Le Signe, centre national du graphisme à Chaumont, opened its doors last October 8. It is a new place, a new project, new dynamics. Le Signe now offers space – 3500m² dedicated to graphic design and its usage – both constantly changing. A resource centre, class rooms, a screen printing workshop, exhibition spaces and also spaces for socializing will make this place into an innovative cultural tool where you can take time to ponder, understand, create, experiment, imagine, curate and exhibit and show graphic forms of the past, present and future. Le Signe is to be a real ambassador for graphic design, by encouraging the emergence of a certain education of the eye, in an era where signs direct practically all of our acts.

Le Signe fait signe* to all, young and old, neophytes as well as designers or commissioners. It invites you to decipher the process of creating forms, to bring into focus the complex relations around the subject and the working methods. It contributes to the construction of a tool for reviewing and exploring the practices and usages in the field of graphic design.

For the first competition since the opening, le Signe asks the students to do research into the creation of tools. The aim is to elaborate a tool that contributes to the transmission of knowledge by means of graphic design and that allows for a renewed interpretation of the world.

On the basis of its educational mission, le Signe has proposed to the graphic designer Lucile Bataille – working on the issue of transmitting knowledge – to draught the theme of the competition « Students, All to Chaumont ! » 2017, and chair the jury of the 2017 student competition. The students will be invited to produce a tool, in order to « faire signe* ».

The team of Le Signe, centre national du graphisme

* Faire Signe — literally : makes a gesture, signal ; figuratively — speaking : sends a message.
Faire signe

Forms of relations ← → Relations of forms

According to Otl Aicher « a graphic designer is someone who can translate the world and what happens in it and transmit it by signs and pictures, someone who makes visible what is not visible. » [1]

With the field of visual perception as their playground, graphic designers are those who bear the heavy task of questioning the ways of processing information and knowledge. As social, economic and technical advances occur, they offer new forms of emancipation that help in understanding the world.

The fact that the processes controlling the activity of our modern societies are becoming more complicated, remote, minute and computerized leads to a different configuration of this processing of information and knowledge. It results in more opacity. The geographer Franco Farinelli sees a deep change in our way of observing and constructing the world in this development : « It presents a huge problem for our Western societies that for centuries based knowledge on vision and in the modern era has made knowledge coincide with the certainty of representation. » [2] For graphic designers, this is an injunction to make the world around us visible and legible.

It thus becomes more and more difficult to be contented with just our own eye in order to understand how the world works and to deduce the relations that unite the matters it is made of. Given this statement, one of the challenges of design is to prepare individuals to become critical towards data received as well as the forms it is served in.

The development of information technology has modified our perception of time, of data flows and movement : Distances are abolished, being in several places at once, hyper-reactivity, instantaneous communication. These profound mutations question our capability to adapt. Our attention has become hyper-solicited ; we have to augment it. It seems important to take the time to slow down in order to gain a better understanding and assessment of the types of technologies we call upon.
In the field of creation, numerous actors, makerlabs, fablabs, hackerspaces, open communities, designers, etc. have attempted to reply to this feeling of being asynchronous created by the acceleration of technical progress by re-appropriating or inventing production tools. Nowadays, the issue of the tools used has become crucial. For designers, their positioning on these issues also furthers an understanding and assessment of these new working methodologies and the displacement that has taken place in the practices.

I wanted to introduce the theme of the competition « Students, All to Chaumont ! » by means of questions that I address in my own practice and research. Currently, in my point of view, the role of interpreter occupied by graphic designers has become crucial. Attempting to fulfil this function leads to considering graphic design with regards to the transmission of knowledge. And in that sense invites us to ponder upon new forms of open plans, implementing tools that allow each and everyone to discover, question and understand. Proposing to focus on the challenges set by this transmission allows an emergence of a critical ground that is potentially emancipating. I join the societal vision of Ivan Illich : « I call a convivial society a society, in which the modern tool serves the individual integrated in the community and not a body of specialists. A society is convivial when the humans master the tool. » [3]

Designing a didactical device leads to a stance on how to create tools, and thus raises various questions related to its usage : What purpose ? Which publics? What skills are mobilized ? How to transmit it to others ? What productions are possible ?

Faire Signe, is above all placing oneself towards the learner, towards the other, i.e. identifying the designer. But Faire Signe also means imagining a device involving knowledge, know-how for a public, so that they can deconstruct and reconstruct it.

Lucile Bataille, Chair of the jury

* Thank you to Sebastian Biniek for his contribution to this text.
† [1] Otl Aicher, Le monde comme projet (The World as Design), B42, 2015
† [2] Franco Farinelli, De la raison cartographique (Cartographic Reason), CTHS, 2009

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- « Commun oppositionnel », Pascale Nicolas-Le Strat, publié le 23 avril 2015
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Regulation

The edition 2017 of the competition « Students, All to Chaumont! » organized by le Signe, centre national du graphisme à Chaumont, is aimed at design students enrolled in public or private art schools, universities, technical and vocational schools for the academic year 2016-2017.

The competition will give rise to an exhibition of selected entries by the jury, and an award ceremony, planned for May 20th, 2017.

Le Signe reserves the right to use certain tools submitted for the purpose of interpretation actions for various audiences led by the team of the Signe, pay they be children, teenagers, adults or seniors – depending on the tools delivered by the students. Any action of mediation using the project will be prepared in collaboration with the student.

Each contestant may submit one proposal, namely one transmission tool, by sending the following elements:

- [1] A transmission tool, may it be analogue or digital that can be submitted: either in its final form. The students submit a finalized production as well as an output made with this tool. This can be e.g.: a card game, a graphic support device for writing in primary schools, a game-book for adults suffering from dyslexia, a signage system for the visually impaired, tools for the understanding of philosophical systems for university students, a video for high school students on sustainable development, an application for introduction to typography or other scientific notions, interpretation tools for the comprehension of graphic design for all publics intended to support the missions of le Signe, etc. This list is not comprehensive.

- Or in the form of a documentation of the tool (pictures, description, mock-up, booklet, video, or sound document…) accompanied by an output made with this tool.
[2] A statement (between 2500 and 3000 signs) in French and English defining the intentions of the project, what the tool consists in, its objectives, the public targeted, the context of its use and diffusion, what presided the development of the tool. Sketches, drawings and draughts can be added to the text.

[3] A poster A2 (40 x 60cm) printed handing out the instructions for use as well as the technical specification related to the implementation of the tool.


→ Only entries created specifically for the competition will be admitted. Proposals documenting work not produced for the competition are not admissible.
→ Le Signe will not return any tools or productions sent in for the competition.
→ Entries must be original. Entries must be signed with the French wording: « Étudiants, tous à Chaumont ! » (or by English speaking entrants: « Students – All to Chaumont ! ») name, first name, (or group name) school, name, 2017.
→ An entry can be a collective piece of work.
→ Entry deadline: Monday, 26 February 2017 (as per postmark or waybill).

Reminders for your consignments:

→ A duly completed entry form.
→ A photocopy of the/each entrant’s student card.
→ The entry must be carefully protected for shipping, the cost of which is payable by the entrant.

→ Students based outside the European Union must ensure shipping does not incur any customs duties to the organizers. For this purpose, please mark on the packaging « printed matter, no commercial value », on the package.
Le Signe declines any liability for any damage caused to entries shipped.

Le Signe reserves the right to reject entries containing elements that are hateful, obscene, discriminatory, xenophobic, sexist, or liable to incite racial hatred. Any project containing such statements will immediately be disqualified.

Le Signe reserves the right to use any information provided by entrants and to reproduce the project photographically for the purpose of the promotion of le Signe, for any publications or catalogues published for this occasion or as part of the programme of le Signe, or for its presentation on the websites of le Signe or partners of the event. Le Signe reserves the right to exhibit entries on further occasions (permanent or itinerating/temporary exhibitions) or to publish them.

The projects will not be kept in the collections of le Signe or the town of Chaumont. The Students will be notified by post/email when the projects are at their disposal for picking up, either after the jury session or after the exhibition. The candidat is in charge of picking up their project within the time limits stated in this letter. Le Signe will not return any projects.

Submission of an entry implies full, unreserved acceptance of the present terms.

Prizes
The selected projects will be exhibited in May, 2017 by le Signe and might be the object of a publication. The professional judging panel will award three prizes, each materialized by a diploma. The first prize will receive 1000 euros, the second and third each 500 euros.

In the general context described here-above, the judging panel’s decision is final. Le Signe reserves the right to cancel the competition in case of force majeure.
Date limite d’envoi des œuvres
(cachet de la poste faisant foi)
Lundi, 26 février 2017
Entry deadline (as per postmark)
Monday, 26 February 2017

Je certifie avoir lu et accepté le règlement ci-joint.
I certify that I have read and accepted the above rules.

Signature du candidat:

Date limite d’envoi des œuvres
(cachet de la poste faisant foi)
Le Signe
« Étudiants, Tous à Chaumont ! »
1, Place des Arts
F-52000 Chaumont
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