


Author
Producer
Activist
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& Curator
Collaborator

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• New Models
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Communicating

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Slow Food®

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Besides community design authorship existing at the level of design creation, online tools for sharing and commentary have become prevalent. Design-related web logs, or 'blogs,' proliferate, with user comments often surpassing the original post in quantity, and on occasion, quality. Furthered by hyperlinking, these blogs and their commentators are participating in a new form of journalism, where the distinctions between content, medium, designer, author and reader are increasingly blurred.

In this context, feedback loops overlap with new iterations in a dizzyingly quick and responsive way. Speed, however, sometimes sacrifices critical depth — perhaps this is why blogs and books will peacefully co-exist as viable media for design authorship. As a reaction to the virtual nature of social interactions online, some designers host real-time, real-place events to create community within the analog world — think: 'the Slow Food Movement meets design.'

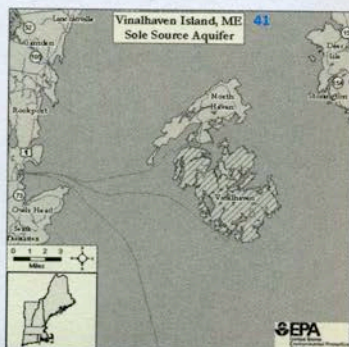
James Victore Presents: The Dinner Series is one such program. The week program is a blend of daily 'nine to five' design workshops at Victore's Brooklyn, New York studio followed by elbow-rubbing with "premier designer, artist, author or film maker" guests over a celebrity chef meal in the evening. The Dinner Series is limited to eight participants, but the \$6000 fee, which does not include hotel or travel to New York, might be its biggest limitation.

Design Inquiry, now in its ninth year, offers an alternative model for design community-building.

The organization's web site states: "DesignInquiry is an alternative to the one-way delivery of a standard conference: each participant contributes and is equally responsible for the quality of the gathering; a collaborative production where we both learn and teach the aesthetics and ethics that are central to Design (AND LIFE). Days become nights; the program doesn't stop when dinner is served."

Founded by Margo Halverson, Peter Hall and Melle Hammer, Design Inquiry is immersive, collaborative, egalitarian, topical, experimental and, due to a selective application process based on the merit of proposals, intellectually rigorous. Their publication Design Inquiry Journal documents the event's concepts and creative production and shares it with the larger design community. The event is held in Vinalhaven, Maine, USA, an island on the Atlantic coast, and costs \$900 for the week, which includes food and lodging.

Besides community design authorship existing in virtual and social environments, public installations reach viewers in the actual environment. Ranging from monumental to intimate in





scale — architectural elements to eye-level stickers — works in the public domain compete with advertising and transportation signage to attract the attention of passers-by. The relationship of the design to its site is crucial for balancing the message with its location, which is to say its context.

Portuguese firm R2 Design achieved notice with a self-initiated project when it installed religious expressions on the exterior wall of a former church in Lisbon, now a secular art gallery. The three-dimensional, white-on-white letterforms seem to recast the echos of prayer fragments back at society as clichés: 'oh my God,' 'go with God,' and many others. The installation of the sayings can be seen as historical, as heretical or as whimsical — R2 Design shows how they are woven into the cultural fabric of contemporary Portugal.

The notion of community in design authorship is complex and subjective. Some large-scale collaborative works like professional blogs and magazines require the specialized participation of many: designers, writers, editors, programmers, developers, publishers and more. Other communities are looser networks of shared interests, like typography, branding and book-binding. All approaches contribute to the idea of sharing, interacting, commenting and collaborating as a diffusive form of design authorship.

42 /// R2 Design (Luza DeFossez Ramalho and Artur Rebelo)
 43 /// Portugal
 44 /// R2 Design, Vai com Deus/Go with God, Lisbon, 2008
 45 /// R2 Design, Vai com Deus/Go with God, Lisbon, 2008

below left /// VINYL BOAT LETTERING: DESIGNINQUIRY: MAKE/DO EXHIBITION (WORKSHOP, VINDALHAVEN, MAINE) /// 2011
 below top right /// TIM VYNER'S "ENDLESS SKETCHBOOK": DESIGNINQUIRY: DESIGN CITIES (WORKSHOP, MONTREAL) /// 2011
 below bottom right /// PANCAKES, BACON AND TYPOGRAPHY: DESIGNINQUIRY: FAIL AGAIN (WORKSHOP, VINDALHAVEN, MAINE) /// 2008



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- 06** // **Lorenzo de' Medici** // <http://rosehowe.wordpress.com/>
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CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY DESIGN AUTHORSHIP

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