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Design Citizen: A Design Pedagogy for the Contemporary Context

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Introduction

In 1996, Paul Rand designed his last logo. The logo, created for the Texas-based Enron Corporation, was a seemingly appropriate end to the designer's prolific career. A capital letter "E" was simply tilted at a 45-degree angle and set in three bold colors; it fit neatly into Rand's greater body of reductive, Modernist work. However, by 2002, the tilted "E" was dubbed the "crooked E." Six years after Rand designed Enron's logo, the company's deceptive financial practices became public knowledge and Rand's final contribution to the design discipline became synonymous with corporate corruption.[1]

The "crooked E" prompted the design community to reconsider its relationship to power, responsibility to the public, and ultimately its ethical code. These reflections occurred at the change of the century as new thinkers were increasingly critical of the Modernist design ideology held by individuals like Rand. Modernism brought its own set of philosophical assumptions, namely, that design can be neutral, separate from the values and ideas that it serves.[2] To critics of Modernist thought, the infamy of the Enron logo evidenced the naivety of this belief—design can unwittingly (and perhaps intentionally) be leveraged for nefarious ends. Therefore, the designer at work can never be neutral, and their labor can never be separated from the ends that it serves.

Implicit in this critique of Modernism is the notion that the designer is in some capacity responsible for how their work interacts with the world. It is sobering to recognize that all designers, like Rand and his work for Enron, have the capacity to bolster morally bankrupt

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[1] Stephen J. Eskilson, *Graphic Design: A New History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 303.

[2] Katherine McCoy, "Countering the Tradition of the Apolitical Designer," in *Looking Closer 2: Critical Writings on Graphic Design*, eds. Michael Bierut, Willian Drentell, Steven Heller, and DK Holland (New York City: Allworth Press, 1997), 212–218.

institutions and ideologies. In simpler terms, design has the potential to harm. This begs the question: how do designers learn to practice their craft responsibly? Where can designers learn how to be responsible citizens and stewards of their discipline?

My conviction is that the classroom provides the ideal training ground for young designers to engage with and practice design responsibility. However, dialogues concerning the ethics of design practice are often absent from the academy. Rather, many collegiate design courses continue to teach and practice antiquated and decontextualized pedagogical methods rooted in Modernist perspectives—the same perspectives that birthed the "crooked E."

In his essay, "Putting Modernism All Over the Map: The Bauhaus and Weimar Politics," design scholar J. Dakota Brown argues that the German Bauhaus proliferated insular notions of a decontextualized, universal design.[3] Professor and scholar Meredith Davis argues that these ideas seeped into collegiate design education, stating that most contemporary design programs fashion themselves in the likeness of the Bauhaus. Assuming this approach, students' design solutions become primarily abstract, formal exercises divorced from their contexts and ramifications.[4] The fractured matrimony of design and context has many implications regarding the academy's effectiveness in producing responsible designers—none of which are positive.

It is here that one sees the crux of the problem at hand. If the standard collegiate design curriculum does not prepare students to engage with their vocation in a contextualized manner, how can the student be expected to operate responsibly in a professional setting? Who or what will prompt the designer to consider their own ethical framework? What safeguards are in place

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[3] J. Dakota Brown, "Putting Modernism All Over the Map: The Bauhaus and Weimar Politics," in *After the Bauhaus, Before the Internet: A History of Graphic Design Pedagogy* (No Place Press, 2022), 60.

[4] Meredith Davis, *Teaching Design: A Guide to Curriculum and Pedagogy for College Design Faculty and Teachers Who Use Design in Their Classroom* (New York City: Allworth Press, 2017), 30.

to prevent the next "crooked E" incident? My thesis project will engage questions like these as it considers the role of education in preparing responsible designers.

In both the written and visual components of my thesis, I will argue that a robust design curriculum for the contemporary context should broaden student's understanding of how design interacts with the world and what design can be. Namely, this pedagogy will create responsible citizen designers by encouraging students to consider the civic and ecological impacts of their work while simultaneously exposing students to diverse perspectives. Before furthering my argument or suggesting specific remedies for the pedagogical dilemma at hand, it is necessary to first consider the histories of art and design education.

The Pedagogy of the Bauhaus

Contemporary design pedagogy, like most pedagogies, did not spawn ex nihilo. It was not the overnight invention of an individual or the scrupulously researched strategy of an academic think tank. Rather, it is the culmination of design practice and education from the last several centuries—a complex story with many histories and characters. A proper understanding of contemporary design education requires familiarity with one of these characters in particular, the German Bauhaus.

Frustrated with the perceived artistic conservatism of his previous institution, architect Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus in 1919. Gropius envisioned his new school as a vanguard of artistic expression and craft—a place where various disciplines would unite to produce revolutionary work. In its brief 14-year existence, the Bauhaus accomplished just this.[5] Gropius' school would craft some of the most pioneering work of its time and become a source of inspiration for designers and educators for decades to come.

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[5] Davis, *Teaching Design*, 20–28.

The sweeping influence of the Bauhaus school is difficult to overstate. In his article, "Bauhaus: Design or Dogma?," British author Hugh Aldersey-Williams contends that it was the most significant design movement of the last 100 years. He traces the pervasiveness of familiar designs like flat-roofed buildings, Braun appliances, and even the typeface Helvetica back to the German school.[6] Moreover, the Bauhaus is cited as a primary inspiration for the aforementioned design legend, Paul Rand.[7] This begs the question, what exactly was taught at Gropius' school? What makes the Bauhaus, the Bauhaus?

In their book, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, authors Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis show that a defining aspect of the Bauhaus' pedagogy was its emphasis on the formal and material principles of design. This elemental pedagogy was implemented through a series of foundational courses known as the "Vorkurs." Created by professor Johannes Itten, Vorkurs courses involved rigorous master studies and visual analyses—all with the chief aim of refining the students' understanding of basic design principles.[8] These elemental classes soon became synonymous with the Bauhaus itself. A brief glance at the school's curriculum shows exactly this—every class offering involved the focused study of a design principle or specific medium (fig. 1). These courses were the backbone of the school, and their ubiquity was central to the identity of the Bauhaus. However, these elemental classes did more than just define the school, they also foreshadowed its evolution.

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[6] Hugh Aldersey-Williams, "Bauhaus: Design or Dogma?," *New Statesman* 129, no. 4473 (2000): 41, accessed on September 14, 2023, https://eds-s-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=26&sid=2dd27229-7b59-42d2-8f1d-1a36e3c1faba%40redis.

[7] Steven Heller, *Paul Rand* (London: Phaidon Press, 1999), 17.

[8] Philip Meggs and Alston Purvis, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2016), 346.

In 1923, after only a few brief years in the academy, Johannes Itten would leave the Bauhaus. The school was evolving in ways that he found unsavory. Namely, Gropius was pushing the school in the direction of rationalism, objectivity, and singularity.[9] The Bauhaus' elemental emphasis, originally established by Itten, was reaching its logical conclusion. No longer were Gropius and his faculty merely encouraging their students to master the principles of design. Instead, they were searching for the ultimate form—a new visual language that transcended time and personal taste, a universal form.

The search for universal form is another distinctive feature of the Bauhaus' artistic philosophy. This quest for universality is most pronounced in the typographic work emanating from the school throughout the 1920s. In 1923, professor Herbert Bayer began a lettering project with the goal of achieving absolute clarity of communication. The project became a lettering system aptly named "Universal" (fig. 2). Completed in 1925, Bayer eschewed most historic typographic traditions along the way. Universal's glyphs were based on raw geometry—the "o" was a perfect circle, and the "n" became a square with a rounded shoulder. Additionally, all capital letters were omitted for ease of communication.[10] In Bayer's mind, this radical subversion of typographic convention was not a self-indulgent experiment. These 26 lowercase characters were his attempt at a new, universal form of design.

To be truly universal, Bayer believed that his glyphs should avoid association with the two dominant typographic styles in Europe: Blackletter and Roman. Blackletter, with its ornamental forms and swashes, was emblematic of German patriotism. The more legible Roman styles were associated with their western rival, France.[11] Bayer's refusal to participate in these

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[9] Meggs and Purvis, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, 346–347.

[10] Eskilson, *Graphic Design: A New History*, 222–223.

[11] Ibid., 221–222.

traditions allowed him to produce a system of glyphs that, in his mind, were without cultural baggage. They could be read without pretense; they could be neutral. To Bayer, the letters of Universal were something new, something objective, something truly universal.

In Bayer's lettering, one clearly sees a defining characteristic of the Bauhaus: the desire to create universal form. This goal was preceded by the school's other defining characteristic—an emphasis on the study of form and material. The sum of these qualities defines Bauhausian pedagogy. They are in fact what makes the Bauhaus, the Bauhaus.

It is worth noting that these distinct philosophies did not live and die inside the walls of the school. As tensions rose in Europe and the Nazi party gained footing in Germany, many prominent figures in the Bauhaus fled to the United States of America. In her book *Teaching Design*, design scholar Meredith Davis explains that these figures implemented Bauhausian styles of pedagogy in prestigious American universities like Harvard and Yale. Although the original Bauhaus school had now closed, its key figures were alive and well. Walter Gropius, Hebert Bayer, Josef Albers, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and more were busy ensuring that their ideas concerning design education would outlive them in classrooms for generations to come.[12]

Bauhausian Influence in Contemporary Classrooms

As semesters became years and years became decades, Bauhausian pedagogical ideas became fixtures in collegiate departments of art and design across the United States. Few are more equipped to account for this than design professor and author Hin Bredendieck. A former student of the Bauhaus, he immigrated to the United States in 1937 and began teaching design fundamentals in Chicago. In his article, "The Legacy of the Bauhaus," Bredendieck contends that the school's pedagogy has achieved a level of "inert acceptance" in design curriculum—it is now

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[12] Davis, *Teaching Design*, 28–31.

regarded as the default approach to teaching design.[13] Interestingly, Bredendieck does not find the ubiquity of his Bauhausian heritage to be particularly beneficial for contemporary design education. In fact, he goes on to highlight several pertinent critiques of his alma matter.

Throughout the rest of the article, Bredendieck expresses concerns about the relevance of this pedagogy for the contemporary context. He argues that although the aforementioned emphases of the Bauhaus were relevant for the early twentieth century, today's designer has fundamentally different needs.[14] Bredendieck believes that the student designer should also be trained to engage with the intellectual and theoretical aspects of the discipline. In other words, the education of a designer should supersede the mere creation of beautiful form and mastery of materials, it should also engender a concern for the world in which they inhabit.[15] In this argument, one sees the primary critique of the Bauhaus: design is fundamentally more than just mastery of visual principles and materials.

Considering the German school's sweeping influence, this argument should raise urgent concerns regarding the efficacy of today's design education. Is heavy emphasis on form and material relevant for design education today? Can design, like Herbert Bayer believed, be truly universal? And the most pressing question: what should be taught in collegiate design curriculum? To begin to answer these questions, one only needs to look at design education in Germany a brief twelve years after the end of the Bauhaus.

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[13] Hin Bredendieck, "The Legacy of the Bauhaus," *Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (Autumn, 1962): 15, accessed on September 14, 2023, https://www-jstor-org.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/stable/774604.

[14] Ibid., 19–20.

[15] Ibid., 19–21.

An Answer in Ulm

In 1955, the Hochschule für Gestaltung (The Ulm School of Design) was founded in Ulm, Germany. Originally conceived by designers Inge Scholl, Otl Aicher, and Max Bill, it serviced a wide range of creative people from architects to cinematographers to graphic designers. Unlike the Bauhaus or other design schools of its time, the unique characteristic of the Ulm school was its focus on the social responsibility of the designer. In his book *Ulm Design: The Morality of Objects*, editor Herbert Lindinger shows that the chief aim of the school was to train designers that were not only professionally competent, but socially critical.[16] Lindinger points out the institutional emphasis on design theory and even prototypical thought on the relationship between design and ecology.[17] Details like these highlight the pedagogical divide between the Ulm School and its predecessor, the Bauhaus.

These differences are further accentuated when analyzing Ulm's foundational curriculum which consisted of "general basic concepts of design together with theoretical and scientific knowledge."[18] Despite their shared German heritage and proximity in history, the Bauhaus primarily emphasized formal excellence while the Ulm School also considered the responsibility of the designer. In fact, in her book *Teaching Design*, Meredith Davis recounts that the Ulm School was wary of form and aesthetics—they believed that an over-emphasis on the visual could lead to compromised social values.[19] This massive departure from the Bauhaus became a prophetic statement from the Ulm School.

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[16] Herbert Lindinger, Egon Chemaitis, Michael Erlhoff, Sibille Riemann, Helmut Staubach, *Ulm Design: The Morality of Objects*, ed. Herbert Lindinger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 9–20.

[17] Ibid., 12.

[18] Ibid., 33.

[19] Davis, *Teaching Design*, 35.

In an age defined by their predecessor, Ulm understood that design was more than the creation of visual form. They saw that the work of designers has ramifications, and because of this, designers should be trained responsibly. As argued earlier by Hin Bredendieck, a shift away from Bauhausian pedagogy is needed, and I believe that the Ulm School of Design can help today's educators imagine a more effective way to teach design. Taking after their philosophy of social responsibility, I believe that a contemporary pedagogy for design should emphasize the civic and ecological responsibility of the designers while simultaneously exposing students to diverse perspectives on design.

The Designer and Civic Responsibility

The civic responsibility of the designer was central to the Ulm School of Design. In her article "Design is Not a Science: Otl Aicher's Constitutional Putsch at the HfG and His Credo for the Social Responsibility of Designers," author Réne Spitz shows that Ulm's co-founder Otl Aicher believed that design was not a morally neutral activity.[20] In American graphic design, few understood Aicher's conviction better than Milton Glaser. A contemporary of Aicher and his Ulm school, Glaser rose to prominence through iconic works such as the "I Heart New York" logo and psychedelic Bob Dylan poster. However, Glaser was more than just a technically skilled designer—he also was a shrewd analyst of the design discipline and advocate for the civic responsibility of the designer.

In a 2003 interview with Jonathan Barnbrook of *Creative Review* magazine, Milton Glaser comments extensively on this topic. Glaser begins by reminding designers that they "are

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[20] René Spitz, "Design is Not a Science: Otl Aicher's Constitutional Putsch at the HfG Ulm and His Credo for the Social Responsibility of Designers," *Design Issues* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 14, accessed September 28, 2023, https://eds-s-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=20&sid=2dd27229-7b59-42d2-8f1d-1a36e3c1faba%40redis.

essentially a salesman for an institution or a client."[21] With this in mind, designers bear a certain responsibility to "sell" products and ideas that they believe to be ethically sound. Furthering this argument, Glaser warns that simply taking orders and following directions from clients is not an effective way to design responsibly in the civic sphere.[22] In fact, designers must deeply consider the effects of their own work—they would be irresponsible not to.

Fortunately, Glaser left the designers who would succeed him with a framework for considering such subjects. Among his most famous written works, Glaser's "Road to Hell" is a series of twelve thought-provoking prompts that encourage designers to consider the ethics of their craft (fig. 3). With each prompt, the moral stakes at hand increase. From the initial prompt: "Designing a package to look bigger on the shelf" to the twelfth: "Designing an ad for a product whose frequent use could result in the user's death," designers are exhorted to consider their own moral framework as it relates to their profession.[23]

To Glaser, this act of considering one's moral framework is a noble gesture of civic responsibility. In his own words "being a good designer is no different from being a good citizen."[24] Collegiate design educators would do well to implement exercises that encourage this level of good citizenship in student designers. Considering one's ethical boundaries would be a fruitful activity to have conducted before entering professional life. That being said, effective citizenship can involve more than just what one refuses to participate in—a robust understanding of citizenship also includes proactive action.

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[21] Milton Glaser, "Just How Personal Should Graphic Design Get? How Political Can or Should a Designer Be? What Kind of Responsibilities Do They Have in These Difficult Times?," interview by Jonathan Barnbrook, *Creative Review* 23, no. 12 (Dec. 2003): 53, accessed September 28, 2023, https://eds-s-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=23&sid=2dd27229-7b59-42d2-8f1d-1a36e3c1faba%40redis.

[22] Ibid., 53.

[23] Ibid., 56.

[24] Ibid., 56.

A monumental call to active civic responsibility came in 1963 through the "First Things First" manifesto written by British designer Ken Garland (fig 4.). Signed by 21 of his contemporaries, the document criticizes design's tendency to be reduced to commercial endeavors.[25] Garland does not wholesale anathematize advertising, but he is wary of its tendency to distract designers from civically minded endeavors like public wayfinding, education, the arts, sciences, and beyond.[26] As opposed to Glaser's reactionary approach to civic responsibility, Garland's philosophy actively pursues socially beneficial design work. In his own words, Garland labels this as a "reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication."[27]

Garland's call to a reversal of priorities reverberated throughout the global design community over the coming decades. The "First Things First" manifesto would be continuously revised, updated, and printed in design publications like *Adbusters*, *Émigré*, *AIGA Journal*, and beyond. Most recently, the article was re-published online in 2020 with explicit calls to engage contemporary issues such as climate change, colonization, and general exploitation of human life.[28] Keenly aware of this document, design educators around the world are reversing their pedagogical priorities to mentor a new generation of civically minded design citizens.

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[25] From its conception, some designers have been critical of Garland's "First Things First" manifesto. Most critics argue that the document is sermonic, overly-idealistic, and fails to recognize the realities of "normal" designers trying to make an earnest living. These criticisms are not to be taken lightly and Garland's manifesto is certainly not above reproach. However, it is my conviction that if there is a place to be idealistic, it is the classroom. Here, students can use their nascent years in the design profession to experiment and develop their own ideas about design responsibility.

[26] Rick Poynor, "The Evolving Legacy of Ken Garland's First Things First Manifesto," AIGA Eye on Design, AIGA, August 12, 2021, accessed on September 28, 2023, https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/why-ken-garlands-first-things-first-manifesto-keeps-getting-updated/.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

A particularly compelling example of this work is Woodbury University in California. In a true "First Things First" fashion, Woodbury's faculty made "significant changes" in the curriculum to integrate dialogue related to design responsibility throughout each level of the program.[29] From first year students to graduating seniors, conversations regarding civic responsibility are incorporated in every class. While freshmen take on projects related to non-profit design, seniors undertake a year-long, theory-based capstone project immersing themselves in a particular social issue of their choosing. As opposed to simply discerning what commercial jobs will not violate a personal code of ethics, Woodbury's students are taught to create work that actively engages the social ills of contemporary life.[30]

Compare this socially engaged approach with the aforementioned "Vorkurs" courses of the German Bauhaus—the contrast is jarring. The latter teaches design as a primarily formal exercise, void of context and civic ramifications. Woodbury's method does the opposite. Firmly contextualized, Woodbury students not only understand the formal principles of design, they also have experienced that design can be leveraged for good. Knowing this, these students graduate prepared to engage their civic responsibility as a designer. Surely this represents a "reversal of priorities" in design education that would make Ken Garland proud.

This pedagogical emphasis on the civic responsibility of the designer is a massive step forward in departing from the antiquated and all-too-pervasive pedagogical methods of the German Bauhaus. That being said, collegiate design curriculum can still further prepare students

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[29] Sue Vessella and Behnoush McKay, "A Case Study of an Innovative Graphic Design Curriculum Focusing on Social Responsibility," *Design Principles and Practices: An International Journal* 2, no. 5 (2011): 473, accessed on September 28, 2023, https://eds-s-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=16&sid=2dd27229-7b59-42d2-8f1d-1a36e3c1faba%40redis.

[30] Ibid., 474–482.

to be good citizens in their craft. By encouraging ecological responsibility in their classrooms, contemporary design educators can help shape conscientious design citizens.

The Designer and Sustainability

A brief glance at history reveals that the Ulm School of Design understood that conscientious design citizens need to consider the ecological impact of their craft. In the book *Ulm Design: The Morality of Objects*, editor Herbert Lindinger draws attention to the school's addition of ecological themes and theory into foundational courses.[31] This approach to design education was radical and utterly prophetic for the mid-twentieth century. Coming off the heels of the Bauhaus, any mention of the ramifications of design practice was countercultural. In the current effort to create responsible design citizens, educators should emulate these countercultural instincts of the Ulm School and consider the ramifications of design, specifically as it relates to sustainability.

To be sure, engaging questions related to sustainability is not an easy task. However, in her article "Towards a More Sustainable Graphic Design Philosophy," author Lisa M. Graham offers encouragement for educators facing this daunting challenge. Graham contends that designers are already well-equipped to engage the sustainability question. Problem solvers by trade, designers should view the topic as just another conceptual problem in need of an elegant solution.[32] To Graham, the solution requires "changing the basic mindset of graphic design from style-and-message maker to 'agent of change.'"[33] In other words, design becomes less about

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[31] Lindinger, *Ulm Design*, 12.

[32] Lisa Graham, "Towards a More Sustainable Graphic Design Philosophy," *The International Journal of the Arts in Society* 6, no. 5 (2012): 175, accessed on October 17, 2023, https://eds-s-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=9&sid=42dd0ad0-1192-4fbb-a480-c3adf6d40df5%40redis.

[33] Ibid., 173.

"making things pretty" and more about approaching the discipline with a proactive, critical

paradigm.

In her article, "Sustainable Communication Design Principles," author Maria Cadarso

agrees almost verbatim to Graham's proactive philosophy. Toward the end of the article,

Cadarso provides an informative list of sixteen principles for practicing sustainable design.

Principle nine reads: "Designers can contribute to fundamental improvements in human well-

being and be developing solutions that lead to a more sustainable future. Designers can be agents

of change, and also inspire change among peers and community."[34] This robust, proactive

approach advocated for by both Maria Cadarso and Lisa M. Graham is in stark contrast to the

typical method of teaching design responsibility. In her aforementioned article, Graham notes

that green design is too often oversimplified, becoming synonymous with non-toxic ink and

recyclable paper.[35] While there is certainly nothing wrong with approaching materials and

production with ample consideration (in fact, Cadarso lists this as principle number 15),[36] this

alone is not the wholistic answer that the sustainability question demands.

So, what are actionable ways this wholistic view of ecological responsibility can be

encouraged and practiced in classrooms? Long-time design educator Peter Claver Fine is happy

to answer that question. In his book, *Sustainable Graphic Design: Principles and Practices*, Fine

proposes several tips to create an effective pedagogy of design sustainability. Firstly, he believes

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[34] Maria Cadarso, "Sustainable Communication Design Principles – 2.0 Version," *Procedia Manufacturing* 3, (2015): 5998, accessed on October 17, 2023, https://resolver-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/openurl?sid=EBSCO%3aedselp&genre=article&issn=23519789&ISBN=&volume=3&issue=&date=20150101&spage=5993&pages=5993-6000&title=Procedia+Manufacturing&atitle=Sustainable+Communication+Design+Principles+-+2.0+Version&aulast=Cadarso%2c+Maria&id=DOI%3a10.1016%2fj.promfg.2015.07.700&site=ftf-live.

[35] Graham, "Towards a More Sustainable Graphic Design Philosophy," 173.

[36] Cadarso, "Sustainable Communication Design Principles," 5998.

that thorough research is the cornerstone for this type of work. By conducting intensive research, student designers begin to understand the larger framework they exist and create work in.[37] This process affords the designer with the opportunity to gain the wholistic perspective necessary to become an "agent of change" for sustainability issues.

As Fine develops this argument, he also encourages educators to create curriculum that removes students from the classroom. To Fine, this is not a novel attempt to make the demands of design school more engaging. By removing students from the familiar comforts of the classroom and placing them in the public spaces their designs will live, students are again encouraged to consider the ramifications of their work.[38] The ecological impacts of their designs leave the abstract and become concrete realities. In his own words, "Sitting work outside the class makes tangible not only immediate environmental concerns, but also the traditional strength of design, one that connects design with people and place."[39] Here, outside of the classroom or studio, students not only learn, but most fully experience the direct connection between the work they make and the world around them.

Woodbury University's aforementioned program for graphic design understands the importance of students experiencing this connection and has designed curriculum to prioritize it. For example, in 2007, third-year students created a visual identity for the school's "Sustainable Campus Task Force." Taking after Peter Claver Fine's guidance, the students conducted ample research and left the classroom as they surveyed peers from around the university's larger community. The collected data influenced the branding of an organization seeking to implement

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[37] Peter Claver Fine, *Sustainable Graphic Design: Principles & Practices* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 111.

[38] Fine, *Sustainable Graphic Design*, 112

[39] Ibid., 112.

ecologically-friendly policies and purvey environmental awareness on campus.[40] This exemplary

project not only offered the students a chance to produce identity work for a portfolio, it granted

a tangible opportunity to be "agents of change" on their campus—a win for everyone.

Projects like this one from Woodbury University can set the tone for educators seeking to

teach design sustainability. Ultimately, this kind of work encourages students to see themselves

and their output as a part of a framework much larger than themselves. This same principle is

applicable to conversations related to the third and final aspect of effective design citizenship—

the inclusion of diverse perspectives.

The Designer and Diversity

Like teaching design sustainability, diversifying design education requires an

understanding that the design discipline is much larger than the self and its immediate context.

The Ulm School's emphasis on the role of design in the civic and ecological spheres of society

began to reveal this. Through their revolutionary pedagogy, they underscored design's important

role in creating and connecting the world at large. The responsible design citizen desires to see

this same principle applied to contemporary issues like diversity—they strive to include a

multitude of cultures and traditions within design education and practice. While this is certainly a

noble goal, statistics from the field reveal how difficult the task of inclusion has been for the

design discipline.

In 1991, the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) reported that graphic design was

93% White.[41] Although this percentage has decreased significantly since then (data from AIGA's

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[40] Vessella, "A Case Study of an Innovative Graphic Design Curriculum Focusing on Social Responsibility," 479.

[41] "Why is Design 93% White?," AIGA.org, AIGA, 1991, accessed on October 24, 2023, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.aiga.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Why-is-Graphic-Design-93-White.pdf.

2021 "Design POV" reports this number to be around 80%),[42] it can still be argued that lack of racial representation among professional designers is an issue. It is an issue that affects more than just professional practice—it seeps into collegiate classrooms as well.

In her seminal essay "Searching for a Black Aesthetic in American Graphic Design," author Sylvia Harris argues that this lack of diversity has marginalized Black students in the design discipline. In her own words:

> "They experience a problem common to many Black design professionals: the feeling that they are not completely welcome in the profession. Lack of exposure to the prevailing aesthetic traditions also puts them at a disadvantage. This outsider posture leads many Black designers to compulsively imitate and assimilate mainstream aesthetic traditions in order to feel accepted and be successful."[43]

While Harris is speaking specifically from a Black perspective here, this principle is easily applicable to the experience of other minority students in design. The inclusion of all these people groups is an essential part of design citizenship, so how can design educators responsibly engage this daunting issue?[44]

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[42] "Design POV: An In-Depth Look at the Industry Now," AIGA.org, AIGA, 2021, accessed on October 24, 2023, https://www.aiga.org/aiga-design-pov-reports.

[43] Sylvia Harris, "Searching for a Black Aesthetic in American Graphic Design," in *The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression, & Reflections*, ed. Carolina Russomanno (New York, Allworth Press, 2022), 27.

[44] Like most questions related to design responsibility, easy answers are difficult to come by. When considering my own identity and perspective, the difficulty only compounds—I design, teach, and write from the perspective of a White male. This means that there will be much that I do not (and cannot) understand about the experience of others. With that in mind, most of my arguments in this section will heavily draw on the work of others with more proximity to these issues.

One of the most convincing answers to this question comes from designer and educator Maurice Woods. In an interview with Anne H. Berry featured in the book *The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression, & Reflection*, Woods contends that the narratives of design history have been so heavily influenced by Western/European perspectives that other voices have been excluded. To remedy this, Woods suggests that educators "focus time on history and the significant contributions many of our marginalized forebears have made to the design industry."[45] By highlighting the work of non-European designers in the classroom, Woods exposes his students to designers and work with which they might share a common cultural heritage or experience. In doing this, he is actively combating the very "outsider posture" that Sylvia Harris warned about in her aforementioned essay.[46]

It is encouraging to consider that Maurice Woods is not the only design educator engaging issues of diversity and inclusion in this same way. Nida Abdullah, Assistant Professor of Communication Design at Pratt Institute, is also critical of the Euro-centric lens through which design is often taught. In an interview with Kelly Walters featured in the book *Black, Brown, + Latinx Design Educators* she states: "I'm not saying we get rid of Bauhaus, I'm saying, 'What's the alternative?' It's being able to accept multiple ways of seeing, or doing, or making. This is still 'good' design."[47] Like Woods, Abdullah's "multiple ways of seeing" emphasizes the importance of promoting a variety of diverse perspectives on design in the classroom. Their argument can venture beyond simply discussing a variety of designers and

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[45] Maurice Woods, "In Conversation: Maurice Woods & Anne H. Berry on Meeting the Demands of the Future," in *The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression, & Reflection*, ed. Caroline Russomanno (New York: Allworth Press, 2022), 125.

[46] Harris, "Searching for a Black Aesthetic," 27.

[47] Nida Abdullah and Kelly Walters, "Nida Abdullah," in *Black, Brown & Latinx Design Educators*, ed. Abby Bussel (Hudson, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2021), 59–60

design objects—it can also emphasize the need for diversity among those teaching and leading these spaces.

In the aforementioned book, *Black, Brown, + Latinx Design Educators*, Samuel Romero speaks candidly about the importance of diversity amongst design educators. When considering the challenges minority students studying design face Romero states, "I think the main challenge is the idea that they don't feel like they belong there. There are very valid reasons that students feel isolated. Sometimes it's because they don't see people like themselves in the classroom, on campus, or in the faculty."[48] In the same book, design educator Ramon Tejada writes, "I need to see Black and Brown people in classes, in studios, in the spaces, in the books, in the reading list, in the syllabi…everywhere."[49] In these statements Romero and Tejada make themselves very clear—curriculum matters, and so does the one teaching it.

While it is true that educators have no control over their own race and limited control over the complexities of their department's hiring processes, there are still tangible ways they can heed Romero and Tejada's advice. By inviting guest speakers from a variety of races and perspectives to their classrooms, educators cast a relatable vision of success for their students. Of course, design educators cannot be all things to all their students, but they can begin to address the diversity issue by platforming a wide range of voices in their classrooms. Small steps like these cumulate and shape the next generation of design citizens that will tell the story of design more accurately and responsibly.

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[48] Samuel Romero and Kelly Walters, "Samuel Romero," in *Black, Brown & Latinx Design Educators*, ed. Abby Bussel (Hudson, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2021), 43.

[49] Ramon Tejada and Kelly Walters, "Ramon Tejada," in *Black, Brown & Latinx Design Educators*, ed. Abby Bussel (Hudson, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2021), 130.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the shaping of the next generation of responsible design citizens is the motivation behind this project. This next generation currently sits as undergraduate students in classrooms around the world. How and what they are taught influences the trajectory of not only the discipline, but the wellbeing of their neighbors and planet. Should design education continue solely in the decontextualized, formal tradition of the Bauhaus and other Modernist movements, the potential that design has to positively influence the world risks being compromised or wasted altogether.

In her article "A Design Core for the Twenty-First Century," author Andrea Marks comments on this subject, writing: "When the Bauhaus began in 1919, its structure and curriculum was progressive. Walter Gropius and his colleagues understood the need for change in how art and design were taught in response to the cultural, social, and economic context of the time. Today's design programs need to also respond to significant changes."[50]Throughout this paper, I have agreed with Marks, contending for a design pedagogy that looks beyond the Bauhaus and responds to the "significant changes" of the contemporary context. In referencing the successor of the Bauhaus, the Ulm School of Design, I have argued that these significant changes can be addressed through a pedagogy that encourages students to consider the civic and ecological impacts of their work while simultaneously exposing them to diverse perspectives on design. If executed correctly, this pedagogy can broaden students' understanding of design and the world in which it lives. In simpler terms, it has the ability to equip the design students of today to be the responsible design citizens of tomorrow.

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[50] Andrea Marks, "A Design Core for the Twenty-First Century," in *The Education of a Graphic Designer*, ed. Steven Heller (New York, NY: Allworth Press, 2015), 19.

Visual Outcome

For the visual outcome of my research, I created a resource for those actively working to create the "responsible design citizens of tomorrow"—design educators. Bearing the same name as this paper, *Design Citizen* is an edited collection of interviews[51] I conducted with designers and educators working at the vanguard of design ethics. Each featured interview contains actionable advice for educators seeking to broaden their students' understanding of design responsibility. However, this collection of interviews is more than just an educational tool. Screen printed and assembled by hand, the artifact itself is a compelling art book filled with conceptually rich imagery and design decisions.

One of the first design decisions that viewers will observe is the repeated use of deconstructed Grotesque typography. Synonymous with Modernism, Grotesque typography is sliced, split, and fragmented to reference the need for contemporary design pedagogy to separate itself from the assumptions of Modernism. Throughout the book this conceptual type treatment is often paired with dynamic, collage-style illustrations.

Like the aforementioned type treatment, these collages are also infused with conceptual significance. Since the *Design Citizen* project encourages designers to consider how their work effects both people and the planet, all the collaged imagery is explicitly human. Hands, feet, eyes, the globe, etc.—these visuals speak to the humanity inherent in design practice. Additionally, many of these collages feature the repeated use of arrows which reminds viewers that design is never practiced in a vacuum.

These aesthetic foundations established in the screen printed book are furthered through the interactive portion of my thesis exhibition—the "deconstruction walls." Measuring around

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[51] Full interview transcripts are included in the following section.

six feet long and five feet tall, these typographic installations maintain a strong presence in the center of the gallery space. During the exhibition viewers are invited to come forward and remove a sheet of paper from the large "sticky notes" on the walls. As viewers remove sheets of paper, the original message is obscured, fragmented, and ultimately, deconstructed. Not only does this interactive installation reference the deconstructed type found in the book, it allows viewers to actively participate in the process of deconstructing traditional design pedagogy.

Through these deconstruction walls and the screen printed book, I have created a visual outcome that not only supports, but furthers my written work. The deconstruction walls provide viewers with a memorable, interactive experience while the book offers design educators a practical guide for creating effective contemporary classrooms. In the future I hope to expand on this work by continuing to develop the *Design Citizen* book.

In fact, the book is purposefully designed to be editable. Resembling a folder, its very nature is dynamic—content can be added and edited with ease. This simple design decision anticipates that new challenges in design ethics will arise and the notion of the "design citizen" is ever-evolving. However, this same decision also ensures that no matter what the future holds for the design discipline, my research will be ready to foster the responsible designers of tomorrow.

Interviews

Tré Seals

- **How did you come to care about issues related to justice and diversity in design?**

  I subconsciously became aware of what diversity is when I first got to college. Because from kindergarten through 12th grade, excluding two years, my classes were always diverse. All of the students were from different backgrounds, different races, different ethnicities, and international culture was studied. It wasn't until I got to college that I realized that this experience was not normal. And as I moved through the semesters, my classrooms became less diverse. And when I finally entered the professional world, I was the only person of color in the room. Sometimes, there were one or two others (from the perspective of completing nine full-time positions as a temp). It didn't take long to realize that this was not simply an industry issue, but this lack of diversity was widespread. After going to the office and creating what I considered pretty meaningless work without being able to be myself because no one wanted to understand me, I needed an outlet to express the parts of me that I felt I had to hide. Vocal Type became that outlet.

- **How can college classrooms today more effectively engage topics related to design justice and inclusion?**

  It starts with the design curriculum. Whether art history or design history, my education started with Swiss, English, Russian, and German design aesthetics. Before we can effectively engage in topics related to design justice and inclusion, we must first learn about the cultures affected by these topics.

- **What can design educators do to create a more inclusive classroom?**

  I don't have a specific answer for that. However, I can tell you of the one professor I had who fostered a truly inclusive classroom. Her name is Andrea Pippins. On the first day of class, she showed us her Black culture-inspired illustrations and identity work. It was because of this that I learned that I no longer had to separate my love for design from my identity. I never knew that that was okay. Because I never knew there was such a thing as a successful Black designer. And because I never knew this before, I was taught to believe that to be a successful designer, I had to conform to European aesthetics and hide most of who I am.

- **What are some traits of a socially responsible designer?**

  Tenacity and patience tie for number one. It took four years, a pandemic, and the police killing of George Floyd for most designers to look for what I was doing (Vocal Type), or even care about it. Just because an issue is important to you doesn't mean it's important to everyone else at that moment. You have to keep doing the work and wait for your moment. But if you can, make your moment.

- **What advice would you give to young designers trying to use design in an ethically sound manner?**

  Do your research. Whether that's researching your client, their practices, researching the communities impacted by your work, or sustainable production methods, research is key.

- **What advice would you give to young designers seeking to use their craft as a *proactive* force for good in the world around them?**

  Be proud of yourself. This isn't easy work. It won't always be rewarding, but it is

fulfilling. Align yourself with people who are also proactive forces for good. And figure out what good means for you, and know that your definition can change with you.

- **What are some must-read resources for young designers thinking about inclusion and justice in design?**
    - Read anything by Mike Monteiro.
    - *Extra Bold: A Feminist, Inclusive, Anti-Racist, Nonbinary Field Guide for Graphic Designers* By Ellen Lupton, Farah Kafei, Jennifer Tobias, Josh A. Halstead, Kaleena Sales, Leslie Xia, Valentina Vergara
    - *Design Emergency: Building a Better Future* by Alice Rawsthorn and Paola Antonelli
    - *Design Social Change: Take Action, Work toward Equity, and Challenge the Status Quo* by Lesley-Ann Noel and Stanford d.school
    - *The Aesthetics of Ambiguity: Understanding and Addressing Monoculture*
    - *Aesthetic Justice: Intersecting Artistic and Moral Perspectives*
    - *Visual Research: An Introduction to Research Methods in Graphic Design*
    - *Good: An Introduction to Ethics in Graphic Design* by Lucienne Roberts
    - *Strikethrough: Typographic Messages of Protest*

Anne H. Berry

- **Tell me a bit about your design and/or teaching practice — what do you do?**
    As a faculty member at Cleveland State University (CSU), my work revolves around three areas: research, teaching, and service. This means that in addition to being an educator, I am engaged in my own creative/research practice and serve on committees at

CSU as well as within national organizations such as AIGA, the Professional Association for Design and the College Art Association (CAA). (I'm currently finishing up my term as president of AIGA Cleveland and my term on the CAA's Committee on Diversity Practices.)

I enjoy working with students, which keeps me on my toes, but am equally grateful for opportunities to pursue projects like The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression, and Reflection, and Ongoing Matter: Democracy, Design, and the Mueller Report. And though much of my research as an academic involves writing and editing–I find writing to be an important part of my creative output–I will always be a designer and maker at heart.

- **How did you come to care about issues related to diversity and equity in design?**
  As a Black woman born and raised in the American Midwest and operating in predominantly white spaces, developing an appreciation for the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion was probably inevitable. But I was also raised by educators who encouraged discussions about politics and social and cultural issues. I think it is difficult, moreover, to be Black in America and <u>not </u>care about DEI, regardless of one's profession. It is true that diversity and representation have been particularly problematic within the design field…but my siblings run into some of the same challenges and issues in their respective fields of theology and physics. I think it is a matter of survival and standing up for yourself.

- **How can college classrooms today more effectively engage topics related to inclusion in design?**

  Ultimately, it's up to individual instructors to develop inclusive design curriculum and put inclusive teaching into practice. Within a given program, department, and even at a university-wide level, implementing policies that promote—or perhaps even require—inclusive approaches is important. I think it's also true, however, that being inclusive requires authenticity and a long-term commitment; individual faculty members must be willing to continually educate themselves and revisit the projects they assign and how they interact with their students to truly engage in the concept of "inclusion in design." (Inclusion happens on a variety of levels within a given context, it's not just about a particular assignment or topic but how people treat one another.)

- **What can design educators do to create a more inclusive classroom?**

  This can be a tricky question to answer because, again, "inclusion" is working on a variety of levels. Even well-meaning people are sometimes tempted to distill DEI down to a project or discussion that is focused on some aspect of diversity, like a Black/Brown designer. But being inclusive requires much more from us. It's not enough to say "I care about these issues" or tell students "This is a safe environment." From how we structure critiques and determine where students sit, to the metrics we use to evaluate and assess students' progress, barriers and biases are (potentially) baked into numerous aspects of a classroom experience.

  That being said, none of us is perfect and there may be times when we fail to meet the expectations that we as teachers set for ourselves. So, I think one of the basic things

design educators can do is to simply talk to their students and determine as a group—a
learning community—what an inclusive classroom should look like and how they can
work at establishing it together. Beyond that, we need to continually check ourselves: do
we overlook/ignore the student who always sits in the back and never talks? Do we blow
off the student who never comes to class prepared? Do we focus our time/energy solely
on the students who are doing well in class? Are we fully transparent with students about
how they are being graded? Every aspect of a student's experience should be considered
when it comes to inclusion. I'm not suggesting that educators upend everything they are
currently doing…only that we take the time to reflect on how we're teaching and engage
students in conversations about what helps them feel valued in the classroom.

- **What are some traits of a socially responsible designer?**

  I think the characteristics of a socially responsible designer actually reveal themselves
  over time, i.e., in the way that people cultivate relationships and opportunities in the long-
  term, the depth of the commitment, a willingness to learn from others, the ability to put
  ego aside for the sake of collaboration, and most importantly, the ability to listen.

  Power and privilege are also important pieces—designer George Aye talks about this in a
  helpful and persuasive way—that we don't talk about often enough. Designers like to use
  the word "empathy" but being genuinely empathetic requires an awareness of our own
  biases, prejudices, and the privilege that we carry due to our race/ethnicity, position in
  society, and socioeconomic status, to name just a few factors.

- **What advice would you give to young designers trying to use design in an ethically sound manner?**

In the introduction of *Citizen Designer: Perspectives on Design Responsibility* (eds. Steven Heller and Véronique Vienne), Steve Heller writes about the "12 Steps on the Graphic Designer's Road to Hell" created by the late Milton Glaser. The list is meant to determine how far a designer might be willing to go in order to lie, with each step becoming increasingly more serious. Item 1, for example, is "Designing a package to look bigger on the shelf" versus item 12, "Designing an ad for a product whose frequent use could result in the user's death."

I have used this concept with students as an entry point for developing a personal code of ethics before they enter the working world. Though it may be difficult to abide by whatever list they create for themselves–crossing some boundaries may be inevitable depending on available job opportunities or other circumstances–being mindful of what they would/wouldn't be willing to do for a job can be a guiding force, a reminder of the kinds of ideals they want to aspire to. And, of course, this "test" can be useful for anyone, regardless of what stage they are at in their career.

I think it's also important to continually ask questions on a given project such as: Who is at the table? Who/whom might be missing from the table? It's tempting to believe that we know more than we actually do or that all we really need is the drive to tackle a given job. But ambition can (sometimes) blind us, especially when it comes to projects/opportunities that may be high profile. In some cases, we simply don't have the

cultural understanding or community connections or have not built up trust or expertise

with stakeholders, to speak to a particular perspective. Taking risks is still important and

necessary, of course. But there's a fine line between boldly pursuing opportunities that

seem out of reach and attempting to insert ourselves into situations in which we should, at

the very least, question whether or not we are the best person for the job.

- **What advice would you give to young designers seeking to use their craft as a**

  proactive **force for good in the world around them?**

  While it is necessary for young designers to forge their own paths, learning about

  designers who have been doing work in the same space/s is equally important. The design

  world is a community, and being knowledgeable about our design history—including

  more current design history—enables us to work/design from more informed

  perspectives. Honestly, this is something I am still working on for myself. There is so

  much Black design history and information I did not have access to when I was a student

  that I am continually trying to get caught up.

  There are many, many people out in the world doing amazing things. So, rather than

  operating in relative isolation, young designers should find the people doing the kind of

  work they want to be doing and/or who inspire them and learn as much as they can.

  Students will not only get a sense of where they are positioned within a larger collective

  of people working towards similar goals but also begin to build networks and

  collaborative communities of their own.

- **What are some must-read resources for young designers thinking about design responsibility and justice?**

  My reading list is incredibly long at the moment (!!!) but below are a few that I have read and/or am starting to dig into and highly recommend:

  - *Design Justice* by Sasha Costanza-Chock

  - *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* by Victor Papanek

  - *Race After Technology* by Ruha Benjamin

  - *Black, Brown + Latinx Design Educators: Conversations on Design & Race* ed. by Kelly Walters

  - *Building Better Citizens: A New Civics Education for All* by Holly Korbey

- **What contemporary designers or design educators do you see doing inspiring work related to topics concerning design and inclusion?**

  Many of the people I collaborate with are folks that I am inspired by, including my Ongoing Matter collaborators, The Black Experience in Design editing team and contributors, and my Value Design Ed collaborators. That's a lot of people! But I think it also reflects the fact that many people, from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives care about diversity, representation, and inclusion within the design profession. Some of the people I am particularly inspired by, most of whom I know and have worked with in some capacity:

  - Audrey Bennett

  - Kelly Walters

  - Jennifer Rittner

- o Meaghan Dee

- o Jen White-Johnson

- o Tiffany Roman

- o Sylvia Harris

- o Steve Jones

- o George Aye

- o Daniele Busciantella Ricci

- o Luis Soares

- **What does the future of inclusion in design look like? What's next?**

Given the extent to which design and technology have always been connected,

technology will inevitably play a significant role in the future of inclusion in design.

Now, whether that role is "for better" or "for worse" is yet to be determined. However,

the discourse we are currently having about artificial intelligence and other emerging

technologies is providing a roadmap for where we are headed.

While I think we can generally agree that technological advancements are good for

society, they can still be problematic, particularly when it comes to marginalized

communities and groups that have historically and/or systemically been discriminated

against. For example, the Netflix documentary "Coded Bias" which features the work of

Joy Buolamwini and Cathy O'Neil, among others, does a great job of articulating

how/why technology is increasing socioeconomic and racial disparities. In other words,

designers will likely be continuing the fight for greater equity amid a culture and society

that seemingly prioritizes technology and convenience over, say, democracy and civil

rights. I will add that civic design is also an important part of creating a culture of inclusion by ensuring that everyone has access to information and resources, whether we're talking about voting or healthcare.

Lisa M. Graham

- **Tell me a bit about your design and/or teaching practice — what do you do?**

  My design practice has evolved over the decades. I started out very traditionally, working with national and international clients. Typical design work such as logos, publications, signage, museum exhibit design, web sites. Pretty much the same things that I was teaching my students in classes. Spent about a decade teaching web design in the early years when it was easy. Learned enough coding to realize that programming did not fit with my artistic brain. I wrote several books, one very much a traditional typography and layout book. I was teaching freshman students, so the book was very much written to their level. The book has since been translated into Chinese, Japanese, and a book for the blind and dyslexic. Even almost two decades later I still have people email me questions about what I wrote about in the book, and it has lead to a relatively new area of interest in my design practice, poster exhibition. Designing posters is a much better fit with my artist's brain, and gives back energy, which I feed into students and my classes. Whenever possible I try to involve students in exhibitions as well.

- **How did you come to care about issues related to sustainability in design?**

  My husband, an architect, was investigating sustainability in design from the built environment point of view. Seemed like there was some really practical ways that graphic designers could fit eco-friendly design into their day-to-day practice. At the time...this

must have been around 1995 or 1996, I looked for publications in the graphic design area that spoke to sustainability and there was not much to be found. Architecture books about sustainability abounded, so I started to adapt concepts from architecture books to graphic design practice. My students were hungry for information on how to make their design practices more eco-friendly.

- **How can college classrooms today more effectively engage topics related to design sustainability?**

  Definitely watch a lot of videos about environmental concerns, and discussion in class about the videos often leads to vigorous commentary. Of course we speak to the practicalities of sustainability in design, such as ink choices, using recycled materials (especially paper), using as many local sources for supplies as possible, rightsizing, downsizing, shipping units in secondary packaging...these are all practical ways that students can immediately grasp the ideas and apply them to design projects.

- **What role do design educators play in accomplishing this?**

  Design educators can lead the discussion, point to resources, and pose challenging design projects that help students work through better and best sustainability practice options.

- **What are some traits of an environmentally and/or socially responsible designer?**

  Of course, curiosity; awareness there are problems with ordinary design practices; ambition to do better, more environmentally and socially responsible designs; willing to consider alternate supplies and printing inks for designs; being outspoken with environmental concerns with clients...the willingness to research, consider options, and speak up.

- **What advice would you give to young designers trying to use design in an ethically sound manner?**

  Think about what you are intending to do with the design. Ask yourself and the client questions such as "Do we really need to design and print so many direct mailers?" Be prepared to offer some ideas for alternate design substrates. Asking the client such questions might not result in much change, but it's worth trying, if only to open up the client's awareness of the problem. The current project might be set in stone, but future projects might be adaptable, if the client has had time to think about some alternate design substrate options.

- **What advice would you give to young designers seeking to use their craft as a *proactive* force for good in the world around them?**

  Even a small effort of trying to improve a design is worthwhile. For example, if you reduce the dead space in a package design by 10%, how much paperboard is saved from disposal across thousands or even millions of units. If you can persuade the client to use PCW high recycled paper, that is better than using virgin paper. Sometimes a small change doesn't really seem like much but if you make a more environmentally friendly choices time after time, think about the differences you can make in two, four, 10, 100 projects. Small steps can make a difference.

- **What are some must-read resources for young designers thinking about design sustainability?**

  Design to Renourish: Sustainable Graphic Design in Practice by Eric Benson and Yvette Perullo; *Green Graphic Design* by Brian Dougherty and Celery Design Collaborative; *The Big Book of Green Design; Sustainable Graphic Design: Tools, Systems and*

Strategies for Innovation by Wendy Jedlicka, and of course the companion book

Packaging Sustainability also by Jedlicka. *Defuturing: A New Design Philosophy and*

Design Futuring: Sustainability, Ethics, and New Practice, both by Tony Fry. *Silent*

Spring by Rachel Carlson. *Natural Capitalism* by Paul Hawkin and Amory Lovins.

- **What contemporary designers or design educators do you see doing inspiring work related to topics concerning design sustainability?**

  Eric Benson and his work with renourish.org. Scott Boylston in speaking up about sustainability in packaging. Tony Fry as a radical design speaker.

- **What does the future of design and sustainability look like? What's next?**

  There's a lot of work to be done to embed sustainable design practices into day-to-day design practice. Its not hard if the designer is aware of the issues and some practical tactics for making their projects more environmentally friendly. AI moving into the design field is an issue that the design faculty at UT Arlington have spent some time discussing. Currently we are waiting to see how the tools evolve. At this point it's fairly easy to spot work that was generated in Midjourney. I place my faith in the ability of artists to design strong concepts.

Steven Heller

- **What advice would you give to young designers trying to use design in an ethically sound/responsible manner?**

  The advice I give to my students and anyone else who wants to play a role in the social or political realm is this: It is good to know public policy — study political science, sociology, urban or rural planning…anything local that will uplift a community. Learn

about business — become a social entrepreneur. In other words, break away, if only for

six months, from the ghetto of design. Understand what people want and need. Not what

designers like or dislike. Help by listening, thinking, conceiving, and making. Raise

money. Help others raise standards. If the will is there, you can be sure that the people in

need and organizations who want are out there. Find them and convince them through

talent, skill and wherewithal, that you can do a service for them that is useful, practical

and invaluable. These may seem like generalities, but they are a mindset. Design is not

getting universal approval or recognition for innovative work (although it is that too) but

making what will provide incentives for others while helping more.

Illustrations
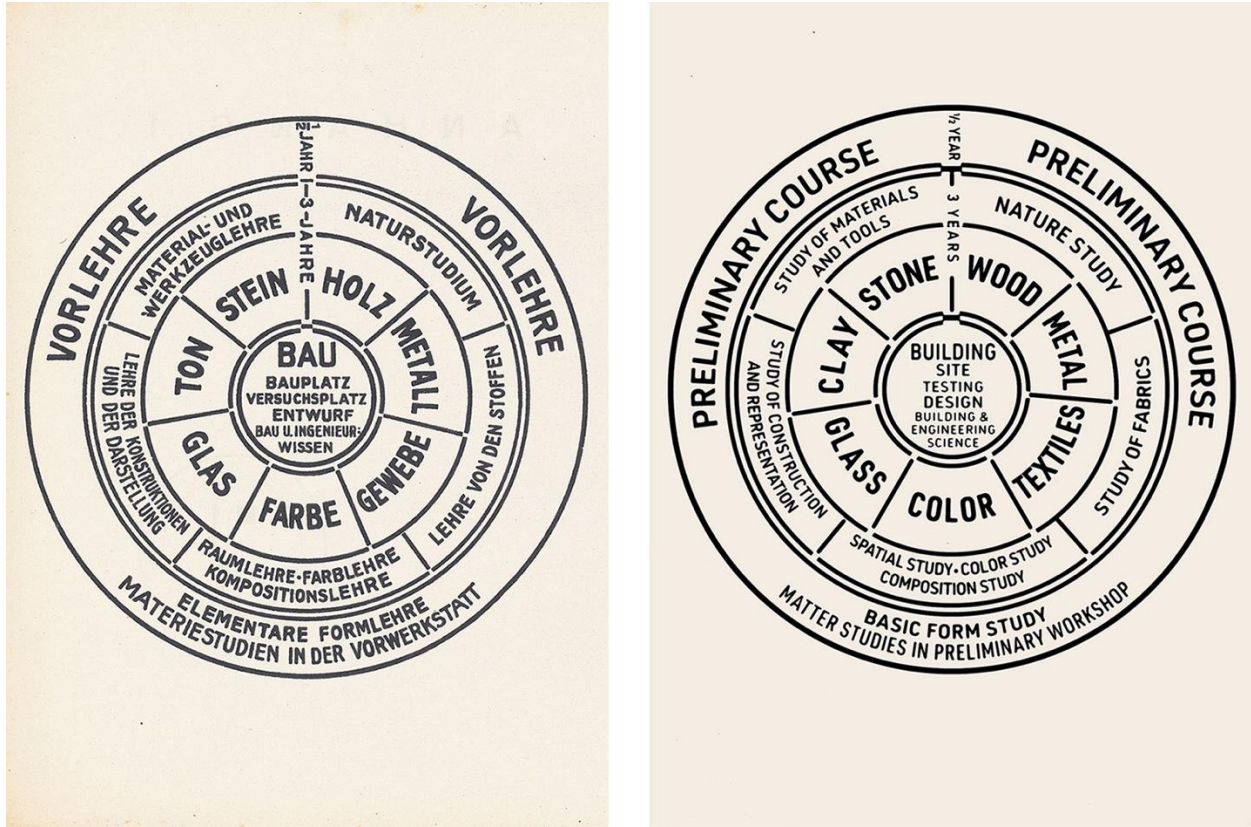
Fig. 1. Walter Gropius, Diagram of the Bauhaus curriculum (adapted right), July 1922, lithograph, from getty.edu, accessed September 9, 2023.
https://www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions_events/exhibitions/bauhaus/new_artist/history/principles_curriculum/

Fig. 2. Hebert Bayer, *Universal Type* (later variation), 1926, from letterformarchive.org, accessed September 9, 2023. https://letterformarchive.org/news/bauhaus-typefaces-part-two/

MILTON GLASER'S ROAD TO HELL

1 DESIGNING A PACKAGE TO LOOK BIGGER ON THE SHELF

2 DESIGNING AN AD FOR A SLOW, BORING FILM TO MAKE IT SEEM LIKE A LIGHT-HEARTED COMEDY

3 DESIGNING A CREST FOR A NEW VINEYARD TO SUGGEST THAT IT HAS BEEN IN BUSINESS FOR A LONG TIME

4 DESIGNING A JACKET FOR A BOOK WHOSE SEXUAL CONTENT YOU FIND PERSONALLY REPELLENT

5 DESIGNING A MEDAL USING STEEL FROM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER TO BE SOLD AS A PROFIT-MAKING SOUVENIR OF SEPTEMBER 11

6 DESIGNING AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN FOR A COMPANY WITH A HISTORY OF KNOWN DISCRIMINATION IN MINORITY HIRING

7 DESIGNING A PACKAGE FOR CHILDREN WHOSE CONTENTS YOU KNOW ARE LOW IN NUTRITION VALUE AND HIGH IN SUGAR CONTENT

8 DESIGNING A LINE OF T-SHIRTS FOR A MANUFACTURER THAT EMPLOYS CHILD LABOR

9 DESIGNING A PROMOTION FOR A DIET PRODUCT THAT YOU KNOW DOESN'T WORK

10 DESIGNING AN AD FOR A POLITICAL CANDIDATE WHOSE POLICIES YOU BELIEVE WOULD BE HARMFUL TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

11 DESIGNING A BROCHURE FOR AN SUV THAT TURNED OVER FREQUENTLY IN EMERGENCY CONDITIONS AND WAS KNOWN TO HAVE KILLED 150 PEOPLE

12 DESIGNING AN AD FOR A PRODUCT WHOSE FREQUENT USE COULD RESULT IN THE USER'S DEATH
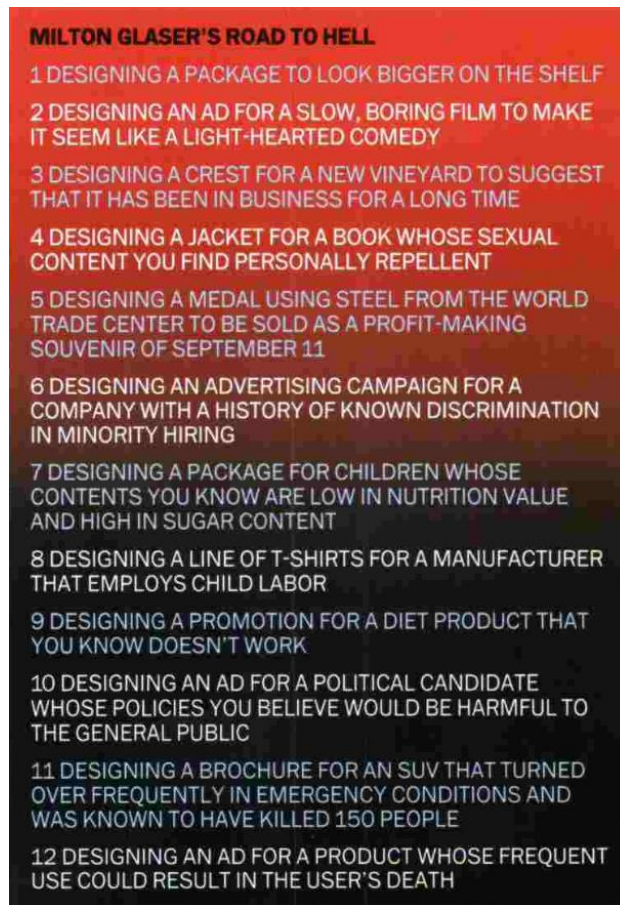
Fig. 3. Milton Glaser, Road to Hell, from "Just How Personal Should Graphic Design Get? How Political Can or Should a Designer Be? What Kind of Responsibilities Do They Have in These Difficult Times?," interview by Jonathan Barnbrook, accessed September 28, 2023. https://eds-s-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=1798aaf5-00cd-4dd7-9ec1-7ef8a2e412c1%40redis
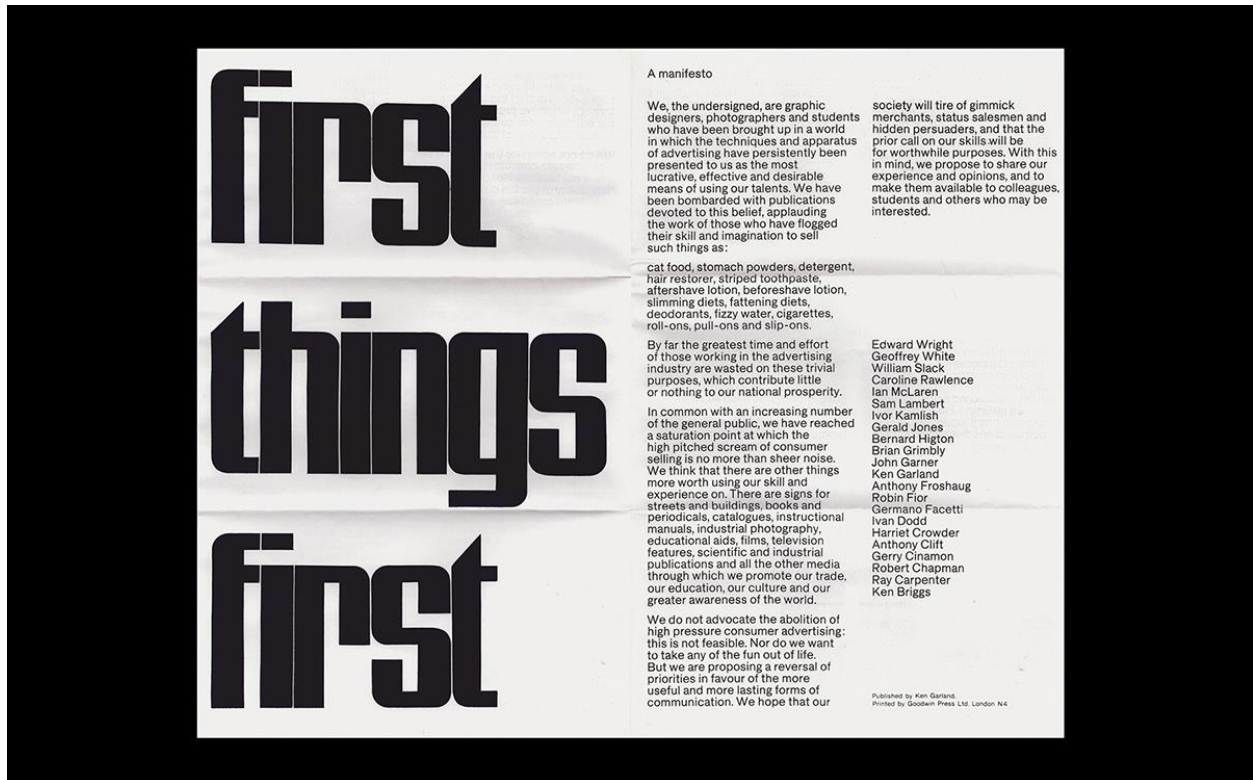
Fig. 4. Ken Garland, "First Things First" manifesto, 1964, from eyeondesign.aiga.org, accessed September 28, 2023. https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/why-ken-garlands-first-things-first-manifesto-keeps-getting-updated/

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