

Are 'art' and 'design' forever destined to navigate by different stars while sailing the same waters? Can design be freed from its pragmatic and decorative function and become a free agent?

These two have been strange bedfellows throughout history, and now, at this post-historical juncture their relationship must be critically reassessed. With the birth of constructivism and the subsequent evolution of non-objective art, their individual syntaxes have come to reflect one another, sometimes rendering them indistinguishable. Without the burden of representation their signifiers are free to form complex interrelationships, creating possibilities for unforeseen, even revelatory developments that often challenge the conventions of taste. When detached from their origins and set into new contexts their distinct codes become prolific agents for invention as well as interruption.

The grid is often the shared framework for both areas and I consider the adaptation of such a neutral matrix an indispensable evil. In its physicality it behaves like a ready-made womb into which a broad range of visual systems can be embedded and where cultural detritus can find a new life. Some unsettling manifestations occur when the tenets of painterly conventions and the fertile ground of design are brought to coexist.