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**GIORGIO CAMUFFO &
MADDALENA DALLA MURA**

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***GRAPHIC DESIGN,
EXHIBITING, CURATING:
KEEPING TRACK OF
A SHIFTING RELATIONSHIP***

In recent decades, the context and apparatus of the exhibition have received renewed attention from different design disciplines and practices.¹ This interest has been expressed not only in the study and recognition of the value of exhibitions and the politics of display from the past, but also in the current engagement in, experimentation with and reflection on the potential of exhibition-making and curatorial work as platforms for mediation, production and circulation. In the field of architecture, for example, some architects-curators-critics have overcome the preconception that because architecture exists in the ‘real world’, any representation in the exhibition context can only be reductive; they are embracing and experimenting with the idea of the exhibition as a ‘productive space’ and a testing ground for architectural thinking, and of curation as architecture.² In the area of fashion, while the fashion designers themselves have shown interest in the context and modes of art, scholars of fashion studies and fashion theory have begun to express increased interest in museums, in collections and in exhibition-making as interpretative and productive practices that, like editorial work in magazines, can contribute to shaping the fashion language and culture at large.³

1 — ‘Apparatus of the exhibition’ describes the assemblage of ‘people, things, ideas, texts, spaces, and different media’ that an exhibition usually brings together; see Paul Basu and Sharon Macdonald, ‘Introduction: Experiments in Exhibition, Ethnography, Art and Science’, in Basu and Macdonald (eds.), *Exhibition Experiments*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2007, pp. 1-24: 9. More recently, graphic designer and curator Andrew Blauvelt used the expression ‘exhibitionary apparatus’ to indicate ‘the support system that surrounds any exhibition, making it intelligible or visible’ and that ‘both precedes and succeeds the actual show itself’, in his paper ‘Exhibit A: The Exhibitionary Apparatus’, written for the catalogue of the exhibition *Zak Kyes Working With...*, see note 34 below.

2 — As for the relationship of architecture/architects with exhibiting and curating, see thematic issues of such magazines as *Log*, 20, Fall 2010, devoted to ‘Curating Architecture’, *Oase*, 88, 2012, on ‘Exhibitions: Showing Producing and Architecture’, and the e-journal *MediaTropes*, III(2), 2012, <http://www.mediatropes.com>. One of several research projects investigating this relationship is being conducted by Roberto Gigliotti at the Faculty of Design and Art of the Free University of Bolzano; a conference was held within its framework on March 27, 2012, titled *Displayed Spaces: New Means of Architecture Presentation through Exhibitions* (the publication of the proceedings is forthcoming).

3 — With regards to the interest of fashion studies in exhibition-making and museums see in particular the issues of *Fashion Theory* released in 2008, 12(1)

As for graphic design, its involvement with exhibitions also offers more than one perspective. While, as part of the visual and material culture, graphic design artefacts have occasionally received the attention of design and art institutions and of their curators,⁴ graphic design is in itself one of the crucial components of the exhibition apparatus – for its role in developing the visual identity of the exhibition and in the interpretation, documentation and dissemination of exhibition contents.⁵ Furthermore, on their part, graphic designers themselves have variously utilized exhibitions over time as a space for visibility, encounter, and reflection. Within this perspective in particular, in recent years, signs have emerged that are indicative of a shift in the attitude of graphic designers towards exhibiting and curating. Examining some episodes that have marked this shift so far can help focus on a number of issues

on 'Exhibitionism' and 12(2) on 'Fashion Curation'. The interest of fashion designers in the art context and in performance is discussed by Jessica Bugg, 'Fashion at the Interface: Designer - Wearer - Viewer', *Fashion Practice*, 1(1), 2009, pp. 9-32. On fashion curating as an editorial practice see the paper by Gabriele Monti, 'After Diana Vreeland: The Discipline of Fashion Curating as a Personal Grammar', *Catwalk: The Journal of Fashion, Beauty and Style*, 2(1), 2013 (we wish to thank the author for providing a pre-print).

4 — In the year 2011 alone, there were two major exhibitions of contemporary graphic design, *Graphic Design Worlds* at the Triennale Design Museum in Milan, curated by Giorgio Camuffo, with Maddalena Dalla Mura as assistant curator, and *Graphic Design: Now In Production* curated by Andrew Blauvelt and Ellen Lupton, at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, jointly with the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York. In the same year, the Design Museum in London celebrated the career of Dutch graphic designer Wim Crouwel, with the retrospective *A Graphic Odyssey*. Meanwhile exhibitions of and about graphic design were held at the Graphic Design Museum in Breda – which in November 2011 changed its name to MOTI, Museum of the Image –, including *Connecting the Past and the Future*, which matched works from the collection with newly acquired pieces made in the 21st century. Again in 2011, on the other side of the globe in Australia, as part of the programme of his gallery project *The Narrows*, graphic designer Warren Taylor organized an exhibition devoted to the work of the Dutch designer Karel Martens for *Oase* magazine, held at the faculty gallery of the Monash University in Caulfield.

5 — Among recent publications focused on graphic design for museums and cultural institutions see Angus Hyland and Emily King, *C/id: Visual Identity and Branding for the Arts*, London: Laurence King Publishing, 2009, and R. Klanten, A. Sinofzik and F. Schulze (eds.), *Introducing: Culture Identities / Design for Museums, Theaters and Cultural Institutions*, Berlin: Gestalten, 2013.