

CALL FOR COVER

Progetto Grafico issue 43

Progetto Grafico Journal is launching a Call for Covers to select the image that will be the cover of the journal's issue 43.

PG No 43 | Back Then Is Back Now. Design history and education in the Age of AI (due out in Sept 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 July 31, 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 August 15, 2026.

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

In addition to the publication of the winning cover, if the selected winner is not already an AIAP member, they will be offered a complimentary one-year AIAP membership.

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

Back Then Is Back Now: Design history and education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence is profoundly reshaping the landscape of visual communication design. Automated systems capable of producing images, typographic compositions, and simulating style, structure and even concepts within seconds challenge long-established design practice and education assumptions about design principles, methods, strategies, authorship, and professional expertise.

If at the end of the last century, the role of communication design was considered crucial in structuring user experiences capable of managing the complexity of social, cultural, and economic dynamics through processes of critical mediation between knowledge and action (Bonsiepe, 1999; Maldonado, 1971), today, in contemporary AI-driven media environments, this function is increasingly dislocated to new forms of automated and often uncritical visual production. In this scenario, the transformation of design practice is progressively calling into question the role, authorship, and epistemological foundations of design practice (DeTroy, 2026; Manovich, 2019; Somaini, 2023). Designers are asked to select, refine and drive the circulation of possibilities generated by algorithmic systems rather than to produce original visual forms. For many designers and students, this technological shift has generated a growing sense of uncertainty. If visual artefacts can be generated almost instantly, what remains of the knowledge, skills, responsibility and processes traditionally cultivated within professional practice and absorbed within educational environments?

Compounding the gradual erosion of the designer's role by an algorithm invested with inscrutable authorship is the progressive renunciation of ethical responsibility for design choices, the automation of which sacrifices their intentionality.

This moment of technological transformation thus requires design discipline to reconsider its foundations, since design – as scholars such as Victor Margolin and Adrian forty have argued – can't be defined solely by its final outcome, rather as a cultural activity embedded in broader social, economic and technological systems (Forty, 1992; Margolin, 2002).

In this perspective, revisiting the history of graphic and communication design becomes a way to recover and foreground the temporal, material, and reflective dimensions of design practice, to emphasize and make transparent the processes of exploration rather than instantaneous making and to reassert the role of experimentation, iteration, definition of constraints and possibilities in the development of ideas. The past does not simply represent an archive but becomes a potential methodological resource (Margolin, 2017) and historical research can reveal how design processes unfold, how decisions are negotiated, and how visual communication responds to technological and cultural change. Recent thoughts on design education have similarly emphasized the importance of reconnecting design history with contemporary practice (Rittner, 2020). Especially for students and younger designers, engaging with and deconstructing the processes behind artifacts for the first time can reveal alternative approaches to visual thinking, experimentation, and communication, making these artefacts appear unexpectedly contemporary.

At the same time, renewed attention to historical processes resonates with another crucial dimension of visual communication design practice and education: its craft dimension and the understanding of the processes and tools that structure its production. Within visual communication design, the project is a processual negotiation between thinking and making (Adamson, 2007), where knowledge is materially and operationally constructed through iterative acts of production (Sewell and Johnston, 2019). In *The Craftsman*, Richard Sennett defines craftsmanship as an “enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake” (Sennett, 2008: 9); within visual communication, this impulse translates into a thoughtful and conscious engagement with tools, media, and techniques – analogue or digital – through which meaning is shaped. As argued by scholars such as Johanna Drucker (1994) and Ellen Lupton (2004), graphic design practices historically operate at the intersection of intellectual structuring and material execution. Craft, in this sense, does not merely refer to manual skill but to a form of knowledge embedded in the relationship between visual thinking and communication practice.

The call “Back Then Is Back Now” therefore invites a critical reflection: how can the knowledge of design history and craft-based approaches, and the recovery of processes and ways of thinking historically rooted in the practice of visual communication – and their transmission and critical reinterpretation within design education – contribute to redefining agency, authorship and responsibility in the age of artificial intelligence?

Thematic Areas

Issue 43 proposes a set of conceptual directions intended to stimulate critical thoughts across the field of visual communication design, including:

- When automated systems can produce large quantities of visual outputs, the knowledge of design processes becomes a crucial field for design education. How can these practices be documented, represented, communicated, and taught as forms of knowledge, design agency, and ethical responsibility?
- For students and younger generations of designers, the history of past processes and experiments in typography, printing, montage and visual storytelling can reveal alternative ways of thinking and designing visual communication. What role can the teaching of these practices play within design education today?
- Design archives and historiographic research increasingly reveal the processes, contexts, and cultural frameworks within which visual communication artefacts were produced. How can this knowledge influence design practice in a context where visual production is increasingly automated?
- Generative AI systems challenge traditional notions of authorship by introducing new forms of automated visual production. Where does authorship reside when visual artefacts are produced through algorithmic systems?
- Craft-based design practices foreground the relationship between thinking and making, emphasizing the role of experimentation, iterative practice, and the articulation between visual structure and execution in communication processes. What role can these practices play in redefining authorship and agency in contemporary visual communication design?
- While automation opens new perspectives in managing design complexity, it also raises

urgent questions related to transparency, accountability, and the conscious understanding and management of the processes themselves. How can visual communication design make automated processes transparent and intelligible, redefining the designer's responsibility in the age of artificial intelligence?

- Artificial intelligence is transforming not only design practice, but also the ways we visualize and access knowledge. How are AI-based interventions in the representation and interpretation of design history taking place, and what implications do they have for the construction of historical knowledge and its critical understanding?

Bibliographic References

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

Adamson, G. (2007). *Thinking Through Craft*. Berg Publishers

Bonsiepe, G. (1999). *Interface: An Approach to Design*. Dawn Barrett.

DeTroy, H. (2026). *Design authorship in the AI age*. NC State News. <https://news.ncsu.edu/2026/01/design-authorship-in-the-ai-age/>

Drucker, J. (1994). *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923*. University of Chicago Press.

Forty, A. (1992). *Objects of Desire: Design and Society since 1750*. Thames & Hudson.

Lupton, E. (2004). *Thinking with Type. A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors & Students*. Princeton Architectural Press.

Maldonado, T. (1971). *La speranza progettuale: Ambiente e società*. Einaudi.

Manovich, L. (2019). *AI Aesthetics*. Strelka Press.

Margolin, V. (2002). *The Politics of the Artificial: Essays on Design and Design Studies*. University of Chicago Press.

Margolin, V. (2017). *World History of Design*. Bloomsbury.

Rittner, J. (2020). Teaching design history. *Medium (SVA MA Design Research, Writing and Criticism)*. <https://dcrit.medium.com/teaching-design-history-e0ad6c5fd72c>

Sennett, R. (2008). *The Craftsman*. Yale University Press.

Sewell, J. E. & Johnston, A. S. (2019). Rethinking History in Design Education through the History of Materials. *Platform*. <https://www.platformspace.net/>

Somainsi, A. (2023). Algorithmic Images: Artificial Intelligence and Visual Culture. *Grey Room*, 93, pp. 74–115. https://doi.org/10.1162/grey_a_00383

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: April 1, 2026

Deadline for submitting titles of books to be reviewed: April 20, 2026

Deadline for submitting contributions through the journal’s website: June 1, 2026

Notification of acceptance / revision requests: June 28, 2026

Deadline for final version: July 15, 2026

Publication of the issue: September 2026

For the **iconographic apparatus**, each author may provide approx. 10 images free of rights accompanied by complete captions with any necessary credits.

Submissions must be uploaded through the journal’s editorial platform at pgjournal.aiap.it.

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



BACK THEN IS BACK NOW DESIGN HISTORY AND EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF AI

