

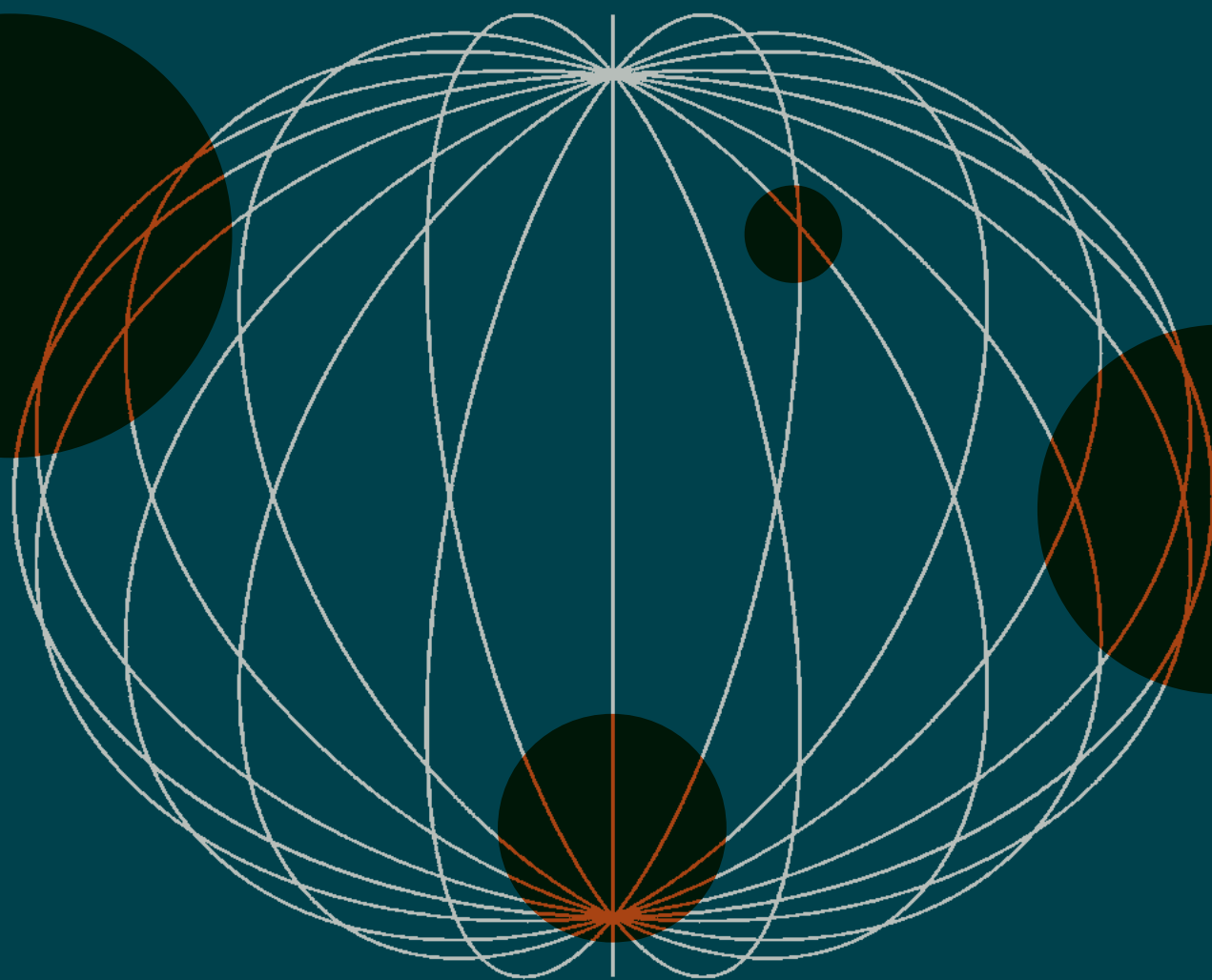
---

Ais/Design  
Journal

---

**Storia e Ricerche**

---



**GEOGRAFIE RELAZIONALI NELLA STORIA DEL DESIGN**

---

---

**AIS/DESIGN JOURNAL  
STORIA E RICERCHE**

Rivista on line, a libero  
accesso e peer-reviewed  
dell'Associazione Italiana  
degli Storici del Design  
(AIS/Design)

**VOL. 8 / N. 15  
OTTOBRE 2021**

**GEOGRAFIE RELAZIONALI  
NELLA STORIA DEL DESIGN**

**ISSN**  
2281-7603

**PERIODICITÀ**  
Semestrale

**SEDE LEGALE**  
AIS/Design  
Associazione Italiana  
degli Storici del Design  
via Candiani, 10  
20158 Milano

**CONTATTI**  
[caporedattore@aisdesign.org](mailto:caporedattore@aisdesign.org)

**WEB**  
[www.aisdesign.org/ser/](http://www.aisdesign.org/ser/)

**DISEGNO IN FRONTEPIZZO**  
Mario Piazza

---

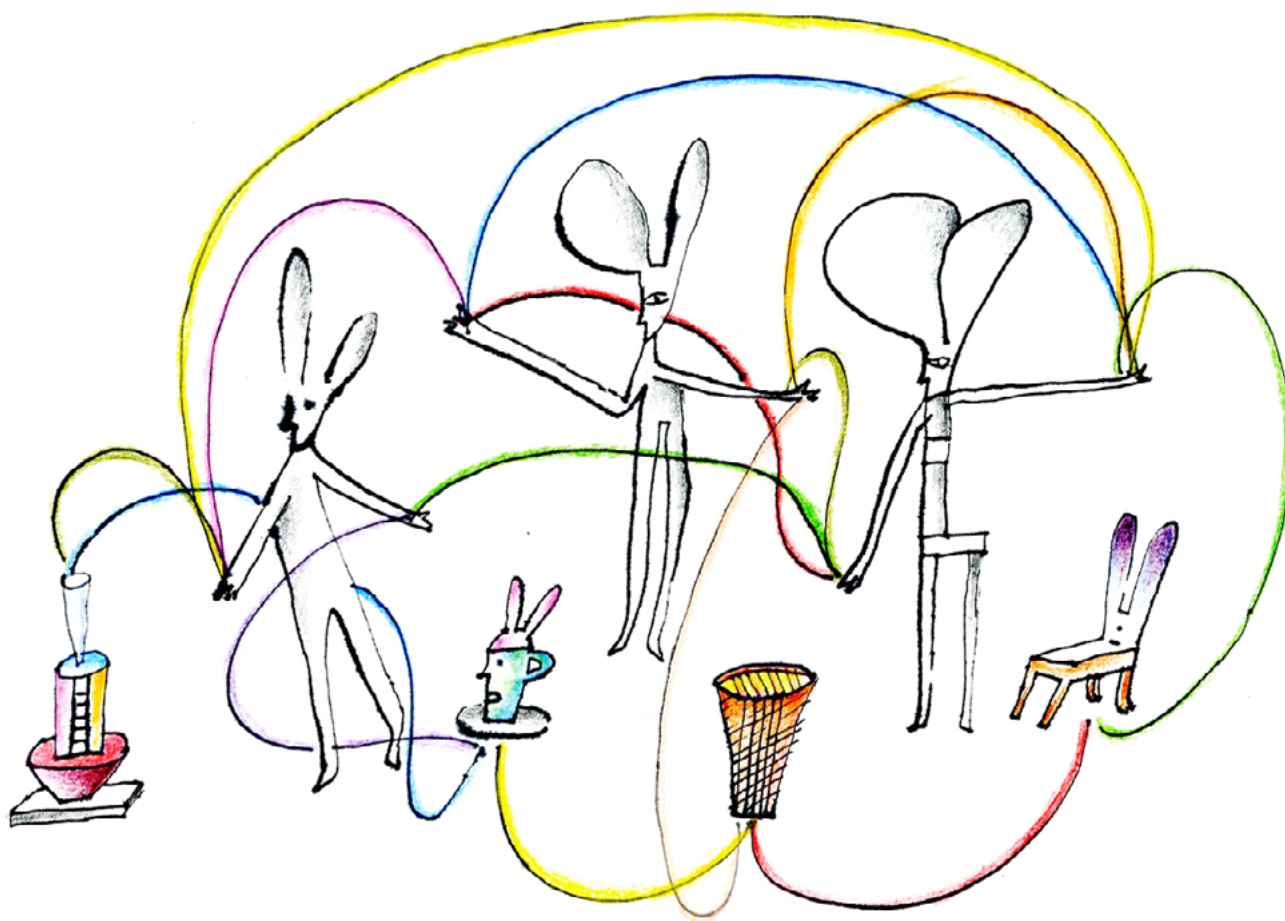
---

Ais/Design  
Journal

---

# Storia e Ricerche

---



**DIRETTORE** Raimonda Riccini, Università Iuav di Venezia  
direttore@aisdesign.org

---

**COMITATO DI DIREZIONE** Marinella Ferrara, Politecnico di Milano  
Francesco E. Guida, Politecnico di Milano  
Mario Piazza, Politecnico di Milano  
Paola Proverbio, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano  
editors@aisdesign.org

---

**COORDINAMENTO  
REDAZIONALE** Chiara Lecce, Politecnico di Milano  
caporedattore@aisdesign.org

---

**COMITATO SCIENTIFICO** Giovanni Anceschi  
Helena Barbosa, Universidade de Aveiro  
Alberto Bassi, Università Iuav di Venezia  
Fiorella Bulegato, Università Iuav di Venezia  
Giampiero Bosoni, Presidente AIS/design, Politecnico di Milano  
Maddalena Dalla Mura, Università Iuav di Venezia  
Elena Dellapiana, Politecnico di Torino  
Grace Lees-Maffei, University of Hertfordshire  
Kjetil Fallan, University of Oslo  
Priscila Lena Farias, Universidade de São Paulo  
Silvia Fernandez, Nodo Diseño América Latina  
Jonathan Mekinda, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Gabriele Monti, Università Iuav di Venezia  
Catharine Rossi, Kingston University  
Susan Yelavich, Parsons The New School  
Carlo Vinti, Università di Camerino

---

**REDAZIONE** Letizia Bollini, Libera Università di Bolzano  
Rossana Carullo, Politecnico di Bari  
Rosa Chiesa, Università Iuav di Venezia  
Paola Cordera, Politecnico di Milano  
Luciana Gunetti, Politecnico di Milano  
Alfonso Morone, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II  
Susanna Parlato, Sapienza Università di Roma  
Monica Pastore, Università Iuav di Venezia  
Isabella Patti, Università degli studi di Firenze  
Teresita Scalco, Archivio Progetti, Università Iuav di Venezia  
Eleonora Trivellin, Università degli studi di Firenze  
Benedetta Terenzi, Università degli Studi di Perugia

---

**ART DIRECTOR** Francesco E. Guida, Politecnico di Milano  
Daniele Savasta, Yasar Üniversitesi, İzmir

---

---

<b>EDITORIALE</b>	<b>GEOGRAFIE RELAZIONALI NELLA STORIA DEL DESIGN</b> Marinella Ferrara, Francesco E. Guida & Paola Proverbio	9
<hr/>		
<b>RICERCHE</b>	<b>SAVILE ROW IN SICILIA.</b> <b>INFLUENZE ED INTERFERENZE TRA LE DUE ISOLE NEL SETTORE DELLA SARTORIA MASCHILE OTTOCENTESCA EUROPEA</b> Giovanni Maria Conti	21
	<b>GEOGRAFIE RELAZIONALI DEL DESIGN CATALANO: DAL CENTRO ALLA PERIFERIA E RITORNO</b> Paolo Bagnato	31
	<b>LINA BO BARDI E LA CULTURA DELL'ABITARE IN ITALIA: DAL SOGNO ALL'ABBANDONO (1939-1946)</b> Raissa D'Uffizi	49
	<b>POLITICIZZARE IL MADE IN ITALY MILANESE: GIORGIO CORREGGIARI E LA MODA TRANSNAZIONALE NEGLI ANNI SETTANTA E OTTANTA</b> Débora Russi Frasquete	72
	<b>COESISTENZA, APPROPRIAZIONE, IDENTITÀ. DESIGN GIAPPONESE TRA ANNI TRENTA E SESSANTA: TREND GLOBALI E CULTURA LOCALE NEGLI EVENTI INTERNAZIONALI</b> Claudia Tranti	91
	<b>EUROPEAN PIONEERS OF SÃO PAULO CITY LETTERPRESS PRINTING: GERMAN, ITALIAN, PORTUGUESE AND FRENCH IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO BRAZILIAN PRINT CULTURE</b> Jade Samara Piaia, Fabio Mariano Cruz Pereira & Priscila Lena Farias	111
	<b>MAPPING DESIGN METHODS: A REFLECTION ON PROJECT CULTURES</b> Valentina Auricchio & Maria Göransdotter	132
<hr/>		
<b>MICROSTORIE</b>	<b>IL BAR CRAJA (1930): DESIGN TOTALE PER UN INTERNO MILANESE (DA ROVERETO A BERLINO)</b> Leyla Ciagà	149
	<b>DA MEMPHIS A TOTEM: L'ASSE LIONE-MILANO NELL'IDENTITÀ DEL DESIGN FRANCESE DEGLI ANNI '80</b> Pia Rigaldiès	165
	<b>LA NEW WAVE ITALIANA? DALLE ESPERIENZE DIDATTICHE INTERNAZIONALI DI WOLFGANG WEINGART ALLE MANIFESTAZIONI DEL CENTRO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE DI PALAZZO FORTUNY</b> Monica Pastore	184
	<b>IBERO-AMERICAN 1980S ROCK ALBUM COVER DESIGN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY</b> Paulo Moretto & Priscila Lena Farias	200
<hr/>		
<b>VISUAL ESSAY</b>	<b>A VISUAL NARRATIVE OF THE TYPOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE JAPANESE DISTRICT OF SÃO PAULO CITY</b> Eduardo Araújo de Ávila	217

---

---

<b>RILETTURE</b>	<b>ICSID. UN «BRIDGE BETWEEN WORLDS»</b> Raimonda Riccini	236
	<b>ICSID A DUBLINO. IL DESIGNER VA DALLO PSICANALISTA</b> Franco Raggi	240
	<b>PEDALANDO SUL TRATTORE. TECNOLOGIE AD HOC PER IL TERZO MONDO</b> Victor Papanek	246

---

<b>RECENSIONI</b>	<b>DICIOTTO STORIE PER UNA CONTROSTORIA DELLA CULTURA TECNOLOGICA DEL PROGETTO</b> Fabiana Marotta	254
-------------------	---	-----

---

<b>IN MEMORIA</b>	<b>OMAGGIO AD ANNA CALVERA</b> <b>IL DESIGN NEL RAPPORTO TRA PAESI DEL NORD E DEL SUD</b> Anty Pansera	263
-------------------	--	-----

# Mapping Design Methods

## A Reflection on Design Histories for Contemporary Design Practices

**VALENTINA AURICCHIO**

Politecnico di Milano

Orcid ID 0000-0003-2138-5854

**MARIA GÖRANSDOTTER**

Umeå Institute of Design

Politecnico di Milano

Orcid ID 0000-0002-9001-0987

*This article outlines a direction for a research endeavour bringing together design research and design historical research from a perspective of contemporary design methods. There is a need to probe and question the histories and geographies of design's methods, to explore how they could contribute to expanding conceptual foundations and develop new ways of designing.*

*We are proposing a programmatic framework that brings design methods to the attention of design history, and to historicity of design in design practices, by sketching a map, a geography in time, to move toward a deeper understanding of the evolution of methods linked to the specific cultures and contexts from which they emerge. It is a starting point for a wider research project, an example bringing design historical and design methodological research agendas closer to each other. Starting from interviews with Italian designers we highlight the need for a deeper and continued investigation into design histories of design methods.*

### KEYWORDS

Design Culture

Cultura del progetto

Design History

Design Methods

Design Theory

### 1. Introduction

From the turn of the century 2000, and during the following decades, design teaching and practice in Italy has seen a rapid introduction of new design tools, methods and processes. This is due to many factors linked to the evolution of project culture and techno-sciences but perhaps in particular due to the introduction of service design processes (Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011; Stickdorn et al., 2011; Stickdorn et al., 2018) and the more recent integration of Design Thinking models within innovation processes (Cross, 2006; Martin, 2009; Zurlo, 2019). While new methods and processes enter the discipline there is also a need for a reflection on how design schools in Italy can support the formation of future practitioners, building on the history of the past, while engaging with global transformations and future challenges (Auricchio, 2018).

In fact, if we on the one hand are witnessing a fruitful international exchange of knowledge in search of a common international design language, on the

other hand there is also a risk of standardization and homologation of design methods, evolving into what can be understood as a singular and universal design model (way of designing). This global adoption of methodologies that build on a specific idea of what *the* design process would be brings about a sort of design imperialism disregarding the cultural and ontological differences that could instead enrich the debate and development of methods and thinking in design in general (Escobar, 2018).

Here, we argue that contemporary designing needs a deeper understanding of the history of design methods: where they come from, from which local 'project culture' they have sprung, in which time and context, and how they have evolved in time and space when becoming incorporated into design (Göransdotter & Redström, 2018). As the contexts and complexities that design practices move into continue to expand and change, the materials, methods and agencies at work in designing also need to change. Opening up and unpacking design's conceptual foundations is key in critically addressing how designing can continue to evolve and respond to emerging contemporary and future situations (Redström, 2017). Taking the Italian context as a geographical starting point, our aim here is to sketch an example of how the approach of making design histories from the perspectives of design methods can be one way of addressing core concepts and practices in designing. Addressing foundational ideas in doing design thus responds to matters of concern and contestation in contemporary design practices through introducing design history as crucial to developing future practices. The current a-historicity within design as a discipline has led to a loss of view of the temporal, situated, and intellectual cultures (the *cultura del progetto*) that have given shape to design's current practices and foundational concepts. Therefore, making design histories that take a starting point in why and where design methods once have come about can open up spaces for critically re-thinking what design can become, while also contributing to make visible aspects of "design" that have so far not been addressed in design history (Göransdotter, 2020; Riccini 2001).

As the field of design history over time has emerged and formed internationally, the geographical trajectories of industrial design's history have largely been traced in a Global North-Western setting. Typically, "international" design histories from Pevsner (1936) and onwards have drawn maps of events, movements, ideas and products that to a high extent have highlighted Anglo-Saxon, American and Germanic contexts and understandings of design. These histories tend to include the occasional detour towards 1950s Scandinavia and 1960s Italy, but seldom moving beyond Europe and



the US, and with certain kinds of objects, practices and contexts coming into view while others remain unseen. These kinds of “grand narrative” of the history of industrial design have been criticized out of its narrow understanding both of geographies, and of design cultures (Fallan, 2012; Fallan & Lees-Maffei, 2016; Julier et al., 2019; Lees-Maffei & Fallan, 2013). Over the past decades, the questioning of how – and from where – design history has been told, has resulted in design historical narratives that highlight specific cultures, projects, agendas and outcomes of designing, expanding the geographies of design histories to include many more geographical contexts (Margolin, 2015). Such histories have not only aimed towards a sort of inclusive cartography of design histories, in which the blank spaces of the map are filled in with other relevant designers, objects, contexts and cultures than “the usual”. But this has also raised questions about design historiography, about what counts as “design”, and what would be relevant histories of design. While giving rise to increasingly diverse and critical perspectives of what and whom to include in histories of design, many of these attempts at covering new relevant historical terrain simultaneously have established design history as something that has its main attention geared towards *outcomes* and *meanings* of design rather than on the historicity of contemporary *practices* and *processes* of designing.

Of course, there neither is nor should be only one way of approaching design historical studies (Dalla Mura & Vinti, 2014). Our point here, is that while design historical research continues to contribute immensely to not only mapping and redefining diverse and critical aspects of design’s past, it has not yet really engaged with some of the core contemporary critical issues in design research and design practice. Therefore, rather than taking a design historical approach that begins with an idea of filling in the white areas of an already existing map over design’s historical and geographical trajectory, a cartography of design’s history needs to be made from a completely different perspective, to support critical transformations towards sustainable and just practices and knowledges in and through design (Abdulla et al., 2019). As design practice and design education moves towards actively searching for ways of designing that can support addressing increasingly complex futures, the old maps of where design comes from are of little help in orienting ourselves in an expanding “now”, or in finding ways of moving forward from here. In order to provide other tools, other cartographies, that could support a shift into other kinds of topographies of design culture and design practice, the ways we narrate and draw our maps of the past can provide an opening in which to explore how contemporary core design concepts and methods work.

## 2. Design's historicity

In designing, projects and situations are set up and carried out with methods, tools and processes that have been invented or incorporated in design at different points in time and place. Design methods and the fundamental concepts these are based on carry expectations, values and definitions of design that stem from other times and situations than those where designing takes place today. While this means that design's ways of working are historical, its methods and concepts often seem to be approached as if they were timeless or neutral. When these methods and processes operate, they support ensuring that certain types of design outcomes are brought forth as responses or solutions to problems. At the same time, these ways of working also perpetuate implicit understandings of design's foundations and frameworks: what design is perceived to be, is established through the ways that design is done, as well as through the manners in which design's histories are told.

Ways of doing industrial design have come about over approximately a hundred years, with concepts and methods evolving along the way. The specific societal contexts, world views, and understandings in which design has taken shape have influenced how its methods have been formed and formulated. Industrial design was once called into being in response to massive changes in scale and perspective brought about through the societal transitions towards industrialisation, mechanisation, and expanding modes of communication (Dilnot, 2015, p. 116). New contexts and situations, and new modes of acting and thinking called for different responses than before, in which early formulations of industrial design addressed the separation of form-giving from making and producing from consuming. Traditional ways of living and working, including craft-based forms of production, were challenged in the shift from an agrarian to an industrial socio-economic system, as this played out in European and Northern American contexts in which today's dominant design paradigms took form.

With design's coming of age in symbiosis with industrialism, the world views, technologies, economies, societal practices and social norms that took form also shaped the development of design's areas of practice. Ideas and values relating to these contexts have, however, over time, become deeply embedded in designing and continue to impact what is possible to do, and to think, in design. Thus, many design methods and processes are based on concepts that carry built-in norms, values and assumptions stemming from times and situations very different from the ones we find ourselves in. This means that many of the contemporary values and contexts that shape our present-day

understandings, ambitions, and motivations for what we expect design to be able to address, are potentially at odds with the conceptual foundations guiding and shaping design practices. The methods and tools that have been continuously developed to handle design issues, largely out of a Western and global North 20th century industrial and societal context, are not always well suited anymore for supporting and expanding the possibilities of designing in light of the increasing complexities of the post-industrial world of the 21st century (Escobar, 2018; Fry et al., 2015).

As design has gradually expanded into situations quite different from those in which it once was called into being, the development of design methods has also shifted emphasis in order to support handling new types of complexities and constellations in designing. In designing, attention has increasingly moved from product to process. If early industrial design strongly focused on *what* to design, developing methods suited for formgiving for industrial mass-production, a processual emphasis instead questions *how* to design. Now, once again, we seem to experience ourselves as living in a time of unprecedented change in regard to scale, complexity, and social transformation, leading to new demands on and contexts for design. Designing systems and services - or indeed products - with complex computing-based technologies, in collaborations and contestations between designers and non-designers, and engaging with other-than-human species bring about situations and considerations that call for other understanding of how to design (Forlano 2017). As design expands and moves into situations that require addressing other materials, relationships and connections than before, the methods and tools at hand seem to become increasingly difficult to apply.

### 3. Histories of design methods

The field of industrial design has continued to change and adapt in response to societal changes and to new understandings of what “things” could be (A.Telier, 2011; Wiltse & Redström, 2018). The development, testing and incorporation of specific methods, tools and processes for handling new design materials, contexts, situations, and scales have been central to these shifts. Different ways of doing design have gradually taken shape to meet new demands and developments in the environments where industrial design has rooted itself. Design has continued its movement into areas of planning and giving form not only to industrially (mass)manufactured products and environments but to increasingly interconnected systems and services, experiences and interactions, and with increasing attention to how people go about using them.

New situations will most certainly continue to call new types of design into being in near and far futures. Therefore, design's methods and tools need to provide resilient ways of adapting to new practices, as well as to support taking action and making choices based on what appears as possible. However, in current industrial design education and practice, the methods and processes taught and applied are seldom considered as having something to do with history. Instead, the processes and methods used in designing are often presented, and taught, as an assembly of tools in the designer's basic tool kit. The British Design Council, for example, visualises the design process as a "double diamond" model accompanied by a "methods bank" that can be applied to address practically any problem (Design Council, n.d.). In this kind of understanding, design methods seem to be thought of as universal, timeless, and applicable to any cultural or geographical situation. Indeed, there are critical discussions about which types of designing different methods or tools support, or not, and how to go about deciding which methods to use in different situations. But these seldom include critically engaging with what it means for designing that the methods, concepts and approaches we use have come about in particular historical contexts to deal with situations specific to the times and places where this happened. There are examples of design research that incorporate historical perspectives on concepts central to designing (Fuad-Luke, 2009; Huppertz, 2020) and also design historical research that activates methods-oriented and critical perspectives bringing forth new kinds of design histories (Rosner, 2018; Wright Steenson, 2017).

As a result of the a-historicity of design, design - and "design thinking" - has begun to become more and more perceived as a set of tools that can be easily applied by more or less everyone in any circumstance (Mootee, 2013). While this inclusive view on designing most surely has opened up for collaborative ways of designing that has brought others than "designers" into practicing design, this has also been criticized as giving form to what has been defined as the *toolism* process of the profession (Zurlo, 2019). A similar instance can be recalled in the history of design methods when in 1966, in his chapter Creativity, Broadbent (1966) depicted a similar risk by pointing out that design methods are often times more fascinated by the means rather than by the ends. Although many could probably readily agree with the proposal that everyone has a capacity for designing, and that creativity is the widely held human ability to modify behaviours and adapt to the changing environment, "designers" are simultaneously pointed to as holding a specific kind of advanced creativity in terms of being design practitioners in their daily profession (i.e. creative professionals and designers).

As Manzini (2015) states in the introduction to his book *Design when everybody designs*, “[...] design capability is a widespread human capacity, to be usable it must be cultivated. This does not usually happen, or it happens in an inadequate way” (Manzini, 2015). In this perspective, professional experience in designing with non-designers cannot only consist of introducing or sharing design methods and tools without addressing issues of how to achieve a collective design mind-set. While design researchers have already tried to describe what is meant by a design mind-set (Kolko 2017; Michlewski, 2015), there is a need to better understand the specificity of such mind-set also in relation to local culture and, more specifically to local design cultures: where methods and tools come from and why and how certain design methodologies have developed in time in specific situations. Giving context to today’s methodologies by unfolding the origins of design methods, from Bauhaus teachings to the Italian avant-garde movements, from design science theories to the recent design thinking tools, is a process that needs to be activated in order to both tackle the future evolutions stated above, but also to encourage a more conscious use of methods building on the historical diversity of the origins of approaches and design cultures.

#### **4. Design culture and methods in Italy**

In design education, when teaching design methods, there are ample resources that introduce and discuss different design tools (Curedale, 2012 and a long list of toolkits such as Design Kit by IDEO, Human Centered Design Tool Kit, DIY Toolkit, Collective Action Tool Kit by FROG, Inclusive Design Toolkit, Service Design Toolkit, etc.) but very few works that allow for a historical understanding of their evolution (Collina, 2005; Cross, 2011; Manzini & Bertola, 2004). In particular, in Italy, studies around design methods mainly rely on publications written by designers themselves trying to explain how they think and how they work (De Lucchi, 2014; Munari, 1977; Munari, 1981), monographs of individual designers or industries that mainly discuss the circumstances of when and how projects developed (Finessi, 2015; Zurlo, 2003), or interviews with designers and entrepreneurs that investigate the back-stories of networks, relationships and projects (Alessi, 2014; Biamonti, 2012; Castelli et al., 2007). However, very little has been done to discuss design practices on a higher level of abstraction, whether attempting to transform the process in a codified and replicable model or attempting to open up for rethinking what designing could become. This might have to do with the fact that Italian design culture has largely based its evolution on a traditional artistic and crafts-based model of the passing on of design practices from master to pupil, however, at an international level it has left a gap in the consolidation and

diffusion of tools, processes and ways of thinking. Another possible explanation might be the lack of historical perspectives in and on contemporary designing. In Italy, the turn towards developing industrial design practices has a strong history of critically questioning *why* to develop new ways to do design in relation to socio-political issues as well as to intellectual and artistic tradition. The critical experimentations within the counter-design and avant-garde arts movements of the 1960s, 70s and 80s did not primarily aim to develop certain methodologies of designing, but to probe what design as a philosophical, intellectual, political and material practice could contribute with in re-framing and re-shaping ways of living and forms of knowledge. Introducing design methodologies developed in response to other cultural, political and historical situations (such as “design thinking” or usability-centred designing) into a more philosophically and epistemologically oriented design culture therefore causes certain tensions or discrepancies that would merit a deeper investigation.

Hence there is a research gap that could be addressed through bringing design history and design practice closer to each other. To examine this closer, we can start by observing design practices in Italy today, focusing specifically on those that have become understood as characterizing Italian design and that have been passed down through generations, in a master-to-apprentice model building on learning by listening, observing and doing. These practices have rarely been codified academically, nor have they been transformed into DIY tools, but rather have been learnt through imitation: observing how and why things were done and made, through the storytelling of designers and entrepreneurs. These stories have been documented mainly only in Italian through interviews, books and newspapers outside of the strictly defined academic and scientific documentation.

The kind of study we propose is based on the belief that there is a hidden and tacit knowledge in design practice in Italy that has not yet been digitized nor is easy to be found by a simple internet research, rather, it takes studying archival material in personal archives and in libraries, in interviews and articles in historical journals such as *Casabella*, *Domus*, *Progettare InPiù*, *Modo*, *Stile Industria* and *Ottagono*, and in books written in Italian that have never reached an international audience. A large part of such a study would also include oral histories, through interviewing designers in design situations (Cross, 1996; Cross, 2004; Dorst et al., 1995; Dorst, 1997; Lawson, 1980; Lloyd & Scott, 1994; Rowe, 1987; Roy, 1993; Schon, 1983) focusing on how they think, how they approach a project and see if it is possible to trace some

patterns and build outcomes that can be replicated, taught and transmitted to a larger public.

The urgency to undertake this kind of study in Italy, in this specific historical moment, comes from observing the recent evolution of design education in Italy as influenced by an international design culture, which eventually will lead to a transformation of an Italian design culture that interestingly, over time, has come to bring together elements of traditional crafts-oriented designing with strong critical and experimental design movements probing the conceptual foundations of designing (Ambasz, 1972; Branzi, 1984). In fact, the more recent integration of design tools and methods within a more traditional design teaching context might need a deeper reflection to better understand how this transformation is taking place and what we might risk unintentionally leaving behind within this process.

Probing the histories of both “traditional” Italian design doing, and those of seemingly “international” industrial design methods can highlight the spaces that could open up for how to approach practicing design differently. This includes educating future designers capable of addressing emerging global complexities, while also preserving and evolving the specific socio-political, geographical and cultural components and aspects that are a part of past and current Italian design practices.

#### **4.1 Example: labs without an end and free thinking**

In the following, we give an example of what a historical perspective that takes a starting point in contemporary design methods can shed light on. This example targets a specific aspect of Italian design culture that has emerged from intertwining different typologies of historical documents with interviews with contemporary designers. This brief example alone suggests openings for four research opportunities: the first is that there are still many aspects of design processes and design thinking that would need to be further unpacked; the second is that introducing a design historical perspective on design methods allows for making visible and re- or de-activating certain values and ideas embedded in contemporary designing; the third is that understanding the history of an approach or method can allow us to refine – or re-define – it in providing resilient ways of adapting to new future practices; the fourth is that a research on the history of design methods today requires a multi-level, multi-perspectival and multi-disciplinary approach in which bringing design research and design history closer is a first necessary step.

We will start from a group of Italian researchers (Borgonuovo & Franceschini, 2015) that have conducted a similar study with the aim to unfold the hidden story of Global Tools - a series of workshops held in Florence, Milan and Naples from 1973 to 1975. Borgonuovo and Franceschini (2015) present the history of “this tentative attempt to realize an experimental dispersed educational program that would serve as an alternative to the university as an institutional model of reference.” (Borgonuovo & Franceschini, 2015, p. 3). In relation to how design histories could make contributions to contemporary design education, an instance such as the Global Tools experience can become even more interesting if examined from a design methods history point of view. The architects, artists and designers involved in this experimental endeavour were proposing a radically different way of teaching and learning design. Central, and perhaps more importantly seen in relation to current design research and design practice, they were proposing a model that was based on “labs without a final end”, introduced within design education to open up free thinking moments as essential blocks within a design process. Basically, these worked as a workshop without a specific productive goal, without a client, and with no productive aim:

In *Document No. 2* of the first *bollettino* (bulletin) published by Global Tools, “Global Tools” is described as “a system of laboratories for the diffusion of the use of natural materials and techniques and associated behaviours.” The pedagogy which the project initiators wanted to promote was aimed at “solving the long-term problems of environmental formalization, an approach which is often focused only on resolving problems in the short term.” (Borgonuovo & Franceschini, 2015, p. 105)

Taking this as an example, a starting point for our discussion, it would be useful to extrapolate the process and methods behind this specific experience. For example, it would be interesting to probe deeper into the conceptual aspects at work in the idea of *labs without an end* in relation to contemporary design approaches that emphasise open-ended processes of collaborative designing, similar to contemporary proposals in design research (Le Dantec & DiSalvo, 2013; Giaccardi & Redström, 2020).

Connected to this last idea, again examining Italian design history from a methods perspective, we would find different practices that place a strong emphasis on imagination, fantasy and playfulness in relation to designing. These traits are of course also present in other geographical contexts than the Italian, but seem have a prominent position in Italian design culture and



history in relation to being probed, described, experimented with by designers, in contexts of developing design practices (Munari, 1977). One aspect of this often emerges in accounts of Italian designers' practices as an emphasis on *free thinking* throughout the design practice, rather than as a certain phase or step in a systematic design methodology to support "ideation" targeted towards a specific design situation. Sometimes, these examples are presented as a kind of *useless activities* (activities without an end): actions that designers do spontaneously and that feed (exercise) their ongoing creative thinking (*Macchine inutili* - Useless Machines, Munari 1933). Activities such as: collecting random objects just because one finds them interesting, collecting things one randomly finds in the streets or at the seaside and putting them together to see how they give form to unusual structures, collecting bizarre objects and doing it following a theme, etc. While echoing similar approaches in the 1970's Design Methods Movement of introducing chance or randomness in attempting to open up new ways of designing (Jones, 1991, pp. 85-123), this kind of *useless activity* seems to hold a different meaning and place in relation to design methods and design processes in Italian design culture. So, the question for a deeper research and analysis could reflect on if it is to be considered a distinguishing element of this specific design culture, how it relates to design methodologies stemming from other places and traditions as these become introduced in Italian design practice, and how to address this, for example in present and future Italian design education.

This practice of random and spontaneous creative activity is, for example, noted in *The Design of the Castiglioni Brothers* (Scodeller, 2019). There, it is described how the Castiglioni brothers would collect three typologies of objects: objects with a specific function (a collection of tweezers, of scissors, etc.); transformable and foldable objects (for the love towards saving space and time); objects with different materials; curious and special objects; ordinary objects of the past. The Italian design critic Alberto Bassi describes how this collection of anonymous objects has become a constant in Italian design culture, to the point that it has even become a ritual (by other designers) to contribute to Achille Castiglioni's collection of anonymous objects when visiting his studio museum (p. 101). The Castiglioni brothers' methodology is categorized by Scodeller (2019) in terms of research, experimentation and method. Research and experimentation were interpreted in two different ways, one was dedicated to understanding deeply the needs of a client and the other was free from any commissioned work (recalling the idea of free thinking or useless thinking). This constant, as defined by Bassi, within Italian design culture can also be found among contemporary designers that have learnt it

from their masters, either through direct contact or through storytelling, in a learning by imitating process.

In interviews with Italian design practitioners, aiming to probe their approaches to designing in terms of methods, thinking, and processes, examples of similar kinds of random or “useless” doings emerge in the conversations. The Italian designer Francesco Faccin (2019), for example, talks about a similar practice in terms of “proto-design”, defining it as:

Proto-design are all the useless things I do before designing. The beauty of thinking, experimenting, researching, understanding the world without a clear aim or productive objective, but just for the sake of doing it. Learning from the world that surrounds me. Collecting objects I like. The research is never within the design field itself, but always in other fields. (Faccin, 2019)

In recent interviews, both Italian designers Francesco Faccin and Lorenzo Palmeri talk about the importance of having macro-themes in their life which then guide them in different directions in their design profession. This brings us back to the idea in Global Tools of labs that explore global themes without a specific need to achieve a final productive goal, but just for the sake of understanding the world we live in.

Francesco Faccin describes it in his perspective as:

For me, design is a tool for interpreting reality and a pretext for doing other things. So, while working I get in touch with realities, themes, macro-themes that I am interested in investigating. It is the key to access those worlds that interest me at that moment. However, theory always comes later. I need to know things in a non-theoretical way. (Faccin, 2019)

On the other hand, Lorenzo Palmeri explains a similar attitude in his design practice with a different method and process:

Sometimes I have macro-themes that I am passionate about. I enter the macro-theme and consume it. I have three or five macro-themes at the same time, then at some point one goes away because maybe my exploration is over. At the beginning it is a new relationship, I want to know more about it and enter every corner. When I reach saturation, because I have read everything (or I think I have), I have looked from all possible angles and find repetition of concepts or nothing moves anymore and it becomes static, then I understand that it is satu-

rated. So sometimes I go to the bookstore in departments I don't know anything about, or something vaguely attracts me, and I start taking two or three books. I buy them inspired by the title, name, cover and take them home. Then anything that emerges from the macro-themes can become material that I translate into projects. (Palmeri, 2019)

There is a thread that links the approaches described in historical documents related to the Global Tools workshops with the description of thinking in relation to designing that emerges in interviews with contemporary Italian designers. Underneath the stories there are hidden thinking processes and attitudes that build a parallel story of design methods pertinent to a specific design culture. When asked if they have a method, the designers interviewed instinctively denied the idea, but when asked to describe how they work and how they have become who they are professionally they started reflecting on their past, life experiences linked to their personal culture and design masters that have left a mark. While this example is both brief and limited, it nonetheless demonstrates the kinds of outlooks towards histories as well as futures of designing that can be opened up through bringing design history and contemporary design practices together.

### **5. Mapping methods: a programmatic research sketch**

A research aimed at investigating the historicity of design methods requires the collaboration of multiple contributions of scholars engaging in research on design all around the world. Since the research objects, design methods and processes, have evolved over time, undergoing mutations due to the adaptation to diverse project contexts and local cultures, there is a need for a collaborative force to untangle the skein of interrelations and cultural cross-overs. There is not one singular way of doing design, and the histories of designing need to contribute to the many and diverse contexts, constellations and cultures in which designing takes place. Mapping histories of design methods is therefore not primarily a matter of tracing linear historical genealogies of where methods come from, but a complex cartography of multi-level relationships between different design practices, diverse conceptual understandings of design, and various trajectories that designing could take towards the future. Therefore, it will be necessary to explore collaborative ways of doing histories of methods and build formats for investigating the historicity of design methods, to critically engage designers, researchers and design students together in exploring limits and possibilities in existing and emerging design processes and practices.

Building a collaborative platform for prototyping formats for investigating the historicity of design methods will include the mapping of design histories of methods as a starting point for discussions and contributions from international communities of design researchers and design practitioners. This kind of mapping can work as a sort of resilient method bank: investigating aspects of the historical emergence of design methods in relation to societal challenges, to build a deeper understanding of the nature of design methods to support their evolution over time. A map such as this is not meant to be static, or an end result of this study. Quite the contrary: these methods maps aim to support planning as well as performance, and imagination as much as action. In a complex landscape, maps serve to support making one's way through a terrain, relying on the cartographer's representation of a possible trajectory but trusting one's own experience and impressions in moving through the landscape: if a road marked as safe to travel on the map turns out to be flooded and impossible to take in reality, then it makes very little sense to insist on the accuracy and primacy of following the map. Mapping histories of design methods is not about defining *the* correct way to take in practicing design, but to make visible the many alternatives and intersecting paths and possible trajectories that might remain unseen if one only ever takes the largest and most established route. Making other histories, other cartographies, of designing intends to identify possible future trajectories of evolution in order to allow for a more conscious understanding of designing with and in the changing world we live in.

## REFERENCES

- TELIER, A., BINDER, T., DE MICHELIS, G., EHN, P., JACUCCI, G., LINDE, P. & WAGNER, I. (2011). *Design Things*. The MIT Press.
- ABDULLA, D., ANSARI, A., CANLI, E., KESHAVARZ, M., KIEM, M., OLIVEIRA, P., PRADO, L., & SCHULTZ, T. (2019). A Manifesto for Decolonising Design. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 23(3), 129-132.
- ALESSI, C. (2014). *Dopo gli anni Zero: il nuovo design italiano*. Laterza & Figli.
- AMBASZ, E. (Ed.) (1972). *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape: Achievements and Problems of Italian Design*. The Museum of Modern Art.
- AURICCHIO, V. (2018). Agile Education: Luisa Collina on the evolution of Design Schools, AGATHÓN] *International Journal of Architecture, Art and Design*, (3), 213-218.
- BIAMONTI, A. (2012). *Giulio Iacchetti: Research Experiences in Design*. FrancoAngeli.
- BORGONUOVO, V. & FRANCESCHINI, S. (Eds.). (2015). *Global Tools 1973-1975*. SALT/Garanti Kültür AŞ.
- BRANZI, A. (1984). *The Hot House. Italian New Wave Design*. Cambridge, The MIT Press.
- BROADBENT, G. H. (1966). Creativity. In S. Gregory (Ed.), *The Design Method*. Butterworth.
- DALLA MURA, M., & VINTI, C. (2014). A historiography of Italian design. In G. Lees-Maffei & K. Fallan (Eds.), *Made in Italy: Rethinking a Century of Italian Design*. Bloomsbury.
- CASTELLI, G., ANTONELLI, P. & PICCHI, F. (Eds.) (2007). *La fabbrica del design: conversazioni con i protagonisti del design italiano*. Skira.
- COLLINA, L. (2005). *Design e Metaprogetto. Teorie, strumenti, pratiche*. Edizioni POLI.design.
- CROSS, N., & CROSS, A. C. (1996). Winning by design: the methods of Gordon Murray, racing car designer. *Design Studies*, 17(1), 91-107.
- CROSS, N. (2004). Creative thinking by expert designers. *Journal of design research*, 4(2), 162-173.
- CROSS, N. (2006). *Designers ways of knowing*. Springer.
- CROSS, N. (2011). *Design thinking: Understanding how designers think and work*. Berg.
- CUREDALE, R. (2012). *Design methods 1: 200 ways to apply design thinking*. Design Community College Incorporated.
- DE LUCCHI, M. (2014). *Gli attributi dell'architetto*. Corraini Edizioni.
- DESIGN COUNCIL. (n.d.). *What is the framework for innovation? Design Council's evolved Double Diamond*. Design Council. <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/what-framework-innovation-design-councils-evolved-double-diamond>.

- DORST, K. & CROSS, N. (1995, September). Protocol analysis as a research technique for analysing design activity. In *International Design Engineering Technical Conferences and Computers and Information in Engineering Conference* (Vol. 17179, 563-570). American Society of Mechanical Engineers.
- DORST, K. (1997). *Describing design: a comparison of paradigms*. Technische Universiteit Delft.
- DILNOT, C. (2015). The matter of design. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 13(2), 115-123.
- ESCOBAR, A. (2018). *Designs for the pluriverse: Radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds*. Duke University Press.
- FACCIN, F. (2019). Personal communication (April 2019).
- FALLAN, K. (2012). *Scandinavian design: Alternative histories*. Berg.
- FALLAN, K. & LEES-MAFFEI, G. (2016). Designing worlds: national design histories in an age of globalization. In *Designing worlds* (Vol. 24). Berghahn Books.
- FINESSI, G. (2015). *Design: 101 storie Zanotta*. Silvana editoriale.
- FORLANO, L. (2017). Posthumanism and Design. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, 3(1), 16-29.
- FRY, T., DILNOT, C. & STEWART, S. (Eds.) (2015). *Design and the Question of History*. Bloomsbury.
- FUAD-LUKE, A. (2009). *Design Activism: Beautiful Strangeness for a Sustainable World*. Earthscan.
- GIACCARDI, E. & REDSTRÖM, J. (2020). Technology and More-Than-Human Design. *Design Issues*, 36(4), 33-44.
- GÖRANSDOTTER, M., & REDSTRÖM, J. (2018). Design Methods and Critical Historiography: An Example from Swedish User-Centered Design. *Design Issues*, 34(2), 20-30.
- GÖRANSDOTTER, M. (2020). *Transitional Design Histories*. Umeå University.
- HUPPATZ, D.J. (2020). *Design: The Key Concepts*. Bloomsbury.
- JONES, J. C. (1991). *Designing Designing*. Architecture Design and Technology Press.
- JULIER, G., MUNCH, A. V., FOLKMANN, M.N., JENSEN, H.-C., & SKOU, N.-P. (Eds.) (2019). *Design Culture: Objects and Approaches*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts.
- KOLKO, J. (2017). *Creative clarity: a practical guide for bridging thinking into your company*. Brown Bear.
- LAWSON, B. (2006). *How designers think: The design process demystified* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Architectural Press.
- LE DANTEC, C.A. & DISALVO, C. (2013). Infrastructuring and the formation of publics in participatory design. *Social Studies of Science*, 43(2).
- LEES-MAFFEI, G. & FALLAN, K. (Eds.) (2014). *Made in Italy: Rethinking a Century of Italian Design*. Bloomsbury.
- LLOYD, P. & SCOTT, P. (1994). Discovering the design problem. *Design studies*, 15(2), 125-140.
- MANZINI, E., & BERTOLA, P. (Eds.) (2004). *Design Multiverso. Appunti di fenomenologia del design*. Edizioni POLI.design.
- MANZINI, E. (2015). *Design, when everybody designs: An introduction to design for social innovation*. Cambridge, The MIT Press.
- MARGOLIN, V. (2015). *World History of Design, Vols. 1 & 2*. Bloomsbury.
- MARTIN, R. L. (2009). *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage*. HBS Press.
- MERONI, A., & SANGIORGI, D. (2011). *Design for services*. Gower Publishing.
- MICHLEWSKI, K. (2015). *Design attitude*. Gower Publishing.
- MOOTEE, I. (2013). *Design thinking for strategic innovation: What they can't teach you at business or design school*. Wiley.
- MUNARI, B. (1977). *Fantasia*. Laterza.
- MUNARI, B. (1981). *Da cosa nasce cosa*. Laterza.
- PALMERI, L. (2019). Personal communication (April 2019).
- PEVSNER, N. (1936). *Pioneers of the Modern Movement: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*. Faber & Faber.
- REDSTRÖM, J. (2017). *Making Design Theory*. The MIT Press.
- REDSTRÖM, J. & WILTSE, H. (2018). *Changing things: the future of objects in a digital world*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts.
- RICCINI, R. (2001). Innovation as a Field of Historical Knowledge for Industrial Design. *Design Issues*, 17(4), 24-31.
- ROSNER, D. K. (2018). *Critical Fabulations: Reworking the Methods and Margins of Design*. The MIT Press.
- ROWE, P. (1987). *Design Thinking*. The MIT Press.
- ROY, R., & GROUP, D. I. (1993). Case studies of creativity in innovative product development. *Design studies*, 14(4), 423-443.
- SCHON, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic books.
- SCODELLER, D. (Ed.). (2019). *Il design dei Castiglioni. Ricerca, sperimentazione, metodo*. Corraini Edizioni.
- STICKDORN, M., SCHNEIDER, J., ANDREWS, K. & LAWRENCE, A. (2011). *This is service design thinking: Basics, tools, cases* (Vol. 1). Wiley.
- STICKDORN, M., HORMESS, M. E., LAWRENCE, A. & SCHNEIDER, J. (2018). *This is service design doing: applying service design thinking in the real world*. O'Reilly Media, Inc.
- WRIGHT STEENSON, M. (2017). *Architectural intelligence: How Designers and Architects Created the Digital Landscape*. The MIT Press.
- ZURLO, F. (2003). *Makio Hasuike. Abitare Segesta*.
- ZURLO, F. (2019). *Designerly Way of Organizing. The Design of Creative Organization*. AGATHON| *International Journal of Architecture, Art and Design*, 5-2019, 11-20.

