

Dynamic Visual Identities: reflection on interaction and playfulness in visual identity design by Porto design studios

Rita Coelho^[0000-0002-5858-1843] and Suzana Dias^[0000-0002-8641-1892]

¹ Polytechnic Institute of Porto_ESMAD; uniMAD; ID+ / Research Institute for Design
Media and Culture, Portugal.

² Polytechnic Institute of Cavado and Ave_ESD;
IPCA ID+ / Research Institute for Design Media and Culture, Portugal.

ritacoelho@esmad.ipp.pt
cdias@ipca.pt

Abstract. This paper is a part of an ongoing research conducted by the authors. As a primary effort of a bigger study, it aims to grasp a correlation between dynamic visual identities and contemporary society, considering the concepts of liquid modernity (Zygmunt Bauman, 2000), mindfulness (Langer, 1989), playfulness (Huizinga, 1938) and relational design (Andrew Blauvelt, 2008), among others. Some brands – particularly a sample of contemporary DVI’s from Porto Metropolitan Area’s design studios – are verified and analyzed through a condensing terminology, from Kopp (2002), Kreutz (2007), Olins (2008), Marriot (2011), Nes (2013), Oliveira and Raposo (2016) to Lelis (2019) and Martins et al (2019). As methodology, we collected important references from literature review on several areas of study and some qualitative content visual analysis of dynamic visual identities from Porto’s graphic realm – our city’s design studios. As value, originality and motivation for this research, we advocate that DVIs do not seem to be taken into account by much of the scientific research in our field of expertise in our country, apart from certain authors that we refer to. We seek to share with design students and brand managers alike, the playful connections the design of a dynamic visual identity can have through a reduced attention span, that the fragmental media and capitalized culture have provoked. As a result of this exploratory research, we accomplish a preliminary contribution to the recognition of Portuguese DVIs, markedly from Porto graphic design studios – and critically reflect about how they are moving in that direction, discussing the benefits and consequences of play in DVIs.

Keywords: Visual identity design, Dynamic Visual Identity, play, liquid modernity, Porto design studios.

1 Introduction

In our contemporary liquid modernity (Zygmunt Bauman, 2000), visual identity systems suffered a great transformation in perception and seek to break through a collective reduced attention span (Lorenz-Spreen, *et al* 2019). The transition to a participa-

tory culture fragmented them, through multiple digital communication devices. Contemplating the interactive reality and willingness to participate in society, brands found themselves in the need to be more than mere labels and to feed themselves in a universe that expands in games, films, TV series and extends into the virtual sphere. In view of these demands, the graphic representation of the brand needs innovative solutions. Integrating meaning into the human experience through design seems, in fact, to have become one of the greatest ambitions of designers' practices in recent decades.

We will reflect on interaction and playfulness in visual identity design as a change in graphic solutions, increasingly manifested through the blurring of boundaries between emitter and receiver, author and audience, playfulness, function, technology, and discuss, critically, the benefits and consequences of the relational and play qualities for visual identity design. Chronologically, we will contextualize the theme from the democratic arouse of Internet (during the 90's), until we contemplate the interactive reality and the willingness to participate, in today's society.

Through this research, we aimed to start to make a literature review connected to contemporary visual identity design, particularly into the Portuguese graphic design context from Porto Metropolitan area. To this study – which is part of a larger and more complete research – we considered some visual identity projects from studios based in that location as an exploratory survey. Thus, since the training of the authors was in Art and Design, this paper is part of an ongoing research, which brings together the playful, participatory and relational dimension subject study (Dias, S. 2015, 2017b; Dias, S., Moura, M. 2017a; Dias, S., Baptista, A. 2019a, 2019b, 2021) with the visual identity design system scientific field (Coelho, R., Aires, E. 2019; Coelho, R., 2014 b; 2011).

In order to describe the characteristics of the DVIs and to demonstrate the (co)relations between playful visual identity designs made in Porto area and contemporaneity, we established literature review on the topic of *visual identity design*, supported by other researchers, particularly Olins (2008), Kopp (2002), Marriot (2011), Nes (2013), Kreutz (2007), Oliveira and Raposo (2016), Lelis (2019) and Martins (2019), on *liquid modernity* (Zygmunt Bauman, 2000), on the *collective reduced attention span* (Lorenz-Spreen, *et al.*, 2019), *mindfulness* (Lange, 1989), *hypermodern ludicity* (Lipovesky, 2007; Poynor, 2003) and *playfulness* (Huizinga, 1938/2007; Callois, 1967/1990), on *emotion* and *relational design* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981; Donald Norman, 2004; Andrew Blauvelt, 2008) to ground a theoretical foundation for our study.

We proceeded with a qualitative content visual analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996) in light of a post-positivist perspective, which embraced subjectiveness and imprecision, aligned with the concept of a *liquid modernity* and fragmental points of view (Zygmunt Bauman, 2000), in order to allow a multitude of empirical and conceptual interpretations resulting in a broader understanding of the phenomena, with the intent of generating more questions for further research and for academic debate.

Firstly, we will present the theoretical background and literature review in detail. Afterwards, we review the importance of the use of emotion, relational design and play, into this design sphere of building DVIs, in light of the concept of a reduced attention span. Latterly, we analyze critically, the results found from the operationalization of our methodology. Lastly, we present the final considerations and future outputs from our study.

2 Visual identities from a solid to a liquid scene

In addition to the technological, social and cultural paradigm shifts in the context of designing a new visual identity, the zeitgeist in which the design activity operates, contemplating not only the technology used to operate and to produce visual identities, but also the technology used to experience them within itself it changes, so the flexibility of the visual identity system is to be considered (Davis, 2017). Moreover, a conventional, static visual identity may develop in its applications and chronological evolution into a DVI, just as a DVI may have to have one or more conventional, static solutions to respond to the communicational requests of the various media. This fragmentation or multiplication of DVIs may have to be tamed or controlled when migrating to other supports or other mediums and might also have to be drawn in a more conventional way in order to fulfill other purposes and programs that may arise.

Here we used the term DVI, but we can find several terminologies utilized by different authors: some researchers call them *variable* (Kopp, 2002), others *mutant* (Kreutz, 2005; Leitão *et al.*, 2014), *flexible* (Hewitt, 2008; Marriot, 2011; Cox, 2014; Felsing, 2010; Hollington, 2011), *open* or *fluid* (Lapetino, 2011; Pearson, 2013), *dynamic* (Felsing, 2010; Nascimento, Kosminsky, 2012; Nes, 2013; Jochum, 2013; Murdock, 2016; Martins *et al.*, 2019), *mutatis mutandis* (Coelho, 2014), *logomorphism* and *liquid* (Elali, Keiser, Odag, 2012), *elastic* (Muscianisi, 2017). Additionally, there are different types of DVIs and authors classifications differ as compiled by Martins *et al.* (2019). For instance, Nes (2013) refers to DVIs in six classifications: *container* (there is a constant shape or typography within which there is variation; for example, in MTV, the characters M, T and V function as a window to multiple textures, colors and movies); *wallpaper* (DVIs where there is a flexible background of images and textures on top of which the fixed logo is juxtaposed, as in AOL by Wolff Olins); *ADN* (there are different shapes that clearly belong to a system and share the same principles, for instance the visual elements of EDP, by Sagmeister&Walsh: this DVI is, according to Oliveira and Raposo (2016), a combination of the abovementioned classification of *wallpaper* in the fact that the logo is stable in front of varying shapes, and the classification *ADN* in the fact that those shapes share the same color, transparency and geometry); *formula* (there is consistency in the several combinations of elements of the visual system, given a common code, as in Google); *customized* (there is interaction and adaptation to user-based changes, such as in 180 Creative Camp by studio Degrau); and finally, *generative* (there are modifications that are algorithm-based, as in Edit, Disruptive Digital Education, by Volta). Kreutz (2005), on the other hand, subdivides DVIs (which, as we saw, she calls *mutant*) into two

categories: *programmed* (changes follow a pre-established set of rules, resulting in a restricted number of variations) or *poetic* (where there are virtually endless solutions). On the other hand, Martins *et al.* (2019), analyze DVIs through the combination of dynamic versus static elements in *visual identity focus* (whether in the logotype, graphic mark or tagline); *variation mechanisms* (such as in *color variation, combination, content variation, positioning, repetition, rotation, scaling, shape transformation*); and through their *features*, classifying them as *flexible* (there are different results in adaptation to different outputs), *fluid* (the DVI is animated and conveys movement, such as The Form of Form, by R2 or André Dias Araújo by Another Collective), *generated* (there are algorithm-based modifications, such as Edit, Disruptive Digital Education, by Volta), *informative* (there is adaptation to portray parallel information, such as in C. M. Aveiro by Providência Design, or Porto. by studio Eduardo Aires), *participatory* (there are user-based modifications), *reactive* (there are external data-based changes, such as Troll by This is Pacifica), and finally *unlimited* (DVIs where there are endless variation possibilities).

Despite these different terminologies and classification categories, there is, however, consensus in the sense that there are static elements in a DVI that maintain its visual system's integrity, graphic equity and recognition of a visual family, and variables, which convey the dynamic element to the DVI.

Says Kopp (2015) that debates about the shift in the zeitgeist of visual identity design can be seen back in 1996 with Lupton and Miller (1996), as well as at the turn of the 21st century with Cauduro (2000), Gruszynsky (2000), Kopp (2002), Poynor (2003) and Bomeny (2012). A shift that we consider inside the relational design concept as it was proposed by Blauvelt (2008).

2.1 A relevance of play, emotion and relational design

In a world where everything stimulates us with seductive, increasingly sophisticated strategies, attention is saturated, fragmented and numbed, resulting in a reduced attention span (Lorenz-Spreen, et al, 2019), propelling us to automatic and visceral responses. What characteristics have developed in visual identity design to install a synthetic message in the memory of this, almost constantly, distracted audience? In fact, within the relational approaches to design, a list of terms has emerged to classify DVIs that involve similar issues, such as stimulation of emotions, empathy, collaboration, dynamism, interaction, or experience.

To support this reflection, we call for the investigation of Ellen Langer (1989), a scholar of positive psychology in Harvard, that has focused for several decades on issues related to attention and awareness. It contributed to the recognition of the concept of *mindfulness* (active awareness), a growing term in psychology in the 90s, and currently a popular term. According to this scientist, it is in the idea of *certainty* that we find a lack of awareness or *inactive attention*. This means that when everything is believed to be known, little attention will be paid by our brain. We will have the same question addressed by authors like Csikszentmihalyi (1981) and Donald Norman (2004) in the thesis that the dynamism of the experience lies in the incomplete, in

what is required by the viewer to be understood or filled out. Active attention is encouraged by demand and by a certain degree of dissatisfaction, and this factor indicates the importance of a dynamic experience in an engaging relationship. The nature of the interaction is experience; therefore, it is relevant to create design solutions that activate attention and a continuous interest.

We know that visual perception is a cognitive process determined by the memory of previous experiences (Leal, 2012). Hence, if a DVI is characterized by the changeability of its visuals, the cognitive process demands a more complex interference of memory. In other words, memory is requested more frequently, resulting in a more complex neurological process of experimenting, and observing a DVI. Consequently, to perceive changes as such, in the visual appearance of each graphic solution of a DVI – be it macroscopically, in correlation to the whole visual narrative of the identity in a holistic way, or microscopically, to a previous keyframe demonstrated in a motion form of a DVI animation – incitement of memory, arousal of emotions and the element of surprise (which is linked to consistency in a rhythmic way) are vital elements (Kreutz, 2007; Coelho, 2014 a, b).

Psychologist Ellen Langer concludes that achieving active attention is not easy, “we need to break through established patterns of perception and experiences (...)” (Niedderer, 2007, p. 8). In other words, there must be a disruption, which can be facilitated by external agents incorporated in the design. Nevertheless, the relational design in a playful approach, imposes certain rules in a particular time and space. Seemingly opposed ideas appear to be defended, such as dynamics (of the experience) and durability (of memory), uncertainty and guidance. Paul Rand, for example, in his text *Design and Play Instinct* (1965), already referred to the pertinence of using game principles – the existence of limits defined by a discipline – as one of the most important aspects for the motivation and creation of new, meaningful solutions by the designer.

The concept of game and play is understood here as a phenomenon of cultural significance, based on the theories of Johan Huizinga (1938/2007) and Roger Caillois (1967/1990), which marked this dimension. Although these authors do not consciously analyze the playfulness in design, they approach cultural manifestations in a broad sense, allowing us to make this approximation. Here we can find an important similarity between games and relational-based design projects. Both “introduce[s] temporary and limited perfection into the confusion of life and imperfection of the world, demanding a supreme and absolute order: the least disobedience to this ‘spoils the game’, depriving it of its character and of any value” (Huizinga, 1938/2007, 13).

Thus, the existence of rules and systematic approaches, such as constraints in color palette, in use of fonts, in use of families of geometric shapes, or in visual language, are fundamental to guide the viewer of DVIs through its many variations. Otherwise, the complexity and difficulty in grouping the variability to one cohesive visual narrative would leave the viewer adrift. More than informing how to experience it, and promoting certainty and rigidity, design should attract the audience to a process, that is, to the playing arena.

In the cultural and social context where interactivity is an attraction and culture is participatory, the design that is now taking place in an *expanded field* (Bovier, 2008),

has shown a growing interest in the involvement of the recipient and a commitment to mobilize it, resulting in the emergence of projects of a relational, dynamic and emotional nature that change appearance or that move through time. In this sense, the relevance of the new approaches to design has been argued as being a way of facing a constantly changing environment: “the challenge is not how to design a response to a current issue, but how to design a means of continually responding, adapting and innovating.” (Burns, Cottam, Vastone & Winhall, p. 21, 2006, Cit. By Sangiorgi, 2011, p. 29). It is essential to reinforce that we live in a fragmented communication environment, without the old hierarchies in which the audience moves with a new libido – the desire to be a producer (Cruz, 2009).

The relational-based proposals, which develop with a hybrid, experimental and dynamic character, have intensely explored the unpredictable nature of the audience's behavior and involvement. In fact, the idea of the independent designer of a commercial relationship, which develops as an author and producer, finds in human availability a raw material on a completely new scale. This reality has made it possible to develop and apply participatory methodologies, in which the process and the performance activity are more relevant than the final result. In those design approaches, the designer becomes a kind of co-interpreter, determining the structure and rules, as if it were a game. As an example of this decision, there are participative DVIs still with few examples in Porto area. One such case is Câmara Municipal de Vila do Conde's visual identity, which empowers each user to make the brand their own by writing the user's name; there is a specific visual result for each character digitized by the user, that has the same lexicon of shapes, colors and grid as the main visual identity of CM Vila do Conde, conceding it flexibility. It is, however, confined to a small space on the CM Vila do Conde website without much visibility for wider use. However, access to participation through recreational moments, pleasure and immediate stimuli, does not necessarily imply symbolic depth, nor the experience of an effective ‘experience’, as discussed in “Play as a trigger for designing significant experiences” (Dias, S. 2021). The playful element is commonly used in the creation of pleasant experiences, but eventually superficial and fleeting. According to that paper, several studies show that the greatest emotional reaction is triggered by less expected events, as opposed to familiarity, which tend to reduce the user's reaction and attention. Donald Norman also concluded that good design solution (or a visual identity with high communicative potential) is one that takes into account the dynamism of the experience. In other words, it is a solution that is moderately revealed (it is not immediate, not revealing everything at once), so it has the factor of surprising and generating enthusiasm. In this process, the subject becomes part of that game, to which he/she voluntarily dedicates. A solution that provides a dynamic experience is one that, contrary to the fast-paced speed we live in, is durable. That is, it resists time due to its capacity for seduction, moving away from neutrality, normality or familiarity. In other words, the design solution must continuously feed the user's interest (Norman, 2004).

For the designer Jeremy Girard, the playful element is fundamental in the communication experience. However, according to him, this factor will only become memora-

ble if the amount of humor is added in the correct proportion, otherwise it can be an obstructive element to the rest of the experience: “too much can have the opposite effect, driving users away due to an over-the-top approach”. As a well-resolved example of this situation Girard points out the Google logo which multiplies the ‘o’ for the ‘more results’ button. The fun factor never compromises the access to the service itself.

3 Porto studio’s DVIs: exploratory research

Our profession as Polytechnic teachers and as researchers in higher education design courses, and as communication designers ourselves, has been developed in northern Portugal. Our geographic context was important as we seek to be aware about market communication, and we wanted to think globally and interact locally. For the development of this research, we first defined the sampling criteria to be our area of expertise, located in the site of Porto city area.

For this first approach we started by contacting some design studios, via telephone and email, without differentiating the more established studios from the most recent ones founded by younger designers.

In this framework, we selected, from their online portfolios and by direct contact, freelance designers and design studios located in Porto Metropolitan Area that developed visual identities. Through this process of visual analysis and interviews, we were able to collect studios that had designed and implemented DVIs.

4 Analisis

As stated, we found redundancies in the terminology used by the several authors analyzed (Kreutz, 2001; Felsing, 2010; Hollington, 2011; Nes, 2012; Jochum, 2013; Pearson, 2013; Murdock, 2016; Leitão, 2014; Martins *et al.*, 2019), so we simplified the categorizations and analysis factors of the DVIs in order to result in students’ awareness and empowerment through pedagogical knowledge.

This preliminary study, part of a bigger research, supported us to critically suggest that there are mainly three types of DVIs in Porto design studio’s activity: (i) DVIs which have movement or animation, (ii) DVIs with an interval of solutions recreated and recombined almost endlessly by the design studio; and (iii) DVIs that are generative, where there is coding involved, allowing adaptation either to external or user-based modifications, even though few examples have been collected.

As an example of the first classification (i), we can mention DVIs such as *Playground*, by This is Pacifica; *180 Creative Camp* by Studio Degrau; *The Form of Form* by R2 Design; and *André Dias Araújo, Arquitectura e Design* by Another Collective. For the second classification (ii), we can mention DVIs such as *Câmara Municipal de Aveiro*, by Providência Design or *Porto Ponto* by Studio Eduardo Aires. And, finally as an example of the third classification (iii), we can mention *Edit* by Volta. Other designers, for instance, Luís Cepa referred the fact that they were working on generative DVIs using, in this case, Processing and P5.js, but were still under construction.

Next, we highlight one example per each category.

4.1 Movement or animation

The Form of Form, by R2. Invited by R2, Henrik Kubel designed new glyphs for the F, R and M and the letter O is reshaped in a variety of squares and rectangles, generating a dialogue between different spaces, just like the intent of discovery and debate construction around architecture, around its visual dimension, social and technical impact of the Lisbon Architecture Triennale. The logo animation is portrayed in suitable new media.

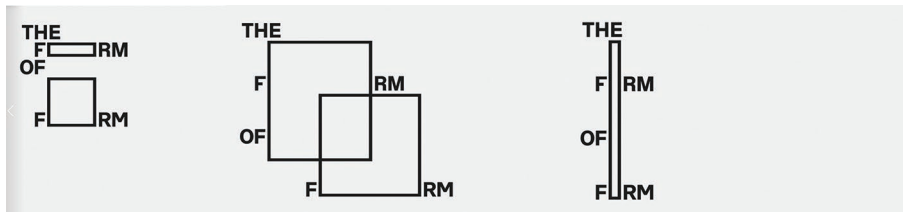


Fig. 1. Frames from *The Form of Form*, Lisbon Architecture Triennale, by R2, 2016.

André Dias Arquitetura e Design, by Another Collective, is an Architecture and Design Office. The DVI is characterized by simple, continuous morphological variations of the letters A and D that define the acronym, supported by neutral sans-serif typography that has no variations, other than its location in relation to the acronym. Similar to the studio's adaptations to the programmatic variety of its projects, the DVI shows flexibility in the scale variability and form of the line, resulting in fluid motion.

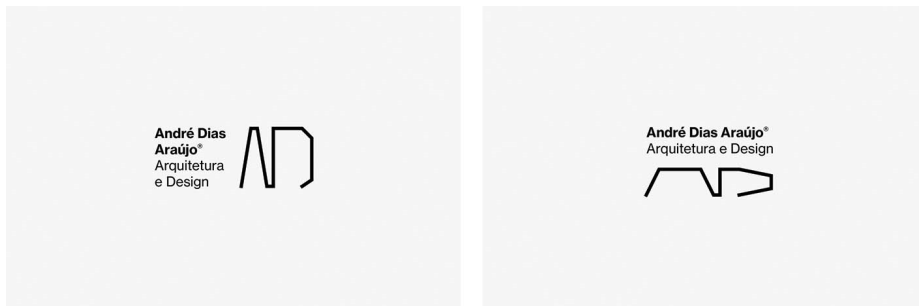


Fig. 2. Frames from *André Dias Araújo Arquitetura e Design*, by Another Collective.

4.2 DVIs: interval of solutions

Câmara Municipal de Aveiro, by Providência Design, is an institutional DVI with variants introduced to distinguish the entity's multitude of services. The typography is static, the iconographic variations are framed in a fixed grid that can be filled in different positions depending on supports, media outputs and informative purposes.

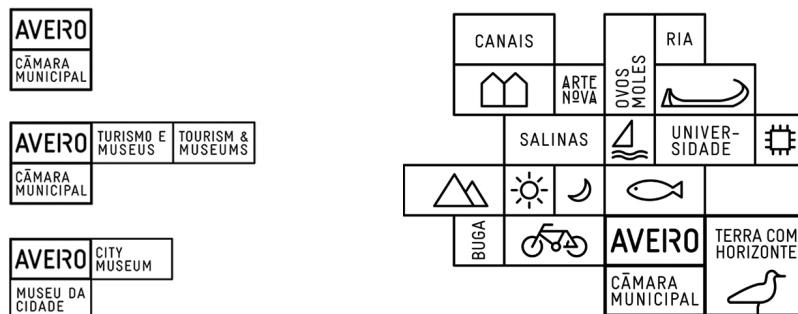


Fig. 3. Câmara Municipal de Aveiro, by Providência Design, 2017.

Porto. by Studio Eduardo Aires, has a static logotype, surrounded by variability in its iconic system and its position inside the grid that the studio has structured. This system is inspired by Porto's tiles and informs the user of the C. M. Porto's stories or services. (Motion can also be present in suitable media by animating the icons' lines.)



Fig. 4. Porto., by Studio Eduardo Aires.

4.1 DVI: generative

Edit, Disruptive Digital Education, by Volta. In a 4×4 grid, each square represents the pixel, framing each letter of the word EDIT. The combinations of frame sizes and positions are endless, portraying a digital attitude for this school on digital design, marketing and creativity. The logo, albeit static in typography, is variable within the structure of its grid.

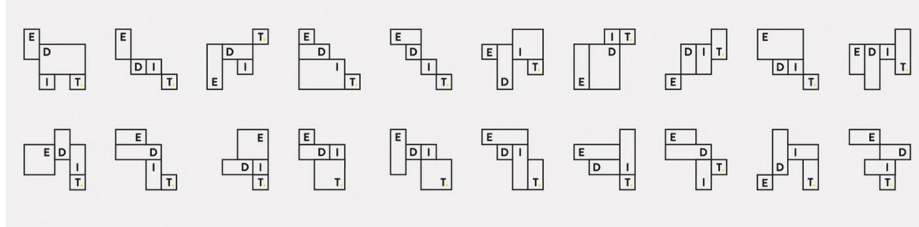


Fig. 5. Frames from EDIT Disruptive Digital Education, by Volta.

5 Conclusion

As a result of this exploratory study, we are able to observe the following:

a) a sample of the contacted Porto Metropolitan Area design studios were unsure of the scope and definition of a DVI;

b) there are fewer examples of DVIs based on generative solutions, of participative or reactive nature, that use the context of the user to feed the code constraints and conditions that were used to design them. However, as stated earlier, there are cases of generative solutions still in the making, some of them through software such as Processing and other coding languages (for example by designer Luis Cepa or Francisco Providência), that haven't been implemented yet or are still in the process of a graphic competition.

c) most of the collected studios' DVIs seem to take hold in an interval of options designed by the designers, that can be rearranged in a virtually endless way.

d) we also found that it is mainly the younger studios analyzed from our sample who have experienced more on DVIs, in contrast to studios that have been established for a longer period of time.

This research, speculative in nature, analyses DVIs with the intent of studying and describing the characteristics of this type of visual phenomenon and playful interaction with technology and the user's emotions. The case studies presented here had no intention of making universal or dogmatic generalizations, nor to state that DVIs are in any way better than conventional visual identities. Nevertheless, our endeavor by using this approach and methods, was to contribute to a new vision on DVIs, through the perspective of playful, emotional and relational interaction that describes a new social and technological zeitgeist and raises design students' awareness on these intertwined topics.

We are living in a moment that might correspond to a recent openness, by designers and their studios, to this trend of DVIs. This situation may also mean that, in terms of design education, there is still plenty of space to create relationships between the most conventional and classic graphic design courses with the information and communication technologies and digital processes. As teachers, we can witness that this interconnection in higher education already exists, but there may be space to strengthen this multidisciplinary in the academic project and in the structure of pedagogical design programs in the metropolitan area of Porto.

Along with humanity's evolution, technology and the way in which we communicate, have evolved tremendously, at an incomparable speed that hasn't corresponded to the velocity in development of our brains and emotions. This new technocratic, globalized world we live in, craves for attention from our optical systems that are, by and large, overloaded. Analogous to our cerebral processes which are configured, in striking similarity, to the ones of our ancestors, which helped us fight or flight from our predators, we are suffering a dramatic reduced attention span due to excessive visual requests.

Nonetheless, it seems our brain is aligned to engage in a more complex way to the presence of play and movement, be it real or perceived as such, due to animation or changes in composition, color, content, morphology, in a DVI, and consequently, be aroused by the presence of one. DVIs show playful features, evoke memory, provoke emotional responses that help establish a relationship and identification with its hypermodern situated audience. Studies in the scientific fields of psychology are, for this reason, fundamental added contributions to instruct communication designers with scientific arguments, safeguarding, however, the importance of their sensitivity and intuition when designing a DVI.

We can also verify that velocity in mutations, characteristic of today's cultural, political, societal, economic sectors we live in, is mimicked and reflected by a dynamic, playful visual identity, of a DVI. These features seek to stay adequate to the varied circumstances their target audience lives in, that doesn't abide by controlled or strict rules that can be frozen on a conventional manual of norms. These rapid advances in technology are also the reason why it is even possible to accomplish the design of recent DVIs. Much like a gesture in a person's identity, dynamism can be also a low-tech feature, similar to color, that adds a new characteristic to a visual identity.

Aspiring designers and design students should be aware of this lifting of technological constraints, beyond conventional graphic design rules and education and be open to design with animation, movement, coding and algorithmic, generative, participative or reactive nature: allowing a flexibility in their design of visual identities, in order to potentially predict their relevance in polysemic and pluralistic needs, purposes, audience expectations, and desires of interaction.

If it is true that levels of elevated arousal – such as the ones resulting from the mutability of a DVI and the consequent superior request of memory to perceive those changes as being part of plural solutions within one same visual identity narrative – it can improve engagement, then it is only safe to say that DVIs constitute an enriched cognitive mechanism with the viewer, transforming one's perception in a subconscious way. In other words, a playful strategic is a manner to obtain engagement and interaction with the audience.

For Brand managers and design students alike, the challenge is to acknowledge that dynamic experience held by DVIs can surprise and delight through an unexpected added image, an added texture, an added position, location, form, color, typography, composition, rotation... Indeed, an unexpected new graphic solution, indelibly engraved in the memory of those who participate in their interpretation, and thus construction, and should go beyond craving for the user's attention in a gratuitous manner. In consequence, engagement is held internally, but never neutral. In other words,

the communicative power of a design solution is in the activation of the user's emotions, retrieved by the associations and memories that are evoked during the moment of interaction through the design.

Therefore, more than dictating prescriptions, we were successful in observing different examples on how to promote experiences through visual identities that guide, both author and receiver, through constraints that are to be played out almost like a game, but convey rhythmic and consistent solutions for a given communication problem of identification.

This preliminary research gave us a perspective on the importance of investigating more on the topic, that does not seem to be taken into account by much of the scientific research in our field of expertise in our country. We concluded that it is still a very much fresh subject in our area of expertise and influence: both lacking a full body of scientific writing and a full tangible implemented design work through most of the studios. Some of the contacted Porto design studios were unsure of the scope and definition of DVI. As we have seen, there are few examples of generative, participative, and reactive DVIs designed by Porto area studios. Processing technology, such as P5.js is beginning to be a technology that is starting to be used by young designers, but as abovementioned, this identity in motion and play can be a low tech feature, adding complexity, depth and emotion and, as consequence, memorability and uniqueness to a visual identity.

As limitations, not every studio replied to our contacts, and by constraints of time and lockdown due to Covid-19, we were able to analyze in detailed form just a portion of the visual identities from the studios in our study collection. Our aim, however, was not prescriptive or universal in any way, therefore, we hope to motivate further investigation, and this will be our starting point for future developments on this topic in our area.

With this research, we believe we have contributed to the communication of such a synthetic design as the visual identity, in particular DVIs from Porto Metropolitan Area. Although preliminary, this research served to observe the pertinence of the theme in the national context. In future studies, it will be important to gather and analyze a greater number and variety of DVIs with common lines of action – in which the design is mediated by playful, participatory and relational factors – in order to establish a new grid of meaning in the creation and development of the graphic identity, examining DVIs reception from its audience and scrutinizing if there is a perception, both by its viewers and its creators, of the playful qualities of its mechanisms of variation.

Finally, if we consider the existence of rules and systematic approaches fundamental in the design experience and in the playing arena, where conventional or unconventional visual identities live, contacting and touching those around them, we are certain that the current pandemic context will have a strong influence in the way brands will communicate in the near future.

Acknowledgements

We would like to identify the designers and design studios who have had a relevant role in the development of this research: André Cruz, Antero Ferreira, António Modesto, Carlos Mesquita, Catarina Dantas, Eduardo Aires, Francisco Providência, Guilherme Ferreira, Helder Dias, Jorge Marques, Jorge Pontes, Laura Pina, Lourenço Vieira Neves, Luís Cepa, Mariana Marques, Né Santelmo, Pedro Amado, Pedro Sousa, Rui Mendonça, Rui Sereno, This is Pacifica, Tiago Nogueira, Vítor Quelhas. We also thank José Oliveira Pereira, our research collaborator.

References Figures

- Fig. 1. website R2: www.r2design.pt
 Fig. 2. Website Another Collective: anothercollective.pt
 Fig. 3. From Brand Identity of Aveiro (CMA).
 Fig. 4. From Brand Identity of “Porto.” (CMP).
 Fig. 5. website Volta Brand Shaping Studio: [volta.pt \(https://volta.pt/pt/edit-pt\)](https://volta.pt/pt/edit-pt)

References

1. Bauman, Z.: *Liquid modernity*. Polity Press, Cambridge (2000).
2. Blauvelt, A.: *Toward relational design*. In: *Design observer-observatory*. <http://observatory.designobserver.com/entry.html?entry=7557>, last accessed 02/2011 (2008).
3. Bomeny, W.: *O panorama do design gráfico contemporâneo: a construção, a desconstrução e a nova ordem*. Senac, São Paulo (2012).
4. Bourriaud, N.: *Relational aesthetics*. Les Presses du Réel, Dijon (2002).
5. Bovier, L.: *Design in the expanded field: Interview with M/M by Lionel Bovier*. http://www.mmparis.com/texts/mm_bovier_en.html, last accessed 04/2011 (1998).
6. Brasel, S.: *How focused identities can help brands navigate a changing media landscape*. *Business Horizons*, 55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2012.01.005>, last accessed 2021/06 (2012).
7. Caillois, R.: *Os jogos e os homens – a máscara e a vertigem*. Ed. Cotovia, Lisboa. (1990).
8. Cauduro, F. V.: *Design gráfico & pós-modernidade*. *Revista Famecos: mídia, cultura e tecnologia*, n. 13, vol. 1, p.127–139 (2000).
9. Coelho, R.: *Flexible ID: to adapt is to resist*. In: Raposo, Daniel (ed.). *Design, Visual Communication and Branding*, pp.82-107. Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2022).
10. Coelho, R.; Aires, E.: *Picture Marks Semiotics between Ontwerpen and Vormgeving*. In: Providência, Francisco (org.) *MADE.PT: Design Crítico para o Desenvolvimento e Prosperidade*, pp. 105–112. UA Editora, Universidade de Aveiro (2019).
11. Coelho, R.: *A construção da marca visual e os media digitais enquanto temas*. *Brandtrends 7 Journal of Strategic Communication and Branding: Pathways to Brand(ing) from representation to practice*, 6–13 (2014 a).
12. Coelho, R.: *Semiótica da Marca: contributos para a construção de uma sintaxe e retórica visual na prática do design de identidade*. (PhD Thesis). Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto, Porto (2014 b).

13. Coelho, R.: The Logo is not Flat: evolving picture marks. In: The 9th International European Academy of Design Conference: The Endless End Conference Proceedings, pp. 708–721. Faculdade de Belas Artes Universidade do Porto, Porto (2011).
14. Cox, O.: Are flexible identities the future of identity design? Institute of Art & Design, Birmingham (2014).
15. Cruz, M. T.: From participatory art forms to interactive culture: Towards a critique of the aesthetic economy. *The International Journal of Arts in Society* 4. http://www.cecl.com.pt/workingpapers/files/ed16_interactive_culture.pdf, last accessed 04/2010. (2009).
16. Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Halton, E.: *The meaning of things: Domestic symbols and the self*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1981).
17. Davis, M.: *The Fundamentals of Branding*. Bloomsbury Publishing (2017).
18. Dias, S. & Baptista, A.: Play as a Trigger for Designing Significant Experiences. In: Martins N., Brandão D. (eds.) *Advances in Design and Digital Communication Digicom 2020*, vol. 12, pp. 300–309, Springer Series in Design and Innovation, Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61671-7_29 (2021).
19. Dias, S.; Baptista, A.: The meaning and the value as triggers for designing significant experiences. In: *Proceedings of 3rd DIGICOM – International Conference on Design & Digital Communication*, November 2019, pp. 15–16. IPCA, Barcelos. 359-366. ISBN 978-989-54489-5-1 (2019).
20. Dias, S.; Baptista, A.: A imaterialização da marca: da economia da mercadoria à economia da transformação. *Revista CMC – Comunicação Mídia e Consumo*. Nunes, M.; Casadei, Eliza. 16 (46), 205–225. ESPM – São Paulo (2019, b).
21. Dias, S., Moura, M.: Aspectos do mundo contemporâneo e a tendência relacional no design: uma síntese. In: *UD17 Noisewise – Design Research in face of current challenges to knowledge on Sixth Annual Forum on Doctoral Design Research proceedings*, pp. 78–86. Universidade do Porto, Porto (2017a).
22. Dias, S.: O Momento Presente e os Novos Contornos Culturais – reflexões para a área do design. *Convergências – Revista de Investigação e Ensino das Artes*, vol. X (20), <http://convergencias.ipcb.pt> (2017b).
23. Dias, S.: *Design como processo: Uma reflexão sobre a dimensão lúdica, participativa e relacional (PhD Thesis)*. Faculdade de Belas Artes, Porto (2015).
24. Elali, L.; Keiser, D.; Odag, O.: Logomorphism and Liquid Logos: An Analysis of Google Doodles, p. 183–206. In: *The Dialogue Imperative Trends and challenges in strategic and organisational communication.*, Labcom Books, Covilhã. (2012).
25. Felsing, U.: *Dynamic Identities in Cultural and Public Contexts*. Lars Muller, Baden (2010).
26. Friedman, T. L.: *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. Douglas and McIntyre (2007).
27. Girard, J.: A Fun approach to creating more successful websites. <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2012/02/24/a-fun-approach-to-creating-more-successful-websites/#more-125330>, last accessed 04/2020. (2012).
28. Gruszynski, A.: *Design gráfico: Do invisível ao ilegível*. In: *X Encontro da Associação Nacional de Programas de Pós-graduação em Comunicação*. Brasília (2001).
29. HBR Brasil Channel: Langer’s interview – A pesquisa sobre o Mindfulness – Ellen Langer, Harvard University Department of Psychology, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IqEpY_SKO4, last accessed 3/2021. (2014).

30. Hewitt, J.: Flexible Consistency, Consistent Flexibility, *Speak Up*, <http://www.underconsideration.com/speakup/archives/004431.html>, last accessed 2008/2. (2008).
31. Huizinga, J.: *Homo Ludens: O Jogo como elemento da cultura*. Editora Perspectiva, S. Paulo (original work published in 1938, 5. Ed. (2007).
32. Jochum, E.: *Dynamic Branding: How flexible design systems turn brands into dynamic visual identities*. Zurich University of the Arts (2013).
33. Kopp, R.: Design gráfico cambiante para marcas hipermodernas. *Comunicação Mídia e Consumo*, 12(34), 124–145. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.18568/cmc.v12i34.925>, last accessed 2020/5 (2015).
34. Kopp, R.: *Design gráfico cambiante*. Edunisc, Santa Cruz do Sul (2002).
35. Kress, Gunther; van Leeuwen, Theo: *Reading images: the grammar of visual design*. Routledge, London (1996).
36. Kreutz, E. A.: Identidade visual corporativa mutante: uma estratégia comunicacional contemporânea. In: XXX Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências da Comunicação (2007).
37. Kreutz, E. A.: *As Principais Estratégias de Construção da Identidade Visual Corporativa*. Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre (2001).
38. Langer, E. J.: *Mindfulness*. Addison Wesley Publishing Company, New York (1989).
39. Lachat-Leal, C.: Percepción visual y traducción audiovisual: La mirada dirigida. *MonTI: Monografías de Traducción e Interpretación*, pp. 87–102. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.6035/MonTI.2012.4.4>, last accessed 2020/02 (2012).
40. Lapetino, T.: The future is fluid: inside dynamic logos. *Hexanine*. Retrieved from <http://www.hexanine.com/zeroside/the-future-is-fluid-inside-dynamic-logos>, last accessed 2019/10 (2011).
41. Lehu, J. M.: *O Marketing interativo: a nova abordagem estratégica do consumidor*. Civilização Editora, Porto (2001).
42. Leitão, S.: *Princípios estruturantes e orientadores da identidade visual de marcas em ambientes multimeios*. Departamento de Comunicação e Arte, Universidade de Aveiro (2014)
43. Lelis, C.: Like a chameleon: the polychromatic virtue of flexible brands. In: *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, DOI: 10.1108/JPBM-10-2017-1621 (2019).
44. Lelis, C.; Kreutz, E. A.: Narrative dimensions for the design of contemporary visual identities. In: *International Association of Societies of Design Research Conference 2019 (IASDR)*, Manchester School of Art, pp. 2–5 September 2019, Manchester (2019).
45. Lipovetsky, G., & Serroy, J.: *Cultura-mundo: Resposta a uma sociedade desorientada*. Edições 70, Lisboa (2010).
46. Lipovetsky, G.: *Paradoxical Happiness: Essay on Hyperconsumption Society*. Gallimard, Paris (2007)
47. Lorenz-Spreen, P.; Mønsted, B. M.; Hövel, P.; Lehmann, S.: Accelerating dynamics of collective attention. *Nature Communications*, vol. 10. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-09311-w>, last accessed 2020/01 (2019).
48. Lupton, E.; Miller, A.: *Design, writing, research: writing on graphic design*. Phaidon, New York (1996).
49. Lupton, Ellen: *Mixing messages: graphic design in contemporary culture*. Princeton Architectural Press, New York (1996).
50. Marriot, J.: Could the adoption of flexible identity systems by some contemporary designers have any enduring influence on the field of brand identity design? Retrieved from <http://www.pdfarchive.com/2011/04/19/investigative-study/investigative-study.pdf>, last accessed 2014/03 (2011).

51. Martins, T.; Cunha, J.; Bicker, J.; Machado, P.: Dynamic Visual Identities: From a Survey of the State-Of-The-Art to a Model of Features and Mechanisms. *Visible Language*, vol. 53, 4–35 (2019).
52. Murdock, J.: *Fluid Identity: History & Practice of Dynamic Visual Identity Design*. College of Communication and Information of Kent State University (2016).
53. Muscianisi, S.: *Identità Elastica: Otto*. Dissertation presented at the Scuola di Design, Politecnico di Milano. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/sofiamuscianisi/docs/elaborato_def2, last accessed 2019/12 (2017).
54. Nascimento, I.; Kosminsky, D.: A evolução dinâmica das marcas. In: *P&D Design*, 10º Congresso Brasileiro de Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento em Design, São Luís (2012).
55. Nes, I.: *Dynamic identities: How to create a living brand*. BIS Publishers, Amsterdam (2013).
56. Niedderer, K.: Designing mindful interaction: The Category of the performative object. *Design Issues*, 23(1), pp. 3-17. <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/desi.2007.23.1.3> (2007).
57. Norman, D.: *Emotional design: Why we love (or hate) everyday things*. Basic Books, New York (2004).
58. Norman, D.: *The Design of everyday things*. Doubleday, New York (1988).
59. Olins, W.: *Brand New: The Shape of Brands to Come*. Thames & Hudson, London (2014).
60. Olins, W.: *Wally Olins: The Brand Handbook*. Thames & Hudson, London (2008).
61. Olins, W.: *A Marca*. Editorial Verbo, Lisboa (2005).
62. Olins, W.: *Identidad corporativa*. Celeste Ediciones, Madrid (1991).
63. Oliveira, F.; Raposo, D.; Lisboa, U.: Metamorphosis. Dynamics of graphic behaviour on contemporary brands. In: *Primer Congreso de Diseño Gráfico: Marcas gráficas de identidade corporativa*. pp.161–168 (2016).
64. Pearson, L.: Fluid marks 2.0: Protecting a dynamic brand. *Managing Intellectual Property*, May, pp. 26–30 (2013)
65. Pallares-Burke, M. L. G.: Zigmunt Bauman interview. *Revista Tempo Social*, 16(1), pp. 301–325. Retrieved from http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_pdf&pid=S0103-20702004000100015&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=pt, last accessed 1/2013 (2004).
66. Parrinder, M.; Davies, C.: Nicolas Bourriaud’s concept of ‘relational aesthetics’ may give designers a new set of tools. *Eye Magazine* (59), <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/part-of-the-process>, last accessed 2/2013 (2006).
67. Pinker, S.; Ridley, M.; Botton, A. de; Gladwell, M.: *Do Humankind’s Best Days Lie Ahead?* Simon and Schuster (2016).
68. Poynor, R.: *Observer: stained relations*. Retrieved from http://www.printmag.com/article/observer_strained_relations/, last accessed 9/2010 (2008).
69. Poynor, R.: *No more rules: graphic design and postmodernism*. Yale University Press, New Haven (2003).
70. Rand, P.: *Design and the Play Instinct*. In: G. Kepes (ed.) *Education of Vision*. G. Braziller, New York, http://www.paulrand.com/foundation/thoughts_designAndthePlayInstinct/#.VAy-yUgpeGQ, last accessed 06/2012. (1965).
71. Raposo, D.: *La letra como signo de identidad visual corporativa: codificación y descodificación visual des sistema de identidad*. Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa (2012).

72. Queirós, M.; Cavalho, P.: Paulo Cunha e Silva's Interview. O Porto pode ser um laboratório político-cultural para o país. Público.
<https://www.publico.pt/2013/11/17/culturaipsilon/noticia/entrevista-1612770>, last accessed 08/2013 (2013).
73. Sangiorgi, D.: Transformative services and transformation design. *International Journal of Design*, vol. 5 (2), pp.29–40 (2011).
74. Studio, W.: Porto. Manual de identidade, http://www.cm-porto.pt/assets/misc/documentos/Logos/Manual_de_identidade_MarcaPortoPonto.pdf, last accessed 08/2014 (2014).
75. Wheeler, A.: *Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide for the Whole Branding Team*. John Wiley & Sons (2012).