

Mistakes – Methodical Blunder in Creative Processes

Project description

In this project, we are going to deal with the role of mistakes, coincidence, the imperfect and the unexpected in creative design processes. In 1968, Spencer Silver tried to develop a super strong adhesive for the 3M Laboratories and invented a formula that was far from being super strong. A few years later, his colleague Art Fry discovered the potential of this product. Silver had invented the opposite – an adhesive that sticks to objects but can be detached very easily – the Post-it® note was born. ¹

The Italian designer Munari created „useless machines“. ² Jacques Carelman designed faulty objects such as the „coffee pot for masochists“ (Catalogue d'objets introuvables, 1968) ³ and the architect Katerina Kamprani produces lovely but useless everyday items. ⁴

Of course, the design process follows creative and strategic rules in order to convey a message to the target group successfully. However, on our way we make mistakes, fail and start from scratch. Knowing about the mistake, we also get a clearer view of functioning and failing communication.

We live in a world where the perfect and flawless is desirable. We are supposed to run smoothly, and mistakes are not intended. We are becoming more and more like machines while machines are becoming more intelligent. The imperfect turns into the disruptive element in the planned and familiar process. What looks like failure at first sight may also develop into a fascinating, smart and clever idea. Mistakes may inspire, they turn things into something uniquely imperfect. So, can the mistake also be a method in the design process? May you become advocates of the mistake?

Semester structure

1. Research, sensitization, practice: At first, we go on an error search; we look at our own mistakes and at those of other. What are mistakes, where do we find them? Are there cultural differences when it comes to making mistakes? What is the importance of the mistake in design? Do creative mistakes exist? Is a mistake a failure?

2. Experimental work: playful exercises, methods of failure and blunder in drawing, typography and painting. Accidental and intended, minimalistic and maximal mistakes. Can we intentionally make mistakes? Correlations between mistake and coincidence, perfection and imperfection, mindfulness and inattentiveness, mistakes in content and form.

3. Project work. Development of a conceptual objective, idea and its realization. Design your own strategy and instructions for creative mistakes. In addition, you describe your research work and the workshops in your project booklet.

What you should bring to class: Curiosity and the courage to take risks. Do you have questions? juergen.hefele@hs-augsburg.de
The project will be held in English.

»Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.

Albert Einstein

»Do not fear mistakes.

There are none.«

Miles Davis

»Have no fear of perfection – you'll never reach it.«

Salvador Dalí

Student workshop, Istanbul, 2017



Erik Kessels: „Failed it“, Phaidon 2016



Coffepot for masochists.
nach Jacques Carelman



¹ www.inc.com/tim-donnely/brilliant-failures/9-inventions-made-by-mistake

² <https://the189.com/design/bruno-munari-the-man-and-his-useless-machines/>

³ https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Jacques_Carelman

⁴ <https://www.theuncomfortable.com/>