RESEARCH THEME

XLI Cycle – a.y. 2025/2026

Title of the doctoral research	Designing with Prompts: New Creative Processes in the Age of Visual AI

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Abstract

AI-generated visuals have rapidly integrated, not without friction, into the workflows of product, communication, fashion, and service designers. Generative visual AI's key innovation lies in its text-based interaction model, enabling designers to create images through natural language prompts.

This PhD project explores prompting as a new entry point into the design process. In design studios, classrooms, and online spaces such as forums, blogs, and social media platforms, prompts are crafted, requested, shared, and sold. The project will investigate how prompting has transformed the work of designers and creative professionals more broadly, mapping and analyzing the emerging economies, roles, and practices surrounding it. What new roles, processes, vernacular expressions, market structures, and value systems are emerging around AI-generated images and their prompts?

By examining interactions around prompts, both online and offline, and focusing on designers' lived experiences, this project will offer crucial insights into the implications of prompt-based AI visual production in the design world. Given its objective of understanding how prompting has reshaped the design process, the project remains open to methodological experimentation. This may include digital methods, data donation practices, interviews, and critical engagement with AI technologies. The research may also develop a specific thematic focus in domains such as product, graphic, or fashion design.

Keywords	Generative AI, Digital Methods, Design Process