



**Call for a Special Issue of Organizational Aesthetics:  
Reviewing London College of Communication's response to the  
London Design Festival**

This special issue is created to bring together work produced for the London Design Festival (LDF) by researchers at the Design School at London College of Communication within the University of the Arts London, UK.

The exhibitions, performances, talks, workshops and events of LDF 2017, LDF 2018 and the manifesto created for LDF 2018 were part of a series of activities that were initiated in an effort to define and tell a coherent story about the identity of the Design School. The effort in particular was to balance the value of diverse specialist research practices, professional practices, and teaching practices with a coherent identity for the school as a whole that could express critical mass and foster conversations with external partners. Using the exhibitions and the manifesto throughout a design festival allowed the story to be told through the work itself in visual and spatial formats.

The design school provides highly regarded outputs in both Research Excellence Framework (REF) and in creative practice and industry. Often seen in tension, framed as a difference between research for REF and research not for REF, practitioners sometimes shy away from bridging the gap between practice and REF research, and text-based researchers sometimes see their writing practice as too tempting to stop for the purpose of investigating the creative process. But what about design school researchers that are often both – practitioners and academics, designers with PhDs, scholars who create design work beside text-based outputs?

This perceived tension between different forms of scholarly and creative practice gets in the way of creating a collective identity for what research is in the context of a design school, what it looks like, and how this scholarly work defines who we are as an organization.

Giovanni Schiuma described organizations as living organisms: "Organizations are continuously challenged to find new routes to accomplish their strategic business objectives and to deliver value to stakeholders [...] This means that organizations have to be managed as 'living organisms' in which the people and the organizational aesthetic dimensions are recognized as fundamental factors to meet the complexity and turbulence of [our times]." (Schiuma, *The value of arts for business*, 2011, p.2) Schiuma suggests arts based methods as a way to challenge the way we structure our work environment.

Over the past two years, the Design School has used exhibitions and events as a means to express different values and ethics running through the school, through the collaborations and exhibited installations and objects. These values expressed themselves beyond the headlines of the exhibition into other types of activities that took over in-between spaces and pockets of interaction in the form of workshops, symposia, pocket events, and performances.

These initiated conversations across and through the Design School's organizational framework and encouraged active collision of ideas.

This special issue is an attempt to create a legacy for LDF by capturing the collective contributions made by researchers over the two years of our participation in the festival. As a Design School, we recognize and value aesthetic responses as much as the more expected text based methods of analysis and response.

Subjective forms of expression can retain a sense of human experience and interaction: traces of the essence of an experience, for example, and narrative structure to give the subjective form and meaning. We welcome responses that test the range of forms for capturing and conveying researchers' contributions to the LDF to open up the discussion about the function and value of qualitative forms in the process of research and analysis.

We are looking for qualitative responses to the work exhibited, performed and generally produced at LDF 2017 and LDF 2018 at LCC. In particular we are interested in contextualizing the LDF work from a design research perspective, and the way in which these exhibitions and events shape us as a Design School.

Possible topics could be (but are not limited to):

- How design research can be represented within an exhibition context, when that research may be more theoretical, or when the discipline that it operates within does not lend itself as much to the exhibition format
- Archiving as an active practice, that expresses critical frameworks; and how these archiving frameworks manifest in a physical exhibition
- Links between thinking and making in the practice of design and the research in design, as manifested through the exhibition and events
- Launching Research/ Knowledge Exchange platforms, such as SSS or the Comics Research Network, through exhibitions and events within the LDF framework
- Responses to the manifesto, looking at how it came about and was shaped from a staff perspective, and how it tells the story of what we do; and also how we see it shaping the Design School going forward
- Responses to work by other exhibitors, as opposed to responding only to your own contribution; in particular these responses could work across formats and mediums.
- How workshops can impact on curriculum development, for example acting as a framework for research in the curriculum

Possible formats could be (but are not limited to):

- the manifesto as a visual essay in the context of the building
- textual analysis of feedback to the manifesto received during the exhibition within the installation
- cross-media responses; for example: sound as a response to an installation, textual work as a response to a visual exhibition, moving image as a response to a textual work
- moving image documentary of the role of performance within archiving practice
- ways of expressing concepts through making
- essays addressing complex systems focusing on physical manifestations of intangible research
- workshops as a framework for research

To submit:

- We will accept and review submissions on a rolling basis until 31st March 2019.
- Submit electronically at <http://www.organizationalaesthetics.org>

- All submissions should conform to the OA style guide:  
<https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/oa/policies.html#formatting>

### **Special Issue Editors:**

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**Monica Biagioli** is Senior Lecturer in the Graphic and Media Design course at London College of Communication, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and member of the Photography and the Archive Research Centre at the University of the Arts London. Her research focuses on art and design processes as practical applications and examines their role in evaluation and value creation within the social context.

**Silvia Grimaldi** is Course Leader of the MA Service Design and Postdoctoral Research Fellow on the Pharma Factory project (H2020) at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Her research focuses on the role of narrative in users' interpretation of product experience, design fiction and service design as tools for public engagement, surprise within product experiences, and service design pedagogy.

**Dr. Nela Milic** is an artist and an academic working in media and arts, and is Senior Lecturer in the Design School at London College of Communication. She developed the project *Balkanising Taxonomy* for her PhD where she researched the city as a site of spectacle, participatory arts and the culture of protest. She is a reviewer of Memory Studies journal and co-chair of Art and Memory Working Group of *Memory Studies Association* (MSA).

### **References**

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