033 The Esch Clinics

SUPERSTORM: ON DESIGN AND POLITICS IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION

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The Superstorm is a conceptual and narrative metaphor to describe the evolution of political communication in relation to new media technologies and the role of communication design within it. The book traces how, over the past sixty years, politics, media, and images have become increasingly entangled, culminating in today's tempestuous political visual culture – shaped by algorithms, memes, entertainment logics, and the pervasive influence of social networks.

The first part, *Genealogy of the Superstorm*, explores the 1960s and early 1970s as a turning point, when political communication, new media, and design began to intersect in new and unexpected ways. These decades mark the emergence of practices and logics that still resonate in our screen-saturated political culture.

The second part, *Anatomy of the Superstorm*, uses the concept of mediatization to analyze how digital technologies have transformed the production, distribution, and reception of political imagery. It investigates three tensions within design culture – agency, mediation, and authorship – alongside three processes central to contemporary politics: spectacularization, disintermediation, and personalization. This pairing sheds light on the challenges and possibilities designers face in navigating a political environment that is at once fragmented, accelerated, and deeply visual.

Finally, *Design and the Superstorm* examines the role of design within political visual culture over the last fifteen years. Three categories frame this inquiry: *design with politics* (collaborations between designers and political actors), *design about politics* (projects that critically expose or investigate political issues), and *design of politics* (designerly strategies embedded within political communication itself, often without a designer explicitly present). Through these perspectives, the book demonstrates how design is both shaped by and actively shaping the political field. Throughout, the book emphasizes that politics and images have always been closely connected, but that the current ubiquity and speed of visual communication make this relationship more powerful – and more problematic – than ever before. Social networking platforms have displaced traditional campaign tools, turning citizens into both audiences and producers of political imagery. This shift poses urgent questions about authorship, responsibility, and the capacity of design to intervene in democratic processes.

NOEMI BIASETTON is a design researcher, writer and editor based in Venice. Her academic studies focus on design cultures and visual representation, with a specific interest in how these are deployed within the social and political dimension. Her practice includes the production of essays and articles, the organization of talks and lectures, and the contribution to research projects for cultural and educational institutions. She is the author of *SUPERSTORM. Design and Politics in the Age of Information* (Onomatopee, 2024) and curator of the publishing series Bookcloud (bruno, 2022 – ongoing).

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Rather than providing fixed solutions, the book aims to map this complex terrain and offer a critical lens through which readers can understand the evolving dynamics of political communication and design. By framing the Superstorm as both a challenge and an opportunity, it invites designers to reconsider their agency, to experiment with new forms of engagement, and to imagine possible futures for their practice in an increasingly turbulent political climate.



Biasetton, N. *Superstorm: Design and Politics in the Age of Information*. Onomatopee, 2024.