

D I C E C N O

VI/02

journal of design culture  
\_S/D: Sign and Design

U I J L U W U L L W VI U N

+ Γ Γ JΓ II III ↗ n ≡ ↘ ○ I

Γ ○ + I I ≡≡≡ n Γ Γ I ≡

||| U- X = Γ J W L III - L L I

||| U VI ○ ≤ H Γ- J n ↗ X II

I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI

○ ○ ○ ○ I OH 3 0 I [ ] M ○

I ↘ - U U - - - - - U

T ↘ ○ H L Γ Γ ○ X [+]

○ X X X [+ ] W m \* I ≥

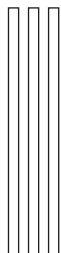
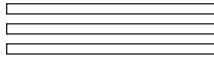
||| ○ X X IVI W m ≡≡≡ III

||| ○ X X ≡≡ 3C ○ / ± L

||| - + ○ Γ = / ○ n L I

U ↘ ○ ≡≡ \* m n [ \ ] ↘

\* ↘ ^ + ≠ W U + □ ↘



# Disegno

JOURNAL OF DESIGN CULTURE

Double-blind peer-reviewed, open access scholarly journal

**Editorial Board:** VICTOR MARGOLIN, PROFESSOR EMERITUS: UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS (1941–2019)

Roy Brand, Associate Professor: Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem

Loredana Di Lucchio, Professor: Sapienza University of Rome

Jessica Hemmings, Professor: University of Gothenburg

Lorenzo Imbesi, Professor: Sapienza University of Rome

Ágnes Kapitány, Professor Emerita: MOME Budapest

Gábor Kapitány, Honorary Professor: MOME Budapest

Viktor Malakuczi, Research Fellow: Sapienza University of Rome

György Endre Szőnyi, Professor: University of Szeged; Visiting Professor: CEU

**Editors:** Zsolt Gyenge, Olivér Horváth (Managing Editor), Szilvia Maróthy, Márton Szentpéteri, Péter Wunderlich (Project Manager). Founding Editor: Heni Fiáth

**Graphic Design:** Borka Skrapits

**Copy Editing:** William Potter

## Aims and Scope

Disegno publishes original research papers, essays, and reviews on all aspects of design cultures. We understand the notion of design culture as resolutely broad: our aim is to freely discuss the designed environment as mutually intertwined strands of sociocultural products, practices, and discourses. This attitude traverses the disciplinary boundaries between art, design, and visual culture and is therefore open to all themes related to sociocultural creativity and innovation. Our post-disciplinary endeavour welcomes intellectual contributions from all members of different design cultures. Besides providing a lively platform for debating issues of design culture, our specific aim is to consolidate and enhance the emerging field of design culture studies in the Central European academia by providing criticism of fundamental biases and misleading cultural imprinting with respect to the field of design.

All research papers published in Disegno undergo a rigorous double-blind peer review process.  
This journal does not charge APCs or submission charges.

**Contact:** Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design  
H-1121 Budapest, Zugligeti út 9–25.  
disegno@mome.hu

The full content of Disegno can be accessed online: [disegno.mome.hu](http://disegno.mome.hu)

**Published by:** József Fülöp  
Publisher: Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, 1121 Budapest, Zugligeti út 9–25.

**ISSN:** 2064-7778 (print) **ISSN:** 2416-156X (online)

Creative Commons License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

# Contents

## **introduction**

- 004** Márton Szentpéteri : *Fabrica and Ratiocinatio. Introductory Notes on Design and Semiotics*

## **obituary**

- 008** Mary Angela Bock: *Klaus Krippendorff (1932–2022)*

## **research papers**

- 012** Mihai Nadin: *Design, Semiotics, Anticipation*
- 042** Salvatore Zingale: *Semiotic Processes and Design Processes. Inventiveness, Dialogue, Narrativity, Translation*
- 060** Edit Újvári: *Stone Pipe and Metal Container: Design Semiotic Analysis of Sacral Objects*
- 074** Janka Csernák: *Templates of Agency: Objects of a Social Design Program for Disadvantaged Girls*
- 094** Erzsébet Hosszu: *Everyday Objects in Trauma Therapy: Examining the Material Culture of Young Refugees with the Aim of Trauma Processing*
- 114** Joana Meroz: *Beyond Biontology? Bringing Elizabeth A. Povinelli's Geontologies to Life-Centred Design*

## **essays**

- 132** Aditya Nambissan: *+ or –. A Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL) in Design Education Using Semiotics as a Tool*
- 148** Maressa Park: *Designing the Dream Ballet: From Oklahoma!'s Third Auteur to Fish's Revival and Beyond*

## **review**

- 160** Julianna Bodó and Zoltán Biró A.: *Ágnes Kapitány and Gábor Kapitány: A szimbolizáció. Hogyan cselekszünk szimbólumokkal?*

- 164** ***about the authors***

# **Klaus Krippendorff**

## **(1932–2022)**

---

### **Mary Angela Bock**

---

[https://doi.org/10.21096/disegno\\_2022\\_2mab](https://doi.org/10.21096/disegno_2022_2mab)

On October 10, 2022, my mentor and friend, Klaus Krippendorff died at the age of ninety. Dr. Krippendorff was the Gregory Bateson Professor Emeritus of Communication. He spent fifty-eight years on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, the longest-tenured faculty member in the history of the school.

Klaus was best-known as a pioneer in the study of content analysis but was also influential in the fields of cybernetics and design. I like to say that he was the scholarly version of an athlete who plays for the NFL and the NBA. He connected the spheres of communication and design in *The Semantic Turn* (2006), in which he argued for a paradigm shift in the design theory to recognise the role of human beings in the creation and use of artifacts. This was no small shift, he argued, as “Artifacts are prostheses of the human mind, being, and doing.” (36)

It is natural that Krippendorff entered the world of communication via cybernetics. He had a degree from the State Engineering School in Hanover, Germany, and earned a design degree from the experimental Ulm School of Design, one of the most influential institutions of its kind following the Bauhaus movement. After completing his PhD in Communication at the University of Illinois, the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania became Dr. Krippendorff's academic home.

Krippendorff approached communication studies with this foundation of engineering and design, thinking in terms of systems for human interaction. His desire to always see the “machine” behind the process is reflected in the way he diagrams his ideas. As he guided me through my own research, I remember him sketching his interpretations of my ideas. My own model for visual affordances in social media, which I theorise as an uncontrolled “tornado,” was influenced by his persistent reminders about recursivity.

Forever interested in the “design” behind communicative systems, Dr. Krippendorff was a leading scholar of cybernetics, a theoretical approach that remains influential today in psychology, social systems and machine learning. He was granted the Norbert Wiener Medal in

Cybernetics by the American Society for Cybernetics in 2001 and the Norbert Wiener/Hermann Schmidt Prize from the German Society for Cybernetics and German Society for Pedagogy and Information in 2004.

Yet for this major league player, it was not enough to dominate just one paradigm. During his early years at the Annenberg School, Krippendorff became the world's leading methodologist for content analysis. His name is almost synonymous with this method, which is unique to the study of media and communication. His textbook, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* has been cited more than 50,000 times and it received the International Communication Association Fellows Book Award in 2001. The book has been translated to Hungarian, Japanese, Spanish, and Italian.

Krippendorff's approach to the content analysis blends his goals of useful design and precision with the variability that comes with human activity in research. It's one thing to count the number of times the word "yellow" appears in a newspaper article; a computer can do that. But what of something like identifying "violence" in a TV program? This question motivated Dr. Krippendorff in the 1960s, when he worked with former Annenberg Dean George Gerbner on the famed television violence studies. How could researchers be sure that the people who were scoring programs for violent content were in statistically sound agreement about those scores? Krippendorff's answer was *Alpha*, perhaps his most well-known contribution to the academy. This coefficient remains the gold standard for content analysis research.

Yet even with this methodological triumph, Dr. Krippendorff was not finished exploring the world of human communication. Content analysis can answer many questions about texts, but he once remarked to me that we must go beyond "counting things." His curiosity as a philosopher took him into new territory once again, and when he became president of the International Communication Association in 1984, his inaugural address established his vision for the social construction of reality and its implications for research.

I met Dr. Krippendorff in this stage of his career, when he was writing and teaching extensively on the discursive constructions of reality, a philosopher in its truest sense. I clearly remember the very day I met him because I was so inspired by his philosophical approach to research. He agreed to supervise my work, and I spent many an afternoon in his home, where he preferred to meet, discussing what became a theoretical foundation for studying photojournalistic meaning. Dr. Krippendorff had never written about photojournalism or journalism generally, so my topic had nothing to do with what interested him except in this larger philosophical sense, and that is where we overlapped, and always will. We shared an understanding of the researcher's relationship with the researched, the notion that meaning is co-constructed with others, and the resulting ethical standpoint that comes with such a theoretical foundation.

Dr. Krippendorff explored the nature of the universe and questioned what was possible to know about it, blending cybernetics into the relationship between language, perception, and the ethical use of power. I and many of his students have been inspired by his insistence on equality in research relationships. In his 2003 essay, “The Dialogic Reality of Meaning,” he wrote: “Recursive constructions not only call on a certain openness, indeterminacy, and acknowledgement of others’ agency, which goes against psychological theory, they also call on us to abandon the position of the superior outside observer” (6).

Dr. Krippendorff wanted to design a better world for all, whether that means encouraging researchers to be mindful of their own power positions or making sure that a cooking area had room for “small kitchen machines.” He liked to work from his home, an historic row-house in Philadelphia that he had renovated, and we often met there as I worked toward my doctorate. He took great pains in this house, and others, to make sure each space was functional. During his memorials, friends and families reminisced about the many design touches he made to his home and theirs. He installed a swing for his children in the middle of his living room. He rebuilt kitchens. He supervised a bricklayer in making a unique design that had no repetition. He built a conversation pit in his home so he could spend time conversing with friends and colleagues about philosophy, communication, and life. Dr. Krippendorff even designed a logo for the International Communication Association that was used for many years. Human centered design was not just a book subject for him.

During my visits, I learned bits and pieces about his childhood in Germany, his memories of bombings during the war, and of his family escaping danger. I am certain these experiences are part of what made him as sensitive to the human condition as he was insightful about cybernetics.

His blending of design theory, cybernetics and the dialogic nature of reality lives on through his influence of today’s researchers. My first PhD student, Krishnan Vasudevan, now on the tenure track at the University of Maryland, was inspired by *The Semantic Turn* and the implications of its philosophy. In recent correspondence with me, Vasudevan wrote: “Specifically, his ideas allowed me to understand how meaning is not only constructed through information but also the designed forms it is presented within. During a time when interactive technologies mediate nearly all aspects of life, I have found Krippendorff’s prescient insights especially helpful in my research about digital platforms, capitalism and race.”

Dr. Krippendorff was a feminist and an anti-racist but avoided such labels. He called himself an emancipatory scholar and wanted everybody to live their best life. He supported me through my doctorate and beyond. When I took on a tenure track job at The University of Texas, I poured out my anxieties to him at a conference just before the job began. “You know what to do,” he said. I wrote it on an index card

that remains on my office bulletin board to this day. By not giving me practical advice on what to do, he gave me something so much more important: evidence of his faith in me.

Many of the tributes that have come out since his death cover his scholarship and his kindness; his contributions to design, cybernetics and discursive theory. Tying these strands together is the fact that Dr. Krippendorff was a philosopher in its truest sense. He explored the nature of the universe and questioned what is possible to know about it. He thought deeply about how researchers, no, really each of us, should interact with our fellow human beings. He is the only academic I know of to emphasise the importance of human love in an article about cybernetic systems. Klaus Krippendorff never stopped trying to build a better world, whether with his hands, his teaching, or his writing. The best way for any of us to honor him now is to follow his example.