

Changing the change

Design Visions, Proposals and Tools

An international conference on the role and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability

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SYSTEMS DESIGN BECOMES EASY LIKE A GAME

A travelling exhibition as a tool to communicate sustainable society

Systems design is a design methodology that does not consider the production process in terms of resources and wastes, but redraw a map of matter and energy flows that represent inputs and outputs of the system. The innovation stays in analysing the characteristics of outputs so to transform them in inputs of other processes, far from the linear idea of the threader, designing open systems instead. This methodology is applied to production and territory, we wonder if it could also be a valid point of view for the communication process.

Systemic approach imitates the mechanisms which regulate dialogue in complex natural systems: in nature all flows of signals are organized in an iterative way, this means that the message is constantly varied according to how the system answers. In this context the role of the feedback become crucial, not only because allows "knowing the score" but also because at each passing new relations are established, contents are enriched and the message gets internalised.

The characteristics of this method make it an ideal tool for spreading a deep ecological thought, intended as Man's consciousness of being part of the net of Nature, not above it.

The more we go far from linear processes of production, the more "systemic communication" move away from the concept of frontal lesson. We can verify its effectiveness in the continuous variation of form and perspective, with a constant passing from the cognitive process, that Enzo Mari defined an HARD phase, to the "real doing", or SOFT phase, where contents materialize and knowledge are shared.

The first experimentation of a systemic communication that respects the above described feedback criteria, relations, hard/soft, is the travelling exhibition *Innovazione&Design*.

This communication is mainly addressed to young people. As we all know, the period when thoughts are more sensible to external conditioning is school age: through the main phases of development children pass from the sensible perception to training the personality that will identify them all their life long. Thanks to their comprehension capacity of "abstract" issues and to their thought flexibility, young students are the best interlocutors to deal with about innovation issues, considering it in the sense of generating new ideas and ways of looking at reality.

For this very reason the exhibition aims at involving junior and high school in the Piedmont region, offering an immediate perception of sustainability issues, using evocative images that provoke reactions and activating a system of answers and contributions from these young visitors. Children, starting from the first prompting of the exhibition, have the possibility of express themselves making comments and realizing documents with tools and techniques closer to them (from video mobiles to video blog) about issues they consider more interesting; all the material is collected, put in common and published on the site of the exhibition in the dedicated area, Piazza Virtuale. Finally we review all the material so to

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show all reflexions presented during the long working period with the students. This is not only a unusual experience in the school path and in the “doing design” approach; the treated issues regard every day behaviours and life style that will form part of their critical knowledge, maybe influencing their future choices.

This operation wants to put in discussion the current social paradigm, which is materialistic and focused on the product, moving the attention on relations and on the role that every single person has with respect to society and its context.



References

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