19

PAD

COMMUNICATION DESIGN

APART

002

003

III. PROJECTS & DOCUMENTS

IV. BIOGRAPHIES

0

EDITORIAL
#19

Communication Design Apart

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PAD dedicated the year 2020 entirely to women, their creativity and design action. The focus of issue 18, entitled "The Women's Making", was on the maker culture and its meanings. In this issue 19, the attention shifts to the field of Communication Design.

The intention is to continue investigating the design contributions and views, expressions and cultural and political positions of women. We believe that the present issue can contribute to the international debate and widen its boundaries.

The title of this second consecutive issue dedicated to women's design intentionally quotes the text edited by M. Antonietta Trasforini, *Arte a parte* (2000). A collection of contributions that in its title wanted to highlight the marginality and omissions made against women artists in art history. This metaphor of the marginal place ("apart") emphasises the "centre" partiality, that is to say of those who wrote history until now. This centrality of historical studies and its importance emerges in this issue of PAD, in which half of the essays have a historical approach.

"Historical Perspective and Women (Under) Representation" is the title of the first section. Starting from different perspectives, in terms of space and time, the four contributions investigate the theme of women's presence in the histories of Communication Design.

The essays by Francesco E. Guida ("Besides Professional Stereotypes. Women Pioneers in the Golden Age of Italian Graphic Design") and M. Àngel Fortea ("From a Female De-

signer's Perspective. The First Female Professional Group of Graphic Designers in Catalonia") propose two readings on a local scale, the one of Italy and the one of Catalonia, each with specific connotations related to the contexts and in two different historical periods. Beyond the designers mentioned and described, the authors suggest research methods and criteria for rereading and rewriting the histories of design. In both cases, the aim is to recognise the work of generations of female graphic designers of the past, never or less mentioned in the previously written histories.

Letizia Bollini, in her essay entitled "Missing in Action. Women of Digital Design", underlines how problematic is the mapping of the presence of women in the field of digital technologies and design according to a historical perspective. The author analyses the research context and the lack of documentation and sources that often highlight not the absence of female protagonists, but rather the lack of their narrative. In particular, she intends to suggest a revision focused on the (under)representation of women as a symptom and need for a change of perspective in the writing of histories of such a recent area of design.

Finally, "I am Cobalt" is the title of the passionate portrait of Thérèse Moll by Cinzia Ferrara. She was a Swiss-born little known but by no means secondary figure in graphic design history, active for a short period post-WWII years. Despite her short life, which continues to create a halo of mystery, the impact of her work for MIT's Office of publications is notable propagating the style of Swiss graphic design.

The second section, entitled "Women in Action", hosts four contributions that extend the discussion's boundaries, from different perspectives but all linked to practice, research, and various kinds of activism.

In her humorous memoir-style case study ("My Adventures with *Adventures in Menstruating*: A Case Study of Feminist Zinemaking and Period Positivity"), Chella Quint introduces us to the rationale behind the *Adventures in Menstruating* zine project and its evolution over time. An excellent example of art activism expanded from a pure DIY level into a mainstream one.

Elisa Bertolotti with her contribution "Playing with Time and Limits. Experiencing Ursula Ferrara's Animation Process" introduces us to one of the most excellent living female animators and her independent practice, built on the use of alternative and less-inhibited techniques.

In "The Role of Women in Technologies According to the Media. How Communication Design Can React", the authors Valeria Bucchetti and Francesca Casnati contribute to the responses that Communication Design can give to fight gender inequalities. They present the work of the research group DCxCG (Communication Design for Gender Cultures) at the Politecnico di Milano in research and teaching. The aim is to discuss the relevant issue of the stereotyped and limiting representation of women in technologies to strengthen the young designers' critical instrumentation and support reflections around new communication models.

009

To close the section, Anna Barbara presents "HERstory. A Women Design Project in UAE", a design-driven experience, organised at the Dubai Women Museum, to promote the dialogue between different generations of women and female leaders in UAE. The research-action project aimed to encourage a different approach, considering female thinking and practice as an inclusive model.

The third and last section of this issue, named "Projects & Documents" gives space to two initiatives promoted by our publisher, Aiap, the Italian Association of Visual Communication Design. Two initiatives that have a common goal to achieve through different activities (an award and an exhibition): that is, through cultural actions, to feed the discussion and to inform the debate on communication design, on the role and the contribution of women, in the present and the past.

The first of those initiatives is AWDA, Aiap Women in Design Award, which Aiap has been promoting since 2012. A unique international award to investigate the languages, poetics and different approaches to communication design and explore the conditions in which women designers work. Exactly one year ago (November 2019) in Florence was celebrated the fourth edition with the Award Ceremony, and in the coming months, the organisers should launch the next edition. The award concept originated from a series of research initiatives promoted by Aiap and aimed to acknowledge and share the contributions of numerous women designers in the field of visual communication design who have contributed to, and continue to enhance, the discipline.

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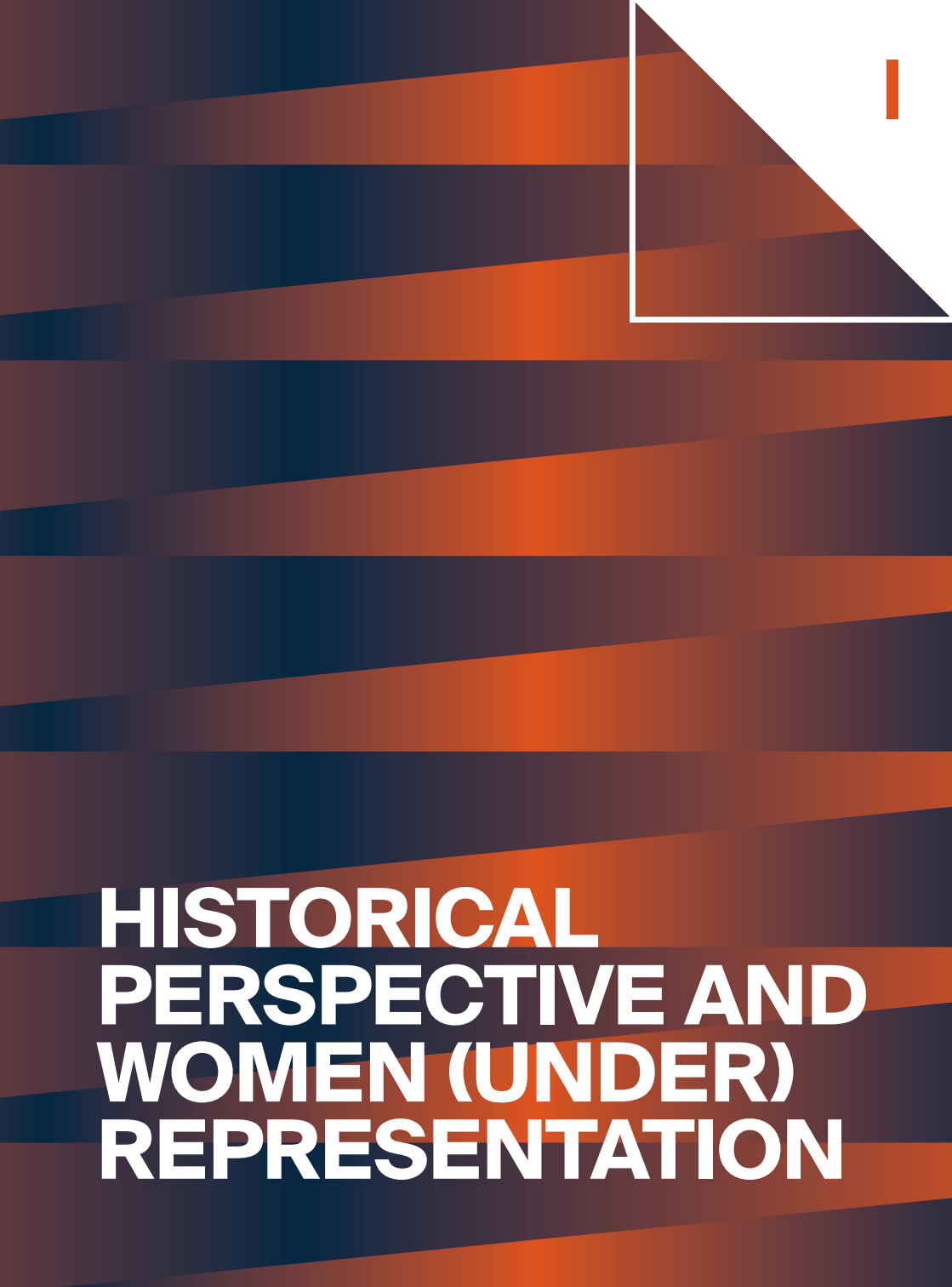
The second project presented in this final section ("PINK. Representations of Women and Women Graphic Designers") also fits into the same route. It is an exhibition project carried out throughout 2020, in uncertain and changing conditions (due to the pandemic), with two objectives. On the one hand, to show women's representations curated by graphic designers (both male and female) from the golden age of Italian design. On the other hand, to reflect on the women designers' contribution in a certain period subject to significant changes. The project intended to question and argue on the role of history, sources and gender studies, on the presence of women designers in the profession in the post-WWII period and their absences in the great histories of design.

With this testimony, the closing and opening parts of issue 19 correctly connect each other. Historical research proposes itself as a versatile tool to interpret the past but above all as a basis for building the future and to better understand how and how much our society has changed. And how much still has to change, thanks and through the specific point of view of design and communication design.

There are still spaces for work, investigation, research, reflection, debate. The discussion is still necessary and indispensable. In particular on topics such as those proposed through this collection of contributions and project cases. A debate whose goal is to inform or, better, to feed knowledge.

011

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Opening photo: Alice Pasquini, wall painting, Barile (PZ) 2012, photo by Gloria Viggiani.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND WOMEN (UNDER) REPRESENTATION

Besides Professional Stereotypes
Women Pioneers in the Golden Age of Italian Graphic Design

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Abstract
Great histories of design and graphic design, both in Italy and internationally, reserve a secondary or minor role for women. Referring in particular to the so-called golden age of Italian graphic design – between the 1950s and the early 1970s – very few female figures have emerged. However, through accurate research on primary sources and original documents, it is possible to identify remarkable profiles, especially in the case of women practising independently or with their husbands, managing their businesses while playing the expected social roles. More than just a list of names and artworks, the paper aims to demonstrate how women designers *de facto* broke the stereotypes of a male-dominated working field such as graphic and advertising design in post-WWII Italy.
Another purpose is to underline how thoughtful use of sources and research methods may lead to a more inclusive rewriting of design history, mentioning less-known figures who have full rights to be considered pioneers and role models.

014

1. Introduction

During the last 20 years there has been a greater interest in exploring the presence of women in the history of Italian design. Starting from the late 70s Lea Vergine (1982) started her first research in the field of avantgarde arts, bringing to Italy some international issues hitherto little dealt with. At the same time Rubino (1979) published his *Le spose del vento* ("The brides of the wind"), dedicated to women designers. Regarding the field of graphic design, it was only in recent times that some publications have framed the question in a critical way, trying to understand the reasons of gaps and omissions (Kirkham, 2000; Pansera & Occleppo, 2002; Gomez-Palacio & Vit, 2008; Breuer & Meer, 2012; Piscitelli, 2015). However, concerning the so-called golden age of Italian graphic design, very few figures have emerged. Those are regarded more as exceptions than as the result of a contextualized and intentional historical research, a research which shifts away from the identification of masters and paradigmatic cases, based on fixed aesthetic values. As stated by Buckley (1986) there is a gender bias in classical historiographic methods which led to the establishment of hierarchies, giving priority to specific types of design, categories of designers, artistic movements and modes of production, which have served to exclude women from history (Ferrara, 2012).

Through a research on primary sources and original documents of the time as well as on secondary sources (e.g. interviews) it has been possible to identify remarkable profiles. In the following pages four profiles of Italian women graphic designers will be presented, focusing on those who practiced

independently or in couples. The aim is to emphasize their roles as practitioners and women in the evolving cultural and social context of post-war Italy.

In some publications (specifically magazines) it is inevitable to note that many of the female practitioners were confined within the areas of the artistic and pictorial approach. They were also described as exceptions in a male-dominated context. But the practice itself, documents and sources, return to us a more complex and multifaceted reality. Women graphic designers, just like their male colleagues, were dedicated to a variety of fields that go far beyond the design for a fashion house, a department store or any other product made for a female target. They used to work with clients pertaining to fields such as heavy industry, chemistry and pharmaceuticals. Producing not only posters, but also advertising campaigns, visual identities, exhibits, packaging, books. Thus, contributing to the development of the industrial culture that characterized Italian economic boom and the revival of the country. In terms of visual languages, the profiles under examination allow us to assert that women graphic designers were not exclusively linked to illustration and pictorial style (as some of them were encouraged to undertake artistic studies) but were also inspired by the most up-to-date trends.

2. Beyond Roles and Stereotypes

According to Proctor (1997), it was only during the 60s that Italian women artists "began to enter art training and the profession in numbers comparable to those of other European countries".

It is possible to include graphic design in the wider field of arts, as testified by Aiap (Italian Association of Adverstising Artists) in the name itself. The association was born in 1955 after the split of ATAP (Association of Advertising Technicians and Artists), remarking a sharp separation of the technical aspects from the artistic expression. The 70 "secessionists" who founded Aiap in 1955 also included five women: Umberta Barni and Brunetta Mateldi from Milan, Alda Sassi from Turin, Annaviva Traverso from Savona and Celeste Visigalli from Rome (Guida, 2018). Those were just a few of the many women designers active in the field, mainly based in Milan as recorded in the Aiap yearbook published in 1963: 199 members are counted, of which 13 are women. Of these, only seven sent their work for publication: Umberta Barni, Brunetta Mateldi, Claudia Morgagni, Elena Pinna, Annamaria Sanguinetti, Rosaria Siletti Tonti (originally from Naples but working in Milan at the time), Verbena Valzelli Guerini (Brescia). Among those names it is possible to identify some of the pioneers of the modern era whose careers and memory have been heavily conditioned by the context they lived in and the stereotypes around female figures.

The short career of Umberta Barni (Milan 1927-?) can be regarded as emblematic. After her studies at the Scuola d'Arte in Ferrara and the Scuola d'Arte Applicata del Castello in Milan, in 1947 she started working at Agenzia Ultra (Ultra Pubblicit. since 1959), where she contributed to the creation of more than 100 advertising campaigns. She was able to take the distance from the mere executive work which was usually required from women, as she had a decision-making role in the creative and design process (Dradi, 2016, p. 91).
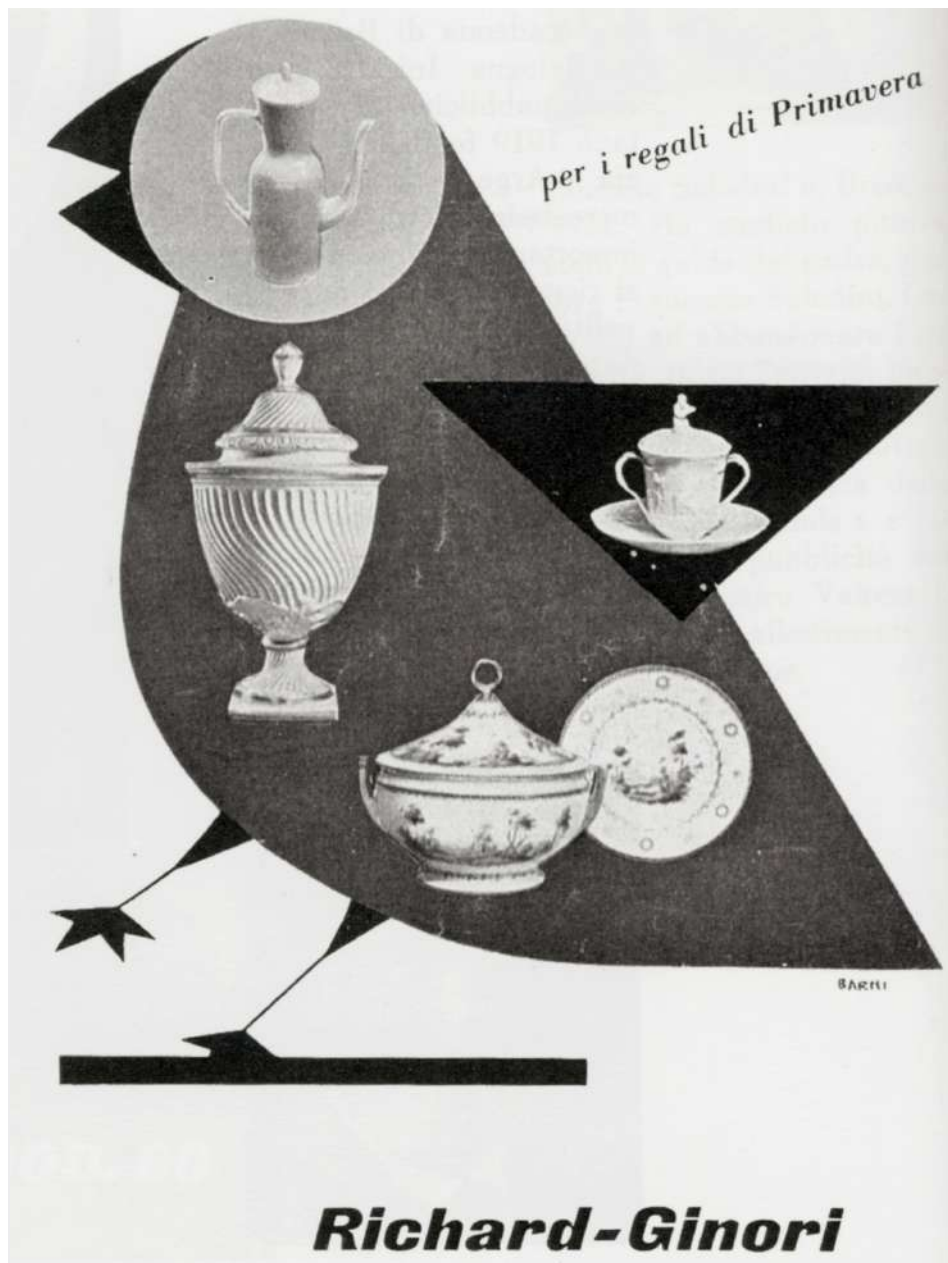
Figure 1. Umberta Barni, "per i regali di Primavera", Richard Ginori, advertising, 1958. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.

Due to the quality of her production, she received several prizes, including a third place awarded by Agipgas brand in 1952. The distinctive feature of her work is the painting-like style, even though she also developed more complex compositions by adding photo-graphic elements to hand-drawn parts (Fig. 1). Active throughout the 1960s, after the marriage her professional activity decreased remarkably.

It is fundamental to notice how the career of a woman, yesterday as today, is irreversibly conditioned by cultural context and social expectations which lead to prioritise private life instead of work. As underlined by Breuer & Meer (2012, p. 41):

> [...] the design career requires a full-time commitment. With its implicit demands on a person's entire and exclusive attention, design work presumes the consent of one's life partner and requires sophisticated management skills from both sides for the organisation of everyday life – as well as financial resources, which are often unavailable to young designers. At a first glance, this situation appears to be gender neutral; however, it is especially ambivalent for women. Frequently, they bear the greaten burden in connection with the work-life balance.

Considering the context of the time means including some of the stereotypes in terms of competencies and skills. Dino Villani (advertiser, artist, first president of ATAP and long-time president of FIP, the Italian Advertising Federation) introduces the work of Claudia Morgagni as follows:

It is not easy to suppose for what reasons the number of women who dedicate themselves to advertising and graphic design is so modest and rare. Also among the poster artists there are no female signatures [...]: instead we find them among the ever more numerous fashion illustrators and this would demonstrate that they tend to deal with those activities that best match their character [...].[1]

The strong cultural prejudice on suitable activities for women designers can be easily pinpointed from this excerpt. Those are also the years in which individual and professional emancipation is often commented in a naive and superficial way as in the article titled "Sono silenziose, ma sono presenti" ("They are silent, but present"), published in the trade magazine *La Pubblicità* (1970):

[...] men, stop pretending to write texts about bras or baby diapers; on products against cellulite or margarines, when you often do not even know how to buy a shirt [...]. You also have to stop pretending to have the happiest intuition in certain creations or advertising actions, you that, without leaving the house, move psychologically with elephantine grace in the world of children and women. Let's also say certain truths.[2]

But from magazines, as well as from yearbooks or exhibitions catalogues, emerges a whole host of women designers, often eclectic, who worked at the same professional level as the many

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1   Translation by the autor. Villani, D. (?), *Claudia Morgagni: sintetismo spinto sull'orlo dell'esasperazione*, article found in the press review collected by Morgagni and kept in her Archive by the Aiap CDPG. Presumably the article is from the mid 1960s.

2   Translation by the autor: Sono silenziose, ma sono presenti (1970). *La Pubblicità, 6* (XXIV), 10.

men mentioned. But of these women, there is almost no trace today. Designers who did not live in the shadow of bulky male figures, practitioners who had their own professional autonomy, who were extremely far from the "hobby" label they were usually categorised with. Figures such as Simonetta Ferrante, Ornella Linke-Bossi (Gunetti, 2018), Claudia Morgagni, Anita Klinz (Pansera, 2017) and others demonstrate an active and participatory presence in the field. Moreover than the professional practice, there are those who have carved out their own extra-space in teaching (like in the case of Morgagni), those who carried out their personal artistic research (Ferrante) and those who contributed to association activities (such the work of Linke-Bossi within Aiap, today the Italian Association of Visual Communication Design). All of these experiences were factual enrichments to the professional system, up to today mainly read and narrated in a male key.

3. Two Pioneers

In terms of professional autonomy, the case of Claudia Morgagni (Milan, 1928-2002) (Guida, 2016) is indicative (Fig. 2). Her work is repeatedly reported in magazines, catalogues and yearbooks. She studied painting at the Brera Academy, then followed courses in ceramics (in Faenza) and mosaic (in Ravenna) as well as graphic design in Paris. During her apprenticeship she was introduced to artistic circles of the time: in this context she first met Mario Robaudi, a Milanese sculptor who would later become her husband. She then separated from Robaudi at the end of the 1960s, after having three children. Morgagni opened her own professional activity in 1957, continuing to collaborate with advertising agencies and managing her own clients.

Figure 2. A portrait of Claudia Morgagni during a lesson at ITSOS, 1979, photo David Cerati. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.

Sources and documents indicate that she was able to exact very respectable fees, equal to those of her male colleagues, and that she had earned a good professional reputation:

> Claudia Morgagni due her reputation among young Italian advertising graphic designers to her strict cultural education, to her vivacious taste, to the rich experience gained in these years of intense activity. The work of Morgagni is distinguished itself, in fact, for the measured control of expression tools and the effective characterization.[3]

Among her clients it is possible to find Esso, Orzoro, Kneipp, Pellizzari, Lanerossi, Ruffino, Ibm, Montedison, Decca (Fig. 3, 4).

3   Translation by the autor. In *Legatoria* (1961, November-December), *2*, 18-19.

Figure 3. Claudia Morgagni, Esso Extra Motor Oil, poster, 1956. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.
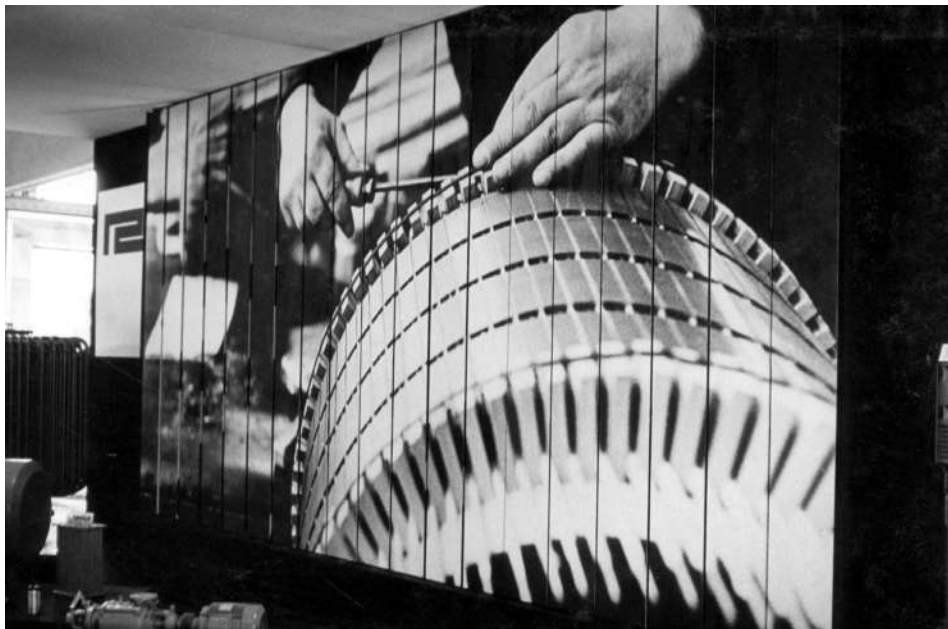
Figure 4. Claudia Morgagni, Pellizzari, Verona fair exhibit, 1968. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.

Her work is characterised by a rich production, from advertising to exhibit, from layout to illustration, extended over a period of time ranging from the mid-50s to the early 80s.

An economically and professionally independent figure, wife, mother and also educator, as she held teaching positions at the Brera Academy, at the Scuola Umanitaria and for a long time at ITSOS (today ITSOS Albe Steiner of Milan), responding to a dual necessity: practical and ideological. In fact, she was strongly committed to the formation of young people as a social duty.[4] It is by no means an exaggeration to define her as a pioneer of the graphic design field: for this reason the latest edition of the Aiap Women in Design Award (AWDA 2019) dedicated the Lifetime Achievement Award to Claudia Morgagni.

Among the years it is possibile to identify other figures like Simonetta Ferrante (Fig. 5), who is still active today as an artist and calligrapher (Guida et al., 2011; Cerritelli et al., 2016). Born in Milan in 1930 in a middle-class family (her grandfather Attilio Calabi has been both director and president of La Rinascente), she was educated in arts and music, getting her high school diploma in 1948.
After completing her studies at the Conservatory of Milan, she started a career as a teacher, a quite conventional activity for a woman at the time. Her wide-ranging education and family background arguably encouraged her to nurture an artistic and professional ambition.

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4   As reported in a series of interviews made by the author to the son of Claudia Morgagni, Paolo Robaudi, between 2015 and 2016.

Figure 5. Simonetta Ferrante (center in the photo), on the right Cecil James Henry Collins, Central School for Art and Crafts, London, 1958. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.

Figure 6. Simonetta Ferrante, Esselunga, posters, 1967, photo Serge Libiszewski. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.
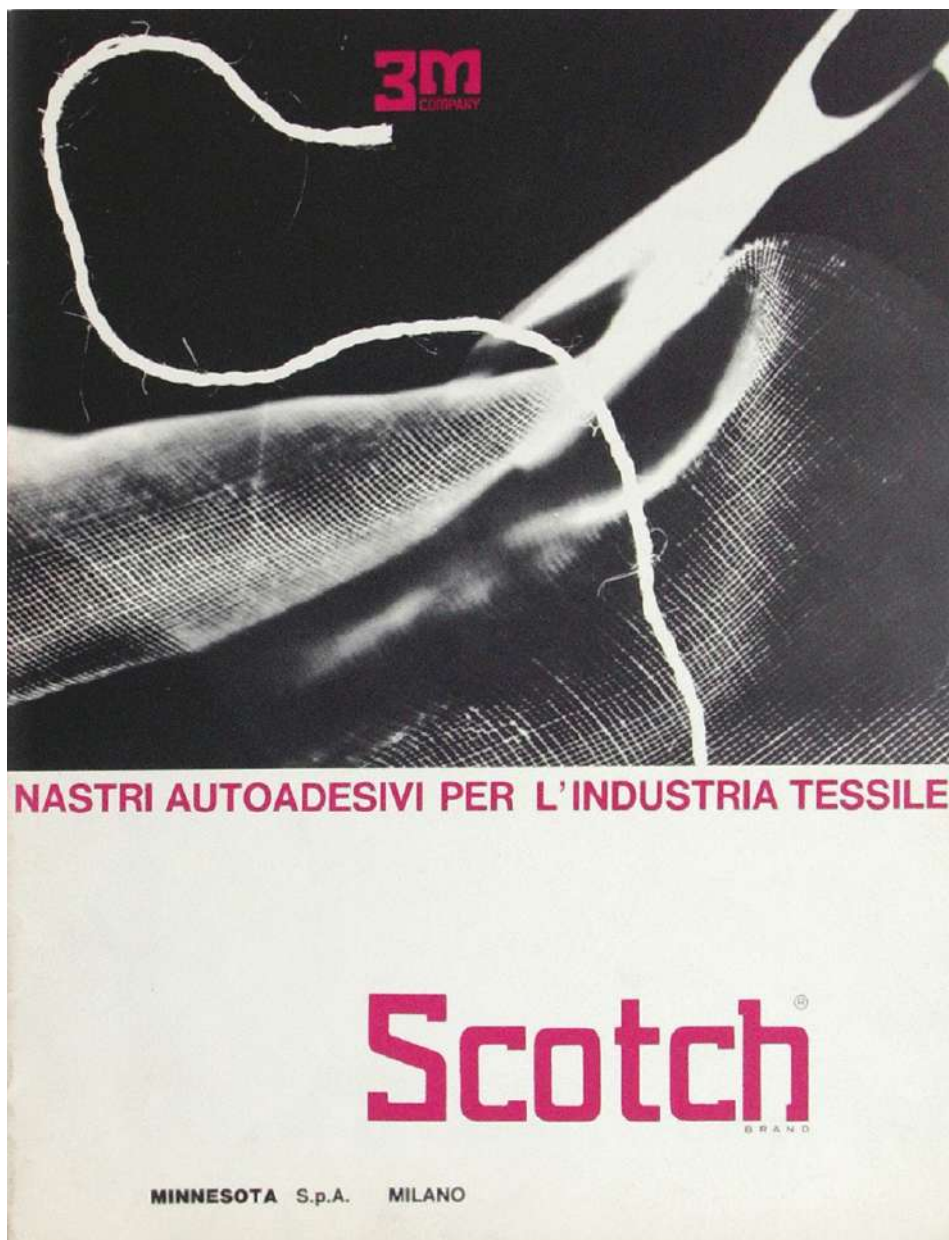
Figure 7. Simonetta Ferrante, 3M - Minnesota S.p.a., folder, 1961. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.

She soon started an apprenticeship programme with Max Huber. But it was Giovanni Pintori, who was working for Olivetti at the time, that encouraged her to go to London and study graphic design at the Central School for Arts and Crafts. After two years of attendance, in 1958 she obtained her diploma in Graphic Design, Painting and Drawing. Back in Milan she first collaborated with Max Huber, Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Bob Noorda and Bruno Munari, then opened her own studio with Carlo Pollastrini and Giovanna Graf in 1961.[5]

Until the mid 70s she worked in the field of graphic design (e.g. Esselunga supermarkets, 3M, Mondadori, Rizzoli, DataControl) (Fig. 6, 7), while carrying out her own experimentations with painting and calligraphy. She effectively combined the two souls of her visual interest and research benefiting from her educational background: at the London school she absorbed less strict expressive and compositional rules than those which were common in Milan in the 60s.

Ferrante stands out not only for her distinctive career path, but also for being one of the first women to open her own professional activity, dealing with publishing, advertising and visual identity far beyond the stereotypes of the time. But it is also necessary to notice that, like others, she was born into a family of the Milan's progressive elite and she benefited of a "class and concomitant educational advantage […] less bound by conventional cultural traditions and gender roles" (Rossi, p. 248).

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5   As reported in the artist's website, http://www.simonettaferrante.it/simonetta-ferrante-biografia.html, and in a series of interviews made by the author in 2011.

4. Two Fellowships

Another professional condition to take into account is the one of studios and agencies headed by couples. The economic growth registered in Italy during the 60s defined the role of women mainly as mothers, wives, house managers and expert consumers (De Benedittis, 2001). In this scenario the opportunity to share the workplace with a partner and contributing to the family's incomes, the chance to organize a common time schedule and workflow, enabled the recognition of women in the professional context. "The trend for male-female partnership was one way women dealt with [the] minority status" imposed by the "legacy of fascist legislation and [the] continuing dominance of the Catholic Church" (Rossi, 2009, p. 245). To better understand the condition, it is useful to consider that fascist legislation confined "women to their maternal role and exclude[d] them from highly skilled employment" (Rossi, 2009, p. 246) and education. As a consequence, a male-female fellowship was one of the few chances women had to start a career even after WWII. It is a professional dimension that would require further investigation to better understand the inner dynamics of medium-sized studios or agencies, in which the daily economic and practical management is related to individual and family issues.

There are well-known fellowships like the one of Albe and Lica Steiner which started in 1939, just one year after their marriage, and lasted their whole life. Lica has always shared and supported Albe's political and cultural commitment, as well as his professional career in their studio named LAS (Lica Albe Steiner).

The role of Lica (1914-2008), not a graphic design practitioner in conventional terms, has been defined as "editor of active memories" (Gunetti, 2015) for her contribution to the daily organization of the archive now preserved at the Politecnico di Milano.

> She has always been the one who, active memory, both in the years of the "professional symbiosis" – from 1939 to 1974 – and in the years of disclosure – from 1974 to 2008 –, organized the projects, the information and the documents. And this is also the "job of the graphic designer": give the opportunity to dispose of past knowledge but also of new content areas, such as projects and theoretical-critical research carried out with Albe. (Gunetti, 2015)

This support role for her husband has been defined as "altruistic: exercising criticism, planning, managerial support, inspiration and creativity for the other" (Waibl, 2011), somehow "extra-ordinary". If there was an inner hierarchy between Albe and Lica, it was not so obvious; but it is a fact that historiography only in more recent times started to consider Lica as an effectively active member of LAS (Steiner, 2015).

If the above-mentioned fellowship is considered as "extra-ordinary", not much is known of other in "more ordinary" fellowships like those of Carlo and Maddalena Angeretti (Studio C + M Angeretti) (Castiglioni, 1964) and Iris and Bruno Pippa (Bonfante, 1960).

Carlo and Maddalena Angeretti, husband and wife, opened their own graphic design and advertising Studio in 1952. Further publications testify that the studio was certainly active

until the end of the 70s.[6] Although the evolution of the Studio should be further analysed, the inner organization of the members in the 60s was just clear and simple as their visual language:

> Carlo [...] deals with the technical, photographic, graphic and administrative part; Maddalena intervenes in the graphic and photographic part with the experience gained in years of work and years of study at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich, which graduated her. (Castiglioni, 1964, p. 293)

Most of the clients belonged to the pharmaceutical and chemical fields, and the Studio designed packaging (Fig. 8), advertising campaigns, corporate identities awarded in several occasions: the Oscar and the Eurostar for packaging, the Gold Medal at the Milan Fair Award or the mention for the Compasso d'Oro in 1955. The workflow described by Castiglioni seems to foster the stereotype (as stated by Buckley, 1989, p. 5) in which it was more suitable for women to take care of the creative or "decorative" part, without burdening them with responsibilities in administrative and clients management. Maddalena studied in a prestigious school of the time that trained other protagonists of Italian graphic design, but her name, besides the exceptionality of the article mentioned, does not appear in any other sources found to date.

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6   Their work appears in *Pubblicità in Italia 65-66* and *Pubblicità in Italia 70-71*. In *Pubblicità in Italia 78-79* the signature is reduced to Angeretti. Examples of their work is also in Studio Sironi (1972), p. 29.

Figure 8. Studio C + M Angeretti, Ansaplasto, countertop vendor awarded the Eurostar packaging in Paris, 1963. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.

Figure 9. Bruno & Iris Pippa, la Rinascente, SNIA event, 1956 ca. Courtesy of Aiap Cdpg.

Despite the lack of available sources, the collaboration of Bruno and Iris Pippa was described by Bonfante (1960, p. 337) (Fig. 9) as ones of the happiest work fellowships:

> By now we don't know how much refined and subtle, how impetuous and peremptory we owe to one or the other of the two creators.

Both were self-educated and started to work in advertising and graphic design in the mid-50s. Iris (born Urso in Pola, 1927-?) started to practice with her husband Bruno (Vicenza, 1925-?) in 1956 (Huber et al., 1964). In the early 60s they used to publish in several editions of the annual *Pubblicità in Ita-*

lia exposing works signed individually or together.[7] Starting from 1963 the name of Iris disappears and only the work of Bruno is registered until the end of the 70s. Bonfante (1960, p. 344) wrote of their common work as the result of a constant rebellion to a fixed scheme but also of a "a severe unity of style" that they pursued for various clients: pharmaceutical and chemistry industries, fashion houses and department stores like Upim or la Rinascente.

Those are two different cases of fellowships taken from the professional advertising and graphic design scene which demonstrate the presence of women with design roles within medium and small-sized organizations. Roles that were recognized, at least in part, and are witnessed in publications. If anything, the question to ask is why Maddalena and Iris have progressively disappeared from the scene? Why do their names no longer appear? Beyond the possible trajectories of their lives, on which further investigations will be needed, it is not possible to exclude that they left space to Carlo and Bruno to totally devote themselves to their families. Giving up the career and those professional satisfactions that the aforementioned premises suggest they would have deserved, as already highlighted in the case of Umberta Barni. Although these are currently hypotheses, it is not possible to discard them, considering the conditioning that very often women practitioners could suffer or to which they forced themselves, confining their roles to the ones deemed more appropriate at the time.

034

7   As it is in the editions of 1957-58, 1960-61, 1961-62 or 1962-63.

5. Conclusions

In the history of professional disciplines, like graphic design, emerges a need in detecting new role models. This lack, as already underlined, affects and conditions the ambition of generations of students and practitioners, besides the more obvious ones like motherhood, family and therefore of organization or support of the partner in professional paths (Guida, 2015, pp. 175-177).

As affirmed by Astrid Stavro (2012, p. 365):

> [...] the absence of women "role models" in design history is one of the factors that explain [...] this apparent lack of ambition and confidence come from.

Breuer & Meer (2012, pp. 25-26) wrote clearly that

> The historiography of design has also contributed to the limited visibility of female graphic designers. During their own lifetimes, many of the women mentioned were recognised within professional circles, and a considerable number of them enjoyed successful careers. However, few gained entry into the canon of design history, and those who did were reduced to the status of exceptions.

Therefore, a question to be asked with conviction is why women designers were less present in publications or in those occasions useful for the enhancement of their work. Rossi (2009, p. 246) points out that "the patriarchal conventions of the [...] design press also served to contain women's existence in the profession". And that "this marginalization

has further contributed to the male bias in design literature". But, to avoid making a mere attempt at reconciliation or correction through list of forgotten women designers, it is necessary to contextualize the paths, without relying solely on a mere aesthetic evaluation, but rather rejecting this formalistic approach. New parameters need to be defined, making them actually inclusive.

One aspect that emerges precisely from the above-mentioned cases is the one of professional autonomy, of those practitioners who in the years following WWII started their own business, taking on responsibilities, covering different roles, interacting with clients and suppliers (as in the cases of Morgagni and Ferrante). Many of them worked and lived in a city like Milan, during a time of unprecedented social changes and economic growth. They undertook independent careers, in a male-dominated context where certain occupations and social roles were designated female (Buckley, 1986, p. 4). As reported in some of the interviews made by the author to the son of Claudia Morgagni, she was sometimes marginalized in some of the professional circles as she was more dedicated to carrying out advertising work. Despite having demonstrated the quality of her work also with significant economic results, it is to be assumed that her ability to manage independently her activity was considered as abnormal.

The multiplicity of roles is another factor. For a woman at the time, carving out her own independent professional business was indeed almost heroic. Especially if the profession had to be accompanied by conventional social and cultural roles: being a

wife, being a mother, taking care of the family home, looking after the offspring. At the time as it is today, the graphic design profession allowed flexible management of daily time, but independence could be relative if it was not possible to achieve economic results of a certain size. This multiplicity of roles evidently "weighs" for women, if not more, differently than for men. And as such it should be considered as an additional element of evaluation and enhancement.

In more general terms, to understand the evolution of a professional practice and its relationship with society, production and industry, considering authors currently absent from great histories can be used to re-read the contours of the profession with greater objectivity. Until now defined and transmitted in a predominantly male key which, however, only partially reflects the same practice and production reality and therefore the society of those years that have been defined as the golden age of Italian graphic design.

037

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039

Missing in Action
Stories of Women of (Digital) Design

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Abstract
In recent years the focus on the role of women in the design world has opened up significant spaces for exploration and research. However, in worlds bordering on other disciplines such as Information Communication Technologies, STEM and Computer Science, i.e. the world that involves design in the digital field, the mapping of their contribution becomes blurred. The article addresses the problem of research and mapping the presence of women in the field of digital technologies and design according to a historical perspective. In particular, it addresses and analyses the research context and the lack of documentation and sources that often highlight not the absence of female protagonists, but rather the lack of their narrative. In particular, it suggests a revision focused on the (under)representation of women in knowledge gatekeepers, such as Wikipedia, or inside the community represented by tech and international conferences, as a symptom and need for a change of perspective.

040

1. Antecedent (a Post-Forward)

> History is written by the writers! We have to write ourselves back into history. (Christina Wodtke,[1] 2020)

In the last few weeks, during the COVID19 lock-down, the closure of schools, university and educational institution, together with museums theatres, cinemas and so on, an intense debate has been raised about the role of culture and art in the present and future society. Scrolling the twitter streaming of debate-related hashtags, a tweet of a girl in the last high-school year discussing the Italian literature programme to be prepared for the final exam has gained a lot of attention. She pointed out that in the whole school year, she was never taught about, nor even met a female author, poet or novelist. I was personally astonished, remembering that decades ago at least authors such as Grazia Deledda, a Sardinian novelist, who received the Literature Nobel Prize in 1926 (the second one in Italy), Elsa Morante and Natalie Ginzburg were read and studied. According to the Italian Literature programme for the last two high-school semesters,[2] the official schedule lists 83 lessons, but only 13 have women as a subject. A "Women in Italian Literature" projects[3] is proposed as integration, including 17 novelists and poets in a sort of history-ghetto since the 1200s throughout XXI Century. If the intention to restore the female presence is commenda-

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1   Co-founder and past president of IA Institute, author and lecturer in HCI at Stanford University.

2   Wikiversity (2018). *Letteratura italiana per le superiori 3*. URL: https://it.wikiversity.org/wiki/Materia:Letteratura_italiana_per_le_superiori_3.

3   Wikiversity (2017). *Progetto "Le Donne nella Letteratura Italiana" (superiori)*. URL: https://it.wikiversity.org/wiki/Progetto_%22Le_Donne_nella_Letteratura_Italiana%22_(superiori).

ble, the overall effect is not. Women are not part of the official narration, just set aside. It seems that in almost three decades, instead of to balance the presence of women in books about literature – but also art, philosophy, sciences, math and other knowledge fields as well in design – they are further omitted, actually cancelled or just added as an excrescence.

2. History: Missing in Actions

Paraphrasing the statement of Paola Pallottino (2019) – in her recent book about the history of Italian female illustrators – it could be said that like other stories, the history of *female designers* is an erasure operation from history too. In fact, one of the main cultural problems is to restore the presence of women, whose existence is witnessed by pictures, but faded in the official debate and historiography – from the Bauhaus epic to the Silicon Valley revolution – finally telling their stories (Bollini, 2016).

Tracing back the history of design, from its ideal modern foundation – i.e. the Bauhaus, which last year celebrate the centennial – to the digital world, the presence of women is documented, but not narrated. One of the most famous photos of the school portraying the teaching staff on the roof of the school in Dessau: 13 people, including one woman. Yet if you ask to name her, few recognise her.[4]
As stated by Sabine Weier (2017), editor at the 11th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, presenting an exhibition about Benita Koch-Otte's work:

4   By the way, she is Gunta Stölzl, first student and then teacher at the Bauhaus.

Auch die Geschichte des Bauhauses ist eine der männlichen Helden. Von den Frauen der Schule, die Kunst und Technik zusammenführte und Maßstäbe für Architektur, Design und Kunst setzte, erzählt im Bauhaus-Archiv jetzt eine ganze Reihe. […] Hinter Koch-Ottes gerunzelter Stirn scheint sich die Wut zu ballen. Wütend wird sie in ihrem Leben noch oft sein […] 1968, wenn sie im Katalog zur 50 Jahre Bauhaus–Ausstellung in Stuttgart nicht erwähnt wird.[5]

She's another of the long-forgotten or underrated presences, such as Lucia Moholy (born Shultz). Writer, under the male alias Ulrich Steffen and then a talented photographer whose works has been mainly credited to her husband, she then intended a legal battle against Gropius to (not) have her work acknowledged, although she had contributed, with her photos, to the school's image and identity (Ambrosio, 2020). Not to mention that also in one of the most recent Bauhaus celebrations, the exhibition: *50 Jahre nach 50 Jahre Bauhaus 1968 Ausstellung* held in Stuttgart in 2018, Marianne Brandt was the only woman included. As Jonathan Glancey points out when presenting the text by Ulrike Müller (2009) about Bauhaus women:

> And yet the photographs of those seemingly liberated women tell, at best, a half-truth. Yes, the world's most famous modern art school accepted women. But few became well known. While the men of the Bauhaus [...] are celebrated, names like Gunta Stolzl

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5   "The history of the Bauhaus is also one of the male heroes. The Bauhaus Archive is now telling a whole series of stories about the women of the school who brought art and technology together and set standards for architecture, design and art. [...] Behind Koch-Otte's wrinkled forehead, anger seems to clench. She will often be angry in her life [...] 1968, if she is not mentioned in the catalogue for the 50th anniversary of the Bauhaus exhibition in Stuttgart".

(a weaver), Benita Otte (another weaver), Marguerite Friedlaender-Wildenhain (ceramicist), Ilse Fehling (sculptor and set designer) or Alma Siedhoff-Buscher (toymaker) mean precious little. If these bright young things came to the Bauhaus as equals, why are the women so obscure? (Glancey, 2009)

Only recently I saw some of the students depicted in one of the icon images of the school properly identified, thanks to the patient research and dissemination work of the *Women's Art project*[6] curated by PL Henderson and based on the *Women's Art: a manifesto* written in 1972 by Valie Export.

Figure 1. Tweet posted by the Women's Art project curated by PL Henderson, 2020.

6   www.womensartblog.wordpress.com.

The artist ends her declaration with a sort of oxymoron: "The future of women will be the history of women" inviting to look at the past to be able to build a different further history.

The story of Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi and the awarding of the Pritzker Architecture Prize only to the latter in 1991, demonstrates the continuous non-recognition of women even in the contemporary world (Capps, 2013). The life-long experience to be ignored as a professional, is explained by the protagonist herself in an essay:

> When Praeger published a series of interviews with architects, my name was omitted from the dust jacket. We complained and Praeger added my name, although objecting that this would spoil the cover design. On the inside flap, however, "eight architects" and "the men behind" modern architectures were mentioned. As nine were listed in the front, I gather I am still left out. (Scott Brown, 1989)

The disappearance seems to be the key to interpreting these phenomena: documentary sources, such as the photographs that demonstrate the presence and participation, the narrated story that systematically erases them (Bollini, 2017).

The phenomenon becomes paradoxical in the world of STEM, ICT and digital design. Often in the early stages of technological revolutions, women are on board, from Ada Lovelace to Hamilton, from Lamarr to Katherine Johnson to Marissa Mayer, precisely because the camp is not yet colonised. Also, in this context, the images refer to a wealth of presences and protagonists.

045

However, it is precisely from photos collected in folklore.org – a web site devoted to collective historical storytelling about "The Original Macintosh. Anecdotes about the development of Apple's original Macintosh, and the people who made it" that we can trace the presence of some of the protagonists and pioneers who contributed founding the company's myth of Apple.

Joanna Hofmann depicted on the cover of *Revolution in The Valley: The Insanely Great Story of How the Mac Was Made* (Herzfeld, 2004), hired in September 1980 as the fifth member of the team and for more than a year the only marketing resource dedicated to launching the Mac on the international market.

Figure 2. Picture of the official Mac Design Team taken by Norman Seiff for Rolling Stone, in the lobby of Bandley 3. Credits: folklore.org, Creative Commons License.

She was also responsible for the first draft of the *User Interface Guide Lines* that, in fact, inaugurate the concept of user experience and usability. Hoffman, moreover – with a doctorate in archaeology and a background ranging from anthropology to physics to linguistics – is the forerunner of that multifaceted culture and hybrid in which technology and art meet and merge to put, in one sort of "computer humanism", the user at the centre. Caroline Rose, part of the Mac Team since June 1982, he has written most of the three technical volumes Inside Macintosh, the Mac developer documentation and takes care of the complete edition. The excellent technical writer continues the publicity experience in 1986 first in NeXT and then again in Apple as editor of Apple's technical journal for Mac developers for about ten years. Patti Kenyon (often portrayed with her newborn daughter Tracy), the software librarian, perhaps best remembered as Larry's wife and hardware design expert (Notarianni, 2014) or as *the Twiggy Mac.* More difficult to reconstruct the stories of Rony Sebok, Hasming Seropian or Ann E. Bowers in the photographs, but not mentioned either as protagonists or authors in folklore.com nor in machistory.net (the information is mainly inferred in from their LinkedIn profiles). Or, as Megan Smith, CTO of United States, points out, in an interview with Charlie Rose about the Jobs biopic:

> There are these incredible photographs from the launch of the Macintosh in the 80s, and the Rolling Stone pictures that were published. The historic record shows this group of 10 people in a pyramid – actually 11, seven men and four women. Every photograph you see with the Mac team has Joanna Hoffman, who was the product manager, a great teammate of Steve Jobs, and Susan Kare who did all the graph-

ics and user interface on the artist side. None of them made it into the Jobs movie. They're not even cast. And every man in the photographs is in the movie with a speaking role. It's debilitating to our young women to have their history almost erased. (Gruber, 2015)

However, it takes at least two biopics on Steve Jobs for at least one female figure to be mentioned in the row and somehow returned to the narrative. The first *Jobs*, directed by Joshua Michael Stern in 2013, has 15 main characters: there's not one woman among them. The other one *Steve Jobs* – Danny Boyle, 2015 – includes at least among the first 5 protagonists Joanna Hoffman played by Winslet, giving her back visibility.

Figure 3. The software team, photographed for Rolling Stone in January 1984, demonstrating teamwork in a human pyramid. On top: Rony Sebok, Susan Kare. Middle row: Andy Hertzfeld, Bill Atkinson, Owen Densmore. Bottom row: Jerome Coonen, Bruce Horn, Steve Capps, Larry Kenyon. In front: Donn Denman, Tracy Kenyon, Patti Kenyon. Credits: folklore.org, Creative Commons License.

A separate speech deserves Susan Kare. Author of the icons and typography to which the Mac owes much of its success, she is a figure already recovered on a historical level, especially thanks to the culture of graphic design. Moreover, from the interview given to Pang (2000) from Kare shows the testimony of a more comprehensive presence of women, also in top positions, within the different Apple divisions including – beyond to Patti Kenyon, Caroline Rose and Kare herself – Ellen Romana from Creative Service, Sandy Miranda and Debbie Coleman, CFO; not to mention Angela Ahrendts, the only woman among Apple's 11 top managers, totally unknown to most.[7]

3. *This is a Man's World*

All the more reason, when exploring the world of technology, the situation seems even more complicated. As mentioned by the research *Elephant in the valley* (Vassallo et. Al., 2015) – meaning the Silicon Valley epicentre of the electronic and digital revolution – the technical world has a problem of representation that effectively excludes women.[8] For instance, the role of Adele Goldberg has been only recently restored, along with the work of her husband Alan Kay, and included as coauthor of many of the research works that led to Dynabook invention and Smalltalk development (Kay & Goldberg, 1977) as other women working at Xerox Park.

Even Muriel Cooper's contribution has blurred edges. On the one hand, she is recognised for her pioneering role in inter-

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7   For an extended version and in Italian compare with Bollini, 2017

8   The recent book written by Claire Evans: *Broad Band: The Untold Story of the Women Who Made the Internet*, published in 2018, retraces the stories of women in the STEM/internet sector.

face design in exploring and building a bridge between the disciplines of graphic design and the new potential of digital media. The *Visual Language Workshop* held at the MIT Media Lab since 1973 opens a new chapter in the world of both electronics and communication, as highlighted by Bill Mitchell:

> I think she was the first graphic designer to carry out really profound explorations of the new possibilities of electronic media–things like 3-D text. She didn't just see computer-graphics technology as a new tool for handling graphic design work. She understood from the beginning that the digital world opened up a whole domain of issues and problems, and she wanted to understand these problems in a rigorous way. (Abrams, 1994)

Nevertheless, as underlined by Jane Abrams (1994) in the Cooper's biography for AIGA web site: "when Cooper showed the latest work of the VLW at the TED 5 conference in February 1994, no less than Bill Gates of Microsoft personally asked for a copy of the presentation". But it still remains ambiguous and is part of the progressive revision of certain historical narratives, the role of Cooper within the MIT Media Lab. In some versions, in fact, she is co-founder, together with Nicholas Negroponte who directed it (Reinfurt & Wassember, 2017; Goodman & Shen, 2014),[9] in others she seems to have been one of the members of the group (Abrams, 1994) as pointed out by Erin Malone – chair of the Interaction Design BFA program at California College of the Arts and co-author of *Designing Social Interfaces* – in a recent thread on Twitter.

9   See also the Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muriel_Cooper.

4. #wikigendergap

The more we broaden the perspective and move away from the contemporary point of view; therefore, it seems that some pieces of a puzzle find their place in the historical image of the digital design phenomenon. However, this image is still sharply fragmented and incomplete also because of a bias underlying the whole narrative that finds in the major collective tools of knowledge sharing - such as Wikipedia - its most ambiguous expression. The recent hashtag #wikigendergap denounces this phenomenon of under-representation or systematic deletion of women's profiles from the *free* encyclopedia precisely,[10] which has become, willingly or not, the primary access point for many kind of researches.[11] The problem is widespread and transversal and affects even fewer niche-sectors than the world of design and digital technologies. Suffice it to say that the Nobel Prize for Physics 2018 – Donna Strickland – was initially denied inclusion in the entries/bio of Wikipedia because

> Strickland is an associate professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Waterloo and former president of the Optical Society, but when a Wikipedia user attempted to create a profile for her in March, the page was denied by a moderator. "This submission's references do not show that the subject qualifies for a Wikipedia article" said the moderator.[12] […] She is the first woman to win the

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10   "The free encyclopedia that anyone can edit" is the original motto. For a deeper discussion on the value and role of user-generated and curated contents on Wikipedia platform (Lovink, 2007; Keen 2007; Metitieri, 2011).

11   In general, the article mainly uses Wikipedia in English and the Italian version only when referring to Italian-speaking issues and people.

12   It is also very interesting to look at the versioning page of the Wikipedia entry: https://en.wiki-pedia.org/w/index.php?title=Donna_Strickland&offset=&limit=500&action=history.

award since it went to Maria Goeppert-Mayer in 1963. Marie Curie was the first to win in 1903.

Strickland herself has declared: "We should never lose the fact that we are moving forward. We are always marching forward" (Cecco, 2018).

Unlike her fellow winners, Strickland did not have a Wikipedia page at the time of the announcement. A Wikipedia user tried to set up a page in May, but it was denied by a moderator with the message: "This submission's references do not show that the subject qualifies for a Wikipedia article." Strickland, it was determined, had not received enough dedicated coverage elsewhere on the internet to warrant a page.

On Tuesday, a newly created page flooded with edits: "Added in her title." "Add Nobel-winning paper." "Added names of other women Nobelists [sic] in physics."

Figure 4. One Wikipedia Page Is a Metaphor for the Nobel Prize's Record With Women. Highlights by the author. Source: https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/10/nobel-prize-physics-donna-strickland-gerard-mourou-arthur-ashkin/571909/.

It is therefore clear that the intermediation of informative gatekeepers becomes a crucial point of the narrative and how the first operation to get to know the protagonists is their "re-instatement" in the common timeline.
Actions like the one undertaken by *Art + Feminism, Wikipedia edit-a-thon* become crucial to enrich the landscape and presence, despite the often-fierce controversies.[13]

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13   First-hand information about the Milan event 2017. http://andreavitalidesign.it/portfolio/art-feminism-wikipedia-edit-a-thon/.

In the Italian experience we can remember the event organised in 2017 in BASE Milan[14] by Annamaria Andrea Vitali. During an interview she underlined the problem of the Wikipedia gender gap:

> La bassa indicizzazione di biografie di donne che hanno fatto la storia in discipline come storia, arte, scienza, etc., è solo una delle conseguenze sintomatiche di questa condizione di disparità endemica in cui riversa la piattaforma dal giorno in cui è nata. […] Per fare un esempio, spesso le voci sui personaggi femminili esistono, ma non hanno lo stesso tipo di cura e attenzione di quelle dedicate a personaggi maschili.[15] (Garcia, 2017).

Besides, the problem is recognized both by research carried out by the same Wikipedia (2011) and by the page explicitly dedicated to the issue of gender bias in the activities of insertion and editing, as well as being thoroughly visualized in the work of Viola Bernacchi (2015). Nevertheless, soon after the event, the collaborative work of inserting and/or translation of profiles of artists, digital and game designers have been systematically frustrated by the deletion and the opposition by Wikipedia editors who have not recognised or emphasised the importance of this work.

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14   https://www.facebook.com/events/1832336850372362/.

15   "The low indexing of biographies of women who have made history in disciplines such as history, art, science, etc., is only one of the symptomatic consequences of this condition of endemic disparity into which it pours the platform since the day it was born. […] to give an example, entries about female characters often exist, but they don't have the same kind of care and attention as those dedicated to male characters"

053

5. Writing Future Histories

If the reconstruction of the individual stories will involve patient and meticulous retrospective work, it is at least possible to start building the future story now as proposed by Valie Export. The problem of the lack of female presence in many cultural, public and educational contexts has become dramatically evident. Conferences with all-male panellists are now viewed with suspicion, and many organizations have begun to adopt ethical codes that explicitly require a fairer representation of underrepresented or excluded groups.

A cultural change that has to confront an inertia to change that mainly clashes against two phenomena. The first is *unconsciousness*, the second a sort of "laziness" in dealing with the issue. This first *attitude* has been targeted not only by extended social phenomena such as the #meetoo, but especially by the emergence of research and publications. These include Caroline Criado Perez: *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (2019) and Emily Chang: *Brotopia. Breaking up the boy's club of Silicon Valley* (2018) that identify, circumstantiate and explain the phenomenon – respectively based on data as well as interviews – to the general public underlining how it impacts on society as a whole. Besides, women in companies and institutions are learning Sheryl Sandberg's (2013) lesson of *lean in* and are promoting the presence through initiatives such as *Women Talk Design*,[16] *Women who design*[17] a Twitter-based directory "of

16 https://womentalkdesign.com/.
17 https://womenwho.design/.

accomplished women in the design industry" or the recent (at least in Italy) *Ladies that UX Milan*[18] promoting activities to improve women's leadership and mentorship in design. The initiatives aim to give visibility to women in the technology, STEM and design sectors and perform a dual-task. In the first place, these projects have the scope map and include notable and relevant female voices in the field of design and tech to give them visibility and *findability*. Secondly, they empower, support and engage women in the field. Similar experiences are emerging on a local level, creating the contemporary and future ground to write a new narrative about digital and design, in which women are already there.

18   https://it.linkedin.com/company/ladiesthatuxmilan.

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The First Female Professional Group of Graphic Designers in Catalonia (1960s - 1970s)

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Keywords

Female Graphic Designers, Role of Women in Design Creation, Gender Studies, Graphic Design History, Catalan Graphic Design.

Abstract

A research project named *Amb mirada de dissenyadora gràfica* (*From a Female Designer's Perspective*) was developed in 2019. Its aim was to fight for the recognition of the role of female designers in the graphic design sector. Its main objective was to recognize the work developed by the first generation of professional female graphic designers in Catalonia (Spain). This first important female professional group emerged from the first promotions of the design schools in Barcelona, such as Elisava and EINA. These women were born between the 1940s and 1950s, during the Franco dictatorship. As a result, at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, the first generation of female graphic designers in Catalonia accessed the professional world. Among them were figures such as Toni Miserachs, Pilar Villuendas, Mercedes Azúa, Tere Moral, Carme Vives, Tere Martínez, Ana Zelich, Mont Marsá, Xeixa Rosa and Pati Núñez.
The current paper focuses on this project. Therefore, it's a research on gender issues, deploying a historiographic methodology combining a literature review with firsthand accounts and oral sources, mainly interviews to some of the most relevant female designers.

059

1. Introduction

The work and contributions by female designers have not been considered in the same way as that of their male colleagues in either Spain, or internationally. There are very few references to them or to their work in design history books so far. They are under-represented in the syllabus of universities and design schools and they are still missing in the scholarly literature. The number of exhibitions devoted to them is very scarce and, finally, their work is under represented and its visibility doesn't correspond to its importance. Women designers themselves have been fighting against this discriminatory treatment for years. In the same way have done some design historians and educators wondering, where are all the women?

In 2012, design historians Gerda Breuer and Julia Meer edited the book *Women in Graphic Design 1890-2012* looking for an answer for a similar question, why were so many women forgotten? The result of their research about this scarcity of female graphic designers is a great contribution, because provides an overview of the history of women in graphic design, mainly western. Throughout 600 pages, it contains numerous interviews, articles and short biographies of women graphic designers. Keep in mind, as Martha Scotford points out (Scotford, 1994) that the Philip B. Meggs' *A History of Graphic Design*, used as the textbook in the most college courses still today, mentioned only fifteen women in its first edition in 1983, and thirty-one women designers, photographers and illustrators in the revised one, in 1992. Therefore, the *Women in Graphic Design* was so necessary.

060

In the same way, it has been written very little about Spanish female graphic designers up until now. In 1997 was published *El diseño gráfico en España. Historia de una forma comunicativa nueva*,[1] written by Enric Satué (Barcelona, 1938). The author is a renowned Catalan graphic designer and he usually writes about Catalan and Spanish history of graphic design too. In the referred book, throughout some 450 pages there are few references to female designers. And in the last chapter, the one dedicated to design schools, he mentioned, in a short paragraph, the first female professional designers in the history of Spain emerged from the official schools.

For this reason, design historians such as Anna Calvera, Isabel Campi and Raquel Pelta have been working for many years to close this visibility gap in Spain through their research, papers and books, and as exhibition curators. Anna Calvera, before she passed away in 2018, encouraged her disciples[2] Teresa Martínez and M. Àngels Fortea to continue the task she began years ago; that is, to keep on fighting for the visibility of the female graphic designers. So, Martínez and Fortea, design history professors and researchers launched the project *Amb mirada de dissenyadora gráfica,* in 2019. The focus of the research is on the first generation of professional female graphic designers in Catalonia. The amount of information about their work is very limited despite their role opening up a career path for many women who are now studying at universities and design schools.

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1   *The Graphic Design in Spain. The History of a New Way of Communication.*
2   Anna Calvera was the thesis director of both researchers.

Therefore, it was necessary to recover and make visible this relevant group.

2. The Context: Women under Franco's Regime

An issue like the relevance and contribution of female graphic designers is not easy to tackle. It requires, in the Spanish case, an approach to its historical context.

In 1939 the Spanish Civil War ended (1936-1939) and, as a result, the democratic system of the 2nd Republic (1931-1939) was replaced by a dictatorial one, Franco's regime (1939-1975). Being a woman under Franco represented the loss of rights and freedoms. The only available space for women was their home, so their education was articulated in such a way that they could only be prepared for the home, crafts and home industries.

At the end of the 1950s, after two decades of autarchy that led to economic stagnation, the regime began a trend towards openness. Foreign financial aid was needed, but this would not be possible without some allowances in return. So, Francoism tried to erase the most obvious signs of fascism and presented itself as a false democracy. The *Plan de Estabilización Económica*[3] was launched in 1959, which sought to open up the market, ceasing state interventionism and allowing foreign capital inflows. As a result, the transition from autarchy to the consumer society took place in the 1960s, a stage known as *Desarrollismo*. These measures brought a fast, economic growth; Spanish society saw its income increase and began to enjoy a certain purchasing power.

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3   Economic measures.

This new situation led to new behaviors within the working class, also affecting the social role of women who now became consumers. Openness brought with it the European modernity, particularly through tourism, and the desire for emancipation of Spanish women increased with it.

The new challenges that Spanish women faced due to this modernization needed some legal changes. The need to redefine the partiotic role of women was taken into consideration through the Civil Code Reform of 1958 and the enactment of the Women's Political, Professional and Labor Rights Act of 1961. Although women still depended on their husbands or parents, they were now able to help the family financially without forgetting ethical-religious principles.
Changes in the legal field continued in the 1960s but it was not until the 1970s that the duty of obedience to the husband disappeared. It was made possible through a law enacted on May 2, 1975, promoted by the *Asociación Española de Mujeres Juristas*,[4] founded in 1971.

Changes were made in the education system too. A special vocational training for women was launched. As of that moment, as Isabel Campi says, either out of necessity or by vocation, Spanish women set out to conquer the professional world. The design one was no exception (Campi, 2011).

In Barcelona, for example, the Center for Female Catholic Influence (CICF), a female religious association, was founded in

4   Spanish Association of Women Jurists

1950. The CICF founded, in turn, the CIC Cultural Institution in 1952, a pedagogical institution dedicated to the female professional training, where young women from well-off families attended to learn languages and secretarial studies. Later, in 1961, Elisava, the first design school in Spain, opened. It was promoted by the CICF and the *Foment de les Arts Decoratives* (FAD).[5] The name of the school honored Elisava (1100-1122), a medieval artist and embroiderer, considered to be the oldest with preserved and signed work in Catalonia. The first professional graphic designers emerged from it.

In November 1966, EINA school was founded as a result of the split produced in Elisava due to the emerging ideological discrepancies between the teachers and the CIC. The new pedagogical center, whose name *eina* means tool in Catalan language, started its classes in 1967. It was a school where graphic, industrial and interior design disciplines were taught; where teachers, art and architecture professionals, taught students on a deep humanistic basis and from practical experience.

3. Women and Graphic Design in Catalonia and Spain.
The first important female professional group in the history of Catalonia emerged from the first promotions of these two design schools, Elisava and EINA. Born between the 1940s and 1950s, during the Franco dictatorship, these women's access to the professional world took place in the late 1960s and during the 1970s. Most of them have had long profession-

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5   The Fostering Arts and Design is a non-profit association of professionals and businesses connected to design.

al careers and have participated in many influencial design projects. So, why are they so little known?

Before the founding of these schools, female have already worked in the trade as illustrators, cartoonists or animation filmmakers. But, at that time they did not used to sign their comissions, that's why it is so difficult to track them down.

That's not just a local or Spanish problem but a general one. Julia Meer noted that "it can be presumed that women have been less encouraged to regard their lives and work as worthy of historical attention" (Gerda-Meer, 2012); because of this, some of them didn't signed their works, or signed with male names or only used monograms.

Pilar Vélez, the director of the Barcelona Design Museum recently corroborated this. In 2014, she and Anna Calvera curated the museum's first permanent exhibition dedicated to graphic design, *El disseny gràfic: d'ofici a professió (1940-1980)*.[6] The exhibition displayed more than 500 pieces from the pioneers of graphic design in Spain. Of all the selected works, 43 corresponded to male designers versus three female designers: M. Rosa Seix (Barcelona, 1927), Toni Miserachs (Barcelona, 1942) and Pilar Villuendas (Madrid, 1945). This is obviously a great disproportion. Vélez insisted that it had been very difficult to find out names and consequently works too. Keep in mind that Anna Calvera (Barcelona, 1954-2018), historian, teacher and design theorist, fought particularly

6   *Graphic Design: From Trade to Profession (1940-1980).*

against female discrimination in the graphic design sector. Therefore, a sample of only three female designers proves the challenge in locating, documenting and making them visible.

Another example, ¿Diseñas o trabajas? *La nueva comunicación visual. 1980-2003*[7] replaced the previous exhibition in June 2018. Curated by Raquel Pelta – professor and design historian –, the exhibition showed a total of 600 pieces from the museum's archive, produced between the 1980s and 2003. In this case, the works represented a total of 200 designers (120 men, about 40 women, being the rest of the pieces from design studios). In fact, the number of works corresponds to more than 40 women due to the design studios; but some women designers were upset about not being selected. Keep in mind that Raquel Pelta, as well as Anna Calvera and Isabel Campi, is one of the researchers who has always claimed the role of female graphic designers and she has specialised in documenting and analyzing the women's movement in Spain too. Therefore, it is evident that is not an easy task ending this discriminatory attitude. She is one of the most interested in ending this situation and has worked towards closing this visibility gap for years. However, in this case, the selection was determined by the material available from the museum's archive. Therefore, it does not seem to be just a problem of attitude, but also has to do with museum acquisitions.

Maybe this discrimination is also a result of the historiographical methods used to document the work of graphic

7   *Do you Work or Design? New Visual Communication. (1980-2003).*

designers so far, or maybe not. Cheryl Buckley expressed herself in that sense. She noted that women's involvement had been constantly ignored due to the application of biased historiographic methods against them. Methods that have selected, classified and prioritized a certain kind of design, designers, styles and so on, but they have excluded women from history (Buckley, 1986). But, the truth is that this discrimination still exists today and, therefore, it's an obligation of design historians and educators to fight against it.

4. From a Female Designer's Perspective

As has already been mentioned, Teresa Martínez and M. Àngels Fortea, design history professors and researchers at Design and Social Transformation Research Group (GREDITS) of BAU, Design College of Barcelona, launched the project *Amb mirada de dissenyadora gráfica* in 2019. The main objective of the project was to fight for the the visibility of female graphic designers and it was decided to focus research on the first generation of professional ones in Catalonia.

The first step was to search for female designers from Catalonia or who had worked mainly there and list those who were part of the first promotions of the design schools in Barcelona. The historiographic method based on the review of literature and published sources was applied, with little success. Due to this limitation and the scarcity of works in the archive of the Design Museum, additional sources were sought. The collaboration of some of the women designers themselves was needed. Xeixa Rosa and Mont Marsà, who were also friends of Anna Calvera, stablished a chain of contacts with oth-

067

er colleagues who quickly contributed names, managing to gather a list of forty names. From this moment on, the project became a collaborative work of women, researchers and graphic designers.

The next action carried out was the organization of an itinerant exhibition, named *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* (Female Graphic Designers). This show was organized in collaboration with University of Vic's Gender Studies Research Group: translation, literature, history and communication (GETLIHC). One of the objectives of this group is to recover and make the most relevant Catalan women visible through exhibitions, and as a condition only twelve women could be selected. So, it was necessary to establish a selection criterion for the forty listed and it was decided that the selected women must had been born between the 1940s and 1950s. They accessed the professional world at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, when the Macintosh had not yet appeared; consequently, the way of working was different from that of the 80s with the digital tools.

Finally, were selected (Fig. 1): Toni Miserachs (Barcelona, 1942), Loni Geest (Hamburg, 1940) and Tone Høverstad (Oslo, 1944 - Barcelona, 1999), Pilar Villuendas (Madrid, 1945), Mercedes Azúa (Barcelona, 1947), Tere Moral (Barcelona, 1948), Carme Vives (Barcelona, 1951 - 2020), Tere Martínez (Barcelona, 1953 - 2019), Ana Zelich (Barcelona, 1955), Mont Marsà (Balaguer, 1956), Xeixa Rosa (Barcelona, 1956), Ana de Tord (Barcelona, 1958 - 2013) and Pati Núñez (Figueres, 1959). As you can see, this action really highlights the work of fourteen women:

Figure 1. Col·lectiu En Boles, Female Graphic Designers Exhibition Poster. From top to bottom and from left to right: Miserachs, Geest & Høverstad, Villuendas, Azúa, Moral, Vives, Martínez, Zelich, Marsà, Rosa, de Tord and Núñez. BAU, Centre Universitari de Disseny de Barcelona, 2019. Acknowledgements: Col·lectiu En Boles.

Loni Geest and Tone Høverstad always worked together; and it also includes Anna Calvera, as a deserved tribute and recognition to her career. The exhibition opened in Vic (Barcelona) on June the 14th 2019.

5. *Dissenyadores Gràfiques*, Who Are These Women?

In 1996 the *Experimenta* magazine published a special issue about the 25 years of Spanish graphic design (1970-1995). Begoña Simón, a graphic designer and professor at the University of Barcelona, wrote an article named *Diseñadoras: el prestigio silencioso*,[8] where she recognized the work developed by the first generation of professional female graphic designers in Catalonia and she insisted on recognizing the contribution of this group in the consolidation of Spanish graphic design (Simón, 1996). She argued that the distinctive feature of female graphic designers it was probably determined by factors such as type of education, business structure, or professional dynamics (Simón, 1996, p. 59).

Two years before, in 1994, Martha Scotford had proposed a typology of women's involvement in order to discover and understand their contributions. In her opinion, the "design experience" of female is different from that of the male one and it should be necessary to compare them in the same period, as well as of understand the private and public roles available to women at each particular time (Scotford, 1994).

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8   *Female Designers: a Silent Standing.*

Figure 2. Toni Miserachs. A selection of some of her projects, done from 1965 to 2000. 2019. Acknowledgements: Toni Miserachs.

In a similar way, for the *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* exhibition it was decided to emphasize the identity of this group to avoid the use of biographical narrative. Because of this, it was stablished the following identifying characteristics as a selection criterion: academic training; design teaching; beginnings in the profession; entrepreneurial character; activism; connection to the design associations and, finally, working for democratic institutions and also for culture (Fig. 2).

5.1. Academic Training

As has been mentioned, all the selected women studied at the Barcelona design schools; the above referred Elisava and EINA, and Escola Massana[9] too. Some of them also graduated from the university and, Pilar Villuendas and Teresa Martínez, became PhD in Design from the University of Barcelona. If it compares with their male colleagues in the same time and at the same context, note that women designers have had more formal education than men.

Talking with Toni Miserachs, Carme Vives, Mont Marsà, Ana Zelich and Pilar Villuendas, at a meeting held in January 2020, they explained that having an academic training, at that moment, gave them more career opportunities; specially in the Spanish context. This statement confirms Martha's Scotford opinion that "educational institutions provide a valuable route for women's success" (Scotford, 1994).

9   Escola Massana.
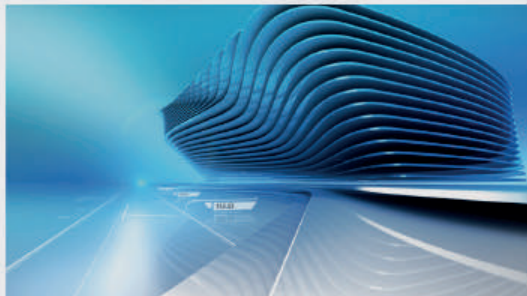
Figure 3. Ana Zelich, TVE News. Selected work for *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton, Zeligstudio, 2012. Acknowledgements: Ana Zelich.

For example, Toni Miserachs studied at Elisava from 1962 to 1965. She was part of the first promotion of designers who studied at this school and the second who graduated from it. She has had a long professional career and her work has been constantly present in the cultural and urban landscape of Barcelona. Or Ana Zelich, who graduated from Elisava in the late 1970s and also graduated in Art History from the University of Barcelona (UB) in the early 1980s. After that, Zelich got a Fulbright grant to study a Master's Degree in Audiovisual Design and Communication at the Pratt Institute in New York. Today she is one of the pioneers of television branding in Spain (Fig. 3).

5.2. Teaching Design

The selected group have combined teaching with professional practice for a long time, and most of them taught at EINA. Toni Miserachs has had a special relationship with this school. It began in 1968, when she joined as a professor. She also managed the Graphic Design Department; later, she was the head of studies and, finally, the director of the center, from September 1996 to November 1998. And Carme Vives taught at EINA for 19 years, since 1986, and she directed the Graphic Design Department for 3 years too. EINA, since its foundation, has maintained great prestige as one of the best design school of Barcelona. So, this represents that both designers have taught to a good part of the best graphic designers, male and female, in Catalonia (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Carme Vives. Exhibition catalog All Mighty Pencil. Lluís Lleó, Centre d'Art Tecla Sala, 2017. Selected work for *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton, Carme Vives studio, 2017. Acknowledgements: Carme Vives.

## 5.3. Starting in the Profession and Entrepreneurial Character

They have all been female entrepreneurs. Note that the most usual practice in young generations of female graphic designers is done in design studios today, but it wasn't in the past. This selected group decided to be independent designers and owners; so, they founded their own design studio instead of working for someone else.

At the beginning of their careers, some of them were partners or collaborators with significant male graphic designers; but, they preferred do it alone years later. Mercedes Azúa, for example, worked in Enric Satué's studio after graduating; and she always says that she learned the profession with him. She founded Azuanco on her own, in 1999, where she is still working so far. In the case of Carme Vives, she associated with the Argentine male graphic designer America Sanchez, in 1983. Vives and Sanchez together designed the logo for the Barcelona 92 Olympic candidacy. Three years later, Vives opened her own studio where she has been working on graphic communication until April 2020, when she unfortunately passed away victim of Coronavirus (Fig. 5).

Pilar Villuendas founded her studio Villuendas+Gómez in 1980, joined by her husband Josep Ramon Gómez as partner. She always talks about the role of working women with family, and she also emphasizes the difficulty for her of keeping domestic and professional lives separate. Nevertheless, Pilar has become one of the most sucessful female designers in Spain, but she recognizes that it has not been easy with two babies. Her daughter Alicia is currently a partner too (Fig. 6).
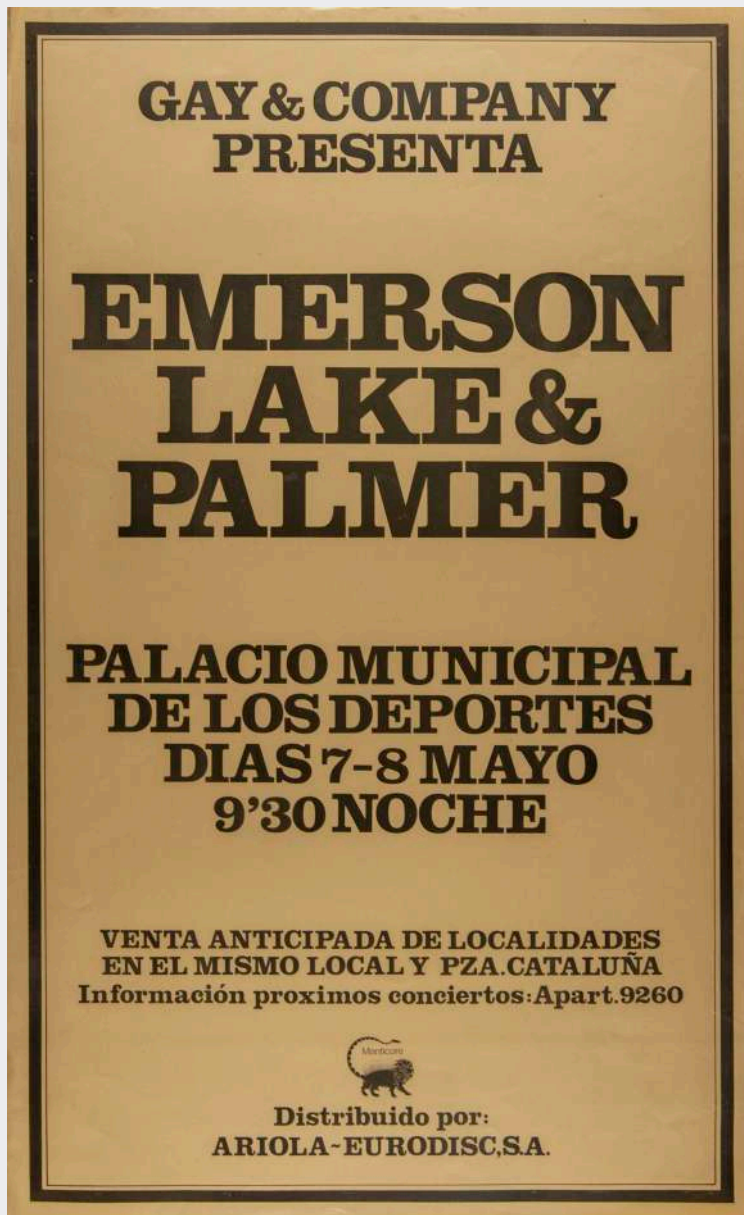
Figure 5. Tere Martínez, Emerson Lake & Palmer Concert poster. Gay & Co., 1978. Selected work for *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton. Acknowledgements: Tere Martínez.
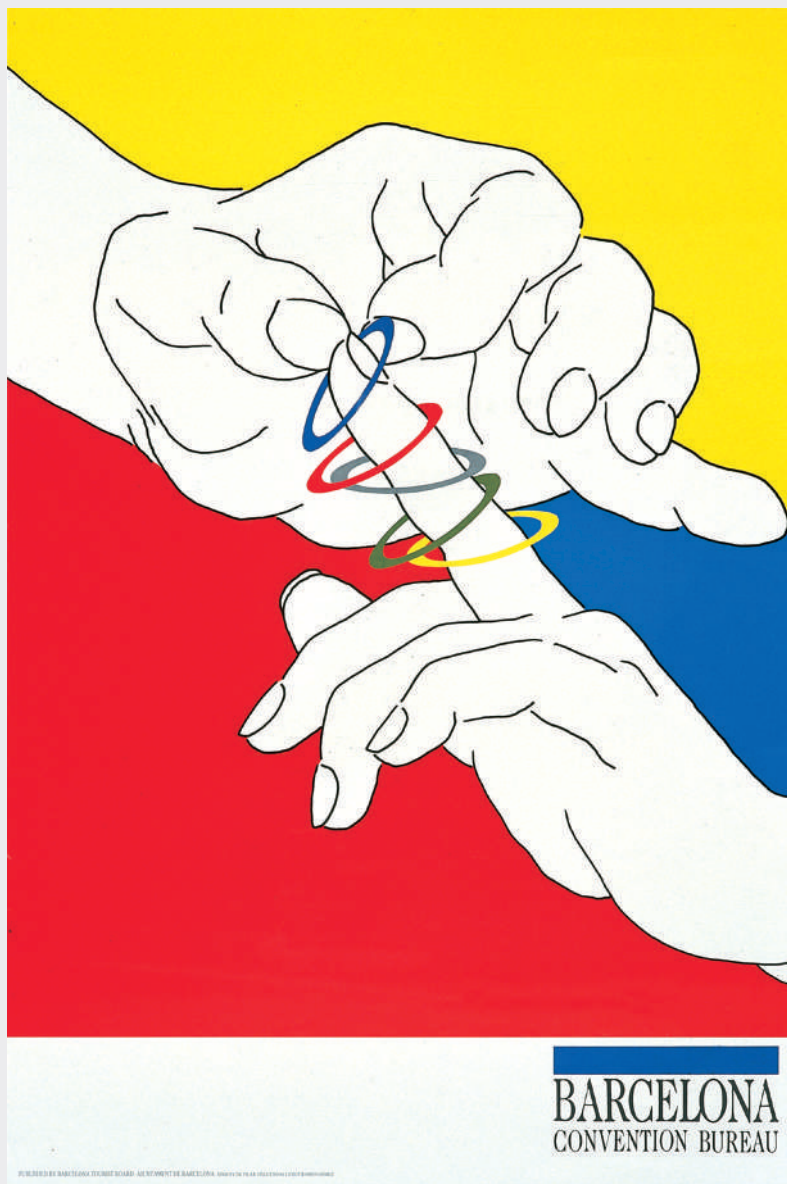
Figure 6. Pilar Villuendas, Barcelona Convention Bureau poster, 1990. Selected work for *Dissen-yadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton, Villuendas+Gómez, 1990. Acknowledgements: Pilar Villuendas.

5.4. Women Activists

As mentioned above, these female graphic designers accessed the professional world at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s; therefore, it happened in the late Francoism and during the transition to the democracy. For this reason, some of them participated in the feminist struggle and in the organization of the leftist parties and movements. Toni Miserachs, Mont Marsà, Xeixa Rosa and Pilar Villuendas were the most activists.

Remember that the *Asociación Española de Mujeres Juristas*, founded in 1971, promoted the law in favor of the emancipation of women, what demonstrates de important role of the feminism movement played in Spain in 1970s.

Toni Miserachs was involved with the Feminist Party of Spain and she designed its magazine, *Vindicación feminista*, a monthly publication founded in 1976. She was in charge of the layout until its closure in 1979 (Fig. 7, 8).

Xeixa Rosa and Mont Marsà have worked on different projects related to the visibility of women. They have designed, produced and distributed the agenda of pioneering and remarkable women together. As Mont Marsà argued, they have spent many years designing their own projects with social and personal involvement.

Finally, Pilar Villuendas has always stood out for her commitment to social causes. Part of his work can be described as activist design. The one produced between 1975 and 1988 is an activism against Francoism, at the service of neighborhood associations, trade union organizations and leftist movements. From 1978 to 1991 she produced public interest designs.

Figure 7. Xeixa Rosa, 16 Barcelona International Women's Film Festival, 2008. Selected work for *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton. Drac Màgic, 2008. Acknowledgements: Xeixa Rosa.

Figure 8. Mont Marsà, Programadors de Músiques Rares Poster, CCCB, 1998. Selected work for *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton. Acknowledgements: Mont Marsà.

5.5. Connected to the Design Associations

Some of them have actively involved to the Spanish design associations. Toni Miserachs, Pilar Villuendas and Pati Núñez did it especially. They were able to manage private and public roles (family, work and associative world) in order to consolidate the profession. But, they admit that they have never been interested in playing a public role to become famous like some male colleagues do (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. Pati Núñez, Fuensanta, packaging design for natural mineral water from Asturias, 2008. Selected work for *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton, Pati Núñez Associats. Acknowledgements: Pati Núñez.

Figure 10. Tere Moral, Guia Visual Art Romànic. MNAC, 2004. Selected work for *Dissenyadores Gràfiques* Exhibiton, MNAC, 2004. Acknowledgements: Tere Moral.

5.6. Working for Democratic Institutions and Also for Culture

Most of them have worked for the main Catalan democratic institutions. Note that the graphic communication of the new Catalan government and institutions was to be done when Franco's regime ended. They have also worked for culture. A large part of the projects they have carried out have been for the main cultural institutions in Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia (Fig. 10).

6. Conclusions

As you can see, these female graphic designers have enjoyed long professional careers, in fact some of them are still active. They agree that they have always had work and affirm that they did not receive fewer commissions because they are women. They have been awarded prestigious prizes and awards. Pati Núñez, for example, was the first woman to get the National Design Award given by the Spanish Government in 2008. Until now, only another woman, Marisa Gallén, won it in 2019. Pilar Villuendas has also received a lot of awards; and Ana Zelich has been awarded the Laus of Honor 2019.
All this shows the great professionalism of this group, despite the little attention have paid to them. The quality of their work is not different from that of their male colleagues. Not forgetting that some of them have been mothers and have had to manage their profession with home care too.

It is necessary to claim the role of these women, all of them great design professionals, who have always been concerned with doing their job as well as possible. They encourage new

generations of designers to dedicate themselves with passion and love. Despite all the circumstances, they have always been there; but the history of design has been written by men so far. They have applied a patriarchal methodology that has silenced their prestige. Because of this, Begoña Simón used the expression "female designers: a silent standing" in a very accurate way.

One more final comment. As you can see, only two of the selected designers had passed away at the start of this project: Tone Høverstad in 1999 and Ana de Tord in 2013. The project began when Anna Calvera died in 2018, as a tribute to her and her fight for the visibility of the female graphic designers. But, two more women have died since the project began: Tere Martínez (November 2019) and Carme Vives (April 2020). Therefore, it is very important that design historians and museum managers realize the need to visibility and preserving the work of these great designers.

From a Female Designer's Perspective continues despite the death of Teresa Martínez, thanks to the enthusiasm of the group of the female designers and the good acceptance of design schools in Catalonia.

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"I am Cobalt"
Thérèse Moll

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Keywords
Thérèse Moll, Swiss Graphic Design, MIT, Typography, Jacqueline S. Casey.

Abstract
Thérèse Moll (1934 - 1961), a little known but by no means secondary figure, is part of the history of visual communication design in which she left a brief but lasting trace. Moll is enrolled at the School of Arts and Crafts in Basel where she meets important designers and teachers including Armin Hoffman, Emil Ruder, Karl Gerstner and Antonio Boggeri. Still very young, she receives an invitation to be a visiting designer at MIT in Boston. At the beginning of 1959, Thérèse Moll arrives in the U.S.A. and during her four-month stay she works with Jacqueline S. Casey and Ralph Coburn at MIT's Office of Publications, radically modifying the MIT communication, while at the same time introducing to her American colleagues the modernity and experimentation of the Swiss school of which she too is a spokesperson. The grid system, the typography, and the asymmetrical composition are only some of the elements of the efficient machine for communicating represented by the Swiss school that, like Le Corbusier's house was a machine for living, is a powerful and effective device that responds to a specific need and that improves our quality of life.

1. Introduction

History should be read through its *continuum* and through its *gaps*, boldly stated British writer Virginia Woolf lecturing students on "Women and Fiction" at Newnham Arts Society and Girton Society at the University of Cambridge in October 1928.[1]

Virginia Woolf was well aware that at the time the history of literature had (and maybe still has today) many gaps the result of more or less conscious neglect or oversight, and due not only to a gender-based discrimination against women (with history being mostly written by men), but also to the few known women writers in England in the early twentieth century. Drawing inspiration from Woolf's remarks and using them as a sort of magnifying glass to go deeper inside a different field of study, we notice that the history of visual communication design is also full of gaps, empty spaces waiting to be filled by what Giovanni Anceschi[2] calls "microhistories". One of such gaps can certainly be filled by Thérèse Moll. Despite a brief but very intense life, her work allowed her to

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1   "On October 20, the Woolfs drove to Cambridge, where they were guests of Pernel Strachey, director of Newnham College. That evening Virginia gave a lecture at the Arts Society, and the following day she had lunch with George Rylands at King's College. The following week she returned to Cambridge, this time by train, with Vita [Sackville-West], and spoke at the Girton Society (October 26). These two lectures, entitled "Women and Fiction", were expanded and published in 1929 under the title of *A Room of One's Own*. (Bell, 1981)

2   In his talk at "Design: storia e storiografia", the first international conference of Historical Studies on Design held in Milan in 1991, Anceschi denounces a lack of scientific publications on design and studies on the history of Italian graphic design. Anceschi defines "microhistories" as the many necessary reconstructions in visual communication design that may concern the work of an author, the history of a particular geographical area, or the reconstruction of a certain period of history. Sometimes the gaps caused by various reasons, at times merely contingent, if identified and filled can help reconstruct long periods of history that, like a connective tissue, join the history of men and women of different personal and professional experiences, alongside stories of schools, movements, regions or entire geographical territories, and cultural areas. (Pasca & Trabucco, 1995)

travel through time and space, creating a network of relations that from her home country Switzerland crossed borders and seas reaching the United States of America. A network of relations that brings to mind the "small-world model",[3] generating not just a series of intersecting lines, but an entire surface, a map tracing her whereabouts, the names of those she encountered, her projects, the places she visited, where she lived and worked, all the years gone by.

A map to be read as a polycentric radial system, showing not only the importance of Moll's work, but also her influence on American graphic design, enriched by the modernity and experimentation she brought from the Swiss school. So, on one hand, the importance of a figure impossible to fully appreciate relying only on her essential biography and short life span (she died at 27 years old), on the other, the possibility of reconstructing her history and work thanks to the people she crossed paths with, who can help shine a light on her place in the international scene of visual communication design and finally introduce her into the narrative and synoptic framework of the history of design. These people are her friends, colleagues, fellow designers, and teachers: a small and fascinating world of knowledgeable, brave, modern, and unconventional women and men.

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3   The small-world model was born out of the Network Theory. Its birth is associated to *Collective dynamics of smallworld networks* by mathematicians Duncan Watts and Steve Strogatza published in *Nature* in 1998. According to the study atomic elements of any kind (people, molecules, electronic processors, etc.) are more or less closely interconnected, regardless of the distance that separates them (www.nature.com/articles/30918).
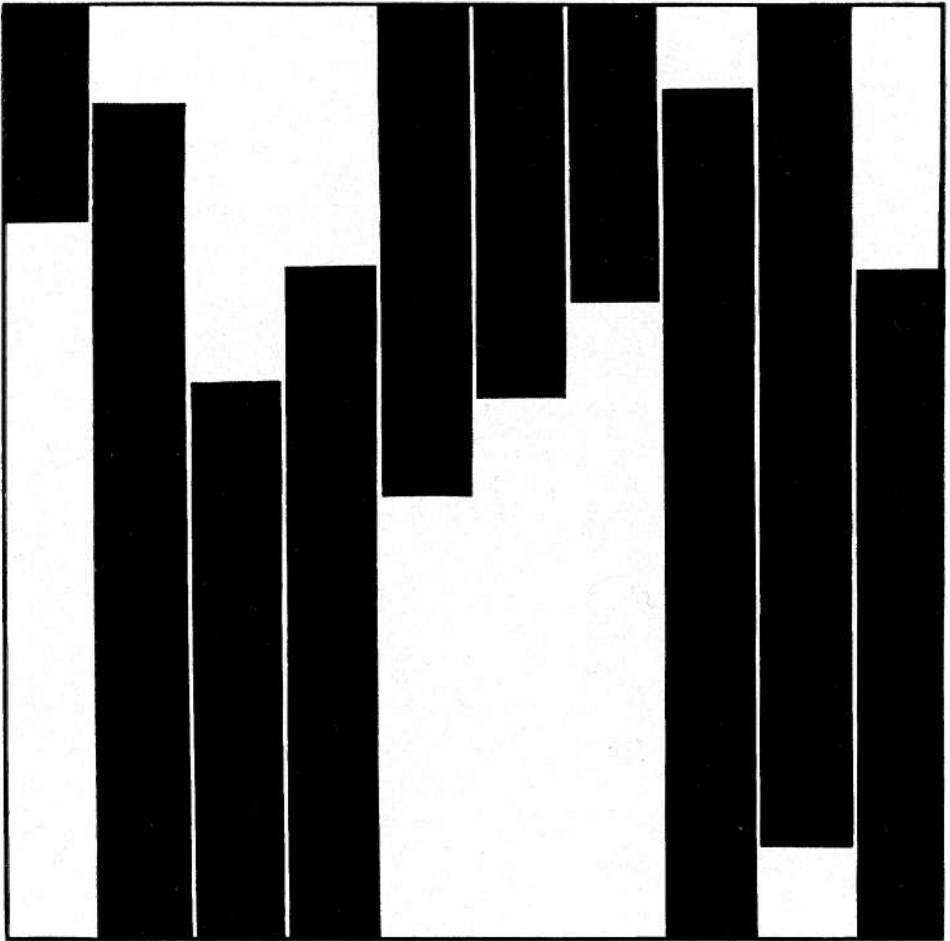
Figure 1. Thérèse Moll, Coursework: production of black and white figures of equal quality, blanking out portions of grid, 1950. Courtesy of Armin and Dorothea Hofmann.

2. Thérèse Moll and Dorothea Hofmann

Dorothea Hofmann (1929), née Schmid, is a fellow student and friend: she and Moll study together and both become communication designers, sharing many important moments of their lives. In 1949, they are enrolled in the Vorkurs (foundation course) at the Basler Allgemeine Gewerbeschule (School

of Arts and Crafts in Basel) today known as the Schule für Gestaltung Basel (Basel School of Design). The following year, they take the difficult entrance examination for the Fachklasse für Grafik (professional programme for graphic design). Only a few new students are accepted based on the quality of their work and their Vorkurs portfolio. In 1950, only seven students are accepted (three men and four women), including Moll and Hofmann. The four-year programme helps Dorothea and Thérèse develop their identities as designers and women. Faculty at Fachklasse für Grafik, directed by Berchtold von Grunigen, numbers twenty teachers, most of them young (including Armin Hofmann, Donald Brun, Emil Ruder, Theo Eble, Gustav Stettler, Walter Bodmer and Hans Weidmann) and little less than thirty students in total, allowing for an excellent student-teacher ratio (almost 1:1) and in a constant exchange between students who work together in one room. The school offers state-of-the-art training combining study, methodological approach, experimentation, and graphic design, at times working on commissioned projects, following what happened in Bauhaus. Through a combination of travels, lectures and publications, this pedagogical teaching method is widely innovative and receives international recognition (Resnick, 2019, p. 52).

Many years later, in her 2016 book *Die Geburt eines Stils. Der Ein uss des Basler Ausbildungsmodells auf die Schweizer Grafik*[4] (*The Birth of a Style. The Influence of the Basel Educa-*

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4   The graphic design of the volume is by Dorothea and Armin Hofmann's son Matthias, also a graphic designer.

tion Model on Swiss Graphic Design) (Hofmann, 2016) on the origin and dissemination of Swiss graphic design, Dorothea Hofmann includes some work from Moll's portfolio that she was given by Moll's mother after her daughter's death.

In the book Hofmann claims that the Swiss teaching method influenced Bauhaus pedagogy to a greater extent than has ever been suggested. The author supports this thesis on historical grounds (Vorkurs are established in Zurich in 1887 and in Basel in 1908, and the first graphic design course is launched in 1915, forty years before the foundation of the famous German design school) and by profiling many prominent figures of Bauhaus, including Johannes Itten who played a major role in establishing the first Bauhaus Vorkurs, of Swiss origins. This indeed provides sufficient elements to open up a new, interesting area of research, namely design teaching in the past and present, never fully uncovered and by no means outdated.

3. Thérèse Moll and Karl Gerstner

Karl Gerstner (1930-2017) meets Thérèse Moll in 1950 when, having won a one-year scholarship, he attends evening classes and the graphic design course held by Armin Hofmann at the Fachklasse für Grafik. Their friendship soon turns into a personal relationship and later transitions into a professional collaboration. Soon after receiving her Swiss Federal Diploma in March 1954, Moll accepts an assistant's placement in Antonio Boggeri's Milan studio, where she spends a few months, probably for at least 9 months, leaving behind only limited traces of her work.

093

Figure 2. Thérèse Moll, Broxi, package design for detergent packaging for BP Petroleum, Atelier Karl Gerstner, 1955-57. Courtesy of Armin and Dorothea Hofmann.

Moll returns to Basel in early 1955 and, from 1955 to 1957, she joins the atelier that Gerstner had set up in 1949, working on a variety of projects for the pharmaceutical company, J.R. Geigy AG. Basel is an epicentre for the chemical and pharmaceutical industry, which explains the type of work produced in those years.

Thérèse Moll leaves Gerstner's atelier at the end of 1957 to join the in-house design office at Geigy (later Ciba-Geigy AG and finally Novartis International). She has great design skills, she is extremely meticulous in her work, and controls the whole graphic composition down to every single detail. At Ciba-Geigy, Karl Gerstner meets Markus Kutter and the two launch the Gerstner + Kutter advertising agency, in early 1959, later named GGK (Gerstner-Gredinger-Kutter) after Paul Gredinger's arrival in 1963. GGK soon becomes one of the most successful agencies in the 1970s, with offices in Europe and the U.S., expressing a rigour and style in design that "make Swiss advertisements look like they have been generated by the work of a designer rather than of an art director" (Hollis, 2005, p. 131).

Gerstner arrives in the U.S. in 1958 for Swiss Graphic Designers exhibition curated by the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, and opened in 1957, where a review of contemporary Swiss graphic design is displayed, including two of his works alongside those of Armin Hofmann, Josef Müller-Brockmann, and Emil Ruder. The exhibition is documented by a catalogue and, more importantly, is followed by a series of lectures by Swiss designers (including Gerstner) invited to talk about their work.
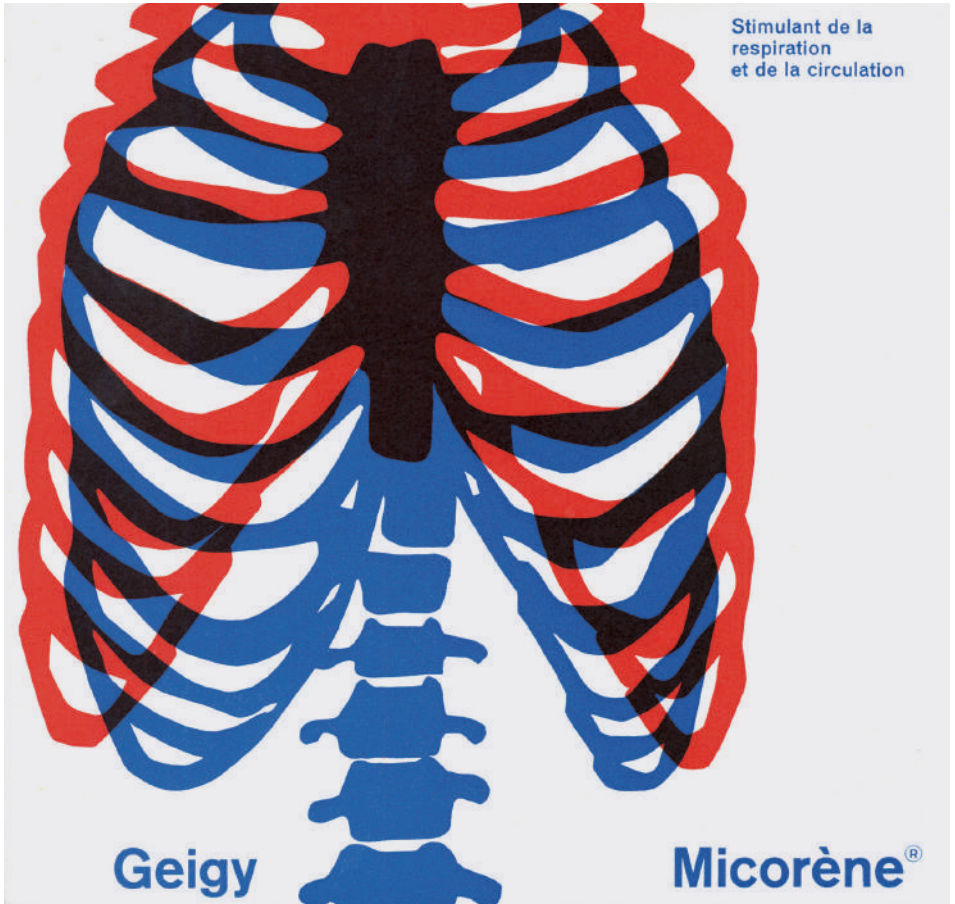
Figure 3. Thérèse Moll, Front Cover: prospectus for Micorène, stimulant de la respiration et la circulation, Geigy propaganda department, 1958. Courtesy of Armin and Dorothea Hofmann.
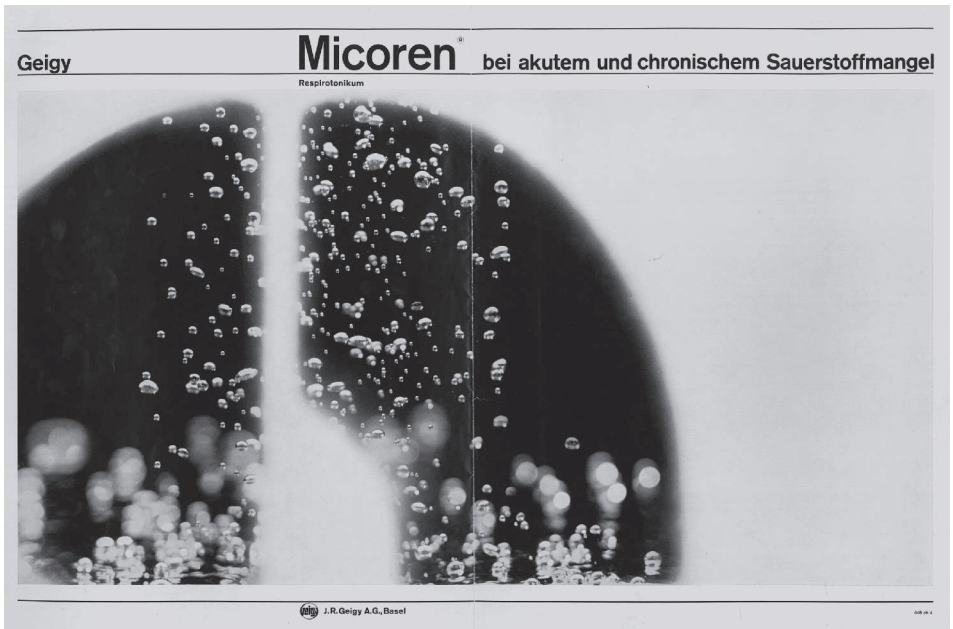
Figure 4. Thérèse Moll, Advertisement for Micorène against acute deficiency of oxygen, Geigy propaganda department, 1958. Courtesy of Armin and Dorothea Hofmann.

These lectures disseminate the dictates of Swiss graphics and typography and, consequently, fertilise the vast territory of American graphic design.

Gerstner is also invited to visit the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston and, when asked to recommend a young Swiss to invite at MIT as visiting designer,[5] he must have recommended Thérèse Moll who arrives in America the following year (Wiesenberger & Resnick, 2018).

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5   John Mattill invited Gerstner to be a visiting designer, and when he declined, he would have suggested Moll (Professor Resnick).

Their names appear again side by side in "The Package"[6] exhibition, curated by MoMA in New York in 1959. The catalogue includes "Broxi",[7] the 1955 packaging products for the Zurich-based BP (Benzin & Petroleum) oil company.

In the following years Gerstner and Moll will go separate ways.

4. Thérèse Moll and Armin Hofmann

Armin Hofmann (1920) is Moll's teacher at the Fachklasse für Grafik where, at 27, he has joined faculty in 1947 thanks to Emil Ruder (1914-1970) who, having heard a new teacher was required at the school, suggests Hofmann apply for the position. Hofmann will continue teaching for over 40 years, including periods abroad (mainly the U.S.) and, as a prominent representative of the Swiss school, will pursue an intense professional career as a graphic designer. Soon Gerstner and Moll, and Dorothea and Armin do socialize as couples. Also, he and Dorothea fall in love and marry in 1953.

Armin Hofmann describes his long teaching experience in a book published in 1965[8] (Hofmann, 1965). Much more than a mere textbook, this volume illustrates the principles of Hofmann's rationalist approach to teaching, and a correct methodological approach to graphic design.

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6   The catalogue documents the exhibition at New York's MoMA from 9 September to 1 November 1959 (Constantine & Drexler, 1959).

7   "Broxi" package was also featured in *Graphis Magazine* in 1957, which is probably where the MOMA curator's first saw it (Professor Resnick).

8   This bestseller in its genre has been reprinted worldwide many times since 1965. Present-day editions include translations in English, French and German.

The images in the book are reproductions of exercises and teaching experiments carried out at Fachklasse für Grafik, including some of Thérèse Moll's early student work featuring graphic compositions of rectangular elements within a grid contained inside a square. The line, the point and the plane set the pace for the various topics reviewed, across pages and images, in a sequence that breaks down and illustrates nature and the fundamental elements of form right down to the atoms and molecules. Point, line and plane appear in Kandinsky's book (Kandinsky, 1968) on his teaching experience at Bauhaus in 1922 (Kandinsky, 1926) in which he summarises his theoretical formulation and outcomes of his research, in a text that is innovative for art theory and a milestone for graphics.

At this point, as for many of the people that are part of Moll's story, the scene moves from Switzerland to the United States of America.

5. MIT's Office of Publications
John Mattill (1921-2019) joins MIT's news service in 1948 after earning an MA in technical writing from the University of Iowa. In 1952 he establishes MIT's Office of Publications (an institution similar to today's University Press) whose task is to manage all MIT's editorial projects. However, while great care is placed on editorial content, visual presentation is hardly taken into consideration.
Although not a designer, Mattill realises the importance of combining these two aspects and when the time comes to pick the person with the right skills he seeks the advice of György

Kepes[9] and on his suggestion hires Muriel Cooper, a young designer who graduated at Massachusetts College of Art in 1951. (Wiesenberger & Resnick, 2018) Cooper will be joined later by Jacqueline S. Casey, Ralph Coburn, and Dietmar Winkler. The four of them are responsible for an innovative, experimental approach that provides graphic design with full recognition and importance for MIT's communication. Mattill understands the importance of inviting visiting designers from Europe, the place where design has developed its foundations and that defined new rules and methods, new ideas and new forms in the Swiss school.[10] Mattill cannot imagine the full extent of this decision, based on practical reasons, that involves the presence of external figures joining the in-house staff for short periods (from January to May) to help them with the office's huge amount of work.
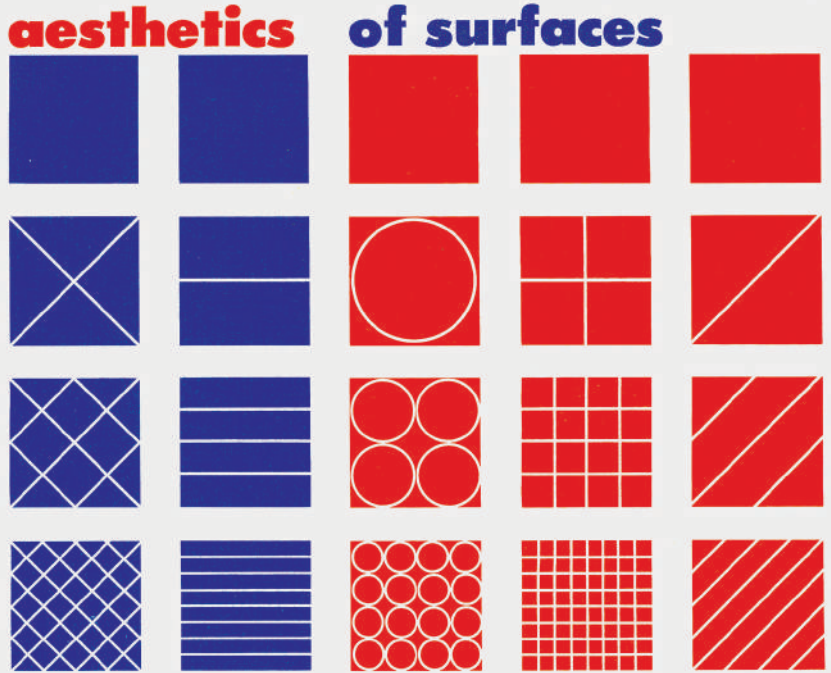
5.1. Thérèse Moll at MIT's Office of Publications

Thérèse Moll arrives at MIT in early 1959: her four months in America are instrumental in exporting the principles of the Swiss school that so deeply have influenced her. The effect is overwhelming. The Office of Publications' approach to design changes completely, embracing a new graphic space conception and composition, regulated by the tool of the grid in which solids and voids enjoy equal dignity and power.

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9   György Kepes (1906-2001) designer, painter, art teacher and theoretician of Hungarian origin. Transplanted to America, in 1947 he accepts a graphic design teaching post at the MIT School of Architecture and Planning and, in 1967, establishes the Centre for Advanced Visual Studies, an art-science research institute where he will remain until his retirement in 1974.

10   "In all the fields of artistic and advertising expression, our generation is looking for new ideas and new forms. These are not the result of an empirical evolutionary process, but signify detachment from tradition and any evidence [...]" (Lohse, Müller-Brockmann, Neuburg, Vivarelli, 1958).

100

Figure 5. Thérèse Moll, Front Cover: prospectus for MIT Summer Session "Aesthetics of Surfaces", MIT Office of Publications, 1959. Courtesy of Armin and Dorothea Hofmann.

The new approach also affects typography (with the use of the contemporary Helvetica and Univers sans-serif typeface), composition (symmetry is abandoned in favour of asymmetry), and layout (no longer justified, the text now has a more dynamic left alignment).

Muriel Cooper (1925-1994) joins the Office of Publications in 1953, initially focusing on designing brochures for the MIT

summer courses, in which the hardest task is to translate complex contents into an appropriate and clear graphic form.

> The almost square, bi-fold brochures make an effort to communicate the often-arcane technical content of MIT's courses, using photography and photomontage, usually of technical imagery such as magnified cellular structures or weather maps, using bright colours and a sometimes eccentric typography, in which Cooper finds abstract patterns […]. (Wiesenberger & Resnick, 2018, p. 31)

The attention to images on the brochure covers is not matched by the same degree of care in the choice of fonts or text layout that seem to lack the idea of a coordinated, integrated design, in which each element is related to the others in a dynamic, yet organic system.

Thérèse Moll arrives at MIT with her Swiss graphic design background of highly systemic nature and rigorous composition, and sparing use of elements (fonts, shapes, images, colours, etc.) to create a universal language that, over time, effectively becomes a sort of *visual international style*. (Polano, 1998) Moll is the expression of the Basel movement influenced by Armin Hofmann that considers the abstract form the best choice to convey communication, thus requiring the designer to translate contents by searching deeper below the surface. The focus on the abstract form provides the perfect setting for a conceptual encounter between Cooper's work at MIT and Moll's design experience at the Swiss pharmaceutical company. After Moll's residency at MIT, where she worked with

Casey and Coburn, the Office changes its approach to design, embracing the Swiss experience and its characterising features, yet transforming them and testing their potential while bringing to light their constraints and rigour. While this occasionally leads to a somewhat rigidity, the institution's new communication will rely on such principles and, in Jacqueline S. Casey's words, "although much has been modified by time, technology and the work of other designers in the office, the basics that Thérèse brought with her are still operating today" (Resnick, 2019, p. 57).

6. Thérèse Moll and Elizabeth Resnick

Elizabeth Resnick is currently Professor Emerita, Graphic Design at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston. A graphic designer, curator, and author of many books, Professor Resnick never had the opportunity to meet Thérèse Moll, although she discovered Moll's contribution to American graphic design though her research on Jacqueline S. Casey in an essay published in the U.S. (Wiesenberger & Resnick, 2018) and in two articles published in Britain (Resnick, 2008; 2019).

She first discovers Moll by chance: in 1989 Muriel Cooper, as a member of the Massachusetts College of Art Board of Trustees, nominates Jacqueline S. Casey for an honorary degree, which is awarded in January 1990.

Two years later, The MIT Museum mounts a retrospective of Casey's work, and publishes a small catalogue that Resnick acquires and that, in 2006, enables her to recognise and photograph a series of posters that are about to be removed from

the MassArt gallery archives to make room for other materials. Eight of those posters are included in Resnick's feature on Casey published in *Eye* in 2008, in which Moll is also mentioned (Resnick, 2008, p. 52).

At the end of 2015, typographic design historian and author, Paul Shaw proposed a book on Mid-Century Typographers for the MIT Press. Shaw invited Professor Resnick to write a chapter about The MIT Office of Publications where Cooper, Casey and Moll worked. Resnick involves design historian Robert Wiesenberger as a co-author, and the result is a detailed essay exploring the history, people, and projects created within The Office. Details of Thérèse Moll's contribution was made possible by the many letters exchanged by Resnick and Dorothea Hofmann between 2016 and 2018.

When Shaw's project is eventually shelved, Resnick submits the essay to Victor Margolin, founder and member of the editorial board of *Design Issues*. The editorial board votes to accept the essay and publishes it in 2018 (Wiesenberger & Resnick, 2018). In the same year, Resnick also proposed writing an article specifically on the work of Thérèse Moll to John Walters, the editor of *Eye Magazine*. The proposal was accepted, and the article was published in 2019 completing Resnick's extended research and study on Thérèse Moll's life and works: a historically and critically accurate rendition that lays the foundations for additional in-depth research.

This essay originates from Elizabeth Resnick's published work and from her strong philological rigor omitting no

details, either more or less evident. We wish to express our deepest gratitude to her knowledge and generosity as a person and historian, and also to Bruno Monguzzi, the first to bring to light and share the need to study the life and works of Thérèse Moll.

7. Thérèse Moll and Her Small-World

The small world described here is one where Thérèse Moll is the full expression: a knowledgeable, brave, modern and unconventional woman, looking at us from one of rare photos of her taken in Basel by Karl Gerstner circa 1953. In the photograph Moll is in the foreground. Behind her the Rhine riverbank, punctuated with wooden buildings on piles, seems relegated to a secondary position, with all the lines descending and uncontrolled in contrast with her figure, perfectly vertical, where only the movement of her feet seem to indicate an impatience for posing still for a long time. Although the photo is in black and white, its lack of colour does not deprive it from any important information. The woman is only 19 years old, and yet, despite her young age, she appears determined and self-confident.

Thérèse Moll was born in Basel, Switzerland, on 17 November 1934. She committed suicide on 27 September 1961. Everything that happened in between is known through other people's lives.

Few traces are left of her work, which nevertheless allow us to evaluate her design methodology, fully in line with the systemic graphics of the Swiss School that she follows as if celebrating a liturgy, yet without a dogmatic attitude.

This allows her to acquire a personal language, with a strong focus on detail and on the technical aspects of the objects observed in their formal quality, in search of an aesthetic value free from classical canons and moving towards the new mythological forms of modernity that use the codes of machine, technology, and industry.

The drawings and photographs she used, fully mastering the methods and techniques of representation, are the result of distortions, reflections, enlargements or X-ray introspections, showing what would otherwise be invisible to the human eye, moving close into details of the branches of the bronchi, the joints between the bones, the clockworks inside a watch, or showing them in front or cross-section as if they were micro-architectures standing out on the page with their lack of dimensions.

Each and everything she represented is dignified by her gaze, regardless of the nature of the object, estranged and taken out of context, translated into powerful shades of colour dominated by an unresolved contrast between blue and red, transformed into two-dimensional silhouettes, deformed in a game of reflections and transparencies. Typography, a key element of Swiss school, establishes the clarity of contents, with its ordered layout aligned with grids, hierarchies in reading and balance, and becoming a shape that relates to the other forms in the composition. In Thérèse Moll's works, however, although constantly interacting with the images, typography never steals the show and is always one step behind these small enlightened objects. Beauty emerges from order, from

proportion, from the "almost quantifiable" clarity (Baroni & Vitta, 2003, p. 180) even from the necessary emptiness in a space where all shapes and colours mix creating an unstable balance between the various tensions produced.

The grid system, the typography, and the asymmetrical composition are only some of the elements of the efficient *machine for communicating* represented by the Swiss school that, like Le Corbusier's house was a *machine for living*, is a powerful and effective device that responds to a specific need and that improves our quality of life.

"I am cobalt", Thérèse Moll could have said, had she had the time, seeing herself in the characteristic blue that appears time after time in her work, and named after the chemical element. In the periodic table of elements, atomic number 27 (Moll's age when she took her life) is cobalt. Oliver Sacks[11] would have gifted her on the day of her birthday with a fragment of the mineral containing the cobalt, and maybe also a fragment of nickel, number 28 on the periodic table, looking forward to her following birthday.

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11   Oliver Sacks (1933-2015), British doctor, writer and academic, diagnosed with an incurable disease, takes leave from his readers with four essays collected in *Gratitude* (Sacks, 2016; Italian edition). The first essay is entitled "Mercury", and the second one "My Periodic Table". Sacks picked up the hobby of element collecting as a child and continued it throughout his life. He used to match atom numbers with his age and with the age of his friends to whom he gave fragments of materials classified and ordered in the periodic table.

107

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WOMEN
IN ACTION

My Adventures with *Adventures in Menstruating*
A Case Study of Feminist Zinemaking and Period Positivity

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Keywords

Zines, Graphic Design, Menstruation, Case Study, Design Practice.

Abstract

From the pun *Ad-ventures* to the choice of glossy covers over a more DIY feel, Chella Quint's *Adventures in Menstruating* zine pastiches the commercial, skewering menstrual product advertising messages and exposing recurring themes of secrecy, whispering, and "Leakage Horror". Chris Bobel notes in *New Blood: Third Wave Feminism and the Politics of Menstruation* that most menstrual zinesters "eschew the glitz and gloss of corporate mass-produced material, generating instead a homespun and intimate look", but Adventures in Menstruating emulates the corporate: each cover reimagines past publications where periods were usually absent: comic books, pulp novels, fashion magazines, science journals, war propaganda…This memoir-style case study uses autoethnography and humorously shares the rationale behind *Adventures in Menstruating* and how the project expanded from zines and craftivism into transmedia companion pieces, going from Ladyfest festivals to Maker Faires to mainstream galleries, seeding menstrual activism ideas within other artists. Zines provide immediacy and agency, underpinning projects that struggle to gain mainstream acceptance through established publishers or galleries. The author credits her community of helpers and tracks the opportunities the work created, showing how zinesters can use their art as activism, and create routes for an artist on the periphery to succeed within the establishment.

1. Being a "Zine Girl"

This is my account of the history, evolution and impact of my zine series, *Adventures in Menstruating*. The zines are out of print, the next issue is well overdue, and the subsequent campaign has gone online, but this work has been discussed by students (Docherty, 2010), researchers (Bobel, 2010, 2018; Chidgey, 2018; Fahs, 2013, 2015; Newton, 2016; Nijsten, 2017; Røstvik, 2019a, 2019b) and popular authors (Barnett, 2019; Chakrabarti, 2017; Hill, 2019) and this is my contribution. This article will most likely be read digitally, but please imagine that it is hot off the photocopier, swiftly stapled, crisply folded, and lovingly shared with you. I'm going to focus on how I came to write *Adventures in Menstruating* and what happened next, but you should probably know from the start that I think in zines and always have: every project that becomes something else – an installation, a comedy show, a bit of activism – begins life as a zine. My brain works in narratives. I loved reading and rereading children's literature, and I was definitely the art and design-obsessed kid in the elementary school classroom, spending ten minutes working on a cover page and running out of time to finish any writing assignment in class. When I started combining the two, even when it wasn't required, suddenly it all came together. I needed to understand how my brain was composing, folding and unfolding ideas through the medium of working on page layouts. I quickly transferred my skills to zine making and even shared a print catalogue of crafts I made, sending it to pen pals and swapping zines I'd seen reviewed in *Sassy Magazine* (Jesella & Meltzer, 2007). I was in the right place at the right time to be (at first unknowingly) participating in *Riot Grrrl*

culture with my friends and the DIY aesthetic of my work was part of that zeitgeist (Ablaze!, 2013). When I was a dramatic writing and media student at NYU I was regularly making collage-style posters for shows at *Kinkos* photocopy shop, trying to push an ordinary Xerox machine to its limits.

When I came to Yorkshire, UK to study theatre, dial-up internet connected me to message boards and early blogs, and the friends who would have written zines tended to write for these or create the online equivalent of a *perzine* or "personal zine" on platforms like *Livejournal*. I enjoyed reading them, and even wrote for and helped moderate a queer youth blogging site for a while, but I missed printed zines.

Soon after, I qualified as a Drama, Media, and English teacher and was suddenly able to express my zine-love as lesson plan and worksheet designing. My study guide on Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was basically a zine. The internet was good for sharing ideas, and school was a great creative outlet, but the relief I felt when I found UK friends who still made print zines a year or two later was as tangible as the little booklets themselves.

Over the next couple of years, I got the hang of teaching and living in Sheffield, and qualified for a permanent visa. This gave me time and space to feel more settled and I was able to work on my own creative projects again, and I started writing zines and performing DIY feminist sketch comedy and spoken word. Since my ideas start as zines, they often morph into live performances and installations after I do zine read-

ings where I get feedback on the work, refining it and performing live errata. I found the cycle (sorry) of performing readings and putting together new issues formed a dialogue about menstrual taboos and began to change the discourse with those who participated. Audiences provided creative urgency and their responses really spurred on my designs.

2. The Adventure Begins

In May 2005 I entered the *24 Hour Zine Thing* (Julie, 2005) – an annual challenge to write a twenty-four page zine in a day. I love narrow parameters when starting a new project. I took inspiration from a dream I had that morning about charting my menstrual cycle – I woke up wondering if I'd be getting my period that day and realised I wanted more encouragement to chart my cycle – so I decided my 24 hour zine was a ten year cycle chart, and got to work.

I asked for people to write to me with their menstrual musings, but the internet was slower then, no one I knew had smartphones, and the world of "instant reply" didn't exist. I interviewed my mom and sister over the phone because they were in an earlier time zone and I thought that would help me get the jump on the day. My mom contributed to my zine with the enlightening information that I was an accident, because her cycle charting was not accurate enough. So with that revelation I knew it would have to be a humour zine, and, with her blessing, included this big reveal in the interview. I interviewed a couple of friends about reusable menstrual products, drew some illustrations, laid out the chart, and chose images to go behind the calendar pages from the invaluable resource I had discovered

an old advert from the *Ad*Access Archive* at Duke University (She Was Baffled! How about You? 1950). As I read more of the adverts, there was so much more I wanted to say. I saw links between messages in these ads and contemporary attitudes to menstruation, including a lot of shame and inferiority aimed at menstruators. I felt like there was a whole other zine forming in my head, but the 24 hours were nearly up, so I finished Chart Your Cycle (Quint, 2005a). The next day, more replies started coming in from the shoutouts I had done over email and I could feel another starting to come together. And that led to *Adventures in Menstruating #1* (Quint, 2005b) (Fig. 1).

I chose the title carefully: *Adventures in Menstruating* as a send up of the film *Adventures in Babysitting*, something that sounds totally mundane but could actually be quite exciting, and possibly a bit terrifying, but just like the film, ultimately resolvable. It also had the cheeky pun *AD-ventures* which was a subtle nod to the ad-busting and anti-corporate tone and content.

When a friend came to Sheffield in July 2005 on a zine reading tour, I arranged a gig for him at the *Matilda Centre*, a reclaimed autonomous art venue that was being squatted as part of a development dispute. The show went down well, and I saw how easy it was to put a tour together: all you needed were friends to provide lifts, good public transport, a place to crash, and a place to perform.

The *Adventures in Menstruating* series focused on what I've come to call *Big Tampon* and their manipulative tactics to sell more products (Kissling, 2006), so I found that autonomous
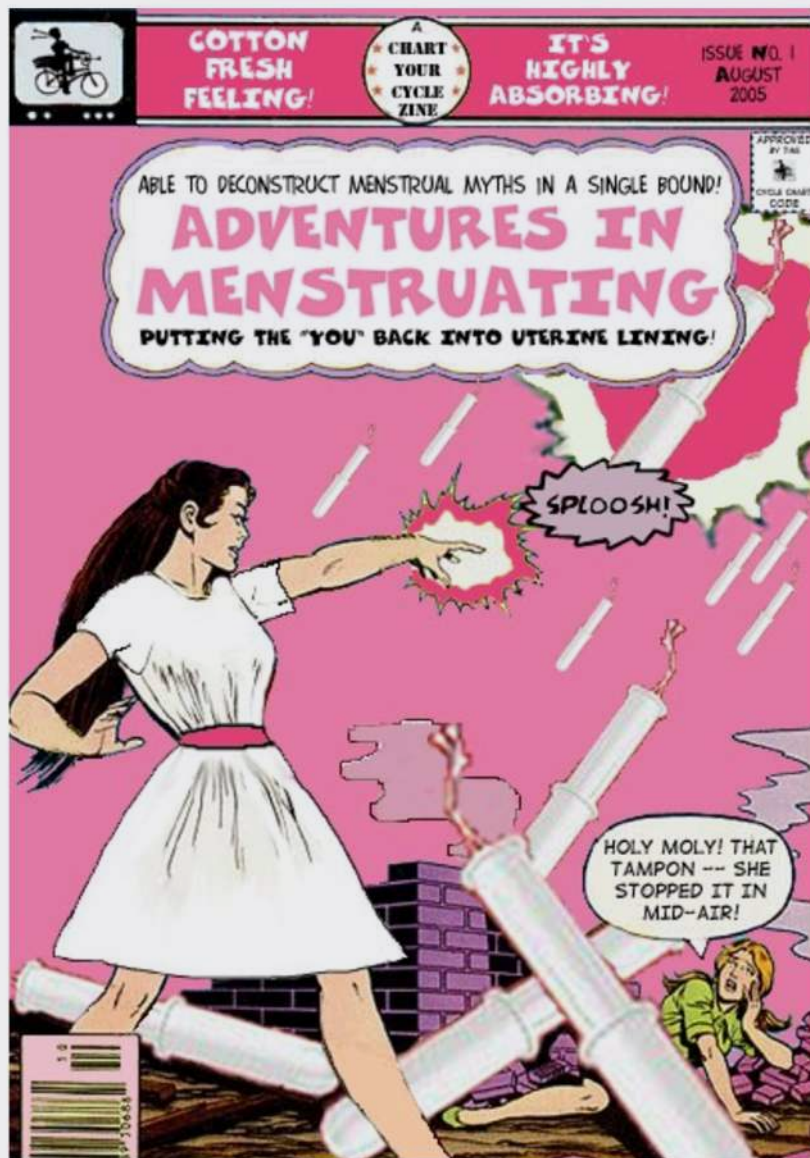
Figure 1. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #1: It's Highly Absorbing!* The cover parodies DC Comics: Isis rescues a woman from giant falling tampons, August 2005.

spaces were the best venues and felt most at home on DIY scenes. I put out feelers and what followed was a series of positive responses and invitations to speak, read, perform and lead workshops based on my zine. That summer, I travelled to the US. Friends on the east coast hosted shows in their towns, and fellow zinesters offered word of mouth promotion and lifts. These were all folks who also made zines on political topics or from marginalised perspectives, and some of them already worked or volunteered at alternative bookshops, squats and other spaces. I invited people to perform, swapped zines, and donated copies to local zine libraries. At *Philly A-Space* in Philadelphia, I met activists from Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) and they gave me stickers for their Tampaction campaign (Bobel, 2009). Their aim was to "infuse healthy attitudes surrounding menstruation into our culture's consciousness" (McDaniel, 2004). At *Bluestockings*, an activist bookshop collective on the lower east side of Manhattan, I was surprised when the librarian Jenna Freedman from *Barnard Zine Library* (Sabadosa, 2019), asked to buy copies for the archive. I was delighted there was a library in an academic institution devoted entirely to zines.

3. DIY Production Techniques and Outsider Art

"Zines do more than disseminate information as they push against institutional structure and norms. They also work to pull activists together" (Bobel, 2010, p.115). Health and sex education experts, feminists and queer activists loved the content and designers and artists also enjoyed the aesthetic of the layout. Other than the glossy covers, I started by using cut and paste for the internal pages, a technique I had learned

as editor of my middle school newspaper. Then I moved on to *Microsoft Publisher* to more closely mimic a magazine layout, I designed a new cover style that let me line up the title text so the *A* and *M* combined to form what could be interpreted as a broadcasting tower icon or an abstract vulva. I eventually made the move to *inDesign* years later, which made the whole process much, much quicker.
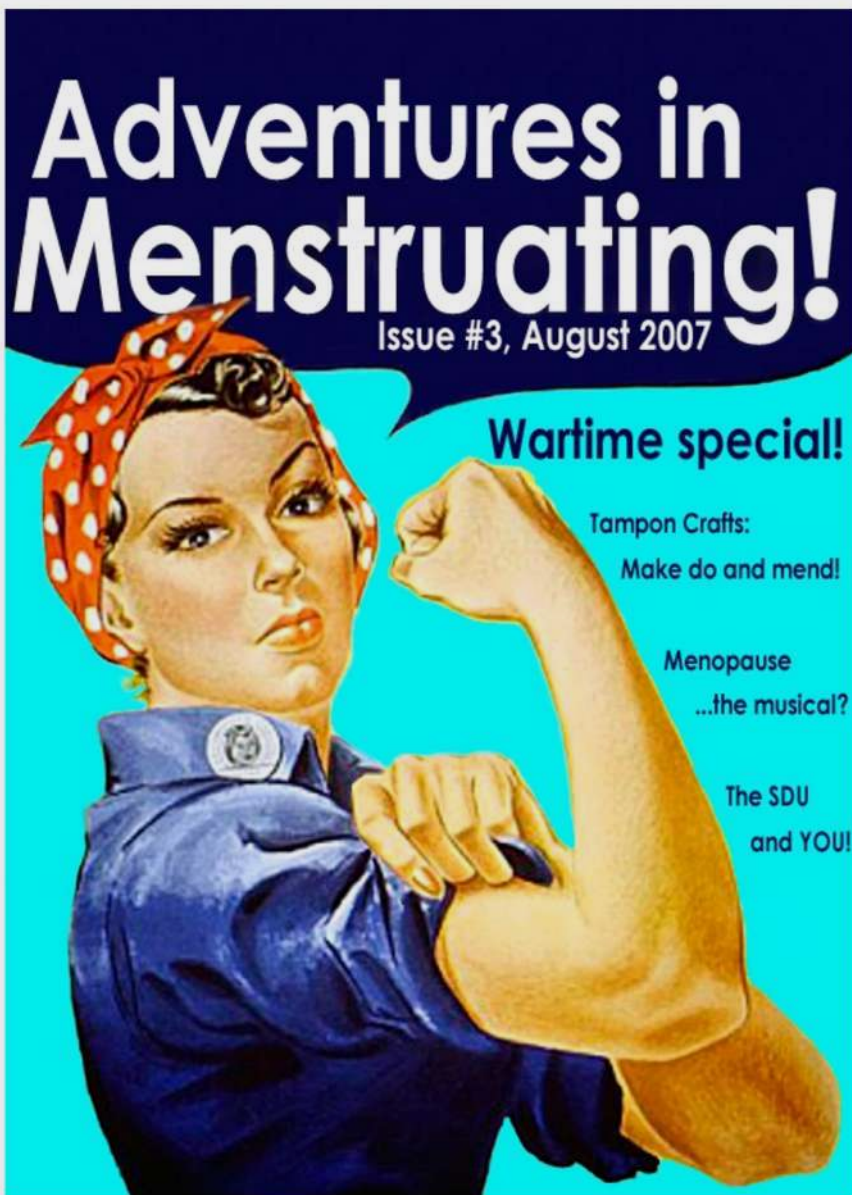
Zines tend to only be sold for the cost of materials and are often given away or swapped at zine fairs or via post, so the pay structure fits the DIY aesthetic. I wanted to make as many copies as possible. For the inside printing, I started by finding photocopy places (or places with a photocopier) based on price, not quality. The cheapest I could find would print black and white for 2.5p a side. For printing the covers without my own high-quality colour laser printer, I started looking for more options to get that glossy, parody-magazine effect. I found a small printing studio in an old, converted steelworks that was about to be knocked down. The printer, Martin Lacey, had actually been a zinester himself in the post punk Sheffield music scene (Lilleker, 2005). He was willing to do 30p silk A3 heavyweight paper prints and so that I would have A4 covers for 15p each – a bargain! The first image I sent him parodied an old DC comics cover of Isis, but instead of big steel beams and missiles, she was protecting a woman on the ground from falling applicator tampons. The cover was subtly altered so that each detail was periodified: the logos, the comments, the taglines. The one mistake I made going from analogue cut and paste flats to manipulating layers in a digital print file for the first time was that the image I started from was only 72dpi.

It was my first time using open source photo editing software *Gimp* at a local hackspace, and I did not yet know to start with the highest resolution possible for print output rather than web output. Martin patiently explained that I would need to improve the image quality to remove some of the pixelation, and that I ought to save it in a format other than JPEG. *I know.* I genuinely didn't know this back then, but the way it was explained made me want to get better at digital graphic design, not abandon it or feel alienated. The cover of #1, even when I reprint it, is still lo-res. I stand by it because it shows how my work has evolved.

The first issue of *Adventures in Menstruating* set the template for all the rest. Colour front and back covers, 24 sides of black and white copy, starting with a diary of what I had been up to - letter from the editor style - and including features from contributors. I always featured advertising analysis and comparisons of past and present ads and genuine product testing – not paid endorsements. The tone was humourous and the zines were serialised: you didn't have to read the previous issue to understand the next one, but there was a progression and there were sometimes references to the issue before. The last page always included a preview of the next issue and all of the article credits, and every contributor got a copy of the zine posted to them.

There is a self-perpetuating culture of making the next issue around the same time other zinesters do so that when they've brought out a new zine you have too. I used to do this with *Phlegm*, another then Sheffield-based artist, but his output was so much quicker than mine that I was insanely jealous.

Figure 2. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #2: Leakage Horror!* The cover parodies pulp novels with a heroine in lingerie with an added bloodstain, April 2006.

Figure 3. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #3: Wartime Special!* The cover parodies propaganda posters and features Rosie the Riveter, August 2007.

He contributed a comic strip to *Adventures in Menstruating* #2 (Quint, 2006), which often is a nice surprise for people who recognise his work from murals in their cities. This issue focused on reclaimed and reimagined versions of classic teenage magazines' embarrassing period stories and the cover was a pulp novel with added blood. The vintage advertising analysis in this issue covered scepticism about claims that anything was leak free, past or present, and examined a *Bodyform* billboard campaign that very closely echoed ideas from eighty years prior. I had interviewed my grandma for this issue and her commentary provided a first-hand account of menstrual literacy that was concurrent with the adverts I had analysed (Fig. 2).

Issue #3 (Quint, 2007a) was subtitled The Wartime Special in reference to baby boomers I had interviewed who were experiencing the menopause at the time of writing, and included a reprint of my review of Menopause: The Musical in *The Guardian* (Quint, 2007b). My take was that there should be more mainstream media about the menopause and queried why the show was panned by so many critics (Fig. 3).

The subtitle of #4 (Quint, 2008), *Now with Skirts* (Fig. 4), was a commentary of the *Tampax* "skirt" adverts describing a new design that would solve the liquid bridge problem and a nod to the equal marriage campaigns happening at the time. This zine issue talked specifically about the trend for modern advertising to reference fabric and trim: skirts, pearl, silk, braids, making it seem like disposable menstrual products were clothing, and starting to feature a trend toward feeling naked without them, positioning them as an urgent necessity.

Adventures in Menstruating
Now with skirts!

#4
April 2009

Pads for men?
Adventures behind the scenes...

Dare to wear white!

Feminine Hygiene Goes Formal

Figure 4. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #4: Now with skirts!* The cover parodies wedding magazines and depicts two brides in long dresses, April 2009.

4. Outsider to Insider

In between making each zine, I had been performing comedy takes on the adverts with friends, past partners, and enthusiastically co-opted fellow gig mates, touring squats and feminist festivals in the school holidays for the cost of travel and a place to stay. Irish feminist punk band Party Weirdo, who'd helped out at a few events, even recorded and pressed a record in tribute to the zines: *Chart Your Cycle,* with lyrics including "Chart Your Cycle! Adventures when you're menstruating!" (Party Weirdo, 2007). I didn't really tell folks at work what I did – hanging out *Ladyfests,* pasting up street art, distributing an underground political zine…even though everything I did was within the law, it all felt a little bit shady to be talking about in a sensible secondary school where I was the weird new teacher from New York.

After issue #4, I really started to hit my stride with the performative aspects of the work. Readings became sketches, audience participation became consistent, and I started using PowerPoint presentations to share the ads on screen. I was still acting ads out, but adding modern sketches as well. I included *Stains™* (Quint, 2009a) for the first time, a bit of activism that was designed to reclaim leakage horror and sell it back to advertisers, using their own language (Quint, 2019).

The zine series started out mocking advertising, but my feminist perspective came through the sarcasm fairly quickly. I was surprised to be approached by Boston professor Chris Bobel to be interviewed for her book on menstrual activism (Bobel, 2010). I tended to get so caught up in the enjoyment of

the comedy and the design that I forgot how powerful zines could be, and how far mine had already travelled.

As I was putting together *Adventures in Menstruating #5* (Quint, 2009b) (Fig. 5), I was asked to speak to students at the *London School of Economics* about menstrual product marketing messages. At the time I was a drama teacher most well known outside the classroom for having terrible allergies, writing popular comedy sketches for assemblies, and proving surprisingly skillful at fixing complex photocopier jams. I still hadn't told folks at work what I was doing in my spare time. Hanging out in squats, pasting up street art, distributing an underground political zine critical of capitalism…it all felt a little bit shady to be talking about in a sensible secondary school and being a non-citizen was a genuine worry. So the head teacher was shocked when I asked her for permission to take the day off to go to London, and said "Why on Earth does the London School of Economics want a presentation from YOU?" I mumbled something unconvincing about writing about marketing in my free time. I never put forward an argument for why I was qualified, and I didn't pursue it, which in hindsight feels ridiculous.

Meanwhile, I was putting my academic skills into my zines. I knew from reader feedback that this was becoming a valuable educational resource for them because while I'd read zines about reproductive health like *Viva Voce* (Viva Voce Wimmin, n.d.) from Brighton, UK and had come across reusable products zine *Red Alert* (Bloodsisters, n.d.) from Canada, I never found zines about menstrual taboos in the media. I was citing sources, contacting the reproductive health researchers who'd

contacted me, and starting to develop a style guide for how I wrote about menstruation. The first linguistic change I made was in 2005 with inclusive language, talking about "people who menstruate" rather than "women", to be inclusive of trans menstruators. I rejected the adverts' framing device of "sanitary protection" from the start because people who menstruate are not unsanitary and I stopped using the phrase *feminine hygiene* a few years later (Quint, 2017).

So in autumn 2009, I was finding a lot more menstrual inspiration and producing more content. I was blogging and gigging regularly, the University of Leeds feminist society booked me for a series of events, and I was about to get a big boost from some of the attendees and organisers of the *Feminism in London* conference.

The night before the conference, some work meetings were running over, but I needed to prep my conference materials. I was mentally ticking off closing times of copy shops around Sheffield, and finally the head teachers asked what was wrong. I explained the problem, and they let me print my resources at school. When I came back, copies in hand, they were fascinated.

The next day I met activists who validated my work and connected me with more folks from around the UK who wanted me to help them put on performances and events about menstruation. I even performed my new song, *The Crimson Tide* (Quint, 2009c), at The *Soho Comedy Club* as part of the conference afterparty.

Figure 5. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #5: Here's the science bit*. The cover parodies science magazines and shows Kitten Von Mew posing with underwear and test tubes, December 2009.

I returned to Sheffield with renewed confidence, finally feeling I could talk about what I did in my free time. I contacted *The Guardian* and set up an interview alongside Chris Bobel and other menstrual writers and artists I'd connected with (Cochrane, 2009). It was difficult to hide something in The Guardian from teachers at a state school in the North of England. My secret was out.

Because of all of this input and output, issue #5 was the most detailed. I was now starting to print about 500 copies in each first run, sometimes did second and third runs, and had moved to litho printing with Martin's new business, because at those quantities the price was fair and the saved labour of machine collating, folding and stapling was hard to resist. This issue also featured quotes from Chris Bobel and other board members of The Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (SMCR) as I was keen to share their research with zine readers and non-academic audiences. It was also the first time I worked with professional cover model Kitten Von Mew (von Mew, 2020), a vintage burlesque artist for whom I recorded American voice-overs in a skill swap.

I became a UK citizen the following year, and thus felt able to be more open in my art side line and incorporate it into my work. Because I was more open at school about my zines, I was chosen to teach on a new literacy team's Make Your Own Magazine project. A few months later, my independent research into menstruation meant the school heads invited me to be part of the health and sex education team, and shortly after encouraged me to apply to lead that department.

They gave me permission to research menstrual literacy on a part-time MA in education. My DIY art was starting to coalesce with my professional identity and it was incredibly satisfying. I didn't release an issue in 2010, but I did perform a comedy show at Bluestockings that was featured in *Time Out New York*, and my existing zines were part of a number of small scale exhibitions, some put on by fellow zinesters turned academics (Clyde & Bakaitis, 2017).

5. New Opportunities

It seemed that more people were becoming what I now like to call "menstrually woke" (Radnor, 2017), but back then I was just noticing that there were far fewer visceral reactions to the name of my zine. More zinesters of all genders were happy to swap with me at zine fairs, companies seemed to be slowly improving their messaging, periods were in the media more, and there was a sense that 2009 and 2010 had been a turning point for me. I worried that I had nothing more to say, so issue #6 (Quint, 2011) talked about what to do when the surface is calm. I started to unpick what was just under the surface: I looked at the structure of why adverts had endured in the same format for 90 years, and what that said about our attitudes towards menstruation.

In 2011 my issue #6 cover designs and zine-related art work (Fig. 6) were getting as much attention as the content. Stains™ was a regular feature of my performances, my talks were becoming tighter and more accessible to mainstream audiences, and my work was featured in several exhibitions and group shows in Sheffield and beyond.

129

Figure 6. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #6: Nothing to worry about.* The cover parodies fashion magazines. Kitten Von Mew wears a parachute. Photo: Kate Donovan, April 2011.

In August I gave a talk at Bluestockings called *Zine Girl You'll Be A Woman Soon*, where I acknowledged that zines were not just a medium for teenage me in my bedroom or dorm, but adult me as a professional artist. I'd been a regular contributor to the *London Zine Symposium* but 2011 was its last year. In 2012 I met Bettie Kirkssen from *Backpack Distro* at the first zine fair in Sheffield. When we discovered the organisers weren't planning to continue the fair, we decided to take it on ourselves and put on *Sheffield Zine Fest* (Kirkssen & Quint, 2014*)*.

Also in 2012, I spoke at *TEDx Sheffield* (TEDxTalks, 2012) and it received a lot of views. I was invited to speak at more events about zines and DIY culture fairly regularly; each opportunity generating the next. Everything was DIY and put together on a shoestring. This had never been a financial enterprise. I was opposed to turning menstrual art into a business; it felt counterintuitive to the point of the work and to my personal values. I was not averse, however, to turning it into education research. The *period talk* had either been corporatised (Kissling, 1996) or was a missed opportunity for teachers, parents, and young people (Bobel, 2018), and if taking some of my public work into the classroom would help young people have a healthier attitude towards menstruation I was all for it. I started planning fieldwork for my Master's degree, *Period Positive Schools* (Quint, 2014a), to explore attitudes to new lesson activities that included my art and humour. I used action research and codesign methods, and by 2013 was asking for parents' and pupils' permission to participate in developing a new menstrual curriculum based on my zines.

That year I only had time to do a compilation issue, the *Comic Poetry Split Special*. A split zine is an issue with two front covers; you flip it over when the first half ends, and there's another zine that starts on the other side.

This issue featured poems and comics from previous issues, plus some new work, including zinester Elvis Bakaitis and their comic all about having a queer *wolf cycle*. One of the covers was an illustration by Sheffield artist Sarah Smizz, based on my poem, *To the leaking girl* (Quint, 2011) with which I had won the Sheffield Off The Shelf Festival poetry slam in 2014 (Fig. 7).

Figure 7. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating Comic/Poetry Split Special #1.* The split issue flips to show cover illustrations by Sarah Smizz and Chella Quint, June 2013.

I was invited to be a keynote speaker, first at Sheffield Town Hall's International Women's Day wellbeing event and then at the 2013 SMCR conference in New York. This time I *did* ask for time off school. At the conference I performed *Adventures in Menstruating: This Time It's Personal* (SMCR, 2020). If I had had time to write an issue of the zine that year, this would have been the focus: what happens when the personal becomes political. By now zines and menstrual activism pervaded every aspect of my life. My sister starred in the *Stains™* campaign, my mom would mail zines to friends and family in the US and cut out felt period stains before shows.

When I got back, I won the *Sheffield International Documentary Festival* Specialist Factual New Talent award based on my pitch for the proposed *Stains™ The Movie* and a sketch show all about breaking menstrual taboos which eventually became a short educational film for the Open University called *Lifting The Lid* (Quint, 2014). When I got back to school I completed my fieldwork and the pupils really enjoyed the lessons we developed. The following school year I took an unpaid sabbatical from teaching to write up my dissertation and do some freelance sex education advisory and science communication comedy. I finished my Master's while developing *Adventures in Menstruating* into a show for the Edinburgh Fringe. I was broke, but got to write, perform, and design a lot more often.

6. Art to Policy Impact

Mainstream audiences were talking about menstruation, and *Newsweek Magazine* in the US interviewed Chris Bobel and others and declared 2015 the Year of the Period (Jones, 2016).

133

Figure 8. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #7: Back to school.* The cover features Chella Quint wearing a graduation gown and a STAINS™ period stain, June 2015.

I took *Adventures in Menstruating* to the Edinburgh Fringe as an unlisted work in progress, and got great feedback (Fig. 8).

Menstruation had gone mainstream. For the first time, I put my face on the zine cover. In *issue #7: Back to School (Quint, 2015)*, I talked about the tendency for advertisers to jump on activists' bandwagons, celebrated completing my degree and shared some of my research. This reached people much faster than the process of academic publishing would have, but required less rigour. I also finally started using *Adobe inDesign*, which I had learned over the preceding two years while contributing articles (Quint, 2016a) and freelancing as the designer of the *Sex Education Forum's* e-magazine.

I have always described the zine and roadshow to prospective venues as inclusive, accessible, and politically right-on. As far back as 2006, I was summing all of this up by calling it *period positive*. I started using the hashtag #*periodpositive* on Twitter to praise things that met the criteria and started to define *period positivity* in more concrete terms through my research, hoping to develop *Period Positive* schools, workplaces and cities. My appendix included a logo that could serve as a symbol for those ready for a new approach that looked at marketing messages sideways, encouraging education and what researchers like Chris Bobel have started calling "menstrual literacy" (Bobel, 2019, p281).

I created a formalised version of the *Period Positive* campaign, registered the trademark, bought the domain, and created resources, hoping to create a legacy for the education side of

the work, while I focused more on the performance side. I put the blog on hiatus in favour of radio and newspaper coverage, added my research back into my comedy show, and did a proper full run at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2016 (Quint, 2016b) to excellent reviews and enthusiastic crowd participation. Periods had arrived (Fig. 9).

By 2017, as people started talking about period poverty, my comic and journalistic writing were featured in newspapers and on the radio and had support from friends and colleagues to deliver more of the work than I could do myself.

Figure 9. Chella Quint, Period Positive Logo®, a hashtag and 2D smiling red blood droplet image that also references Little Red Riding Hood, 2013.

I didn't want to turn it into a charity or a company, and I didn't want to move to London and get sponsorship from a big tampon company (genuine offers). In hindsight, my work might have been more well-known more quickly if I had but throughout that year, it was frustrating to watch well connected campaigners pounce on this menstrual moment, some in partnership with disposable menstrual product companies that still weren't really changing how they talked about periods but wanted to boost their reputations. In contrast, others were excellent colleagues. I worked with the Girl Guides, who launched a thoughtful and well-planned campaign to share a period poverty badge (Waters, 2018) and call for better education with support from *WaterAid*, and approached schools and city councils, supporting Sheffield to become the first Period Positive city (Learn Sheffield & Period Positive, 2017) and my university to have the first Period Positive students' union (Sheffield Hallam Students' Union, 2018). Throughout 2017 and 2018 I was travelling regularly to contribute to local, national and corporate policy consultations, festivals and workshops across the UK and abroad. I shared a programme of study for menstrual literacy at the All Party Political Group for Women's Health (Quint, 2018), and was supported to put forward an Early Day Motion in Parliament (EDM 2661, 2017-19) with my MP in 2019 calling for removal of euphemistic language in policy and industry. Every now and again there was a little nudge, and I noticed an organisation, corporation, or school making a shift or rule change towards a more period positive environment. Still no new zine issues, but I was having plenty of adventures in menstruating.

7. Reflections

In 2019 I hosted the first *Period Positive Week* and launched the *Period Positive Pledge* (Quint, 2020) to introduce a new design template for menstrual literacy, and followed up with a call for global partners who have already started contributing with translations, local outreach, and online collaborations. This has meant I could step back a little. I can work on a book I've been planning based on these experiences, I can develop a book and a show for kids, and create online video resources so that there's a record of some of my live work (Period Positivity, 2020). I've started applying my research methods and graphic design skills to new work - both creative and academic. The Pledge is also an invitation to organisations and artists new to the menstrual sphere to do the hard work and introspection that I did, but without needing 15 years to do it. My work was first inspired by second-wave feminists and my old copy of *Our Bodies Ourselves* (The Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1973) that my mother gave me, influenced by the *Riot Grrrl* aesthetic that I grew up in, and helped massively by the internet and social media. My adventures were also made possible because of DIY and feminist artists, activists, venues, collaborations, tours, autonomous gig spaces, hacklabs, fablabs and maker fairs. These spaces need to exist and be supported by cities, universities and artists through policy, funding, volunteering, and safe space policies.

Have you been imagining this article as a zine? Zines often include Top 5 lists.

7.1. Top 5 things I've learned:

1. Treat your topic as a dialogue: as time passes, respond to where it takes you with new work.
2. Encourage colleagues to join you in projects with social justice themes, and don't be afraid to tell them about your out-of-hours activism and passion projects.
3. Maintain high ethical standards in your partnerships.
4. Be generous but know your value – these are not mutually exclusive.
5. Never use elastic bands to bind zines. They are awful to archive.

When I spoke to Kira Cochrane in 2009, she concluded her *Guardian* article by quoting me saying I'd write *Adventures in Menstruating* until I was ready for *Adventures in Menopausing.* That's not happened yet, and there hasn't been a print issue in a while. I've been busy looking at applying the systems and strategies I developed around menstruation to other topics affected by shame and other psychosocial barriers. I have worked on gender stereotypes in education, income inequality, fair tax, sex education, public health messages, and am now researching a PhD in art and design around attitudes to aging. Having said that, I've got a printer, a paper cutter, and a long-armed stapler, and the design for #8 (Quint, 2020b) is done. The issue will look at where we go from here, and how menstruation has gone from invisible to highly present in popular culture. Its subtitle? *Periods In Space*!

Figure 10. Chella Quint, *Adventures in Menstruating #8: Periods in Space!* A menstrual cup resembling a Saturn V probe heads for Jupiter's great red spot. Cover art, April, 2020.

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143

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Playing with Time and Limits
Experiencing Ursula Ferrara's Animation Process

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Keywords

Animation, Italian Animation, Craft, Tacit Knowledge, Ursula Ferrara.

Abstract

Ursula Ferrara's body of animation work was made over the course of almost 40 years and lasts only 30 minutes in total duration. Working in solitude between Pisa and the hills of Lucca in Tuscany, she animates using her hands, frame by frame, painting and drawing onto large sheets of paper, cardboard and acetate, amongst other materials. She is recognized by many as one of the greatest living female animators, yet she is little-known outside of the animation community. Ferrara opened the doors of her studio during my doctoral research while she was working on three separate animated sequences for three independent documentaries. She was embracing the limited time available on these commissioned films as an opportunity to experiment with alternative techniques which would allow her to work faster and less inhibited, whilst remaining true to her own way of animating.

Using primary research, collated through interviews and fieldwork, this article will reflect on Ferrara's independent animation practice, the highly inventive ways she played with time and the various techniques and processes she employed during this period.

1. Ursula Ferrara. From Photography to Moving Images and Back

Ferrara was born in Pisa in 1961. Her mother was a painter and sculptor and her father was a chemist, geologist, volcanologist and photographer. As a result, art, science and technology were always a big part of Ferrara's life. From a very young age, she started to experiment with drawing, painting and photography (Bignardi, 2007). After studying graphics and photography at the Art Institute of Porta Romana in Florence, in the mid-1980's she began her career as a self-taught animator. For Ferrara, animation was the natural synthesis between drawing and photography. At that time there was nowhere to study animation in Italy, so she started to experiment independently with Polaroids, a Super 8 camera and later with a 16mm camera.

Ferrara's first film, *Lucidi Folli* (1986), was made in black and white with markers on glossy sheets of paper. Her three following films: *Congiuntivo Futuro* (1988), *Amore Asimmetrico* (1990) and *Come Persone* (1995) were drawn with pencil and paper, also in black and white. In 1997, with *Quasi Niente*, Ferrara introduced colour for the first time, creating single frames from acetate sheets painted one by one with oil pastels. From this film onwards, Ferrara's works have all been in colour, accompanied by her own original soundtracks. *Cinque stanze* (1999) and *La partita* (2002) were also made with this technique. In 2006, the director's last independent film, *News*, was completed. The work was created from thousands of individual mixed-media collage frames. In 2007 Ferrara co-created *Les inconnus dans la boite*, the only collaborative

work in her filmography.[1] In addition to her self-produced, independent films, Ferrara has created short animated sequences for several documentary films: *L'amore e Basta* (2009) by Stefano Consiglio, *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011) by Teresa Marchesi and *La passione di Laura* (2011), directed by Paolo Petrucci.

In recent years, Ferrara has cut back her audio-visual output, because she says "[productions] are exhausting". Despite this reduction in creativity, she recently participated in the development of a video installation entitled *Vite sospese* (2019).[2] The piece was made in memory of Jewish students and teachers expelled from The University of Pisa in the 1930's because of racial laws. For this film, Ferrara produced paintings from photographic portraits of students and teachers taken in 1938. Meanwhile, Ferrara has recently returned to her first loves: experimentation with tactile film and photography processes and research into early photographic techniques. She has been working with wet plate and large format photography, transforming a van into a giant camera that also functions as a darkroom, which she named *Cameravan*. She underlines that photography, like animation, is "nothing more than the succession of one frame after another".[3]

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1   *Les inconnus dans la boite* is a collaborative project made by Ursula Ferrara and Manuela Sagona in 2007 during the artistic residency *Match de Catch à Vielsalm* organized by CEC La Hesse in Belgium. The film can be seen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZtsBhdKZ0Y.

2   *Vite sospese*, video installation curated by Gianni Lucchesi, Chiara Evangelista, Ursula Ferrara, Massimo Bergamasco, Michele Emdin, Pisa, 2019. https://www.santannapisa.it/it/event/vite-sospese-1938-universita-ed-ebrei-pisa-storie-di-docenti-e-studenti-ebrei-espulsi.

3   From *Il "camera van" di Ursula Ferrara* by Thomas Martinelli, on Alias, Il Manifesto. https://ilmanifesto.it/il-camera-van-di-ursula-ferrara/.

Although not widely known outside a limited circle of animation connoisseurs, Ferrara's work is internationally recognised. She has screened her work at various prestigious film festivals, such as Cannes and Annecy, and exhibited at several solo retrospectives and international shows throughout her career.[4]

2. Solitude and Silence. The Animation Landscape in Italy

There is very little industry supporting contemporary Italian animation and as a result few animated feature films or serial projects are produced. The independent animators active in Italy today tend to support themselves by producing work for small commercial commissions, such as the development of title sequences or television advertisements. Some also self-finance their own projects, working in their own time to produce auteur films. To this day, there are still very few places to study animation as an artform in Italy and it has only become an established subject in academia relatively recently[5] (Bendazzi & Bellano, 2017).

Ferrara is one of only a small number of internationally recognised animators working independently in Italy today. Together with fellow animators such as Gianluigi Toccafon-

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4   Ursula Ferrara's films have been screened in many international film festivals, including the Torino Film Festival, Annecy Film Festival, Cannes Film Festival, The Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival, Berlinale, London International Animation Film Festival, International Film Festival - San Francisco and the Sao Paulo Film Festival. Her works have been presented at several group exhibitions, including Hors Piste, at the Center Pompidou in Paris in 2010, as well as numerous retrospectives at, among others, Annecy, Locarno, Montevideo, Montreal.

5   The most internationally renowned animation institution in Italy is the Urbino school, a small experimental secondary school from which generations of filmmakers have emerged, including Toccafondo, Catani, Massi, Muratori and Guidi.

do, Roberto Catani, Simone Massi, Massimo Ottoni, Magda Guidi and Mara Cerri, Ferrara is considered to be an active member of the Neo-Pictorial Current (Bendazzi, 2016; Mancini, 2016). While these animators are each very distinct in their practice, the members of the Neo-Pictorial Current share some common characteristics: a deftness with painterly gestures, materials and techniques; a strong relationship with the figurative image; a fascination with the human body; an inclination to explore domestic and natural landscapes;[6] a propensity to depict movements through fluid metamorphoses and transformations; a preoccupation with deforming and manipulating backgrounds and environments; an interest in subjective points of view; and a tendency to convey intimate, very personal stories. Perhaps most importantly these animators are also known for working in solitude often with small, self-financed budgets, usually far away from the distractions of big cities and expensive studios.

However, working in solitude is also common in the field of animation in general because the practice often requires patience and an understanding of how to be creative in isolation. As a result, the slow process of animation is sometimes spoken about as a somewhat mystic and meditative practice (Bendazzi, 1988; Dumala, 2011). This might be because the very nature the animation work is contemplative and it is often arduous, usually necessitating long periods of silence

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6   The surrounding territories from which these animations were made are often evoked in the films of these artists. We can notice recurring landscapes such as the inner spaces of houses, where we can sense the hills, countryside and sea.

and concentration. The members of Neo-Pictorial Current are known to take this solitary approach to an extreme

> [To do animation] you need to know how take a very long view of the process and not be in a hurry. I am an animator because I know how to work for years on the same project, I have patience and consistency. I work every day from eight in the morning to eight in the evening, with very few interruptions. (Della Torre, 2009)

Some interpret the solitary works of these animators as acts of resistance, responding to a deep cultural, economic and social crisis in Italy. In many ways these measures of solitary resilience share similarities with the practices of the medieval amanuenses, who retreated into the quiet, secluded corners of monasteries in order to copy out ancient texts. In this sense, the work of the Neo-Pictorial Current is an expression of their own existence through intellectual and artistic meanas (Galbiati, 2014).

3. A closer look

I met Ferrara for the first time at a conference dedicated to her work in Milan in 2009. At this time, I was undertaking my doctoral research, investigating the practice of craft animators and how production limitations such as the availability of time, money and crew, could condition a project. My research hypothesis was that by studying the experiences and processes of craft animators, a type of technical black box (Hérbert, 2005; Wells & Hardstaff, 2008) could be activated. This black box might inspire the contemporary practices of professional animators as well as people more broadly involved with au-

dio-visual productions in general. With this in mind, I was interested to undertake a close study of Ferrara's work. Through my research, I sensed that she was pushing the margins of the mainstream storytelling and filmmaking with a unique animation practice, deeply intertwined with the act of painting.

Artists can often be reluctant to open their workshops to outsiders (Arnheim, 1962) and animators are particularly known to search for places of silence and solitude (Dumala, 2011) to carry out their work. However, there is also a tradition amongst animators to unveil the mechanisms behind their work (Bertolotti, 2012). It has been said that this tradition is in some ways connected to the ancient relationship between animators and magicians (Manovich, 2001; Willoughby, 2009; Bendazzi, 2016). These issues of privacy might partly explain why negotiating access to Ferrara's studio for a close observation of her craft took more than one year. My visits happened at a time when she was making short animated sequences for documentary films. Arranging meetings during periods of intense and complicated work required continuous rescheduling in order to avoid disturbing her and to reach her at moments of pause between the development of one process and another. I visited Ferrara several times in the period between November 2010 and November 2012. I also conducted digital interviews with her in November 2011 and at the end of January 2012, to explore some of the ideas that emerged in our face to face discussions more deeply. At that time, Ferrara was going back and forth between her home/studio in Pisa, where she was living with her daughter and husband, and a studio/workshop in the hills of the Lucca countryside.

Figure 1. Ursula Ferrara, Lucca, Italy, November 2011.
Figure 2. One of the frames from the film *La partita* by Ursula Ferrara, 2002.
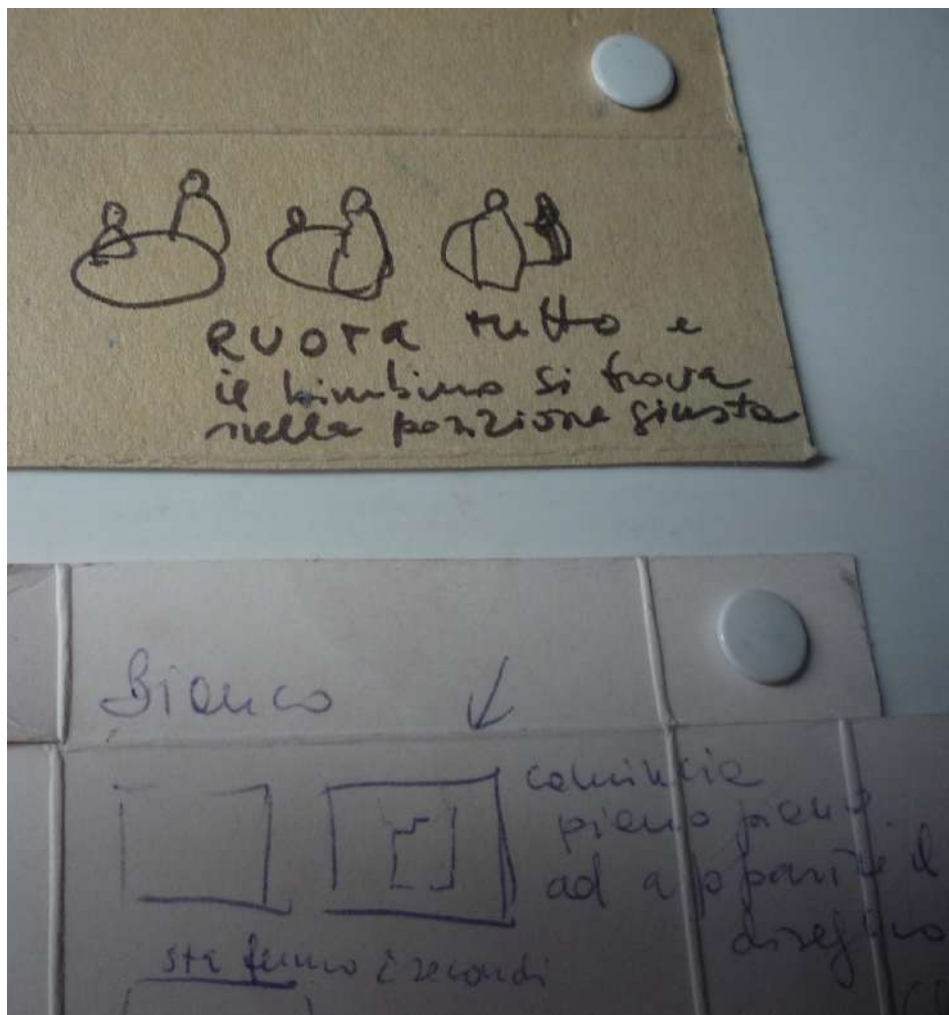
Figure 3. Photographs of Ferrara's notes and ideas, Pisa, Italy, November 2011. Her notes were sometimes drawn on the backs of medicine boxes, or disposable objects that she had to hand at the moment of finding an idea, often at night. The notes are extremely concise, utilising few words and fast sketches. They are usually for her to retain ideas, and to leave traces to return to later, they are not meant to be understood by others. When she writes too much or draws too well it means that she has not yet found the way. When she finally finds her path, her notes are very simple, with only a few words and few lines: "Usually the more important my notes are, the more indecipherable they are" (Bertolotti, 2011).

Figure 4. Some storyboard images by Ferrara, Pisa, Italy, November 2011. For her the storyboard is a synthetic visual note used in order to remember an idea. Ferrara usually works alone so does not need to communicate her ideas to clients, producers or collaborators.

Here she could work in almost total silence and tranquility, surrounded by olive trees and vineyards.

Her studios/workshops were like living collages, containing recently completed silk-screened fabrics and shelves full of colours, books and catalogues. Glued and hung to the walls of the studios were evidence of continuous iconographic research: hundreds of small drawings, cropped images, newspaper clippings, small notes, the backs of medicine boxes where ideas had been sketched in the middle of the night. The extensive archives of her past projects, with large boxes containing the frames of her films, were housed in her home and workspace. Some of the frames in the archive, such as those from the film *La Partita*, were almost a meter wide.

Figure 5. From my observation of Ferrara's studio, frames for one of Ferrara's animation interventions for the film *L'amore e basta* by Stefano Consiglio, Pisa, Italy, June 2011. This animated sequence is made from a video shot by the animator herself. Some of the frames were printed onto photographic paper and then scratched with different tools and reworked by adding acids. Depending on how much the surface was scratched or corroded, the colours imprinted on the various layers of the photographic paper are highlighted. The photographs subjected to this process were then photographed one by one, eventually becoming the frames of the animation.

Figure 6. Frames from one of the animated sequences for the film *L'amore e Basta* (2009) by Stefano Consiglio. In this case, the animation is made by painting with acrylics on page after page of an old psychiatry book. This was the only animation for Stefano Consiglio's documentary that was not created with photographic material.

At this time, Ferrara was tirelessly working on presenting and talking about her work, finding ways to communicate her practice with the public through lectures and tours of her studio. During these public unveilings of her working process, Ferrara would pull out and open her heavy archival boxes, scattering the frames haphazardly around the house, barely giving a thought to the work involved in putting everything back in order afterwards. These piles of drawings and paintings were tangible things that could be held in one's hands. This helped to demystify the process, allowing people to see animation as a physical and visible practice.

I could not see the animator actually at work, despite my requests. Only one of her sisters has been able to occasionally visit her while she animates, managing to gather rare documentary video footage of Ferrara's process. However, such observations remain infrequent because the ideation and the making require so much concentration and silence that the animator needs to be alone. My visits were therefore surveys of the spaces, tools and materials integral to Ferrara's work. Not being able to see her at work directly, meant that I would have to reconstruct her production process from story fragments. I collated these pieces of narrative through exploring her workspaces and having direct conversations with her. Since I was already very familiar with Ferrara's filmography, I focused less on her past work and more on the small commissioned films in progress at the time of my visits.

In order to represent the technical work and tacit knowledge embedded in her practice, I attempted to convey Ferrara's use of time, her ways of collaborating with others and her production processes. Visualising these findings was much simpler than it might have been, had I been researching a bigger production or TV series with a larger crew. Indeed, the solitary nature of Ferrara's work gave me the opportunity to get closer to her practices and understand the communicative qualities of her audio-visual tools. One particular example of this were her storyboards. Storyboards are usually a way of visualizing and communicating an idea of a story within the context of a timeframe. In Ferrara's case, her storyboards were used less to communicate ideas to other people and used more as visual traces of an idea. In this sense the storyboards were like flashback-provokers or visual aide-memoires.

Each visit to her studio became an extended dialogue about her work. We discussed the animation and art markets, digital technologies, an animator's inherent isolation, the sheer effort involved and the many sacrifices that are made in order to create films. Ferrara applies many tools to experiment, design and animate, through both analogue processes with materials such as books, cards and pens and digital processes with equipment such as DSLR cameras, video cameras and iPads. She reiterated to me how important it was to work with high quality materials. This was almost her mantra and she often repeated the words: one must be generous with one's passions.

4. Different Times, New Techniques. An Independent Approach Meets a Commissioned Project

Ferrara's independent animations are based on a frame-by-frame approach, where every movement is created from scratch. The frames are often large in scale and are drawn and coloured by hand individually. She animates between 12 and 24 frames per second with each frame of artwork photographed painstakingly, one after the other. The sequence of images obtained through this process are very close to the final animation. Ferrara also collects and studies sounds alongside the animation process, offering her the chance to give rhythmic structure to the film as she works. This organic way of working helps her to find gaps and to go in search of sounds using a little tape recorder. When her animation and sound recordings are finished, Ferrara goes to a recording studio and collaborates with a sound engineer who helps to assemble her audio and to produce a musical score. Later on, she works with an editor to complete the final assembly of her film.

The freedom that she enjoyed with her commissioned work offered an opportunity for the animator to experiment with new rhythms and approaches. Careful not to distort her unique way of animating, she introduced a series of techniques that allowed her to work out of her comfort zone and save time. She tested the use of live action video as a means to integrate painting and drawing into her films, exploring technical approaches that had begun to emerge in the director's previous independent film, *News*. These videos served as guidelines for her animations, almost like homemade rotoscopes.[7] The frames for these videos were printed onto various materials, such as photographic papers of different weights. This technique saved the animator much time because she did not have to build the actual animations from scratch by drawing. Ferrara explains how this sped up the process: "With a white sheet it would have taken triple, quadruple time. The calculations, the drawings, drawings [...] It's half of the time, at least" (Bertolotti, 2011).

In more than 35 years of activity, Ferrara has produced roughly 35 minutes of film, including 10 minutes of commissioned material. Her films vary between 12, 18 and 24 frames per second, meaning she has made approximately 37.800 frames in total. Each frame is an individual design, and most are created on a 21x29.7 cm format or on a 30x42 cm format.

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7   Animating using as a basis frames from videos is not something that Ferrara invented, but a common practice, in both industrial and independents animation. The presence of a photographic basis can be hidden or unveiled. In the Italian Neo-pictorial wave Gianluigi Toccafondo has extensively worked in this direction, making very evident the use of printed and photocopied frames as a basis for animation, where the act of painting transforms the pictures in something else, in a continuous metamorphosis.

This means that, by an approximate calculation which excludes abandoned works, Ferrara has produced around 2.380 square meters of drawings throughout her career.

The short films made for the three documentaries increased the duration of Ferrara's entire animation output of 35 years by almost a third over three years. This gives an insight into how Ferrara approaches time within a production and suggests that the duration of a project is, for her, a specific choice at the beginning of the creative process. Ferrara works slowly because this is necessary for her research, as a craft animator. She has demonstrated that by adapting procedures and tools according to the specific requirements of a project, her production can be faster or slower. For Ferrara, time is simply another element that can be played with, a device to be manipulated and tested.

5. The Right Spot to Jump Into the Water. A Conversation Around the Process of Invention in Commissioned Works

To help describe her pre-production processes, Ferrara used the example of her animation sequences for the film documentary *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011), which started with in-depth research into the character of Pivano, the Genoese intellectual, looking specifically at her biography. She searched for small details and evocations of memories that would help her in the development of a narrative about this character and help produce the visual skeleton of her animation. Sometimes a single word would help her in finding an image: "She always said peace and love, and so this [use of] black and white came from yin and yang.

Figure 7. Ursula Ferrara working on the main animated sequence of the film *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011), where a young girl is running. Around 500 sheets were used for this scene, each of the frames was 30x40 cm.

Figure 8. Frames for the main animated sequence of the film *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011). Animating a person running from scratch is extremely time consuming. To speed up the process, Ferrara shot a video, then selected frames she needed from it and printed them onto paper. Ferrara placed acetate sheets over these frames and traced them using special acrylic paints that adhere to plastic.

I know that others may not even need these explanations, but they help me to transform them into images" (Bertolotti, 2011).

Ferrara soon realised that the most common images of Pivano were either photos from her youth or from her later years. These images, Ferrara felt, did not necessarily give justice to her complexity and liveliness. Her first attempts in depicting Pivano did not convince the animator, and she continued to explore new forms of narrative and visual representation. By weaving an abstract narrative plot, she found that the image of a running girl could represent Pivano's vitality and energy: "Children never stand still, her life has always been full of research and activity. She runs, because life is short, she wants to do many things" (Bertolotti, 2011). This idea became a imperative device for Ferrara, almost like a rope is crucial tool for a climber. The theme was a critical implement to rely upon and with which to continue the long ascent of building a story: "hook onto it, like a climber hooks into an iron nail. Then from there the rope is long, for climbing, climbing". It was at this time that she started to write down various aspects of Pivano's life, almost as a stream of consciousness:

> The college degree: in what? Moby Dick. Whale. Melleville. Water. I add water. Water. Blue. Then what did she translate? Hemingway. [..] She used to go fishing. Always sea. What happened? A sailboat turned upside down and she went under the sea. She was the only one laughing, while her father and mother were very worried. Then she crosses the sailboat under the sea upside down, chased by a whale, which in turn is killed and turns into one of those fish that

Hemingway caught. Hemingway. Bullfight. The image of the bull. She keeps running, running. (Bertolotti, 2011)

Ferrara says that one of the hardest things for her to achieve is finding the correct narrative path to pursue. The story has to sound engaging in order to work because otherwise the risk is that things can become too confusing. As a result, the ideation process is long, and is made up of a wealth of research material and notes. However, once Ferrara has found the direction for the story, the rest of the creative process is downhill. Drawing is the easy part, because it is comparatively quick: "With drawing there is always its difficulty. But you jump into the water and swim. The problem is the exact point to throw yourself into the water, without hitting a rock" (Bertolotti, 2011).

Ferrara's creative process seems to take place in a constant working routine that requires a great mental effort. Although exhausting, she finds that if she tackles this process in the right way, moments of inspiration can appear like a lightning bolt: "It's as if nothing ever happens, nothing ever happens, but at an unconscious level there's work, the flow goes. And at a certain point, as if a tap were turned on, it's all clear, all connected. At that point you only get if you do all the other steps" (Bertolotti, 2011).

6. Conclusions

Materiality and immateriality seem to be intrinsic to the practice of Ferrara. On the one hand, the materiality of her animation work is exemplified through physically drawing or painting vast numbers of frames. On the other hand, Fer-

rara fears the immaterial nature of the completed film and is concerned by the risk that the animation may disappear due to a human or computer error. The animator's choice to create frames on large, bulky sheets of paper addresses these tensions in some ways. The tangible process somehow opposes the immateriality a film which, when finished, may soon fade away, eventually becoming lost or ruined.

It is important to Ferrara that each of her frames are elements that can be touched, they are blank sheets of cardboard on which she can intervene. Her way of animating demonstrates how control over a work can be achieved through the use of touch and in this way she researches the creative role of the hand. With her hands Ferrara learns, invents, builds and makes. These manual acts are almost her way of taking possession of the universe, becoming a kind of 'tactile flair' (Focillon, 1934). Her work is a tangible exploration that connects with our original ways of knowing and sensing the world around us through movement (Focillon, 1934; Sennett, 2008; Ingold, 2008 & 2011). However, while this may be a romantic notion, there is nothing romantic about the hard, repetitive and physically demanding challenges involved in craft animation (Hosea, 2019).

Learning about these uniquely physical aspects to her practice was a means to activate a 'technical black box' of experiences (Hérbert, 2005; Wells & Hardstaff, 2008) that might help inspire others in the field. In addition, it was a way of gaining a holistic overview of some of the audio-visual methods employed by solitary animation practitioners.

Ferrara stresses that animation is hard work, which requires patience and dedication. Her career testifies the importance of slowness in order craft a well-made work which is reflective and imaginative (Sennett, 2008). By proposing alternative technical processes and production methods, and by creating offbeat visual and narrative worlds, Ferrara is at the forefront of a quiet poetic resistance. In an audio-visual landscape that tends to be predictable and familiar (Wells & Harstaff, 2008), there is an essential need for difference, variation and contrast. The film world, like the Earth itself, needs and thrives on biodiversity. It is not just about selecting which of the many possible stories we choose to tell, but about how the story is made, how it is technically constructed and, perhaps most importantly, how it is told, from a poetic point of view.

Ferrara, with her 35 minutes of film made over 40 years, goes to the heart of this creative matter. She silently invites us to question everything, starting by asking ourselves if making something is really necessary, and if so, what we want to do, why and how.

Figure 9. Frames from one of the animated sequences for *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011).

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The Role of Women in Technologies According to the Media
How Communication Design Can React

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Keywords

Communication Design, Gender Stereotypes, STEMs, Education, Design Tools.

Abstract

As far as Design is concerned, while the presence of women in the applied arts is historically consistent, the role of women in the technological dimension is still underestimated and their presence still scarce. According to a report about gender segregation published in 2018 by EIGE "in all EU Member States men dominate specific fields, such as engineering and technology", among the elements that contribute to fuel the gap EIGE highlights "stereotypes, social norms and cultural practices" (Reingarda, 2015) in a culture which is still oriented towards male. From the communication design perspective, the issue mainly concerns the representation of women in the media and the repercussions it has in reinforcing gender stereotypes.
This paper aims to provide a contribution regarding the responses that communication design can offer to fight gender inequalities in the area of technologies. At the centre of the reflection is the work of research group DCxCG (Communication Design for Gender Cultures, Politecnico di Milano) in the fields of research and teaching.
The contribution will focus on the projects developed by some students in response to the stereotyped representation of women in technologies. The projects represent educational experimentations aimed at strengthening the critical instrumentation of young designers and support reflections around new communication models.

1. Introduction

> Only 17 women have won a Nobel Prize in physics, chemistry
> or medicine since Marie Curie in 1903, compared to 572 men.
> Today, only 28% of all the world's researchers are women.
> (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organiza-
> tion, 2017)

We happened to experience during the teaching activity an
episode in which, in front of a project presented by a group
of girls, teachers and assistants let themselves go to consid-
erations such as "Well done, we did not expect it by a group
of girls". The project required a good knowledge in coding
and the fact that five female students were perfectly self-suf-
ficient in learning and managing the required programming
languages was the object of jokes and, perhaps worse, of
surprise throughout the semester. We consider the episode to
be in its own small representative of how *theoretical equality*
(Halimi, 1992) – in this case equal rights in accessing STEM
or STEAMD university courses, mentioning Paola Antonelli
who includes Art and Design as essential disciplines of tech-
nology and science (Oxman, 2016) – does not coincide to the
reality of everyday life, still permeated by gender stereotypes
that affect the perception of the Self and the individual biog-
raphies (Bourdieu, 1998; Ghisleni, 2004; Baule & Bucchetti,
2012), stereotypes and models that limit girls in university and
professional choices.

Data on the female participation in STEM university courses
still show a numerical imbalance strongly oriented to the male.

According to the report *Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)* published by UNESCO in 2017, female students represent 35% of students enrolled in STEM courses at global level and the gap increases in disciplines as engineering, natural sciences, mathematics and statistics and ITC (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017).

The situation of Italian universities also seems to be in line with the survey carried out by the United Nations. According to the *2018 Reports on the employment status of graduates* published by the interuniversity consortium AlmaLaurea, in Italy boys (59%) outnumbers girls among graduates in STEM disciplines. This imbalance is accentuated if we consider male graduates in engineering (74%) and in science (68.4%). Data also confirm what emerged from the *Gender Balance Report* of the Politecnico di Milano (2019). Out of the total number of students enrolled (44,012), female students are 34% (14,450). If we take a look at engineering courses, girls represent only 23% of students. A similar situation could be found in the teaching staff, with 403 women out of a total of 1,403 teachers. Surveys carried out in the academic and professional field highlight further imbalances in the assignment of responsibilities within companies and in wages, and merely point out the weight of an issue that has long been at the center of the fight for gender equality.

In this framework the Politecnico di Milano has been working for several years to fill the gender gap and promote STEM subjects among young female students. It works through the de-

velopment of numerous projects such as *POP – Pari opportunità politecniche* born in 2018 to "ensure a study and work environment that respects gender identities", among the main stated objectives POP aims to "bring girls closer to STEM studies"; or through "on the field" actions such as *Le ragazze possono* (2014-2015) a project of Fondazione Politecnico that promoted meetings and workshops in schools to encourage girls to make a conscious choice concerning STEM courses and professions; with the participation of the University at *STEM in the city,* an event promoted by the City of Milan with the support of the United Nations, aimed at spreading the culture of STEM and removing "cultural stereotypes that alienate girls from the study paths in technical-scientific subjects". The Design Department of the Politecnico has also been involved in gender issues for years, specifically with the work of the research group *DCxCG - Communication Design for Gender Cultures* engaged in research and teaching activities to promote the social responsibility of Communication Design within Gender Cultures.

The activity in the educational field led to the birth of the first teaching in *Communication Design and Gender Cultures* in 2014, aimed at students enrolled in the Master's degree courses of the School of Design in order to provide them with the tools for a critical reading of mediatic forms of representation and for a gender-sensitive approach to the communication project. The teaching activity in particular allows to work on different levels, on one hand the training of conscious designers, on the other hand the development of communication projects that experiment new formats and communication languages to achieve equality.

Starting from this scenario, the paper intends to provide an insight into some experimental activities – developed within the course *Communication Design and Gender Cultures* – that have their own focus on STEM representative issues and which constitute methodological models in the area of design concerning contrasting actions and new languages and communication models. These are three case studies that address gender stereotypes related to STEMs through different approaches, which we believe can be explanatory of the different responses that communication design is able to offer to counter the stereotyped representation of women in STEMs.

2. Femininity vs Technological Expertise. The Point of View of Communication Design

To adopt the point of view of Communication Design means first of all to consider the sphere of media representation, providing a critical reading of the communication project itself (Caratti, 2015). The visual communication project, and in a broader sense the media, plays a role of vehicle of models and stereotypes within society, returning them amplified and contributing to their rootedness.

Giovanni Baule in *Anticorpi comunicativi* adopts the image of a "deforming mirror". He describes the media as a "mirror both faithful and deforming the reality", within a short circuit of sense that feeds itself: media communication draws from models and stereotypes already established and returns them through reiteration, supporting their fixity. We could schematize this vicious circle as an infinity symbol whose center is constituted by the *stereotype* and the two antipodes respec-

tively by *media message* and *social identity*. The arrows represent its flow and feedback mechanism (Bucchetti & Casnati, 2019). The schematization (Fig. 1) allows us to highlight the system of responsibility that involves the different actors behind the communication project – client, designer and broadcaster – at different levels all responsible for the quality of the images that are produced and distributed.

In these terms the designer needs tools that enable him or her to exercise a self-critical reading of his own work, from design choices to behaviors acted in the division of labour within the team. This specific issue is the object of one of the case study that focuses on the stereotype "as one of the many tricks of the mind to guide our processes of knowledge" (Baule & Bucchetti, 2012, p.97) and behaviors.

One concrete example that helps to decrease the schematization within the STEMs issue can be represented by the packaging of some games for school-age children.
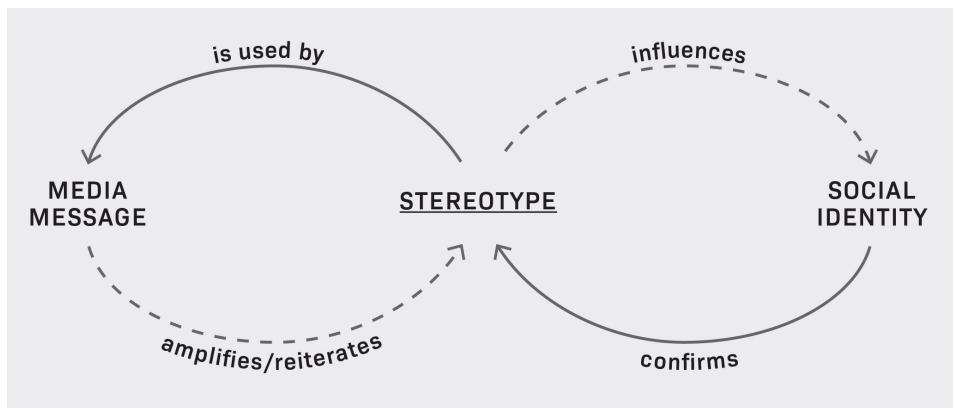
Figure 1. Stereotype loop.

In this specific case the game, one of many, belongs to the *science and technology* category of a well-known Italian brand and according to what on display to play *manual skill*, *ingeniousness and planning* are required. The game is designed to bring boys (and girls?) closer to the field of biomechanics and natural sciences. On the box, however, a boy and a girl are already representative of gender roles. The boy plays the active role of inventor and proudly shows his project, while the girls has her mouth open, her eyes grainy and the hands around her face in an expression of amazement and surprise for the work done by him. The designer has simply translated the commonplace that differentiates male and female skills and consequently games from male – science, technology, sports, adventure – and from female – home care, body care, child care. The resulting message puts in contrast science expertise with femininity, telling that science and technology are male things and implicitly influencing the self-esteem and future choices of children.

The issue of STEM gender stereotypes could be simplified and traced back to a single macro-model that contrasts the sphere of the feminine with the competence in technology, attributed by default to the masculine. The gender stereotype acquires sense only if placed on the background of the male universe, starting from this assumption the use of the semiotic square (Fig. 2) allows us to highlight the relationships between what we have defined as the two opposing poles: technological competence, attribute of the male universe, and female universe. The two terms are semiotically in opposition but can, on the other hand, contract a relationship of implication through

assertion, so for example non-femininity implies masculinity and therefore being competent in technology and vice versa. The square of Greimas is useful to us in reference to visual languages because it allows us to examine all the meanings of the message and to bring out positions of meaning present in the conceptual universe of a given communicative action but not explicitly expressed (Agnello, 2013), thus facilitating the process of the deconstruction of the stereotype that underlies the gender-sensitive project.

technological expertise (masculine)

woman (feminine)

not-woman (not-feminine)

technological incompetence (not-masculine)
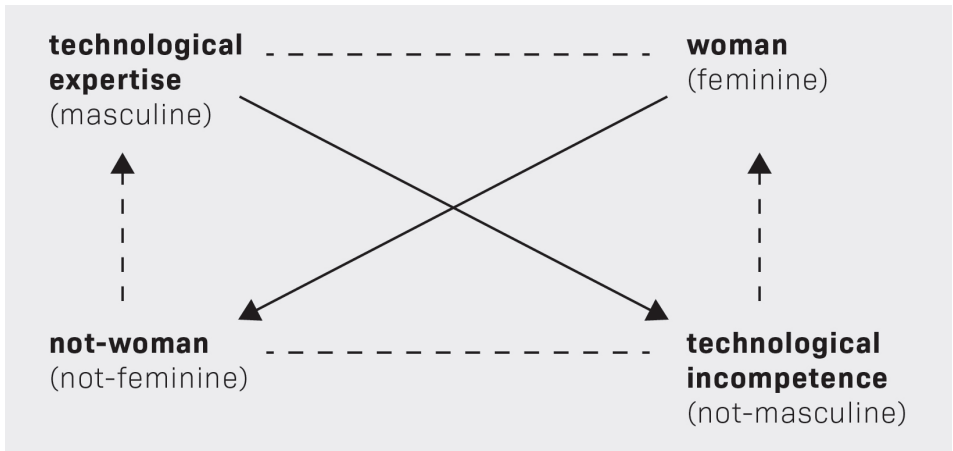
Figure 2. The semiotic square of Greimas.

The opposition of the female universe to the sphere of technology, with all the facets that derive from it, is the common thread at the base of the three projects reported as case studies. The students, starting from common bases, identified specific stereotypes that were deconstructed and analyzed through methods that bring into play different aspects and skills of the communication designer. The research work has given rise to communication projects aimed at raising aware-

ness of gender issues related to STEM and stereotypes in communication artifacts.

3. The Reactions of Design Students

As previously mentioned, the three case studies have as a common starting point the macro-area of gender stereotypes in STEMs, from the point of view of communication design. The area was left deliberately wide to allow students to move within it according to their attitudes and interests. A first phase of reconnaissance allowed them to trace a state of the art from which they defined a very specific research area to focus on. The projects show, on the methodological level, three different reactions of communication design.

3.1. Tech(wo)man – Semantic Flipping

The assumption from which the students based their work refers to the representation of women and technology in the editorial field, in order to investigate the forms of representation through which gender stereotypes are *translated* (Federici & Leonardi, 2013; Baule & Caratti, 2017) into images. First of all, the students delineated the area of analysis. In this phase it was decided to reduce the field to the most read STEM periodicals in Italy, selecting twelve issues (the most recent) of the five most popular periodicals. The methodology draws on the *Mixed method research* which integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches by exploiting their respective potentialities and allowing, according to Capecchi, "to achieve at the same time an objective of corroborating the reliability of information and one of information enrichment, to reach generalized results, but also to go into depth of the empirical material" (Capecchi, 2018).

The students then conducted a taxonomic collection of all the female figures found in the selected magazines, performing a critical deconstruction of the image in order to isolate and analyze the recurring structures. This made it possible to identify and cluster two macro-areas that concern respectively:

1. explicit stereotypes, the woman has mainly four different functions:
the *grechina*, with a function of embellishment without any connection to the content; the *object holder*, when the only function is to expose a product holding it in the hand, the *erotic* or *object of desire* and the *incopetent* when the relationship with technology generates expressions of astonishment or incomprehension.

2. Implicit stereotypes which refer to a series of editorial and scenic choices that work at an implicit level. They can be summarized in a numerical disparity between the clearly inferior female figures and the male figures; and in the lack of relevance between the use of the female image and the content of the article.

The point of interest to which we aim to bring attention concerns the perspective assumed during the analysis work. The deconstruction of the images allowed to bring out a similarity between the visual codes that characterize the representation of the female in computer-technology magazines and the expressive conventions in the field of porno-soft. The observation led to a deepening of the relationship between the two areas. This similarity, which can then be translated into se-

mantic ambiguity, has been translated into a game of substitution aimed at highlighting the recursiveness and sharing of visual codes, in some cases impossible to distinguish. Therefore, a web page has been designed to denounce the phenomenon, which included an interactive section with the aim of making the recipients directly experience the evidence of a sexist use of images.

Few covers of STEM magazines have been placed, in random order, next to some covers of the porn-soft magazine Playboy (Fig. 3). Through a horizontal scroll the images of the female figures, taken from the covers of both categories, can be scrolled on the layouts to recompose the whole. This transposition game made the equivalence evident.
Women's images are indistinguishable – by style of shooting, aesthetic features, posing, expression, clothing – and therefore interchangeable between the covers. The students exploited a flipping mechanism (often declined in gender flipping) which in this case could be defined *semantic flipping* aimed at allowing the user to experience firsthand the paradox in front of which he or she is facing.

Figure 3. Authors: F. Casnati, C. Cingottini, C. Della Longa – Master degree students in Communication Design, Politecnico di Milano. Project title: *Tech(wo)man*.

The tool designed is at the service of the connections detected between apparently very distant areas, technology and porn, to give concrete form to a contrast action that plays on the user's displacement in order to raise awareness of the issue and trigger a more in-depth reflection.

3.2. Hack the Stereotype - Disciplinary Contaminations, a Designer Self-Analysis

The second case study that we want to focus on has as object of analysis the community of designers itself, specifically a group of students, both male and female, of Communication Design of the Politecnico di Milano. The observation starts from two assumptions: (1) the percentage of women involved in coding is much lower than the percentage of men; (2) a designer who knows at least the basics of coding is facilitated in the design of user interfaces. The young designer who conducted the observation decided to focus on the behaviors acted by students in approaching coding for the first time, in order to verify if and how they were influenced by gender stereotypes and if these stereotypes influence the perception of their technical skills. The point of interest is the method of observation adopted, which draws from the fields of cultural anthropology and sociology, focusing on the multidisciplinary character of communication design. The observation activity conducted hybrids some peculiarities from the participant observation (used in gender research) with the methods of design.

This allows to develop a direct contact between the phenomenon under study and the subjectivity of those who study it, avoiding intermediated data.

Figures 4-5. Author: B. Verrotti di Pianella – Master degree student in Communication Design, Politecnico di Milano. Project title: *Hack the stereotype*. Some shoots documenting the workshop activity.

A workshop was thus designed in which three male and three female design students without coding knowledge were involved. In order not to influence the participants' behaviors and conversations the objectives were not stated. The activity included a first introduction and a brief explanation of basic notions of programming, some individual exercises and subsequent team work (Fig. 4-5) The analysis can be divided into the following phases:

1. "Description, report of what has been observed, enriched with meanings and interpretations through the assembly of different materials" (Decataldo & Ruspini, 2014). The workshop activity was documented through videos and the conversations were transcribed, this allowed to affect as little as possible the data with the subjectivity and preconceptions of the observer;

2. Clustering of the recursiveness in the acted behaviors (gestures, proxemics etc.) and in the conversations. An emblematic example is the assumption of leadership in group activity by young people despite the fact that they were all newcomers;

3. Analytical phase, in order to elaborate some abstractions from the results of clustering.
   This phase led to identified the implicit and rooted gender stereotypes of which the subjects themselves are not aware but which lead them to act according to predetermined patterns.

This work has allowed to highlight some points summarized here: (1) in the group work the girls did not expose themselves, while the boys were more confident and serene and they acted as group leaders even if clearly less prepared; (2) in the individual work it was the girls who were more active and contributed with questions and reflections; (3) in coding the girls were more easily discouraged by throwing in the towel or asking the neighbor for help; (4) the girls said that coding is not important for their professional career, the opposite was said by the boys; (5) in conversations was often present the stereotype of the nerdy boy who loves video games.

After the activity individual interviews were conducted with the participants to reveal them the objectives of the workshop and documenting the reactions. All the participants had a surprise reaction and after an initial moment of disorientation they had a chance to activate a self-reflection process. Most acknowledged that they were probably driven by gender stereotypes in their approach to coding, particularly the girls admitted that they felt "unable" when it came to coding, even if they had never tried before.

The activity that led to empirical evidence of how much STEM stereotypes implicitly affect the work of designers, offers a concrete example of tools for a work of self-analysis: the designer who takes as an object of study the community of which he is part.

184

3.3. Not Only Dolls – the Restitution of the Research Through an Awareness-Raising Action

Studies on the development of gender identity show that the process of acquiring roles and stereotypes happens very early. According to the survey conducted by UNESCO (2018) girls tend to lose interest in STEM subjects growing up, especially during the transition to adolescence. The research question underlying the last case study concerns STEM gender stereotypes conveyed by the packaging of children's toys defined as educational. The objective was to analyze the visual composition and text messages that characterize the packaging of toys in order to capture any gender stereotypes that could negatively affect the choices and orientations of girls. The first phase of research follows a method of taxonomic collection of the visual compositions on the boxes (Fig. 6 - some of the analysis sheets used for the data collection). 179 games were collected from the online catalogs of the six international companies which were most present in Italian stores and that responded to the categories "educational games" or "scientific games". The collected images were deconstructed through the use of analysis cards that allowed to identify the recursiveness in terms of visual languages – color palettes, illustrations, fonts, etc. – and verbal languages.

The experimental nature of the case study is given by the kind of output produced, which meets the dual objective (1) of synthetic visual restitution of research results and (2) of raising awareness of the target audience - parents in their role as purchasing responsible.

IDENTIFICAZIONE DEL GIOCO

Marchio: Clementoni.

Ambito/professione: Biologia evolutiva

Età: 8-12

COLORI E AMBIENTAZIONI

Colore:
tenue   caldo
intenso   freddo

Contrasto:
alto
basso

Modalità di rappresentazione:
illustrazione
fotografia

Sfondo:
contestualizzato
decontestualizzato

PROTAGONISTI E AZIONI

Non presenti

ELEMENTI TIPOGRAFICI E VERBALI

Font:
light   soft   dinamico   tipografico
bold   hard   statico   handwritten

Contenuti testuali:
scienza e gioco ORIGINAL Il mondo dei Triops
Osserva la crescita di queste misteriose creature!...e Ricrea fossili di animali
antichi tuttora viventi. Questo set educativo NON CONTIENE ANIMALI VIVI NE'
MANGIMI, in linea con le disposizioni del Ministero della Salute.
Ricevi gratis a casa tua le bustine con le uova di Triop ed il mangime per
nutrirli, all'interno il coupon per effettuare la richiesta.

IDENTIFICAZIONE DEL GIOCO

Marchio: Clementoni.

Ambito/professione: Meteorologia dinamica

Età: 8-12

COLORI E AMBIENTAZIONI
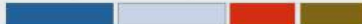
Colore:
tenue   caldo
intenso   freddo

Contrasto:
alto
basso

Modalità di rappresentazione:
illustrazione
fotografia

Sfondo:
contestualizzato
decontestualizzato

PROTAGONISTI E AZIONI

Genere:
maschio
femmina

Marcatori di genere:

Interazione soggetto con oggetto:
sì
no

ELEMENTI TIPOGRAFICI E VERBALI

Font:
light   soft   dinamico   tipografico
bold   hard   statico   handwritten

Contenuti testuali:
scienza e gioco Tornado e Cicloni
Scopri l'incredibili potenza del tornado!
Crea meravigliosi vortici in acqua!
Studia l'origine e il movimento dei cicloni

IDENTIFICAZIONE DEL GIOCO

Marchio: Clementoni.

Ambito/professione: Astronomia

Età: 9-14

COLORI E AMBIENTAZIONI

Colore: tenue / caldo / **intenso** / freddo

Contrasto: **alto** / basso

Modalità di rappresentazione: illustrazione / **fotografia**

Sfondo: **contestualizzato** / decontestualizzato

PROTAGONISTI E AZIONI

Genere: **maschio** / femmina   **maschio** / femmina

Marcatori di genere:

Interazione soggetto con oggetto: **sì (attivo)** / no   **sì (passiva)** / no

Interazione tra i soggetti: sì / **no**

ELEMENTI TIPOGRAFICI E VERBALI

Font: light / **bold**   soft / **hard**   dinamico / **statico**   **tipografico** / handwritten

Contenuti testuali:
scienza e gioco Telescopio
CD INTERACTIVE Scruta il cielo e riconosci le stelle della volta celeste
Ottiche intercambiabili 20x-40x-60x
CD INTERATTIVO CyberSky per conoscere il cosmo, i pianeti, gli astri e le costellazioni
Sistema di messa a fuoco

Figures 6a, 6b, 6c. Authors: S. di Nardo, M. Felicetti, Su Xizi – Master degree students in Communication Design, Politecnico di Milano. Project title: *Not only dolls*. Some examples of analysis sheet.

On this purpose the students designed a short animation that shows through its own narrative flow the confusion of a parent within a games department. The video opens with the title "Not only dolls". A parent and his daughter are in a lane of male games (Fig. 7 - storyboard showing keyframes); STEM toys to build, learn, experiment; and female games: dolls, tricks, household appliances. The story draws attention to the hesitation – which verges on perplexity of the father, whose gaze bounces from one side to the other, alternating between the so-called male and female toys. The situation is resolved for the best when the child explodes her enthusiasm in front of a "scientific" game, a game to discover the world of insects, and therefore belonging, according to convention-

al codes on which the identity of the product is based, to the first category. Everything ends with an invitation to adults so that we can go beyond conventions. The setting, the lane of a shopping mall, follows a recurring real situation, taking advantage of data emerged from the research. The color palette, illustrations and texts on the boxes represent the recursiveness identified during the analysis phase, through a synthetic reconstruction and assembly operation. Some zooms on the words respectively addressed to boys – observe, build, analyze, experiment... – and girls – care, iron, princess, makeup, baby – highlight the most recurrent models and languages. Although the students did not have the opportunity to publish and test the effectiveness of the video with the target audience, it was tested in the following years during the course *Communication Design and Gender Cultures.* The animation was shown to the students who were not yet aware of the theme, and triggered a more in-depth collective reflection about gender stereotypes in products for kids, proving to be an effective tool at the service of awareness actions.

Figure 7. Keyframes of the video – *Not only dolls*.

4. Conclusions

The three cases show the contribution in terms of tools and methods that Communication Design can use to analyze and contrast the STEMs gender stereotypes perpetrated by the communication designers themselves. The points of view of the selected cases allowed us to introduce observation methods and new approaches to communication design in the field of gender research, with a view to contamination and multidisciplinarity. They constitute models which are transferable and repeatable in different contexts, moreover, the experimentation conducted by students constituted, in terms of method, a model based on experience, aimed at building tools to observe and critically interpret the reality in which we act both as designers and as citizens. The contribution therefore highlights the kind of experimentation that the DCxCG group conducts in the educational field, highlighting through concrete examples the contribution of Communication Design to the training of conscious designers, able to manage complexity and to exercise a critical reading of their work, fundamental requirements for the gender-sensitive project.

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191

HERstory
A Women Design Project in UAE

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Abstract

When dealing with women, stereotypes always exist. They manifest, mainly in two kinds of attitudes: the first resort to outdated models and the second address feminist models. Years ago, me and my colleague, the architect Indu Varanasi have been called to create a design-driven experience to promote the dialogue between different generations of women and female leaders in UAE. The setting was the Dubai Women Museum, founded by doctor Rafia Goubash, where is located the main collection of women stories and objects in Emirates.
The project *HERstory. A women design project in UAE* aimed to promote a different kind of approach, the one that considers female thinking and practice as an inclusive model. *HERstory* project was a result of plural desires: of meeting and speaking with the women in the UAE, who are trying to change their world; of investigating their forms of dialogue, confrontation and expression; of using design as a tool for building dialogue, listening, creations. The idea was to build a strong contact between women living in UAE, asking them to use their senses as a meta-language for an authentic communication. The project, and the final exhibition, was curated and designed by Politecnico di Milano together with the architect Indu Varanasi (IRDesign) and sponsored by Iguzzini Lighting Middle East.

1. HERstory

HERstory was born from the encounter between Anna Barbara (architect and professor of the School and Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano) and Indu Varanasi (founder of IRDesign in Dubai) with Rafia Obaid Goubash, the founder of the Women's Museum in Dubai. *HERstory* was born as a desire to use the practice of design as a tool for bridging women and the language of the senses as a meta-communication able of making different cultures and generations dialogue. Specifically, the mediation was to take place between women born and living in the UAE and foreign women but residing in the country for a few decades.

The project consisted of:

- a *sense_based* workshop focused in creating five couples of women – one leader/pioneer in her field and one artist – to experiment a sort or telling/listening practice through senses in order to go deep in the relation between them;
- the development of the relation (reported into the final catalogue);
- the creation of five artworks, video and installations collected into an exhibition hold at Dubai Women Museum (Barbara & Varanasi, 2018).

2. The Beginning

HERstory was born in 2017, through the dialogue with the founder of the Museum who spent an important part of her life in putting together pieces of this female story, the history of her country from its origins to now.

Two important issues emerged from these meetings: the first is that stereotypes have been built around women living in Middle East, which are in fact their first obstacle on the international profile and on the other hand the need to highlight the existing and possible extra-family alliances between women, who have been working and acting in the country for years with commitment and low visibility.

HERstory is inspired by the researches and practices developed by the *Vanda Group* at the Politecnico di Milano, founded by Ida Faré, Gisella Bassanini, Sandra Bonfiglioli, Marisa Bressan and a number of students and researchers who have studied and graduated with them around the nineties (Bassanini, 2005). From that experience was evident, from the beginning, that the contribution of women to the design of spaces, as architects, but also as teachers, artists and researchers should be explored in *HERstory,* not focusing on the final artistic results of the works, but on the practices and the experiences lived by the women involved.

HERstory is the project that starts from that "wisdom of starting from herself" at the center of women's work which, in the relationship, attributes new meanings. The whole project is permeated by this subjectification that becomes plural to be shared: a practice of thought and design which is activated in the workshop by sensory, narrative, listening, memory, revelation exercises (Diotima, 1996).

3. The Place Built by Women for Women
From the beginning there was the thought that the Women Museum was not a simple museum, but the cardinal point of a past history, and above all the future one, of that country. So, the

curators proposed to develop a project with the museum that would narrate the relationships that arise between women.

The Women's Museum started out as a project to create a curated collection of artefacts and information about the role of women in the emergence of the UAE in a way that would also reflect on the multi-cultural nature of the population. However, in essence, the museum is designed to embody the culture of the host country, the culture of the people, their work, and their ethics and values, which define them.

The museum has become an authentic source of information for visitors, who are made aware of the long journey that the country has covered in a very short time. The museum has also become a rich source of research material for governmental and international organizations.

Women's Museum in Dubai is a peculiar place built by women for women. They are places of encounter, support, collection, recognition. They are places not for herself but for us, as Virginia Wolf would say, "a room for myself", and all the other personal selves. The museum is not a monument. It is an architecture that goes beyond time. It is a place of living memories where stories and objects exist and resist any attempt of "museification". The exhibited pieces, not fixed artworks but fragments of a polyphonic storytelling, are presented there. They are moving, flowing from one room to another in a continuous combination of meanings.

The museum is an unfinished space – a curatorial choice of the founder, as women leave meanings open. In their personal biography's women leave space for other stories; stories coming

from their friends, housekeepers, stories made for dressing up, as young daughters do with their mothers' elegant clothes.

The museum is a place of narration, not of performance. It is a space for an alliance between women, all, in the UAE. It is their version of facts, their narration of the story and what brought them here. The Dubai Women's Museum is a place that reminds the Eileen Gray's projects, in the attention for details, bodies, movements of things, daily biographies. In fact, this is not a space born as a museum. It was a house and its domestic origin is preserved, linking itself to "that art of living" that reminds Charlotte Perriand's House of Tea, in a small side room at the entrance, whose configuration is born from the gestures and rituals of the Arab tradition of serving tea (Bassanini, 1990).

4. Sense/Time-Based

At the peak of a digital revolution, we became aware that somethings have changed, and the female opinion is still on the side-lines.
We are now living in a time in which digital innovation should be driven by women, because of their ability to think, build, live that way, since the time everything was analogue and only a few things were digital.

The iconic words of the digital world – sharing, clouding, multitasking, etc. – are the ones that have belonged to a female glossary for thousands of years now.
The Women's Museum is a time-based exercise displaying *Kairos*, the female form of time, which is not linear but narrative.

It is perceived in its compressions and expansions triggered by emotions, putting moments together in sequences. *Kairos* cannot be measured; it is a qualitative time.

The museum nestles in the old Dubai *souq*. Nestled between traditional buildings and narrow streets, smelling spicy scents and humidity, illuminated by an unrepeatable light that creates a choreography of shadows.

The Women's Museum is a sensory place of smells, materials, fragments of the past but also of the future. A place of light cuts, a privileged view of the *souq*. The artificial light is warm and moulded, underlining the stories like a finger following the lines of a story. And then there is silence. A sacred calm making us whisper instead of talking, making us move smoothly and listen with attention.

Senses use a metalanguage able to access complex communication forms, not necessarily verbal but mainly emotional.

Places like the Women's Museum promote another kind of aesthetics: one that uses all our senses going beyond the purely visual level. More intense, less predictable, they are the places of memorable human experiences. They are not welcoming nests or self-pity rooms but places of strong dialogue, heart-breaking authenticity, places of identification.

Attention to the senses and to time, as well as to people, is a reference that has been explored from Lina Bo Bardi who, in her Brazilian works, builds relationships and stories through the spaces and the urban. Bo Bardi considered museums

A corner of memory? A mound for illustrious mummies? A repository or archive of human works which, made by humans for humans, are already obsolete and must be administered with a sense of pity. None of this. The new museums must open their doors, let in the fresh air, the new light. There is no continuity between past and present. (Miotto & Nicolini, 1998)

5. Scope

Raising a house. Choose the roof tiles and the brick floor, imagining facades, loggias and stairs, perspectives, gardens. As far as I knew, a woman had never done it. (Mazzucco, 2019)

One of *HERstory*'s strategic goal, is to showcase the work of pioneering women in the UAE. Those who had done in their disciplines what "a woman never done it" before.

It was immediately understood that the centrality of the project was the meeting between the protagonists, that the documentation collected from time to time as testimony, would be the true substance of the project. The result would have been in words, images, objects, videos, stories…full of meaning and that all this material would have been an integral part of the project as well as the results. In *HERstory* every woman would bring her own social and human experience, every artist her own sensitivity, vision, creativity, to tell the single story. A sequence of narratives, different and unique, but with a common frame: dialogue as an engine of transformation. Therefore, we did not come to the narration of a biography but of an interaction, an exchange and a dialogue between

personalities, which would have led to demonstrate an evident existence of a very strong relational potential among the women of the country (Fig. 1).

6. Methodology

From a methodological point of view, *HERstory* refers to the approach that sees the women architect as the one who not only deals with aesthetic language, but who builds relationships, new languages and meanings, who creates places from the relationships and not vice versa (Farè, 1983).

After the development of the strategies and objectives of the project and the establishment of an operational team of women capable of building, promoting and communicating the project, a phase of research began on the possible figures to be involved. The first strategic choice was to research mainly in two areas: that of women leaders in a sector or eminent figures in the country; that of women in the creative sectors. The disciplines involved were art, curation, textile design, photography, singing, writing. The selection therefore sought across the board in various sectors with the intention of selecting:

- different generations;
- various social backgrounds;
- heterogeneous scientific, artistic and cultural sectors;
- different countries of origin although all resident in UAE.

From a very large selection that included over 50 candidates, the circle narrowed to ten, divided into five couples based on the principle of diversity. Each leader was accompanied by an artist.

Figure 1. A. Barbara, I. Varanasi, workshop *HERstory*, Dubai, 2018.
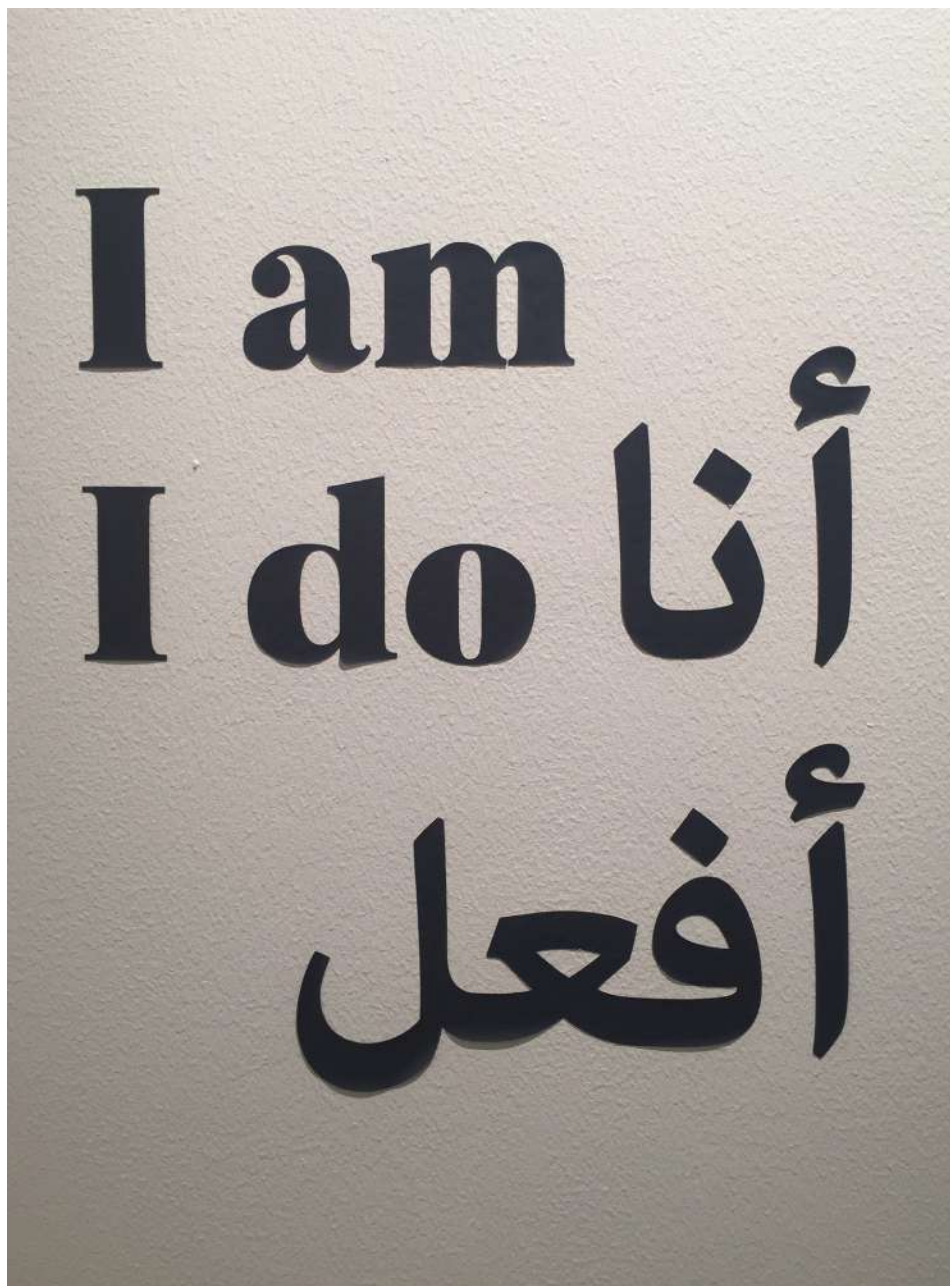
Following the selection, it was decided to promote a meeting through the holding of a sensorial workshop, held inside the Dubai Women's Museum in which the artists and founders put into practice a multisensory dialogue, which did not have the biographical narrative as its objective, but precisely the birth of a new relationship between creative couples that would bring into play the emotional as well as the cognitive dimension. The workshop included a comparison of reactions, sensations, emotions arising from colour palettes, from smells that opened up sometimes forgotten memory scenarios, from clouding of words and meanings. This approach allowed to extrapolate emotional and significant aspects of each person's identity in a way to make them "ingredients" for the works that was then exhibited at the final event. The workshop was followed by an exchange, elaboration and creation phase between the women of each couple, which realized works of art that were the subject of an exhibition-event held at the Women Museum. Five stories, therefore, with five different and absolutely unique narrative modes.

The workshop takes up the "participating practices able to open new connections and a continuous and lively dialogue between the knowledge system and acting". It is the practice of "starting from herself" that works on the experience, on personal biographies, on desires and contradictions, which are personal, but related to a collective and shareable idea (Bassanini, 2008).

7. The Ladies

The idea was to create a transversal dialogue, also transgenerational, avoiding the typical "mothering" of relationships

between women. The practice was that of the classic principles of Anglo-Saxon feminist pedagogy:

- transforming individual creativity into a collective collaboration mechanism, promoting teamwork;
- to separate authority and knowledge;
- to eliminate dichotomies between theory and practice;
- to emphasize ethical and relationship values, overcoming the classic hierarchical transmission of knowledge (Gotti, 2005).

The real protagonist of the project is doctor Rafia Goubash (Women's Museum founder) Professor of Psychiatry, president of Arab Gulf University (AGU) in Bahrain, and currently President of Arab Network for Women in Science and Technology, a network created to help women scientists to achieve leadership positions and to bring women closer to science. Around this pioneer figure in the country, a series of initiatives are born to enhance the work and thoughts of women, including the Women Museum in Dubai which aims to discover and understand the United Arab Emirates society through the life of women – of the past and present – highlighting the various roles assumed by UAE women. *HERstory* is the narration of five stories, those of socially and culturally active women, in dialogue with as many artists. Isobel Abulhoul founder of Emirates Airline Festival of Literature; doctor Najat Makki, visual artist, first Emirati woman to win a scholarship made available by the government in 1977 to attend art courses abroad; Alia Lootah currently part of the team working on the Louvre Abu Dhabi; Hissa Mohammed Hasan the previous photographer and reporter since the

1950 in UAE; Afra Atiq award-winning poet; Sheikha Sanaa Al Maktoum and her mother; Majida Nasreddin, Lebanese artist and member of Emirates Fine Arts Society; Kusum Dutta, Indian born doctor, providing by her work, immediate help to workers and support special need kids and their families; Elisabeth Stoney, assistant professor in Art History and Curatorial Studies at Zayed University at Abu Dhabi.

8. Workshop

The idea that *HERstory* takes from the museum and from the ingredients that the founder, Rafia Ghubash made available, was an essential condition.

The idea was to build a strong contact between women living in UAE, asking them to use their senses as a metalanguage for an authentic communication. The workshop's exercises did not have the purpose of synthesizing, but rather of taking them to a neutral yet intimate level, to be able to narrate without revealing themselves.

The exercise was done in pairs. Both the parties were proactive, so the final result is not a biographical praise of one of them but a synthesis of their interaction. The output was not an artwork about the other woman, but the result of the interaction between them.

The methodology used is called "active listening", which leads to an interlocution, which presupposes a strong identification able to make "see things and events from a perspective" of the interlocutor as if it were her own (Scalvi, 2003).

The meeting between the leader and the artist has been placed in the presence of the curators and the team, in order to help and encourage and stimulate the exchange between the two

women, so that they have been guided towards an output to be exhibited at the end. The place where they met, was at the Dubai Women's Museum and was interesting to analyse how they sit, where they sit and how they interacted (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. A. Barbara, I. Varanasi, exhibition *HERstory*, Women' Museum, Dubai, 2019.

9. Setting
The setting hosting the encounter between the two protagonists was welcoming and meaningful. The meetings took place sitting at a table. The position was not given: they could be seated in front of each other, on one side, one next to the other or squeezed at the corner as if they were sharing some kind of intimacy. Their position was a geometry that gains meaning in terms of proximity, distance, proxemics.

On the table we placed a set of "ingredients" used to activate emotions, reactions, confrontations. Each exercise contained a kit of elements to be used, rejected, transformed to become part of the future narrative. The value of these elements had a semantic as well as aesthetic, spatial, emotional nature.

10. Exercises

The workshop lasts one day. It was hold in one of the Museum rooms. The exercise was performed by both ladies, because it was from the interaction of the two identities that the relationship emerges. Both participants were active in swapping roles. When both were proactive, their interaction triggers a dimension of deep and authentic meanings.

11. Storytelling

The first exercise started with words, the most immediate way of starting a dialogue. These were then abandoned, during the workshop, with the aim of entering a degree of profoundness where words got so full of meanings that they became artworks. During this exercise they narrated themselves. The value of one's own description was not necessarily linked to a meaning but also to a sequence, a hierarchy of some values over others, a volume and tone of voice used by a lady to describe some aspects of herself, some spoken but also unspoken things and, above all, some perceived things, how much the other side understood, felt, took back, transcribed… In this exchange there was a gap between what one narrated and what the other one interpreted: this was the foundation of an encounter. If she started with a physical description or talk about her origins, job or other things, this was not a secondary element of one's own narration.

205

Figure 3. A. Barbara, I. Varanasi, workshop *HERstory*, exercise storytelling, Dubai, 2018.

The result was a "cloud of words", a semantic glossary following the encounter until the moment of realization of the artwork or even beyond – duration 10 minutes – (Fig. 3).

12. *Colorscape*

The exercise of the *colorscape* leads to an exploration of the theme of feeling/living which places perception and the body as metalanguages for the construction of the relationship (Barbara, 2000).

The term colorscape introduces the idea of a landscape, in this case a chromatic, interior one essential to explore the complexity of our emotional language and helping us express it in its most subjective aspects.

Every person has her own personal colour palette, made not only of tone preferences but also of saturation, intensity, brightness, quantity and distribution. We all build our chromatic sensibility during our whole lives. This is a very articulated language that each of us uses when shaping our environments and when getting dressed, when choosing an object or taking a picture of a certain landscape, whether natural or artificial. The exercise of selecting colours, naming them, comparing and putting them in sequence, working with possible harmonies and complementary tones is a rather primary exercise. Building a dialogue using colours is a deep journey into our emotional as well as visual imagination. From a collection of Pantone colours, each lady has been requested to select a chromatic combination of four-five colours (tones, intensity, saturations, etc.) and quantities. – duration 10 minutes – (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. A. Barbara, I. Varanasi, workshop *HERstory*, exercise colorscape Dubai, 2018.

13. Scent of Memories

When we smell a scent, we get – voluntarily or involuntarily – into a very private and intimate emotional depth. Besides being a *scentscape*, of pleasure or displeasure, a scent is a medium that comes from our memory and is capable of taking us to different places and times evoking memories of people and situations otherwise forgotten. Communicating through scents means revealing a very intimate part of ourselves, talking about our taboos, fears, weaknesses and lowest instincts. It is a nude narrative that can lead us to feel ashamed to the point that we immediately want to cover ourselves with other scents, putting on an invisible dress that tells about an aspirational, yearned for, official identity.

Figure 5. A. Barbara, I. Varanasi, workshop *HERstory*, exercise scent of memories, Dubai, 2018.

A range of primary essences was offered to the ladies who were asked to do an exercise of figurative, verbal and emotional visualization. Places, people, situations, distant memories emerged. Some pleasant, forgotten, moving, but some also unpleasant, belonging to foreign worlds, unwanted guests. We cannot run away from the sense of smell. The narrative flows, the images of our memory come to light or are pushed back because they are too painful.

We offered to both, some fragrances to be smelled in order to take off some deep emotions: memories, the evoked images, the emotions told have been recorded – duration 10 minutes – (Fig. 5).

14. Cont-Act

It was an exercise on the objects of the self, the ones every woman keeps in her bag as an *existens minimum*. What all women carry with themselves is a complex narrative of their relationship with the external world but also with their own creativity, intimacy, strength and fragility.

The request to empty one's own bag is a way of forcing them to build a relationship. It can be premature; it can be decisive. In both cases the request of showing the purse's content is a provocation and the reaction to a provocation always tells us something.

Each of the two ladies showed one or more objects to the other and described it in its physical and symbolic aspects. This object remained all the time in the hands of those who brought it. Sometimes it was passed to others to be hold it in her hands to observe it better. The actions were not taken for granted at all and they will reveal interesting aspects.

In certain cases, we asked them to "open and empty her bag" which is for all women in the world a house-in-house. The bag is not an accessory; it is a physical place and soul of each of us, often inviolable. Some of they refused the exercise, because of shyness or privacy, some accepted because of self-confidence or freedom. However, inexplicably there was always a moment of justification for something that was missed or something that was too much. A bag contains functional, secret, redundant, essential, emotional objects, everything and nothing, in an extraordinary tale about the complexity of everyday life.

Someone did not have a bag to empty, and this was another important point related on being so free to don't need to carry nothing with her.

Showing the content of another people's bag was an act of trust and intimacy. It was important to study the resistance reaction to perform this action, which each of them posed before such a request, in the ways and, above all, in the gestures – duration 10 minutes – (Fig. 6).

Figure 6. A. Barbara, I. Varanasi, workshop *HERstory*, exercise cont-act, Dubai, 2018.

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III

PROJECTS
& DOCUMENTS

Aiap Women in Design Award (AWDA)
Short History and Perspectives

Cinzia Ferrara
Università degli Studi di Palermo

Francesco E. Guida
Politecnico di Milano

Ph. Gianni Ugolini © 2019
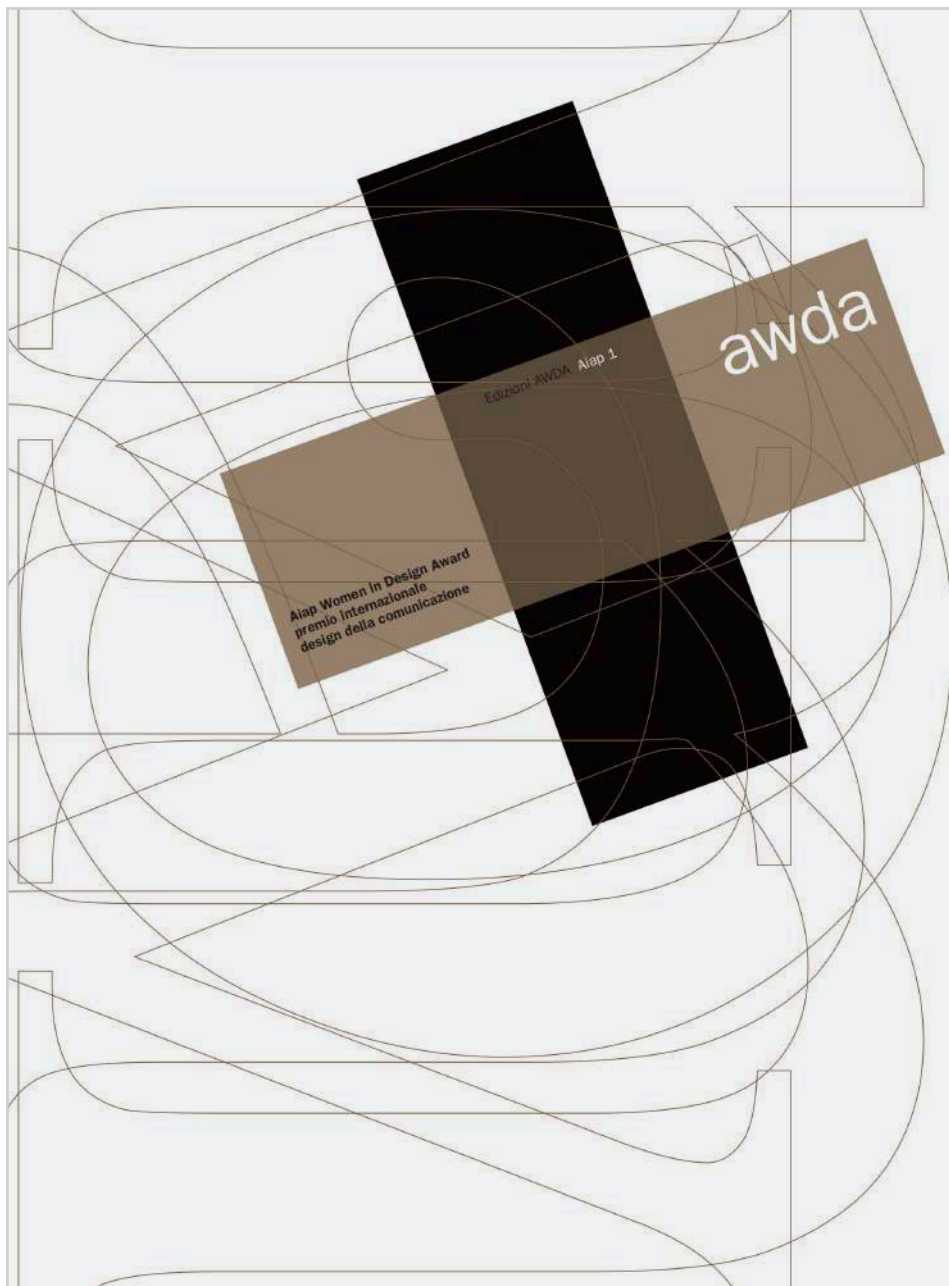
AWDA vol. 1, Aiap Edizioni, 2015.

AWDA vol. 2, Aiap Edizioni, 2018.

1. The Award's History[1]

On the 8th of November, 2019, the fourth edition of the Aiap Women in Design Award Ceremony took place in Florence, at the Tepidarium del Roster's prestigious space. It has been an important occasion to verify how such kind of initiative has grown up upon time. An initiative with a recent but already long history and deep roots.

Its history started with the *Stanze* contest and related exhibitions at the Archaeological Museum of Gela (Sicily) and the Florence Festival of Creativity in 2010. Then it continued in 2011 with the retrospective exhibition *The unbroken sign. Graphics between art, calligraphy and design* dedicated to Simonetta Ferrante. Even earlier, this story began in 2007 with the *Manifestinno* exhibition (curated by Mario Piazza and Nicola Zanardi). The initiative collected the posters created by 30 young Italian women designers on innovation and progress. The selected posters were presented in Aosta and Florence. Another preliminary event was *Singolare femminile* in 2008: a series of seminars with four communication designers (Rosemary Sassoon, Great Britain; Dorothee Wettstein, Switzerland; Frédérique Mathieu, France; and Lola Duval, France), organized at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome.

The AWDA project was born in 2009 from an idea by Laura Moretti and, starting from 2012, it is curated with Cinzia Ferrara and Daniela Piscitelli. In 2017 Carla Palladino was added

1   The authors co-wrote this contribution. Francesco E. Guida dealt specifically with paragraphs 1 and 2, Cinzia Ferrara with paragraph 3.

for the curatorship. This shortlist of events and initiatives helps understand how such a specific award, however necessary, has been elaborated in the associative context of Aiap.

The biennial award organized by Aiap (the Italian Association of Visual Communication Design) intends to investigate the languages, poetics and different approaches to communication design and explore the conditions in which women designers work. Not to examine a protected area or search for peculiarities characterizing women's design methodology (Ferrara, 2018). Nevertheless, to act as a place whence to observe a partly hidden dimension, to use single projects to bring to light the wide-ranging, diverse world of women communication designers (Piscitelli, 2015). The award intends to emphasize the role that women graphic designers have or had in the professional and educational areas, both in present times and in the past, to identify role-models.

In 2012 the first edition of AWDA was open only to Italian women designers and received submissions from 112 designers for a total of 237 projects. The jury selected 25 designers for 30 projects for publication in the catalogue, edited by Cinzia Ferrara and Daniela Piscitelli and published by Aiap in 2015. The award-giving ceremony took place during Aiap Design Per – International Graphic Design Week, which took place in Treviso from 26th to 29th of September 2012. The first prize was awarded to Nike Auer and Claudia Polizzi for their project *Panorama 4*. The Honorable Mention for Lifetime Achievement was for Anita Klinz and the Honorable Mention to Memory to Lica Covo Steiner.

Sylwia Bartoszewska, visual imaginary of the Polish National Parks, AWDA 2019, First Prize.

Carlotta Origoni, *The veil is seen only when it is lifted*, AWDA 2019, Honourable Mention, Professionals Category.

Orith Kolodny, *199 Drapeaux - Formes, couleurs et motifs*, AWDA 2019, Honourable Mention, PhD, Researchers and Teachers Category.

In the second edition, the award was open to women designers living or working in the European and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. An international jury made up of 5 leading figures in visual communication design selected the projects submitted. The selected projects were later included in the second volume released in 2018. Among the works deemed worthy of publication, the jury chose Astrid Stavro to be awarded the first prize and Ornella Linke Bossi for the Honorable Mention for Lifetime Achievement Category. The official award-giving ceremony took place during the following edition of Aiap DX – International Graphic Design Week, which took place in Milan from 4th to 8th of November, 2015.

Starting from its third edition, the award was open to women designers from all over the world. 186 projects were submitted from 34 Countries, selected by an international jury made up of 8 leading figures in visual communication design. In this edition, the award-giving ceremony took place in Rome on the 30th of September, 2017, in the framework of Aiap Design Per – International Graphic Design Week "Visible Cultures", on the premises of Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, with the participation of many of the selected visual communication designers. The AWDA's first prize was awarded to Afrouz Razavi and her *Journal des Jungles*.

2. The 2019 Edition

In its fourth and latest edition, the award counted on the partnership with ico-D, the International Council of Design, that have recognized the great social and ethical value of the prize,

supporting and promoting the award on the international scene. The award counted on the support by two professional Associations: Grafill of Norway and ADGI of Indonesia. The final selection awarded to Sylwia Bartoszewska the 2019 first prize, three honourable mentions (one for each of the Professionals, Researchers and Teachers, and Students categories), five special mentions, and two special awards. The Career Award for Historic Achievement was awarded to Claudia Morgagni and the Lifetime Achievement Award to the swiss-born designer Lora Lamm.

Over the years, the award earned an international reputation and growing attention by women designers worldwide. An award cannot transform or change realities where women are often denied their human, not only professional, rights. It can be a powerful spotlight on critical issues and an instrument to explore and spread women's graphic design culture. Thus, giving a look both to the past and to the present, travelling backwards into the future (Ferrara, 2018).

3. Perspectives

AWDA has taken on its configuration over time, addressing students, researchers, professors, professionals. That is to those women who work in various capacities in visual communication design, covering all stages of professional life, from training to building a career, crossing the fields of research, teaching, and experimentation.

At this point, what is the future of AWDA? First of all, the preparation of the new call for participation to the fifth edi-

tion. The call will still have a worldwide diffusion thanks both to the networks that have been built over time and the collaborations with other professional associations as Aiap is. Those organizations will act as an amplifier on their respective territories, helping spread the award's values and activities among their members and contacts.

The design of the special book that will collect the results of the last two editions of the award (2017 and 2019) has been entrusted to a group of the Isia in Urbino students. Professional designers like Paolo Di Vita and Laura Moretti designed the previous books. The choice to entrust students of one of the best design schools in Italy was not casual. But it is perfectly in the spirit of the award, among which categories there is the one aimed at women students and graduates from design schools. Perhaps it is no coincidence that it was Roberto Pieracini, previous director of the Urbino school, who suggested involving students. Pieracini was very sensitive to issues of teaching and training of designers. Since he told the curators the idea of this involvement, with his concise manner interspersed only with the cigarette's movements held between his lips, standing in the Aiap headquarter in Milan, has immediately become theirs too.

For the AWDA publishing project, the current director of ISIA, Jonathan Pierini, was involved and was asked to identify a working group among the school students. The group of young designers will have to rethink the concept and the layout, breaking away from the editorial line already started with the previous publications. The new book will contain both the section relating to the projects selected, mentioned

and awarded and the section of critical essays signed by authoritative scholars. A new section will be dedicated to the results of a consultation/interview launched between the participants, during the latest edition, to have statistical data visualized through infographics. The definition of the concept, a central part of the editorial project, will explain the comparison between the curators and the selected students. They have been asked to become real builders in the project and not mere performers.

The book new project will allow the curators to look at AWDA with new eyes. Those of the young people to whom the award is also addressed, returning their observations, findings, and changes of pace that will be evaluated in the new call for participation structure. This comparison is also an opportunity for more extensive reflection on the future of the award.

An award that the curators consider an organism that changes over time, sensitive to cultural, social and economic changes to which the designers' profession's future is linked.

Even more so, if the future of the profession is female.

Laura Simonati, *Unfolding Brussels. Colonial traces in the public space*, AWDA 2019, Honourable Mention, Students Category.
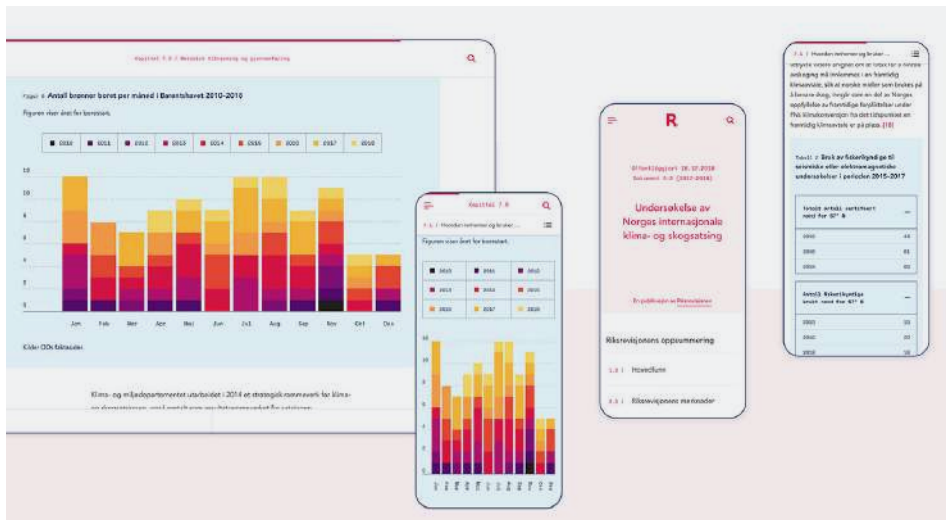
Svanhild Vindenes Egge, Maria Bono, Digital reports for the Office of the Auditor General of Norway, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, Professionals Category.

Tricia Treacy, SLOT, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, PhD, Researchers and Teachers Category.

Joy Gloria Harendza, Jagoan Social Campaign, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, Students Category.

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Link

www.aiap-awda.com

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PINK
Representations of Women and Women Graphic Designers

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1. Introduction[1]

From 9th to 28th of October 2020, Laboratorio Formentini per l'Editoria in Milan hosted the exhibition "PINK. Representations of Women and Women Graphic Designers". The event, initially postponed due to the pandemic, was organised by the Aiap CDPG[2] in collaboration with the Fondazione Mondadori and the Master on Digital Archives FGCAD held by the Università di Macerata and was curated by the authors (Francesco E. Guida and Paola Ciandrini) with Lorenzo Grazzani (Aiap CDPG).

The exhibition opened the 9th of October 2020 with a round table attended by Annalisa Rossi (MiBACT Soprintendenza Archivistica e Bibliografica della Lombadia), Valeria Bucchetti (Politecnico di Milano), Raimonda Riccini (Università Iuav di Venezia) and Anty Pansera (President of the Association DcomeDesign).[3]

2. The Exhibition Concept

Two were the main aims of PINK. On the one hand, to show the representations of women curated by graphic designers (both male and female) from the golden age of Italian design (approximately between the 40s and early 70s).

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1   The authors co-wrote this contribution. Francesco E. Guida dealt specifically with paragraphs 1 and 2, Paola Ciandrini with paragraph 3.

2   The Graphic Design Documentation Centre of Aiap, the Italian Association of Visual Communication Design, was opened in 2009 and today host more than 70 founds of various consistencies. Among the others, it holds founds registered to Simonetta Ferrante, Anita Klinz, Brunetta Mateldi and Claudia Morgagni, as well as materials produced by Carlo and Maddalena Angeretti, Umberta Barni, Jeanne Grignani, Lora Lamm, Ornella Linke-Bossi. http://aiap.it/cdpg/.

3   The official video registration of the panel (in Italian) is available here: https://www.fondazionemondadori.it/evento/pink-rappresentazioni-femminili-e-donne-graphic-designer/.

On the other, to reflect on the contribution of the women designers in a period conditioned by stereotypes and preconceptions about female roles in a social context subject to significant changes. The exhibition and the related discussion panel intended to question and argue on the role of history, sources and gender studies; on the presence of women designers in the profession in the post-WWII period and their absences in the great histories of design. And on how visual artefacts of design return a possible reading of society and its complexity, allowing different and richer interpretations of our history.

In PINK there were micro-histories of women graphic designers, showed through samples of their work, such as Brunetta Mateldi (Fig. 1), Anita Klinz (Fig. 2), Claudia Morgagni, Simonetta Ferrante, Jeanne Grignani (Fig. 3), Lora Lamm, Ornella Linke-Bossi.[4] Beyond their professional contribution, the quality or the styles of their work, the dimension and variety of their clients, in the exhibition were considered the multiple roles they interpreted, both at a social (women, wives, mothers) and professional levels (educators, active in associations, artists). Those criteria were used not just to fill supposed absences, but to discuss issues to take into account to write a more inclusive history of graphic design, as already proposed by Scotford (1994) on the need of understanding private and public roles available to women at a particular time.

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4   Some of the mentioned names are presented and analyzed in the essay "Besides Professional Stereotypes" published in this issue of the journal by Francesco E. Guida. Most of the issues here shortly discussed are indeed argued by M. Àngels Fortea in her essay.

Figure 1. Brunetta Mateldi Moretti, cover for the magazine "Il Dramma", Società Editrice Torinese, 1943, courtesy Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori.
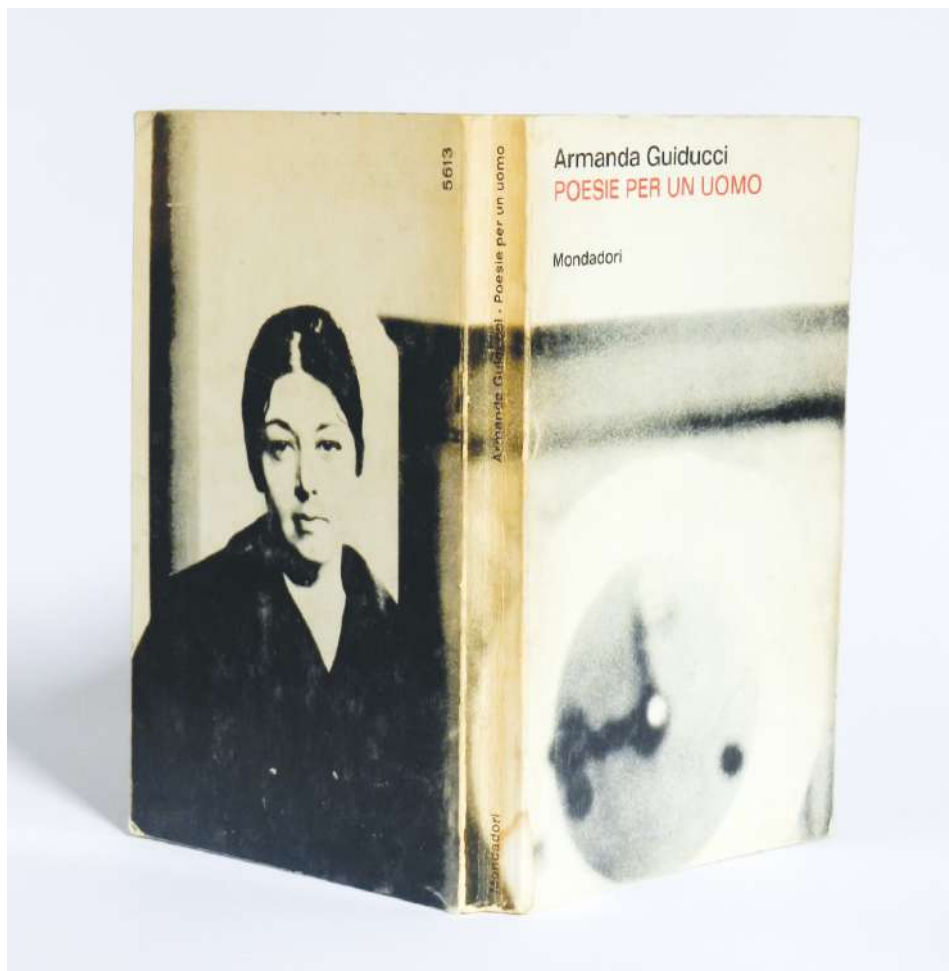
Figure 2. Anita Klinz (with Ferruccio Bocca), cover for "Il Tornasole" book series, Mondadori, 1965, courtesy Aiap CDPG.

Figure 3. Jeanne Michot Grignani and Franco Grignani, advertisement, Necchi, 1955-60, courtesy Aiap CDPG.

PINK also showed how the image of the woman and its representation made by female and male hands (e.g., Silvio Coppola, Salvatore Gregorietti, Antonio Tubaro, Franco Mosca, Ilio Negri and Giulio Confalonieri, Massimo Vignelli, Pino Tovaglia) allows us to re-read the changes in Italian society and at the same time to reflect and discuss the use of the female body through visual artefacts. And how much it has eventually changed over time.

In the exhibition, some strong contrasts were emphasized, not necessarily in purely chronological order. Through the displays designed by Antonio Tubaro for furniture and household appliances during the late 50s and early 60s, it is possible to observe women suspended between stereotypes (the queen of the house) and possible emancipation (Fig. 4). Far later, the use of photography by well-known designers and art-directors allows to emphasise the affirmation of stereotypes or analyse the use of female bodies as objects. As it is in the adverts by Giulio Confalonieri for Filiclair (1968), in a series of posters by Silvio Coppola (1968-69) for Laminati Plastici-Formica (Fig. 5) or in a couple of posters by Walter Ballmer for Olivetti (1966-1967). Different art-works, in which female bodies are used with sexual appeal malice or to represent stereotypical women (e.g. the "stupid" secretary) (Fig. 6).

On another level, there is, among others, the 1972 advert for the Bambole sofa series by Mario Bellini for C&B Italia. In this advert (Fig. 7), the photographer Oliviero Toscani and the art-director Antonio Trabacchi chose a famous model, Donna Jordan, "who is pictured topless and heavily made-up in poses that combine doll-like stiffness with sexual availability [...]
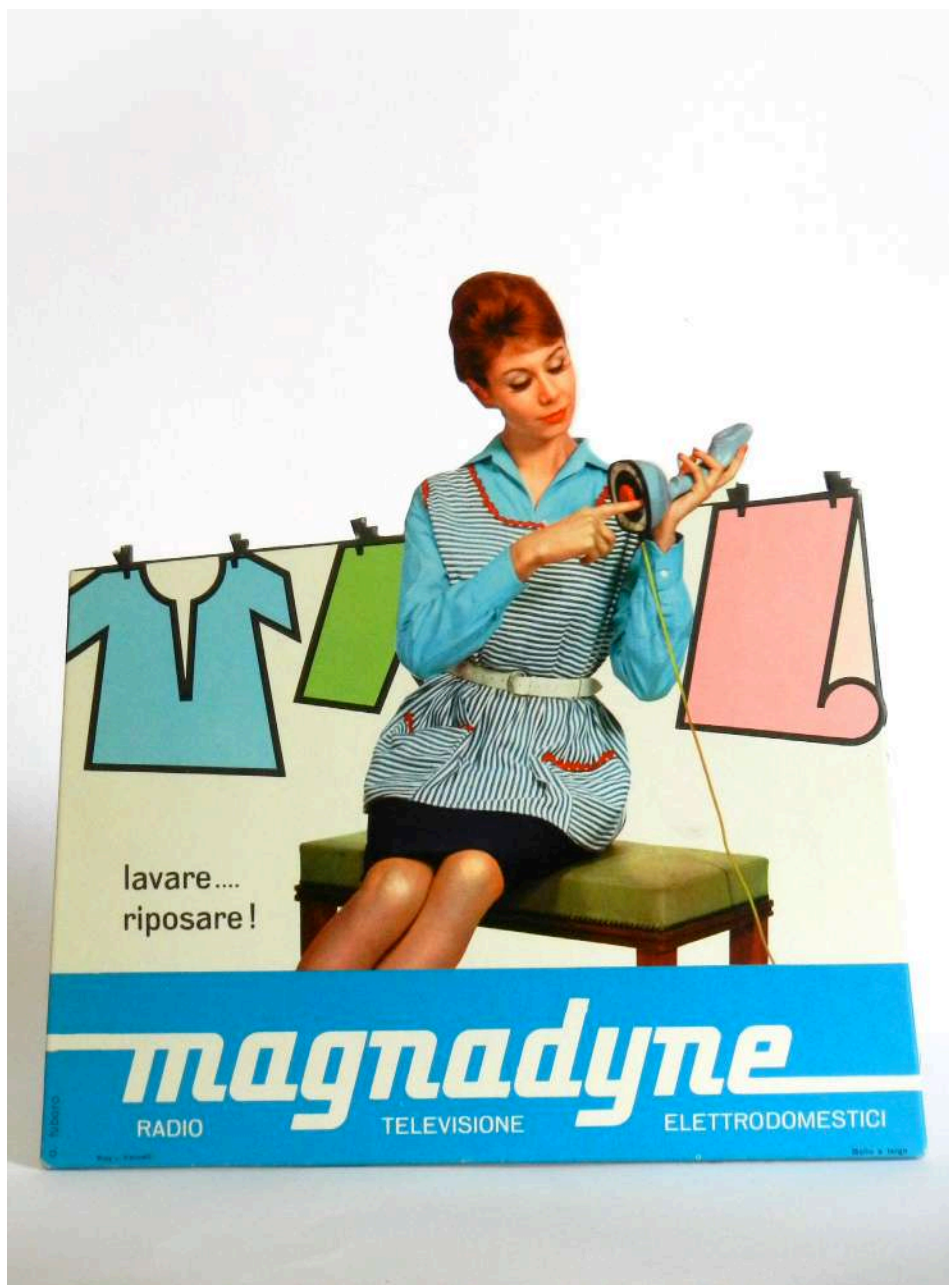
Figure 4. Antonio Tubaro, shaped counter display, Magnadyne, 1962 ca., courtesy Aiap CDPG.

Figure 5. Silvio Coppola (art director), Serge Libiszewski (photo), poster "Vestire il futuro vestirlo di colori", Laminati Plastici-Formica, 1968, courtesy Aiap CDPG.

Figure 6. Walter Ballmer, poster "Copia II", Olivetti, 1966, courtesy Aiap CDPG.

Figure 7. Enrico Trabacchi (art director), Oliviero Toscani (photo), advertisement, C&B Italia, 1972, courtesy Aiap CDPG.

The semi-clad Jordan and the sexual passivity of her poses make her the epitome of the to-be-looked-at female" (Rossi, 2009, p. 252).

To more in-depth discussing the male-gaze theme, it is interesting to observe the illustrative work of Jeanne Grignani for Necchi (Fig. 3). She used to draw women who look into the eyes the observer, inviting the spectator to look at with provocative poses. On the opposite, Lora Lamm's work is where the female bodies are nearly abstracts, synthetically drawn, with no explicit reference to forms or age (Bucchetti, 2016).

However, the objective of the exhibition was not to compose a gallery of artefacts to be demonised, but rather to re-read them from a different point of view, recognising their value and quality and at the same time having in mind the context in which they were created. The goal was to emphasise history and sources as indispensable tools for re-reading and interpreting our present. The sources and the places of their conservation – the archives, the places of memory – offer the possibility and allow to work on different research paths, always new, even on contemporary issues.

Archives as a memory to counter stereotypes, as evidence to return the kaleidoscope of characters, styles and design languages that contributed to visual communication as we can intend it today. In this sense, it is appropriate to quote Giovanni Baule's words (2005), commented by Bulegato (2013, p. 104): "Our 'need for memory' is a requirement as the design world risks going adrift in contemporary communica-

tion-based society. And the memory housed in archives is the memory of the future".[5]

3. The Role of the Sources

Baule's words offer a key to understanding the activities of the Aiap CDPG dedicated to archival heritage. In spring 2019 the CDPG launched a project for the description and enhancement of the archives kept, with a co-financing from Regione Lombardia and the collaboration of the Master on Digital Archives FGCAD, the doctorate Memories and Digital Humanities and the Ibridamente.it project of the University of Macerata. This brief report aims to illustrate the methodology adopted and the results achieved, with particular attention to the forms of PINK project dissemination and enhancement of the archival sources preserved by Aiap: an exhibition path and an encounter open to citizenship were born from the finding aids created by Aiap, consistent with the themes of "Archivissima 2020" and "Creativa 2020. I talenti delle donne" ("Creativa 2020. The talents of women"), respectively promoted by ANAI – Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana (National Italian Archival Association) and the Municipality of Milan.

An archive is always a complex system. A particularly and eloquent noun and adjective: the term "complex" derives from the Latin *complector*, girders, keeping tightly bound. By metaphorical extension, the word expresses embracing, understanding, uniting everything in itself, bringing it together un-

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5   Original text: "Il nostro 'bisogno di memoria' è l'esigenza in un mondo del progetto che rischia la deriva nella società della comunicazione. E la memoria degli archivi è la memoria del futuro".

der a single thought and a single denomination. From which link, network, network of relations.

Archives are the documentary by-product of human activity retained for their long-term value.

They are contemporary records created by individuals and organisations as they take care of their business and therefore provide us with a direct window on past events. This is the authoritative definition by ICA, International Council on Archives. So, archives are complex systems of all records, regardless of the form or medium: complex systems of records created, received, accumulated and used by a person, family or corporate body in the course of the activities and functions of their creator.

The Italian for "Creator" in the archival language is "Soggetto produttore": who produced that precise, organised system. Archives can be composed in a wide range of formats, and Aiap CDPG testifies this multidimensionality of format, organisation, and contents. Aiap is both the custodian of archives produced by different creators and the creator of new archival complexes, including the archive of the association which boasts over 50 years of activity.

Hans Tuppy, the internationally renowned biochemist, opened the four-year ICA congress in 2004 and presented the archives as DNA, the molecule par excellence: the molecule of memory. Let's try to formulate an example starting from the archive concept as the DNA of society and its being a democratic tool. To be of value to society archives must be a trusted resource, and to achieve this, they must have the four qualities.

244

Authenticity: the record is what it claims to be, created at the time documented, and the person that the document claims to be created by. Reliability: records are accurately representing the event, although it will be through the view of the person or organisation creating that document. Integrity: the content is sufficient to give a coherent picture. Usability: records must be in an accessible location and usable condition, over time and through the time. The action of Aiap CDPG for its archival heritage took place in this scenario, reflecting on the famous five laws of Ranganathan[6] declined in an archival way: 1. Records are for use; 2. Every person his or her record; 3. Every records its user; 4. Save the time of the user; 5. The archive is a growing organism.

Aiap CDPG as a service for preservation, research, enhancement. What is the basis? A massive operation of description, of creation of finding aids. Only with a competent description and organisation operation, the archival heritage becomes a shared asset at the community's service.

Only in this way, the Aiap DNA becomes accessible and investigable. And to support the user audience, "compasses" are needed: multi-level tools, different finding aids as a guide to Aiap fonds, and inventories for each archive kept. The first year of collaboration between Aiap and the University of Macerata produced two results: a guide and an inventory, the latter dedicated to the Tubaro archive, involved in the PINK exhibition.

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6   Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan (1892-1972), Indian librarian and educator who was considered the father of library science in India and whose contributions had worldwide influence. His "Five Laws of Library Science" (1931) was widely accepted as a definitive statement of the ideal of library service: 1. Books are for use, 2. Every person his or her book, 3. Every book its reader, 4. Save the time of the reader, 5. The library is a growing organism.

On the occasion of PINK, the Aiap heritage also became the subject of a thematic podcast for the "Sound Atlas of Italian Archives", a dissemination project dedicated to archival sources: in the podcast – titled "When the archive is a need"[7] – the story is dedicated to the Aiap fonds. Created to highlight women's presence in graphic design, the podcast traces Claudia Morgagni's profile through the voice of a potential user – Valentina de Poli, journalist and copywriter – who tells about materials, studies, perspectives and emotions caused by contact with the archive.

Acknowledgements

7   Original title: "Quando l'archivio è esigenza"; credits: text and voice Valentina de Poli, producer Matteo Scandolin, publisher Archivissima.

Links

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Her interest involves visual and gender identities in communication design field. She studies theoretical aspects of identity systems and their communication components and developed projects of basic and applied research. She is a member of the Ph.D Design board and of "Centro di Ricerca interuniversitario Culture di genere".

She won the "Compasso d'Oro" Design Award as co-author of the project for the multimedia catalogue of the Poldi Pezzoli Museum (Milan, 1995) and received Honourable Mention, Compasso d'Oro ADI (XXV), for the project "WeMi. La città per il welfare". She is author of several books: *La messa in scena del prodotto* (1999), *Packaging design* (2005), *Altre figure. Intorno alle figure di argomentazione* (2011), *Anticorpi comunicativi* (2012), *Un'interfaccia per il welfare* (2017), *Progetto e culture visive* (2018).

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She's author of books and essays published on national and international journals: she's also part of editorial committees, observatories and European projects. She lives and works in Sicily, which is a continent, rather than just an island.
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Co-founder of *PAD. Pages on Arts & Design* journal, since 2011 she has been the PAD editor in chief. Since 2015 to 2017 she has been a member of ADI's executive board, and currently coordinates the technical-scientific committee for long-life professional training of design professionals.
Since 2019 she has been a member of the executive committee of *AIS/Design. Storia e Ricerche* scientific journal.
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She has recently joined Lab4Living's 100 Year Life and Future Home project at Sheffield Hallam University. Her doctoral research explores ways to navigate aging and lifecycle changes where embodied shame can be a barrier to agency in co-design. She co-hosts the annual Sheffield Zine Fest and her zines are held in a number of international zine libraries and collections. She performs and exhibits regularly at science, literary and comedy festivals.
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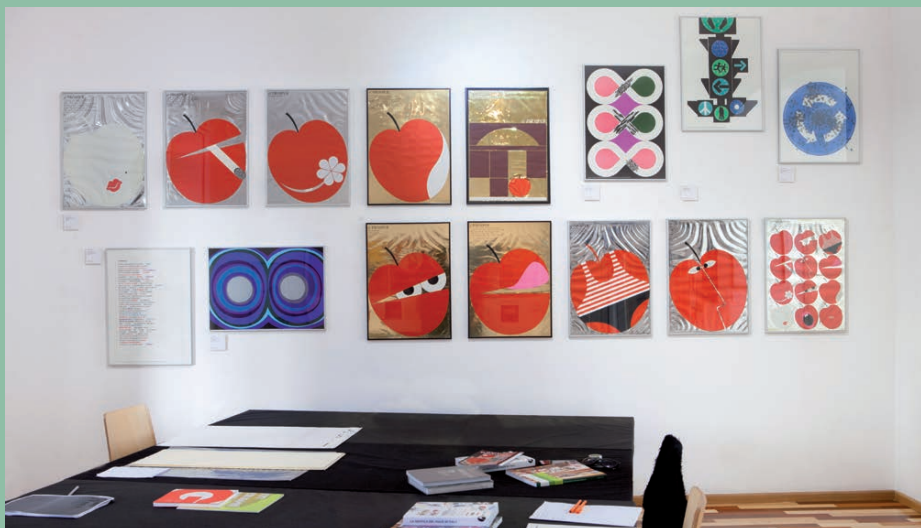

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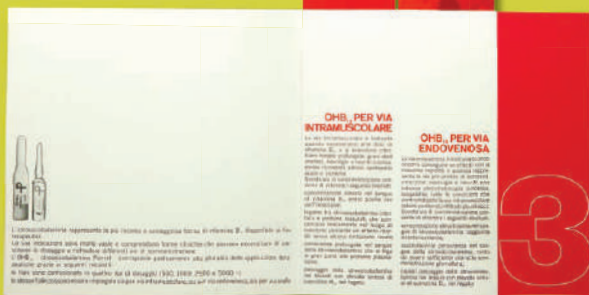
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