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Word | Image | Space | Materiality | Experience

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Welcome to *Visible Language*'s special issue of student research: Word | Image | Space | Materiality | Experience.

We last published a special issue (52.3) devoted to student research in 2018. That issue focused on participant research and encompassed studies of a range of artifacts within typography, illustration and communication design (including: handwriting and branding, posters, maps, eInk displays, resources for people with aphasia, garment label design, storytelling with new digital tools, live art and social media spaces). They shared an engagement with everyday contexts for human-centered design.

This special student issue similarly includes an array of visual communication applications: bilingual cover design, typeface legibility, the hypertangible novel, print and digital newspaper design, textile tickets, and wayfinding. As a collection, they incorporate historical and emerging practices and engage with questions of culture and materiality.

The call for this special issue invited research papers on both participant and collections-based research. Our double-blind peer review process applied to give students and recent graduates an opportunity to experience the publication process, with some concessions made in terms of the number of artifacts or participants expected within the scope of study. Generalizability is often a challenge for design research, as findings from both participant- and artifact-based research are always specific to the materials studied. From a methodological point of view, this collection — through its variety of approaches to literature review, visual analysis, and participant

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research — demonstrates the importance of multiple methods in our field. And the importance of multiple lines of inquiry to explore different facets of visual communication, its evolution and how it is experienced.

The issue also includes two invited memorial tributes, one to James Mosley and the other to Michael Twyman, who both made an immeasurable contribution to typographic research since its emergence as a discrete area of inquiry. We are honored to acknowledge their respective influences on our discipline. We hope the juxtaposition of these tributes alongside examples of research from emerging researchers encourages our readers to continue exploring visual communication design theory, research, methods, and practice.

Our thanks to all the authors, reviewers and the editorial team for their important contributions to this issue.