Nigel Cross's 'Designerly Ways of Knowing'; George Stiny's 'Shape' and More: Books Received & Noted

REVIEW SHORTS

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Neil Leach, *Camouflage*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 2006, 289 pages
Architect and theorist, Nogel Leach, takes the idea of camouflage as a way of exploring how individuals come to identify with their environments. He delivers a subjectivist focus relying heavily on the reiterations from a pantheon of cultural theorists – like Adorno, Benjamin, Lacan, Deleueze & Guattari, Battaille, Caillois, Kristeva, Freud, Marcuse, Judith Butler. There are some nods to the "strategic importance of design" in facilitating "mechanisms of connectivity", but not much else. With elegant typography, lots of white space and arty black & white of bodies dissolving into their environments punctuating the chapters, this is yet another tome from MIT Press seeking the redemption of aesthetics.

George Stiny *Shape: Talking about Seeing and Doing*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 2006, 422 pages

In contrast to the decorative, philosophically tinged, meanderings of Neil Leach, this author, a Professor of Design and Computation at MIT, seeks to reduce design to a grammar of shapes. The 422 pages are populated with endless permutations of lines, rectangles, squares and triangles, which you're meant to read as part of the chatty, first person text – presumably this is the 'seeing' part of the book. Not sure Prof Stiny ever arrives at 'doing' or design.

Nigel Cross, *Designerly Ways of Knowing* Springer-Verlag, London, 2006, 114 pages

Nigel Cross was one of the founders of the UK-based Design Research Society. He presents seven essays spanning twenty-five years, that add up to an attempt to understand, within an empirical framework and often in a micro-focussed, watching-paint-dry-on-a-wall way, the activities of professional designers. It is disappointing that this book doesn't develop any further the ideas that Cross has had in circulation for some time, most significantly 'designerly ways of knowing'.

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Bi-annual refereed publication in Turkish and English. Vol 23, no 2, 2006 includes papers on 'virtual space as a public sphere', 'multiple views of participatory design' and 'community design in its pragmatist age'. Vol 23, no 1, 2006 includes papers on 'Turkish urban professionals and the politics of housing' and 'the evolution of courtyard houses in Cairo'. Enquiries to the editor Ali Cengizkan jfa@arch.metu.edu.tr