

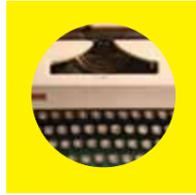


ISOTYPE

Neurath, the Isotype and the third competence
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Isotype revisited
ERIC KINDEL and SUE WALKER
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Progetto grafico has shown its interest for the Isotype ever since its beginnings. The opening section of issue n.2, December 2003, was entirely dedicated to Otto Neurath's work, in occasion of the exhibition curated by Alan Zàruba, *Otto Neurath: Isotype and the Development of Global Signs*, in the Milan Triennale: the section, curated by Mario Piazza and Daniele Turchi, included texts by Anceschi, Piazza, Turchi, Zàruba. More recently, *Pg* returned to the argument in issue 18, September 2010, with an article by the Isotype Revisited research group from the University of Reading, a review of the book *The transformer. Principles of making Isotype charts* by Marie Neurath and Robin Kinross, and an overview of the main initiatives from the past three years related to these themes. We chose two articles from this vast collection of contributions: Isotype and the third competence by Giovanni Anceschi, which has the merit of analyzing one of the most overlooked aspects of Isotype, transformation, and Isotype Revisited, which presents some of the researches taking place in Reading. **S.S.**



SAMIZDAT

The Soviet Samizdat
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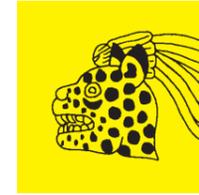
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Hundreds of thousands of people making four copies of a text with a typewriter. The document would travel from hand to hand and each of those four copies could generate hundreds, thousands of new ones, for thousands of texts. Just a few pages or long works. All of this in the name of simple yet basic principles. The need for freedom, the love for literature and poetry, and the belief that writing and the transmission of texts could be the way to defend those undeniable values. These thoughts, and the emotions we felt when first seeing and touching a samizdat, gave birth to the idea for the opening section of *Progetto grafico* 11, November 2007, from which these articles are taken.

The paper, the typewriter, the carbon paper, the text. The making of a samizdat shared certain implications with the graphic designer's activities. While sitting in front of the typewriter, the producers of those four copies became editors who also were required to make graphic choices. Format, spacing, margins, titles, paragraphs, illustrations, etcetera. These choices necessarily also had aesthetic implications. The composition of the text, the packaging of the samizdat, its binding: all these choices had a meaning of their own. They transmitted values that were a challenge to power.

Later on typewriting gained further sense and values. The choices made by the 'composers' mixed with the needs of poetry. Words gained sense also in relation to their position on the page, to their graphic rhythm, their form and their disposition. In these pages many examples of visual poetry document a closeness or superimposition of the works by certain authors and the samizdat practices. Above all the works by Dmitrij Prigov, which will be the object of an exhibition in Venice from the first of June 2011, organized by the Saint Petersburg Ermitage Museum and by the Ca Foscari University.

The Soviet era samizdat was a dangerous, tragic and desperate form of self-production which generates reflections on the self-production practices of our time. Websites and blogs, printed materials and magazines are being created more or less everywhere. This section is also dedicated to the authors of this endless resistant production, of this vaster than ever independent information. The pages from samizdats produce emotions, they move us and make us angry. It is healthy to know their history, to view them: it allows us to understand how a reaction against power is always possible. Hundreds of thousands of works and editors are there to demonstrate it. **A.L.**



READING/WRITING

Writing, image and linearity: the Aztec case
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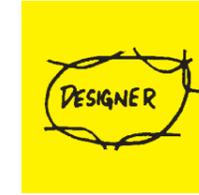
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The theme of reading/writing is a 'red line' that has pervaded the entire activity of *Progetto grafico*, and indeed precedes it: the exhibition *Scrittura* (lit. Writings), organized by Aiap alongside the Rome Municipality library system dates back to 1997, while the brief article which kicks off this section is taken from the last issue of *Notizie Aiap*, a 'transitional' issue, provokingly titled *Lorem ipsum* in order to underline the periodical's imminent change of masthead, formula and ambitions. This article re-analyzed the nature of graphic notations by starting from a 'wider' anthropological perspective, motivated by the belief that only by observing different solutions than the alphabetic one will it be possible to weaken those western clichés that had become the target of Giovanni Lussu's criticisms during his speech at the ATypI conference in Rome, in 2002, later published in the first issue of *Progetto grafico* (and translated into English by *Typography Papers*). In the text by Lussu we are presenting in this issue, previously published in *Pg* 4/5, the design solutions of Themerson's semantic typography are considered to be a challenge, launched 'from within', to the dogmas of the western typographic canon.

The arguments tackled in the opening section of *Progetto grafico* 8, an issue from which we are presenting two articles by the Exp research group, are apparently more limited and have already been extensively discussed: current typographic texts and their reading. However, as underlined by Ole Lund in his PHD thesis and in a couple of articles published in *Pg*, no definitive conclusions have yet been achieved. The idea was to offer a critical overview of the problem, because today, especially in the field of neurosciences, it has produced an authentic cognitive revolution, to the extent that many of the essays from that period now need to be updated (the soon-to-be-published synthesis proposed by Riccardo Falcinelli, finally a text that is free from all linearist prejudices, aims to achieve this goal). However, the basic questions addressed by those two articles are still topical ones: the tension towards an as yet un-achieved interdisciplinary approach and the incapacity of communication design to suggest themes and problems for research (partially due to the alphabet-centric 'mental cramps' we mentioned). Those pages, just like previous and following articles which appeared on our periodical, were a small contribution to the ongoing process of the emancipation of communication design from limits imposed by strict practicality, and to the goal of achieving trans-disciplinary attitudes destined to positively influence graphic design's practices. **A.P.**



THE GHOST USER

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The articles in this section aim to contribute to the idea of a graphic design capable of re-centering its process around the user. They are taken from the opening section of *Progetto grafico* 17, April 2010, and are the continuation of a discussion on the role of the user which began during *Design Per* 2009, the graphic design week organized by Aiap in Naples, featuring a meeting/debate curated by our editorial staff. The ghost user is an observation regarding the presence/absence of the user within the design process. It collects various texts (apart from the ones we are publishing in this issue, *Pg* 17 also featured contributions by Max Gaeta and Carlotta Latessa) which describe, in different ways, a situation of unease: the ghost user, just like the medically defined ghost limb, is absent yet perceivable. He is an indefinite presence and, according to each specific case, is ignored, trivialized, reduced to the status of lowest common denominator, yet very rarely listened to.

The article by Antonio Perri, the first of this section, kicks off from the very definition of this entity or presence, by comparing various models proposed by semiotics or communication studies: his conclusion is that none of these models are capable of providing a definition of user that may truly prove itself useful for the needs of communication design. On the other hand, Luciano Perondi presents an approach to research applied to graphic design, which is also an invitation to interdisciplinary work and to build projects not focused only on the capacity of the designer, but capable of involving, according to the specific case, the necessary skills to truly provide a service for the user. **S.S.**

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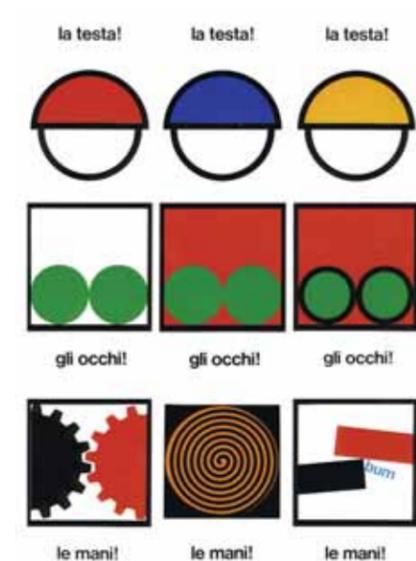


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The contents of each issue of **Progetto grafico** are divided into four sections identified by the periodical's four-color process. In the **yellow** section readers find brief essays or articles on arguments we consider to be fundamental. The **cyan** section is dedicated to a single theme and features various contributions. The **magenta** section collects reviews, reports and news. The **black** section is dedicated to initiatives by Aiap, the periodical's editor.

Further articles are considered to be transversal and are thus identified by all four colors together.

This issue of **Progetto grafico international** features a selection of articles from the over three thousand pages we have published from issue 0 (Lorem ipsum, October 2001) to now. We have tried to represent the numerous themes tackled by our periodical: facts and characters from the history of graphic design in Italy and abroad, current affairs, in-depth analyses and formation.

These pages of **Pg international** are yet another demonstration of our attention towards the representation of different aspects, thoughts and modalities, of our love for writing and narration, of our attempt to express thought-provoking proposals and to distance ourselves from fleeting fashions.

The selection and organization of the articles composing this issue of **Pg international** was curated by

ALBERTO LECALDANO
and **SILVIA SFLIGIOTTI**
Translations by
BENJAMIN GINSBORG

