

Fluxus Heidelberg Center BLOG

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Ken Friedman - New Interview



Professor Ken Friedman
Dean, Faculty of Design, Swinburne University

From the multi-layered artworld of Fluxus to the strata of design research, Professor Ken Friedman's contribution to the knowledge economy is globally renowned. Now, as Swinburne's Dean of Design, he is building a new school of thinking from the ground up.

As a central member of the pioneering arts, intermedia, and design group Fluxus, Ken Friedman forged a singular place at the intersection of experimental art and media, design research, academia, and educational philosophy.

Throughout a long and exploratory career, he has been a visual artist, writer and publisher, design entrepreneur, consultant, researcher, and academic. Widely exhibited in major museums and galleries around the world – including the Tate Modern, the Guggenheim, MOMA and Stuttgart's Stadtsgalerie – Ken Friedman remains a true design innovator and above all, a thinker.

He continues to be intrigued by ideas and their application, but as an educator, he is focused on the discipline and academic precision required to advance loci of design invention to global paradigm.

Ken Friedman received a Master of Arts degree in interdisciplinary studies in education, psychology, and social science from San Francisco State University in 1971. Five years later, he earned his doctorate at United States International University. In 2007, Loughborough University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Science degree for outstanding contributions to design research.

In between, he was Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in

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Contemporary Art, San Diego, and during the mid 1980s, he was President of the Art Economist Corporation in New York.

Friedman's October 2007 appointment as the Dean of Design at Swinburne University was a coup for an ambitious faculty intent on creating a unique environment for design thinking, practice, and education.

What exactly lured Friedman from his previous post as a Professor in the Department of Culture, Communication, and Language at the Norwegian School of Management in Oslo, and the Design Research Centre at the Danish Design School in Copenhagen? It was an idyllic life in a beautifully restored home perched on the edge of a fjord, with a book-lined study and a thinking man's perfect balance between work and life.

Perhaps, it was the same motivation that underpinned Fluxus all those years ago: the opportunity to create an original laboratory of design thinking with the view that constructive thought breeds constructive cities wherever they are in the world.

Friedman is well credentialed to take on the multiple policies and processes of his new mission. He has conducted research in the philosophy of science as well as the philosophy of design and doctoral education. He has worked with national design policy projects in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Wales. He actively continues to build links and networks within the international design research community.

In his notes for the 1972 'Omaha Flow Systems' project, Friedman wrote that the most complex of human activities is "creative participation in the arts."

Today, he argues that the art of learning must combine the rhetoric and reason of design with modern metrics that account for the great issues, critical faculties, and resource allocation in the vital life and cycles of global design contingencies such as sustainability.

And he is a patient man. In ushering in a qualitative new pedagogy, he is not so much concerned with the velocity of change, but the vector of its thinking.

There is much on the drawing board to facilitate the Professor's 7-10 year plan. Greening the pastures of his vanguard school on the Prahran campus, creating interdisciplinary course models to attract nascent talent and nurture it to mastery, repurposing resources, encouraging existing designers, and wooing new minds to broach and expound on the challenges of matter. Friedman plans on infusing thought with rigour, skill with focus, and education with a broad, cognitive interpretation of design rationale.

In discussions with Ken Friedman, no matter how diverse the subject or tangential the conversation, it all comes back to discipline: the thoughtful application of acquired knowledge, of text and context rather than self-expression in isolation.

Professor Ken Friedman talks with Design Victoria about taking design education and research to a higher degree.

DV: So, you have packed up your home in a village on a bucolic Norwegian fjord, moving lock, stock, and barrel to Australia. For how long?

KF: This is it. I'm 58 years old and what I have to do here is going to take 7-10 years. When I am through with my work as dean, I'm going to be a research professor and stay in Australia.

DV: Is that the nature of the life of a 'design thinker' or of design itself in that as a practice it is typically nomadic these days?

KF: Well, it's not specifically an issue in design thinking. You can say that this is the case for the academic world and the research life. To tell you truth, I hadn't really planned on being a dean. I had a lovely life as a research professor. My job was so good, that if I hadn't needed the money, I would probably have paid them the money to let me do what they paid me to do!

DV: So you went from a good life to the complete unknown. Was the former pleasant-speak for a kind of semi-retirement or do you never professionally retire the mind?

KF: Well, my role model was management scholar Peter Drucker. He worked until he was 95 and then he died. W. Edwards Deming, the physicist and statistician who helped Japan in its post-war reconstruction, worked until he was past 90, and then he died. And that's more or less the way I look at it. Retiring is not something I plan to do. In fact, that's what's nice about Australia. When I finish working as a dean, I can go on working as a professor for a long time.

DV: Nevertheless, from Scandinavia to a small but earnest faculty in Prahnan is a long way. What convinced you to accept the post?

KF: What I learned was that [Swinburne] really wants to increase the quality and the standing of the faculty dramatically; increase its research capacity dramatically to become a genuinely serious, even eminent, design school.

I met the Vice-Chancellor Ian Young in Amsterdam and I was very interested in what he had to say. I was deeply impressed because even though he is a university Vice-Chancellor, he remains research active. My thinking then was that I don't have to give up being a research professor if I become a dean at a place like this. So, I came down to Melbourne. I spent a week here and they sold me on the Swinburne vision.

DV: Does a designer or any creative for that matter need high level challenges like this to keep the function operationally acute?

KF: Everybody does. There are different kinds of challenges for different people but everybody needs some kind of challenge. For people who are creative, it's about challenges, opportunities, and sometimes the chance to do something you couldn't do anywhere else. One reason I never thought about being a dean previously is the fact that most everybody has got their university, their faculty, their staff - it's all in place, so deans can make an incremental difference but not a massive difference. At Swinburne, they are eager to create something new and significant in design and they're prepared to invest in significant numbers of new staff members to grow our capacity, and to dedicate new and significant resources to it.

This is a chance you don't get very often in life.

DV: So it's the opportunity to be at the coalface of education, which is a very essential issue now.

KF: All deans are. And that's where all deans make a difference. The great opportunity here is that I'm going to have a significant number of staff positions to fill in the next seven years and that means I create something new at the same time I have the chance to build on and reinforce the strong skills and capacities that we have here now.

DV: There is at the moment universally, a serious reflection on the model of design education that currently exists. Is the perceived need for more rigour in thinking, more inclusive, longer course studies, a reason you are pursuing the 3 + 2 Bologna structure?

KF: We are moving toward that. Basically, we've got '3' but we really want to encourage people to go on for the '2'. Now to do that, we have to offer a better Master of Design degree than we do currently.

Here, issues of funding and income come into play. All universities want and need money for other reasons, and they get them from full-fee students in masters degree programs. We are not necessarily getting the best students for these programmes in any of the Australian universities, because the best students generally want to go to the US or the UK. In design – at least if we want to attract the best –we have to revamp our master's programme in a serious and significant way. I believe that we are going to be able to do so. Then, we will have a serious 3+2, like the good schools in the UK, or like the North American universities with a '4+1' or even a '4+2'.

Design Rationale

DV: Does the design world both in research and in practical application require a broader bandwidth of thought and multidisciplinary approach?KF: Now this is tricky. Let's revisit your question about rigour first. If you are going to do research, you have to be rigorous.

At a recent lunch with colleagues in one of the design specialties, the conversation turned to research. A woman getting her doctorate mentioned one aspect of a program in the discussion, and I said that the particular focus wasn't as strong and rigorous as it could be. She looked at me, and replied, 'but you know, making creative artifacts is a form of research.'

I said, 'no, it may be part of a research programme but it is not in itself a form of research.' Then I had to qualify that statement. Anyone who can solve a clinical problem does conduct clinical research, and this includes manufacturing creative artifacts. Nevertheless, to transform clinical research into research on a broader level, you've got to be able to write it down, and then you need the meta-narrative of the research. That involves more than just doing it. It involves explaining how you did it, why you made the choices you made, what your methods were, what they amount to... Well, then she looked at me and said: 'But that's so old-fashioned. You're privileging the text!' And I said, but you have to understand, you are trying to get a PhD. You have to write a thesis and that is not privileging the text; you must communicate what happens inside your mind in words.

Now, the minute we get paranormal communication, or mind-to-mind linkages then we won't need to bother with words any more. Until then, what you do with your hands, what you do in a test tube; all that happens in the physical world. But research happens only in the mind of a researcher, and therefore for a research outcome, you've got to communicate using words, the meta-narrative research. If you don't do that, there's no research.

DV: There's much to be said for actually articulating your rationale, why you are doing it, because anyone has a little bit of hubris invested in any project or skill that they want to take to another level. Do you think that the importance of language is often understated in communicating ideas?

KF: This is the whole point. Research is a practice, just like the practice of design or the practice of violin making, or the practice of chemistry... But an aspect of what makes research different is that if you teach someone to make violins, part of that education is informing them on the reasons for certain aspects of the practice. You're going to tell them this is why you must do this, this is why you make the choices you make, this is why we use this varnish rather than that one, this is why we carve the 'f' holes this way... It's the same thing with any practice. If you do not articulate the process of the practice, you are not actually doing the research, or at least you are not communicating it. And this is the problem.

So, when we talked about rigour in design research or in any of these other fields, the answer is yes, but in design it has been missing, in part, because there has been a lot of confusion about the distinction between design practice, and practice-led research.

Researching High and Low

DV: What is their definition?

KF: Well, that's the point. They are different entities. Research is research and practice is practice, but some forms of research grow out of practice. That is, you don't set out a theory in advance, you actually do something, you work with things, you learn from what happens in the process of making, the process of planning, what happens in the empirical world. That's also true when you research with chemistry or anything else. But the point is that people are often they're confused in design and in the areas of art where they are trying to create research traditions.

Many, many people believe for example, that you should get a PhD for writing a book of poetry or creating a load of paintings, and then doing what they call an 'exegesis'. The truth is that they do not understand what an exegesis is. An exegesis is an analysis of the text, reading out from the text what lies within the text, often with a relation to its history, its culture, it's time, the way it's made.

Now here's the problem. When you study any of the exegetical research traditions, the first thing scholars warn you about is not to commit the grave sin of 'eisegesis', essentially interpreting the text according to your own wishes, beliefs, or desires.

To be skilled enough to do exegesis on your own work requires a level of sophistication and maturity that relatively few youngsters have. And when I say 'youngsters' I mean people up to the age of 40 - 45. You also require a tremendous level of philosophical integrity and psychological depth. Every few centuries, you get someone who can do auto-exegetical work – Søren Kierkegaard is one example. There are not many more.

What you are really getting are people who are not able to distinguish between their intentions and their actual outcomes when they think they are doing an exegetical document on their own work. Because they read their intentions so strongly, they become confused between what they intend things to mean with what those things actually mean.

There is subjectivity and objectivity in everything, as Kierkegaard told us. The point is that when you get a PhD, you must be able to do both and

balance both. You don't just get the one – that is what a degree in arts practice is for, not what a research doctorate is for. A PhD is a doctor of philosophy, a doctorate in research. Even Kierkegaard didn't analyse himself for his doctorate. He analysed Socrates.

DV: This raises a point about multi-disciplinary interpretation and absorption of classic methodologies as part and parcel of higher education, especially in design thinking. A kind of accredited polymath. Can you consolidate rather than institutionalise a polymath?

KF: Yes and no. Some colleagues and I have undertaken a research programme to develop an inventory of the number of fields and sub-fields, disciplines and sub-disciplines of design and design research. We are now up to about 800. Nobody can master all of that. Most of these fields and subfields aren't even taught in design schools. Design schools, or architecture and design schools, or art and design schools focus on a few specific areas. None of the schools teaches in more than 5-8% of the fields. If you want to learn to design pharmaceuticals, you study pharmacology, biopsychology or bio-'something'. If you want to design laws you study jurisprudence, or political science. Street systems would be urban planning or large-scale urban architecture... There are places to study nearly all the kinds of things that human beings can design, but not all of these disciplines have design in the name of the school or the program.

Now, there's one area where design schools ought to work but few do so, and that is the question of design as a human process without regard to the target discipline. In fact, at places like Open University or at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology (KAIST) they do study design as a field without regard to the target discipline. But most design schools work with target subjects. You do need to do both. But you don't train polymaths. You train people to think, and then depending what you're designing, they learn how to assemble multidisciplinary teams.

DV: Technology has changed education through e-commerce models to pair ideas with investment across the world whilst still learning in design school. How does an academic institution with a focus on design research and rigour and a decade long mandate to evolve, absorb the technological considerations of immediacy whilst still keeping a course focus on developmental education?

KF: Technology is very important. But the most important tool is thinking. Along with thinking is the ability to respond to the environment. What's taking a decade is that there are a lot of different issues: reorienting the curriculum, attracting new people to help us build new courses, helping current staff add to their level of skill and knowledge. Another key issue involves finding new ways for current staff to express their skill and knowledge. We have some very good people right where we are now. The new curriculum has a real need for much of what they know, but perhaps we need to orchestrate our forces in a different way.

Ten years is a long time. In another sense, ten years is no time at all. And that is what is so extraordinary about all of this. Some of what we must implement to make the school that we are going to make is to physically build a school. That alone is going to take us four years. Planning, building, all the associated processes ... it is unbelievably interesting once you start to deal with these kinds of things.

But the decade timeline is about getting all the pieces of the puzzle together and then implementing, implementing, implementing. This takes a lot of time. It's one thing to know where I want to go; it's another to develop the skills to get there.

DV: In the sense of consolidating a universal language of design, it's still a struggle to speak to different industries, to a greater context about design, let alone it's importance in innovating and competitive edge.

KF: This is tricky because any genuine design problem is embedded in the immediate context. You need thinking skills that may be very broad and generic but each time you solve a problem, you are actually solving a clinical problem for a specific stakeholder or a legitimate problem owner, whatever you want to call that person. The problem is always immediate and anchored in the situation.

In that sense, nothing is truly universal. What should be universal is to develop analytical, rhetorical, and synthetic skills to examine the problems and solve them successfully.

DV: To frame the questions as well as posit solutions?

KF: Yes.

DV: What do you hope the graduate of your new model will be as a designer?

KF: I hope one of our graduates will be a properly prepared professional who is able to go into a design firm, or into an organisation that needs a designer with the awareness that the problem comes first, that you start by understanding a problem. You're able to start to figure out how to solve that problem for a legitimate stakeholder or problem owner. You're able to bring the appropriate kinds of skills to bear by asking good questions, opening the question space coming to understand the genuine problem before jumping to solutions. And then, you must be able to open the solution space, laying out a range of solutions, choosing the most effective solution for the circumstances, then able to bring it to bear. Finally, you're able to go through a number of iterations and actually get the problem solved together with a team, normally at least the designer and the client, maybe the designer and several other members of a design team, a client, maybe several members of a client team.

If you look at some big design problems like building an airbus, your design team and client teams might be 5,000 or 10,000 individuals. Most kinds of problems that the majority of our students will graduate to solve may involve teams of 5-30 people. This is something that is often overlooked. The design team is often a virtual, small business that gathers together as an SME for the duration of a project to get the problem solved. That's one of the things I hope our graduates will be ready to do.

The other thing I hope is to serve as a forum for those who really get curious about problems and research. I want our graduates to be ready either to move into serious advanced professional practice rather than becoming one of those people that is going to have to unlearn everything over a period of 5-10 years before they are ready to start learning how to design.

A strong education includes vocational skills, high level intellectual skills, the ability to challenge as well as to create, and it one signal of that readiness is

the ability to move into a serious doctoral programme and get a doctorate.

DV: Sustainability. Eco-design. Environmental friendliness. These issues have obviously moved beyond buzzwords. What is the role of the designer in addressing these and is the principle now a fundamental imprimatur for anything we teach given the era we will live in?

KF: For us, it is one of the three thematic issues in our transformation. These three issues are research, sustainability and the role of design in the global knowledge economy. We are definitely moving that way. Getting there will take us time.

We were the first design school in the world to join the Designer's Accord, a group of designers founded by Valerie Casey from IDEO. They've calculated a few simple models that we are going to use. For example, we will be measuring our own sustainability every year to see if we have done as well as we should and to see how we can do better. When we work with clients, we'll examine the sustainable aspects of what is involved in the case... This involves much more than buzzwords, but it doesn't mean getting there is easy. There is an awful lot to be done, even for just one school. We're about to build a massive new building and simply making that structure sustainable offers us a great laboratory.

DV: Can you teach creative enterprise and commercial ingenuity?

KF: I think that you teach people to make the most of what they've got. You provide a context in which they can grow and learn. Creativity is a constellation of characteristics and they don't 'lump up' in any profession. There are as many creative electrical engineers, as many creative chefs and plumbers, as there are creative designers and even artists. Now, artists, musicians and theatre people don't want to hear that but the truth is most of what they do as most of what human beings of all kinds do, involves mastering skills based on ideas, practices, and information that others have developed.

Every now and again, you get someone who comes along and invents a new medium: opera, ballet... whatever it is, it's new and that's a creative gesture, a new medium. Then, people innovate incrementally within that medium. A lot of human creativity involves the social conversation of incremental innovation.

But the notion that a designer, or anybody else is necessarily going to be a creative genius...(laughs)

DV: Some are very good design managers, great organisers, and brilliant project managers...

KF: Yes, very often in many outstanding design teams, it may be the design manager who is the actual creative genius of the team. You just don't know; it depends on the team – people spark each other, they learn from each other. I don't think we should ask whether we need to teach designers to be great creative entrepreneurs. Some people aren't cut out to be that.

DV: Having said that, there is a societal pressure on young people to be entrepreneurial in their work lives whatever skills or attributes they possess.

KF: I think a lot of these issues are up for grabs. Many people want to go out and get a nice job, and there's something to be said for a pay cheque! I've

been an entrepreneur and I've made a lot of money; I've been an entrepreneur and I've lost a lot of money. I've survived. I'm still here. And that is something in itself!

DV: What is the end effect of linking people in a globalised world?

KF: It's not clear yet. We've had globalisation for many, many years because there are many, many faces of globalisation. People talk about globalisation primarily as a corporate phenomenon but in fact that is not all there is to globalisation. Very often, it is the failure of globalisation that permits corporations to jump borders and swap jurisdictions. Globalisation also involves universal human rights and universal human law. The first great upsurge of globalisation involved the anti-slavery movement of the early 1800s when Britain outlawed slavery. Then America outlawed slavery and slowly, this began to roll around the world.

State of Fluxus

DV: When you reflect on Fluxus, forty years on, could you have anticipated today, what is happening creatively and in terms of the means of information dissemination?

KF: Yes and no. It's very interesting because some of the systems that we see now with the Internet and communication networks go back a long time. For example, George Maciunas had an idea for something he called 'learning machines'. These worked in some ways that computer do now. In 1974, Nam June Paik talked about the 'Information Superhighway' in ways that could be compared to the Internet. If you look at someone like Vannevar Bush and his idea of the Memex, it could be seen as a precursor to the World Wide Web. Or think about Paul Otlet's 1934 proto-Web that took the form of a hyperlinked paper-based 'réseau' or global network. That involved what is now being called the syntactic web. The need to edit or create syntactical structures was always much greater than would have been possible, even with today's technology. But there it was.

It turns out that many Fluxus artists didn't care about these kinds of issues. They just wanted to make art and music. But for those of us who did care, the answer to the question of whether we see some of this today is yes and no. It's yes because we saw it, and no because at the same time we could see it, we simply failed to understand the depth and resilience of cultures. I certainly did.

One reason I went back to school to get my PhD was that even then, I started to realise all the things that we wanted to do that wasn't getting done – couldn't get done - and I wanted to know more. I wanted to know why, and how to change it.

DV: The argument would be that that was a choice of traditional learning path rather than pursuing a kind of experiential collaboration in the archetypal art/life sense.

KF: Well, yes! I had to learn from people like Abraham Maslow and Sigmund Freud and W. Edwards Deming... all those people. If you want to get things done, you need skills and knowledge. No matter how much you experiment in terms of creating outputs, if part of what you want to do with that experimentation involves changing culture, you have to get the tools. The tools involve change agency and this means something quite different to simply experimenting.

The Fine Art of Collective Bargaining

There's also another issue that I don't think we necessarily paid enough attention to and this is that everyone involved in this has some kind of voice or choice in these issues. It's not like there's just going to be these kinds of visionaries who are going to make the decisions – George Maciunas and Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik or Ken Friedman. There are other aspects that come into play. I'm not sure that we totally attended to it all as much we should have, if we wanted the kinds of change that were implicit in the things that some of us were interested in achieving. So there was a lot to it.

DV: Was change necessarily the prescriptive objective or was it just about a lot of really interesting ideas? Was it vive la revolution? KF: Both. Nam June Paik and George Maciunas envisioned revolutionary change. Everybody should have a TV station of his or her own. We should be an open circuit so we can achieve a kind of 'social Buddhism' through this new technology. Of course they're talking about change. For Maciunas and for me, and for Dick Higgins with the idea of intermedia, it was about new ways of making art that actually increase the opportunities we have for constructive societies.

DV: Collaboration and personality in that context, require strong vision and voice to engage people to join and become a collective, but how does it work operationally?

KF: Fluxus was never a collective: that was only ever George's idea. But the trouble was it is a lovely sounding idea for a lot of people who picked up on the notion of a 'Fluxus Collective'. You can say it was a laboratory, a community of people or a group of people in the large sense of the word 'group', but never a collective. George was the only one who wanted a collective and after 1965, even he didn't.

DV: Why don't art collectives work?

KF: Collectives don't work for the same reason the Soviet Union collapsed. Supposedly, everybody decides together but ultimately, power gets invested in a sole authoritarian decision body, normally headed by one person who pretends to speak for the whole group. But a collective, unlike a parliamentary democracy, doesn't allow mechanisms for change because of the myth that the people control it all. Therefore the head of the state, the head of the collective is the great father, which is really Tsarism.

DV: That goes to the question about personality in collaborations. Someone in the group will always be, at least perceptually, 'the director'.

KF: Not necessarily in a laboratory.

DV: Isn't there a head lab technician?

KF: There may be but there's always some governing authority as distinct from the 'Animal Farm' or the 'Lord of the Flies'. The reason collectivism never works is that no one ever signs up to sign away all their rights and let the great father or a tsar speak for them. The truth about George is that although he had some dictatorial tendencies early on, he wasn't a dictator and he never wanted to be. And that is also partly why he abandoned the idea too when he realised that everybody didn't want to sign some sort of manifesto that spoke for us all.

DV: How do you look back on it all now? Do you think you can activate that same sort of 'laboratory' in today's environment?

KF: It's very difficult to say. There are a lot of ideas that are still quite lively, but there's a lot of stuff you wouldn't even try - or want - to do today. There's

a lot coming from Fluxus that some young artists today are making very good use of, but they are interpreting it in their own way. And a lot of the Fluxus people get a little bit grumpy with me because of the fact that I actually have the view that people should be able to reinterpret things. For example, if there is the issue of musicality involved in working from event scores, then that means people have to be able to reinterpret the scores and bring them to life in their own way. We have to acknowledge and accept that.

The composer writes the score, but Mozart might or might not have been able to direct the best performance of one of his own operas. When someone does Don Giovanni today, is it a proper recreation of Mozart's way or a totally new way? Or whether you do Henry V as Shakespeare did it or as Kenneth Branagh did it... the truth is it's still Henry V and it's still Shakespeare's play. And in fact, I'd be willing to argue that Branagh's Henry V is superior as a movie to Laurence Olivier's because he learned how to master the art of film in a way that wasn't even possible to Olivier. His was a great film for a certain time in history and I would be willing to bet that Shakespeare would be awestruck by and totally accept Branagh's performance because it is true to the text and yet at the same time, it brings the battle to life in a way that Shakespeare explicitly said you couldn't do in his day.

DV: You've talked about video for example, as having passed out of its Stone Age and entered the Bronze Age of technology. In terms of experimentation keeping apace with media and delivery, was McLuhan right? Are we more entranced with the medium than the message?

KF: That's the interesting and the tricky part. I think there always is that temptation, at least for me, and that's what I very specifically tried to avoid. But that's also why you get this really difficult situation with someone like myself, where I have to think about it much too long and then I'm never happy with that I've done. That's why I keep dipping into and out of the art world because I'll start to think about something and then it just takes me forever to do it. And by then, maybe the world has moved on.

DV: But then that goes to the original discussion about taking time to think through an idea, and apply a rigorous process to the realisation of a project be it design, policy, process, art or science. So, can you teach people to think patiently and more openly?

KF: Of course, that you can do. Teaching people to be creative is different to teaching people to think openly. You can do the latter because people respond to models of ways to think. You can give people models. You can show them how to employ those models. When you do, I observe that people nearly always respond in productive and interesting ways. Absolutely, no question about it.

DV: In your own design research at the moment, what is especially intriguing you, exciting your enthusiasm in ways we've been discussing?

KF: There are three things that really interest me. Two are pretty straightforward. The other one is trickier and more difficult and I've been working on it for some time.

One set of fairly straightforward issues involve how to build good design schools. What should design education be like? How should we be working with design these days? And the other set involves the question of comparative research methodology. How should we be conducting design research? How do we build good research paradigms? How do we make

them work effectively?

The tricky that is taking me such a long time is the question of hermeneutics. How can we revive and make good use of the hermeneutic research traditions that deal for example, with issues of exegesis? How can we learn from an artifact, or from a text, or a cultural context what we can do and how we can create to get better design applications in the present moment?

DV: It's a practical application too: you're actually researching and designing the spatial structures of the school that you are going to learn and work in.

KF: Yes. Interestingly enough, something that turns out to be very, very good, is that we have a couple of significant research projects going on right now that deal with all of this. As a result, we have layers on top of layers working for us!

At the same time, we are trying to hire and attract significant new staff, to develop the areas we want to develop. We are talking to a couple of globally renowned designers. If you mention their names, everyone knows who they are, and they have decided that they would like to come here from Europe to help us build our design school of the future.

Other kinds of design schools are also design schools of the future, for example, Stanford d-School. What they do at the intersection of design and engineering and business is unparalleled. We can't do anything like that. One reason is that we have different heritage. Another reason is that they're Stanford and they have a lot more money than we do. On top of that, they're in the middle of Silicon Valley, plus they're got business connections on top of business networks...

But we can do some things that they can't do because of the kinds of people who will come here for a different philosophical challenge at the edge of Asia.

So, as I say, I've got 7 – 10 years. If I'm lucky, it will take me only 7 years and I don't expect to be unlucky. But if I don't go as fast as I wish, it will take me 10 years. And then the next dean will take us to the next level.

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www.swinburne.edu.au/design

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<http://www.designvic.com/Knowledge/HotTopics/KenFriedman.aspx>

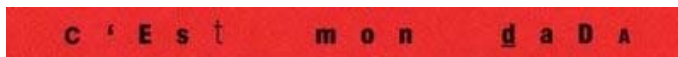
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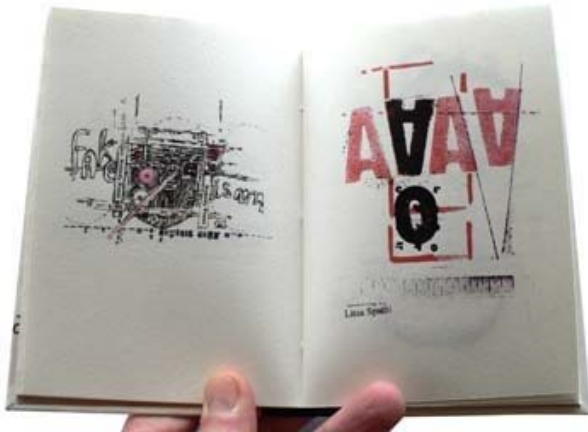
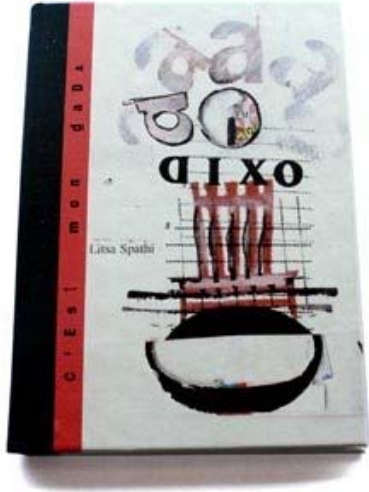
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SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2009

A new book of visual poetry by Litsa Spathi







LITSA SPATHI (GERMANY)

"Oxid"

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A new book of visual poetry by Litsa Spathi from the Fluxus Heidelberg Center,

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Since this month the complete collection is also available at MoMa, New York and ICA, London

The name of the collection "c'est mon dada" is a french saying meaning it's my favourite thing, it's my hobby.

Dada in french children language means horse.

That's apparently where the dadaists got their name from.

This book collection is available in following bookshops

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- >> Kenny's Bookshop - US export, Galway
- >> Gibbon's Bookshop, Westport
- >> On Sundays, Tokyo
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REDFOXPRESS

Francis Van Maele

Dugort, Achill Island, County Mayo, Ireland

Labels: [Francis Van Maele](#), [Litsa Spathi](#), [Redfoxxpress](#), [visual poetry](#)

posted by Litsa Spathi / Nobody @ [10:51 AM](#)

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MONDAY, MARCH 02, 2009

Fluxus Movement & Fashion (News)

Tim Van Steenberghe presents A/W 2009-2010 collection

March 02, 2009 (Belgium)

The collection Autumn-Winter 2009-2010 by Tim Van Steenberghe has the aura of Joseph Beuys and the Fluxus movement: 'the search and respect for harmony in nature'.

Sober and fluent lines come alive in humble silhouettes with an easy fitting and a Chanel touch. The shape is straight and with an A-line. The structure of wood and its granulation are the signature of each garment. Ropes are stitched in spontaneous curved seams: the design of a tree that has been cut through. Organic forms show a physical process in pure, clean and rich materials, as if these clothes are telling their story.

Fabrics are cotton, cool wool, soft flannel and coated cotton, comfort jersey, felted merinos, ottoman silk, modal, cuprum, cashmere, structured leather and sheep. All finished with couture ribbons, luxurious buttons and duffle coat fastening. Colours vary from brown, grey, black, copper, powder and alabaster: The shades of the earth...

The woman's collection shows structured suits and knee high skirts, bolero jackets, casually draped jersey trousers, belted pants with an outside waistband and classic men's trousers with a slanting pleat. A rope is stitched on the leg as if it were a tree grain.

A sober dress, A- line silhouette, comes also in full embroidery. The same goes for the skirts and chemise jackets with embroidered wood structure or bark structure cut outs. This is the Victorian era!

Yet, one tiny dress, combination of jersey and zibeline or comfort wool, has an additional necklace accessory in jersey. Another straightly draped dress comes into different light or structured fabrics and fits the body in one movement: just as its is!

A horizontal dégradé is surprising and plays with a distinguished pallet of colours. Different shirts with original fastening and cross lining on the back can be completed with capes and separate collars. Some jersey pullovers with frontal cross lining have a raw cut. Others are worked out and fit to the body.

A range of eyecatching jackets: asymmetrical long blazers with details of a tailcoat, cabans in comfort stretch, waistcoats with turned-up collars stitched with ropes, voluminous three-quarter length capes, sash jackets with hood in combination with deconstructed leather and sheep.

Knitwear duffle coats and skirts with jersey leggings underneath represent the playful chic! Seamed stockings, lingerie dresses, tops and cat suits in hightech lingerie materials are perfectly matching with the themes of this story.

Accessories consist of borsalino Beuys hats, gloves and spats in leather and sheep, collars, corset belts, and scarves which can be worn as bolero capes.

A series of luxurious sunglasses "Theo by Tim Van Steenberghe" and shoes, "Tim Van Steenberghe, handmade by Ambiorix" finishes this collection which is a reflection on ready-to-wear.

Tim Van Steenberghe

source: http://www.fibre2fashion.com/news/fashion-news/newsdetails.aspx?news_id=69665

Labels: [fashion](#), [Fluxus](#)

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