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IS THIS PRINT TALKING TO ME? MATERIAL AGENCY IN DESIGN.

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ABSTRACT | The workshop “Is this print talking to me?” is a relational practice in which we shift the perspective to the object. Human participants will be chosen by one of the participating objects, and the research team will observe the level of agency of the objects. On the other hand, participants will reflect on and define the qualities of the relationship they have established with their objects based on a questionnaire that will be provided.



1. Theme and Objectives

The theoretical model that governs the workshop is framed within Lambros Malafouris' Material Engagement theory (2013). It rethinks the agency of objects as a shared feature, within the framework of the new materialism movement (Harman, 2010). Subjects and objects are understood as part of the socio-material assemblage of design (Bill et al., 2015, p.10). Design is defined as the process of characterizing an artifact, encompassing its essence through to the elicited sensations, experiences, values, and imaginary signs it activates in the user (Calvera, 2007).

During the workshop, we will observe how prints activate sensory processes (Bedolla, 2005), how they have their own agency, and how they address participants in the personal, social, and practical spheres (Walker, 2015). Participants will also share the lived experience with the print, and we will use the collected data to validate the main hypothesis of the research, according to which end objects have an agency capable of addressing users in the most personal sphere.

Both the theoretical model and the questionnaire (research instrument) have been improved and validated with feedback obtained in previous editions of the workshop. With the edition we are presenting, our goal is to compare the experience of material agency across the cultural contexts of Barcelona-Lisbon-Hungary.

2. Schedule

Workshop schedule will last 90 minutes, with the following agenda:

1. Introduction (10 min):
 - Introduce the topic and the research context;
 - Sign permissions for collecting data (only research purposes).
2. Objectives (5 min):
 - Outline the specific objectives of the workshop and encourage active participation.
3. Time for Person-Object Interaction (15 min):
 - Choose an object and interact with it;
 - Objects can be shared, but responses are individual.
4. Questionnaire Response (20 min):
 - Written activity for participants to reflect on what they feel // data gathering for research.
5. Sharing Session (25 min):
 - Group discussion to share responses and reflections from the questionnaire;
 - Debate and exchange of ideas among participants.
6. Time for Person-Object Interaction (10 min):
 - A second connection to consolidate knowledge.
7. Conclusion (5 min):
 - Summarize key points and highlights of the workshop;
 - Stay connected

3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is structured in four phases:

1. Level of agency (Malafouris, 2013; Harman, 2010; Bill et al., 2015)
 - Origin
2. Material experience (Desmet, 2012; Dezcallar, 2012; Morales, 2015; Bedolla, 2020)
 - Sensory
 - Emotional
 - Meaningful
3. Interaction (Rognoli, 2018; Lefteri, 2005; Maldonado, 1993)
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Mixed
4. Spheres of meaning (Walker, 2012)
 - Personal
 - Social
 - Practical

4. Audience

The targeted audience is people from art, architecture, design and/or research areas.

It is recommended that participants attend our paper presentation in order to familiarize themselves with the concepts that we will work with before the workshop begins.

Expected number of participants: Between 15 and 20 persons.

5. Equipment needed

20 chairs, 2-3 tables for object exhibition and to fulfill questionnaires, computer and projector, 20 pens, 20 printed copies of the questionnaire.

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