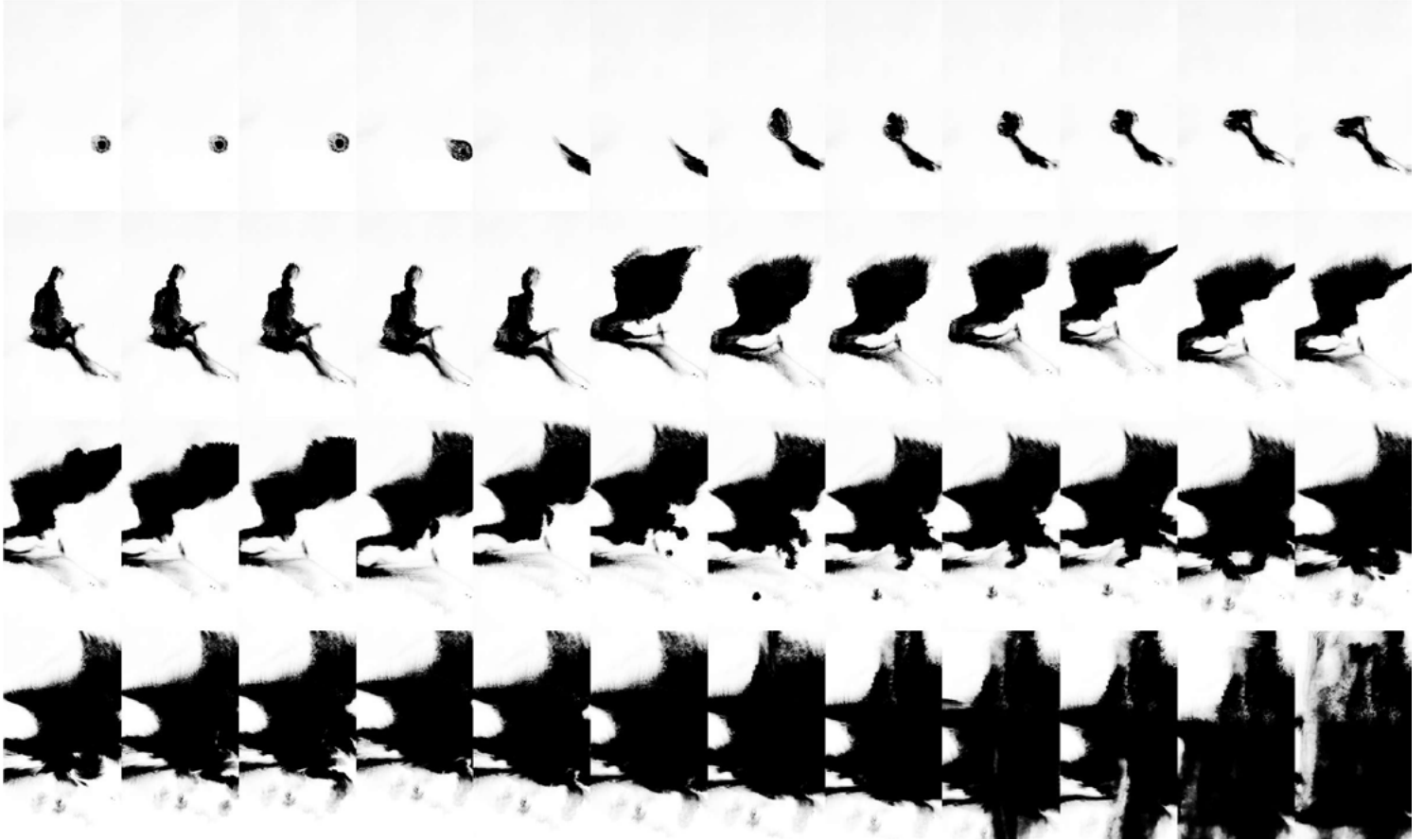


# Temes de Disseny #40

## The Role of the Designer in Society: Ethical, Theoretical and Practical Perspectives



Resonancia. Irene Moreno Sáez, 2022. Elisava Degree in Design final project.

# CALL FOR AUTHORS

A DESIGN RESEARCH JOURNAL  
by ELISAVA BARCELONA SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND ENGINEERING

# About the journal

*Temes de Disseny* (Topics on Design, hereinafter TdD, in its Catalan acronym) started in 1986 as one of the first design local journals. It was created with the goal of being a knowledge transfer channel between design professionals, pedagogues and scholars. TdD aims to bring together knowledge generated by experts from multiple disciplines, who study design from distinct points of view. Each journal edition intends to approach specific topics related to design, such as: design methodologies; innovation through design; indoor spaces and objects shapes; transmedia and macro- trends; design, food and health; visual communication or industrial design, among others. The 34th issue of the journal was the first step towards transforming TdD in an open access, peer reviewed, indexed journal that locals and foreign designers can use to share their knowledge at an international level.

*Temes de Disseny* is currently indexed in: Carhus Plus+, CrossRef, Dialnet, DOAJ, ERIH PLUS, Google Scholar, Latindex Catalog, REDIB, Scopus.

## Special Issue

The Role of the Designer in Society:  
Ethical, Theoretical and Practical Perspectives

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# Call for Authors

This issue of *Temes de Disseny* explores the ethical, theoretical and practical perspectives comprising the role of the designer in the 21st century. From the dawn of humankind, the role of the designer was fairly straightforward - to help the survival of individuals and communities by conceiving artefacts and ways of doing things. This changed with industrialisation where a specialized role for factory workers appeared: the designer. Later, in the late 19th century with the Arts and Crafts movement and in the early 20th century with the Bauhaus, the role of the designer was consolidated and a fully-blown professional discipline started to emerge. After WWII, stemming from a capitalist society seeking self-fulfillment, mass production stunted the designer to work as a marketing expert harnessing design to boost sales and create an evocative need to continuously consume.

Throughout the 20th century, influential designers spearheaded movements and introduced values that reshaped the design landscape. The last decades have presented us a plethora of global shifts and changes which challenges the role of the designer in society: ecological disasters, global pandemics, streams of refugees, local and regional wars, disruptive technological innovations, economic inequality, populist governments and more.

The advent of digital technologies has broadened their scope to include digital interfaces, user interactions, immersive platforms and AR/VR and AI. New design-related initiatives arose, adding to innovative roles and responsibilities developed by design professionals, such as social design, service design, design strategy etc. Designers have taken on more strategic and multidisciplinary roles, delving into meta-design, processes and other outcomes that are not necessarily products. As a result, they are now expected to tackle complex problems, create or enhance empathy, and mediate between various stakeholders and agents.

In a shift from the margins of the discipline to the mainstream, designers are increasingly attuned to social and ethical considerations, ensuring their processes and outcomes align with sustainability, privacy, and broader societal impact. They actively advocate for user-centered solutions, highlighting the needs of design partners, and fostering collaborative relationships with cross-functional teams to develop innovative and purposeful solutions that profoundly enhance people's and other species' lives.

How can designers effectively navigate the multifaceted challenges posed by global shifts and transformations? In what ways can designers leverage digital technologies, from social networks to Generative AI, to create impactful and inclusive experiences that are just and non-extractivist? How can designers integrate social and ethical considerations into their design practices to address sustainability and justice concerns? How can designers effectively mediate between diverse stakeholders to foster meaningful collaborative and participatory approaches that don't succumb to oppressive power dynamics?

# Key Themes

*Temes de Disseny* calls for design practitioners, educators and theoreticians to reevaluate the role of the contemporary designer through three distinct layers: ethics, theory and practice. In “ethics” we wish to consider the designer’s role vis-a-vis complex questions and their application throughout the various venues of design. As design theory has immersed to form a new sub-discipline, we call for papers highlighting its contribution both to broader, classic theoretical dilemmas as well as et me practice-related. Finally, we wish to include practical case studies dealing with the designer’s role in society through ‘real life’ scenarios, presenting design processes involving all venues of design practice.

## *Design Justice*

- design ethics in theory and practice
- design and acculturation/appropriation
- design and postcolonialism (case studies)
- design and activism
- the politics of design and revolution

## *Community Engagement*

- participative and collaborative practices in design
- stakeholders and their relationship with the designer
- equity in collaborative, creative practices

## *The Human-Nature Gradient*

- the designer’s relationship with the natural environment
- roles and responsibilities of the designer within the natural environment
- post-human approaches in design
- equity in more than human approaches

## *AI and Digital Mediation*

- design and digital (imagined) communities
- using digital platforms in disaster scenarios
- digital mediation between stakeholders in design projects
- social service design: implications and reflections on an evolving field
- the ethical dimensions of design and AI
- the role of AI in working with communities
- AI-driven (social) design

# Type of papers and length

*Temes de Diseny* publishes the following type of contributions. (Footnotes, references and bibliography are not included in the word counts)

## *Original research papers*

Research papers which expose a hypothesis that is tested with a specific methodology and supported by results. The length must be between 3000 and 5000 words.

## *State-of-art papers*

State-of-art papers collect the most recent information (i.e. methods, case-studies, project examples) of a specific topic. These are expected to provide more than 50 literature references which are properly discussed to identify future challenges. At least 75% of the literature must have been published after 2014, and the length of the article must be between 4000 and 10000 words.

## *Case studies papers*

Case study papers aims to collect and properly describe the theoretical framework, processes and results of one or several design projects within a specific topic. The article must remark the strengths and weaknesses of the example/s. A length between 3000 and 5000 words is mandatory. Pictures of the different case studies are mandatory. It is recommended to classify properly the case studies.

## *Provocations*

Provocations are short contributions that inspire debate and reflection on the presented topic. They should position the research topic in the current context with critical spirit and be up-to-date with social, cultural, economic and/or academic trends. The article must not exceed 2000 words.

## *Pictorials*

Pictorials are illustrated capsules that presents a design project, a workshop or a research process with a strong focus on images or illustrations that convey knowledge. Each image or set of images should be accompanied by descriptive texts that puts them in context as well as describing what are they showing (aesthetics, processes, materials, concepts, results...). For each set a length of 200 words is recommended; and the total length must be maximum 2000 words. Pictorials should also provide an introduction of the project and the concluding remarks of its research process.

You can see examples of previously published articles at [tdd.elisava.net](http://tdd.elisava.net)

# Submission Process and Requirements

[Submit your  
proposal here!](#)

The publishing process for the present *Temes de Disseny* special issue has the following key dates:

*28 September 2023*

Authors must submit an extended abstract, following [this link](#).  
500-600 words for Original, State-of-Art and Case Studies.  
300-400 words for Pictorials and Provocations

*26 October 2023*

The editorial team will communicate if the proposal is accepted.

*21 December 2023*

Authors must submit the manuscript of the article.

The submission will be assessed by independent reviewers –double blind peer review– who will suggest the suitability of the manuscript for its publication and will provide improvement suggestions for the authors.

If the proposal is accepted, authors must then respond reviewers' comments, apply reviewers' comments into their manuscript and submit a reviewed version of the manuscript.

Guest Editors will decide upon final acceptance, and the final selection will be published on Summer 2024.

Follow [this link](#) for a more detailed overview of the process.

## *Ethics of publishing*

Authors are responsible of presenting totally original works and must properly cite others work if used. Moreover, authors cannot submit and already published paper or submit a paper that have already been submitted to another journal which is still under a review process.

Authors are encouraged to acknowledge potential conflicts of interest and/or sources of funding by including a brief disclaimer at the end of the paper:

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## *Language*

Authors are highly suggested to write and submit their manuscripts in English. However, with the aim to promote local authors' publications, Catalan and Spanish manuscripts will also be accepted.

## *Publishing ethics and malpractice statement*

Please read the [journal's PEMS](#) before submitting.