

**Call for papers: Message Journal, Edition 3**

**What is the topography of the contemporary graphic design / communication landscape in relation to art practice? What occupies the space between disciplines?**

**Call for academic submissions**

Scholarly submissions are invited for consideration in Message edition 3 – an international open access journal published by the University of Plymouth Press.

Message Open Access is an open access journal where all materials, once published will be freely available. Published papers/reports will remain the copyright of the author.

**Message** edition 3 will be published in July 2016

**Dates for submission of abstract (300-500 words): 25 September 2015**

**Notification of abstract acceptances: 9 October 2015**

**(4000-6000 words): 8 January 2016**

**Email to:** [v.squire@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:v.squire@plymouth.ac.uk)

For more details of Message visit:

<http://messageresearch.net>

What is the topography of the contemporary graphic design / communication landscape in relation to art practice? What occupies the space between disciplines?

Message journal edition 3, aims to explore further the boundaries between contemporary graphic design/communication and art, as well as examining what occupies the space between the disciplines.

Authors, through written and illustrated submissions, may question and investigate the broad nature of graphic design and communication practice in relation to both historical and contemporary contexts. The intention of this edition is to debate and illustrate whether graphic design/communication can be seen as imaginative, intuitive and creative self (or group) expression – a form of artistic composition – in the same way that we recognise much of art practice? Or is there practice outside the conventional boundaries of contemporary graphic design/communication that demands a space of its own?

For this exploration to take place it is important to put forward some definition of the broad nature of graphic designers/communication practice. As a frame of reference we might include (or exclude) the following:

Graphic designers/communicators:  
working with brand and identity  
in editorial and publishing  
envisioning information

Illustrators, photographers, animators, film-makers, typographers

Graphic artists

Convention defines graphic design/communication as visual communication and problem solving. This methodology – involving intuition and conceptual thinking – uses image, type, materials, colour and space, in varying amounts, to achieve clarity of message, as well as appropriate tone of voice to reach a chosen audience.

Often employed in commercial environments, these methods are well known to the graphic designer, illustrator, photographer and typographer. But many outside these professions fail to recognise the complexities of work and outputs. Some see the output of graphic designers and communicators as some kind of lower art form. Many fail to recognise the intrinsic value of much of the design and communication we experience in our world. How can this be?

Further, the boundaries of graphic design/communication and art are constantly in flux and being questioned. Illustrators create type, photographers illustrate, and both of these types of practitioner commonly create artefacts. The role of the graphic designer continues to change. Traditionally, image making for the most part, has rested in the hands of illustrators and photographers. But, for as long as designers have existed (and that is not very long) many have wanted to explore image as part of their output. Now, as boundaries between disciplines blur, designers do not always rely on the commissioning of others to complete designs and communicate messages.

So, a number of questions arise...

When/how can graphic design/communication be art?

When/how is the graphic designer/communicator an artist?

When/how can graphic design/communication be seen as imaginative or creative self or group expression?

When/how can graphic design/communication be seen as artistic composition?

When/how can graphic design/communication be seen as an expression or application of human creative skill and appreciated for its beauty or emotional power?

When/how can the design/communication of a brand message be seen as art?

When/how can the design/communication of an editorial message be seen as art?

When/how can the design/communication of envisioned information be seen as art?

When, why and how do boundaries exist between graphic design/communication and art?

When and why is it relevant to make distinctions between graphic design/communication and art?

Who creates or breaks the boundaries?

This journal will add to ongoing discussions and research and intends to capture contemporary views and examples relevant to a changing graphic design and communication landscape nationally and internationally. It will also aim to evaluate in part how current practice impacts on wider art and design/communication culture.

An overarching aim of this journal is to provide context for, as well as drive, new and future cultural discussions and research alliances, capturing and publishing new experiences, environments, methods and outputs. It should enhance our contemporary understanding of the nature of graphic design and visual communication presenting opinions across subjects and institutions.

### **Background**

Message is a peer-reviewed academic journal that consists of blind reviewed academic papers plus one to three commissioned essays/articles. It is dedicated to the development and discussion of contemporary Visual Communication research particularly within Art & Design with an emphasis on Practice, Outputs and Artefacts.

The aim of the Message journal is to explore and expand the boundaries of Visual Communication within Art & Design through an experimental and developmental ethos, challenging the practitioner, the development and use of technology, as well as questioning Visual Communication values and social, ethical and sustainable practices.

The Message journal welcomes contributions from national and international Visual Communication researchers and practitioners from a variety of perspectives – theoretical, conceptual, educational, industrial.

The Message journal has been initiated by the Message research group at Plymouth University. The group's research focuses on the areas of graphic design, illustration and visual communication.

The Plymouth University Message journal and research group is committed to enhancing the development of these subject areas, both in education and commercial design, through research and enterprise.

### **Message advisory board**

Patrick Baglee, design consultant and journalist, NY

Professor Phil Cleaver Middlesex University, UK

Professor Dóra Ísleifsdóttir Iceland Academy of Arts

Associate Professor Maziar Raein. Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norway

Professor Teal Triggs Associate Dean at Royal College of Art, UK

### **Submissions**

Contributions can take the form of:

#### **Research papers** (4000–6000 words)

A critical analysis and contextualisation of initial stages, on-going or completed practice based research projects (to include research question(s), methods and where appropriate outcomes and findings).

#### **Position papers** (4000–6000 words)

Put forward and debate a position on a particular issue.

#### **Reports** (4000–6000 words)

Reports that document advances in the field for example new collaborations, technological developments, processes, methods etc.

All papers are considered with the understanding that they represent at least 80% original material and have not been previously published.

Papers/reports that exceed the stated length should be discussed with the editor prior to submission.

**Dates for submission of abstract (300-500 words): 25 September 2015**

**Notification of abstract acceptances: 9 October 2015**

**(4000-6000 words): 8 January 2016**

Full submission must include: abstract, written paper or report, images (with evidence of permissions), captions, and three-sentence biography with contact details (affiliation, address, email).

When submitting a full paper/report, contact details from authors should be included on a cover sheet only and have authors details (name/s etc.) within the paper or report removed.

It is essential that all authors provide a thoroughly proofread and checked manuscript by 8 January 2016.

### **Images**

Images within papers/reports should be 300 DPI and sent via wetransfer.com

Images should be properly referenced and proof of copyright permissions cleared by the author.

Evidence of this needs to be sent via email to the Editor.

Abstracts/Full paper/report, images and permissions should be emailed to the Editor:

[v.squire@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:v.squire@plymouth.ac.uk)

Receipt of your submission will be made within 5 working days.

### **Peer-review**

Papers and reports selected by the Editors will be peer-reviewed by international professionals and scholars – all material will be “blind” read and commented by, at least, two reviewers.

The peer-review of each paper or report, will concentrate on whether the research paper or report relates adequately to the call, is sufficiently well conceived, has potential to be well executed, and

is appropriate to be included in Message.

- Reviewers will be invited to consider submitted papers and reports within their expertise.
- Each submission will be reviewed against clear editorial criteria. Feedback will be provided.
- After consideration by the Message editorial team a decision will be sent to the author within a specified time frame.

Editors will respond to authors according to the following

- accepted without revision
- accepted with minor revision
- rejected

### **Selection of peer-reviewers**

The Message editorial board will in the first instance identify appropriate reviewers for a particular paper or report. Reviewers will be chosen according to factors including their expertise, reputation and knowledge.

As part of our editorial procedure, the Message team will brief potential reviewers before sending them papers and reports to review and all correspondence will be treated confidentially. Reviewers will remain anonymous during the peer-review process and impartiality will be our aim.

### *Feedback*

All comments from reviewers to the editors will be treated confidentially.

A good review would answer the following questions:

- What is the thematic relevance to the call for papers?
- Are the main aims of the paper/report clearly stated
- Is the paper and its aims well situated and referenced in the context of other research around the subject?
- Does the paper offer new insights and contribute to the development of the subject?
- Is the article clearly written and well organised?
- What are the potential directions for further research?

### *Confidentiality*

The review process will be seen as confidential by the Message editorial board and reviewers. As the author may have chosen to exclude some people from this process, the reviewer should not discuss nor consult other colleagues or experts about the review unless this has been agreed with the Message editorial team. Where appropriate we will request any feedback that might help to strengthen the paper or report to send to the author.

The Message editors may edit comments made by reviewers. In their comments to authors, reviewers are encouraged to be honest but not offensive in their language.

It will be the responsibility of the Message editorial team to send the decision to the author with any reviewers' comments.

The Message editorial team makes final publishing decisions. In the event that these are different from the reviewer's recommendations this will have been the result of a robust process of consideration.

Message Editorial board – Victoria Squire, Esther Dudley, Peter Jones

Message Publisher – University of Plymouth Press

For more details of Message visit:

<http://messageresearch.net>