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A lot of design has happened in the 50 years since *Visible Language* was founded: typesetters – gone; desktop publishing – a passing blip; computers – moved from desktop to pocket. The term graphic design had hardly entered the dictionary before the discipline started to consider renaming itself visual communication design or just communication design. Because communication continues to grow in quantity and importance there's no reason to disbelieve in a promising future for a communication design discipline. What the promising design future looks like is, as always, sketchy. A well-known 20th century Danish proverb states that predictions are easy except when they involve the future and George Santayana famously warned of the trouble that awaits failure to examine the past. If we take Santayana's statement less as a warning than as a prescription to guide action, we might reflect thoughtfully on the past in order to plan our steps today to help shape a future the Danes say is so difficult to predict. Reflecting on the past may not make predictions easier, but it might make them more realistic.

To celebrate its 50th year *Visible Language* will revisit themes from the journal's past to help chart the design discipline's future. This issue features articles by Meredith Davis, Sharon Poggenpohl, and myself commenting on design's direction, design journals, and design research. As a special homage to the journal's roots in typographic research issue 50.2 will revisit typography and see what we have learned in the past 50 years and project where typographic study should be going next. Issue 50.3 will look at *Visible Language* in light of design history and theory with a similar aim: to reflect on the past to help guide and inspire the future: reflecting back – reflecting ahead. Reflecting in the sense of thinking deeply or carefully about something and at the same time suggesting the visual nature of much of human cognition and the essential visual nature of design. Reflection is a physical process wherein light or energy is thrown back from a surface. We learn about ourselves through reflection. We see things in a new light, from a new vantage point, and if the mirror is placed properly we can see not just where we've been but where we are going: around the corner we have not yet turned.

This year we are devoting part of the journal to not predicting the future but to shaping it. We can't wait to see what they'll say about our efforts in 2065!

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