



Press release

Essen, 16 November 2018

"Design in the Age of Big Data" – an exhibition about the design of intelligent products

6 December 2018 to 3 March 2019 in the Red Dot Design Museum in Essen

With "Design in the Age of Big Data", the Red Dot Design Museum in Essen will feature an exhibition with innovative products that highlight the impact of digitisation on the products we use and the lives we lead. The exhibits include sensors, scanners, fitness trackers and medical devices for monitoring and visualising the human body, but also robots and drones. The products are classified into different topics, helping visitors to the exhibition to understand the complex interplay between humans, technology and data flows in the era of big data, how they affect each other mutually and what the consequences are for the design of intelligent products. The exhibition will be on show in the Red Dot Design Museum in Essen from 6 December 2018 to 3 March 2019.

Homo ex data – a new type of human is emerging

The exhibition concept is based on the article "Homo Ex Data" by Professor Dr. Peter Zec, the Founder and CEO of the Red Dot Design Award. In that article, which was published in the catalogue of the same name for an exhibition in Hong Kong last year, the design expert takes an in-depth look at the reality of living in an era of big data and draws the following conclusion: "After Homo sapiens and Homo faber, a new type of human is emerging that we call "Homo ex data", a human whose living circumstances are determined by the generation and transfer of data."

The structure of the exhibition is based on the different activities in the world of Homo ex data, ranging from the realm of data collection to data processing products via the field of controlling intelligent products right through to optimised end products such as robots or VR products. This highlights the complexity and multifaceted nature of this thematic area.

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The design of intelligent products

The more technology a product involves and the more intelligent and connected it is, the more it becomes a black box with the complex processes taking place concealed inside the product. In addition, in an era of digitisation, more and more products are no longer standalone. Instead, they are integrated in entire service and data processing systems. The task of the designer is to design the interaction with these products perfectly so that these devices can be used simply and intuitively even without a deeper understanding of the underlying processes and can be integrated as naturally as possible in our world.

A further challenge for designers is to facilitate and shape the mutual communication and interaction between products as well as between humans on the one hand and products or entire systems on the other. Within this process, the design of individual products becomes less significant than the design of comprehensive systems. In these cases, the products themselves are to a certain extent only the tip of the iceberg – a small part of the system that is visible and thus tangible for the consumer. These devices are representative of the underlying system and make it possible to use services or access data and interact with that data. Examples include intelligent loudspeakers such as Google Home, which use language assistance to provide users with easier access to information, or sensor-based systems like Grohe Sense, which help to control intelligent functions in the home. The “less is more” design principle appears to be informing the design of these devices: The more complex the underlying systems, the more reduced the design of the devices that serve as an interface between the data and the users. The aim of the design process is to achieve as much user friendliness as possible and to overcome any hesitancy about using highly complex technical systems. The actual design retreats behind ease of use and sophisticated system-based communication.

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reddot design museum

Red Dot Design Museum – Opening hours and entrance fees

Tuesdays – Sundays & public holidays: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

(last admittance: 5 p.m.)

Mondays: closed (except on public holidays and during school holidays in North Rhine-Westphalia)

Entrance fee for special exhibitions: EUR 9 (reduced rate: EUR 4)

Children under the age of 12: free

Fridays: pay what you want

www.red-dot-design-museum.de

About the Red Dot Design Museum Essen

Making good design tangible and exhibiting the quality of daily objects – that is the task of the Red Dot Design Museum, the roots of which date back as far as 1955. With roughly 2,000 exhibits from around 45 countries, it presents the entire range of current product design. The museum is situated in the former boiler house of the UNESCO world heritage site Zeche Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex and extends across five floors and more than 4,000 square metres. It presents well-designed objects that have been selected as winners by renowned experts in one of the largest international design competitions, namely the Red Dot Design Award. The world's largest exhibition of contemporary design informs about 150,000 visitors each year about current design trends, and visitors are encouraged to try out many of the exhibits. Special thematic exhibitions complement the inspiring insight into the fascinating world of design.

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