



CURRICULUM CONTEXTUAL DESIGN
MASTER RESEARCH PROGRAMME

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RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Designs are witnesses of the times in which they are born, they tell us something of the place in the world in which they function, of the manufacturing process. They carry the traces of the hand of the maker, the signature of the designer, the technological possibilities of their time. Designs have a history, for instance because they have been used or because they function within specific contexts only. Becoming aware of all the hidden meanings is of great importance to any designer, as it will help you create your own meaningful designs and relationships with their contexts.

During your studies we will not literally take you by the hand, for instance by teaching you exactly what you should know. We will not focuss on skills and learning techniques. Instead we will often try and puzzle you, we will turn all questions and all answers upside down. In that process we will help you discover who you are, to trust your intuitions, to mistrust your first assumptions. We will help you discover your own personal talents and will help you improve your research and design talents. We will try to open your eyes to the world and give advice where and how to gather all necessary knowledge and skills. The focuss will be on seeing, listening, feeling, gathering information and knowledge, on reflection, analyses, on organising what you have researched and on translating your intuitions and your knowledge into relevant design proposals.

In the first trimester of the first year the first year students will work on an overall theme: Living as a physical being in a digitalised world (see 2011-2012 / First Trimester / First Years). The second year students will work on themes they have chosen themselves (see 2011-2012 / First Trimester / Second Years).

MENTORS

The Research Programme Contextual Design works with a pool of mentors. Each trimester there will be changes in the team.

First trimester 2011-2012

First year students, design mentors: Dries Verbruggen (designer), Cornel Bierens (artist and theorist) and Mikel van Gelderen (architect). Incidentally Louise Schouwenberg (theorist, head of the department)

Second year students, design mentors: Louise Schouwenberg (theorist, head of the department), Gijs Assman (artist) and Jan Konings (designer) / research and thesis mentor: Koen Kleijn (theorist)

Second trimester 2011-2012

First year students, design mentors: Gijs Assman (artist) and Hansje van Halem (designer). Incidentally Louise Schouwenberg (theorist, head of the department).

Second year students, design mentors: Louise Schouwenberg (theorist, head of the department), Sofie Lachaert (designer) and Jan Konings (designer) / research and thesis mentor: Koen Kleijn (theorist)

Third trimester 2011-2012

First year students, design mentors: Sofie Lachaert (designer), Edith Gruson (designer) and Koen Kleijn (theorist). Incidentally Louise Schouwenberg (theorist, head of the department) Second year students, design mentors: Louise Schouwenberg (theorist, head of the department), Gijs Assman (artist), and Jan Konings (designer)

Apart from the weekly lessons, in the first trimester there will be a three day workshop, given by Jeroen van Mastrigt (lector new media). In the second trimester a workshop will be given to the first years by Hella Jongerius (designer) during an excursion to Berlin, and in the same trimester a workshop will be given to the second years by Edith Gruson. In the third trimester specific experts will give lectures and workshops, related to the commissions of the external commissioners. For info on additional guest lessons see schedule.

Throughout the year, experts in the design process, such as Mario Minale and Ted Noten, and communication and exhibition design, such as Bart Guldmond, will help you create your final presentations.

GENERAL PROGRAMME

Each day the programme starts at 10 o'clock: from 10-11 one of the mentors who are present that day (or combinations of mentors) will provide a programme for all students Contextual Design, first and second years (see schedule).

The morning programme may be a lecture about one of the mentors own projects, a lecture about their oeuvre or it may be a theme they deem interesting for you. The morning programme can also consist of a group discussion or a workshop. Make sure you are all present and in time! Place: lecture room second floor.

After the general programme (which ends around 11/11.30), the first year students talk with their mentors about the general theme they work on (see below). The second year students will talk with their mentors about the research of their personal themes (see below).

If one of the mentors wants to take the group on an excursion, the schedule will slightly change, so keep track of changes by checking the schedule every week.

2011-2012 / FIRST TRIMESTER / FIRST YEARS

THEME OF THE FIRST TRIMESTER: LIVING AS A PHYSICAL BEING IN A DIGITALISED WORLD

You will work on 2 specific assignments within this overall theme, given by the first year mentors: Dries Verbruggen, Cornel Bierens and Mikel van Gelderen (each mentor guides a group of students. You will find your name in 2 groups. See the lists). You will meet your mentors almost every week and discuss with them, either in the group or individually, how you have proceeded your research. Incidentally the head of the department will attend the lessons.

Why this theme?

We live in a digital era. New technologies have not only influenced the way 'things' are made, they have also had consequences for the way we experience reality. Digital technology has created a large range of 'social media', in many fields it has created a democratization of the production means and it has drastically changed the way people relate to each other and how people relate to their physical environment. Whereas the old technologies were linked to the idea of causality and linearity, the newest technologies are linked to the idea of networks and relationships.

The way to approach this theme contains many possibilities, both on a micro and a macro level, on a theoretical and a practical level. All elements of design research (key words in the masters programme) are dealt with: research of an abstract, philosophical theme; development of concepts; the translation of concepts into designproposals.

Advised reading list:

Below you find a few titles of books; some texts you can find on the internet, some are included in this folder. Try and read as much as you can to become informed and inspired. If texts are too difficult or beyond your interests, find your own texts about the theme. Your designmentors will give you additional tips for reading.

- Walter Benjamin, The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, 1936
- Jos de Mul, The World in the age of its digital manipulation - A virtual exercise in derealization, 2010
- Marianne van den Boomen, The Metaphor Thing. Representing social movements by network metaphors, 2004
- Peter Sloterdijk, Rules for the Human Zoo: a response to the Letter on Humanism, 2001
- Stacy Jo Scott, At Home 3D Printing, The Journal of Modern Craft
- Chris Anderson, In the next Industrial Revolution, Atoms are the new Bits, Wired Magazine
- Jos de Mul, Cyberspace Odyssey, 2010 (or chapter via the internet, see links below) Jos de Mul, Cyberspace Odyssey, 2010: <http://www.c-s-p.org/flyers/978-1-4438-2127-8-sample.pdf> RealSpace in QuickTimes. RealTime in QuickSpace: http://static.nai.nl/www_riq/essay_intro.html, Michael Heim, The Erotic Ontology of Cyberspace, 1993: http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/erotic_ontology_of_cyberspace.html

After the conclusion of the trimester in december, you will receive a small but important writing assignment to work on during the long holiday: a short essay about your future role as a designer (± 250 words/maximum 400 words). What is your mission or 'message', for the designworld, for the world at large. Will you be a productdesigner, a designer of public space, a designer of strategies or services, a teamleader, In which contexts would you like to work, for which target groups, etcetera.

Advised reading: Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Message, 1967

2011-2012 / FIRST TRIMESTER / SECOND YEARS

Before you start the first trimester you have presented your thesis proposal and described the theme of your choice. Your design, research and thesis mentors (Gijs Assman, Jan Konings and Koen Kleijn) and the head of the department (Louise Schouwenberg) will guide the research and design process, by giving you explicit assignments within the theme of your personal choice. We so to speak 'take you by the hand' in this first trimester. This does not mean you cannot propose your own way of dealing with the theme. In close consultation with each other the assignments will be formulated.

By the end of the first trimester a full-blown research report (text, film,) + design proposal is expected.

SECOND AND THIRD TRIMESTER

2011-2012 / Second Trimester / First Years

Theme of the second trimester: 'The Message And The Medium'. At the start of the trimester you present the personal statements you have written during the holiday. Based on these texts each one of you will receive specific assignments, given by two of the three (new) first year mentors. Why this theme? To create awareness about the relationship between content and medium; awareness about the layers of meanings that are hiding in each medium, material, technique; awareness about the role a designer can play within this field of expertise.

2011-2012 / Second Trimester / Second Years

In the first trimester you have formulated your own theme and have worked on specific assignments, given by the mentors. In the second trimester you formulate your own assignments within that theme (or an alternative theme if the first trimester did not work out well). You will be mentored by two designmentors, the research and thesis mentor and the head of the department.

By the end of that second trimester a full-blown research report (text, film,) + design proposal is expected.

2011-2012 / Third Trimester / First Years

Theme of the third trimester will be given in due time by an external commissioner. You will work on three assignments, mentored by three mentors.

2011-2012 / Third Trimester / Second Years

The research has been concluded in the second trimester. The third trimester is focussed on the design and the final presentation of your research and design. You will be mentored by three designmentors and the head of the department. Apart from them you will get specific guest lessons in presenting your work in an exhibition and before an audience.

By the end of the third trimester a finalised research report (text, film, ...), oral presentation and design is expected. If you deviate from this (for instance because you have focussed only on a theoretical project or because your main focus is visual material), you have to make sure the research has been conducted in a systematic way, consistent with the academic criteria we set for a master's proof.