



POLITECNICO DI MILANO



SUMMER CUMULUS CONFERENCE - POLITECNICO DI MILANO - 3-7 JUNE 2015

Call for papers: CUMULUS Milan 2015 Conference. The Virtuous Circle.

Milan, Politecnico di Milano, June 3-7, 2015

Website: <http://cumulusmilan2015.org>

We are pleased to announce that the call for papers of the conference 'CUMULUS Milan 2015 - The Virtuous Circle. Design Culture and Experimentation', is open.

The conference aims to investigate how design comes out of the interaction between a practice, which seeks to change the state of things, and a culture, which makes sense of this change. The way this happens evolves with time: practices and cultures evolve and so do the ways they interact; and the attention that is paid at different moments to one or other of these interacting polarities also evolves. In the current period of turbulent transformation of society and the economy, it is important to go back and reflect on the cultural dimension of design, its capacity to produce not only solutions but also meanings, and its relations with pragmatic aspects. Good design does not limit itself to tackling functional and technological questions, but it also always adopts a specific cultural approach that emerges, takes shape and changes direction through a continuous circle of experimenting and reflecting. Because the dimension and complexity of the problems is growing, it is becoming evident that to overcome them it is, above all, necessary to bring new sense systems into play. This is ground on which design, by its very nature, can do much. Indeed, the ability to create a virtuous circle between culture and practical experimentation is, or should be, its main and distinctive characteristic. However, for this really to happen it is necessary to trigger new discussion and reflection about the nature and purpose of design practice and culture. We need to take a step back in history and look at what they were like in the past; then come back to the present and ask ourselves how they have changed and are changing in today's world in transition. This process could start with some questions, for example: how do the new design practices produce culture? Vice versa, how can this culture orientate and offer common horizons to the multiplicity of practices that take place in design activities? How does this emerging culture tie up with the design tradition of the last century? How can this add depth and consistence to the design culture of the 21st century?

In order to discuss these issues the conference will be organised into 7 tracks corresponding to 7 activities in which the virtuous design-culture-experimentation circle can take place: Nurturing; Envisioning; Experimenting/Prototyping; Incubating/Scaling; Assessing; Disseminating/Communicating; Training/Educating.

Nurturing The complexity and variety of contemporary cultural production informs the quality of design. Design approaches and nurtures innovation with cross-cultural historical references and multidisciplinary stimuli. Design's ability to explore the surrounding world and learn from traditions, other cultures and other disciplines reveals opportunities for the future and generates new cultural production, in a virtuous and transformative circle from reflection to experimentation. This track focuses on this continuous nurturing process. Especially welcome are papers reporting on: experiences of how this process can be activated and integrated into design practice; examples and replicable models for translating such cultural references into innovative design; the more fertile fields involved; the impact of such cross-fertilization on the outcome of design. Predictions about the future are made in the present from among possible futures, from long or short term interpretations of current turbulence and how these may fit together.

Envisioning Not only has design discovered the heterogeneity of contexts through globalisation, but it is also becoming increasingly aware of the complexity and value of time as an inevitable variable in design. The present is made of predictions for the future among possible futures, of short or long term interpretations of current instabilities and their possible combinations. As a result, artefacts emerge at different times and live different lives according to their cultural setting. Each of them tells a possible story, determines its relationship with a brand, seeks a relationship with its user while managing time wisely. How can we understand such dynamics and include them in design processes? How can we envision the possible and give shape to uncertainty? How can we represent the complexity of the product system and its declination into markets distinguished by geography and commercial logic? How can we generate and interact with the various subjects in design storytelling?

Experimenting/Prototyping Design is intrinsically an experimental process, which shapes individual and collective knowledge, as well as a tacit and explicit one within intelligible models and artifacts. It creates prototypes and shared knowledge and research models, which support collective ideation and production. This track is focused on how design can exploit this experimental attitude as a powerful source to investigate new cultural models and practices. More specifically it aims to explore the following issues: what is the nature of design experimentation and prototyping in an era where tools for implementing them are accessible to non-professionals within a global knowledge network (making, digital fabrication)? What roles are emerging for design in the current democratization of its knowledge and practices? How can the experimental nature of design be used in a broader context of application to positively drive social and cultural change?

Incubating / Scaling Design's role today in envisioning and conceiving social interactions, practices and behaviours in the form of solutions and services, is more and more concerned with the need to understand how to scale-up such complex artefacts. This track focuses on how design can support incubation policies or the replication of initiatives, solutions and services that imply complex social interactions, often involving social innovation, and that are likely to evolve into business ventures or structured

organisations. Specifically, it aims to explore the following issues: what are the features that design can work on when it comes to scaling-up a solution? What methods and tools can it adopt? What skills must designers develop to make a venture out of a potential innovation? How must the design discipline change in order to embrace this challenge?

Assessing Assessment is a thermometer of the state of design. It may be an instrument for correcting the direction of design, for verifying a methodology or for questioning value systems. This track seeks to open a debate on the role of assessment today in its numerous forms: from competitions designed to innovate products, to analysing the impact of a process on an ecosystem, or formalising a quality judgement on the performance of a knowledge product. The output of design is becoming more and more complex, processes are governed by phenomena such as crowdsourcing, and sharing takes place at all levels. We are constantly asking ourselves how we can make assessment processes transparent and about how appropriate and meaningful an evaluation based entirely on quantitative analysis may be in the age of democratic design and open source tools.

Disseminating / Communicating Through its media dimension communication design is a determining factor in the production, organisation, sharing and diffusion of knowledge. Acting on the perception (from visibility to understanding) of various kinds of phenomena (social, scientific, cultural, economic...), it facilitates orientation, access, positioning and decision-making processes by impacting directly on the behaviour of the various stakeholders. In this framework, the convergence and integration of different media, formats and languages contributes to how well information is understood, shared and communicated. It generates shared spaces for interaction and participation; its tools and artefacts facilitate recognition of the actors in play and help to develop a culture of constructive criticism and active participation in social life, work and politics. With this in view, how does communication design operate and in what problem areas? What are the tools and processes it brings into play?

Training / Educating The growing complexity of the issues which design deals with presupposes increasingly extensive, diversified skills and abilities, such that the very figure of the designer is changing. The familiarity with humanistic disciplines that constitute a significant part of some designers' training, leads them to become cultured professionals, well-able to proffer interpretations of the transformations underway in society. In professional design practice we can see a thrust towards change due to evolution in the socio-economic context on the one hand, and technological evolution on the other. In what way do these changes impact on the education of the new generations? In a world that dedicates growing attention to financial, managerial and technological aspects, what role do the humanistic disciplines play in a designer's training? We say that we are seeing the birth of a new generation of designers willing to create their own enterprise: what training should they receive? Is it possible to say that self production technologies are determining a new figure of designer-craftsman?



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We expect contributions that acknowledge a systemic perspective on the topics and present reflections arising from applied research projects and experimentations:

Key dates:

Call For Papers Launch: Wed 23 July 2014
Submission of Full Papers: Mon 10 Nov 2014
Early Bird Conference Registration: Wed 3 Dec 2014 - Mon 16 Feb 2015
Final note of acceptance of the full paper: Thu 15 Jan 2015
Conference Registration Opens: Tue Feb 17 2015
Delivery of the final papers: Wed 15 Apr 2015
Conference: 3-7 June 2015

Submission:

Paper submission - Deadline: Mon 10 Nov 2014

Authors are invited to submit a full paper (4000 words maximum):

- Send a word file (doc. or docx) using the template provided here: paper_template.doc
- Use the EasyChair platform link to submit the paper at <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=cumulusmi2015>
- Send a word file (doc. or docx) – save the file with the initials of the title of your contribution. Example – ‘My Paper Submission’ – MPS.doc, MPS.docx
- The contributions should be anonymous and should not contain the name(s) of the author(s). Documents that do not comply with this rule will be excluded from the evaluation process.
- The official language of the conference is English. Submissions which do not comply with this rule will be excluded from the evaluation process.

Revised version - Deadline: Wed 15 Apr 2015

You can send a revised version of the paper, with the Scientific Committee suggestions or comments included, until 15 April 2015:

- Use again the EasyChair platform link to submit the new version of the paper at <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=cumulusmi2015>
- Send a word file (doc. or docx) – save the file with the same name as the previous one.



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Paper template

Please download from the conference website the template to submit your paper.

- Final paper text up to 4000 words (excluding title, authors' names, tables and the reference list).
- References in Normal style following APA guidelines

Contact: Laura Galluzzo, cumulusmi2015@easychair.org

All info at: <http://cumulusmilan2015.org/>