

CALL FOR COVER

Progetto Grafico issue 42

Progetto Grafico Journal is launching a Call for Covers to select the image that will be the cover of the journal's issue 42.

PG No. 42 | Design under Attack: Politics, Values, and Responsibility Principles (due out in March 2026)

Submission is open to professionals, designers, illustrators, and students in Communication and Graphic Design, with no limitations on technique or style. Participants are asked to produce artwork that is suitable for both digital and print use and consistent with the issue's Topic (attached to this call).

1. Proposal Requirements

The proposal must consist of an original, freely edited image (illustration, photograph, collage, digital graphics, etc.) that has not been published before.

The image must be designed as a pattern or modular composition, without a single focal point and capable of maintaining visual effectiveness even when some elements are partially obscured. The image must allow the logo, issue title, and other graphic/editorial elements to be overlapped in variable positions, without compromising the overall readability or meaning of the proposal.

The image must occupy a space of 21 x 29.7 cm. Attached to this call is a PDF with the layout and specifications for the required space for service information (masthead name, AIAP logo, issue title, etc.).

Each author may submit only one image per issue. Technical specifications and a brief descriptive text are required to properly evaluate the interpretation of the topic to which the image refers.

2. How to Participate

Submissions must be sent to editors.pgjournal@aiap.it no later than February 28, 2026.

Authors must submit the following:

- * Author information (name, surname, contact information, short bio of up to 500 characters);
- * Image title (optional);
- * Brief description explaining the approach adopted for the visual interpretation of the topic, highlighting aspects of originality and innovation (1000-1500 characters);

- * Graphic proposal in JPG or PNG format, RGB colour profile, 300 dpi resolution, maximum file size 10 MB, minimum dimensions 21 x 29.7 cm. If selected, the author will also be required to provide a high-resolution CMYK version, suitable for printing.
- * Two versions of the graphic proposal, monochrome/multichromatic.
- * Animated version of the proposal (optional);
- * Technical data sheet for the image, indicating:
 - technique used (digital illustration, photography, collage, etc.);
 - colour palette (with colour codes or Pantone references, if used);
 - information on monochrome/multichromatic variations and possible colour variations;
 - characteristics of the dynamic version of the proposal (if applicable).

3. Evaluation Criteria

The selection will be made by the Scientific Director, the Editorial Committee, and a member of the AIAP Board of Directors based on the following criteria:

- * Ability to integrate with the editorial elements on the cover (logo, titles, information) without losing visual effectiveness and meaning;
- * Consistency with the theme of the Call for Contributions;
- * Innovation and originality in the visual interpretation of the theme;
- * Effectiveness of the image in both its multi-colour and monochrome versions.
- * Presence and characteristics of an animated version (submitting a dynamic version is optional, but its creation is strongly recommended for the journal's digital publication).

4. Selection and Communication

The editorial staff will select the winning proposal, with the option to request minor changes in consultation with the author to adapt it to the journal's overall graphic design.

The outcome of the call will be communicated to participants via email by March 15, 2026.

The author of the selected cover will be published in *Progetto Grafico* and cited in the issue's credits.

For further information and technical details: editors.pgjournal@aiap.it

Design under attack: Politics, values and responsibility principles

Over the past few decades, design – visual communication design in particular – has been recognized as a cultural and social agent capable of promoting values such as inclusiveness, sustainability, justice, participation, and democracy (Anceschi, 1984; Kotler, 2020; Manzini, 2015; Papanek, 1971). Thoughts and approaches on design activism have emphasized the need to respond to people’s real needs, promoting actions oriented toward the common good and social responsibility. More recently, scholars and designers have outlined a genealogy and phenomenology of design activism, identifying strategies, tools, and limits of design as a form of political intervention in a scenario troubled by authoritarian tendencies, ecological crises, ideological polarization, populism, and misinformation (Julier, 2013; Bieling, 2019; Fuad-Luke, 2009).

However, while the current landscape clearly demonstrates the potential of visual communication design to generate awareness, influence public opinion, and activate forms of participation (Baule, 2015; Bichler & Beier, 2016), these values are increasingly being challenged by political, economic, and media forces that pursue collective de-responsibilization and the regression of civil, environmental and social rights.

In this scenario of “permanent emergency” (Piscitelli, 2019) – environmental, social, informational, and democratic – questioning design as a critical tool and agent of transformation becomes more urgent than ever. Today we are witnessing actions that destabilize the potential of communication design and open the door to a “design under attack” perspective, troubling its role as a tool grounded in transformative actions, as a bearer of ideologies, and a catalyst for empowering awareness. Hence it is necessary to reconfigure and strengthen the epistemic, ethical, and operational status of communication design, attempting to ask how design can respond today to a context that is subverting its ethical and political premises, and, specifically, whether communication design can avoid taking a stand regard to a global landscape affected by growing inequality, migration crises, decline in civil rights, climate catastrophes, and information conflict.

Issue 42 of *Progetto Grafico* invites designers, theorists, researchers, and activists to enquiry visual communication design as a form of militancy, an act of resistance, a tool for critical information capable of constructing alternative imaginaries. The issue asks to analyze and hypothesize new or enhanced forms of expression that amplify the discipline’s ability to operate as a true agent of breaking down dominant codes, and a vehicle for new visions for the future, and it also asks to broaden our perspective on the possibilities and the systemic contexts in which a design project takes shape. The aim, therefore, is not only to analyze tools, languages, and messages, but also to interrogate the organizational forms, the institutional platforms, the structures of design work, and the participatory opportunities that either limit or enhance the designer’s role as a social agent. This involves asking which systems currently interfere and often deny the access to spaces for design action, dogmatically defining who is entitled to participate and who is excluded.

At the heart of the debate is the urgent need to (re)define a plural, systemic, and participatory design ethical responsibility, capable of adapting to specific contexts, abandoning

universalistic claims, and addressing the real implications of design practices in their various forms. Design actions, by their very nature, have the potential to overcome self-referential tendencies and respond critically and pragmatically to the complexity of the contemporary world. From this perspective, design ethical principles become operational tools, instruments of interpretation and intervention, activated through collaboration between different fields, including – but not limited to – visual communication.

Thematic Areas

Issue 41 of the journal welcomes contributions that explore some key questions, including:

- Endorse the role of design as a responsible and critical practice, and therefore question how visual communication design can respond to a reality that subverts its founding values.
- Design forms of responding towards dominant communication, questioning the communication, projectual, and speculative strategies that can stand against the rhetoric of populism, anti-science, and post-truth.
- Hybridize visual languages as an act of speaking out and of civic action and ask what languages, devices, and formats are emerging in visual design as a form of political action.
- Design communication tools that facilitate the visibility of marginalized subjects, categories and communities and their access to design tools. Therefore, the question is: To what extent can communication design build spaces of resistance and solidarity, as well as spaces of visibility, coalition, and representation for marginalized subjects?
- Demonstrate that every design act involves choices ethically and politically positioned worldviews: Is there such a thing as “value-free” design, or is every project inevitably political?
- Enhance the intrinsically social, cultural, and political nature of communication design and question whether design can be limited to being merely functional and instrumental, or whether its connection to society makes it inevitably political and ethical.
- Investigate contemporary work systems and design platforms, asking what organizational, institutional, and technological conditions enable or limit communication projects as forms of social and political intervention.

Bibliographic References

Authors are encouraged to consider the following references as starting points for their proposals:

Aneschi, G. (Ed.) (1984). *Prima Biennale della Grafica. Propaganda e cultura: indagine sul manifesto di pubblica utilità dagli anni Settanta ad oggi*. Arnoldo Mondadori Editore.

Baule, G. (2015). “C’è design e design. A proposito di design critico”, in V. Bucchetti (Ed.), *Design e dimensione di genere*. FrancoAngeli.

Bichler, K. & Beier, S. (2016). Graphic Design for the Real World? Visual Communication’s Potential in Design Activism and Design for Social Change. *Artifact*, 3(4), 11.1–11.10.

Bieling, T. (2019). *Design (&) Activism. Perspectives on Design as Activism and Activism*. Design Mimesis International.



Fabris, A. (2006). *Etica della comunicazione*. Carocci.

Fuad-Luke, A. (2009). *Design Activism. Beautiful Strangeness for a Sustainable World*. Earthscan.

Kotler, P. & Sarkar, C. (2018). *Brand Activism: from Purpose to Action*. Idea Bite Press.

Julier, G. (2013). From Design Culture to Design Activism. *Design and Culture*, 5(2), 215–236.

Manzini, E. (2015). *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*. MIT Press.

Papanek, V. (1971). *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*. Pantheon Books.

Piscitelli, D. (2019). *First Things First. Comunicare le emergenze*. ListLab.

Types of Contributions

Contributions published in Progetto Grafico are divided into four sections:

- *Research* – Scientific essays on the theme of the call (25.000-30.000 characters, including spaces), to be placed in one of the following categories:
 - Experiment*: applied research and design innovations.
 - Mapping*: case studies and critical analyses of design experiences.
 - Narrate*: historical research on relevant phenomena, figures, or artifacts.
- *Visualize* – Scientific communication artifacts (infographics, maps, experimental visualizations, videos, interactive representations).
- *Discover* – Critical book reviews (max. 7.000 characters).
- *Wander* – Scientific essays off-topic but of particular academic interest (25.000-30.000 characters, including spaces).

Each section has a specific editorial purpose and follows defined formatting guidelines. For full details on the types of contributions, please refer to the document “INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS”.

Deadlines and Submission

Opening of the call: September 1, 2025

Deadline for submitting titles of books to be reviewed: September 15, 2025

Deadline for submitting contributions: October 28, 2025

Notification of acceptance / revision requests: November 20, 2025

Deadline for final version: December 15, 2025

Publication of the issue: January 2026

For the **iconographic apparatus**, each author may provide approx. 10 images free of rights or for which they have already obtained publication rights (for the online version of the journal), accompanied by complete captions with any necessary credits.

All uploads and communications will be handled by email via redazione_progettografico@aiap.it.

Editorial guidelines for preparing texts and images are outlined in the “INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS” document, attached.



DESIGN UNDER ATTACK RETHINKING POLITICS, VALUES AND RESPONSIBILITY PRINCIPLES

