

Written response

1.3 Methods of translating

Explanation

In the initial segment of the '**Conditional Design Manifesto**,' the individual taking the oath initially sets the stage by delineating the broader context of the social environment. Subsequently, they briefly outline the manifesto's overarching vision. The manifesto is then elaborated upon in three distinct sections. Finally, the name of the person taking the oath is left. Notably, the presentation has the appearance of a scanned copy of a physical manifesto.

The following text explores the article '**Designer as Author**' by Michael Rock, using '**Conditional Design workbook**' by Maurer and Luna, as a structure to re-present the article's main arguments and ideas.

Designer as Author

An article for designers

Authorship, in one form or another, has been a popular term in graphic design circles, especially those at the edge of the profession, the design academies and the murky territories that exist between design and art. The word authorship has a ring of importance: it connotes seductive ideas of origination and agency. But the question of how designers become authors is a difficult one, and exactly who the designer/authors are and what authored design looks like depends entirely on how you define the

term and the criteria you choose to grant entrance into the pantheon.

The difference between the way different writers or designers approach situations and make sense of the world is at the heart of a certain criticism. The challenge is to accept the multiplicity of methods that comprise design language. Authorship is only one device to compel designers to rethink process and expand their methods.

Definition of author

The meaning of the word itself has shifted significantly over time.

All literary theory, from Aristotle on, has in some form or another been theory of authorship.

The historical evolution of the concept of authorship from early definitions with authoritarian connotations to shifts in literary theory.

On the surface at least, contemporary designers were moving from authorless, scientific text — in which inviolable visual principles were carefully revealed through extensive visual research — toward a more textual position in which the designer could claim some level of ownership over the message.

The ambiguity surrounding the term "authorship" in graphic design.

Auteur theory

American critic Andrew Sarris — held that directors must meet three essential criteria in order to pass into the sacred hall of the auteur.

The interesting thing about the auteur theory was that, unlike literary critics, film theorists, like designers, had to construct the notion of the author.

The parallel to design practice is useful.

the graphic auteur must both seek projects that fit his or her vision and then tackle a project from a specific, recognizable critical perspective.

The application of auteur theory may be too limited an engine for our current image of design authorship but there are a variety of other ways to frame the issue, a number of paradigms on which we could base our practice: the artist book, concrete poetry, political activism, publishing, illustration.

Designer as ...

Designer as translator.

The act of design is, in essence, the clarification of material or the remodeling of content from one form to another. The ultimate goal is the expression of a given content rendered in a form that reaches a new audience. In certain works, the designer remolds the raw material of given content, rendering it legible to a new audience. The designer is the intermediary.

Designer as performer.

The designer transforms and expresses content through graphic devices. The designer becomes the physical manifestation of the content, not author but performer, the one who gives life to, who speaks the content, contextualizing it and bringing it into the frame of the present.

Designer as director.

In large projects, the designer orchestrates masses of materials to shape meaning, working like a film director, overseeing a script, a series of performances, photographers, artists, and production crews. The meaning of the work results from the entire production.

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Michael Rock

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Reference list

Maurer, L. and Paulus, E. et al. (2013) *Conditional design workbook*. Amsterdam: Valiz.
Rocjk M. (1996) *Designer as Author*. Available at: <https://2x4.org/ideas/1996/designer-as-author/>
(Accessed: 10 Nov 2023).