Abstract

Terminology moves fast across conferences, blogs, journals and schools. The conversation we propose is an attempt at making use of the endless ambiguity such volatility produces, to open a productive discursive space. The Design Research Group (Knowledge Circle) of the Design Academy Eindhoven, comprising representatives from Masters, Bachelors and Readerships, will host a gathering of opinions, positionings and phrasings, around words chosen from the DRS2018 conference materials. As DRS2018 invites design researchers to explore design as a “powerful catalyst for change”, we would like to explore what these words could mean, through a series of “Socratic Dialogues” with participating convenors and delegates of the conference. A Socratic Dialogue can be defined as an attempt to develop a mutual understanding related to a fundamental question through systematic consultation. The outcomes of the conversation will include new notes and entries in the ongoing project Lexicon of Design Research (http://www.lexiconofdesignresearch.com/) maintained by Design Academy Eindhoven. The structure and the methods proposed are adapted from previous Live Lexicon events organised by the same group in Eindhoven and during Salone del Mobile in Milan 2017.

Lexicon Live: Performing the discursive space around keywords

Keywords: Lexicon; Dialogue; Communication; Design methods; Socratic method; Systematic reflection; Change; Catalyst

1. Convenors Information

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2. Context

Terminology moves fast across conferences, blogs, journals and schools. Terms, often originating from liminal disciplines, enter the design research field to become passwords, catchphrases, but also entry points into patterns of production, consumption, and deeper social trends. The exercise of picking one of such terms and following its roots, as well as its current usage, opens up to an endless ambiguity, a productive diplomatic space that can be navigated through conversation (DiSalvo 2009; DiSalvo et al. 2011). Dialogue has the potential to (re)shape malleable terms, but also to make the articulated configurations of the public that gather around these words tangible. Such activity can also save persistent concepts from disrepair and oblivion, through their tougher times, or deceptive hypes.

At Design Academy Eindhoven research happens in all Bachelor and Master departments, as well as in the research programmes of the readerships Strategic Creativity and Places and Traces. Manifestations of design research include objects, services, events, drawings, films, texts, maps, styles, identities, scenarios and more. In 2014, a Design Research Group (Knowledge Circle) emerged, comprising representatives from Masters, Bachelors and Readerships. In 2015, we initiated a platform to host discussions and notes around the terms that define our - and the students - research and practice: a Lexicon of Design Research. The project is by definition an ongoing endeavor, constantly being refined and built on, through iterations of both internal dialogues and public Lexicon Live events, structured gatherings and discussions open to the public. During the Salone del Mobile 2017, for example, a series of three “Socratic Dialogues” were organised, connected to the Design Academy’s show, in which the participants explored terms connected to media and design research. The Lexicon of Design Research is an attempt to develop a common language to explicitly discuss a repertoire of practices.

DRS2018 invites designer researchers to explore design as a “powerful catalyst for change”. We would like to explore what these words could mean, through a series of Socratic Dialogues with participating convenors and delegates of the conference.

2.1 Socratic dialogue

A Socratic Dialogue can be defined as an attempt to develop a mutual understanding related to a fundamental question through systematic consultation. The question stays central during the entire session. Under the guidance of a moderator the participants work together intensively; they ask questions, listen carefully, recap and think together.

In our everyday conversations we often rely on conceptual frameworks informed by our upbringing, education, authoritative opinions, ingrained habits and thought patterns. A Socratic Dialogue offers a “conversation space” in which all existing frames are moved to the

1 http://www.lexiconofdesignresearch.com/
background, as much as possible. By requiring active listening, Socratic Dialogues require mutual respect, question hidden assumptions, and produce experience-based comprehension and shared meaning between parties. While this form of dialogue derives its name from Socrates – who tried to get to a shared understanding by asking questions, giving examples and analysing experience – the direct background for this proposal lies in concrete experiences in design research.²

2.2 Dates
We can arrange for one or two dialogues on the 28th of June.

3. Conversation research question
Through the Socratic Dialogues we want to investigate the terms ‘Change’ and ‘Catalyst’ and come to a mutual understanding of them, making different positionings visible.

Overarching question: What is the meaning of the term ‘Change’ and/or ‘Catalyst’ in design research?

Sub 1: How do we use the terms ‘Change’ and ‘Catalyst’ in our practices?
Sub 2: How many angles or points of view on the subject can be listed, and how do we position ourselves towards them?

4. Set-up of your session

4.1 Participating convenors
One of the convenors of the Design Academy will be the moderator, the ‘Socrates’ of the dialogue, namely Irene Fortuyn. She will be monitoring the dialogue in accordance with the Socratic Dialogue rules and invite and question the others to speak and take part during the session. Two convenors, Paolo Patelli and Donato Ricci, will be in charge of visualising the discussion, through notes, images, videos and external content. Liesbeth Fit will make notes of the dialogue content. Yoko Akama will be participating in the dialogue.

4.2 Participating delegates
Our goal is to work with delegates from different geographical and disciplinary backgrounds. For practical reasons, the ideal number of participants in the dialogue is around 12. As three convenors from Design Academy Eindhoven will be participating in the dialogue, we can host another 9-10 delegates, of which already 3 have confirmed attendance (see participants list below). But with 8 delegates in total from Design Academy Eindhoven, we will be able to regroup participants as appropriate, to always get the amount of 12.

4.3 Participating audience
When the facilities will allow us, we will regard the possible audience that is not

² http://humbertoschwab.net
http://www.lerenfilosoferen.nl/onzediensten/socratisch-gesprek
http://hetsocratischgesprek.nl/dossier-socratisch-gesprek-achtergrond-en-uitleg/
directly participating as a potential extra member of the dialogue, with the possibility to join (by standing up and getting the microphone), sharing insights from and reflecting on other DRS2018 conversations, paper presentations and workshops.

4.4 Contextual information
During the dialogue a screen shows a live stream of movies, images and text, related to the topic of the dialogue. This stream will be both informative and reflective for the audience and the participants. We could also include parts from the Forum.

4.5 Recruitment
We have approached known delegates in advance (see list of confirmed participants at the end). Other interested delegates can be approached during the conference through personal contact or posters. Or if possible before the conference through the delegates list of DRS2018, or via registration for the conversation sessions when made public by DRS2018.

4.6 Documentation
One of the Design Academy Eindhoven convenors will be making notes of the dialogue that also will be recorded and filmed (depending on the facilities). The registered dialogue will then be worked out (the same day) to a document that can be used and shared. The document will also be published on the website www.lexiconofdesignresearch.com which is made and maintained by the Design Research Group of the Design Academy Eindhoven.

5. Type of space and equipment required
The conversation takes place in a circle. Ideally, we would gather around a circular or oval table, so to make visualisation efforts more effective.

A big, preferably wall filling, screen would be placed at the back of the podium or seating, visible for the public and connected to a laptop showing digital materials and a feed from a camera focused on the objects, notes and gestures taking place at the table.

We would need 2 microphones for the participants and moderator, and 1 for the possible audience. One of the delegates from Design Academy Eindhoven can assist in passing it around. When there is no audience we will need no microphones at all.

To summarize: circular table setting, big screen, 3 microphones, 1 camera.

6. Dissemination strategy
The registered dialogue will be worked out the same day to a document that can be used and shared. The document will also be published on www.lexiconofdesignresearch.com.

7. References
www.lexiconofdesignresearch.com
About the Convenors:

**Yoko Akama** is an Associate Professor at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. She is co-founder and co-leader of Design and Social Innovation in Asia-Pacific platform at RMIT and has a PhD in Communication Design. Her expertise is in human-centred design.

**Irene Droogleever Fortuyyn** is an artist and lecturer, head of the department Man and Leisure at Design Academy Eindhoven and creative director at KETTER & Co, a foundation that works on social, urban and environmental space from different disciplines and collaborations.

**Liesbeth Fit** is a lecturer Writing at Design Academy Eindhoven and Royal Academy of Art The Hague. She obtained her Bachelor Design at the Academy of the Arts in Utrecht and her Master Cultural Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

**Paolo Patelli** is Associate Reader “Places and Traces” at Design Academy Eindhoven and artist-in-residence at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. He obtained his PhD in Urban Design at the Politecnico di Milano.

**Donato Ricci** is a designer and a researcher working at the intersections of social sciences, humanities and communication design. He obtained his PhD from the Politecnico di Milano and is the design lead at Sciences Po | médialab, in Paris.

About the participants:

**Danielle Arets** is a design researcher with a background in cultural science (University of Maastricht), media science (Aarhus University) and journalism. She is Associate Reader Strategic Creativity at Design Academy Eindhoven and lecturer at the research minor Radical Ecologies.

**Alissa van Asseldonk** is a founding partner of design studio Alissa + Nienke, co-founder of the multidisciplinary collective NUL ZES and research associate at the Readership Strategic Creativity at Design Academy Eindhoven were she also graduated.

**David Hamers** is Reader “Places and Traces” at Design Academy Eindhoven and senior researcher Urban Area at the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. He obtained his PhD in Cultural Analysis at Maastricht University.

**Bas Raijmakers** is creative director at STBY, a design research studio in London and Amsterdam. He holds a PhD in Design Interactions (Royal College of Art). He is Reader in Strategic Creativity at Design Academy Eindhoven.

**Renee Scheepers** is an independent designer, co-founder of the multidisciplinary collective NUL ZES and research associate at the Readership Strategic Creativity at Design Academy Eindhoven where she graduated cum laude in the Man and Well-Being department.

**Yoyce Yee** is an Associate Professor and Reader in Design Practice (Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK). She is co-founder of the Design and Social Innovation in Asia Pacific Network at RMIT and part of the DESIS Network.