Immediacy vs. Design: The Importance of Project Time

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Reflections on immediacy and design practice.

The term "immediatism" generally refers to an approach or mindset that values instant gratification, the pursuit of immediate results, or decision-making without considering long-term consequences.

The craving for quick answers finds a medium in digital technology and the internet for swift access to content. However, this progressively anxious behavior leads to the fragmentation of knowledge across scattered sources of information.

Different perspectives and authors understand immediatist behavior as an impatient mode of being that establishes a new approach to time, centered on the present moment. In this context, the immediatist individual gives little consideration to the past, while uncertainty about the future distances them from planning and understanding projects.

Immediatism and Design

The practice of design presupposes a deep engagement with the field, fostering continuous learning and the refinement of one's repertoire. As a process, design requires dedication, a broad perspective, and critical thinking. Reflection and the capacity for abstraction are inherent to a designer's effective work. When considering the complexity of design problems, the need for immersion in the process—which demands project time—is undeniable. Design operates by addressing problems, articulating knowledge with analytical and creative activities in an intelligent action aimed at developing tangible solutions for strategic issues.

Among the many factors that can characterize design practice, it is worth reflecting on the relationship between typically immediatist traits and certain aspects of design, such as:

1. Repertoire and Design Learning

Learning in design requires in-depth study to build analytical and critical capacity, identifying problems as opportunities. By maintaining a broad perspective and seeking references in the most diverse contexts, a designer builds their repertoire. The immediatist, due to their inherent anxiety, fails to see the value in a meaningful learning journey that demands time.

2. The Design Process and the Quality of Design Solutions

Design is a process that demands immersion, reflection, openness to alternatives, the capacity for abstraction, and the projection of future scenarios. The quality of design solutions stems from multiple project variables and the designer's repertoire. The immediatist wants to do everything the moment an idea strikes, driven by an eagerness to complete projects in the shortest possible time, an approach that seeks instantaneity.

3. Reflection and Abstraction

Design activity can also be considered a process of reflection-in-action. Reflection promotes the reading and re-reading of the context and project factors. It is through abstraction that designers conceive ideas capable of creating value for brands, products, and businesses. Since reflection is a time-consuming action, it does not fit the immediatist lifestyle, as individuals guided by immediatism act automatically. The urge to complete tasks quickly directs the immediatist to seek shortcuts. It is important to emphasize that providing "canned answers" and "operating software" is not design. Design requires reflection, contextual understanding, analytical skills, interpretation, conceptualization, and a commitment to the outcome.

4. The Complexity of Design Problems

A recurring topic is the complexity of design problems, which often demands an investigative stance from the designer in a process of immersion within the project's context. The immediatist is averse to issues that require greater complexity and more time to find solutions.

The culture of immediacy is based on promises of easy execution, which consistently prove to be profoundly superficial.

5. Project Time

Broadly speaking, design can be considered a process of identifying societal needs; analyzing and defining project factors; designing solutions to established problems; reconciling the interests of different stakeholders (clients + users); and taking responsibility for the outcomes and material culture. The shortening of project time due to immediatism precludes the full experience of the design process, which demands dedication, patience, persistence, and an appreciation of the experience itself. This experience fosters the learning that leads to mature and responsible projects, congruent with ethical and cultural factors.

Designers must consider the immediatist behavior of individuals, as they design solutions that are instantly understandable, accessible, and effective. However, to operate in this context, immersion and in-depth work are necessary to propose solutions that meet or exceed user expectations. Where the designer's own immediatism prevails, design is left out. Only by respecting the project's timeline is it possible to effectively practice, promote, and strengthen design.

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