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Publisher

Aiap Edizioni via A. Ponchielli 3 20129 Milano – Italy aiap@aiap.it www.aiap.it

PAD © ISSN 1972-7887 #19, Vol. 13, December 2020 www.padjournal.net

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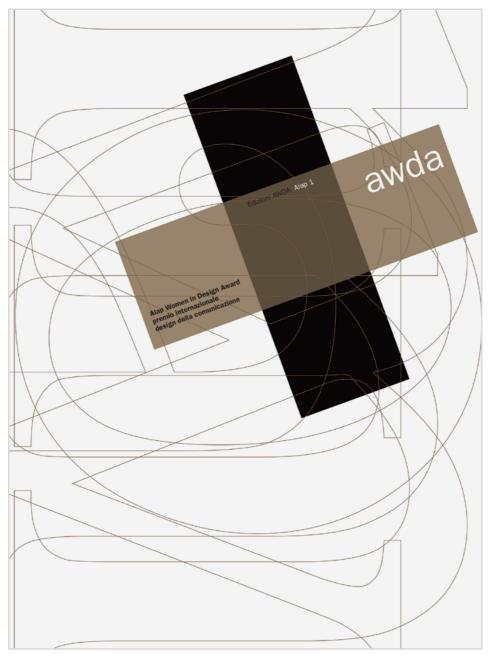
PROJECTS & DOCUMENTS

Aiap Women in Design Award (AWDA) Short History and Perspectives

Cinzia Ferrara Università degli Studi di Palermo

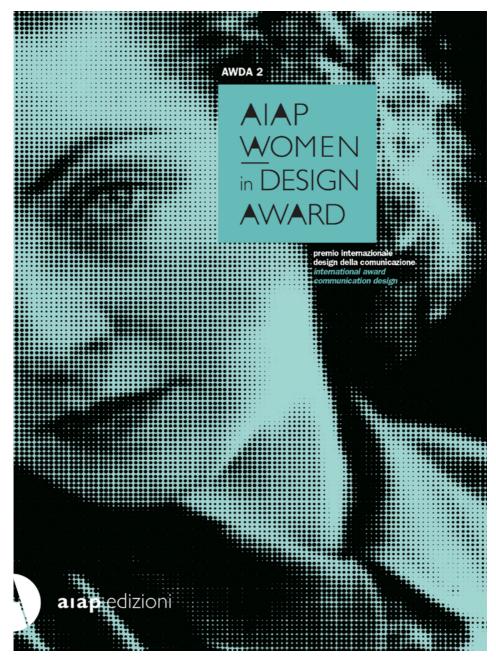
Francesco E. Guida Politecnico di Milano







AWDA vol. 1, Aiap Edizioni, 2015.





AWDA vol. 2, Aiap Edizioni, 2018.

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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.

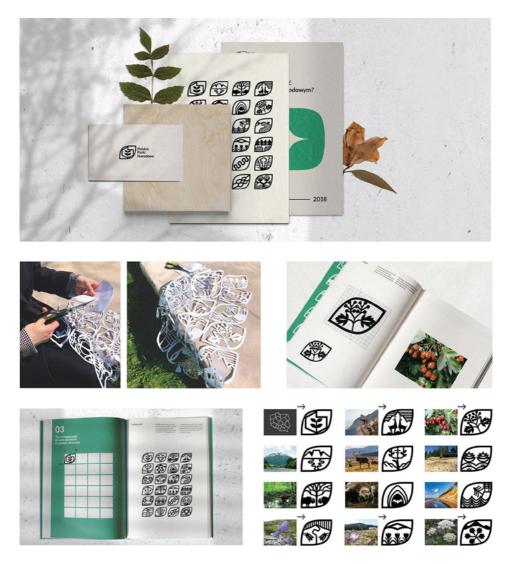
The AWDA project was born in 2009 from an idea by Laura Moretti and, starting from 2012, it is curated with Cinzia Ferrara and Daniela Piscitelli. In 2017 Carla Palladino was added

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.



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Sylwia Bartoszewska, visual imaginary of the Polish National Parks, AWDA 2019, First Prize.



Carlotta Origoni, *The veil is seen only when it is lifted*, AWDA 2019, Honourable Mention, Professionals Category.



Aiap Women in Design Award (AWDA). Short History and Perspectives by C. Ferrara & F.E. Guida













Orith Kolodny, 199 Drapeaux - Formes, couleurs et motifs, AWDA 2019, Honourable Mention, PhD, Researchers and Teachers Category.

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 Bartoszewska 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.

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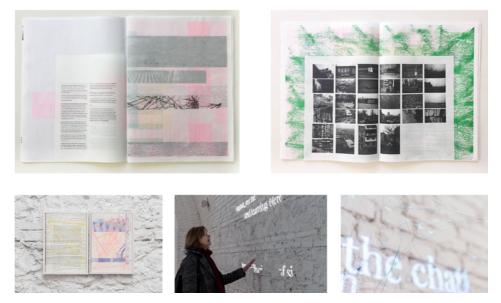




Laura Simonati, *Unfolding Brussels. Colonial traces in the public space*, AWDA 2019, Honourable Mention, Students Category.



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



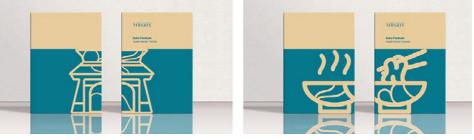
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Tricia Treacy, SLOT, AWDA 2019, Special Mention, PhD, Researchers and Teachers Category.



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.

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Link

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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.

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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). valeria.bucchetti@polimi.it

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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. cinzia.ferrara@unipa.it

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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. marinella.ferrara@polimi.it

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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. chellaquint@gmail.com

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PAD. Pages on a and Design International, peer-reviewed, open access journal ISSN 1972-7887

#19, Vol. 13, December 2020

www.padjournal.net

