

Preface

This book is the result of three years of intensive research work on prototyping. The cooperating fields and departments shared a scientific interest in both new approaches to development processes and a collective understanding of prototyping. The project called “Rethinking Prototyping—New Hybrid Concepts for Prototyping” brought together fields that often differ greatly in terms of their methodology, terminology and hypotheses or even partially contradict each other: the engineering disciplines at Technische Universität Berlin and the artistic design disciplines at the Berlin University of the Arts.

In this project, the researchers embarked on a journey into uncharted territory since there was often a lack of established interdisciplinary experience between the fields. It was common practice to think laterally and outside the box in the three interdisciplinary sub-projects entitled “Hybrid Prototyping”, “Blended Prototyping” and “Beyond Prototyping”. The theoretical and practical exchange was not solely on a research level; however, all the researchers were involved in the establishment of a discourse wherein the generally formulated search for a collective understanding of prototyping played the main role. In practice, transdisciplinary research required additional reflection from all participants in regarding their own perspectives and openness in considering other scientific points of view. The process of finding suitable research formats and methods was itself the object of much consideration during the course of the project. The experiences and scientific knowledge that resulted from this intercultural experiment is documented in this book and also includes scientific contributions from guest experts whose ideas stimulated and supplemented the research as well, both directly and indirectly.

This publication itself is the result of a searching process. For the prototypical, self-reflecting and optimising overall project, we sought an appropriate format that reflects the character of the experimental research and in which the results are manifested in part plastically and thus become perceptible. We realised the solution in a comprehensive package that includes this book and other objects that were developed in the prototyping process. The analogue and digital elements of this so-called layer cake impart knowledge in a playful, appealing and generally

understandable way, all stemming from extensive reflections on a common understanding of prototyping. You will find more information on the entire package in this book (Ängeslevä et al. “Results of Rethinking Prototyping”) and on the project’s Website www.rethinking-prototyping.org. The “layer cake” will be released in a limited edition.

One of these layers is the book that you have in your hands. It is a hybrid anthology that has high expectations for integration. It shares the transdisciplinary scientific knowledge gained in this research project that can be used for future basic research and also has potential for future application. In addition to the articles on the results from the research project itself, the anthology also provides a multi-perspective view of the broad theoretical and practice-relevant field of prototyping through inclusion of additional external perspectives provided by guest experts. Furthermore, this book also describes the experiences gained from the coordinating support for the project, which can be useful for the planning of future interdisciplinary projects.

The conclusion of a research project manifests itself, as a rule, in a scientific publication. This publication and its findings and observations, however, always remain only one static picture of an ongoing discourse that is also needs to continue regarding prototyping research. In this sense, we wish you an exciting and inspiring read and hope it encourages you to reflect and to continue rethinking prototyping.

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Rethink! Prototyping

Transdisciplinary Concepts of Prototyping

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