

Preface

This book discusses the very early stage of design. In order to help you understand what this book is about, we would like to explain the context of this book.

We will begin with a brief description of the authors, Toshiharu Taura and Yukari Nagai. When Toshiharu Taura was younger, he worked as a mechanical engineer for nearly 10 years. Back then, he believed that he experienced and captured the essence of ‘design’ in his mind. Since then, he has attempted to describe this essence using a more scientific approach—as a researcher—for nearly 20 years. Yukari Nagai studied ‘art and design’ at an art university, and she has been pursuing its ‘heart’ from both practical and theoretical perspectives, with an interest in creativity.

On the basis of our experience, we have been attempting to find an answer to one question—‘what is design?’—for the last 10 years. It has been a long and difficult search. Nearly everyday was like this: sometimes, we felt as if we had caught hold of its (design’s) tail, but it slithered away from us; at other times, when we felt we had caught it again, it turned out that we had caught merely its shadow.

Now, we hope that we have found an answer to this question, albeit concerning a very small part, and have, therefore, decided to concentrate all our efforts on writing a book entitled *Concept Generation for Design Creativity*.

The contents of this book are systematically laid out from theory to methodology and applications such that when a reader opens the book and begins reading it, through the flow of the book, he or she may understand the progression of our research.

Ten years ago, we would never have believed that our efforts would be systematized in the form of book chapters. In fact, the research in [Chaps. 2, 3, and 4](#) had been conducted later than that in the other chapters. Incidentally, the first chapters were written last. Indeed, we are surprised to see this book compiled so systematically; all our prior efforts, which were attempted independently, were found to be related to each other. We have never ‘designed’ (i.e. in a well-planned, systematized manner) our research, but merely pursued the essence of design on the basis of our *inner sense*, which we believe is functioning to create the context of this book.

We would like to focus on the fact that our undesigned efforts have resulted in a book which looks designed. In other words, there may be another type of design which is not planned in a systematized manner; systematization is not the cause of design but a result of it. We would like to extend this message to you as our simple claim, which underlies the context of this book.

We hope this book will be read as an introduction to advanced studies on *concept generation* in design. To aid the reader in understanding this book, we have provided precise explanations of our research methods and procedures.

The main contributors to this book have been the co-authors of our previous publications, which are cited in this book; they were the ones who actually conducted the experiments or simulations. Our previous publications have been introduced in [Chap. 1](#), and we would like to extend our gratitude to our co-authors. In addition, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Georgi V. Georgiev and Dr. Kaori Yamada for their devoted contributions towards the editing of this book.

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Toshiharu Taura
Yukari Nagai

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A Systematized Theory and Methodology

Taura, T.; Nagai, Y.

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