

## EDITORIAL

It is rightfully highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic can be thought as the principal problem of an entire generation of designers (Strategic Design Research Journal, Part 2, 2021). In Higher education too, including design education, a quarter of a billion of students have been forced to disrupt learning due to COVID-19. Among the ultimate challenges for governments were “how to mitigate learning losses, how to deploy remote learning, how to safely reopen educational institutions and how to ensure that underrepresented, vulnerable and disadvantaged learners are not left behind” (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission, 2021).

This special issue of the Bulletin is dedicated to Education and Design Learning. Has the passion of learning and teaching been reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions? Evidence show that Higher Education settings used information and communication technologies to positively impact learning for students, faculty and staff. Experiences differ just like in real life. Despite the psychological and social cruelty of the pandemic; the interruption of face-to-face learning and academic life as we used to live it or expected it to be; passionate learning has found many ways of expression.

The papers contained in this special publication are centered around learning and the design discipline. They illustrate that contemporary uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic and relevant restrictions can be seen as the root cause and opportunity for adaptation and transformation of designers, scholars, researchers and students. New ideas and innovative means are generated which coexist with old and valued approaches in order to facilitate an unprecedented shift to new conditions in teaching, working, producing, communicating.

Kyriakou A., concentrates her focus on examining the treasured role of Creative Practice as a Prospect for Self-Therapy During the Covid-19 Pandemic. The author offers insights on the use of the medium and experimentation as a vital part of the designer’s creative process which can contingently create favourable grounds for self-therapy. The act of experimenting, she stresses, is like an exploration of possibilities, impossibilities and limitations, and it entails freedom as it gives the ability to the designer to become the author of her work. This type of freedom and authorship which can ignore rules and anticipate any potentials is very valuable for the mind, especially when the mind is bound to fear, uncertainty and confinement, as is the current case with the pandemic. The practice of exploring possibilities through unplanned processes and applications of media which lead to unknown actions and end results can be a healing activity for the designer as it offers excitement and enthusiasm, and the prospect of what it is to come calls for a dose of thrill and pleasure.

Effie Toumazides Katchis discusses the notions of positive and negative space which determine the composition of artwork. Positive space is described as the parts of artwork that show areas or subjects of interest. Negative space is the parts of artwork around the subjects of interest. Katchis, challenges the traditional understanding of negative space as white page or a symbol of the gap that is created through adding the positive images. She ascribes to the view that just as it would be difficult to appreciate music if it wasn’t for silence, negative space in graphic design provides the eye with a place to “rest” between important information, while also creating rhythm and structure. The author substantiates her argument in favour of negative thinking by demonstrating some original pieces of her work inspired by the social implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The work presented by Voulgaris P., examines how the remarkable effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in various changes particularly in how educators in graphic design have responded to this evolving environment. He points that educators should consider the diversity embedded in the experience while teaching the students of now. The concern of graphic design students should be about changing their mindset and adapt to the changing scenario of the worldwide crisis with effective and imaginative interventions that they are capable of bringing to light. The role of graphic design students as digital thinkers has become crucial in periods where there has been a sudden shift to the digital world as there has been restriction and social distancing introduced for the prevention of the disease. The author identifies an evolving need for practical skills in craft as well as the printing of 3D face shield and the production of facemasks. The designers are thereby bestowed with the duties of contributing with their creativity and imagination. The graphic design and visual communication students of now require practical skills to extend their support.

Pallecaros M., in her sensemaking investigation “The Future of Graphic Design” elaborates the argument that human behaviour, social change, environmental concerns, health and safety issues, and advancements in

technology have transformed the face of graphic design in a competitive and evolving environment. Analysing the results of an online survey, she comes to the understanding that the transition from social inactivity to a slight resurgence has not fazed the public's habitual handling of tangible products to a great extent: even though public spaces have been adapted to safeguard the public's wellbeing, the reaction to handling 3D and printed material has somewhat varied according to demographics. Pallearos offers intrinsic insights to new trends in design and design products such as business cards and an identified tendency of the younger generations to prefer digital products. The author proposes that despite the fact that designers cannot ignore progression or abandon tradition altogether, common ground can be found. Perhaps an amalgamation where technological demands and conservation unite, preserving values yet paving way for efficient and cost-effective solutions.

Penga M., continues her stimulating quest for solutions which contribute to Sustainability in Textile Design. Her ideas are underpinned by the principle that materials have a critical impact on the current state of the environment. They are a starting point for change and a valuable commodity for farmers, designers, the manufacturing industry, consumers and recyclers. In this sense, the author exemplifies new needs and technologies for recycled, organic, and bio-fabricated materials and among others for compostable materials that can be produced with minimal raw materials, toxins and water. She introduces the work of fashion pioneers who draw inspiration from nature to create unconventional materials with the introduction of technology.

Christodoulides St., reviews «Art Market 2021» offering insights of a significant market transformation in artwork and antiquities. During the COVID-19 challenging era, online sales have immensely increased. Digital innovation has emerged through the negative impact of the pandemic on the global market. Security, transparency and comprehensive information in online viewing rooms have been tested with absolute success. Auction houses, galleries and traders will invest the most in them. Finally, more and more millionaires are investing in works of art, either out of love for art, or because they see it as a safe investment.

Lastly, Christodoulides C. attempts to identify how teaching staff in Cyprus adjusted teaching methodologies during 2020 COVID-19 restrictions and what their expectations were in regards to intended learning outcomes of their students. He argues that this is a fundamental issue in case COVID-19 restrictions and on-line learning is extended in the future. Aside to lectures, academics employ discussions and assignments to raise interest of students to the distant learning content. Academic personnel reported negative impact of COVID 19 to their quality teaching at least to some extent. This may be related to the non-optimistic expectation that fewer students are expected to acquire intended learning outcomes in comparison to 2019-2020. A more optimistic eye on results of the author's research outcomes show that there is room for new teaching methods to be embraced such as flipped learning and break out online rooms for collaboration.