

## VIII. INTERNATIONAL TRIENNIAL OF TEXTILE ARTS 2024

Theme 2024

### TOLERANCE LIMIT

We can take at least three approaches to the meaning of words. They have a dictionary meaning – collected in dictionaries and defined by dictionary makers – which provides their standardised, accepted use, based on which we put them in sentences and understand them in the sentences of others. At the same time, ever since Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) it has been possible to think about the meaning of words in another way i.e. meaning is determined by usage, and a given community using the language can 'decide' (expressis verbis, or implicitly) what meaning they want to assign to a sequence of sounds besides, or perhaps instead of its customary meaning. The Hungarian use of the word design, especially in the adjectival usage meaning of sleek or trendy, has little to do with the original, dictionary meaning of the English word 'design', which means to draw a plan, and, similarly, with its definition referring to a special design thinking and practice that developed and became widespread in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of course the connection between them can be found as the contemporary use of design did not just spring up from nowhere, but from a certain point in time it became the dominant meaning obscuring almost all others. According to the third approach, the meaning of words is examined in the specific context in which it is being used, for example a sentence, and it focuses on the question of what other words could have been used and what significance it has the writer or speaker uses that particular word and not any other. He or she might use the word gap, for example, and not hole, crack, or lack.

All this could be elaborated far more in detail and in greater complexity, as the literature available on this topic could fill many libraries. But let the above suffice to just illustrate that the meaning of our words and the connections between their usage are extremely multi-faceted. It is easy to see that while the directions of our sentences and the distinct directions of their understanding (from left to right, from top to bottom) clearly serve a specific, discursive comprehension, words do not exist in this linearity in our languages and in our minds (nota bene: most often not even in our speech), and neither are they present in a two-dimensional plane that result from breaking up the lines. The majority of words are multi-layered (i.e. they do not move within a single plane), and their interactions arrange these layers into usual or unexpected configurations, especially when, taking associative leaps, we skip or conceal the discursive-logical gaps of our trains of thought. \*\*\*

**Tolerance limit:** this word is a compound and its analysis is not too difficult since it is made up of two nouns: tolerance and limit. The first noun is formed from the verb 'tolerate' and denotes the state or attitude which something or somebody goes through, or what they have to put on/force on themselves when they have to endure a (more typically negative) impact, either internal or external. We tolerate pain, we tolerate being pestered, and similarly, materials also tolerate (up to a certain point) the work that is done to them. "Up to a certain point" applies not only to (both rigid and elastic) substances but also to (highly resistant or extremely fragile) people too – and that is exactly where the limit is. The limit, which in this context, is a point or linear entity, while in other uses it works more like a zone (border zone, i.e. a transition) or sometimes as a surface (in the sense of an enclosing form). Viewed from this perspective, the tolerance limit not only denotes what something or somebody can still endure but also what/who they show themselves to be as a result – how much more can it/he/she take? – what they present through their form(edness) that is perceptible to the outside world.

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