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COMMUNICATION DESIGN A PART



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Aiap Women in Design Award (AWDA)

Short History and Perspectives

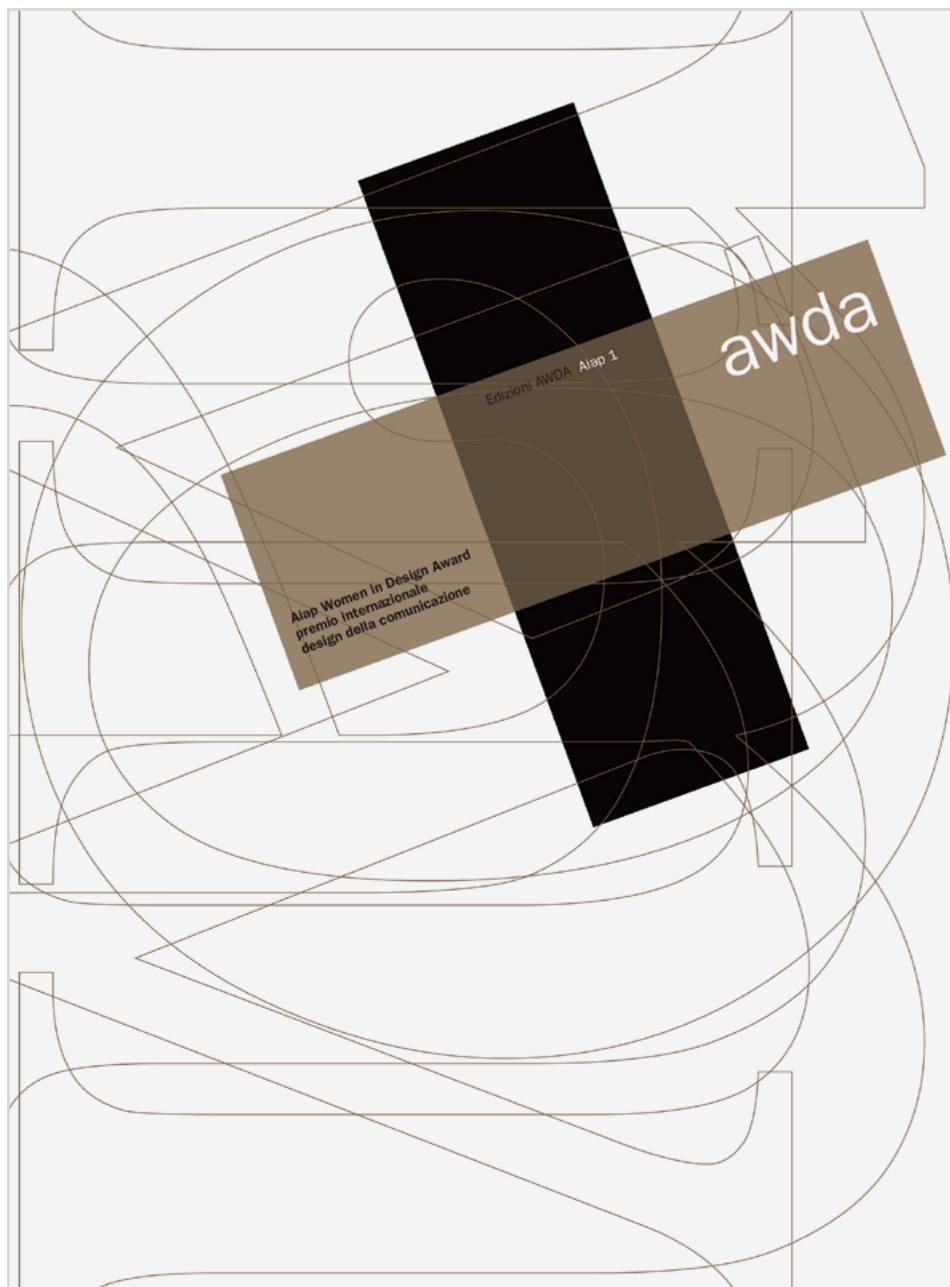
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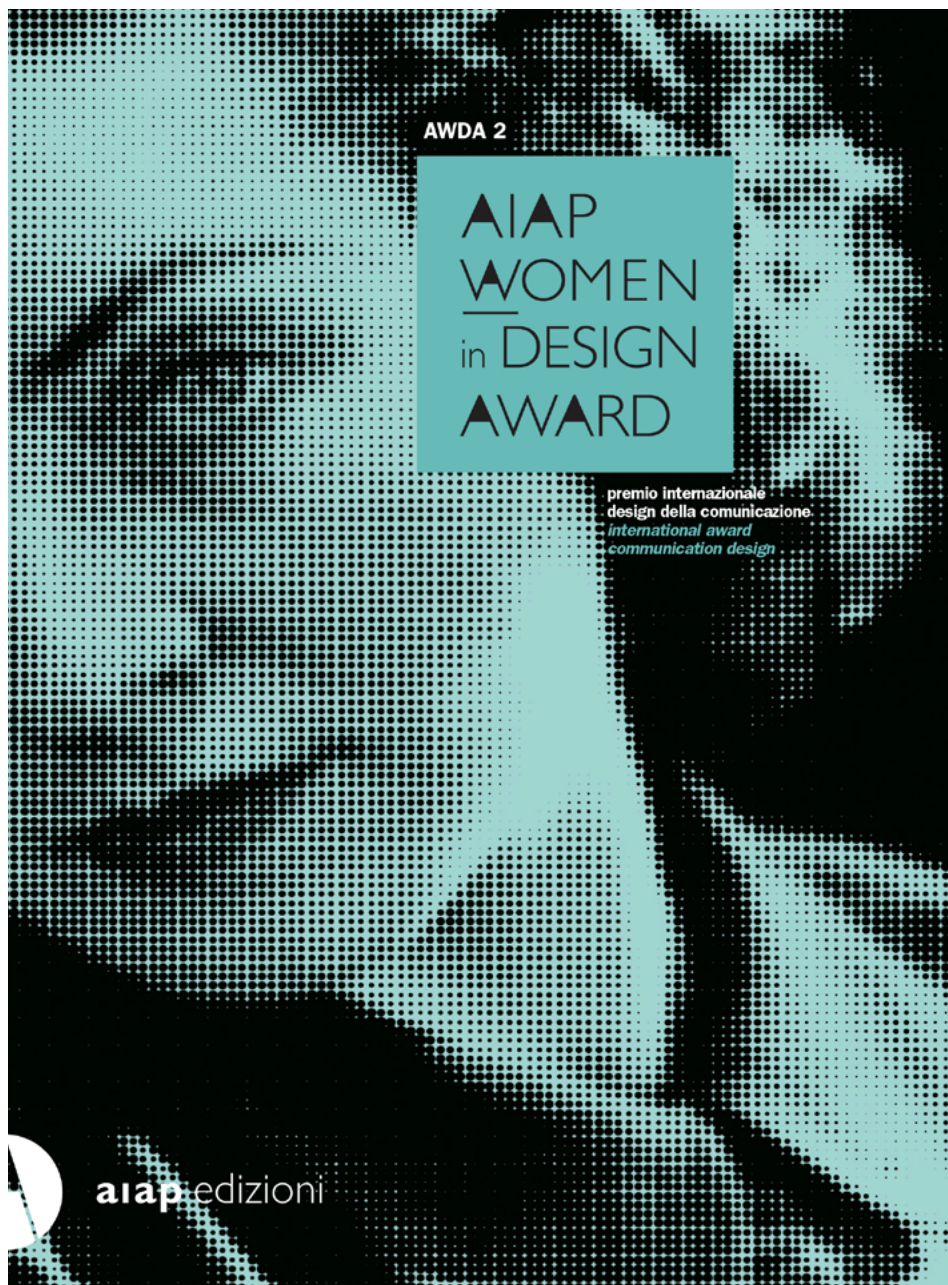
Francesco E. Guida

Politecnico di Milano





AWDA vol. 1, Aiap Edizioni, 2015.



AWDA vol. 2, Aiap Edizioni, 2018.

1. The Award's History¹

On the 8th of November, 2019, the fourth edition of the Aiap Women in Design Award Ceremony took place in Florence, at the Tepidarium del Roster's prestigious space. It has been an important occasion to verify how such kind of initiative has grown up upon time. An initiative with a recent but already long history and deep roots.

Its history started with the *Stanze* contest and related exhibitions at the Archaeological Museum of Gela (Sicily) and the Florence Festival of Creativity in 2010. Then it continued in 2011 with the retrospective exhibition *The unbroken sign. Graphics between art, calligraphy and design* dedicated to Simonetta Ferrante. Even earlier, this story began in 2007 with the *Manifestinno* exhibition (curated by Mario Piazza and Nicola Zanardi). The initiative collected the posters created by 30 young Italian women designers on innovation and progress. The selected posters were presented in Aosta and Florence. Another preliminary event was *Singolare femminile* in 2008: a series of seminars with four communication designers (Rosemary Sassoon, Great Britain; Dorothee Wettstein, Switzerland; Frédérique Mathieu, France; and Lola Duval, France), organized at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome.

The AWDA project was born in 2009 from an idea by Laura Moretti and, starting from 2012, it is curated with Cinzia Ferrara and Daniela Piscitelli. In 2017 Carla Palladino was added

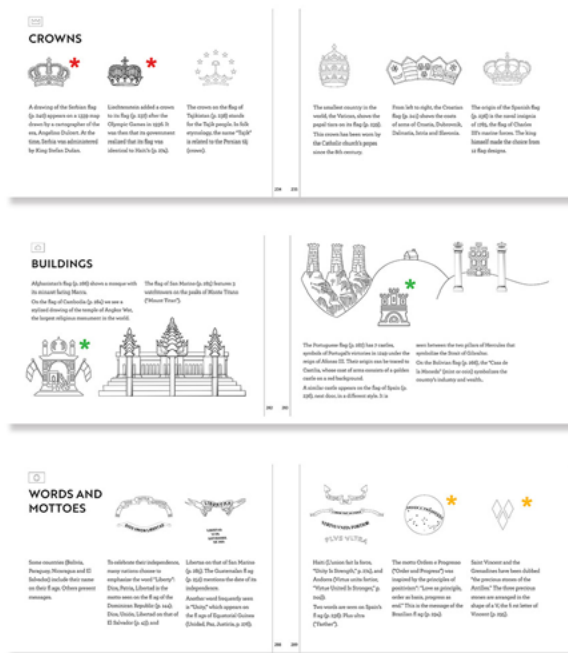
1 The authors co-wrote this contribution. Francesco E. Guida dealt specifically with paragraphs 1 and 2, Cinzia Ferrara with paragraph 3.

for the curatorship. This shortlist of events and initiatives helps understand how such a specific award, however necessary, has been elaborated in the associative context of Aiap.

The biennial award organized by Aiap (the Italian Association of Visual Communication Design) intends to investigate the languages, poetics and different approaches to communication design and explore the conditions in which women designers work. Not to examine a protected area or search for peculiarities characterizing women's design methodology (Ferrara, 2018). Nevertheless, to act as a place whence to observe a partly hidden dimension, to use single projects to bring to light the wide-ranging, diverse world of women communication designers (Piscitelli, 2015). The award intends to emphasize the role that women graphic designers have or had in the professional and educational areas, both in present times and in the past, to identify role-models.

In 2012 the first edition of AWDA was open only to Italian women designers and received submissions from 112 designers for a total of 237 projects. The jury selected 25 designers for 30 projects for publication in the catalogue, edited by Cinzia Ferrara and Daniela Piscitelli and published by Aiap in 2015. The award-giving ceremony took place during Aiap Design Per – International Graphic Design Week, which took place in Treviso from 26th to 29th of September 2012. The first prize was awarded to Nike Auer and Claudia Polizzi for their project *Panorama 4*. The Honorable Mention for Lifetime Achievement was for Anita Klinz and the Honorable Mention to Memory to Lica Covo Steiner.





In the second edition, the award was open to women designers living or working in the European and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. An international jury made up of 5 leading figures in visual communication design selected the projects submitted. The selected projects were later included in the second volume released in 2018. Among the works deemed worthy of publication, the jury chose Astrid Stavro to be awarded the first prize and Ornella Linke Bossi for the Honorable Mention for Lifetime Achievement Category. The official award-giving ceremony took place during the following edition of Aiap DX - International Graphic Design Week, which took place in Milan from 4th to 8th of November, 2015.

Starting from its third edition, the award was open to women designers from all over the world. 186 projects were submitted from 34 Countries, selected by an international jury made up of 8 leading figures in visual communication design. In this edition, the award-giving ceremony took place in Rome on the 30th of September, 2017, in the framework of Aiap Design Per - International Graphic Design Week “Visible Cultures”, on the premises of Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, with the participation of many of the selected visual communication designers. The AWDA’s first prize was awarded to Afrouz Razavi and her *Journal des Jungles*.

2. The 2019 Edition

In its fourth and latest edition, the award counted on the partnership with ico-D, the International Council of Design, that have recognized the great social and ethical value of the prize,

supporting and promoting the award on the international scene. The award counted on the support by two professional Associations: Grafill of Norway and ADGI of Indonesia. The final selection awarded to Sylwia Bartoszezwska the 2019 first prize, three honourable mentions (one for each of the Professionals, Researchers and Teachers, and Students categories), five special mentions, and two special awards. The Career Award for Historic Achievement was awarded to Claudia Morgagni and the Lifetime Achievement Award to the swiss-born designer Lora Lamm.

Over the years, the award earned an international reputation and growing attention by women designers worldwide. An award cannot transform or change realities where women are often denied their human, not only professional, rights. It can be a powerful spotlight on critical issues and an instrument to explore and spread women's graphic design culture. Thus, giving a look both to the past and to the present, travelling backwards into the future (Ferrara, 2018).

3. Perspectives

AWDA has taken on its configuration over time, addressing students, researchers, professors, professionals. That is to those women who work in various capacities in visual communication design, covering all stages of professional life, from training to building a career, crossing the fields of research, teaching, and experimentation.

At this point, what is the future of AWDA? First of all, the preparation of the new call for participation to the fifth edi-

tion. The call will still have a worldwide diffusion thanks both to the networks that have been built over time and the collaborations with other professional associations as Aiap is. Those organizations will act as an amplifier on their respective territories, helping spread the award's values and activities among their members and contacts.

The design of the special book that will collect the results of the last two editions of the award (2017 and 2019) has been entrusted to a group of the Isia in Urbino students. Professional designers like Paolo Di Vita and Laura Moretti designed the previous books. The choice to entrust students of one of the best design schools in Italy was not casual. But it is perfectly in the spirit of the award, among which categories there is the one aimed at women students and graduates from design schools. Perhaps it is no coincidence that it was Roberto Pieracini, previous director of the Urbino school, who suggested involving students. Pieracini was very sensitive to issues of teaching and training of designers. Since he told the curators the idea of this involvement, with his concise manner interspersed only with the cigarette's movements held between his lips, standing in the Aiap headquarter in Milan, has immediately become theirs too.

For the AWDA publishing project, the current director of ISIA, Jonathan Pierini, was involved and was asked to identify a working group among the school students. The group of young designers will have to rethink the concept and the layout, breaking away from the editorial line already started with the previous publications. The new book will contain both the section relating to the projects selected, mentioned

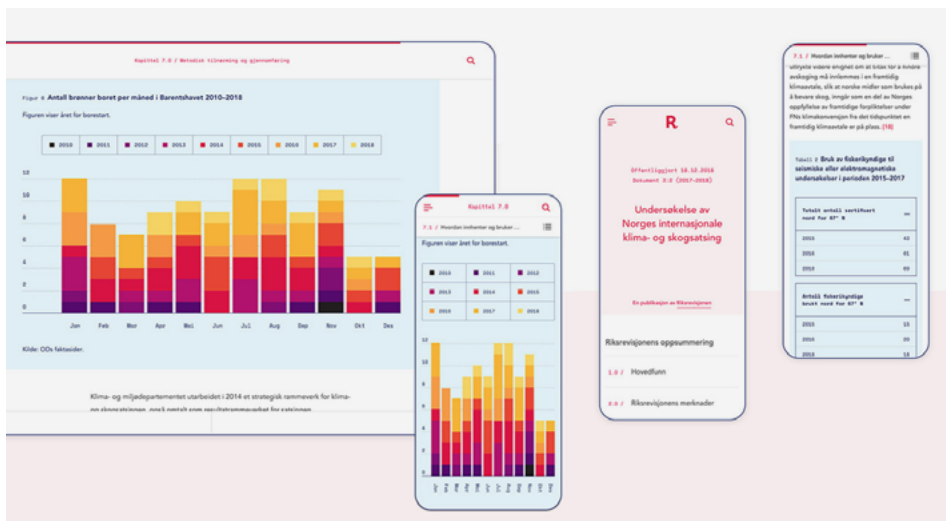
and awarded and the section of critical essays signed by authoritative scholars. A new section will be dedicated to the results of a consultation/interview launched between the participants, during the latest edition, to have statistical data visualized through infographics. The definition of the concept, a central part of the editorial project, will explain the comparison between the curators and the selected students. They have been asked to become real builders in the project and not mere performers.

The book new project will allow the curators to look at AWDA with new eyes. Those of the young people to whom the award is also addressed, returning their observations, findings, and changes of pace that will be evaluated in the new call for participation structure. This comparison is also an opportunity for more extensive reflection on the future of the award.

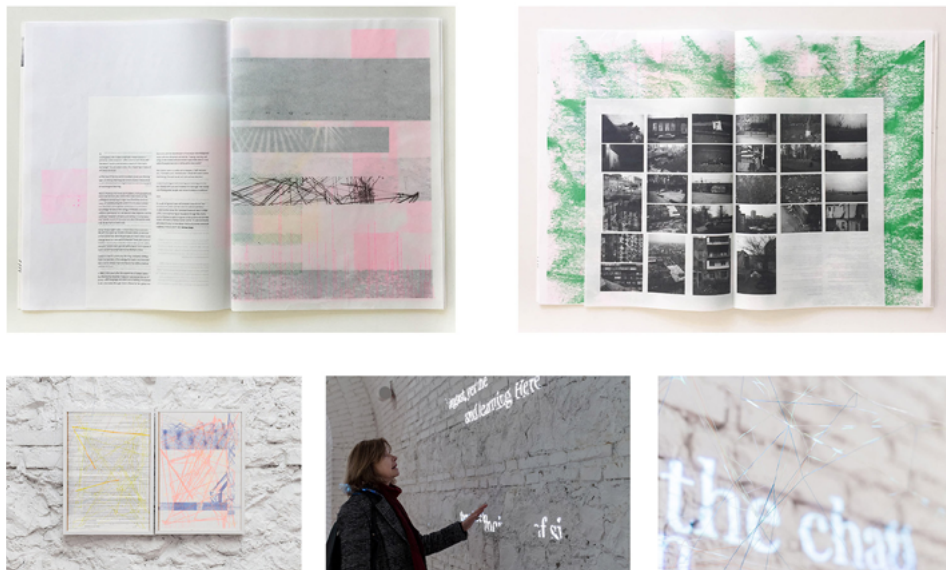
An award that the curators consider an organism that changes over time, sensitive to cultural, social and economic changes to which the designers' profession's future is linked.

Even more so, if the future of the profession is female.





Svanhild Vindenes Egge, Maria Bono, Digital reports for the Office of the Auditor General of Norway, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, Professionals Category.



Tricia Treacy, SLOT, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, PhD, Researchers and Teachers Category.



Joy Gloria Harendza, Jagoan Social Campaign, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, Students Category.



Maryam Helida, *Guidebooks: Heritage Exploring of Ternates*, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, Students Category.

Link

www.aiap-awda.com

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BIOGRAPHIES

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Architect and Associate Professor in Interior and Spatial Design at Politecnico di Milano. She has been visiting professor at Tsinghua University, School of Art and Design, Beijing (China); Kookmin University, Seoul (South Korea); Hosei University, Tokyo (Japan) and many other international universities. She was Canon Foundation Fellow 2000 in Japan. Awarded by Premio Borromini, selected by Archmarathon and ADI-Index 2019. Sense/time_based design is her the main topic developed in education, conferences, publications, curatorship and professional works.

Author of *Storie di Architettura attraverso i sensi* (Bruno Mondadori, 2000), *Invisible Architectures. Experiencing places through the senses of smell* (Skira, 2006) and *Sensi, tempo e architettura* (Postmedia Books, 2012), *Sensefulness, new paradigms for Spatial Design* (Postmedia Books, 2019) and many other publications.

In 2021 she will launch with POLIdesign the first international course in Olfactive Spatial Design.

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Elisa Bertolotti works with storytelling, moving image and communication design. With a Ph.D and postdoc from Politecnico di Milano, Elisa is currently teaching design at the University of Madeira, Portugal.

She is also co-curator of the Atlantic Wonder research program, focusing on alternative methods for learning outdoors and developing new ways to foster innovation between design and the natural sciences.

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Research and design topics since 1995: interaction, experience, multimodal interface design, visual, social and spatial representation, with a strong focus on tech evolution, and accessibility in the field of Cultural and Intangible Heritage and Archives. Previously researcher at the Department of Psychology of the University of Milano-Bicocca (Theory and Technology of Communication; Psychosocial Science of Communication), professor at the Politecnico di Milano and faculty member of the HEC in User Experience Design, the University of Bologna (Internet Science) and the Milan State University (Digital Communication).

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Her interest involves visual and gender identities in communication design field. She studies theoretical aspects of identity systems and their communication components and developed projects of basic and applied research. She is a member of the Ph.D Design board and of "Centro di Ricerca interuniversitario Culture di genere".

She won the "Compasso d'Oro" Design Award as co-author of the project for the multimedia catalogue of the Poldi Pezzoli Museum (Milan, 1995) and received Honourable Mention, Compasso d'Oro ADI (XXV), for the project "WeMi. La città per il welfare". She is author of several books: *La messa in scena del prodotto* (1999), *Packaging design* (2005), *Altre figure. Intorno alle figure di argomentazione* (2011), *Anticorpi comunicativi* (2012), *Un'interfaccia per il welfare* (2017), *Progetto e culture visive* (2018).

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After the master degree in Communication Design, with a thesis about gender stereotypes in the communication field, she joined the research group DCxCG (Communication Design for Gender Cultures) contributing to projects on gender issues

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Architect and Visual Designer, Cinzia Ferrara holds a PhD in Industrial Design: she is Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Palermo, where she performs a series of duties such as conducting research on Visual Communication Design and holding courses for both the BA in Industrial Design and the MA in Design & Culture of the Territory. She's also the course leader for a series of masters and workshops, and an organiser of cultural events, conferences and exhibitions. From 2015 to 2018, she has been National President of Aiap (the Italian Association for Visual Communication Design) after serving as Vice President from 2009 to 2015. In 2017, she was one of 100 designers selected to be World Design Ambassadors for the Italian Design Day.

She's author of books and essays published on national and international journals: she's also part of editorial committees, observatories and European projects. She lives and works in Sicily, which is a continent, rather than just an island.

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PhD, associate professor of product design in the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano. Since 2014 she has been the head of MADEC, the Research Centre of Material Design Culture in the Department of Design. Her researches are mainly focused on design-driven innovation, design for materials (advanced and smart materials), news technologies integration in product and interior design, Future Design Scenarios. With her research, she has made a significant contribution to methodologies of Design for Materials and historiographical work. Moreover, she deals other research topic like the design in Mediterranean countries, gender issues in design and Design History.

Co-founder of *PAD. Pages on Arts & Design* journal, since 2011 she has been the PAD editor in chief. Since 2015 to 2017 she has been a member of ADI's executive board, and currently coordinates the technical-scientific committee for long-life professional training of design professionals.

Since 2019 she has been a member of the executive committee of *AIS/Design. Storia e Ricerche* scientific journal.

Authors of more than 140 scientific publications, she is a member of scientific committees in international conferences, reviewer for international scientific journals, and research evaluator for academic research application in NL and PT.

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In the research field, she is member of GREDITS (Design and Social Transformation Research Group). She has specialized on Historical and Historiographical Research of Design. Her research work is focused on Pop Art Design, and specifically on the development of graphical Pop Art in Catalonia and Spain as a result of her PhD thesis.

She is currently interested on research projects that seed to make visible the contribution of female graphic designers.

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Francesco E. Guida

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Board member of Aiap (the Italian Association for Visual Communication Design), actually he is coordinator of activities and researches for the Graphic Design Documentation Centre (Aiap CDPG). Since 2013 he is a member of the editorial committee of *AIS/Design. Storia e Ricerche* journal and since 2014 of *PAD. Pages on Arts & Design* journal.

Starting from 1997 his contributions on graphic design and visual communication are published in journals, books and conference proceedings.

His main research activities are in the fields of visual identities, speculative and experience design, and graphic design micro-histories.

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She is a Brooklyn, US-born, Sheffield, UK-based designer, writer, performer, researcher and founder of the Period Positive movement. In between performing feminist sketch comedy and studying for an MA in Education, she coined the term 'period positive' to describe the zeitgeist of her zines, art and craftivism, and developed the concept into a well-known desing initiative and campaign to find long-term solutions to menstrual illiteracy. She launched the first annual Period Positive Week in May 2019.

She has recently joined Lab4Living's 100 Year Life and Future Home project at Sheffield Hallam University. Her doctoral research explores ways to navigate aging and lifecycle changes where embodied shame can be a barrier to agency in co-design. She co-hosts the annual Sheffield Zine Fest and her zines are held in a number of international zine libraries and collections. She performs and exhibits regularly at science, literary and comedy festivals.

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