



Visual Communication Design Research Methods

Prof Masood Masoodian



Design Research

Visual Communication Design Research Methods

What is design?

A philosophical question!

A black and white photograph of John Heskett, a man with glasses, speaking into a microphone. The background is dark with a bright light source creating a lens flare effect.

Design is
to design
a design
to produce
a design!

johnheskett.com

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DESIGN IS THE
HUMAN CAPACITY
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johnheskett.com

What is a good design?

Is it just a matter of taste?



Juicy Salif, Philippe Starck
www.starck.com



Discover the 20th century's most controversial citrus-squeezer story

I met Philippe Starck in Paris in the mid 1980s, during a conference on design at the Italian Institute of Culture in Rue Varenne. He was generous in his compliments on our most recent projects, especially on the Kettle with metallic handle by Richard Sapper, the La coccia coffee maker by Aldo Rossi and the Dry cullery by Achille Castiglioni. For years, Alessandro Mendini had been urging me to get in contact with Starck, whom he considered might prove to be an interesting designer for Alessi. So when I met him, I immediately asked him to design something for us in actual fact. I gave him a full, carefully studied briefing for a stainless-steel tray. I was sure that his powerful and original imagination would soon have created a stunning tray for me (Trays play a star role in our catalogue) which would be simple to manufacture, not too expensive to make and really attractive...

... he liked the idea, but then the years started sleeping by and the project never arrived, even though I tried to get some response out of him on a number of occasions. Nothing doing: he used to reply that he hadn't yet got the right intuition. I began to despair but then, one day in the summer of 1987, Starck came to Cusinato. We'd been working on other projects with him in the meantime: the Walter Wayne II wall clock, the Hot Berbaa kettle, and the large Max le Chicaise calendar. Without expecting much joy, I once again mentioned my long-standing request for a beautiful stainless-steel tray. He didn't say no but just repeated he was still awaiting his blessed intuition. We then went out to lunch on Lake d'Orto. He had come over with his family and, chatting about this and that, we somehow got onto the subject of the latest trends in nutrition and how people in the 80s had started consuming citrus fruit. That's all there was to it—we said farewell and off went the Starcks on their holiday in the South.

About a week after they left, I received a letter from Capri. In the envelope there was also a crumpled piece of paper. You know, one of those paper placemats they use in cheap pizzerias. On the placemat, among some incomprehensible marks (tomato sauce, in all likelihood) there were some sketches. Sketches of squids. They started on the left and, as they worked their way over to the right, they took on the unmistakable shape of what was to become the most debated citrus-fruit squeezer of the last century. You can imagine what had happened: while eating a dish of squid and squeezing a lemon over it, our man had finally receiving his inspiration! **Juicy Salif was born, and with it some headaches for the champions of "Form follows Function"**.


Alberto Alessi

Forms follows function...
Is it a question of one at the cost of the other?

Louis Henry Sullivan (September 3, 1856 – April 14, 1924) was an American architect, and has been called the "father of skyscrapers" and "father of modernism". He is considered by many as the creator of the modern skyscraper, was an influential architect and critic of the Chicago School, was a mentor to Frank Lloyd Wright, and an inspiration to the Chicago group of architects who have come to be known as the Prairie School. Along with Wright and Henry Hobson Richardson, Sullivan is one of "the recognized trinity of American architecture". "Form follows function" is attributed to him although he credited the origin of the concept to an ancient Roman architect...

"Form follows function" would become one of the prevailing tenets of modern architects.

Louis Henry Sullivan



(c. 1895)


Born	September 3, 1856 Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.
Died	April 14, 1924 (aged 67) Chicago, Illinois, U.S.
Occupation	Architect

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Sullivan

In 1896, Louis Sullivan wrote:

It is the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic, of all things physical and metaphysical, of all things human, and all things super-human, of all true manifestations of the head, of the heart, of the soul, that the life is recognizable in its expression, that form ever follows function. This is the law.

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Jonathan Ive
Designs Tomorrow

MIKE BASILIANO/WIREIMAGE

time.com/jonathan-ive-apple-interview

In 1985, the year Jobs was forced out of Apple, Jony Ive was in design school in England, struggling with computers, blaming himself. "Isn't that curious?" he says now. "Because if you tasted some food that you didn't think tasted right, you would assume that the food was wrong. But for some reason, it's part of the human condition that if we struggle to use something, we assume that the problem resides with us."



www.vogue.com/1415025/apple-design-genius-jonathan-ive


...the designer, when at his or her best, could also be called a 'behavioural scientist'.

Some designers are content to create a **chair**; others who are more problem-oriented think more about the need to 'sit'. Some simply create a **glass** while others reflect upon the art of 'drinking' and come up with a **drinking glass** that really fulfils the **desire to drink**. We could identify with two different schools of design: those who choose the **noun 'glass'** and those who prefer the **verb 'to drink'**. I am convinced that the latter school is the one that wins our trust and our love.

Staffan Bengtsson

Staffan Bengtsson

IKEA
the book



Designers, products and other stuff

"Form ever follows function"


Perhaps this does not imply so much the importance of function over form

Think of it more as giving importance to both form and function

It is the idea of form and function being really inter-twined and inseparable

That the form and function should not exist without each other in any form of design

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What is research?

Another philosophical question!

Research /'ri:sə:tʃ/ or /rɪ'sə:tʃ/

1. careful or diligent search
2. studious inquiry or examination; especially : investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws
3. the collecting of information about a particular subject

www.merriam-webster.com

Research use, late 1500s to 1800s

Looking carefully for something defined in advance

Research use, since 1900s

often used with the word 'development' to mean work directed towards the innovation, introduction, and improvement of products and processes

en.oxforddictionaries.com

...the word research carries no specific scientific meaning – indeed it predated the division of knowledge into arts and sciences.

Research in Arts and Design
Sir Christopher Frayling

arts.brighton.ac.uk


...the word [research] has traditionally been used of art (and... of design), and that for an activity to count... as research the subject or object of research must exist outside the person or persons doing the searching. And the person must be able to tell someone about it.

Research in Arts and Design
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What is design research?


Is it the same as science research?



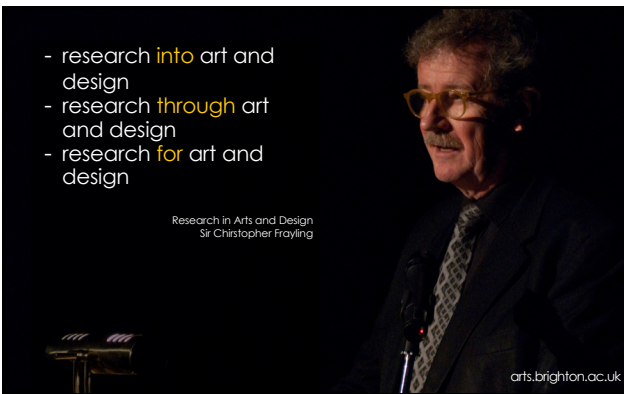
We have come to realize that we do not have to **turn design into an imitation of science**, nor do we have to treat design as a mysterious, ineffable art. We recognize that design has its own distinct intellectual culture; its own designerly 'things to know, ways of knowing them, and ways of finding out about them'.

Nigel Cross

www9.open.ac.uk



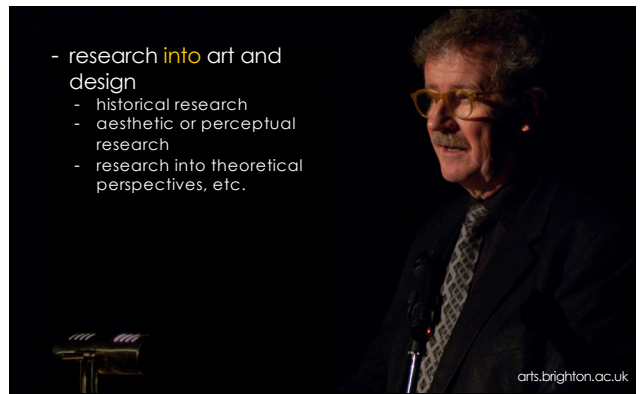
Sir Herbert Read (1893–1968)



- research **into** art and design
- research **through** art and design
- research **for** art and design

Research in Arts and Design
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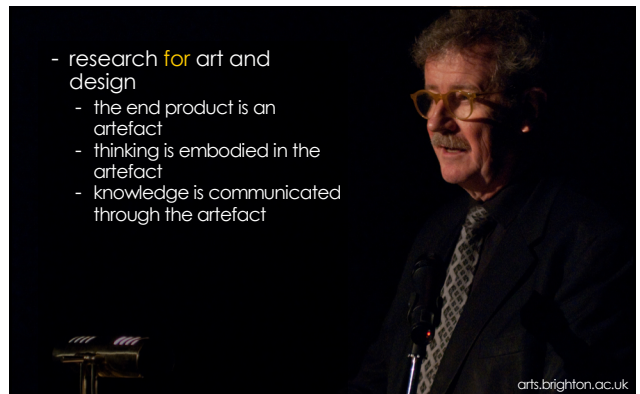
- research **into** art and design
 - historical research
 - aesthetic or perceptual research
 - research into theoretical perspectives, etc.

arts.brighton.ac.uk



- research **through** art and design
 - exploration of methods and practices
 - material research
 - action research

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- research **for** art and design
 - the end product is an artefact
 - thinking is embodied in the artefact
 - knowledge is communicated through the artefact

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...but we do not at present offer research degrees entirely for work where the art is said to 'speak for itself'. Rightly or wrongly, we tend to feel the goal here is the art rather than the **knowledge and understanding**.

Research in Arts and Design
Sir Christopher Frayling

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- **design epistemology**
study of designerly ways of knowing
- **design praxiology**
study of the practices and processes of design
- **design phenomenology**
study of the form and configuration of artefacts

Design Research:
A disciplined conversation
Nigel Cross

Why do design research?

Research is needed to test the boundaries of an ever-shifting landscape to demonstrate that there is more to design than material production.

Cathy Gale

The changing role of design

The awareness of change in paradigm forces us to identify the challenges of the future, the emerging issues which design must look at.

Luisa Collina

Inter –
Multi –
Trans – disciplinary

The need to cross conventional discipline boundaries

Social responsibility

Promoting social change through action research

Designing for sustainability

Connecting abstract sustainability concepts to concrete human behaviour

Designing for diversity

Designing for societies which are global, multi-cultural, inter-connected, and inter-dependent

Design research leads to

the ability to work across media, to work collaboratively across disciplines, the ability for design itself to take initiative, for things to be created in a participatory and inclusive manner.

Andrea Wilkinson



Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture