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Hypervernacular Design: Rethinking the Vernacular Design Paradigm

Niek Kosten, Liesbeth Huybrechts

Introduction

Contemporary design discourse needs words to discuss its role in everyday life. This article discusses the meaning and value of the term *vernacular design*—with a focus on vernacular graphic design—in contemporary society. Vernacular design is broadly defined as focusing on habits, customary practices, existing forms, skills, and traditions that form a framework for design and fabrication embedded in a particular context. The term *vernacular* refers to what is recognizable, ubiquitous, and closely linked to a group's identity or an individual's identity and thus to what forms a central component of the culture of everyday life.[1] Through the lens of graphic design, vernacularity includes everyday visual language, familiar visual codes, aesthetics, fabrication techniques, and media, among others.

From this broad definition, we distinguish several ways in which vernacular design ~~generally~~ is generally interpreted. First, traditional vernacular design involves the work of skilled craftspeople. They are perceived as designers and producers who work in harmonious relation with their natural environment. Either the artisans create in ~~close~~ near proximity to the user, or they are the user.[2] The knowledge from which their work originates is based on traditions passed on for generations. This description also connects traditional vernacular to indigenous craft knowledge, beliefs, and aesthetic characteristics. Second, a common interpretation involves amateur vernacular, which is seen as the designerly realizations of untrained people, outside of professional practice.[3] This form of vernacular design can include not only people's painting of their ~~house~~houses~~, as well as~~but also spontaneous "adhocism," like creating a sign for a community noticeboard. Its forms are often informal, arise out of necessity, and follow ideals of constraint, durability, and thrift.[4] Third, commercial vernacular starts from what surrounds us in everyday life. This vernacular refers to the visual language of popular culture and advertising: from the signage of a market stall to the neon of Las Vegas.[5]

Vernacular design is so ingrained in society that it becomes part of the visual landscape and collective memory. As an integral part of everyday life, the vernacular can play a critical role in a design research practice that deals with issues in society by collaborating with its actors. Vernacular design can be seen as a tangible manifestation of (group) identity in visual form and thus can carry rich contextual information about practices, dynamics, values, methods, goals, and struggles. It offers a valuable space for the articulation, interaction, and reflection on issues inherent in a specific context and thus critically opens up these issues in a way that is relevant to many people involved.

Despite vernacular graphic design's central role in shaping the visual environment—alongside photography, film, and television, among others—its design work is often overlooked and unrecognized.[6] Vernacular design's established interpretation carries reductive connotations: the simple craftsperson, the crude and flawed work of the amateur, or the bluntness and bad taste of commerce. Although many viewers may find the vernacular attractive and valuable, when we frame it purely as an expression of folk culture, often accompanied ~~with~~ by nostalgic sentiment, we engage in *othering*, which inhibits a ~~relation~~ relationship as equals in a collaborative process.[7]

Moreover, this commonplace view of vernacular is limited to superficial visual characteristics created by a particular group of actors in a specific locality.

Discussions about vernacular design have recently come back onto the design discourse agenda.[8] Searching for ways out of the global ecological crisis, designers are exploring what vernacular design has to offer. Because of this revival, the term might be used lightly and addressed primarily from the traditional idea of local knowledge. However, ~~as a result of~~because of its growing recognition, the market also is appropriating the term as a strategy to allude to authenticity and a more intimate scale. We argue that the design domain needs an interpretation that is more attuned to novel approaches around hybridity and plurality in design. In the following sections, we frame this needed development first from theory; we then propose the concept of *hypervernacular* as a relational and plural approach. This notion takes an inclusive and critical position on what we consider vernacular, which actors we include, and how we collaborate. We ground our conceptual argument by reporting on a case study that investigated the everyday, ubiquitous, and *more-than-human* position of the plant species, Japanese knotweed. ~~In particular, we~~We explore collaboration as a method to engage with this silent actor, which previously had not been taken into consideration.

Revaluing the Amateur

Both the academic field and the professional field have discussed the qualities of the vernacular. Architecture~~, in particular, has~~ has a long tradition of examining vernacular self-building. Authors such as Amos Rapoport, Kenneth Frampton, Maiken Umbach, and Bernd Hüppauf discuss other ways of valuing the vernacular and propose opportunities to learn from it.[9] In comparison, the studies into vernacular graphic design have been less extensive because graphic design historically has lacked a presence in academics and arguably is still in its formative years.[10] Discussions on vernacularity in graphic design primarily took place in the 1990s and 2000s by authors such as Ellen Lupton. Her writing questioned the profession's boundaries and the outsider position of vernacular design.[11] As a consequence of more accessible design technology, the rising democratization of design has profoundly transformed the field. The postmodern movement spurred on the debate of hierarchical distinctions between high and low culture and questioned the superior position taken by "specialists" who had a formal design education and saw the vernacular as the inferior (un)designed work of amateurs.[12]

These developments were the signs of a prevailing paradigm shift that moved away from the patronizing idea of the signature designer as the only one with the knowledge to solve people's problems. Instead, design abilities are seen as present in everyone, even ~~in~~ non-professional designers. Ezio Manzini describes the field as lying between the diffuse design by non-experts and the expert design by trained professionals.[13] A wide range of skill levels ~~are~~ is apparent in this field, wherein all people are recognized as designers, but some are better designers.[14] The shift also adjusts the view that "ordinary" people are passive consumers who need design experts for solutions. More and more, people seek to increase their design capabilities as a means to take control of the making of their own environment, giving them a valuable sense of agency.[15] Therefore, the role of design experts in this process also is shifting to become a collaboration with non-expert designers.[16] These shifts create a space where the vernacular can be a critical part of design practice and not solely the field of amateur handicrafts and DIY enthusiasts.

Beyond the Local

In the English language, *vernacular* refers to non-dominant languages native to a place. From this meaning, vernacular design commonly is perceived as a visual dialect "spoken" by a specific group of people in a particular place. However, from our literature study, what becomes apparent is that this relation to locality is far from its only characteristic in a globalized and hyperconnected world. While interpreting Ernst Bloch's work, Hüppauf talks about the vernacular in relation to giving people a sense of belonging.[17] From the concept of *Heimat* (homeland), this perspective could be interpreted as a longing for a physical place. Nevertheless, the mental space (or culture) linked to this place is what plays an integral part in the connection between a person and a place. We could even posit that a vernacular cannot be linked to a physical place without the existence of an associated mental space.[18] By conceptualizing vernacular as a shared mental space, in addition to its link to a physical place, it could better represent the interrelations of contemporary society.

As a result of global travel and communication systems, local vernaculars are able to spread further and develop similarly in places far apart. For instance, in previous work, we studied *ultras* football fandom, where fans design spectacular visual actions to encourage their team.[19] These organized groups exist across the globe but have similar specific practices, values, conventions, goals, and even design methods, aesthetics, and fabrication techniques. This type of fan culture originated in Italy and spread through media and increased travel, enabling supporters to view, engage, and interact with a range of fans from all over the world.[20] In the internet age, vernacular particularities can even be bound only to virtual spaces that are mediated primarily by digital networks, screens, and the visuality of graphic design. The examples in cyberculture are legion and range from the image macro format for internet memes to the visual conventions of hacker communities, like Anonymous, to standard building practices in Minecraft's gaming environment. Recent developments in the metaverse paradigm could advance the possibilities of novel expressions of shared identity and further blur the distinction between physical place and virtual space.

Conversely, traditional vernacular often refers to a time before the information age, pre-globalization, or even pre-industrialization, when the boundaries of the local were more pervasive. The reference could be to a space of escape from the alienating effects of modernity, but by painstakingly protecting this historical image of vernacular from being swept away, the view on it can become very delineated and static.[21] Furthermore, it could entail a trap of false nostalgia and localism based on a romanticized image, reminiscent of the Arts & Crafts movement. Bruno Latour notes a similar pitfall: When seeing that globalization offers no more answers, a reactionary return to the local seems to take precedence.[22] Place-based identity gains prominence when conventional connections with place are disrupted or absent, and in current times of crisis and uncertainty, identity formation is even more challenging.[23] We might find the safe and familiar embrace of intimate tradition comforting, as it offers us identity; but does this nostalgic place still exist?[24]

Into the Relational and Plural Space

On the other side of the spectrum, the global has long been presented as the progressive way out of the archaic and outdated local.[25] The process of globalization in the twentieth century went hand in hand with the rise of modernism in design. Modernist design principles led the way to a universal visual language to unite the citizens of the global city. It formalized rules that prioritize functionality, rationality, and neutrality using abstractions that transcend natural and state borders. However, its homogenizing force—first and foremost (ab)used by neoliberal

capitalism—risks producing a monoculture with cultural and aesthetic uniformity. The most powerful groups have been enforcing their exclusive (Eurocentric) one-world world. Modern design practices have played a considerable destructive role in these processes.[26] Hegemonic corporations and institutions ensure that the mainstream quickly absorbs everything divergent, after which it stops being different. This assimilation exposes a significant discrepancy: In a globalized society, culture and identity are inevitably hybrid through interconnectedness and exchange; but while modern reality is more layered and complex than ever, its representation in design is becoming less diverse.

To illustrate, the non-hegemonic local specificity of vernacular design commonly is positioned as the opposite of the modernist monoculture of the global. However, the vernacular thereby embeds itself in the same universal design logic. It presents one part of a singular dichotomy, in which the vernacular is perceived as something *othered* that comes from afar and thus is not from here. Embracing these seemingly contradictory movements and focusing on their negotiation and interdependency is possible.[27] For example, Latour suggests breaking away from the local-global axis and finding a place to land in the *terrestrial*.[28] In this space, we could simultaneously root in a particular patch of soil and connect to the global world. The terrestrial space inherits materiality, complexity, and heterogeneity from the local space but avoids its rustic attributes, such as ethnic homogeneity, historicism, and inauthentic authenticity. From the global, it discards the negative aspects of the single vision modernization project that represents only a small number of interests; it includes the parts that make us go across any border and considers a more significant number of beings, cultures, phenomena, organisms, and people.[29]

In the past decade, this plural way of thinking about knowledge and identity has come to the fore of design research discourse.[30] Recent publications often have referenced Arturo Escobar, Marisol de la Cadena, and Mario Blaser, who build on Latour, among others, to further explore the problematic unified modern model of thought imposed by the Eurocentric global North. From a decolonial and ontological approach, they highlight traditional vernacular and indigenous practices to open up the possibility of other ways of knowing.[31] To promote a world where many worlds coexist and continuously interact, de la Cadena and Blaser describe "divergent worldings constantly coming about through negotiations, enmeshments, crossings, and interruptions."[32] These worldings question our relationship with and the inclusion of various other actors that make up our world(s). These more-than-humans can be animals, plants, artificial intelligence systems, mountains, and spirits, among others. The broad scales of this *pluriverse* are intimately related to identity on a more individual level. The universality of the modern and its clear, rocklike identity are far removed from the reality of heterogeneous beings.[33] De la Cadena's concept of *not only* indicates the inherent plurality of things and selves: Something is a mountain but *not only*, someone is a designer but *not only*, or a graphic pattern originates from a specific locale but *not only*.[34] Every vernacular design and designer entangles with countless others in this ever-changing relational network of worlds. Therefore, we should explore how design and the act of designing can function across these hybrid realities.

Hypervernacular Design

So far, this article has argued for the necessity to surpass vernacular design's one-dimensional, reductionistic, and stereotypical *othered* implications. We brought together design and architecture theory on vernacularity that extends the existing interpretation by revaluing the amateur and moving beyond the local. We connected vernacular design with novel relational and plural approaches to further rethink the paradigm and bring it closer to everyday realities. Through Latour's thinking on identity, we break the vernacular free from the local–global

dichotomy. His terrestrial concept provides a hybrid space where vernacular design interrelates with the world and can exist simultaneously close and far away. We broadened this relational thinking by opening up the vernacular to plural ways of meaning-making and the inclusion of other actors, such as more-than-humans, which allow us to reframe vernacular design in a networked model that holds multiple meanings and is open to change.

Contemporary design discourse needs words to discuss its role in everyday life. Instead of abandoning the concept of vernacular altogether, we argue for reclaiming its potential as a space for design discourse to represent and engage more profoundly with diverse everyday experiences. We do so by introducing the term *hypervernacular*. By adding the "hyper" prefix, we emphasize vernacular's inherent hybridity and relationality in a complex system. The new term reframes the focus of vernacular design's concept and can help us better direct the discussion about its limitations and opportunities.

In its foundation, hypervernacular design incorporates and represents heterogeneity and complexity of individual narratives, which in turn interconnect through diverse communities in a relational network. Its visuality is a representation that interrelates with the broader cultural, social, economic, ecological, and political contexts in which it is situated.[35] Its entanglements constantly relate and share with others through the global—never conforming, but rather hybridizing on its own terms. This relationality implies a view of vernacularity that acknowledges its fluid and open-ended nature. Moreover, it transcends fixation in time and embraces different temporalities. The term *hypervernacular* aims to be inclusive toward what is considered vernacular and thus also toward the actors that are related to these forms of design. Meanwhile, this approach entails continuous critical questioning of how we involve actors and collaborate with them. We suggest hypervernacular not as a fixed concept but as one open to change and adaptation.

While we use "hyper" to broaden the concept of ~~open up~~ vernacular design, the prefix brings its own connotations from terms such as "hyperspace" and "hyperlink"—well known in the graphic and interaction design field. It indicates relationality and recognition that a subject goes beyond what it was and how it was known. Although *hypervernacular* might therefore risk being narrowed down to the digital realm, we see it instead as suitable for other domains, thus opening up not just its meaning but these other domains as well. In contemporary ecological thinking, Morton conceived the term *hyperobject*—detached from digital connotations—to describe entities so vastly distributed in space and time that they become incomprehensible (e.g., global warming).[36] The "hyper-ness" of the object refers not merely to scale but also to its relationship with a much larger complex system, thus corresponding with hypervernacular. Morton uses the example of a styrofoam cup that is, ~~in~~ itself, ~~is~~ just an object. However, when thinking about all the styrofoam in the world, more dimensions reveal themselves: its impact on ecology, its role on a global economic and political level, and its application in a social context. When taking this multitude of relations into account, styrofoam becomes a hyperobject.[37] Likewise, we could consider a fan-made banner to support a football team as an example of vernacular design. However, this vernacular graphic design object and its ~~particular~~ specific characteristics come to be in relation to many fluctuating social factors (e.g., group dynamics, status~~,~~), economic factors (e.g., production cost~~,~~), and political factors (e.g., restrictions, activism). The vernacular banner and its maker are influenced by other beings and communities, from micro- to meso- and macro-levels (e.g., support/protest aesthetics). The far-reaching relational network in which this banner is enmeshed places it within hypervernacular design.

Met opmerkingen [GP1]: Another synonym: Expanding, enlarging, increasing?

Met opmerkingen [GP2]: Precede, introduce, "to broaden the concept of"?

Met opmaak: Engels (Verenigde Staten)

Critically Designing Around Japanese Knotweed

In the case study, *Not in My Backyard!* (NIMBY), we ground the concept of hypervernacular in a type of graphic design and research practice that aspires to profoundly engage with issues in society. Its goal is to help us better understand current problems and challenges by evoking political issues using designerly methods and forms.[38] NIMBY investigated the everyday and ubiquitous position of the alien invasive plant species, Japanese knotweed, in our Belgian environment.[39] Since its introduction as an ornamental garden plant in the mid-nineteenth century, Japanese knotweed has fallen out of favor because of its rapid, uncontrollable growth (see Figure 1). The plant can cause damage to infrastructure~~,~~ and ~~crowds~~ crowd out other (native) species~~;~~ ~~and~~ therefore, it has been established as a significant threat to biodiversity in Europe, North America, and parts of Oceania.[40]

Figure 1

Many people in Belgium are unaware of this issue; some even suffer from "plant blindness," which implies that most plants in their daily environment essentially go unnoticed as passive extras in human life. This cognitive bias leads to overlooking the importance of plants in our ecology and to the false conclusion that they can be excluded from human consideration.[41] However, media outlets are reporting more frequently on how Japanese knotweed is impacting our built environment and biodiversity. These fleeting and often simplified bytes of information recognize Japanese knotweed's active effect ~~in~~ on society, but they commonly assert a fearful and protectionist attitude. This perspective antagonizes the plant and overlooks the reality that human actions are the primary origin of its spread.

We aimed to unravel these perceptions, increase knotweed's visibility, and renegotiate its position to explore new possibilities to coexist. These challenges around representation typically are relevant ~~for~~ to the discipline of graphic design. We used a hypervernacular approach to engage the issue's many complex, entangled relations. Hypervernacular design includes the more-than-human Japanese knotweed as an active actor, supplementing the already-present human actors. It thereby expands what constitutes vernacular design in this context and broadens our perspective of those with whom we can collaborate. This view brings the silent actor to the forefront, whose voice was previously excluded or disparaged in the societal discussion on its presence.

Engaging Hypervernacular Relations Through Collaboration

In NIMBY, we explored a network of hypervernacular relations to unveil underlying layers of meaning that influence and shape how the knotweed issue manifests and evolves. From a graphic perspective, these relations include concrete material characteristics, such as the aesthetics of a Japanese knotweed leaf or root system. Another relation connects to the visuality of the representation of Japanese knotweed and its perception in society. Less tangible relations include the plant's abundance on a phenomenological level and knotweed's interaction with other beings and the built environment. The latter also relates to political dimensions of nature preservation groups and legislation. Additional less tangible relations concern knotweed's connection to time or to the economy.

We experimented with various visual and participatory methods to engage with these many hypervernacular relations. In the experiments, we tried to capture these sometimes abstract, blurry, fluid, and intersecting relations through graphic means. In addition to finding, connecting with, and framing these other dimensions, our design strategies also aimed to preserve existing ambiguities to create space for other interpretations. The more tangible visual manifestations, and their related research and development, acted as critical tools to stimulate reflection and debate.

They served as a space for interaction and collaboration, both with the plant species and with the humans in their network.

The human collaborators included members of nature conservation groups, inhabitants of neighborhoods where knotweed is present, government agencies, and artists and designers working with the plant. These encounters mainly took the form of conversations in which experiences were shared. Other, more formalized interactions included in situ participatory workshops and classes with art and design students—for instance, through dye extraction and guided tours that actively involved the plant (see Figure 2). Manzini describes this process as "co-design as social conversations": "a vast, multifaceted conversation among individuals and groups who set design initiatives rolling at the nodes of the networks they are part of."[42] In this process, transdisciplinarity was essential to tap into a richness of perspectives that supplemented our hypervernacular mapping. Moreover, collaboration helps us, as designers, to acknowledge and explore our own positions. Because knotweed also is present in our "backyard," we cannot watch from a distance. Our entanglements compel us to be conscious of the influence of our assumptions and biases. Even though the hypervernacular approach aims to include what was previously left out of the conversation, we are never able to capture all relations, positions, and actors. Acknowledging this limitation is intended to prevent exclusion, whether accidental or intentional, from turning into "othering"—a central concern for vernacular design.[43]

Figure 2

The more-than-human actor central to the issue at hand forced us to think beyond the anthropocentric view of collaboration. Our position recognizes a more-than-human agency, implying that a plant has the capacity to observe, react, and communicate and is able to alter the environment around itself.[44] We build on the belief—which the study of *biosemiotics* theorizes—that all living systems, including plants, are involved in the production and interpretation of meaning through signs.[45] Plants communicate internally through networks of proteins, minerals, and chemicals and make decisions based on these signals in their cells and tissues.[46] In the case of Japanese knotweed, researchers have found that when stems get cut down, the plant communicates this severing through its root system, and increased growth is generated elsewhere.[47] These survival methods are innate to many plant species but are especially visible in Japanese knotweed because of ~~its~~ the knotweed's ability to grow up to 20 centimeters a day. Despite its rapid growth, humans perceive the actions of the plant as non-existent. The divergent temporal scales of humans' and plants' actions obscure the multiple dimensions of the more-than-human agency.[48] The lack of perceivable direct communication and the absence of a shared spoken or visual language impede the use of our primary tools for human collaboration. To involve more-than-human beings, we need to reframe our meaning of working collaboratively and of ~~communication~~communicating.

Collaboration with more-than-humans might be less tangible. Nevertheless, physical presence could be seen as a mechanism through which more-than-humans communicate messages and participate in design conversations.[49] While discussing how more-than-human entities participate in the design process, Louis Rice argues that visibility is a crucial factor to participate because when a more-than-human is not present, it cannot communicate.[50] He states that "humans or nonhumans who are invisible or absent are less likely to be, or become, participants in a design conversation."[51] Many humans in our environment seem to have a blind spot for plants, which implies that humans actually are the ones who are absent from the conversation. However, as the challenges associated with Japanese knotweed affect humans as well, our hypervernacular approach also aimed to include them. Still, we feel that the discussion is in a transitional period as knotweed increasingly enforces its visibility in society through

widespread propagation and disruptiveness. In this way, some humans do seem aware of the plant's ability to communicate, even though they still regard it as an uncontrollable invader. In this scenario, Japanese knotweed's physical presence gives it an othered, unequal place at the table that lacks mutual understanding or openness toward other, non-anthropocentric ways of knowing. The NIMBY experiments aimed to break through this one-sided interpretation by creating ~~a~~ richer, ~~and~~ multiple images with the hypervernacular design approach. In this way, knotweed's visibility could better represent its agency, thereby strengthening its participatory action.

In one experiment, we engaged with the plant's material characteristics based on knowledge and techniques shared and co-produced by many collaborators. We extracted color pigments from different plant parts and used these pigments to dye yarn, which we then wove into a flag (see Figure 3). We intended for this process of physically making this graphic object to be a meaningful space for designers to ~~enter into~~engage in a dialogue with the plant and other human actors. ~~Creation~~ The creation of the flag-object was not a goal in of itself, but the flag serves as a critical artifact in the larger conversation on Japanese knotweed. In addition, the design subverts the flag medium that is commonplace in the graphic design field as a representation of a delineated cultural or state identity. The visuality of this incomplete representation is determined by different colored yarns woven in varying patterns. The color of the dyes will change over time because they are sensitive to sunlight, and we intentionally did not apply a fixative. These approaches create a more open-ended design that brings in other worlds and references a more fluid concept of (graphic) identity. The plant can become better represented by incorporating the actual materials and thereby letting them influence the design.

Figure 3

Conclusion

This article problematizes the established interpretation of vernacular design. The conventional view mainly is concerned with superficial visual characteristics that find their origin in indigenous customs, local craftsmanship, or amateur design. In this way, it tends to focus on locality and positions the vernacular (designer) as an *other*. By bringing in theories on hybridity and plurality, we argue for considering vernacular design as part of a more complex system incorporating diverse actors—a system with many cultural, social, economic, ecological, and political levels. Involving these relations in the design process is necessary for representing and engaging the complex socio-environmental challenges that designers increasingly face in contemporary society. We coined the term *hypervernacular* to name a concept that highlights this relational and plural reinterpretation of vernacular design. It uncovers relational paths that previously were unimaginable or difficult to grasp. It has the potential to deepen the relationships in and comprehension of a context and its actors.

We examined the societal challenges associated with Japanese knotweed to illustrate ~~which~~ those dimensions and actors to which hypervernacular design can relate. From our case study, we can highlight several implications that broaden the scope of what previously has been conceptualized around vernacular design. We include a more-than-human agent—in this case, a plant—with an active role in the vernacular, thereby extending the prior anthropocentric view of artisans and amateurs. On a spatial level, we break through the limitations of locality typically associated with the vernacular by involving a globally abundant plant that is not bound to human-made borders. The local disruptiveness of Japanese knotweed compels us to acknowledge its global presence and interrelation with many other locales. The case also demonstrates the different temporal scales in which actors such as plants operate. Vernacular's frame of reference

Met opmerkingen [GP3]: Might either of these sentences work? "We examined the societal challenges associated with Japanese knotweed to illustrate those dimensions and actors to which hypervernacular design can relate." or "We examined the societal challenges associated with Japanese knotweed to illustrate which dimensions and actors that hypervernacular design can relate to."

usually includes the past few centuries of human history, delineated by artificial events (e.g., pre-industrialization). This case opens up vernacular design to the ~~large scale~~large-scale, slow, and evolutionary time perception of plants. Finally, engaging with knotweed includes more-than-humans in meaning-making processes that formerly were assumed to be exclusive to humans. Vernacular graphic design incorporates the visual signs of more-than-humans to give meaning to and interpret everyday life. These moves take the discussion on vernacularity in design discourse beyond the usual notions of actors and boundaries.

The experiments in NIMBY focused on collaboration as a method in the hypervernacular approach as we sought to include diverse voices that expand the dominant perception of Japanese knotweed. In a previous case study, we had already explored additional dimensions of vernacular design for creating space for a greater diversity of (human) voices in the debate around urban development.[52] This previous case study also focused on making silent actors visible by actively collaborating with them. In this article, we expanded this collaboration to more-than-humans because this inclusion often remains abstract, in theory. Graphic design is fundamentally concerned with materializing and interpreting in visual form, which means the discipline can play a crucial role in addressing knotweed's challenges ~~on~~ in representation. Through the hypervernacular approach, the tangible designs ~~have the ability~~can ~~to~~ reimagine the sometimes-abstract implications and complex relations of knotweed. In a graphic form, incorporating them into a design process and transferring them for others to reinterpret becomes more manageable. The designs retain a level of heterogeneity by including contested views and leaving room for ambiguity.[53]

Although our experiments triggered a critical debate on Japanese knotweed in our environment, further research is necessary to develop the possibilities of the hypervernacular approach. The adaptation of the concept to the challenges of new contexts, with different actors and other ways of understanding collaboration, will bring new designerly ways of interrelating to the surface. We see opportunities for hypervernacular design in further investigations of more-than-human collaboration; in our case, knotweed's agency could be increased. The plant may never be able to fully "speak" for itself. Therefore, designers should examine how they can become better "interpreters"—for instance, by collaborating with more diverse actors close to the plant (e.g., biologists).

From the broad perspective of the discipline, we see a need to move graphic design past the universalist dogma closely intertwined with common practices. To be meaningful for everyday life, the discipline needs to bypass the reductive nature of current debates on vernacularity and find ways to give space to heterogeneity. The critical and inclusive hypervernacular approach is a way to reorient~~s~~ vernacular design ~~as a way~~ to reveal and build plural relations. By actively exploring and designing these relations, graphic design can more profoundly represent and serve the diversity and complexities of everyday contexts.

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[52] Niek Kosten and Liesbeth Huybrechts, "Ontwerp Voor Debat: De Rol van Vernaculair Ontwerp Voor Stadsontwikkeling" [Design for Debate: The Role for Vernacular Design for Urban Development], *FORUM+* 27, no. 1 (2020): 15–23.
[53] The space where divergent views exist in difference together is presented by de la Cadena and Blaser as the "uncommons." It also has been developed in the discourse of participatory design through the concepts of "agonistic pluralism," by Carl DiSalvo, and of "dissensus," by Mahmoud Keshavzarz, Ramia Mazé, and Thomas Markussen. See de la Cadena and Blaser*, A World of Many Worlds*, 4; Carl DiSalvo, "Design, Democracy and Agonistic Pluralism," in *Proceedings of the Design Research Society International Conference, 2010: Design & Complexity* (Montreal, Canada: Design Research Society, 2010), 366–71. Mahmoud Keshavarz and Ramia Mazé, "Design and Dissensus: Framing and Staging Participation in Design Research," *Design Philosophy Papers* 11, no. 1 (May 1, 2013): 7–29; and Thomas Markussen, "The Disruptive Aesthetics of Design Activism: Enacting Design Between Art and Politics," *Design Issues* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 38–50.