

A project by Katharina Moebus

5

THE DISH

5 - THE DISH

A project by Katharina Moebus | Spring 2011

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Stay hungry, stay foolish.

PROLOGUE

The summer of 2009 brought about major changes in my life. By spending only one day in a student community of a small Italian village nearby Florence, my passion for artisan production of food, bread baking, and slow living was awakened. The former years of my education spent in sunny Italy added to that experience – to see the way people enjoyed and relished traditional local food and rituals. Coming to Finland, I was astonished with the amount of ready-made food and the standardized way of living; everything had to be practical, pragmatic, and time-economic. It was a new side of Finland that had not struck me before, even though I had spent many holidays in Rovaniemi and Kittilä with my Finnish relatives.

There is always something you crave for from your home country when you move abroad: in my case, it was the small bakeries. Already in Vienna, where I had lived for some time after my studies in Italy, I had been missing artisan bakeries. Most of the existing ones were part of big chains that produce all their bread in big factories. Having grown up in Germany, I learned to appreciate freshly baked buns on Sunday mornings (the infamous ‘Sonntagsbrötchen’). Indulging into long breakfasts in the backyard with my family was part of our standard weekend program. In Finland, all the bread came in plastic bags from supermarket shelves. Even most of the fresh bread was delivered from big companies (and did not even have a good crust!). After my first months of enthusiasm about having access to *ruisleipä* every day, (a comestible I dearly remembered from our regular family trips to Lapland during Easter), I started my quest for ‘real’ bread. I found a German bakery in Punavuori that only baked German bread with imported German flour. Even though they make great bread products, it was not what I was looking for – I wanted to find the true roots of Finnish bread culture and learn about its history to understand the situation better. After a while I found out: Finns have a very rich and colourful bread culture, but a history that puts the country apart from their European neighbours which explains the lack of urban bakeries. Either way, I had found a product representing many cultural implications and emotions which later became intrinsic part of this project.

Another thing I missed in Helsinki were the cheap and simple eateries where you could just meet up with friends and enjoy simple good food for a reasonable price. Three good friends of mine were also very passionate about cooking and local vegetarian food, so we started to dream about a guerilla restaurant at our own home (two of them were my flatmates). After the first dinner event, I decided to involve food activism into my final project; the idea for 5 - *The dish* was born. A blend of passion and personal history as a starting point for a project is the best motivational force, which pushed and inspired me throughout the entire journey of this project.

5 - THE DISH

Design seems to be in crisis – while catchwords like sustainability and post-consumerism call the traditional tasks of a designer into question, it becomes more and more difficult to define where the profession is heading. What is the current and potential role of the designer, what are his possible tasks and activities? What is design activism and how closely does it advance to art?

The project 5 – *The dish* takes an experimental approach to design research and practice to find new ways of working as a designer. The project consists of a series of events and workshops that took place in changing urban locations of Helsinki during late 2010, with a focus on the consumption and production of food. Food is an ephemeral material that satisfies one of the most basic needs shared by all humans. It reflects local conditions, traditions, culture and social change. By drawing analogies to past and current movements in the design and art field, 5 – *The dish* aims to inspire thought amongst creative professionals, students and laypeople about the way we live, work, and consume, now and in the future.

The project itself consists of five follow-up events that are based on the production process of food, a system we have lost touch with as an urbanized generation who primarily grew up with mass produced goods. Mass production has blurred our perception of value towards both the products and the work behind it. Nobody could have imagined the impact of the invention of the steam engine, cars, the printing press, and telegraphs. All in the sudden, things were automatized, hand labour could be done by machines, mobility and communication received new notions of speed, and knowledge was available to everybody. In the past decades, things have changed even faster, technologies develop faster than society can take it. We live in a society of knowledge and communication, progress seems to move faster than the human eye can see. Nevertheless, it seems like we are losing something – the essential knowledge of how to produce things ourselves. Where do the products we consume on a daily basis come from, how and by whom are they made, what are the materials?

Each event of the project symbolizes one step of that production process and is attended by one of the respective elements. A reoccurring metaphor is bread, representing *the* essential everyday product taken for granted by most, affiliated with a cultural relevance shared by many cultures. The five steps consist of 1) fertilizing (earth), 2) growing (water), 3) preparing (fire), 4) consuming (air), and 5) salvaging (love).

The participants of the events and workshops were either random, invited or otherwise

recruited in order to make my research and results visible to a wide audience. With my research and practical work, I intended to look for parallel developments in the art and design field and investigate the ever closer growing relationship between those two disciplines.

How can we build new experiences using food as the basic material? How oppose common perspectives with counter-narratives? How build new relationships with those people who normally work in the background? Marije Vogelzang, Dutch eating design pioneer, uses a framework of eight different columns on which she builds her projects: psychology, culture, senses, nature, action, science, technique, and society¹. I would add two more columns: history and space, which were important concepts I used to set up my events.

There has been a lot of writing and research about design history, and the design profession has always been greatly questioned and challenged in cyclic orderliness by several design movements such as the *Bauhaus*, the *British Arts & Crafts movement*, *Memphis* and sorts. The bigger picture of these developments, an analysis of the current state, and a daring look in the future have not been explored thoroughly. Beyond that, the relationship between design and art, the field designers were actually recruited from in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, has grown closer together again. This relationship has been somewhat explored in practice since post-modern thinking and the rise of designers as cherished artists, but not too much in critical practice, research and analysis. In matters of sustainability and future thinking in design practice and education, a lot of research into *cradle-to-cradle* concepts and sustainable materials has been executed. Often dismissed is the critical analysis of the profession of a product designer and the designed artifact. Is it enough to make consumption sustainable or should the whole pattern of consumption be questioned and changed? And is it enough to make artifacts from sustainable materials or should the whole significance and purpose of the object itself be challenged? How important is the consideration of social, political, and environmental issues in the design process? And how can the creative potential and abilities of the designer be applied in different ways? *Design activism*, a relatively new design field, tries to find answers to these questions, so I put my focus on this emerging discipline.

The current landscape of design seems to drown in new terms that try to label tendencies such as *Eco-design*, *User-inspired Design*, *Critical Design*, *Meta Design*, *Social Design*, *Participatory Design*, *Environmental Design*, *Green Design*, *Re-Design*, *Strategic Design*, *Slow Design*, *Co-Design*, *User-centered Design* – the list is endless. All these are

¹ Vogelzang, M. (2010) p. 3.

just approaches and frameworks that center around the different fields of design. Those areas are blurring more and more in practice, inter-disciplinary collaborations between professionals with different backgrounds not necessarily from the design field are gaining more and more relevance. There is a lot of confusion and uncertainty for students, teachers and professionals of the creative fields and a common need for redefining the purpose of our profession.

The structure of the project's theory is based on the metaphorical contents of the practical work. Each single event contains strong references to historical and contemporary movements in the art and design scene, each location alludes to different aspects of the everyday. All objects used are either ephemeral, re-functioned, ready-made or simply found. Their 'designs' are unspectacular, simple and yet beautiful in their anonymity. They serve the purpose of memory, contemplation, contentment or simple functional use.

The book is a documentation, a source of inspiration, and a cookbook in a wider sense; a compilation of elemental and refining ingredients, counter-balanced in their proportions, adding up to one possible vision of what design could taste like. An overview of ingredients needed to cook 'the perfect dish' that I have been looking for during all my study years.

I hope to inspire creative professionals and minds to make use of their potential as social, anthropological, and cultural facilitators, and involve consumers in the creative thinking and making process. In the end, *5 - The dish* is not only a series of events, it also represents what is most essential to life: food, community and love.

PRODUCTION PROCESS

A SERIES OF FOOD EVENTS
THAT SHOW THE STEPS
OF PRODUCTION.
BASIC FOOD IS (BREAD);
THE REST A METAPHOR.

1 2

(to) crop

(to) harvest



3 4 5

(to) prepare (to) consume (to) salvage



FERTILIZE,

vb (tr)

1. to provide (an animal, plant, or egg cell) with sperm or pollen to bring about fertilization; 2. to supply (soil or water) with mineral and organic nutrients to aid the growth of plants; 3. to make fertile or productive fertilizable, fertilisable adj

GROW,

v. grew (gr), grown (grn), grow-ing, grows

1. To increase in size by a natural process. 2 a. To expand; gain: The business grew under new owners. 2 b. To increase in amount or degree; intensify: The suspense grew. 3. To develop and reach maturity. 4. To be capable of growth; thrive: a plant that grows in shade. 5. To become attached by or as if by the process of growth: tree trunks that had grown together. 6. To come into existence from a source; spring up: love that grew from friendship. 7. To come to be by a gradual process or by degrees; become: grow angry; grow closer.

v.tr. 1. To cause to grow; raise: grow tulips. 2. To allow (something) to develop or increase by a natural process

PREPARE,

vb [from Latin praeparāre, from prae before + parāre to make ready]

1. to make ready or suitable in advance for a particular purpose or for some use, event, etc. to prepare a meal to prepare to go; 2. to put together using parts or ingredients; compose or construct; 3. (tr) to equip or outfit, as for an expedition

CONSUME,

v. con-sumed, con-sum-ing, con-sumes

v.tr. 1. To take in as food; eat or drink up. See Synonyms at eat.; 2. a. To expend; use up: engines that consume less fuel; a project that consumed most of my time and energy. b. To purchase (goods or services) for direct use or ownership.

SALVAGE,

tr.v. sal-vaged, sal-vag-ing, sal-vag-es

1. To save from loss or destruction.; 2. To save (discarded or damaged material) for further use.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

This book is a basic cookbook for creative minds: a compilation of ingredients that offer new perspectives on the possibilities of design. To understand emerging movements and current practice better, I tried to draw out single ingredients from past, present, and future - just like somebody who tastes a dish and tries to find out what it is made out of. The ingredients laid out in this book were my inspiration for the project 5 - *The dish*, which combined them in new ways. Of course all of the events are just proposals and the possibilities are endless. I hope to inspire others to create new combinations.

Instead of displaying a chronological table of contents, the theory of each event is tagged with a choice of those ingredients; an internet-based bottom-up approach of classifying an item. In the same open and democratic spirit of the internet (see p.70) and Web 2.0, which both played a big role in the realization of this project, the book can be read in different modes: by course, chapter, or simply by browsing through the different ingredients that are listed on the following spread. To enable you to read the book with different sets of goggles, it is printed on different paper qualities: all documentary photographs of the events and workshops are printed on glossy paper whilst the theoretical background is held in black, white and red printed on matte paper.

The structure of the book is based on a classic 3-course-menu: *I. starters*, *II. mains*, and *III. dessert*. The *starter*-section describes the two workshops that preceded the event series, both documented differently from the main section with either movie stills, blog posts, or a vast range of pictures showing the single steps of two slow production processes. The *mains*-part contains the documentation and theory of the five events, the latter including currents and knowledge from different fields such as technology, social science and art and design history, some of which are so new that it is hard to find any official information about it and others that are common sense but necessary in order to understand how everything is connected.

The final part - the *dessert* - is a study of the process with the attempt of finding answers to the research questions posed. Like that, the meal should be complete and leave a long and lasting aftertaste in your mouth. But I am sure you will recover your appetite quickly just by flipping through the book!

Enjoy the meal,

Katharina Moebus, Helsinki 12.01.2010

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l ■ **starters**

1. a small amount of food or drink taken to stimulate the appetite
2. any stimulating foretaste

~~“We all tend to design by changing existing situations into preferred ones.”~~

HERBERT SIMON

BREAD WORKSHOP

The first practical experiments of the research for this project were two workshops about the two major inventions of bread history: how to make sourdough bread and how to build an oven. A main challenge in the beginning was to somehow build up a network of people who might be interested in the topic. The vision of gathering a group of idealistic 'guerilla bakers' who would bake together for the people started to take form, and I asked friends and fellow design and art students to join me in the first workshop.

The Avikainen bakery is one of the last family bakeries in Helsinki, and one of the last ones that still uses an old sourdough starter (theirs is more than 50 years old). The business started their practice in 1955, when Elvi Avikainen, Jenni's mother, founded and opened the bakery in Kallio, one of Helsinki's most unique districts.

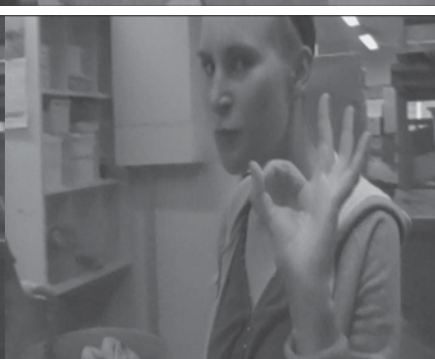
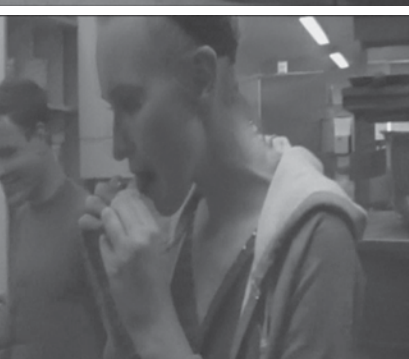
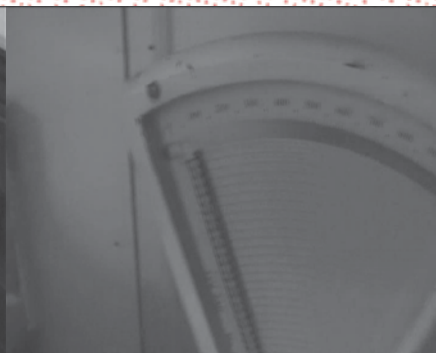
Today, Elvi still sells the bread behind the counter even though she must be way over 70 years old. According to a Mondo article¹, there is only two legendary bakeries left in Helsinki: the Avikainen bakery and the Eromanga bakery in the city centre, close to the harbour's market square. During the exchange project *My Helsinki* I had gotten to know the bakery following the steps of food activist Aki Arjola, who was hosting one of the guests of the exchange program from Washington. I was so impressed by the intimate and yet open atmosphere of the bakery that it immediately came back into my mind when I started to plan the baking workshop. After almost 2 years of living in Helsinki, it was still the only bakery of the city that had truly made a lasting impression on me.

Jenni was immediately willing to help by teaching and showing us her baking skills. We agreed on a date and time (June 9th, 2010, starting from 5 pm), and six people, all fellow students and friends of mine (Iina from Finland, Valeria from Russia, Jens and Jakob from Germany, and David and Giovanna from Mexico) confirmed to participate.

We made about a dozen of reikäleipä and finished the workshop with a small picnic in a park nearby. I saved ten of those breads and hung them up on my curtain pole to dry. Reikäleipä used to be stored like that over the winter. Its taste gets stronger and stronger with time, and its consistency harder and harder to chew on. The plan was to use them in one of the upcoming events (2/5, [see p. 137](#)).

¹ Kalmari, H. (2008) *Pullista Parhaat*. Mondo Lehti 9/2008.

WORKSHOP 1/
Baking 'reikäleipä'



FILMED AND BAKED AT
Avikainen Leipomo, Helsinki

INSTRUCTED BY
Jenni Avikainen

PARTICIPANTS
Ina-Karolina Vailia
Jakob Schenk
Valeria Grynda
Jens Gerber
Giovanna Esposito Yussif
David Muoz

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO
Jenni & Elvi Avikainen, Avikainen Leipomo, Jani,
the 'Baker Apprentices', Osse, Are, Cathérine, Phil







BREAD – A SHORT INTRODUCTION

Bread is a staple food in many cultures of the Western world and has one of the oldest histories of all prepared foods, dating back to the Neolithic era. It came to its rise with humans beginning to cultivate wild nature – the birth of agriculture. Agriculture has had a major influence on life and culture of humans. Already about 10,000 years ago, men started to systematically grow grain for their own consumption. Originally, the grain was grinded and mixed with water to be eaten as a nutritious porridge. Later people started to bake the porridge on hot stones or in the ashes of the fire. That was the first kind of bread: flat bread. This bread type can be found in almost any culture around the world (e.g. Rieksa in Finland, Tortilla in Mexico/Central America, Piadine in Italy, and Chapatti in India).

Two inventions changed the bread-making massively: the invention of ovens and the discovery of leavening. Hot stones only allowed the making of flat breads, a loaf of bread however asks for an all surrounding heat to bake thoroughly in a continuous manner. First primitive ovens consisted of a big pot turned around on a hot stone, a method still applied by scouts at the bonfire.

Sourdough was invented after the discovery that a simple mixture of flour and water would turn into a living culture able to make bread rise when left to ferment for several days. The resulting bread is softer and tastier than bread made from normal dough. Sour bread might be known since around 5,000 years, but no secure proofs exist for this assumption - the archaeological finds of sour breads might as well have fermented with time. The first time leavened bread was actually mentioned was in the Bible, in the Exodus from Egypt: ‘That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs’, since there was no time to let the bread rise – a tradition still practiced today by Jews during Passover.

Egyptians were great bread eaters and were also nicknamed after that. They were the ones who first cultivated and used yeast for baking. The Egyptians developed ovens further, the first ones were made from clay and would reach very high temperatures. From Egypt, the knowledge about bread making soon reached Greece and the Roman Empire and Europe. The Romans were the first ones to build mills and produce fine flour. After the fall of the Roman Empire, white bread rose in hierarchy to a festive and prestigious food. Poor people could only afford dark bread, which is actually the healthier one because it still contains all the vitamins and minerals from the outer core of the grain.

Bread has a significance beyond mere nutrition – in history and today, it has never lost any of its great cultural importance. The line “Give us this day our daily bread” is part of



the Lord's prayer which is practised by many cultures in the West and Near and Middle East. Bread equals necessities in general, as many old sayings, but also contemporary language suggest. The word bread or dough is nowadays commonly used around the world in English speaking countries as a synonym for money. A 'bread-winner' is a person in a household providing the family with financial support by 'putting bread on the table'. The word companion comes from Latin com- 'with' + panis 'bread'. 'The greatest thing since sliced bread' is a phrase commonly used for ingenious innovations. The same or similar linguistic and phrasal expressions can be found in an array of other cultures and languages.

Many rituals still alive involve bread, such as the Slavic tradition of bringing bread and salt to a housewarming or as a present to a host to bring luck, fortune, and wisdom (see p.164). The sacramental bread – the body of Christ – is offered with wine – the blood of Jesus.

Bread culture in Finland has a special history – the country's harsh climate caused the cultivation of mainly root plants and grains that tolerated difficult weather conditions. This led to a heavy reliance on staple food that grew under the earth such as turnips and later the potato, dark rye bread and fermented dairy products. Fish and meat was also part of the diet, but only on special occasions. Until the present day, rye bread has not lost its major position in Finnish food culture and is one of the first things missed by Finns going abroad.¹ Rye is more resistant than wheat which explains the importance of this grain for Finnish people. The Finnish book *Ruis – Suomalaisten salainen ase* ('Rye – The Finn's secret weapon') by Ulla Rauramo is dedicated to this type of grain only – the title stands for itself.

Other than wheat bread, rye bread is always made with sourdough and can therefore be stored longer. Typically, Finns baked big batches of rye bread at once and stored them over the year. The country was populated by so few people that it was common to bake at home for the whole family. Whereas the baker's profession was already established

1 Rauramo U. (2004) p. 85.

and highly regarded in Egypt with bakeries all over the city in ancient times, there was simply no need for them in Finland; most people lived on farms far from reach of a city and were entirely dependent on self-sufficiency. Only in the middle of the 19th century, first commercial bakeries were founded in Finland, which maybe explains the scarcity of bakeries in the cityscapes.²

Nowadays, most bread is produced industrially by big companies such as Finland's most popular bread, *Vaasan ruispalat*, a variation of ryebread which is very tasty and practical because it can be stored over long times. It survives without additives because sour ryebread naturally stays fresh longer. Each region of Finland has its own regional bread specialties, which adds up to a big variety of different bread types. Nevertheless, Germany can still proudly call itself the country having the largest variety of breads worldwide with more than 300-500 basic kinds of bread and more than 1,000 types of small bread-rolls and pastries. It has been estimated that the nation has more than 16,000 local bakeries³, just enough to feed the Germans being the biggest bread consumers per capita worldwide. Germany has also influenced most of the bread types in Nordic countries, even though Sweden, Russia and Slavic countries have had a great influence on Finnish bread culture and traditions.

When Berlusconi visited Finland some years ago, he claimed Finnish food to be even worse than British cuisine. This bad reputation concerning food culture was a common notion about Finland which has changed remarkably in the past ten years. Nowadays, it is generally famous for combining traditional dishes and haute cuisine with contemporary continental style cooking. Due to having a coast in the West, fresh fish and meat play an important role in traditional Finnish dishes in the western part of the country, while the eastern part traditionally includes various vegetables and mushrooms in the dietary program.

In general, Finns are quite health conscious and use many wholemeal products such as

2 Leipätiedotus ry. *Leivän tuotanto*, viewed on 10.1.2011.

3 BIV-Rheinland. *Brotweltrekord*, viewed on 20.10.2010.

Ei kaikille jaettu leipä moninkertainen ole.
Kenen leipää syöt, sen lauluja laulat
Korppu oikein ja korppu nurin - siinä on kahenlaista kahaveleipää.
Leipä miehen tiellä pitää.
Sen laulua laulat jonka leipää syöt
Vintillä ois leipää, mutta lapset söi portaat.
Leipä vahvin suksen voide.
Leipänsä edestä koirakin haukkuu.
Leipää leivän murusetkin.
Toisen kuolema toisen leipä.
Leipä hyvä kumppaniksi
Ei ikinä niin hyvää vuotta tuu, ettei leipä kelpaa.
Ei oo rukkiisen leivän eelle käännyttä.
Hapan leipä ja jauhokalja ei tuu koskaan vanhanaikaseks.
Nyt on meillä ilo suur, kun on meillä leivän juur
Ei viljan vähyyttä, jos ei osan kovuutta. (Kuhmolainen sananlasku)
Kun leivät ovat ohkasii niin pellot kasvaa kukkasii. (Loimaalainen sananlasku)
Leivo leivät liivin laavin, kyllä uuni kaunistaa..

rye, barley and oats. The everyman's right guarantees the right to pick as many berries and mushrooms as wanted from the many forests, which is a common activity during the late summer months. The romantic picture of Finns strolling through the bushes is contrasted with the urban reality of the 'lähikauppa', where common people usually buy lots of prepared dishes and frozen pizza. These fast foods have found their place in the diets of Finns just as they have in most countries where time is money and cooking from scratch simply takes too long. This is due to the changes that came with industrialization. During its early decades, a radical change took place in both dietary regime and the ideology of food; the profit motive argued that all products should be available to everyone, at different levels of quality. No one in capitalist industrial Europe should have to deny freedom of choice, and the fact that all might and should maintain a certain level of consumption pushed forward the mechanization of food production. The idea of universal or democratic consumption had cultural as well as economic importance. The common people's simple diet based on grains gave way to one in which protein and fat were supplied to a large degree by animal foods; England and France were the first to industrialize whilst Italy and Spain developed slower. Basic factors for the changes were the revolution in transport and the development of techniques for the transformation and preservation of food.⁴

The transformation of the food systems in non-industrialized areas such as Latin America for the production of beef for hamburgers made local meat consumption decline. A complex web of relationships created by the global food delocalization of food production threatens those producer populations that depend on the sale of one or few products. For the first time in history, humankind had succeeded in conquering famine, at least during times of peace – during war, famine re-emerges quickly, as we can see daily on the news. Delocalization of food production has imposed greater uniformity upon dietary models of the industrialized world. An increase in social mobility and the expansion of globalization has led to a progressive decline of food rituals and the periodic variation of diet linked to religious festivities. Many products have lost their cultural significance. The European food system has taken on a strong and increasingly urban character.

Lately, a trend in urban diets towards an imitation of traditional rural food culture can be observed – simple and regional meals how we know them cooked by our grandmothers reflect the urge of urban dwellers to return to the romantic countryside. The negative aspects of a more uniform food system has produced this new sort of nostalgia. It might be only an urban legend and a mere reflection of happiness and simple living opposed

⁴ Montanari, M. (1994)

to the stressful life of the city. But fact is that the difficulty to retrace origins and production methods of the food available for us to buy and consume in supermarkets and restaurants increasingly worries people. The desire of going back to self-sufficiency, or learning how to produce and grow food ourselves has evolved globally amongst urban citizens. Educational projects for children and participatory art and design initiatives often involve the cultivation of food in the urban environment. Guerilla-gardening and urban community gardens are popping up everywhere around the world, and the desire to return to old knowledge and nature seems more and more obvious. People seem to be over-saturated with industrial products that are often processed, with suspicious lists of ingredients and health effects that are hard to predict.⁵ This topic will be discussed further in chapter 4 (see p.284).

MAKING CULTURE

Culture,

1. (Sociology) *the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action*
2. (Social Science / Anthropology & Ethnology) *the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group*
3. *a particular civilization at a particular period*
4. *the artistic and social pursuits, expression, and tastes valued by a society or class, as in the arts, manners, dress, etc.*
5. *the enlightenment or refinement resulting from these pursuits*
6. (Sociology) *the attitudes, feelings, values, and behaviour that characterize and inform society as a whole or any social group within it*⁶

Culture (from the Latin cultural stemming from colere, meaning "to cultivate") is a term with many meanings. It is most commonly used to describe human knowledge that is linked to his ability for symbolic thought and social learning. Another definition describes culture as the set of attitudes and values that a group of people share, such as the population of a specific area, a country, or a region.

The concept of culture first emerged in 18th and 19th century Europe and described a process of improvement, such as the cultivation of a field in agriculture. Applied to a person, it is education that cultivates the individual. Sociologist Georg Simmel referred

⁵ Raymond, M. and Sanderson, C. (2008)

⁶ Culture. (2003) Collins English Dictionary. Viewed on 12.1.2011.

to culture as "the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history"⁷. In the 20th century, the concept of culture became central to anthropology, defining all human phenomena that cannot be explained with human genetics – the evolved human capacity to use his own imagination creatively in action and thought by representing daily experiences with symbols in distinct ways all over the world⁸, which led to the most common definition of culture as described in the beginning.

Pierre Bourdieu first manifested the term of 'cultural capital' which refers to one's intellectual and educational properties forming a capital which lays beyond economic means. It is a sociological concept that has become widely recognized and cited amongst scholars in the cultural and educational fields. It has played a vital role in education in its attempts to define the abilities that make the individual rich in a system of exchange.

Bourdieu distinguished between three forms of capital, economic, social, and cultural capital, all symbolic goods that aid social mobility. Cultural capital again can be distinguished in three different kinds: objectified, embodied, and institutionalized capital. Objectified cultural capital refers to physical objects owned by a person, as e.g. a valuable painting, which can have two functions: to transmit economic power and cultural knowledge. Embodied cultural capital defines the consciously and passively inherited knowledge of a person over time, whilst institutionalized cultural capital is a term used to describe academic recognition such as titles and qualifications. In the labor market, this capital is of vital value, since it helps to achieve higher job positions.

From a historical point of view, culture has, from its very beginnings of simply cultivating land, the invention of agriculture, over the Enlightenment and the right to education for all, led to the incredible process of humanity and the rapid developments in technology and science. One might question whether the balance is kept between new and old knowledge transmitted in schools or in the process of falling out of balance. Who defines what we really need to know in a world that is changing so fast? What are the capitals of the future?

Alasdair Fuad-Luke opens up new perspectives on how to view capital in a world driven by exchange – he proposes the five capitals nature, human, social, manufactured and financial⁹. He sees design as one of the key mediators of the flow of all these capitals. To be able to locate areas for activist work as a designer, one needs to understand the bigger landscape of possible capitals that can be affected negatively or positively.

Individual human capital is a capacity that is crucial to social behaviour. It resides with-

⁷ Levine, D. (ed) p6.

⁸ Culture. Wikipedia, viewed on 23.1.2011.

⁹ Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.6.

in a person and touches physical, intellectual, and psychological skills, expanded by spiritual and emotional capacities. Adam Smith, the father of the theories capitalism is based on, defined human capital in his 1776 *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* as ‘the acquired and useful abilities of all the inhabitants or members of the society’¹⁰. More modern definitions of human capital have a more holistic view of the concept – it is a capital that does not only help to enlarge financial, manufactured, and natural capital, but also adds value to any situation of daily life.¹¹

Is there a global human capital in an interconnected global world? If culture is something shared by a group of people, has not the world become a place where people should share one global culture in order to understand each other, and have a more holistic view on what is right or wrong? Wouldn't that lead to peace, if we would see each other as parts of one big nation, instead of small little nations struggling to survive?

CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory is a social theory oriented towards critiquing and changing society as a whole. Whereas traditional theory is only oriented towards an understanding of society, critical theory examines the totality of society with all the major social sciences integrated in it, including geography, economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology and psychology. With reference to Kant's 18th century notion of *Critique of Pure Reason* and Marx's 19th century work *Das Kapital*, critique finds new applications in Critical theory.¹²

In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer elaborated certain characteristics of the theory - an ambivalence towards social domination for example. There was a certain doubt about the possibilities of human emancipation and freedom, which can be explained by the historical circumstances under which the work was published. The Marxist prediction of a social revolution resulting in the diminishment of the tension between the modes of production and the productive forces of society apparently had only led to fascism and totalitarianism. Jürgen Habermas formulated new ideas for a theory of critique in the 1960's, stating that the public sphere and communicative action could be ways of facing modern and post-modern challenges. The term postmodern critical theory is often associated with Michel Foucault, whose focus lay on power and discourse. He argued that by analyzing a discourse, power struc-

10 Smith, A. (1776)

11 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.7.

12 *Critical Theory*. Wikipedia. Viewed on 14.1.2011.

tures could be revealed, which would be a first step towards equality¹³.

Throughout all different approaches to critical theory, they all have one thing in common: the focus on the processes by which human communication, culture, and political consciousness are created. Habermas tried to define universal pragmatic principles through which mutual understanding is achieved, Roland Barthes defined semiotic rules by which objects obtain symbolic meanings, the psychoanalytic thinkers focussed on the psychological processes by which the phenomena of everyday consciousness are generated, and the episteme underlying our cognitive formations was Foucault's focus area. These processes help to observe and explain phenomena in society, going back to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which coined synthesis according to rules as the fundamental activity of the mind to create order of our experience.

Marx emphasized the next step, the practice of social revolution, instead of only analyzing the world: “Philosophers have only interpreted the world in certain ways; the point is to change it.”¹⁴

PRODUCTION PROCESSES

“The first premise of all human existence, and therefore of all history, is that human beings must be in a position to live in order to be able to make history. But, life involves before everything eating, drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself.”¹⁵

Karl Marx

Industrialization has led to an automatization of production processes. Single production steps are separated from each other, in the production cycle of e.g. an apple it can happen that they are cultivated in Great Britain, flown to China for waxing, to be brought back to the UK to be then exported to other European countries. When we look back in history to a society which was mainly employed in agriculture (between 1740 and 1850 the proportion of people working in farming fell from about three quarters to one quarter¹⁶), one characteristic becomes apparent: our labour was not separated in singular steps that alienated the worker from the results of his work.

The alienation as a result of the division of labour is a concept introduced by Karl Marx, a key figure of the critique of capitalism and the social changes brought about with the Industrial Revolution. Marx wrote that “with this division of labour”, the worker is “de-

13 Van Loon, B. (2001)

14 Marx, K. (1888)

15 Marx, K. (1846) p. 16.

16 InfoBritain. *Travel Through History In The UK: The Industrial Revolution*, viewed on 14.1.2011.



Charles Chaplin in *Modern Times* (USA, 1936).

pressed spiritually and physically to the condition of a machine.”¹⁷ He believed that the fullness of production is essential to human liberation. The division of labour could, according to his beliefs, only be accepted as a temporary necessary evil. Adam Smith, on the contrary, wrote in the first sentence of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), that division of labour represents a qualitative increase in productivity as the essence of industrialism. “The specialization and concentration of the workers on their single subtasks often leads to greater skill and greater productivity on their particular subtasks than would be achieved by the same number of workers each carrying out the original broad task.”¹⁸ This brings us to Marx’s definition of the modes of production (in German: *Produktionsweisen*, meaning ‘the ways of producing’) which typically consist of productive forces (human labour power and the means of production) and social and technical relations of production (such as property, power and control relations, relations between people and the objects of their work and the relations between social classes).¹⁹

Charlie Chaplin, a film maker and comedian who impressively always had his finger on the pulse of time, produced several movies that commented on big societal changes before history was even written. With movies such as *Goldrush* (1925), *Modern Times* (1936), and *The Great Dictator* (1940), Chaplin was always ahead of time and managed to communicate his leftist opinions via humour and comedy without being ridiculous or meaningless. Particularly in *Modern Times*, Chaplin tackles the problems that industrialization and working on the assembly line has brought upon people. His famous character, the Little Tramp, struggles for survival in a modern world affected by the Great Depression.

17 Marx, K. (1844)

18 Smith, A. (1776)

19 Marx, K. (1858)

The ability to produce and the active participation in social relations were regarded by Marx as two essential characteristics of human beings. In capitalist production, these relations are at ill – in order to survive, people must produce and consume, and to do so they enter relations they are unable to control. Marx argued that the mode of production employed by a society also shapes the conditions of the distribution, the circulation and the consumption of wealth in a society. When either one of those relations change, a conflict with the existing mode of production comes into being, resulting in a social conflict that can only be solved with a new mode of production. “The nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production.”²⁰

To Marx, the human need to shape his environment by means of production is inherent in his nature. In Marxist terms, all we actively transform is ‘labour force’. This definition comes close to Benjamin Franklin’s definition of humans as ‘man as the tool-making animal’ - *homo faber* (Latin for ‘Man the Smith’ or ‘Man the Maker’), a term defined by Hannah Arendt and Max Scheler; similar to Henri Bergson’s definition of intelligence of humans in *The Creative Evolution* (1907): the “faculty to create artificial objects, in particular tools to make tools, and to indefinitely variate its makings.”²¹

20 Marx, K., (1846) p.7.

21 *Homo Faber*. Wikipedia, viewed on 14.1.2011.

~~“All men are designers. [...] Any attempt to separate design, to make it a thing-by-itself, works counter to the fact that design is the primary underlying matrix of life.
[...] Design is the conscious and intuitive effort to impose meaningful order.”~~

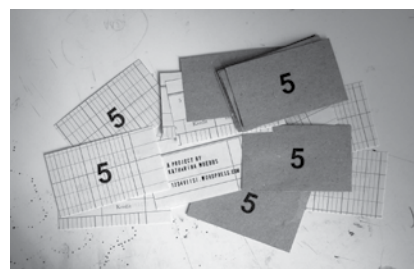
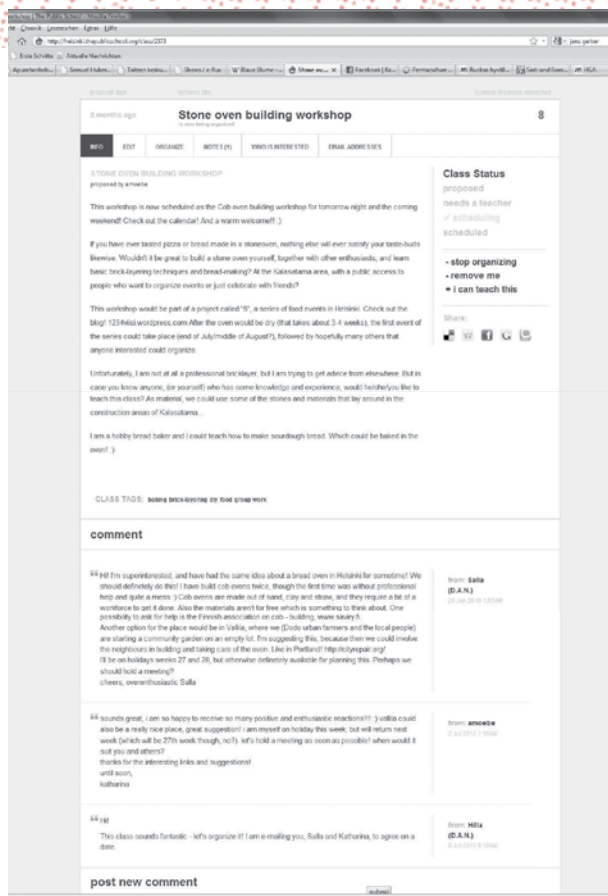
VIKTOR PAPANEK

OVEN WORKSHOP

In order to create a network of people and to have an oven to use for the first event, an oven needed to be built. After long struggles with oven masters and myself I finally came about an idea: to put the oven building workshop on the website of the *Public School Helsinki*. I was fortunate enough to receive an enthusiastic answer by food activist and guerilla gardener Salla Kuuluvainen (see interview p.292) who brought her friend Tanja Korvenmaa (see interview p.78) along to our first meeting. She was at that time in charge of the secretary and facilitation responsibilities at the *HUB Helsinki* (see p.69). Together, we were able to organize and set up a workshop consisting of three phases: the planning night, the material retrieval and the building weekend. An international group of about +- 15 enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds gathered for the planning at the *HUB Helsinki*. We started from total scratch with basically no knowledge. All information was retrieved from the internet (see p.70), supplemented by the experiences that both Tanja and Salla had gathered in workshops in Germany and England.

The planning night was followed by two days of material retrieval; we had organized ourselves so that everybody had a different task to accomplish. After the material group had found out where to get clay and bricks, almost the whole group met up to get the materials together. The clay was dug up from a forest spring in Maunula, the bricks for the oven's base originate from a demolition site in Suvilahti. The sand was retrieved from the building site in Kalasatama, the straw were left overs from the citygardeners who had used it for their vegetable garden. Finally, the building phase could begin.

We gathered in the morning of the first weekend of August at the Kalasatama container square to start constructing together. The group consisted of a variety of people, such as Sarah Alden, environmental artist from Canada, Gaye Amus, kindergarten teacher from Turkey, Berndt, a Norwegian hippie who had just arrived from a Rainbow gathering in Kuopio, Elissa Eriksson, textile designer, Anna Haukka, environmental biologist, Tanja Korvenmaa, secretary at the HUB, Salla Kuuluvainen, food activist, Valtteri Maja and Matti from Finland, Daniel Milligan, biologist from Scotland/Egypt/Finland, my dear sister Rebekka Moebus, fashion designer from Germany/Finland, Joel Rosenberg, photographer and artist from Finland, Felix Rost, food technician from Germany, Vappu Kuuluvainen, who provided us with drum music while 'puddling' and building, and Hilla, Outi, Samuli, Päivikki, Anna, and all those who popped by to lay some bricks and help out for a while. All of us experienced these incredible workshop days full of fun, work, discussions, surprises, and positive spirit together. With the help of a free pdf-manual from a blog (clayoven.wordpress.com) and many group discussions and democratic deci-



(from above downwards) header of the oven blog; Public School Helsinki post that led to the workshop; Facebook event of the workshop; screenshot of the project's blog; business cards.

sions, we actually managed to build a working cob oven! The work was officially finished one week after the building weekend because we got interrupted by the biggest storm of the whole summer (and also because we ran out of time after having finished the second layer). After two weeks of drying, the building team gathered again to test the oven. It worked perfectly! The official oven warming party could be announced – it coincided with the plan of the environmental organization *dodo* to have a harvest party of their guerilla garden on the other side of the harbour. The plan to put the harvest as toppings on pizza which would be baked in the new oven emerged out of these two coinciding events. In the beginning of September, the oven had its official inauguration party together with the *dodo* community, the oven building group, and all friends and relatives who got to know about the event. It turned into a huge party with live concerts, a harvest buffet, and a DIY-pizza-table. Around 100 pizzas were made during the night and the self-built oven proved to be working perfectly.

The long-planned series of events could now start, since there was an oven and a network of people. The first event *1/5:FERTILIZE* (see p.85) took place only one day later. Since then, the oven has been open for public use, which has been coordinated via a blog (*stadinuuni.blogspot.com*), set up and regularly updated by the building group. The blog contains a calendar which shows the events that are planned and confirmed. People who want to organize events or simply bake some bread, pizza, or cake with friends can make a reservation by sending an email with a description of the event to the following address: *saviuunihelsinki@gmail.com*. During the time the weather conditions allowed the oven to be used, we had about 15 events of Helsinki citizens, who had heard about the oven via the numerous press articles or the news feature on MTV3 in Mid-September.

In mid-May, I had set up a blog in order to document the process of the project and to show the project and its process to other people. I printed business cards with the address of the blog and gave them away to as many people as possible. The blog was a very important tool for the documentation process. It also served as a vital platform to gather and share information about events and their theoretical background. As you will notice in the now following articles, the open and democratic character of social media characterized this workshop. You will find some of the original blog posts documenting the process in chronological order, supplemented with pictures of the oven's history on the following fold-out spread (see p. 56/57).



Simon's blog 'The Clay Oven' from where we retrieved most information. I contacted him after the workshop and he was so glad about our work to feature an article about the oven.



The first mention of the oven in the press was on the same weekend in the metro-paper and on-line on omakaupunki.fi.

The Finnish newspaper 'Helsingin Sanomat' featured an article about the oven in August 2010. The magazine 'Kirkko & Kaupunki' interviewed me about the workshop, as did the national TV channel MTV3. I baked German sourdough buns for the interview and enjoyed them together with the reporter Mika Tommela.



More info to be found at:

<http://stadinuuni.blogspot.com>

<http://1234viisi.wordpress.com>

CO-DESIGN

Co-design can be used as a 'catch-all term'¹ to describe design approaches that encourage participation. It literally means 'designing with (others)', if the prefix co (com, Latin=with) is translated. Immanuel Kant's observation that in order to question an existing situation, one must have some information or knowledge about it - which he called 'a priori knowledge'² - is a basic belief of the Co-design philosophy. The main idea is democratic and based on the belief that all people are different and therefore should be part of the design process. The involvement of many different actors offers the opportunity to make a design outcome more effective and adapt to the real needs of people. Co-design offers both stakeholders and actors a mutual learning process involving real problems and situations. It has the potential to generate new values in the design scene, but also demands a new set of skills and tools. All Co-design disciplines are approaches focused merely on processes and design methods rather than representing a certain style.

A typical Co-design process starts with the design brief that all parties mutually agree on, followed by the formation of a design team, the ideation and conceptualization, prototyping, proposing, selection of a proposal, and specification and detailing³. The next phase is particular for Co-Design: the design outcome is applied and the resulting experience offers the possibility to learn and redesign, to both stakeholders and actors.

Co-Design projects can be initiated by professionals from the creative fields such as designers, architects, and urban design planners, but also by citizen initiatives, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and other experts and consultants. This character trait gives Co-design a political dimension since it empowers anyone to have an impact through the means of participation, comparable to the processes of direct democracy.

The Co-design philosophy is reflected in a number of emerging and historical already established design methods such as participatory design, user-centred design, transformation design and Metadesign, which will be explained further in the following articles.

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

Participatory design found its beginnings in co-determination laws in Scandinavia and US labour laws in the 1950s. Those laws aimed at the empowerment of workers to actively participate in the decision-making process in the workplace. The movement developed further in the 70s, when collaborative and open practices perfectly suited the spirit of the time. One of the heroes of the approach was Ivan Illich, a philosopher and Roman

1 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 147.

2 Kant, I. (1781)

3 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.148.

priest, who published the much accredited and radical books *Deschooling society* and *Tools for Conviviality*. According to him, the people's "freedom to make things among which they can live (...) according to their own taste"⁴ was the first step in deinstitutionalizing society.

Participatory design opposes the top-down decision-making of work hierarchies and encourages people to play an active part in the systems they are part of. At many times, it finds application in computer soft- and hardware development, science and interaction design since it is very suitable to redesign systems. Architects and product designers also have applied the method and generated promising outcomes. According to the information scientist John M. Carroll, participatory design involves the following dimensions: domains of human activity, roles of stakeholders in a design, types of shared design representations and the relationship of users to design activity with respect to changes in their knowledge and skill⁵, which would mean that the user does not only profit from the results of the process, but also from the learning process itself.

A version of participatory design, user-centred design, is an approach embraced by product designers to maximize the 'user fit'. It is questionable whether the resulting economic profit or the happiness of the user is the primary motivation of this approach; in any case, the primary goal is to prevent bad design solutions which is good for the user, the environment, and the economy. Indeed, user-centered design is a useful and important approach that puts a central focus on the user during the design process. Though consulting with users, it does not allow them to make the decisions nor are they equipped with the tools that the experts use.

As already mentioned above, research projects on user participation in systems development have a long history in Scandinavian countries with its beginnings dating back to the 1970s. Action research was a way of approaching problems at workplaces - the 'collective resource approach' developed strategies and techniques to influence the design and use of computer applications at the workplace through active cooperation between researchers and workers. It was a win-win situation for both parties - researchers got their results and the people they worked with could apply the results to improve their working conditions.

Nowadays, Scandinavian countries still apply participatory design research methods on a regular basis, and are therefore important actors in the active development of the methods with a new focus on industry.

Participatory design is especially well-suited for urban planning projects. Communities

4 Illich, I. (1973)

5 Carroll, J.M. (2006) *Design Issues*, vol 22, no 2, Note 40.



Part's website www.part.fi;
WDC 2012's internet appearance.

have the opportunity to get together, voice their hopes, wishes and needs to actively design their surroundings together. It is a chance for all participants to improve social relations and understand the needs and wants of their neighbours better. Participants are involved in the initial exploration and problem definition phase, the ideation phase for solution finding, and during the development phase to help with the evaluation of proposed solutions. In the field of urban planning, a growing demand for greater consideration of community opinions in major decision-making developed during the 1960s. Many people felt like they were not being planned 'for' but planned 'at'.⁶ In Britain, the idea that the public should participate in urban planning processes was first raised in 1965. Nowadays, public workshops and hearings have now been included in almost every planning endeavour.⁷

The urban planning and architecture office Part oy, which has been important partner in the establishment of the oven workshop, organized community get-togethers for Helsinki citizens to ask what they would wish for in the Kalasatama area (see p.91) which will be under construction for the next 20 years. They have been cooperating closely with the city of Helsinki in order to create new places for people to hang out and build culture. Next year, Helsinki is going to be the World Design Capital 2012. Their theme fits the current spirit - the theme is: 'How could design be embedded in everyday life?' People are actively asked to participate and propose ideas themselves in disregard of their professional backgrounds. The role of design is called into question and answers on how to re-define design are looked for through the proposals. Following an excerpt from the website:⁸

6 Nichols, D. (2009)

7 Wheeler, S. (2004) p. 46.

8 WDC Helsinki 2012. *Come and build the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 Year!*, viewed on 10.1.2011.

Come and build the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 Year!

The International Design Foundation is inviting proposals for programmes. World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 is a unique opportunity to do important things – things with the seeds of change in them. The theme of the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 Year, Open Helsinki – Embedding Design in Life, is a future-oriented idea.

The World Design Capital is more than a year-long event. We have a wide conception of design and its possibilities. The World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 programme consists of events and deeds that make use of design as a wide-ranging tool of cultural, social and economic development.

1. Open city – preconditions for a better life for city dwellers

We are searching for inspiring ways for city residents to participate in and actively influence the development of their living environment. This is related, among other things, to the city environment, communality, sustainable development and the renewal of public services based on residents' needs.

2. Global responsibility – a new role for design

We are searching for solutions that promote happiness and quality of life. We realise projects where design and design thinking have a new role as triggers for change. As the Design Capital, we are also searching for connections to people, organisations and solutions throughout the world.

3. Roots for new growth – Embedded Design

We are searching for new ways to utilise design as a source of growth in a sustainable way. We expect growth in business and also as increased well-being measured in other ways. The core idea of World Design Capital 2012 has been Open Helsinki – Embedded Design in Life. Embedded Design extends the area of applicability of design from goods to services and systems. It brings the methods of design and the needs of users to planning from the beginning.

The international organization Project for Public Spaces provides a platform for communities to participate and co-design public spaces. They openly provide insights that independent design professionals such as architects or even local government planners may not have. According to their belief, rigorous participation is the essential ingredient for successful environments. With their 'Placemaking approach', they aspire to "help citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs"⁹ On their website, they describe what placemaking is and what it isn't:

9 Project for Public Spaces. *About PPS*, viewed on 23.2.2011.

It IS:

Community-driven - Visionary - Function before form - Adaptable - Inclusive - Focused on creating destinations - Flexible - Culturally aware - Ever changing - Multi-disciplinary - Transformative - Context-sensitive - Inspiring - Collaborative - Sociable

It is NOT:

Imposed from above - Reactive - Design-driven - A blanket solution - Exclusionary - Monolithic development - Overly accommodating of the car - One-size-fits-all - Static - Discipline-driven - Privatized - One-dimensional - Dependent on regulatory controls - A cost/benefit analysis - Project-focused - A quick fix¹⁰

Other inspiring projects such as the Oregon city repair project is another form of participatory design which involves solely the community to co-design and improve their environment without traditional involvement from local government or professionals. Instead, only volunteers from the community initiated and run the project. The project was quite successful and proves how much power the individual has when well-organized as a community. "City Repair began in Portland, Oregon with the idea that localization – of culture, of economy, of decision-making – is a necessary foundation of sustainability. By reclaiming urban spaces to create community-oriented places, we plant the seeds for greater neighborhood communication, empower our communities and nurture our local culture."¹¹

This project leads to another branch that very recently emerged called *Transformation design*, formulated by the now defunct RED group at the UK Design Council. It is a growing community of practice that welcomes professional as well as amateur designers as members and embraces the diversity that emerges out of such an openness. The aims are highly idealistic: fundamental change in national systems or company culture, design beyond tradition, and the creation of fundamental change¹². This approach is also redefining the role of the designer as the 'auteur', who defines his own brief, independent or only interdependent from a company's brief.¹³

All the participatory design approaches have one thing in common: they are about a certain mindset and attitude about people with the democratic call for everybody's voice. "The new rules are the rules of networks, not hierarchies."¹⁴ Participatory design can be seen as a move of end-users into the world of researchers and developers. The transdisciplinary tendency is also apparent in many of the emerging programmes

10 Project for Public Spaces. *What is Placemaking?*, viewed on 14.1.2011.

11 *City Repair*, viewed on 14.1.2011.

12 Burns, C., Cottam, H., Vanstone, C. and Winhall, J. (2006)

13 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 150.

14 Sanders, E. B.-N. (2002) p. 1-7.

offered by design schools such as the MA programme *Transdisciplinary Design Practice*, (see p.179) which the accredited New York Parson Design School introduced in their study curriculum. Another new design approach worth to be emphasized is ‘metadesign’, which will be described as follows.

METADESIGN

The first ideas about ‘metadesign’ emerged in the 1980’s with the implementation of information technologies in the practices of design and art. With the development and expansion of the internet, the movement received more interest in the late 90s and is now respected as an emergent new approach to Co-design that goes beyond those of participatory and user-centred design.

The main concern of metadesign are the global relations on our planet with capitalist economies, industrialized societies, mass production, and the continuous unsustainable use of ending resources. Metadesign recognizes the need for a holistic new view on design practice in order to develop tools and methods to transform the average person’s attitudes and behaviours. Since governments are too linked with the global economy, they are not likely to achieve such a goal – therefore it is up to the people to become active. The introduction of more design thinking (see p.388) could be a solution to the problem since it offers creative thinking methods ‘outside the box’ vital for change. Most designers are educated in a system that still focuses on economies, their training is focused on specific areas and does rarely see society as a whole. They are specialists within their field, but often not able to truly think beyond the borders of their discipline.

“Meta-design characterizes objective techniques and processes for creating new media and environments that allow the owners of the problem to act as designers”¹⁵, empowering users to engage in informed participation.

Avantgarde-thinker Buckminster Fueller proposed already in the 60s the concept of ‘Prime Design’ – a way for society to reform itself by reshaping the modes of eating, clothing, housing, meeting and communicating. Currently, research towards a formulation of metadesign as a profession is being done. Metadesign could become ‘a superset of co-design’¹⁶, a framework of methods and tools to approach the ethical, social, and environmental problems designers are faced with. This is a highly complex task, therefore researchers of the *Goldsmiths University of London* have developed a number of tools that are designed to support a metadesign process¹⁷:

15 Fischer, G. (2003)

16 *Metadesign*. Wikipedia, viewed on 14.2.2011.

17 Personal communication with John Wood in 2008, in Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.221.

1. *The Dream Exchange*
2. *Team Roles and Action Types*
3. *Casting for Team Members*
4. *Cultural Props*
5. *The ‘I-to-We’ Cycle*
6. *Cross-championing*
7. *Building team-identities*
8. *The Team turns inside-out*
9. *Mapping team evolution*
10. *Synergy mapping*
11. *Mapping role and scale*
12. *Mapping relations in systems*
13. *Mapping the equilibrium in systems*
14. *Collective storytelling*
15. *Metaphors be with you*
16. *Using bisociation in preference to conflict*
17. *4-way-thinking*
18. *4-way-innovation*
19. *4-way-ethics*
20. *Win-win-win-win*
21. *Team diagnosis*

Metadesign encourages and allows social creativity to everybody with a problem – everybody can act as a designer in a sense. Therefore, metadesign tries to under-design environments in order to leave space for others to become creative and generate ideas. Metadesign is evolutionary because it never stops to evolve – it is a system encouraging a ‘spontaneous culture of design’.¹⁸

John Wood sees metadesign as a superset of design – a transdisciplinary approach to create altruistic change. He emphasizes the importance of team building, the ‘metadesign teams’, that should always consist of entre-donneurs as well as entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Wood believes in ten characteristics of metadesign: auspicious, indescribable, self-steering, fractal, holistic, synergistic, synergy-seeking, opportunity-making, innovations-integrating, and paradigm-shifting.¹⁹ The idea of re-designing Design is reflected in the name of metadesign, ‘meta’ meaning ‘after’ or ‘beside’ (from the Greek language) which also implies the possibility of transformation. According to Aristotle’s theory of design, the ‘cause’ of design was its final state, similar to the concept of au-

18 Alexander, C. (1964)

19 Wood, J. (2008)

topoiesis, a term originally introduced by Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in 1972: “An autopoietic machine is a machine organized (...) as a network of processes of production (...) of components which: 1) through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes that produced them; and 2) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in space in which they (the components) exist by specifying the topological domain of its realization as such a network.”²⁰

After all, metadesign offers possibilities and thoughts that have the potential to encourage designers to deal with difficult situations of a complex world. It is a vision of ‘direct democracy’ and should be explored further by the international design community.²¹

DIY

“Our educational system, in its entirety, does nothing to give us any kind of material competence. In other words, we don’t learn how to cook, how to make clothes, how to build houses, how to make love, or to do any of the absolutely fundamental things of life. The whole education that we get for our children in school is entirely in terms of abstractions.”

Philosopher Alan Watts, 1967

The do-it-yourself-movement started out in the late 1960s, when first environmental movements started to establish. In the 1970s, DIY started to spread through the North American population of college- and recent-college-graduate age groups. Most of the time, these movements related to the social and environmental concerns that were answered with visionary projects encouraging the consideration of those issues in everyday life. Substantially, self-education and self-sufficiency were idealistic approaches of early environmentalists. Projects such as the *Whole Earth Catalogue* by Stewart Brand or the book *Self-sufficiency* by John Seymour became the bibles of a generation fed up with industrial mass products and the dependency of institutionalized systems.

Brand, a young biologist, established together with friends and family a catalogue featuring products and services needed to live alternatively by just ‘doing-it-yourself’, inspiring new views on global issues. Apple founder Steve Jobs describes it as “some sort of (...) Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along. It was idealistic and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.”²² In the prologue of the catalogue, the function and principles are explained as follows:

20 Maturana, H. and Varela, F. ([1st edition 1973] 1980) p. 78.

21 John Chris Jones cited in Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 152.

22 Jobs, S. (2005) *Stanford commencement address*.



(left) The first Whole Earth cover image. (right) Sample spread from the WE-catalogue.

“An item is listed in the catalogue if it is deemed:

- 1. Useful as a tool,*
- 2. Relevant to independent education,*
- 3. High quality or low cost,*
- 4. Not already common knowledge,*
- 5. Easily available by mail.”²³*

According to the introduction of the catalogue, church, governments, business and formal education has done their share in shaping people and their knowledge. The power of the individual to decide himself what to learn and how to shape his environments should be recognized and seized via the tools and inspirations the catalogue offered to its readers. Similar to the philosophy of Ivan Illich, tools were regarded as a means to express yourself other than products that were solely consumed. “Tools accept more than one utilisation, sometime even distant from its original means, so a tool accepts expression from its user. On the contrary, with a machine, humans become servants, their role consisting only of running the machine in a unique purpose.”²⁴ Tools were very broadly defined in the catalogue, ranging from ‘informational tools’ such as books, professional journals, courses, and classes; specialized items such as carpenter’s and mason’s tools, garden tools, welding equipment, different materials, etc. The catalogue had a huge influence on the do-it-yourself attitude and movement of the late 1960s and appealed to a broad range of people in the US.

An array of DIY-magazines and books were published in the following decades, with Sunset Books’ line of how-to books being the first to create real books containing DIY-articles. As soon as the internet started to rise, the movement immediately found its way into the web. *House.net* was the earliest site where users shared and discussed informa-

23 *Whole Earth Catalog*. Fall 1969.

24 Illich, I. (1973)

tion, *HomeTips.com* soon followed in 1995, which was the first free DIY-content written by experts. Since then, DIY can be found throughout the web – to many, the internet can answer any how-to question just by ‘googling’ it. Indeed, you can find even instructions on how to build working cob ovens! It only proves: people have the inherent urge to know how to do things that formal education is not teaching us and the internet has finally made it possible to satisfy this thirst for knowledge.

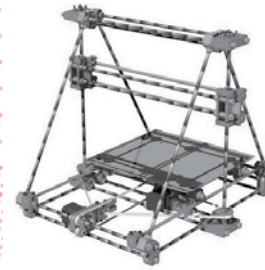
The DIY-videos that came along with home VCRs in the 1970s were followed by an explosion of TV programs: in 1979, *This Old House*, starring Bob Vila, premiered on PBS; in 1999, the *DIY Network cable television channel* came out with huge success in the US and Canada²⁵. Services like Youtube, launched in 2005 by three former PayPal employees, added a new dimension to the DIY movement by enabling anybody to be a teacher simply by filming himself with a web cam and putting it online.

DIY has also had a great influence on subcultures, starting with the punk movement in the 1970s. Bands organized themselves instead of relying on big music labels and managers and started to publish self-made tutorial zines which encouraged the youth to participate in the DIY culture. The music industry has made a big leap towards DIY with the introduction of the internet and Myspace, where bands had the possibility to distribute their music globally and for free.

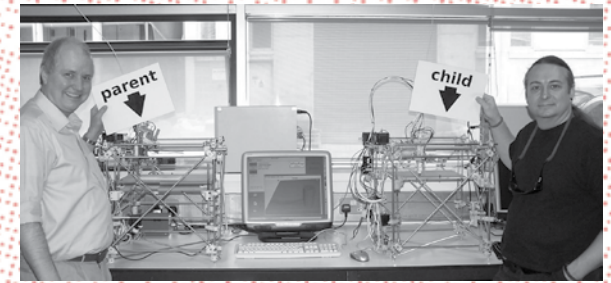
People are starting to recognize their individual power in our modern industrialized society. With an awareness of global problems such as labour exploitation and environmental issues such as climate change and oil peak, a new consumer class has emerged in the past years: consuming less or more consciously has become a political statement. The slogan ‘think globally, act locally’ (see p.221) inspires many to try to exploit one’s actions and consumption by learning how to make goods themselves, buying local goods and services, and boycotting the big multinational companies. Dumpster divers live only off the food, clothes, and items considered waste by the rest of society and prove the possibility to live self-sufficiently even in a city – of course only if not everybody follows this lifestyle (see p. 284).

If we look in the future, we might also think of a culture of professional self-production with personal 3-D-plotting machines, such as the RepRap, a project begun in 2005 by Adrian Bowyer. The RepRap is a 3-D-plotter programmed to reproduce itself, which means it can be distributed by anyone who owns one. The goal of the project is to give individuals anywhere on the planet the opportunity to use a desktop manufacturing system that enables the individual to manufacture many of the artifacts used in everyday

²⁵ *Do it yourself*. Wikipedia, viewed on 10.1.2011.



The RepRap.



Adrian Bowyer (left) and Vik Olliver (right) with their project.

life, independent of industrial production and for little money. “The point of RepRap is replication and evolution.”²⁶ Projects such as the local company *Freedom of Creation* focusses on 3-D-plotted designs and is therefore capable of producing anything drafted and drawn on the computer, enabling customized and one-off pieces. The question about the quality and purpose of those objects stays open to the designer in charge.

HUBS

“We’re a social enterprise with the ambition to inspire and support imaginative and enterprising initiatives for a better world. The Hub is a global community of people from every profession, background and culture working at ‘new frontiers’ to tackle the world’s most pressing social, cultural and environmental challenges.”

Where are the physical spaces for the people who connect via the internet? So-called hubs offer a virtual network to connect people with similar ideas about the world and, in consequence, physical platforms and tools to turn these ideas into concrete projects. The spirit of Hub culture can be best explained with the idea behind ‘serendipity’: “a propensity for making fortunate discoveries while looking for something unrelated”²⁷, which offers the potential to unintentionally make valuable discoveries. The network of Hubs facilitates the possibility of finding like-minded people, ideas and projects whilst possibly in the search for something else.

So far, there are Hubs in 27 cities spread throughout the world, from North and South America over South Africa, Europe, and India. Constantly, there are new Hubs popping up promoting and spreading the word to more and more people. The Hub Helsinki was founded in 2009 during the Design Week Helsinki in a summer workshop I participated

²⁶ RepRap. *Future Plans*, viewed on 23.2.2011.

²⁷ *Serendipity*. Wikipedia, viewed on 22.2.2011.

in. Since then, it has been actively arranging meetings and lectures on a huge range of topics with changing hosts. Hubs are a very valuable venue for any city. As it is the case for all innovations, it seems to be difficult to make the concept comprehensive to people. On the Hub's general website, one can find more definitions of what a Hub is: "We set out to create places that borrow from the best of a member's club, an innovation agency, a serviced office and a think-tank to create a very different kind of innovation environment. Places with all the tools and trimmings needed to grow and develop new ventures. Places to access experience, knowledge, finance and markets. And above all, places for experience and encounter, full of diverse people doing amazing things. We call these places Hubs. In many ways we're just getting started. And we'd like you to be part of it."²⁸ Maybe, the idea can only be understood by experiencing it yourself, so I encourage everybody to visit a Hub when he or she gets the chance.

INTERNET

According to Manuel Castells, "the story of the creation and development of the Internet is one of an extraordinary human adventure".²⁹ In regard of the obstacles and barriers that had to be overcome in order to build up one of the most important inventions of the 20th century, this statement is more than true. The Internet finds its origins in the 1960s, when the US military attempted to mobilize research resources from universities into computer networks. The Defense Department of the US formed the *Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA)* in 1958, which set up the *ARPANET* in 1969; a computer network which offered a way of sharing computing time online between various research groups. The *National Science Foundation*, as well as private funding led to worldwide participation in the development of new networking technologies. After a range of nodes, technologies and networks had emerged over the years, they merged eventually together and formed the Internet.

The development of the world wide web, an information-sharing application invented by Tim Berners-Lee, made the global spread of the Internet possible in 1990. He defined the software that made it possible to retrieve and contribute information from participating computers within the network: http, html, and url. The www-browser software was released in 1991 by Cern, the high-energy physics research center in Geneva, where Berners-Lee was working. The first commercial browser, *Netscape Navigator*, which was based on his software, was released in 1994. *Microsoft* finally discovered the Internet and released its own browser, the *Internet Explorer* with *Microsoft 95* in 1995. By the mid-

90's, the Internet was privatized, and user-friendly browsers made the world wide web available to the public. For most people, business and society, the Internet was born in 1995, but the original idea already began in the early 1960s. By now, an estimated quarter of Earth's population used the services of the Internet. It is virtually incorporated in every aspect of modern life.

The Internet was born at an intersection of big science, military research, and libertarian culture.³⁰ It has no centralized governance in technologies, access and usage. The openness of the Internet architecture is its main strength: every user becomes a "shaper of the whole network" by using it.³¹ It plays a major role in providing a platform of knowledge-sharing and global communication. Since its implementation it has grown rapidly into a huge system of interconnected computer networks using the standard Internet Protocol Suite. Billions of users exist worldwide and the number is constantly growing. Millions of private, public, academic, economic and political networks are hosted by the internet, which carries an incredible amount of information resources, services and knowledge. Until the present day, the Internet has managed surprisingly well to keep its initial philosophy of democratic access to knowledge by sharing it for free.

Traditional communication media such as telephone and mail have been redefined by the internet, and new kinds of media such as social media came into being. In the beginning, many internet critics observed the new ways of communicating via computers as impersonal and dangerous, but it became quickly clear that the positive potential of the new technology outnumbered most negative effects. Media and knowledge control became suddenly independent from governments and societies (at least in those countries in which the internet is not under control of undemocratic governments such as China and such, even though even under controlled access of the internet knowledge people find their ways to retrieve bits of 'forbidden information'). Human interaction and instant communication became suddenly possible with a huge potential of building up new and growing networks throughout the whole Internet community in disregard to actual physical space and time, facilitated by the introduction of social media and Web 2.0.

Social media is a term to define the sum of media used for social interaction using Internet-based applications. Those applications are highly accessible tools that are easy to understand and use by the common user who wants to publish and share content on the internet with a group of users. Social media facilitates social interaction via the global network of internet users, independent of mainstream media and common

28 HUB, viewed on 26.2.2011.

29 Castells, M. (2001) p.9.

30 Castells, M. (2001) p.17.

31 Ibid p.27.

publishing techniques. Distinct from traditional media such as newspapers, television and magazines, social media distinguishes itself through its high accessibility independent from geographical location, its inexpensiveness, and freedom of content. Social media makes it possible for people to inform and educate themselves from sources of their choice. Naturally, they have to evaluate the reliability of the sources themselves since the authors are not always professionals and retractable. Like industrial media, they have the possibility to reach huge audiences or small-scale communities. Two big advantages of social media are its recency and permanence – the delay between an event and the virtual response can be astonishingly short, which also applies to updating once published information. By offering forums, opinions can be exchanged through open discussions, which adds valuable insights to what people really think.

One of the most important social media inventions of the last decade was Facebook, a social networking site allowing users to connect with old and new friends, relatives and business partners. It was launched in 2004 as a small college-internal network and has rapidly grown into a global community of more than 500 million users. According to a study of Social Media Today of April 2010, an estimated 41.6% of the U.S. population has a Facebook account.³²

The term Web 2.0 describes “the whole of web applications that facilitate interactive systemic biases, interoperability, user-centered design, and developing the World Wide Web. A site providing these applications gives users within virtual communities the possibility to interact and collaborate with each other.”³³

Most or all of the content is merely user-generated, making the users to active ‘prosumers’ – consumers that are also producing instead of only passively consuming prefabricated contents. Websites, on the other hand, only allow to view content created and controlled by others (if not by oneself). Social networking sites such as *Facebook* or institutional intranets, social bookmarking sites such as *del.iciou.s*, blog portals such as *Wordpress* or *Blogspot*, wikis such as *Wikipedia*, video sharing sites such as *Vimeo* or *Youtube*, hosted services, web applications, mashups and folksonomies, the collective tagging of user-generated content to make the finding of materials easier, are all examples of Web 2.0 applications. With well-designed user interfaces and software and storage facilities, users are provided with everything needed to use the internet as a platform; an individual online desktop connected to the world. According to Best, rich user-experience, user participation, dynamic content, metadata, openness, freedom and collective intelligence are some of the many characteristics of Web 2.0.³⁴

32 Social Media Today. *41.6% of the U.S. population has a Facebook account*, viewed on 10.1.2011.

33 *Web 2.0*. Wikipedia, viewed on 18.1.2011.

34 Best, D. (2006)

“It’s a story about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before. It’s about the cosmic compendium of knowledge Wikipedia and the million-channel people’s network YouTube and the online metropolis MySpace. It’s about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes. It’s a story about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before.”

Lev Grossman

OPEN SOURCE

Peer review is a common practice in science, academics and technology. The open sharing of data and research is the only way to bring forward new ideas, thesis, and experiments. With the development of the internet in the 1980s came the free software movement that encouraged group collaboration to test and improve existing software. With the introduction of a public interface through the world wide web in the early 1990s, the global exchange of information and hence, a global peer review of data and research was made possible to anybody who had access to the internet.

The term ‘open source’ describes the nature of a product to be open and free for further development. In its very origins, it was mainly applied to products such as software (e.g. Linux, an operating system software starting in 1991) and open source content (such as Wikipedia, introduced in 2001) which are constantly updated, tested and improved by users. The open source model introduced new concepts on software development contrasting those usually used in commercial software companies. Through peer production, constantly updated ‘end-products’ are released for free to the public.

The mass collaboration enabled by the internet opened up new possibilities in the development of physical objects – in this context, the new term ‘open design’ has come up, meaning “the investigation and potential of open source and collaborative nature of the internet to create physical objects.”³⁵ The results of the open source philosophy have proven the advantages of not entirely protecting one’s creative work. Many software developers have demonstrated the possibilities of open IP to challenge profit-based businesses by introducing new business models. Collaboration in open source projects helps advance professional skills.

If we take a look at the issues the global community is facing, it only makes sense to collaborate on knowledge and methods from different cultures and geographies. The will to share is a key condition to achieve mass collaboration. The copyleft movement of

35 *Open design*. Wikipedia, viewed on 14.1.2011.

the 1970s, which challenged the traditional concept of protecting intellectual property via copyright rights, was taken a step further with the introduction of a new organization, the Creative Commons, in 2002. CC constantly develops and publishes IP licences which respond to the different needs of scientific, educational, and creative communities, ranging from full copyright over ‘some rights reserved’³⁶ to the public domain, giving all rights to the public. Lawrence Lessig, chairman of CC, hopes that the future is one where people increasingly embrace the idea of making content available to others.³⁷ The moderate version of Copyright and Copyleft enables artists to build and share content and be compensated for their creative work.

PUBLIC SCHOOL

“The Public School is not accredited, it does not give out degrees, and it has no affiliation with the public school system. It is a framework that supports autodidactic activities, operating under the assumption that everything is in everything.”³⁸

This is how the Public School presents itself on the internet, as a web-platform where people with similar interests and differing knowledge can exchange and organize themselves to meet in physical space in order to learn those things that are either not offered in normal educational curricula or not as easily attainable for the public because it would ask for applications and costly fees. This approach is highly democratic and altruistic since it organizes itself with a changing ‘hierarchy’ of volunteer facilitators in charge of pushing through popular or interesting proposals. The first *Public School* was initiated by Telic Arts Exchange in Los Angeles in 2008, a network of local offsprings has until now spread to cities such as Brussels, Helsinki, New York, Paris, Philadelphia and San Juan. The concept is relatively unknown and only waits to be discovered and explored by more people. Even Online encyclopedias and dictionaries do not have any relevant entries about the Public School yet. Wikipedia only explains the common concept of a ‘public school’: 1. (UK) A fee-charging private or independent school. 2. (North America, Australian) A publicly administered school³⁹, which is actually the very opposite of what it is trying to be (a free-of-charge public and independent school, administered by the public).

The concept of the Public School embodies the idealistic concepts of Ivan Illich about public education. Illich was a great exponent of alternative education models and radi-

36 *Creative Commons*, viewed on 26.2.2011.

37 Mau, B. (2004) p.93

38 Public School. *About*, viewed on 23.2.2011.

39 *Public School*. Wikipedia, viewed on 15.1.2011.



cally opposed the institutional education system. According to his ideas, universal education could only be achieved through “educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring”⁴⁰ Furthermore, he envisioned a network of peers who would enter their interests and match them up with others – the exact vision of the Public School:

“The operation of a peer-matching network would be simple. The user would identify himself by name and address and describe the activity for which he sought a peer. A computer would send him back the names and addresses of all those who had inserted the same description. It is amazing that such a simple utility has never been used on a broad scale for publicly valued activity.”⁴¹

Ivan Illich

TALKOOT

I first encountered the term ‘talkoot’ in the context of the oven building workshop, when the word was mentioned by one of the Finnish participants to describe the building process. According to him, the workshop could be compared to an ‘urban talkoot’. The word exists in different cultures with similar meaning, such as ‘bee’ or ‘barn raising’ in English, ‘imece’ in Turkish, ‘talgod’ in Estonian, ‘dugnad’ in Norwegian, ‘kaláka’ in Hungarian, ‘gadugi’ in Cherokee, and ‘tłoka’ in Polish, or ‘Nachbarschaftshilfe’ in German.⁴²

In Finland, it is an old tradition to help our your neighbour or the community in a village with volunteer work to build e.g. a barn, a house, an oven, or to harvest the fields. This tradition is still alive in old neighbourhoods on the countryside and at Finn’s mökkis (cottages). Andrew Paterson, a researcher in media lab at Taik in Helsinki, analyzed the lingual origins and meaning of the word ‘talkoot’ by comparing it to contemporary

40 Illich, I. (1971) *Deschooling Society*, retrieved on 15.1.2011.

41 Illich, I. (1971) Ch. six.

42 *Talkoot*. Wikipedia, viewed on 16.2.2011.

internet practices.⁴³ According to him, internet communication and web activity enlarge the 'social capital' of a society, referring to the term defined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (see p. 43). "Social capital is a sociological concept, which refers to connections within and between social networks. The core idea is "that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so do social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups".⁴⁴

With the expansion of big cities and people moving away from the countryside, social bonds between neighbours got lost. While we may not know the people who live next door, we might talk online to strangers from the other side of the world exchanging advice and asking for help. Yet it seems that virtual social networks are actually reviving real life social bonds, which is a very promising sign for the future. The oven workshop is a fine example of how people connected via an online platform, met in real life and collaborated on a project envisioned together with resulting social bonds that might last even longer than traditionally formed connections of people who had nothing else in common but being related or living next to each other.

WIKIPEDIA

According to Wikipedia's definition of itself, it is a "free, web-based, collaborative, multilingual encyclopedia project supported by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation"⁴⁵, featuring around 17 million articles in different languages, of which over 3.5 million are in English, written collaboratively by volunteers around the world. The basic principle of Wikipedia that anybody who wishes to contribute to the project can do so, and almost all of its existing articles can be edited.

Since the launch of the Wikipedia site through Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger in 2001, it has become the largest and most popular source of general information on the Internet with more than 365 million readers.⁴⁶ The name Wikipedia is a combination of the Hawaiian word wiki, meaning 'quick' (an internet term generally used to describe a technology for creating collaborative websites) and encyclopedia, and has been coined by Sanger.

From its very beginnings, Wikipedia has been strongly criticized for its lack of expertise, and accuracy, inconsistencies and reliability, even though the project has a list of very

43 Petterson, A. (2010)

44 Putnam, R. (2000)

45 *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia, viewed on 13.1.2011.

46 West, S. (2010)

strict policies on verifiability and a neutral point of view. Scholars who investigated on the topic found out that the quality of Wikipedia articles concerning scientific topics comes close to the one of the Encyclopedia Britannica (with a similar rate of errors). But who really writes Wikipedia? According to founder Jimmy Wales, only "a dedicated group of a few hundred volunteers" makes most of the contributions to Wikipedia, calling the project therefore "much like any traditional organization."⁴⁷ In a study, Wales found out that over 50% of all the edits are done by just 0.7% of the users (at the time: 524 people).⁴⁸ Compared to traditional and well-regarded encyclopedias like e.g. the Encyclopedia Britannica with 100 full-time editors and more than 4,000 expert contributors⁴⁹, this number seems to be relatively small. One must consider though that Wikipedia never claimed their contents to be comparable to the expertise level of traditional lexica. A certain degree of tolerance and own caution is required to appreciate the advantages of Wikipedia fully: on top of supplying users with free access to information, it can be considered a valuable resource of frequently updated news.

Wikipedia employs an open editing model. Every article offers the possibility for editing either anonymously or with a user account. Only registered users can create new articles. All contents are without authorship, meaning that articles do not belong to anybody's intellectual property. Controversial articles prone to vandalism undergo a special treatment, the 'pending changes' system, which allows edits to be verified first by an authorized Wikipedia editor before being published. Wales called a general editor review before edits to any article "neither necessary nor desirable", as practiced by the German Wikipedia version. Computer programs called Internet bots are in charge of removing vandalism in no time and of correcting spelling mistakes and stylistic issues.

A coverage of all human knowledge in the form of an online encyclopedia is the ideal goal of Wikipedia. Due to its digital format, it can cover far more topics than any conventional print encyclopedia, which led to controversial discussions on what to include and exclude, especially when it comes to politically sensitive topics. The People's Republic of China allows only limited access to Wikipedia articles. Nevertheless, Wikipedia is a powerful tool for the free contribution, distribution and access to knowledge in the global community.

47 *Wikipedia*. Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Kister, K.F. (1994)



“WE ARE ABLE TO DESIGN ENVIRONMENTS THAT USE THE NATURAL LAWS INSTEAD OF DIMINISHING OR TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THEM.”

PEOPLE'S PROFILE

Name: Tanja Korvenmaa

Born in: Tampere, grew up in Jyväskylä, Tuulenkylä community

Lives in: Tampere, Pispala Yellow House with six other young adults

Profession: Former facilitator at HUB Helsinki, now aspiring social entrepreneur

Free-time: Writing, reading, hiking, travelling, seeing friends F2F or online, cooking

What do you do?

I'm currently starting an enterprise with my friend, Johanna Kerovuori. It's called Co-housing Suomi and our aim is to help communities to be born, by a) helping people to find each others b) facilitate a learning program, where a group finds out what it needs to do in order to built a house. So at the moment, I'm studying social entrepreneurship in practice. :)

What is your background education?

I'm educated as a textile designer, never finished the school though. The more important education for me has been the years when I went to a self sustainable farm and stayed there in Eastern Finland by myself, and then spent one meaningful month in Germany, in the eco-village of Sieben Linden on an Ecovillage Design Education course, lead by Kosha Joubert. Since then I've studied empowering social dynamics, facilitation, systems intelligence and permaculture design.

What is a HUB? How were you involved with it?

I'm not so much involved at the Hub any more, though I'm partly using the Hub Tampere as my working space. The Hub is a place - a working space, a conference space, a meeting space - for entrepreneurs who see the benefit of networks - at the Hub you can get to know people who can support or compliment your own skills and tasks. The idea of the Hub is especially to be a meeting and working space for entrepreneurs (or students or..) who want to work for a better world by using entrepreneurship as a tool.

What is facilitation?

Facilitation is a word based on latin: "facil" means to make things easy, so a facilitator is in a group to make things easy: decision-making, creative process, vision sharing, con-

flict resolving, usually by leading people co-designed processes, like a bus driver. :)

What are your thoughts about the future of design? What kind of role could/should it have? What potentials?

I think design thinking will have a big role in the future. We have come to realize that the effects of our action have a very complex impact on everything. We are able to design environments that add to that complexity and use the natural laws instead of diminishing or taking advantage of them. So design thinking – especially two things: observing and collaboration and third: prototyping.

How would you define social entrepreneurship?

The idea of social entrepreneurship is to bring a third kind of niche in the field. Now we have a) businesses that measure their impact only by how much money is gathered to owners and b) governmentally owned social services that are run by taxes that these first businesses and their workers pay. This does not create much variation or opportunities for designing social services better, because there's only a little money. Social entrepreneurship creates a third area: a business, that offers a solution to a social or environmental problem and aims to be financially sustainable (e.g. sustaining the entrepreneur and the family maybe). This business competes in the traditional capitalist market – the client chooses. Financial sustainability is not the main aim though – solving the problem is. The impact of social businesses is measured also by other measures than money.

How do you define happiness?

Happiness is to be alive and breathe.

What is your biggest dream?

Right now it seems to be in two aspects: it's a stage of being, where I have my own small space, a living home with a garden, where I can always go back to. And then a work that nourishes the community and larger society. And I wish to travel to Congo. I've met a strong woman from there, somehow it struck me very deeply to understand that Congo is one of the richest countries in the world and then at the same time, there's a lot of violence and suffering just because the social system has collapsed. Now it's building up again – hopefully not following the example of Western countries.

Thank you!

The interview took place between Helsinki and Tampere via Skype on 27.2.2011.

II. ■ mains

The main course is usually the heaviest, heartiest, and most complex or substantive dish on a menu. The main ingredient is usually meat or fish; in vegetarian meals, the main course sometimes attempts to mimic a meat course. It is most often preceded by an appetizer, soup, and/or salad, and followed by a dessert.

1

CHAPTER 1: FERTILIZE

~~“Beneath the paving stones - the beach!” - Sous-~~
~~les pavés, la plage!~~

~~-ANONYMOUS GRAFFITI, PARIS 1968~~

1/5: FERTILIZE (earth)

vb (tr)

- 1. to provide (an animal, plant, or egg cell) with sperm or pollen to bring about fertilization;*
- 2. to supply (soil or water) with mineral and organic nutrients to aid the growth of plants;*
- 3. to make fertile or productive fertilizable , fertilisable adj*

The first event's main purpose was to gain attention, make people interested, and create a starting point of a growing network. Therefore, the location and concept of the event had to refer strongly to the contents important to this project: locality, participation, happening, tradition, ritual, culture, food, art, and design.

The revival of traditional local cultural knowledge stood in focus of the first event; of how to bake rieska, a Finnish flat bread found in numerous different variations all over the country. With bread history starting with flat breads ([see p.37](#)), the event series should also start with the very first and primitive bread type.

Another purpose of the event was to reinterpret and update traditional recipes, knowledge and proverbs in order to not only remember forgotten techniques and proliferations, but also to integrate them into present culture. Therefore, I asked people to bring one old, found or self-invented rieska recipe with them. In reference to old Finnish bread proverbs, I provided stamps with words taken out of them translated mainly to English to keep the nature of the event open for people from different cultures. These words could be assembled in new ways and therefore receive new contexts and meanings.

The location for the event was crucial to the nature of it – a public space with as much freedom for creation as possible. In a city like Helsinki and a country like Finland (where public space is generally under strict control of the city, the police, and the public eye), it was quite a challenge to find a suitable place. Through Cathérine's hint about the area and the plan to put up a temporary container village at the old harbour of Helsinki, Kalasatama, I went on an investigation of the area and immediately knew: I had found the perfect location.



DISCOVERING TRUE PUBLIC SPACE: KALASATAMA

Kalasatama is an area in Helsinki that is one of the biggest construction sites of the city. Plans to build a whole new city district were made in the past years and are momentarily turned into reality. In the meanwhile, the area is used by graffiti artists and urban citizens after the city employed the architecture and design office Part to develop an artistic program for the site. In summer 2010, 6 empty shipping containers that can be rented by artists and other interested organizations were put up to make the area more lively. Part encouraged people to participate freely by suggesting interesting projects for the container village.

Compared to other areas of Helsinki, the area is extremely anarchistic and free – for instance the fact that artists can legally produce huge graffiti paintings along the kilometres long graffiti wall is worthy of mention, since Helsinki follows a strict 0-tolerance policy towards graffiti and street art. The graffiti wall was always busy with people painting, and even though the ‘legal’ nature might not correspond to all spheres of graffiti art, it offers a great opportunity for Helsinki’s inhabitants to give it a try without getting into trouble with the law.

In the following theory part, you will find articles about Avant-garde movements, urban art forms, and art and design manifestos of different kinds. The Dadaists questioned just as much as the Situationists the status quo of society to create new forms of expression to make sense of the old by breaking it up and reinterpreting it. The Kalasatama harbour is the location that breathes a similar spirit - freedom of expression and creation, closeness to the city, and the reinterpretation of an formerly industrially relevant area that has lost its former spirit of efficient labour to artistic small-scale utopias.





5

WORK
IN
PROGRESS

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper with six pink circular markers.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper.





(left) The workstation with different kinds of flours, tools, and ingredients. (right) View of the container village from the other side with first people arriving.



(from left to right) Glasses; Flours, tools, and word stamps; People eagerly mixing doughs. Tristan kneading his first rieska.



(previous page) The word stamps taken from the Finnish bread proverbs displayed on the container walls by the oven. Pedro and Caterina from Portugal trying out the oven, successful result coming out.

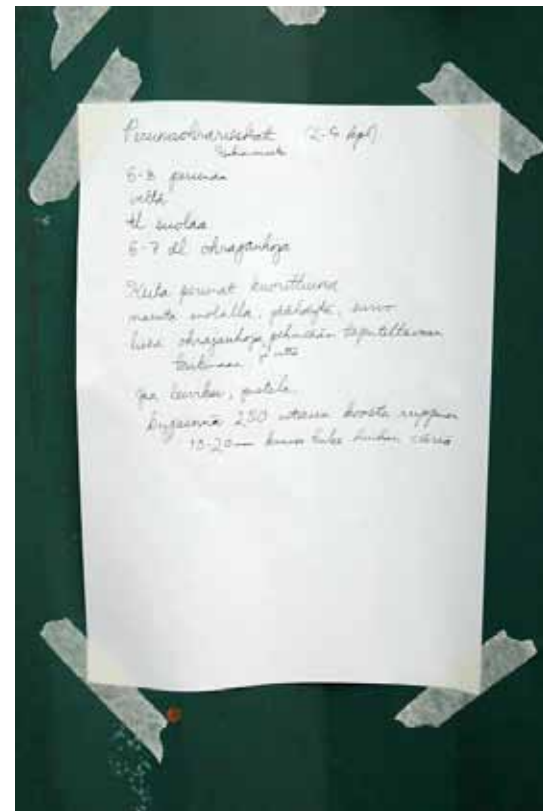
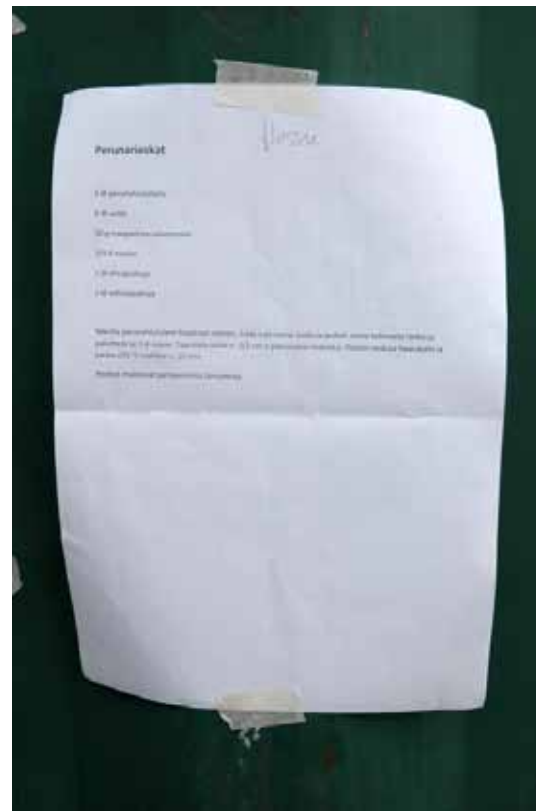


(from above left to down right) Chair, Ivan from Brazil, Hessu from Finland, Tristan from France, Caterina from Portugal, Felix from Germany, Elissa from Finland with Sharon from Hongkong, Daniel from Scotland, Pedro and Caterina from Portugal, Sarah from Canada, Ville, Sirkku and Peikko from Finland.





Different kinds of ryeska: whole grain mix on cabbage leaf, barley grandma-style, potatoe ryeska, barley ryeska, whole grain, forest porridge, potatoe, aronia berry, beer ryeska, ryeska waiting to be baked, cabbage leaf ryeska, potatoe-filled ryeska.



The recipe wall (left). Two of the recipe contributions by the participants: Perunarieska by Hessu and Perunaohrieska by Daniel.



The rieska-feast from bird's perspective with different rieska left-overs, bottles, the guestbook.



ACTIVISM | AVANTGARDE | DADAISM | SITUATIONISTS | ADBUSTERS | CULTURE
JAMMING | STREET ART | SOCIAL SCULPTURE | RELATIONAL AESTHETICS |
DESIGN MANIFESTOS | FIRST THINGS FIRST | 10 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DESIGN |
THE DESIGNER'S ACCORD

ACTIVISM

“Activism consists of intentional action to bring about social, political, economic, or environmental change.”¹ The term activism is often used as a synonym of protest or dissent, but it does not necessarily mean opposition of an argument, but also supportive acts towards a specified goal. These acts can take on different forms such as boycotts, rallies, demonstrations, marches, strikes, sit-ins, hunger strikes and all kinds of guerilla tactics. With the possibilities offered by the Internet, activism has taken on new, more pluralistic forms. It has become a lot easier for activist movements to organize themselves via virtual networks regardless of the geographical location.

The professional activism industry consists mostly of non-profit NGOs that work within political, social, environmental, economic, and institutional domains. By eliciting change, activism operates on the flow of “a variety of forms of capital”, as Fuad-Luke puts it, that “contribute in different ways and by different means to the globally shared notion of ‘capitalism’, which has come to dominate economic and political thinking.”² He refers to the Forum for the Future’s Five Capitals Framework to present in what kind of different areas activism can take effect: the natural, human, social, manufactured and financial capital. Beyond that, Fuad Luke elaborately propounds an activism landscape, laid out in maps referring to each one of the five capitals. The possibilities of intervention are endless.

The real challenge is how to achieve the goals and how to get many people interested. This is where the importance of technique, communication and method sets in, and why creative activism is a good way to successfully attain public attention. Just like any business, activists need a clear and professional ‘corporate identity’. More and more designers are employed by NGOs and nonprofit organizations. According to Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka, a global nonprofit organization that invests in social entrepreneurship around the world, the new citizen revolution is made possible through social entrepreneurship: “I believe that social entrepreneurs are the cutting edge of the democratic revolution.”³

1 *Activism*. Wikipedia, viewed on 24.2.2011.

2 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 6.

3 Mau, B. (2004) p.220.

THE AVANT-GARDE

“Avant-garde represents a pushing of the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm or the status quo, primarily in the cultural realm.”⁴

Avant-garde derives from French and means ‘advance guard’ or ‘vanguard’. The term originally comes from the military vocabulary and was used to describe the front line of an army marching into battle. Later on, the term found its application to describe movements, people or works that are particularly innovative and ahead of the majority. With their intellectual and artistic work, usually small avant-garde groups paved the way for society to follow to new cultural or political realms. The avant-garde is essential for societal change and progress. In the 1825 essay *The artist, the scientist and the industrialist*, Rodrigues states that “the power of the arts is indeed the most immediate and fastest way” to social, political, and economic reform.⁵ Therefore, he calls upon the arts to be the avant-garde of society.

Avant-garde later was also used as a term to describe art that explored new possibilities within its own field without the aim of societal transformation. The expansion of the possibilities of the aesthetic experience moved back into the foreground, which was an important part of exploring new means of expression.

The Italian essayist Renato Poggioli tried to map the main aspects of avant-gardism in his 1962 book *Teoria dell'arte d'avanguardia*. Interestingly, he called the avant-garde a form of Bohemianism, extended by Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* of 1974, in which the German literary critic regarded the establishment's welcoming reception of critical art as a neutralizer of the political content of an artwork.⁶ Once part of the art institution, the artist is an ‘accomplice of capitalism’. Even today, this phenomenon can still be observed - in Banksy's first and most recent movie *Exit through the giftstore*, he follows the steps of a graffiti artist selling himself to the art industry without even noticing it. Only by staying resistant towards fame and financial success, critical work can protect itself from being absorbed by a society based on capitalist values.

An avant-garde of sorts is important as it functions like a fertilizer for new things to come. Without people who have the finger on the pulse of time nothing new would come into being. Change is generally difficult for people to accept and the avant-garde is often first misunderstood or even neglected. Now the question is: what is the avant-garde of today, and who is in charge of recognizing it?

⁴ *Avant-garde*. Wikipedia, viewed on 14.1.2011.

⁵ Calinescu, M. (1987)

⁶ Bürger, P. (1974) p.90.



(left) Duchamp's famous 'Fountain' (1917). (right) From 'Der Dada' Nr.2, Berlin 1919.

DADAISM

*“Dada comes from the dictionary. It is terribly simple. In French it means ‘hobby horse.’ In German it means ‘good-bye,’ ‘Get off my back,’ ‘Be seeing you sometime.’ In Romanian: ‘Yes, indeed, you are right, that’s it. But of course, yes, definitely, right...”*⁷

Hugo Ball, “The Dada Manifesto”, July 14, 1916

Dadaism is a cultural movement that began during World War I in Zürich, Switzerland, with its main activities between 1916 and 1922. The movement criticized and innovated the prevailing standards of the art world and other fields of cultural production such as literature, theatre, graphic design, and poetry by questioning everything that was considered the modern world. Dada was anarchistic and anti-everything in its nature, but prominently against war and the bourgeoisie. The dadaists were actively involved in public demonstrations and publications of their own journals such as *Dada*, *391* and *New York Dada*.

Amongst other modern art movements such as expressionism, impressionism, futurism, and surrealism that have paved the way to contemporary art, Dada was one of the bravest and most extreme early avant-garde movements. It had a great impact until the present day on how art is done and perceived. It opened up possibilities of re-organizing common perspectives on art and the world by questioning society and politics with daring new techniques and methods, manifestos, journals, and demonstrations. Dada not only laid the foundation to activism in graphic design and the art world, but also to avant-garde and downtown music movements, punk rock, and art movements such as surrealism, Nouveau réalisme, pop art, and Fluxus.

The techniques the Dadaists developed included collage (extending the heritage of the

⁷ Art History.Net. *Introduction to the Artistic Style of Dada*, viewed on 18.2.2011.

cubists), involving real objects from people's everyday lives such as train tickets, maps and such to portray and depict reality. Abstraction was their main goal. Photomontage, assemblage and ready-mades were other new techniques employed. Everyday objects and trash became meaningful by being put in the art context. Most famous and known is Marcel Duchamp's urinal, titled "Fountain", which he turned upside down, signed with the wrong name R.Mutt and submitted to the Society of Independent Artists exhibition. Duchamp wrote: "One important characteristic was the short sentence which I occasionally inscribed on the 'ready-made.' That sentence, instead of describing the object like a title, was meant to carry the mind of the spectator towards other regions more verbal. Sometimes I would add a graphic detail of presentation which in order to satisfy my craving for alliterations, would be called 'ready-made aided.'"⁸

According to Marc Lowenthal in the translator's introduction to Francis Picabia's *I Am a Beautiful*, Dada is the "groundwork to abstract art and sound poetry, a starting point for performance art, a prelude to postmodernism, an influence on pop art, a celebration of antiart to be later embraced for anarcho-political uses in the 1960s and the movement that lay the foundation for Surrealism."⁹

SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

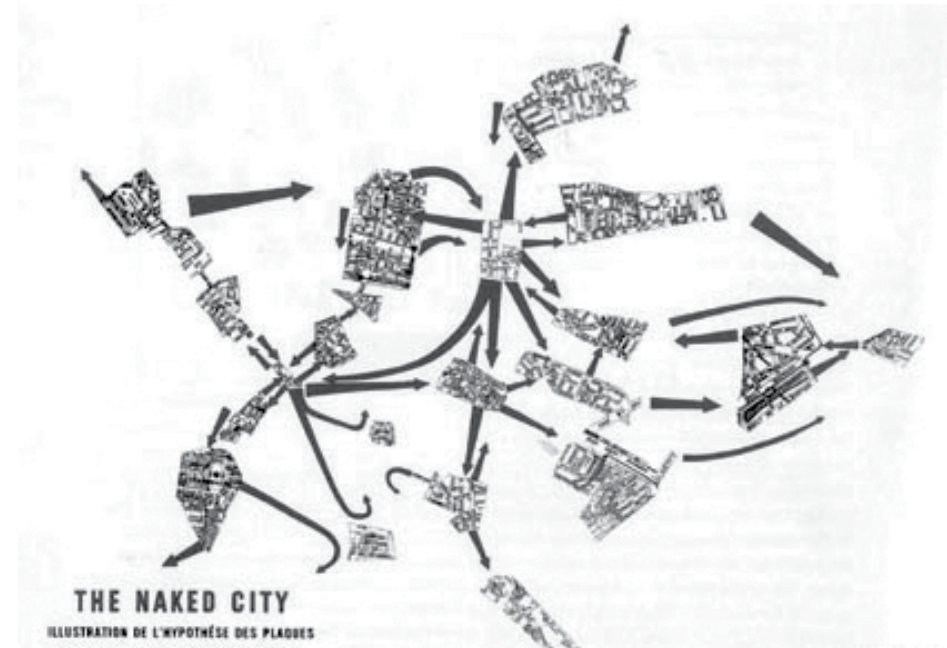
The *Situationist International* (SI) was an avant-garde group of international revolutionaries founded in 1957, most commonly associated with the May revolts of 1968 in France. They criticized the predominating capitalist lifestyle of work and consumption and experimented with the creation of situations which would generate alternative experiences. Using artistic methods, they conducted experimental studies for the construction of such situations. The concept of the 'situation' goes back to Paul Sartre's concept of a *Theatre of Situations*. In a theatrical play, the spectator's passivity is broken by 'situations', defined as "a moment of life concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambiance and a game of events."¹⁰

According to Guy Debord, one of the key thinkers of the movement, people living in an advanced capitalist society are reduced to being passive spectators of the 'spectacle' – the show mass media and advertising is performing for us. The passivity of people in everyday life could be broken similarly to the theatre. The fulfilment of simple human desires was the ultimate aim, therefore people first had to discover what their true desires were.

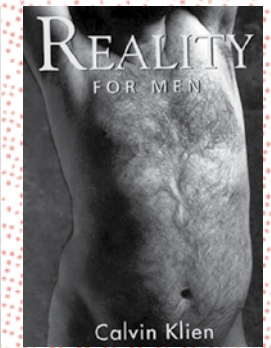
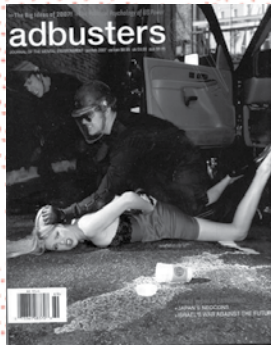
⁸ Duchamp, M. (1989)

⁹ *Dada*. Wikipedia, viewed on 23.2.2011.

¹⁰ Debord, G. (1958)



(above) Guy Debord (1957) "The Naked City" Psychogeographic map. (left) The Situationists Debord, Jacqueline de Jong, Jorn, Kotányi, Katja Lindell, Jörgen Nash, Prem, Sturm, Maurice Wyckaert and H.P. Zimmer (1960).



Adbusters 'subvertisements'

Once these elements were known, they could be used for the construction of a situation. The analysis of everyday life and the personal self combined politics, arts and psycho-analysis from a revolutionary perspective. The proletariat was identified as a major force – the working class was thus asked for revolution which eventually led to the student protests of May 68 in Paris, the largest general strike ever held in an industrial country. The Situationists deeply rejected an art separated from daily life and politics. According to them, it was the mission of the artistic avant-garde to tackle political problems and transform society in favour of a turn to the better. Conservatives attempted to diffuse the role of critical art and intellectuals in politics; there was no desire to empower art to critical discourse.

One of the tools the Situationists developed to achieve their ambitions was 'psycho-geography': "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals"¹¹, in other words: another way of walking a city in order to experience new perspectives of the urban landscape. Derivé, the urban drift, and détournement, the antagonistic reinterpretation of an existing work of art or media, were other methods used by the Situationists. After publishing in the last issue of the magazine an analysis of the May 1968 revolts, the SI was dissolved in 1972.

ADBUSTERS

Adbusters Media Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1989 by Kalle Lasn and Bill Schmalz in Vancouver, Canada. They describe themselves as "a global network of artists, activists, writers, pranksters, students, educators and entrepreneurs who want to advance the new social activist movement of the information age."¹²

11 Ibid.

12 Adbusters. *About Adbusters*, viewed on 19.12.2010.

The foundation publishes the reader-supported ad-free *Adbusters*, an activist magazine which mainly focuses on consumerism. The core intent is to attack and criticize advertising and create awareness on how multinational companies affect the consumption behaviour of the people. The magazine has an international circulation of about 120,000 regular readers and is estimated to be one of the best known activist magazines of the Western world. Beyond the publishing of the magazine, *Adbusters* has been active in launching several international campaigns, amongst which the *Buy Nothing Day* (Älä osta mitään in Finland) has gained most recognition worldwide with more than 65 nations participating since its first celebration in 1992.¹³

CULTURE JAMMING

Culture jamming is a tactic to subvert commercial messages targeted at the public. Many consumer-critical social movements and activists employ this method to question the hidden (or obvious) meaning of an advertisement and to inspire thought about senseless consumption and the branded environment we are surrounded with. Famous and popular products, logos and brands considered particularly cool are favoured goals of culture jams. With usually ironic or funny outcomes, they ridicule the 'coolness' of these brands by using the original medium's same communication tactic. This method is based on the 'détournement'-technique which the Situationists have developed in the 60's (see pp.123). Similar to the movement, culture jammers want to disrupt the unconscious and evoke behavioral change by primarily addressing four emotions which are believed to have most potential to catalyze social change: shock, shame, fear, and anger.¹⁴ Just like the advertisement industry, culture jammers employ similar strategies to evoke these emotions. So-called memes (images that many people recognize and associate

13 Adbusters. *Buy Nothing Day 2006*. Press release, viewed on 20.2.2011.

14 Summers-Effler, E. (2002) p. 41-60.



Famous anonymous SI graffiti (1968) 'Under the paving stones the beach!'



Banksy street art. Nobody knows who he is and still, everybody knows him.

with certain values) such as the McDonald's M, are used in different contexts to make people reconsider e.g. their eating habits. One great example of a successful culture jam is the story of Jonah Perreti. He ordered customized Nikes with the word 'sweatshop' placed in the Nike symbol. Of course Nike refused his request, but nonetheless, the news of his action quickly spread globally and stirred debate on the political correctness of sweatshops and child labour.

The term culture jamming can be traced as far back as the 1950s to the Situationists mentioned above. Their main idea referring to consumption was that in the past, humans used to deal with the consumer market directly, whereas the consumer's unconscious is nowadays constantly bombarded with commercial messages. As a result, he is not able any more to identify his real needs and desires.

STREET ART

Street art is any art situated in public spaces. The term usually refers to unsanctioned art, as opposed to government-supported public art. Most commonly associated with street art is graffiti, but it includes a much wider range of techniques and art forms such as stencils, stickers, street posters, video projections, art interventions, flash mobs, and street installations. Graffiti is often associated with vandalism and therefore, street art as a term should be distinguished from that sort of practice.

Along with other art movements such as Environmental Art (see p.222), the Dadaists, and the Constructionists, the main idea is to situate art out-of-the gallery in non-art contexts. The artwork itself inherits the same properties, but the environment is questioned by applying the same language the artwork is taking place in. Other than art contained in museums and galleries, street art reaches out for common people. By becoming part of the everyday context of the space a society inhabits, art becomes part of life, even if it might not be recognized and acknowledged as such by the majority of people. The main

intention is to communicate with everyday people about socially relevant topics. Another interesting feature about street art is its anonymous nature – mostly, the art moved between the borders of being legal and illegal and must therefore be executed under difficult circumstances such as time pressure, poor light conditions during the night and the omnipresent fear of being caught. For many, exactly those conditions make street art an exciting challenge worth to pursue. Street artists commonly remain only known amongst their scene; becoming part of the art institutions by revealing the name and selling the artworks would be regarded as treason to the cause. Therefore, the street is regarded as the only place where truly political art can be made because it is not institutionalized by the art world. A strong presence of activism can be observed in most artworks to reach the public, concerned with consumer culture and actual political issues. Adbusting and culture jamming, reclaiming the streets and creative protest can be counted under the domain of street art. Others in turn are merely motivated by the reason that urban space provides many pristine surfaces offering themselves to be transformed into personal artworks.

Beyond graffiti as a technique, many other media have found their way to the urban canvas - 'LED art, mosaic tiling, murals, stencil art, sticker art, street installations, wheat-pasting, woodblocking, video projection, and yarn bombing'.¹⁵ Therefore, other terms such as 'post-graffiti' or 'neo-graffiti' came up to describe the art form.¹⁶

SOCIAL SCULPTURE

Joseph Beuys exclamation 'Everybody is an artist' is just as famous as it has been widely misunderstood. His goal was not to encourage everybody to draw or paint and call himself an artist. His notion of art was a different one; to fully understand the meaning of the sentence, we must take a closer look at his concept of the 'social sculpture'. To Beuys, art and politics were inseparable. Art was the only means able to achieve the transformation of a repressive society towards a freedom of expression. Any citizen, being a part of the social organism, was therefore part of the artwork. "Let's talk of a system that transforms all the social organisms into a work of art, in which the entire process of work is included... something in which the principle of production and consumption takes on a form of quality. It's a Gigantic project."¹⁷ By actively participating in shaping the social apparatus, "every living person becomes a creator, a sculptor or architect"¹⁸ Language, thought, action, and object are the means at disposal, which the social sculptor is encouraged to

¹⁵ *Street Art*. Wikipedia, viewed on 10.1.2011.

¹⁶ Lewisohn C. (2008)

¹⁷ Beuys, J. (1973) p. 48.

¹⁸ Beuys, J. (1973)



Joseph Beuys' '7,000 oaks' intervention Kassel Documenta 7 (1982). Basalt stones in front of the Friedrichsplatz in Kassel (above); people planting (right); Beuys himself.



exploit in order to transform society. Beuys' vision of the political potential of art to transform society was inspired by the ideas of Romantic writers such as Novalis and Schiller – his phrase 'Everyone is an artist' was actually borrowed from Novalis' *Glauben und Liebe* ('Faith and Love') of 1798 ("Every person is meant to be an artist."¹⁹). Another source of inspiration was the work of Rudolf Steiner, the father of anthroposophy who brought about alternative education models. According to Beuys, the three principles freedom, democracy, and socialism were dependent on each other and none of them could survive without the fulfilment of the other two. Established definitions had to be opened up in order to make use of the potential of art as 'the only evolutionary-revolutionary power.'²⁰ Society as such was to be seen as a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' - one great work of art.

One of his most famous artistic interventions was the work he created for Documenta 7 in Kassel in 1982. He planted one single oak tree and placed a huge pile of stones in the shape of an arrow pointing at it near it. In order to remove a stone, he demanded from the public to plant an oak tree instead of the stone, which resulted in 7,000 new oak trees in Kassel.

Beuys once said "every sphere of human activity, even peeling a potato can be a work of art as long as it is a conscious act."²¹ This point of view encourages people to consider the individual as part of a whole, and therefore every act and decision of everyday life important because it always affects society as a whole.

19 Social Research Unit. *Every Human Being an Artist*, viewed on 16.2.2011.

20 *Beuys statement dated 1973*, first published in English in Tisdall, C. (1974) p.48.

21 Weintraub, Danto, Mcevilley. (1996)

RELATIONAL AESTHETICS

Relational Art or Relational Aesthetics is a concept of contemporary fine art practice observed and described by French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud. The term had its first appearance in 1996 in the catalogue of an exhibition curated by Bourriaud and was further developed in his book *Relational Aesthetics*, published in 1998. The approach is based on the observation of augmented inter-activity and user-friendliness in the art field.

Bourriaud wonders what channels are left for social bonds and human interaction: Are they all "symbolized by goods or replaced by them, (...) signposted by logos, (...) turned into a standardized artifact"?²² He refers to Guy Debord's definition of the *Society of the Spectacle* in which human relations are no longer 'directly experienced', but starting to become blurred in their 'spectacular' representation. The works of art Bourriaud refers to bring relief and hope to such a world – he calls them 'hands-on Utopias'. After the world has refused the art's vision of the irrational (Dada, SI) and moved towards a modernity based on rationalist and utilitarian thought in both production and life, urbanization seems to have hailed a new upsurge of social communication. It is no coincidence that Bourriaud observed the new interactive character of contemporary art practice in the 90s when the internet started to expand world-widely. Accordingly, he even applies the terminology of the Internet by bringing in words such as user-friendliness, inter-activity, and do-it-yourself. In his 2002 book *Postproduction: Culture as screenplay*, Bourriaud describes the artworks he refers to as works that were inspired by the "changing mental space opened by the internet."²³ Art has, according to him, always been relational in differing degrees – at this point, he brings in the idea of 'linkage' (French: reliance), citing Michel Maffesoli: "flags, logos, icons, signs, all produce empathy and sharing, and all generate bond."²⁴

The artwork creates social environments that offer people the possibility to get and act together in a shared space. Contrary to former purposes of artworks "to form imaginary and utopian realities", relational art invites to take part in "ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever scale chosen by the artist."²⁵ Other than referring to art produced in the 60s, which are often mentioned in pertaining to participatory art, he claims the '90s to be the time our focus should be moved to. The artwork is envisaged as a means to produce community – other than media producing individual consumption such as television or a book, the artwork produces encounters in a shared space with a collective consumption that allows dialogue with strangers.

22 Bourriaud, N. (2002) p.9.

23 Bourriaud, N., Schneider, C. and Herman, J. (2002) p.8.

24 Maffesoli, M. (1993)

25 Bourriaud, N. (2002) p.13.

The concept of a relational art has been conceived critically. Many claim it to be just another -ism that may redefine but does not describe art. Claire Bishop refers to Bourriaud's concept as follows: "An effect of this insistent promotion of these ideas as artists-as-designer, function over contemplation, and open-endedness over aesthetic resolution is often ultimately to enhance the status of the curator, who gains credit for stage-managing the overall laboratory experience. As Hal Foster warned in the mid-1990s, "the institution may overshadow the work that it otherwise highlights: it becomes the spectacle, it collects the cultural capital, and the director-curator becomes the star."²⁶

DESIGN MANIFESTOS

A manifesto is the public declaration of principles and intentions. The term is directly derived from the Italian word *manifesto* (Latin *manifestum*, meaning clear or conspicuous). The first record of a manifesto translated into English is from 1620, in Nathaniel Bent's translation of Paolo Sarpi's History of the council of Trent: "To this citation he made answer by a Manifesto."²⁷

Artists and designers have a long history of declaring self-reflective intentions and aims, mostly with the goal of transforming society for the better. With the rise of modernity and the spread of letterpress printing, the manifesto became a new literary medium. After more than a hundred years of publications of manifestos relevant to the creative field, several attempts have been made to pull together an overview. This list was largely drawn from Mario Piazza's presentation at the Più Design Può conference in Florence, which has been supplemented by the author of a respected Design activism blog²⁸.

- 1883 The Ideal Book, William Morris
- 1889 The Arts and Crafts of To-day, William Morris
- 1909 The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism, F.T. Marinetti
- 1914 Manifesto of Futurist Architecture, Antonio Sant'Elia
- 1918 De Stijl Manifesto
- 1919 Bauhaus Manifesto, Walter Gropius
- 1919 Das grüne Manifest ("The Green Manifesto")
- 1920 Down with Seriousism!, Bruno Taut
- 1922 Manifesto of the Painters' Union, Taller de Grafica Popular
- 1923 Topology of Typography, El Lissitzky

26 Bishop, C. (2004) pp.53.

27 Manifesto. Wikipedia, viewed on 16.1.2011.

28 Social Design Notes. *100+ Years of Design Manifestos*, viewed on 19.1.2011.

- 1923 The New Typography, László Moholy-Nagy
- 1933 Charter of Athens, Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne
- 1964 First Things First, Ken Garland
- 1967 The Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord
- 1971 La coscienza del designer, Albe Steiner
- 1979 Ahmedabad Declaration on Industrial Design for Development
- 1983 The Free Software announcement, later clarified in 1985's GNU Manifesto
- 1987 Design memorandum. Dall'etica del progetto al progetto dell'etica.
- 1987 Ten Rules of Good Design, Dieter Rams ([see p.133](#))
- 1989 Carta del progetto grafico
- 1990 A Scandinavian Design Council Manifesto on Nature, Ecology and Human Needs for the Future
- 1991 The Social Role of the Graphic Designer, Pierre Bernard
- 1991 The Munich Design Charter
- 1991 The Riot Grrrl Manifesto, Kathleen Hanna
- 1992 The Hannover Principles, William McDonough ([see p.325](#))
- 1996 Viewer's Declaration of Independence
- 1998 Ne Pas Plier statement
- 1998 People's Communication Charter
- 2000 First Things First update ([see p.132](#))
- 2000 Icograda Design Education Manifesto
- 2000 Incomplete Manifesto for Growth, Bruce Mau
- 2001 Diseno etica e comunicazione, AIAP
- 2001 Socialist Designer's Manifesto
- 2001 Designers Against Monoculture, Noah Scalin
- 2001 Manifesto for Agile Software Development
- 2002 First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit
- 2002 Triangular Design Manifesto, Conceptual Devices
- 2004 The Free Culture Manifesto
- 2006 The Public Role of the Graphic Designer
- 2006 Free Font Manifesto, Ellen Lupton
- 2006 Owner's Manifesto, The Maker's Bill of Rights
- 2007 The Designer's Dilemma and subsequent Designers Accord
- 2007 1000 Words: A Manifesto for Sustainability in Design, Allan Chochinov
- 2007 Um Manifesto Anti-Design
- 2008 White Night Before A Manifesto, Metahaven
- 2008 Kyoto Design Declaration, Members of Cumulus
- 2009 The Repair Manifesto from Platform21

- 2009 A Short Manifesto on the Future of Attention, Michael Erard
- 2009 Information Visualization Manifesto, Manuel Lima
- 2009 The Awesomeness Manifesto, Umair Haque
- 2009 Charter for Innovation, Creativity and Access to Knowledge
- 2009 Not In Our Name, Marke Hamburg!
- 2010 The Role of Design in the 21st Century, Danish Designers Manifesto
- 2010 The Obstructionist Manifesto (Mark Goldman against harmful city planning)
- 2010 Anti-Design Festival Manifesto
- 2010 The Win Without Pitching Manifesto, Blair Enns
- 2010 The Glimmer Manifesto, Warren Berger

FIRST THINGS FIRST MANIFESTO

The *First things first* manifesto was written and published in 1964 by Ken Garland. More than 400 graphic designers and artists undersigned the manifesto, with additional support by Tony Benn, radical left-wing politician, who helped publishing it in the Guardian newspaper. Based on ideas of *Critical Theory*, the manifesto declared the belief that design is not a neutral, value-free process. Instead of being an instrument of consumer culture, designers should take a more humanist approach into consideration. The 60s manifesto was later updated and republished in the *Adbusters* magazine with a new group of signatories as the *First Things First 2000* manifesto.

“We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, art directors and visual communicators who have been raised in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable use of our talents. Many design teachers and mentors promote this belief; the market rewards it; a tide of books and publications reinforces it.

Encouraged in this direction, designers then apply their skill and imagination to sell dog biscuits, designer coffee, diamonds, detergents, hair gel, cigarettes, credit cards, sneakers, butt toners, light beer and heavy-duty recreational vehicles. Commercial work has always paid the bills, but many graphic designers have now let it become, in large measure, what graphic designers do. This, in turn, is how the world perceives design. The profession’s time and energy is used up manufacturing demand for things that are inessential at best.

Many of us have grown increasingly uncomfortable with this view of design. Designers who devote their efforts primarily to advertising, marketing and brand development are supporting, and implicitly endorsing, a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact. To some extent we are all helping draft a reductive and immeasurably harmful

code of public discourse.

There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. Many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programmes, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help.

We propose a reversal of priorities in favour of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication – a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.

In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.”²⁹

TEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DESIGN BY DIETER RAMS

Back in the early 1980s, Dieter Rams asked himself: what makes design good? He was increasingly concerned about the development of the design world – “an impenetrable confusion of forms, colours and noises.”- and pulled together his *Ten principles of good design*:

GOOD DESIGN IS INNOVATIVE

The possibilities for innovation are not, by any means, exhausted. Technological development is always offering new opportunities for innovative design. But innovative design always develops in tandem with innovative technology, and can never be an end in itself.

GOOD DESIGN MAKES A PRODUCT USEFUL

A product is bought to be used. It has to satisfy certain criteria, not only functional, but also psychological and aesthetic. Good design emphasises the usefulness of a product whilst disregarding anything that could possibly detract from it.

GOOD DESIGN IS AESTHETIC

The aesthetic quality of a product is integral to its usefulness because products we use every day affect our person and our well-being. But only well-executed objects can be beautiful.

29 Eye Magazine. *First Things First Manifesto 2000*, viewed on 3.1.2011.

GOOD DESIGN MAKES A PRODUCT UNDERSTANDABLE

It clarifies the product's structure. Better still, it can make the product talk. At best, it is self-explanatory.

GOOD DESIGN IS UNOBTRUSIVE

Products fulfilling a purpose are like tools. They are neither decorative objects nor works of art. Their design should therefore be both neutral and restrained, to leave room for the user's self-expression.

GOOD DESIGN IS HONEST

It does not make a product more innovative, powerful or valuable than it really is. It does not attempt to manipulate the consumer with promises that cannot be kept.

GOOD DESIGN IS LONG-LASTING

It avoids being fashionable and therefore never appears antiquated. Unlike fashionable design, it lasts many years – even in today's throwaway society. Things which are different in order simply to be different are seldom better, but that which is made to be better is almost always different.

GOOD DESIGN IS THOROUGH, down to the last detail. Nothing must be arbitrary or left to chance. Care and accuracy in the design process show respect towards the consumer.

GOOD DESIGN IS ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY

Design makes an important contribution to the preservation of the environment. It conserves resources and minimises physical and visual pollution throughout the lifecycle of the product.

GOOD DESIGN IS AS LITTLE DESIGN AS POSSIBLE

Less, but better – because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and the products are not burdened with non-essentials.

Back to purity, back to simplicity.³⁰

³⁰ Vitsoe. *Dieter Rams: 10 principles for Good Design*, viewed on 3.1.2011.

THE DESIGNER'S ACCORD

The Designers Accord is the global coalition of designers, educators, and business leaders working together to create positive environmental and social impact. Adopters of the Designers Accord commit to five guidelines that provide collective and individual ways to take action. Becoming a member of the Designers Accord provides access to a community of peers that shares methodologies, resources, and experiences around environmental and social issues in design.

The five guidelines for Design Firm Adopters:

- 1. Publicly declare participation in the Designers Accord.*
- 2. Initiate a dialogue about environmental and social impact and sustainable alternatives with each and every client. Rework client contracts to favor environmentally and socially responsible design and work processes. Provide strategic and material alternatives for sustainable design.*
- 3. Undertake a program to educate your teams about sustainability and sustainable design.*
- 4. Consider your ethical footprint. Understand the environmental impact of your firm, and work to measure, manage, and reduce it on an annual basis.*
- 5. Advance the understanding of environmental and social issues from a design perspective by actively contributing to the communal knowledge base for sustainable design.³¹*

There are three ways to join: as an adopter (an organized group within the creative community (design firms, corporations, educational institutions), a supporter (an individual, e.g. artists, freelance designers, students), and endorser (an organization, adding awareness to the cause, and providing infrastructure for education and outreach programs).

The unifying philosophy of the Designers Accord is open source. The traditional model of competition is encouraged to be inverted by sharing best practices and knowledge in order to innovate faster and more efficiently.

³¹ The Designer's Accord, viewed on 6.1.2011.

2

CHAPTER : GROW

~~“What people seek is not the meaning of life but
the experience of being alive.”~~

J. CAMPBELL

2/5: GROW (water)

v.

1. To increase in size by a natural process. 2 a. To expand; gain 2 b. To increase in amount or degree; intensify 3. To develop and reach maturity. 4. To be capable of growth 5. To become attached by or as if by the process of growth 6. To come into existence from a source 7. To come to be by a gradual process or by degrees v.tr. 1. To cause to grow; raise: grow tulips. 2. To allow (something) to develop or increase by a natural process

What do people really dream about? With posters advertising an open call to ‘Stitch your dreams’, I invited students from the Helsinki School of Design and Art to think about their true hopes and desires about life and work and stitch them into a tablecloth. What are desirable work futures? What is the role of the artist? Where is our profession heading? How does education respond to emergent needs amongst students?

During a participatory stitching afternoon supported by Anarchistic Martta Sari, students employed different ways to express their dreams. The resulting tablecloth became part of a growing installation – cress seeds sown on top of it grew within 5 days into an edible green field which was harvested by students and teachers during the closing dinner of the event, literally eating from a ‘field of dreams’.

Considering the presence of teachers during the dinner (which I had intentionally invited to create a dialogue beyond the classroom), above mentioned questions were posed again. As you will find out later, the school in question is currently in an important phase of change - it has been merged with the School of Economics and the School of Technology to the Aalto University. Beyond that, pressing topics such as concerns about the environment and massive changes brought about by the age of technology and mass communication have changed the nature of art and design practice. To what extent is education reacting to this fact? What are the directives the different nations consider in educating the next generation? And what are new models of work? It seems like we live in times of such large and all-encompassing upheaval that we could almost start from scratch. Or start remembering old ideas for the future - Thomas Paine’s basic income guaranteed by the state for instance, Plato’s idea of the Republic, or Tomas More’ theoretical construct of Utopia. Time starts to receive more value than money in times of crises, and people seem to move their focus on spending more time with their families and friends.

HELSINKI.



INSTITUTIONAL SPACE: SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN HELSINKI

The second event took place at my school, the *Aalto University School of Art and Design* (Finnish: *Aalto-yliopiston taideteollinen korkeakoulu*), known commonly as TaiK. It is the largest art university in the Nordic countries, and was founded in 1871. According to its website, since the foundation as a Craft school it has grown into 'one of the most international universities in Finland' and into 'one of the most respected in the world.' It is the largest in its field in the Nordic countries. The university awards the following academic degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Doctor of Arts. Degree programmes are organized under five departments: the departments of Motion Picture, Television and Production Design; Media, including the former department Media Lab; Design; Art; and Art and Media Pori.¹

The university has been active in establishing research projects and industrial collaborations via the private sector. During the time Yrjö Sotamaa was rector, the university was active in integrating design into Finnish innovation networks, which eventually led to the amalgamation of TaiK together with Helsinki University of Technology (TKK) and the Helsinki School of Economics (HSE) into the Aalto University in January 2010. This significant change in the curriculum of the university has been critically observed and commented by most TaiK students, since a common fear of losing our artistic independence to industry prevails. Plans about moving all departments to a common space shared by all three universities of Aalto are in discussion and planning phase.

The school has had a major impact on Finnish culture and design, with famous alumnae such as Tapio Wirkkala, Timo Sarpaneva, Kaj Franck, Birger Kaipiainen, Erik Bruun, Antti Nurmesniemi, Yrjö Kukkapuro, Pentti Sarmallahti, Yrjö Wihorheimo, Janna Syvänoja, Harri Koskinen, Ilkka Suppanen, Elina Brotherus and Paola Suhonen. Formerly situated in the Ateneum building in the city centre, the school was moved to Arabianranta in 1986. The Ateneum now hosts the Finnish National Gallery and is a popular venue for tourists. TaiK's nickname Atski goes back to that part of history. The aim of education at the School of Art and Design has been to "deepen students' scientific and artistic competence, and to refine their innovative processing into professional practices". The traditional education in product and environmental design was expanded within the years by new programmes in the fields of visual communication, new media, film and television. The school is very open to the international market, which has led to many partnerships with foreign institutions and businesses. New media, mul-

¹ *Taik*. Wikipedia, viewed on 20.1.2011.

tidisciplinary research, and new MA programmes such as Curating Art and Creative Sustainability have been introduced in 2010. Along with the changes of the merger to the Aalto University, Taik turned into a foundation based, multidisciplinary university. The university officially states the following mission on its website:

“In its field the University of Art and Design is a dynamic international university that promotes the development of creative industries, the regeneration of the national culture, artistic edification and innovative entrepreneurship based on sustainable development. The University of Art and Design is part of a local concentration of universities and polytechnics, which will provide international-level conditions for high-standard research, teaching, artistic endeavour and effective innovation. The University of Art and Design participates in active cooperation with industry and commerce, culture and the surrounding society. To achieve its aims it also networks with the best international universities and centres of learning.”

Amongst their values, student satisfaction, the joy of co-operation, and creative know-how stand on top of the list, in order to achieve the following: innovation, the creation of work and business, the promotion of the status of art, and the application of know-how.²



² Taik. *About Us: Mission, Vision, Values*, viewed on 24.1.2011.

A
R
A
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What do you expect from your work future?
 Don't know yet. I have some ideas but they are really not really specific

What do you want to learn?
 as much as possible

How do you want to educate?
 I want to learn as much as possible

What do you dream of?
 teaching and doing things that I enjoy

How do you want to work?
 I want to do different things and projects with different people

What is the role of the artist?
 herään optiimin mikä se on englanniksi?

What do you expect from your work future?
 Odotan tulevaisuutta jota olen tehnyt aikoo, ja pisa toteutan unelmiani. Odotan tulevani taitajaksi, ohjelmistojen ja ohjelmien kehittäjänä.

What do you want to learn?
 Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla. Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla. Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla.

How do you want to educate?
 Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla. Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla.

What do you dream of?
 Haluan onnellisuudesta, omasta vapautuksesta ja itseään toteuttavasta työstä. Haluan onnellisuudesta, omasta vapautuksesta ja itseään toteuttavasta työstä.

How do you want to work?
 Haluan tehdä töitä josta saan nauttia. Haluan tehdä töitä josta saan nauttia. Haluan tehdä töitä josta saan nauttia.

What is the role of the artist?
 Näyttää, hermostuttaa, muistuttaa, opettaa, luo ja hermostuttaa. Näyttää, hermostuttaa, muistuttaa, opettaa, luo ja hermostuttaa.

What do you expect from your work future?
 I want to do something that feels important

What do you want to learn?
 I want to learn to understand the world

How do you want to educate?
 I want to learn to understand the world

What do you dream of?
 living a happy life

How do you want to work?
 with my

What is the role of the artist?
 I don't know

What do you expect from your work future?
 In the future; Oiskellen lapset graafiset works in the computer.

What do you want to learn?
 I want to learn much subjects what I need for my work.

How do you want to educate?
 I want to study children's subjects. (koulusta, puumista, koulusta)

What do you dream of?
 I have many dreams, example: (englanti, espanja, suomi) and my education. and then a work.

How do you want to work?
 I want to be a teacher in Finland.

What is the role of the artist?
 Artist must be always artist. Every days is a big work for yourself.

What do you expect from your work future?
 Odotan tulevaisuutta josta olen tehnyt aikoo, ja pisa toteutan unelmiani. Odotan tulevani taitajaksi, ohjelmistojen ja ohjelmien kehittäjänä.

What do you want to learn?
 Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla. Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla.

How do you want to educate?
 Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla. Haluan oppia kokeilemaan, kokeilla ja kokeilla.

What do you dream of?
 Haluan onnellisuudesta, omasta vapautuksesta ja itseään toteuttavasta työstä. Haluan onnellisuudesta, omasta vapautuksesta ja itseään toteuttavasta työstä.

How do you want to work?
 Haluan tehdä töitä josta saan nauttia. Haluan tehdä töitä josta saan nauttia. Haluan tehdä töitä josta saan nauttia.

What is the role of the artist?
 Näyttää, hermostuttaa, muistuttaa, opettaa, luo ja hermostuttaa. Näyttää, hermostuttaa, muistuttaa, opettaa, luo ja hermostuttaa.

What do you expect from your work future?
 I hope that my future work touches people and maybe make their lives better.

What do you want to learn?
 Who am I? Who are the others? How can I help the world?

How do you want to educate?
 I want to take part of the world. Good projects this even thing for example is really good.

What do you dream of?
 My own place in this world.

How do you want to work?
 With people and with things which are important to them.

What is the role of the artist?
 s/he is just a guide or a helper. It is the people together who make the art.

What do you expect from your work future?
 to be able to guide children with their way of thinking/learning.

What do you want to learn?
 I want to learn to understand the world

How do you want to educate?
 I want to learn to understand the world

What do you dream of?
 living a happy life

How do you want to work?
 with my

What is the role of the artist?
 I don't know

What do you expect from your work future?
 paljon erilaisia työkokemuksia ja opettajana eri-ikäisille. Tunnen myös tarvetta oman koulun kehittämiseen ja osittain luomaan.

What do you want to learn?
 paljon kaikkea!!!

How do you want to educate?
 onnellisesta ja monimuotoisesta elämästä.

What do you dream of?
 onnellisesta ja monimuotoisesta elämästä.

How do you want to work?
 monipuolisesti

What is the role of the artist?
 luoda yhteiskunnalle ja tuoda henkistä voimaa. Kriittistä yhteiskuntaa.

During an Art Education seminar in September 2011, I asked students preliminarily about their dreams. Above the results.





(above) The 2-bottles waiting to be used, the guestbook waiting for entries. Anti-stress tea and cookies kept us alive during an afternoon of stitching.



(left to right) People started stitching quickly and with enormous skill. All yarns were in different shades of blue, colour of the romantic movement which stood for desire, love, and the striving for the infinite and unreachable.







(left) The tablecloth after the stitching afternoon
(right) Seeds being sown on top of the dreams.
What will grow out of them?



Harvest night with apples, bread, and salt – people were asked to bring the latter two things, remembering the old tradition of bringing wisdom to someone's house.



The final picture of the installation before people harvested the dreams. The apples were just in season and suited the harvesting topic perfectly.



ARTS & CRAFTS

The Arts & Crafts movement with William Morris as the key exponent was a response to the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. Inspired by the writings of John Ruskin, it originated in Great Britain but soon spread to Europe and the US. Opposing the impoverishment of craftsmanship and the conditions under which products were made, the movement advocated the return to traditional materials and production methods. Parallel to that, a social and economic revolution was sought for with industrialization undermining all standards of human production. The paradigm of considering aesthetics and ethics as unseparable has paved the way for modernity to follow shortly after.

The Arts & Crafts movement flourished between 1880 and 1910 with a continuing influence on the art and design field until the present day. It can be understood as one of the first activist movements that opposed the production modes of mass production and anticipated the negative impacts it should have on humankind and nature: globalization, mass consumption, the throwaway-philosophy of today with objects having lost their value. The quest for an authentic design true to form and materials – which, according to the movement, could not be achieved by machines – led to simple forms (according to notions of simplicity of that time) and domestic and traditional shapes inspired by nature and floral patterns. Old techniques and traditions went through a revival, some designers set up workshops in the countryside and applied old production methods to the making of objects. Influenced by the Gothic Revival of the 1830s - 1880s, anything medieval was of interest.

In social terms, the Arts and Crafts movement was very active; Ruskin as a key speaker for social criticism stood up against the mechanization of most production processes and believed in crafts as a healing force for a society. Machines were, according to him, the source of many social ills. He strongly opposed the idea of the division of labour, which alienated the worker from the product he was working on. Morris combined his design criticism with the social ideas proposed by Ruskin and suggested the idea of the artist as the craftsmen-designer.¹ Other than many exponents of the movement, Morris would accept machinery in the production process, but only under the condition that it was only used to improve the working process by reducing the hours of labour.

Movements such as Art Nouveau, the Dutch De Stijl group, the Vienna Secession, and eventually, the Bauhaus all built on ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement. Like Morris, the Bauhaus believed in design by the people for the people, only that it took the notion

¹ Pevsner, N. (2005)

of the simple form and true democracy a bit further – modernity as we know it today was on its way.

BAUHAUS

The Bauhaus was a school in Germany famous for the approach to design that it publicized and taught combining crafts and the fine arts in its educational program. It operated from 1919 to 1933 and its style and philosophy is considered to be one of the most influential currents in Modernist architecture and modern design.² Beyond that it has influenced art, architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design and typography.

Historically, it was preceded by an organization called the *Deutscher Werkbund*, founded under Hermann Muthesius in Munich in 1907. According to the beliefs of the *Deutscher Werkbund*, design was a powerful tool to improve people's lives. It clearly had socialist ambitions in its pursuit of overcoming class differences. Their philosophy was inspired by the thoughts of Ruskin, but aspired to combine the idealist social ideas about production processes with utilitarian production methods together with the industry. Affordable but functionalist design with a social imperative was the highest goal of the organization. Members included architects, artists, and designers, including Walter Gropius who later founded the Bauhaus.

“The ultimate aim of all visual arts is the complete building! To embellish buildings was once the noblest function of the fine arts; they were the indispensable components of great architecture.

Today the arts exist in isolation, from which they can be rescued only through the conscious, cooperative effort of all craftsmen. Architects, painters, and sculptors must recognize anew and learn to grasp the composite character of a building both as an entity and in its separate parts. Only then will their work be imbued with the architectonic spirit which it has lost as “salon art.”

The old schools of art were unable to produce this unity; how could they, since art cannot be taught. They must be merged once more with the workshop. The mere drawing and painting world of the pattern designer and the applied artist must become a world that builds again. When young people who take a joy in artistic creation once more begin their life's work by learning a trade, then the unproductive “artist” will no longer be condemned to deficient artistry, for their skill will now be preserved for the crafts, in which they will be able to achieve excellence.

2 Pevsner, N. (ed.) pp. 880.

Architects, sculptors, painters, we all must return to the crafts! For art is not a “profession.” There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman. In rare moments of inspiration, transcending the consciousness of his will, the grace of heaven may cause his work to blossom into art. But proficiency in a craft is essential to every artist. Therein lies the prime source of creative imagination.

Let us then create a new guild of craftsmen without the class distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsman and artist! Together let us desire, conceive, and create the new structure of the future, which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in one unity and which will one day rise toward heaven from the hands of a million workers like the crystal symbol of a new faith.”³

Walter Gropius, ‘Bauhaus Manifesto and Program’ (1919)

The Bauhaus school was established by Walter Gropius in 1919 in Weimar as an attempt to emancipate art (art meaning the form language of historical designs) from industry by reviving the crafts. Instead of imitating historical styles, a new and own form language was sought for by experimentation with materials and production processes adapt to mass production. The borders between the craftsman and the artists should merge and eliminate social differences.

The history of the Bauhaus School, its directors and students, has been paid much attention to by art and design historians. Its history is complex with constantly changing locations within three different cities (Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin), a break caused by the war and changing directors. When it all started with Walter Gropius, times could not have been more difficult – between two world wars, the living situation was devastating in Weimar. There was hardly any money for materials and staff. Gropius had a great vision of a non-political school that would form a small community of artists and creatives, able to exert a positive influence on society. Even though Gropius claimed to be non-political, he was a member of the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*, a left-wing association for architects and artists, whose aim was to forge a new social order with the involvement of creative people. He condemned parties, since he felt abhorred of all organized politics after the war. Gropius shared some of the aims that the left-wing revolutionaries were striving for, as he condemned “the dangerous worship of might and the machine which led us over the spiritual to the economic abyss”,⁴ in a speech given in Leipzig in 1919.

Parallel to the Bauhaus movement, similar thoughts emerged in artist circles. Theo van Doesburg, founder of De Stijl in the Netherlands, visited Weimar in 1921, hoping to

3 Gropius, W. (1919) *Bauhaus Manifesto and Program*, retrieved on 14.1.2011.

4 Whitford, F. (1984) p.37.

be appointed by Gropius to teach at Bauhaus to make a bigger name internationally. He criticized the situation of the Bauhaus harshly, saying that it had become hopelessly romantic and not producing much concrete results. Gropius realized that his intentions to emphasize the crafts and to form a vital diverse community had failed and led to isolation from the real world. He made a change in his policy, after his difficulties to unite the fine arts with the crafts (workshops were closed or masters missing, students just as much as teachers who wanted to become painters missed the idealistic constipation of the school to finally split from Bauhaus in 1921 and become the *State School of Fine Art*) and cleared his mind of “utopian socialism and romantic medievalism.”⁵

In 1923, he appointed the Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy, whose appointment had a crucial impact on the development of the school. Moholy was a Constructivist, a follower of Vladimir Tatlin and El Lissitzky, who rejected all subjective definitions of art. An artist was a maker who did not scorn his art with his own personality but with the idea behind it. The idea was more important than the manner of its execution: “The private property aspect of creativity must be destroyed, all are creators and there is no reason of any sort for this division into artists and nonartists.”⁶

Moholy was a multi-disciplinary self-taught artist who believed strongly that any artist who stuck to only one medium should not be taken seriously. *“During the war, I became conscious of my responsibility to society and I now feel it even more strongly. My conscience asks unceasingly: is it right to become a painter at a time of social upheaval? Can I assume the privilege of becoming an artist for myself when everybody is needed to solve the problems of simply managing to survive? During the last hundred years art and life have had nothing in common. The personal indulgence of creating art has contributed nothing to the happiness of the masses”*,⁷ wrote Moholy-Nagy in his diary in 1919.

Moholy was not entirely popular amongst students and colleagues, not only for his radical view towards art, also for his rejection of the irrational; he believed the soul to be “nothing but a function of the human body”, rejecting Klee’s phrase to use art to “render the invisible visible”⁸. It was now clear that the philosophy of the school had changed.

After the early years, the emphasis shifted from the revival of craftsmanship towards a unity of art and technology. The education directed towards a new breed of students capable of conceiving products to be mechanically produced. After economic problems and political upheavals, Bauhaus in Weimar had to be closed down in 1924. Dessau

5 Whitford, F. (1984) Ibid. p.121.

6 Thompson, N., Sholette, G. (ed.)(2004) p.134.

7 Whitford, F. (1984) p.127.

8 Ibid.

made the offer to take over the students and professors, so the move was made shortly after.

Another big change happened with the directorship of the Swiss architect Hannes Meyer. During his time from 1928-1930, the Bauhaus had its most socially proactive phase. Meyer enthusiastically pushed the production of affordable design for the working classes. His commitment to socialist ideas eventually led to his dismissal in 1930, as the political climate in Germany became harsher and no political ideals were accepted by the Nazis. Meyer was replaced by architect Mies van der Rohe, and the last bitter years of the Bauhaus began, until it was eventually forced to close its doors in April 1933. After the war, the Bauhaus ideas were continued also in Germany with the foundation of the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm in 1953 by Max Bill, Inge Aicher-Scholl and Otl Aicher. The influence of the movement never ceased to last until today.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism was an artistic and architectural movement that originated in Russia in 1919 rejecting the idea of ‘art for art’s sake’ in favour of an art channeling its forces and potentials on social and political change. Constructivism had a major influence on developments in the art of the Weimar Republic and other parts of the world. Constructivism as a term first appeared in Naum Gabo’s *Realistic Manifesto* of 1920. It was defined as an industrial approach to sculpture and art, with abstraction and geometry being the main characteristics. Soon, constructivist ideas entered education; Moscow’s VKhUTEMAS, the School for Art and Design established in 1919, started to teach the philosophies of the movement to its students. Gabo later complained about the school’s focus on politics and ideologies rather than art-making.

Constructivism as theory and practice derived itself from a series of debates at *INKhUK* (Institute of Artistic Culture) in Moscow from 1920-1922. The First Working Group of Constructivists defined Constructivism as the combination of *faktura*: the particular material properties of the object, and *tektonika*, its spatial presence. As a first step to participate in industry, the Constructivists worked on three-dimensional objects and then later also on two-dimensional compositions such as posters, advertisements and books. Art and design had joined forces to create a new agency for transforming society by entering everyday life and industry. Beyond that, artists and designers engaged actively in public events and politics, inspired by Vladimir Mayakovsky’s 1917 declaration ‘the streets our brushes, the squares our palettes!’. The aim was to create works that would activate the viewer by spiritually involving them. These ideas were transferred and tested



(left) Vladimir Tatlin, 'Proposed Monument to the Third International', (1919). (above) El Lissitzky, 'Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge' (1919)

in theatre and cinema and had an important influence on the stage design of that time. Construction art soon spread to Germany with El Lissitzky showing a special interest in the movement. A short-lived *Constructivist International* was formed in 1922 with members coming from the Dada and De Stijl movement, including Lissitzky and Moholy-Nagy, who later became one of the directors of the Bauhaus school in Germany (see p.170). In the meanwhile, debates amongst Russian constructivists at the *INKhUK* school reached the point where a direct participation in industry and 'the end of easel painting' was proposed by Osip Brik.⁹ Some artists like Tatlin answered this call by diverting their artistic skills to the design of functional everyday products which were suitable for industrial production. The first step towards a union of functional art and consumerism was done, followed by the 'advertising constructors' Mayakovsky and Rodchenko, who worked together on posters and advertisements made for the state-run department store Mosselprom to promote their products. With the use of bright colours, geometric shapes, and bold letters, they achieved to reach a broad public and paved the way for most simple laws of advertisement: creating emotional reactions with the use of strong images and catchy slogans.

DESIGN EDUCATION

The Bauhaus school, influenced by the different movements such as Arts and Crafts (see p.169) and the Constructionists, has laid the foundations to design education. According to Moholy-Nagy, "designing is not a profession, but it is an attitude which everyone should have, namely the attitude of the planner"¹⁰. Furthermore, he stated that "the education of the industrial designer is a problem that is perhaps secondary to the problem of general education, of which the industrial design education should be a part."

⁹ *Constructivism*. Wikipedia, viewed on 24.2.2011.

¹⁰ Moholy-Nagy, L. (1947) p. 42.

He believed that "the capacities of the human being are his ability to perceive, to have conceptual thoughts, to feel, and to express himself in different media." Moholy-Nagy intended to shift the discussion of design as a profession to a reflection on its characteristic of being a fundamental human activity inherent in every human being, a recurring idea that can be found again in Papanek's famous line "everybody is a designer", formulated many years later. But what should design education be based on? How did the ideas of the pioneers of Modernity in the art and design fields find their expression in education?

Norman Potter, himself a designer (and political dissident, poet and author) tried to outline the characteristics of design and art in his 1969 book *What is a Designer: Education and Practice - A Guide for Students and Teachers*. He groups the design field in three areas: things, places, and messages – product, architecture and communication design. Potter classifies the profession further by defining functional classifications of the designer, dividing them into different characters: impresarios, culture diffusers, culture generators, assistants, and parasites, who are all interdependent of each other. He questions whether design should be taught in art schools, diffusing both activities and making the student decide between either one of them (see p.377). What is the difference between the two fields being taught in the same schools? The dictionary might help to understand the full meaning of the terms design and art:

"to design, vb: 1. to work out the structure or form of (something), as by making a sketch, outline, pattern, or plans; 2. to plan and make (something) artistically or skilfully; 3. (tr) to form or conceive in the mind; invent; 4. (tr) to intend, as for a specific purpose; plan"

*"art, 1. Human effort to imitate, supplement, alter, or counteract the work of nature; 2.a. The conscious production or arrangement of sounds, colors, forms, movements, or other elements in a manner that affects the sense of beauty, specifically the production of the beautiful in a graphic or plastic medium. b. The study of these activities. c. The product of these activities; human works of beauty considered as a group; 3. High quality of conception or execution, as found in works of beauty; aesthetic value; 4. A field or category of art, such as music, ballet, or literature."*¹¹

Potter describes the designer as a person who works primarily for the people, solving their problems and not his own. Therefore, a designer is highly problem-conscious. He needs to analyse and solve a problem according to a brief and propose solutions by clearly communicating them. The artist however is usually not as condemned to a client's brief and has more freedom in the execution of a work. An artist works in a different en-

¹¹ The Free Dictionary. *Design; Art*, viewed on 18.1.2011.

vironment and a different economic system. Mostly employed by the state through funding programmes, he can concentrate on his personal work and is therefore usually less detached to his work than the designer. The nature of both professions is getting more and more blurred though and both, artists and designers, see the need of applying their creativity in a different way than proposed by common perspectives on their professions. Both have similar goals, want to engage in social and political topics and see their potential as 'change agents' in a society that urgently needs a 'redesign'. (see p. 392)

The future of the creative fields lays, to certain degrees, in the hands of conscious professionals, but foremost in those of design educators. Universities are responding quickly to the new demands of the changing world and new programmes and goals are being defined while I am writing this sentence. Certain design schools such as the *Royal College of Art in London* and the *Eindhoven Academy* in the Netherlands have played crucial roles in the past years with new approaches and fresh designs in student exhibitions. As a student, one has all the liberties to express themselves freely, without having to consider too much economic directives and concerns. This free thinking is important to be kept alive also after finishing studies, since it is the thinking of a design activist: brave, transformative, and idealistic.

After the study of historical movements in the arts, crafts and design, it is interesting to observe how different study programmes are built up in different countries. I collected some of the current visions of Design schools I have attended and of MA programmes I found worthy to be mentioned in the context of this book, without the ambition to be complete:

Bolzano Free University Faculty of Design & Art | BA & MA in Design

“Creating a Faculty of Design and Art at the trilingual Free University of Bozen/Bolzano has succeeded in tapping into the full cultural and economic potential that this city’s particular geographical location offers. Bozen/Bolzano: a modern meeting place and cultural mix between the Italian and German worlds as well as a natural interface between traditional cottage industries and state-of-the-art technology.

This rich heritage gave birth to the project that spawned the innovative degree course in Design, which ably reflects the ever-changing currents in the design world. It is no longer feasible to simply describe the designer’s work as a part of Product Design or Visual Communication. This profession has opened up and evolved and much of this development is due to the opportunities offered by digital technology, which has contributed to the breaking down of traditional barriers between the two disciplines. Product designers are now also working in the area of interface design, creating web pages. Moreover, in

the area of interior design, skills needed for three-dimensional projects as well as those generally regarded as visual communication skills are merging with incredibly exciting results. Designers are no longer solitary figures; they are working more and more within networks where different skills and expertise are fused together, often by the designers themselves. They are no longer “specialists” but rather “generalists” who will have increasingly important social, economic and ecological roles in the future.”¹²

Helsinki Aalto University School of Design & Art | New MA Programme Creative Sustainability

“Creative Sustainability is a new cross-disciplinary master’s level Minor Study Programme on sustainable design for students at the Aalto University. It has also started as an international Master’s Degree Programme in 2010.

Along with globalization, challenges concerning environment, society and economy have become shared challenges for humankind and the world as a whole. Climate change is a fact, although the scientific community still struggles to understand its reasons. The connection between economic and social development is clear, and increasing prosperity provides the foundation for protecting our planet and its ecosystem.

Urban and industrial designs are key issues in building a more sustainable future. There is a growing global need for architects, engineers, designers and business managers, who are specialized in sustainable design and innovations.

Aims of the programme are to: Educate world-class architects, designers, engineers and business managers in sustainable design; Provide internationally profiled cross-disciplinary content; Build on system theory and thinking as the basic model; Develop an extensive international case portfolio; Utilise an international university network; Provide a 2-year Master’s programme starting in autumn 2010; Provide a Cross-disciplinary international programme for professionals with a graduate degree.”¹³

London Goldsmiths Department of Design

“The Department of Design is dynamic, contemporarily engaged and forward thinking. Design flourishes at Goldsmiths; the College’s interdisciplinary intellectual climate affords us the unique opportunity to draw upon a wealth of critical, theoretical and creative perspectives, which in turn shape the distinct – and often radical – design practices, educational programmes and research that we pursue in the Department.

Design has a huge influence on the way we live. In an increasingly uncertain world – facing, for instance, climate change, globalised consumerism and social fragmentation

¹² Unibz, Faculty of Design & Art. *Vision*, viewed on 18.1.2011.

¹³ New Creative Sustainability. *About Master Programme*, viewed on 18.1.2011.

– designers need to think more deeply, critically and creatively about their activities than ever before. Appreciating this, we have developed contemporarily engaged and future-sensitive academic programmes that cultivate versatile, pioneering graduates, critically aware of their responsibilities to the environment and of the ethical dimension of their activities in influencing social processes and cultural formation.”¹⁴

London Royal College of Art | Department Design Interactions

“Designers often refer to people as users, or sometimes as consumers. In Design Interactions, we prefer to think of both users and designers as, first and foremost, people. That is, we see ourselves as complex individuals moving through an equally complex, technologically mediated, consumer landscape. Interaction may be our medium in this department, but people are our primary subject, and people cannot be neatly defined and labelled. We are contradictory, volatile, always surprising. To remember this is to engage fully with the complexities and challenges of both people and the field of interaction design. (...) In Design Interactions, then, we are not simply concerned with acquiring or refining a specific set of skills. Essentially, we are interested in the social, cultural and ethical consequences of emerging technologies, and this means asking probing questions through design. To this end, we encourage students to consider the implications, as well as the applications, of new technologies, and thus to seek fresh approaches to interaction design – approaches that are meaningful and relevant today. In short, we see this field of design as a fertile way of thinking about the life around us, within us, and in the future beyond us.”¹⁵

Eindhoven Academy Netherlands | MA Programmes Contextual Design, Social Design and Information Design

“The world is changing rapidly, and the design profession is also changing with it. Design Academy Eindhoven has anticipated these developments. We have repeatedly asked ourselves the question how the designer should relate to this changing world and what role he or she should fulfil in it. The answer to this question is never unequivocal, but provides an idea of various professional or career profiles that Design Academy Eindhoven can address in updating the courses and programmes we offer. A number of these profiles have been incorporated within the Bachelor’s education, while others are more appropriate for the Master’s programmes. As from the start of the 2010 – 2011 academic year, the first changes can be seen that represent part of a process of renewal of the

¹⁴ Goldsmiths. *Department of Design*, viewed on 18.1.2011.

¹⁵ Design Interactions at RCA. *Department*, viewed on 18.1.2011.

education we provide. Within the Master’s programme this has led to three renewed research programmes: Contextual Design, Social Design and Information Design. Three distinct domains, but in conformity in one important respect: the research programmes are always focusing on people.”¹⁶

Parson’s School of Design & Art New York | MA in Transdisciplinary Design

“Emphasizing collaborative design-led research, the MFA Transdisciplinary Design in the School of Design Strategies at Parsons serves as an academic laboratory in New York City for graduate students seeking to define the next phase of design practice globally. The complex problems that confront a networked 24/7 global culture call for broad design approaches. Parsons created the MFA in Transdisciplinary Design (TransDesign) for a new generation of designers who want to address pressing social issues using new ideas, tools, and methods. Students work in cross-disciplinary teams, consider issues from multiple perspectives, gain insight from industry leaders, and emerge with a portfolio of projects showcasing design as a process for transforming the way we live in the 21st century.

TransDesign is a two-year, 60-credit program focusing on project-based design work that incorporates a profound understanding of the ways design transforms social relations. Project teams represent multiple disciplines and points of view, reframing the possibilities of design for the larger community. Transdisciplinary Design students who serve as adjunct faculty and teaching assistants are expected to inject a similar dynamism into the undergraduate setting. Graduates of the MFA TransDesign program will possess a unique set of skills and capacities that will distinguish them professionally. (...) While graduates may work in conventional design consultancies, they will also be qualified to apply their skills in areas outside of traditional design realms. Graduates may work in careers that involve structuring health care policy; rebuilding infrastructure; rethinking public education, microbusinesses, and nongovernmental organizations.”¹⁷

School of Visual Arts in New York, USA | New MFA in Design Criticism

“This innovative two-year program trains students to research, analyze, and evaluate design and its social and environmental implications. (...) Situated at the intersection of commerce and culture, design is a field of activity that touches the lives of everyone. Its role as an aesthetic, social and economic force is the subject of increasing attention: Mainstream news outlets, the business press and lifestyle magazines routinely cover de-

¹⁶ Design Academy Eindhoven. *Master Departments*, viewed on 3.1.2011.

¹⁷ Parsons The New School For Design. *Transdisciplinary Design*, viewed on 3.1.2011.

sign, and it is the focus of major exhibitions and even entire museums. Yet, while forums for design commentary have increased, there is a crucial need for more intellectually rigorous approaches to design criticism.

The School of Visual Arts MFA in Design Criticism - the first of its kind in the United States - seeks to cultivate design criticism as a discipline and contribute to public discourse with new writing and thinking that is imaginative, historically informed and socially accountable. Drawing on the broadest possible definition of design, the curriculum includes graphic, Web and product design, as well as fashion, urban planning and network systems. The course of study couples a theoretical framework with significant opportunities for practical experience. In providing the tools for researching, analyzing, evaluating and chronicling all aspects of design, students will prepare for careers as design critics, journalists, editors, curators, educators and design managers.

We welcome students from a range of academic backgrounds whose diverse perspectives and experiences enrich the debate. The program is equally well suited to designers, who want to hone their skills in writing and critical thinking, as it is to journalists and writers, who wish to enrich their understanding of design.”¹⁸

CRAFTS

What is the role of handicraft in nowadays' society? How is it integrated in the design schools? According to the different cultural histories of each nation, this topic is approached from different viewpoints. In Finland, the crafts have had a long and important history that lasted until the present day and is also reflected in the emphasis that is put on Applied Art in the art schools of the country.

According to Wikipedia, a craft is “a branch of profession that requires some particular kind of skilled work”¹⁹. In history, the term was applied for people occupied in small-scale production of goods. Craftsmen were organized in guilds that were usually concentrated in cities. Usually, a higher level of education was necessary because the artisan was also involved in trading his goods. Because craftsmen were not engaged in the production of edible goods, they depended on agriculture and the exchange of goods. The system of stepwise moving up from apprentice to master has a long history and has survived in some countries. Nevertheless, the craft sector has changed dramatically with the introduction of machinery through the Industrial Revolution. Mass production made craft products unaffordable for many people and changed the perspectives on what a finished product should look like. Many craftsmakers specialize in customized

¹⁸ School of Visual Arts. *Graduate Design Criticism. Program Overview*, viewed 3.1.2011.

¹⁹ *Crafting*. Wikipedia, viewed on 18.1.2011.

fabrication of products for a small clienté, and make changes to industrially produced products that need customization.

Nowadays, the common view on the craft and applied art sector is often ambivalent – some see it as outdated, medieval, and sentimental, others see the potential in crafts to produce research on new techniques and methods that can be applied in industry, and others value the knowledge that is being preserved, revived, and taken further by those artisans specializing in a material or a field of handicraft.

Eventually, to implement the work in workshops and the learning of basic craft skills is an important part of a designer's and artist's educational curriculum and can be considered an important contribution to their 'toolbox' and thinking.

FUTURE

The future is the indefinite time period after the present. Due to the existence of time and the laws of physics, it cannot be stopped from arriving and is therefore unavoidable. Everything that is now is only temporary and will come to an end; therefore past, presence and future are closely interrelated. Both future and eternity have been subjects of big relevance to philosophy, science and religion. Defining the future led to controversial debates amongst the greatest thinkers. Since it is unpredictable and only suggestions and speculations can be made about what is to come, it can only be affirmed in the moment it happens (which would make it presence and past at once).

Visualizing the future has been a reoccurring obsession of mankind – especially those who are capable of visualizing their visions with images and words such as filmmakers, architects, artists, designers, poets, writers, and futurologists. One of the first future movies was Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, (1927) presenting a dystopian vision of a society split in two classes, inhabiting a city with the ruling class living in the top of endless skyscrapers and the working class slogging away underground.

Interestingly, each decade seems to have predicted the future as a version of the present by reinforcing the trends and cultural conditions of the time being. An important source for inspiration has been the field of science-fiction literature with prominent writers from different decades such as H.G. Wells, Isaac Azimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Philip K. Dick and many others. In the Fine Arts, future has been explored thoroughly in the beginning of the 20th century by artists such as Max Ernst and avant-garde movements such as the Dadaists, the Surrealists, and the Futurists. The Futurists embraced all sorts of innovation, technology, speed, and violence. They opposed everything from the past and explored every artistic medium to express their visions – from painting over sculpture, poetry, theatre, music, architecture, even food, which later expanded to other spheres

such as industrial design.²⁰

A number of architects attempted to produce plans for the new city of the future, like e.g. Le Corbusier with his vision of 'La ville radieuse' or the Futurists' vision of a machine-like city called 'La Città Nuova' by architect Antonio Sant'Elia. It seems like the beginning of any century is an important moment, but the beginning of a new millennium is charged with incomparable significance. We all remember the future fear when the clocks were turned to 2000: Y2K, panic shopping, switching off all computers, and waiting for the world to come to an end. The fear that technology will overwhelm the individual at some point in history seems to be a prevailing concern amongst us.

How do we know what happens in the future? Globally, there are think tanks, sociologists and futurologists who do research on future. But what is future? Shouldn't we live in the present? Or is taking care of the future the whole sense of the present? The much acclaimed futurologist Alvin Toffler wrote in 1970 that "too much change in too short a period of time"²¹ would lead to a 'Future Shock' (which is also the title of his book, a bestseller at that time). According to Toffler's theories, people underwent one revolution after the other, turning from an industrial society to a "super-industrial society". The rate of technological innovation would accelerate more and more, leading to a social change that would leave people "disconnected and suffering from "shattering stress and disorientation" – future shocked".

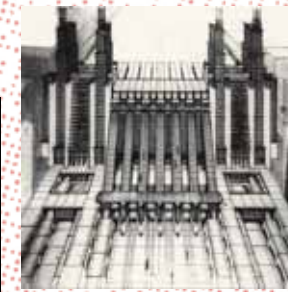
Toffler defined three revolutions as waves humankind would go through: 1) the Agrarian Revolution, which replaced the first hunter-gatherer cultures; 2) the Industrial Revolution – to which he referred as "industrial and based on mass production, mass distribution, mass consumption, mass education, mass media, mass recreation, mass entertainment, and weapons of mass destruction"²²; and 3) the post-industrial revolution, coined by him and others as the Information Age, Space Age, Electronic Era, Global Village, technetronic age, scientific-technological revolution, which to various degrees predicted de-massification, diversity, knowledge-based production, and the acceleration of change. Considering that those books have always been written ahead of time, they seem to describe quite accurately what has actually set in.

In his book *Design Activism*, Fuad-Luke examines different space-time-models of society. By combining concepts of Postmodern critic Charles Jencks and brand-consultant Will Murray, he presents how the role of design has changed over time. The first phase concluded around 1450 with the emergence of the Renaissance and the concept of a 'linear

20 Apollonio, U. (ed.) (2001)

21 Toffler, A. (1970)

22 Entrepreneur Magazine (1999) *Future speak. Interview with the Tofflers*, viewed 16.1.2011.



(from left to right) Film still from Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' (1927). 'Antonio Sant'Elia's 'La Città Nuova' (1914). Le Corbusier's 'La Ville radieuse' (1935).

time-space-model', signalling progress. The preceding model of time-space was cyclic, a model that had kept humans in harmony with natural rhythms. The Industrial Revolution rapidly accelerated progress and marks the beginning of the next phase. Another change happened in the 1960s with the beginning of Post-modernity. Murray suggests the economic model to be the fundamental drive of change, meaning that all shifts in societies are driven by the ruling economic model. According to Fuad-Luke, design has evolved with these economic models and helped to materialize 'culturally acceptable' forms to represent those models.²³ Design would, Fuad-Luke writes, provide a 'regulatory service' in production and consumption. He divides the history of this role in three major phases: 1750-1850 (early industrial equipment and manufacturing), 1851-1918 (Great Exhibition, labour and material exploitation in European colonies), and 1918-1990 (World Wars and various struggles of numerous design movements).²⁴

Nowadays, we live in the phase of the Knowledge age in a globalized interconnected society. Capitalism serves as the economic model our rules are based on. With rising urgent concerns such as climate change and the effects of globalization on nature and people asks for those rules to be rewritten. As Toffler prophesied rightly: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."²⁵

UTOPIA

Utopia is a term to describe a perfect society governed by an ideal social and political system. The term can be used to describe fictional societies portrayed in literature (such as Sir Tomas More's novel 'Utopia' from 1516, where the term originally comes from)

23 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 36.

24 Ibid.

25 Gibson, R., Toffler, H., Toffler, A. (1998)

or to refer to micro-communities who seek to live under shared values that guarantee true equality and happiness. In common language, the term Utopia is used to describe a vision or proposal of something good but unattainable. The etymology of More's word creation is Greek οὐ, "not", and τόπος, "place". Because the word suggests that the idea of a perfect society is impossible, it also implies a certain naïvety to such proposals.

Historically seen, Plato's 'Republic' is the first utopian vision. He proposed a categorization of citizens into a class structure of four different rankings: golden, silver, bronze, and iron, with the golden citizens trained to be philosopher kings who would eliminate poverty with their wisdom.²⁶

More's vision of the island state Utopia was a place where meaningful work, an equal social order and religious tolerance prevailed (ironically, More was in real life a fanatic catholic who boycotted Henry VIII's wedding to Anne Boyleyn which led to him being sentenced to death). Utopian novels followed and soon developed into a sub-genre, the dystopia: the exact opposite, showing that any utopian vision must end in a totalitarian system that rather oppresses than frees people. *1984* by George Orwell or *Brave New World* are world-famous examples of such dystopian literature. By emphasizing a particular problem of a society in order to eradicate it seems to usually result in the exact opposite: a social distortion in the treatment of other problems.

Most utopian projects concentrate on solutions for social problems such as class struggle and unfulfilled human needs, resulting in a range of utopias being almost all Marxist with a focus on the working class.

Lately, the term Utopia has come up again frequently, but in a more positive tone: 'Attainable utopia' is the title of the metadesign project's website, the book *Real Utopia: Participatory Society for the 21st Century* by Chris Spanner has just recently been released, and 'The Real Utopias Project' is an academic research project initiated in 1991 at the A. E. Havens Center at the University of Wisconsin with so far six book releases. All of them concentrate on how to make utopian ideas become true.²⁷ There seems to be a general desire and hope to create real utopias in a world system apparently not able to satisfy everyone's needs.

26 *Utopia*. Wikipedia, viewed on 26.2.2011.

27 University of Wisconsin. *The Real Utopias Project*, viewed on 25.1.2011.

WORK

*"If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually at work, and over our ashes will be shed the hot tears of noble people."*²⁸

Karl Marx, in a letter to his father

The main focus of utopian visions often lays on how work structures of a society are organized. If we assume that humans are made to work and consider the fact that work is the major cause of many social problems, governments and policies should shift their main focus on how to make work truly worthwhile to people.

To work is necessary in order to give life a daily sense and order – people in our society define themselves with the work they do. Some jobs are paid better than others; the value of a service or a good being determined by the market. In contrast, in communist societies it is the state that controls the value and reach of a job. In our society, we basically have the freedom to choose how hard we want to work and how much responsibility we want to assume. The capitalist system suggests competitiveness as a driving force of being successful, a general motivation to improve one's performance.

The way work is organized and valued plays a great role in defining a society. The Surrealists and Situationists opposed work and suggested different models of making a society function. Suggestions such as a general basic income would secure the individual from poverty by the state providing each citizen with a sum of money. The only condition to receive it would be the ownership of a nation's citizenship, other than the models of Western social welfare that do not accept anyone to decide not to work. "The Basic Income Guarantee is an unconditional, government-insured guarantee that all citizens will have enough income to meet their basic needs."²⁹ The concept dates back to 1795, when Thomas Paine proposed 'capital grants provided at the age of majority' in his *Agrarian Justice* of 1795. A similar new current trend can be observed in capitalist societies: 'downshifting' is the new buzzword to describe the intent to simplify one's life by reducing work hours and consequently stress, resulting in more quality-time and less money to spend on useless consumer goods.

"Remember - The most important gift is time. Spend quality time with the most important people in your life. I hereby pledge to slow my life down a gear, for the benefit of my health,

28 Marx, K. (1835) pp. 35-39.

29 The U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network, viewed on 23.2.2011.

my well being, my environment and for those around me whom I dearly love.”

Tracy Smith, The Downshifting Manifesto

The balance between leisure time and work, personal fulfillment and active relationship building are amongst the most important life goals that replace economic success. The concept is distinguished from the concept of *Simple Living*, which is a very similar approach, but distinct in its way to achieve a more moderate lifestyle – slowly downshifting instead of radically changing everything. *Simple Living* is a concept that became popular in the 1990s in many industrial societies amongst the world, mostly the US, the UK and Australia. The reduction of work hours and salary results in more thoughtful spending habits and less material possessions. It results in more time for personal interests, loved ones, civic engagement and the community, which adds more meaning to life and has the potential to increase general happiness. If we believe *Zeitgeist*-director Peter Joseph, the future of labour is moving towards a almost complete replacement through machines; 75% of all human labour can be replaced by technology, freeing people of inhumane working conditions, repetitive work and dissolving the social stratification caused by the prevailing work hierarchies.

HAPPINESS

Happiness is defined as “a state of mind or feeling characterized by contentment, love, satisfaction, pleasure, or joy.”³⁰ Happiness seems to be the thing everybody is dreaming about. But what is happiness? What makes people happy?

Think tanks around the world make independent research for governments to find out how to raise the happiness level of the inhabitants of a society. According to the *Happy-planet Index*, a measurement system to compare the level of happiness around the world, the happiness level in most Western countries has not notably increased since the 1970s despite significant economic growth.³¹ The happiness index is measured by multiplying life satisfaction with life expectancy divided by the ecological footprint, recognizing the fact that humans rely on nature. The country on top of the list is a small pacific island state called Vanuatu, followed by Colombia and Costa Rica. All of them are equipped with a good ecological capacity and a contented population. On the bottom of the list are African countries such as Burundi, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. Happiest of the G8-countries is Italy, followed by Germany and Japan, all falling below the rankings of China, Brazil, and India. The reports reveals that the social capital tends to be larger

30 Wolfram Alpha. *Happiness*, viewed on 27.2.2011.

31 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 71/ 190-191.

in those countries who have a high life satisfaction. The improvement of well-being and the advancement of social capital seem to be two interconnected basic goals that societies should work on. They should be on top of the agenda of people who aim to transform the society they are part of.

According to a WWF report on happiness written by the local think tank *Demos*, the following factors help elevate the happiness of people:

- community
- health care
- meaningful work
- meaningful space
- meaningful free time.³²

This year, the documentary *Economics of Happiness* by Helena Norberg-Hodge, Steven Gorelick & John Page will be released; ‘going local’ is advertised as a “powerful strategy to help repair our fractured world - our ecosystems, our societies and our selves. Far from the old institutions of power, people are starting to forge a very different future...”³³ The synopsis of the movie describes the causes of the world’s unbalanced state: “fundamentalism and ethnic conflict; climate chaos and species extinction; financial instability and unemployment” caused by economic globalization. Our world seems to be torn between two forces: corporate power and a new paradigm of people: an economics of localization. The psychosocial stress caused by the economic system we live in is a major problem of our Western countries, but the problem causing it actually helps to keep our economies alive. Against common expectations, less competitive societies that are not based on the maximization of profit in order to keep the economy at health, innovation and social capital are greater as is the level of happiness.³⁴ According to studies by the London based *Equality Trust*, social inequality is the biggest factor causing health problems, drug abuse, mental illness, homicide and crime.

32 WWF & Demos (2010)

33 The Economics of Happiness, viewed on 31.1.2011.

34 The Equality Trust. *Why More Equality?*, viewed on 31.1.2011.



“I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE TO FACE THAT THERE IS NO ECOLOGICAL MATERIAL, IT IS THE IDENTITY OF THE OBJECT. I THINK THE ART BRINGS THE LONG-LASTING IMPACT ON THINGS.”

PEOPLE'S PROFILE

Name: Timo Salli

Profession: Design professor and designer

Born: Porvoo, 10.8.1963, grew up in Pohjanmaa

Lives in: Helsinki, Finland; alone, two daughters

Free time: Design works such as bottles, lamps. At the moment, a chandelier.

What is your background education?

My first profession was welding, with a specialization in metal tubing. I was travelling around a lot in different countries. Then I wanted to become educated and started to study in 1989, first, I did the BA in Wood and Metal Design in Lahti in 1992, then I started the MA in Crafts Design at Taik in Helsinki. Back then - just like today- there were not too many projects offered by my own department, so I took courses all across the departments, which was a very enriching experience for me. I graduated in 1997 from Taik, established my own studio in 1997, and became a design professor here in 200x. And still, I don't earn as much as I did back then! (laughter)

What is the future of design education?

The old top-down military system doesn't work any more. It is a memory of the Golden Age of Finland, when design specialists were needed more. Nowadays, that system does not work any more. You cannot first get educated in a special field and only then start to open up for other disciplines. That just doesn't work.

Many people graduate from our departments and are not prepared for the real world. Just have a look at the current situation of the job market: how many furniture designers are employed by design firms? We need to break open the disciplines and integrate more cultural and philosophic thinking in design education to expand the designer's ability to adapt to changing markets.

Design still focuses mainly on objects. In my opinion, it should be more about communication: designers have to communicate more directly about the identity of objects. When I studied, you were not supposed to talk about your piece: just send in the drawings to the producer and get it produced. Customers need to understand production processes and where things come from.

What do you try to teach your students?

There is so many cultural things that you have to understand in order to create in a bigger context. There should be more talking and discussions and not so many objects. As a professor, I am rather invisible. I am not that kind of professor who tells students what is good or bad. I try to be the bridge between students and people, I try to make connections between them. I am changing the practical project every year, I never had the same project twice. That way, it is always a reflection of what is currently happening in design practice and the cultural world. I think all professors should have another leg in the working field, otherwise you just get stuck in school structures.

What is the future role of design and the designer?

Talented designers who don't agree with the current situation are around, but companies are not open for them. Those people must get organized and find ways of establishing their own practice. The situation seems to be frozen and I really hope that something is going to move forward there.

I think we are going in a more conservative direction, not only in Finland, but seen globally. In art and design auctions, designer objects get high prices just like art pieces, moving towards the mechanisms of the art world. Konstantin Grcic gave one of his prototypes to an auction to donate the money for a good purposes, but then he saw it in another auction. He got sort of angry...

You always cared about the differences and similarities of Design and Art - how do you see their relationship?

Design always needs to be functional, but you can see the comment an object is making as a main function. We are using completely wrong words to describe things. The matter of making something new is a driving force. Our brain is about making continuously decisions, we put things together and try to solve. The practical thing is just the starting point, but in the end, you always want to communicate something. The built environment is much more complex, we refer to materials in a certain way. It is not all about being functional, it is our culture, which opens our window much wider. Like Wirkkala said in his famous quote, we have hands AND a head: "thinking hands".

How do you see the future of design practice?

Designers nowadays are mainly Art Directors, who go to meetings and communicate with people. Then, specialists are contacted and involved in projects. The future of design is subjective: we can either kill it or go ahead and try to work with

economics. We are a bit naive to think that we could be more ecological, but that would mean that we have to stop producing things. When I visited Shanghai, I saw how naive it is to think if a country as small as Finland would stop producing things - in China, everything is about consumption. Consumers in the West are lost, they feel like they cannot buy anything any more. At the same time, there is the technology device market, which causes a huge environmental problem.

There was a time in the mid-70s, when everybody was happy to buy Finnish products. Then, in the 80s, the market was entered by anonymous foreign products, which were produced somewhere far away. We should believe in local production and quality materials that have a soul. I believe that we have to face that there is no ecological material, it is the identity of the object. I think the art brings the long-lasting impact on things.

How do you define happiness?

I am more that Lutheric type of guy; happiness is more something like taking risks and still succeed, that is happiness in working life for me. Scary processes create better results. From scratch you can always create something quite positive.

In a nutshell: the role of design is ...?

I think the built environment makes mankind exist. It is the image how we express ourselves. So there is a big role. Everything is designed, and that is true. The only thing that you can see from the moon is the junkyard of New York, so you gotta be careful.

Thank you!

The interview took place in Helsinki, 8.2.2011.

3

CHAPTER 3: PREPARE

Designers should “make wholly unreasonable demands on a world that has neglected the needs and aspirations of most its inhabitants.”

MICHAEL COOPER AND RACHEL PRESS

3/5: PREPARE (fire)

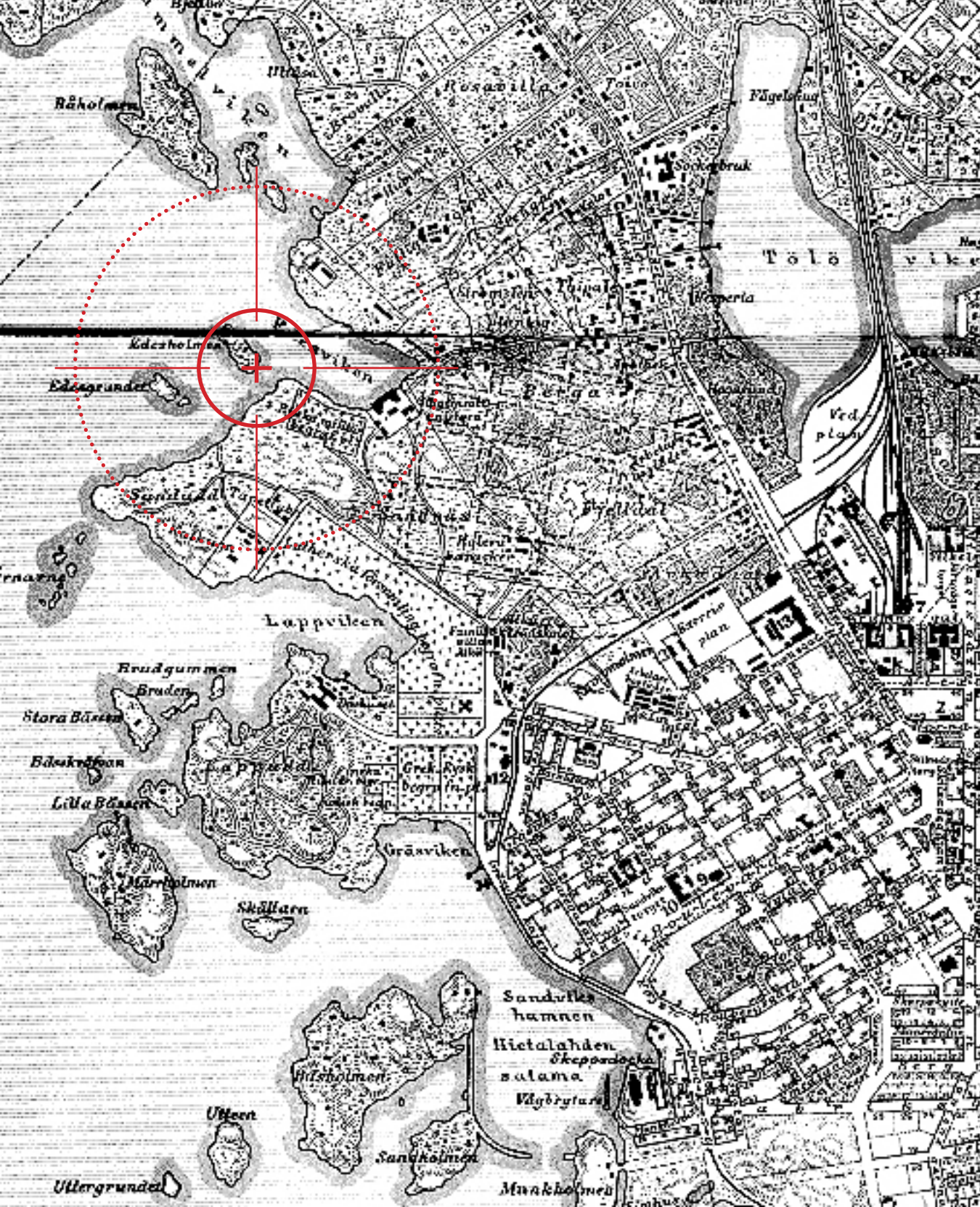
vb [from Latin praeparāre, from prae before + parāre to make ready]

1. to make ready or suitable in advance for a particular purpose or for some use, event, etc. to prepare a meal to prepare to go; 2. to put together using parts or ingredients; compose or construct; 3. (tr) to equip or outfit, as for an expedition

What does locality really mean? Where do things come from? The third event put a focus on the meaning of the environment and how humans relate to it. What does it mean to live in a city? How does it change the perception of nature? What does it mean to shape nature according to our needs?

With the beginning of mankind, men instinctively hunted and gathered what they could find around them in order to survive. Our ancestors lived in a natural environment dominated by wild nature. With a rise in population and the consequent rising need for food, agriculture became predominant over 'uncultivated food'. As a consequence, forests were cut down and cultivated into fields yielding crops to feed people. With industrialization and the rising urge of people to live in cities, the countryside was abandoned and most labour force replaced by effective machinery. Nowadays, most food is produced industrially since small farms can hardly keep up with the harsh competition that rules the food industry. Most farmers live off government or EU substitutions in order to get by. Globalization has caused production processes that are neither comprehensible nor traceable for the common consumer, not only in terms of food. What ingredients are in a product? How was it produced and by whom?

For the third event, people were asked to bring one ingredient and one story of their choice to the urban island Seurasaari. We prepared the ingredients people brought along on location and cooked them into a hearty stew over the open fire. While the moon came up and temperature fell, we moved together around the fire and made up stories... One common belief was put in question: do too many cooks really spoil the broth?



NATURAL SPACE: SEURASAARI

Seurasaari (Swedish: Fölisön) is an island and a district in Helsinki, Finland. Most commonly, it is known as the location where the Seurasaari Open-Air Museum is situated, since it spreads throughout the whole island. It consists of many old, mainly wooden buildings that have been transplanted from elsewhere in Finland to the island to offer visitors the possibility to experience on a densified location how people used to live in Finnish villages. During the summer months, Seurasaari is a popular recreation area where many Helsinki residents come to enjoy outdoor activities such as running, walking, grilling, taking pictures or feeding squirrels, which are uncommonly tame. The island has a very rich flora and fauna and several cafés, a restaurant, and swimming beaches, which includes even a nudist beach.

During Midsummer, a huge bonfire is burnt on the island's coast, which is a popular attraction for both tourists and Helsinki residents.

The first group of buildings was brought to the island in 1909, which marks the foundation of the museum. The buildings comprised the Niemelä farm in Konginkangas in Central Finland. Axel Olai Heikel, an expert on ethnology and vernacular architecture, was the main initiator of the museum. Most of the buildings that can be found on the island are from the 18th and 19th centuries, comprising mostly agrarian wooden buildings. There is also a church, which is also the oldest building - the Karuna Church, built in 1686. Heikel's concept was to collect buildings typical of the different provinces and regions of Finland, which was made difficult by the provinces who wanted to keep their buildings in the original location. With a number 85 separate buildings, the museum is still quite well-equipped and shows a wide range of houses.

Because the island is protected by law as a museum island, it is not allowed to make open fires without the special permission of the city. After several inspections of the island, I had found a nice spot to lit a bonfire, but failed to get a permission. Fortunately, the Seurasaari foundation maintains a barbecue place with benches, a fire place and a small wooden shelter with firewood provided, which eventually served as the location for the third event.





On a crisp autumnal afternoon, people were invited to join an open-air one-pot dinner. (right) In the local spirit, the bread offered was 'piimäleipä', typical for the Uusimaa region.



Spoons were marked with a letter of the alphabet as a starting point for the stand-up stories invented during the dinner. They made up a puzzle that showed combined the forest sky.





People brought one raw ingredient each: amongst many others, Cathérine brought onions, Samara cauliflower, Daniel water cress, I brought lentils, Linda cabbage, and Tristan turnips.





As soon as the ingredients were photographed, the guests started preparing them by peeling, chopping, and cutting the vegetables into small pieces.





Everybody gathered around the fire to warm hands and spirits while the stew was cooking over the open fire. (next page) Time to eat!



INDUSTRIALIZATION

The Industrial Revolution induced massive change in all societies throughout the world and is considered a major turning point in human history. It can be divided in two major phases, starting with the first stage in the late 18th century in Great Britain with the invention of the steam engine, which dramatically increased production capacities in almost all fields of production. The changes started with the mechanization of the textile industries. Manual labour was largely replaced by machine-based manufacturing techniques. Iron-making techniques and the expansion of trading routes by constructing a whole new network of canals, roads, and railways enabled the massive growth of trade and production capacities.

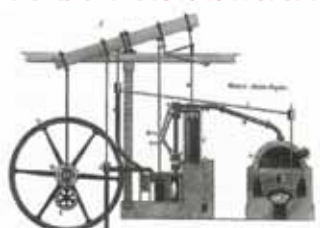
The first phase of the Industrial Revolution was superseded by the Second Industrial Revolution around 1850, when further developments of steam-powered ships, railways, the internal combustion engine and electrical power generation were made. In consequence, agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology were changed substantially throughout the world after it had found its beginnings in the United Kingdom and spread further in Western Europe and North America during the 19th century.

Historians agree that the Industrial Revolution is the most important event in the history of humanity since agriculture. It hauled changes in almost every aspect of human life. "For the first time in history, the living standards of the masses of ordinary people have begun to undergo sustained growth. Nothing remotely like this economic behavior has happened before."¹ Average income and population grew such in the two centuries after 1800, that the world's average per capita income had increased over 10-fold, while the world's population increased over 6-fold.² Large cities with new factories offered new opportunities of employment and attracted masses of people to move away from the countryside. The living conditions in the city seemed to be much better than in rural areas, food, shelter, clothes, health care and educational opportunities were available for everyone. The transportation system was revolutionized with the invention of trains, cars, and steam ships. Family needs were no longer based on conjoint production but on shared consumption.³ The middle class came to rise and the whole structure of society changed drastically. Large scale production caused a growth in wealth and profits, on both domestic and international levels. Mass production caused a wider range of products to cheaper prices attainable for most of the population. In spite of all these advance-

1 Lucas, R. E., Jr. (2002) pp. 109–10.

2 Maddison, A. (2003) pp. 256–62, Tables 8a and 8c..

3 Did You Know? *The Industrial Revolution & Public Health*, (2007) viewed on 28.1.2011.



(from left to right) James Watt's development of the steam engine (1763 - 1775). The world's first locomotive (England, 1804) . Industrial 'cotton town' Manchester with its characteristic chimneys.

ments caused by the Industrial Revolution, massive social and political problems came into being that lasted until the present day.

GLOBALIZATION

"Globalization describes the process by which regional economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated through a global network of political ideas through communication, transportation, and trade."⁴ The reduction and removal of barriers between national borders facilitates the flow of goods, capital, services and labour. According to the United Nations ESCWA, globalization is not a new phenomenon. It already began towards the end of the 19th century and then slowed down between the start of WWI and the third quarter of the twentieth century. The pace of globalization picked up rapidly during the fourth quarter of the twentieth century.

The downside of globalization is manifold – the grow-or-die-dynamic⁵ of globalization has caused the rapid expansion of transnational corporations which are ruling the market and either destroying or buying out local small businesses. This phenomenon is called economic globalization which led to the present form of neoliberal globalization. All areas of society are going through the processes of globalization, such as industry, job markets, politics, culture, ideology, technology and society itself.

Globalization has caused a vast movement of material and goods amongst global markets, between and within national boundaries. International trade of manufactured goods increased by more than a hundred times in the years after 1955. The global financial infrastructure became increasingly instable because of the interconnectedness of global markets, which are easily affected by national incidents, as evidenced during the financial crisis between 2007 and 2010. The same applies for the economic market

4 *Globalization*, Wikipedia, viewed on 12.2.2011.

5 Fotopoulos, T. (2001)

– companies can produce goods and services in regions with the lowest cost, which is usually in areas with low wages, low worker protection, low environmental regulations and low health regulations. As a result, mass produced goods are sold in countries where the opposite is valid, profiting from the poor regulations of poor countries and affecting the environment by moving the guilt elsewhere.

To survive in a globalized market, the ability to compete is crucial – improved productivity in order to be able to compete is therefore necessary to face the increasing competition amongst global players. Ecological standards are considered a hindrance of the ability to compete, one of the main reasons why the international cooperation on ecological measures to achieve a global reduction of the carbon footprint is not moving forward. Many argue that the improvement of living standards and economic development require a "dirty" industrial age, and that rising developing countries such as China should not be required to improve their environmental regulations to be able to compete in the global market.

The cultural impact of globalization is remarkable – with increasing access of world citizens to global media and products, cultures and lifestyles diffuse. The desire to achieve similar living standards as the West prevails in many developing countries.

There are two sides to the phenomenon: multiculturalism adds variety and can potentially increase peace and understanding, but at the same time, it endangers cultures to become assimilated. After all, a globalized world potentially could be a generally positive phenomenon – if everybody was treated equal and guaranteed the same rights.

THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

The phrase "Think global, act local" became increasingly popular in everyday and corporate language in the past decade. It encourages the consideration of the environmental state of the planet and its citizens by taking action in the own communities and cities, independent from governmental efforts. The concept finds its origins in town planning and is attributed to social activist and urban planner Patrick Geddes. His 1915 book *Cities in Evolution* does not cite the exact same phrase, but the idea is clearly expressed: "Local character' is thus no mere accidental old-world quaintness, as its mimics think and say. It is attained only in course of adequate grasp and treatment of the whole environment, and in active sympathy with the essential and characteristic life of the place concerned."⁶

It is unclear who first linked the phrase to the environmental context. It has been in use

6 Geddes, Patrick (1915) p. 397.

slightly varied since the end of the 1960s by many various famous people, including Yoko Ono and John Lennon, Mother Teresa, Buckminster Fuller and Hazel Henderson. The concept has been applied to other fields such as education and business strategy, where multinational corporations try to build local roots in order to increase their market value, expressed in the single term 'glocal'.

Local identity, activism and awareness in the global context potentially protect and conserve culture and local markets against the profit-oriented competitive behavior of multinationals. I am not talking about a distorted feeling of national pride, but a healthy portion of local awareness. As Mother Teresa said in 1979 upon receiving the Nobel Peace prize and being asked: "What can we do to promote world peace?," she replied: "Go home and love your family."⁷

ENVIRONMENTAL ART

"Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power."

Michel Foucault

Environmental art can be described either as a movement or a special way of looking at art. It is hard to put into words because it is an all-encompassing way of viewing art as a force considering all contexts of the human being: the built environment and all formal, political, historical, and social conditions he is surrounded with. The term is also used to refer more specifically to artworks dealing with ecological issues and nature, but no general rule can be made about the contents and motivation of Environmental Art.

Environmental Art can be traced back to the 60s and 70s, when a growing concern about the state of nature manifested amongst people. Parallel to that and the countercultural movements of the time, artists felt the common urge to leave art institutions behind and act out of the gallery. Site-specific art, Earth Art, and Arte povera arose out of the criticism towards traditional art forms. Artists were more and more interested in considering the environment with all its layers in their practice. Many works refer to the definition of space and time and how the human relates to it. The relation of the human to his environment changes depending on how he perceives and interacts within it. The way space and time are perceived depends on many factors: seasons, climate and the natural shift of night and day can change the perception of a space drastically with almost no way for humans to affect them. The same thing counts for the scales of a space and how it relates to its surrounding environment.

7 Mother Teresa (1979). *Nobel Prize Lecture*. 11.12.1979, retrieved 25.5.2007.

Common notions of sculptural practice were challenged by artists leaving the cities and producing works too large in scale to be seen from a human perspective. Only documentary photographs represented the works to the public. It was a protest against the venality of art. "I am for an art that is political-erotic-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum", wrote Claes Oldenburg in 1961, "I am for the art of scratchings in the asphalt, daubing at the walls. I am for the art of bending down and kicking metal and breaking glass, and pulling at things to make them fall down."⁸ Jan Dibbets challenged the mechanisms of art institutions with his claim "Selling is not a part of art."

Robert Smithson, one of the main exponents of the movement in its beginnings and author of the infamous 'Spiral Jetty', organized one of their first exhibitions named *Earthworks* in 1968. Most works were only photographs of sculptures done in the desert. The shift away from traditional exhibiting and selling art opened up new ways to conceptualize and document artworks. Whilst most of the early Land Art was done in the deserted deserts of the American west, works had slowly moved back towards the cities by the 70s and 80s, exploring urban space in all its formats – from abandoned estates to parking lots, gravel pits and empty houses. Space in all its manifestations, natural or urban, was perceived as a new material to work with: "They were not depicting the landscape, but engaging it; their art was not simply of the landscape, but in it as well."⁹

The city as an urban landscape offered a potential resource for artists to stimulate and reach a bigger audience. Other than presenting photographs of artworks hidden in the huge vastness of the desert hung up in a confined gallery space, public art was a way of exploiting urban spaces as a public gallery open for everyone. "Many environmental artists now desire not merely an audience for their work but a public, with whom they can correspond about the meaning and purpose of their art."¹⁰

Environmental Art often tackles environmental or political issues by making the invisible visible. It is a strong tool to create awareness amongst people in drawing attention to environmental problems that might not be visible at first sight. Works such as *House* (1993) by contemporary British artist Rachel Whiteread or Gordon Matta-Clark's *Conical intersect* (1975) are examples of artworks directly placed in urban space, becoming part of the everyday context. The artwork is attainable for anybody, even if not understood by all – due to their unusual placement out of the museum context, it is not always perceived as art. The way we interact with such artworks is also different with no museum guards, surveillance cameras and museum rules guiding our behavior. Art comes down from its pedestal and

8 Oldenburg, C. (1961) *I am for an Art*. The Store, New York. Cited in Kastner, J. (ed.) and Wallis, B. (1998) p. 202.

9 Beardsley, J. (1998) p. 7.

10 Ibid. p. 127.

becomes reachable.

Alan Sonfist was the artists who introduced the key environmentalist idea of bringing nature back into the cities. Until today, Sonfist is actively engaging in public debate about environmental and green issues. Environmental artists do not always consider the environmental impact of their artwork. Opinions amongst the field are split – for some, it merely means to deal with environments, whilst others first and only care for the environment by employing sustainable working methods and topics. Herbert Marcuse's statement "man's struggle with nature is increasingly a struggle with society"¹¹ fits quite well in this context – no matter what the final goal of the artwork is, it always represents a social interaction with nature. An art resisting 'commodity status', as Lucy R. Lippard puts it, is able to resist the abuse of nature to provide these commodities.¹²

The ignorance of some of the Earthworks and Land Art pieces towards nature has led to a re-thinking of the meaning of such works, after the negative environmental impact of some artworks became evident (like Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* or Christo's wrapping of a coastline).

Strangely, the human is often seen as an antagonist of nature, even though he is just as much a part of it as flora and fauna are. Yet, he possesses greater power to cause harm in his longing for innovation and growth, sadly often disregarding natural processes. "Man is a singular creature. He has a set of gifts which make him unique among the animals: so that, unlike them, he is not a figure in the landscape – he is a shaper of the landscape. In body and in mind he is the explorer or nature, the ubiquitous animal who did not find but has made his home in every continent."¹³

SUSTAINABILITY

In the past decade, the term sustainability has been so overused that it has become a "feel-good buzzword with little meaning or substance"¹⁴, or as a "dialogue of values that defies consensual definition". Since it has been described and explored thoroughly by such numerous student and scholar works, I will try to outline only shortly the most important facts but found it inevitable to include at least some explanation in this book.

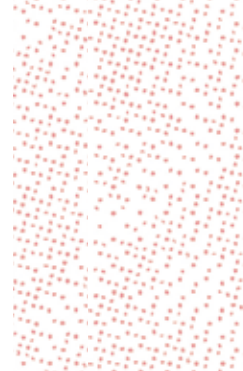
The etymological origin of the word comes from the Latin term *sustinere* (tenere, to

11 Marcuse, H. quoted in Leiss, W. (1974) p.22.

12 Kastner, J. (ed.) and Wallis, B. (1998) p.258.

13 Bronowski, J. (1973)

14 Dunning, B. (2006) *Sustainable Sustainability*, viewed on 25.2.2011.



Richard Long: Dusty Boots Line (1988); Robert Smithson: Spiral Jetty (1970); Gordon Matta-Clark: Conical intersect (1975); Rachel Whiteread: House (1993); Krzysztof Wodiczko: Guests (2009).

hold; sus, up). Since the 1980s, the word has been used mostly in connection with humanity's impact on the earth and its resources. The Brundtland report of 1987 established the term 'sustainable development', described as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."¹⁵ Originally, the idea of sustainability first came up in 1713 by Hans Carl von Carlowitz, who dealt with the problem of scarcity of timber in the mining industry in Germany and was the first one to write down principles of sustainable forestry in his 'Sylvicultura Oeconomica'.

Sustainability goes far back in history with humans dominating ecological systems from the earliest civilizations to the current day. As soon as a natural crisis came about, it was either solved by sustainable solutions or led to decline. With the Industrial Revolution, humanity started its own dependence of fossil fuels, which has led to many environmental implications nobody would have wanted to predict. Those problems have become of global scale in the 20th century, and the 1973 and 1979 energy crises rose global awareness to the problem. In the 21st century, the greenhouse effect became another issue of global concern. Since the beginning of the millennium, sustainability became an everyday issue integrated in most people's awareness. Ways of depicting the impact of our excessive lifestyles have created new awareness of the injustice prevailing towards not only nature, but also the global community – the carbon footprint for example illustrates how some nations use way more resources than others. Finland has the third biggest footprint after the United Arab Emirates and the United States, explained with "the energy-intensive nature of the pulp and paper industry, heavy use of timber, and the simple fact of our being one of the developed countries, where almost without exception the consumption of natural resources outstrips the planet's ability to cope."¹⁶ This means that Finns are consuming four times the sustainable level. The entire world's ecological footprint exceeds the corresponding biocapacity by around 25 percent with the footprint growing larger each year.. Those are just illustrations of numbers, but they facilitate a new awareness for the urgent need to change our lifestyles.

The 'three pillars of sustainability' are nature, society and economy, often depicted as the 'triangle of sustainability'. During the 2005 Earth Summit, this concept has been developed to an illustration of three overlapping ellipses, which indicates that the three pillars of sustainability can reinforce each other, but are not mutually exclusive.¹⁷

15 United Nations (1987) *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*.

16 Helsingin Sanomat International Edition. (25.10.2006) *WWF report: Finns' ecological footprint third-heaviest in world*.

17 Forestry Commission of Great Britain. *Sustainability*, viewed on 23.1.2011.

There are two major ways of reducing our negative impact on the environment: the first is environmental management based largely on information gained from earth science, environmental science, and conservation biology; the second is the reduction of human consumption of resources, with economics being the biggest source of information.¹⁸ The move towards sustainability implies the cooperation of economic, social and ecological activity. It means that all areas of human activity, including politicians, urban planners, citizens, businesses, scientists, and engineers, have to work together to achieve a generally 'redesigned' new lifestyle that embraces basically all fields of our everyday: housing, work practice, leisure time, consumption, energy use, travel and transport. It is a challenge to the whole global community and can only be achieved together.

SLOW MOVEMENT

"The only thing for certain is that everything changes. The rate of change increases. If you want to hang on you better speed up. That is the message of today. It could however be useful to remind everyone that our basic needs never change. The need to be seen and appreciated! It is the need to belong. The need for nearness and care, and for a little love! This is given only through slowness in human relations. In order to master changes, we have to recover slowness, reflection and togetherness. There we will find real renewal."

Guttorm Fløistad, about the philosophy of the Slow movement

The Slow movement emerged in the 1980s with the creation of the *Slow Food* organization through the Italian Carlo Petrini. It was inspired by the protest against the opening of a McDonald's restaurant near the Spanish steps in Rome. The movement developed into different sub-branches such as Slow travel, shopping, design, parenting, art, gardening, media, and money. The *Slow Food* organization tries to preserve traditional and regional cuisine, encourages self-sufficiency and home-gardening with a consideration of local ecosystems. Other activities include the promotion of small local businesses and the opposition of industrially produced agricultural products that are exported and imported globally. By today, the slow movement has expanded to more than 100,000 members spread in 132 countries. In 2004, *Slow Food* opened a University of Gastronomic Sciences in the Italian cities Pollenzo and Colorno with Carlo Petrini and Massimo Montanari as the leading figures. The mission of the school is to promote awareness of good food and nutrition. The single points of the mission statement of the organization are:

18 *Sustainability*. Wikipedia, viewed on 24.2.2011.

- to form and sustain seed banks to preserve variety
- to develop an “Ark of Taste” for each ecoregion
- to preserve and promote local and traditional food products
- to organize small-scale processing of certain products (such as slaughtering of animals) - to celebrate local cuisine in bigger contexts, involving locals
- to promote “taste education”
- to educate consumers about the risks of fast food, commercial agribusiness, factory farms, the risks of monoculture
- to develop various political programs to preserve family farms
- to lobby for organic farming, against government funding of genetic engineering, and against the use of pesticides
- to teach gardening skills to students and prisoners
- to encourage ethical and local buying¹⁹

Due to the young age of the movement, it is still hard to say how big the impact of it is so far. Slow food is more known in the US than in Europe, but according to statistics, Europe, with Germany in particular, consumes much more organic food than the US. On society as a whole, *Slow Food* has had only little effect. Nevertheless, volunteers help worldwide to achieve some of the movement’s goals by teaching farming in schools and kindergardens to educate the coming generations.

SLOW DESIGN

Slow design emerged as a derivative of the *Slow food* movement. As it says in an outline of a Slow design manifesto pulled together for an international seminar of designers and slow food activists (including Ezio Manzini from the Politecnico Milan and Giacomo Majoli from the University of Gastronomic Science) from 2006, slow design means “cultivating quality: linking products and their producers to their places of production and to their end-users who, by taking part in the production chain in different ways, become themselves coproducers.”²⁰ The manifesto describes the changing nature of design and how the international community has to adapt to it: “Design is changing. The issues it addresses are changing. Its tools are changing.”²¹

Slow design is a design field that emerged in the past years out of the need for products that respect the human conditions. “Tradition, ritual, experience, the ability to evolve,

slowness, eco-efficiency, open source knowledge, and technology” are core themes that try to be considered in the designs.²² Slow lab, a collaborative design organization founded in 2005, created six principles of slow design as follows:

- 1) reveal: reveal experiences in everyday life that are often missed or forgotten, including the materials and processes that can be easily overlooked in an artefacts existence or creation
- 2) expand: considers the real and potential expressions of artefacts and environments beyond their perceived functionalities, physical attributes and lifespans
- 3) reflect: artefacts/environments/experiences induce contemplation and reflective consumption
- 4) engage: slow design processes are open source and collaborative, relying on sharing, co-operation and transparency of information so that designs may continue to evolve into the future
- 5) participate: encourages users to become active participants in the design process, embracing ideas of conviviality and enhance communities
- 6) evolve: recognizes that richer experiences can emerge from the dynamic maturation of artefacts, environments and systems over time; slow designs are behavioral change agents.²³

The Slow design principles have been taken further most prominently by Alastair Fuad-Luke, who has established a website as a cultural space, called SLOW, where he has collected thoughts about the linkage of slowness and design. Beyond that, there is already mentioned organization *Slowlab* based in New York, whose board he joined in 2005. Their webpage is an open platform for an international network, outlines the principles, and presents projects and people’s profiles. According to Fuad-Luke, Slow design is still a discipline whose “full potential remains to be explored.”²⁴

19 Slow Food. *The International Statute*, viewed 27.2.2011.

20 Slow + Design (2006) *Manifesto + Abstracts*. International Seminar, Milan 6.10.2006.

21 Ibid.

22 Fuad-Luke, A. (2004, 2005) *Slow Design*.

23 Slow Lab. *About*, viewed on 28.2.2011.

24 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.158.

DESIGN ACTIVISM

*Design activism is “design thinking, imagination and practice applied knowingly unknowingly to create a counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change”.*²⁵

AlastairFuad-Luke

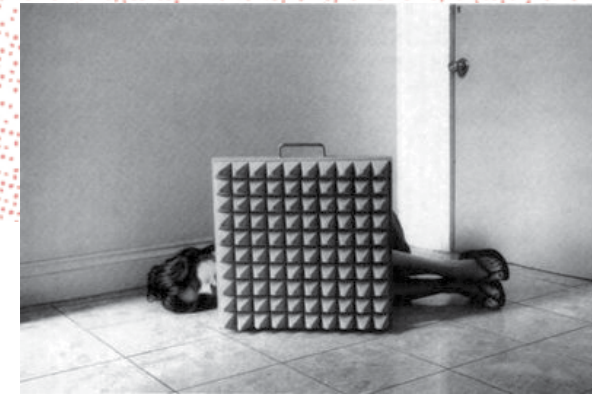
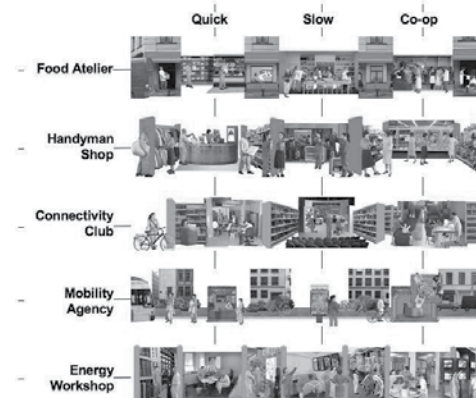
Design activism is a young discipline that was coined only in the past years as an emergent approach to design. Fuad-Luke can maybe be regarded as the pioneer of the movement, since he was the amongst the first ones trying to define the approach. He published his research results in the recent book *Design activism – Beautiful strangeness for a sustainable world* from late 2009. On the internet, you can find several websites from different authors seeking for a definitions, such as designactivism.org: *“Design activism encompasses a wide range of real-life, socially and environmentally engaged actions. It includes processes that innovate forms of creative practice, providing models by which designers might work, or challenge existing conventions of design knowledge.”*²⁶

By connecting the two terms ‘design’ and ‘activism’ with each other, Fuad-Luke has invented a term that seems to be paradox at first sight – design is commonly still understood as a service for the industry whose primary goal is economic profit. Activism, on the other hand, is most commonly associated with leftist demonstrations against prevailing conditions of a society. In combination with each other, the term suggests a design that questions the status quo and works towards a transformation of the latter. Indeed, the emphasis of Design activism lays on presenting counter-narratives that oppose the underlying paradigm of a society. Design activism offers other possibilities than those that already exist with a focus on eliciting societal change and transformation.

Fuad-Luke interrogates the current design paradigm and identifies a problem many design academics and practitioners are facing: our complex world is moving and changing faster than the design paradigm we are working with, which is still dominantly tied to the values and imperatives of business. To ensure that the discipline of design is able to adapt to new challenges such as sustainability and social equality, teachers, students, and professionals alike need new tool sets to be equipped for the near future. Foremost, design practice needs to be redefined: what does it mean to be a ‘designer’? Whilst designers are usually controlled by business and government, the ‘design-activist’ is a new agent of reform. He is a person who uses the power of design to form culture – design for the greater good of humankind and nature. A design activist is, according to Fuad-Luke’s

25 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.27.

26 Design Activism. Viewed on 28.2.2011.



(from above) ‘Tree’ (2007) by Simon Heidjen; ‘The Sustainable Everyday Project’ led by François Jégou & Ezio Manzini (2003); ‘Q Drum’ (1993) by P.J. and J.P.S. Hendrikse; ‘Electro-draught Excluder’ from the Placebo Project (2001) by Dunne & Raby; UK Design Council’s ‘Dott 07’ Festival (2007).

definition, a “non-aligned social broker and catalyst; a facilitator; an author; a creator; a co-author; and a happener (someone who makes things happen).”²⁷

In the past years, numerous contemporary expressions of design activism have emerged – co-design, social design, slow design, metadesign, architecture for humanitarian purposes, graphic and communication design, critical design, Design for the other 90% – all new and emergent frameworks that go beyond eco-efficiency and make hope for a new definition of the role of design. It is necessary to find new definitions of design practice and education and to reconsider the role of the artifact. As a first step towards that goal, design activism reveals the “power of design for positive social and environmental change, design with a central activist role in the sustainability challenge.”²⁸ Eventually, design activism has a dual aim: to challenge and reinvigorate design praxis, and to make positive impacts in work and life.

27 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.xxi.

28 Earthscan. *Design Activism. About this book*, viewed on 28.2.2011.



“THE IDEA OF GIVING UP SOME OF DESIGN’S ROLE OR ACTIVITY TO PEOPLE THAT ARE NOT DESIGNERS IS VERY THREATENING TO THE DESIGNER’S STATUS QUO. ”

PEOPLE’S PROFILE

Cindy Kohtala

Profession: Design Researcher, focus on sustainability

Born: 25.08.1968/ Red Deer, Canada

Lives in: Helsinki, Finland (Finnish immigrants in Canada, 100% Finnish blood)

Free time: Watching films (less mainstream), reading, swimming

What is your background education?

I hold a BA in Industrial Design, University of Alberta, Canada 1991 and an MA in Craft Design, Taik, Finland 1999. After my BA I was very interested in architecture, furniture and product design. When I left Canada for my studies in Finland, I basically lived out of one backpack for two years, and it felt really comfortable to live off so little and not be overwhelmed with choice day by day. When I started to apply to Taik, I had to decide between furniture and crafts. The furniture department seemed too commercial to me – designing for a market full of too much choice didn’t make much sense to me – so I chose Craft Design. All those things together led me to Design Sustainability. After finishing my studies, I continued teaching Business English to adults to have a regular income and worked with NGO’s such as - Helsinki green map and Helsinki Green Drinks).

What can you tell me about sustainability in Finnish Design?

The MA in Creative Sustainability was introduced last year, in 2010. I helped coordinate the Sustainable Product Design module in Fall, teaching the new MA students. Before, I was working on the Lens project, which is an international EU funded project.

Beyond that, I am working on an independent research project that functions as a sustainable design barometer. We are mapping design for sustainability competence and mindsets in Finnish Design practice. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of sustainability in design practice – hypothesis says there is a big gap between design research and design practice; in the real world, design agencies and practising designers are not as sustainable as we would like them to be. The sense of responsibility is not there, the feeling of the local and global impact of their activities. If they only think of economic sustainability, they only think of what the client has been given them. When the contract is over, the responsibility is also gone. It’s that easy.

Your thoughts about design education?

It still is very capitalist – it must be finally recognized that there is many different clients beyond business, such as NGO's and the public sector. It needs to be recognized that different types of actors will have design competence themselves, which means that designers will probably be designing design tools to help customers design their own work. If a designer designs a service for a group of people, they also need the tools to be able to redesign those services to serve their needs. The idea of giving up some design role or activity to people that are not designers is very threatening to the designer's status quo. Long-term impacts and ethics since need to be introduced more widely.

Do you have any design heroes? Who is way ahead of the rest?

The Belgians and the Dutch seem to be far ahead with their risk-taking and willingness to explore. The Brits are also doing very well in establishing design for public services and social design, so we could take an example from there.

What is your biggest dream?

Keeping the balance between work and life, research and practice, theory and practice, design and not-design.

How do you define happiness?

Having the opportunity for flow experiences as often as possible – that feeling that you can be creative no matter what, you just experience that creative feeling. A Hungarian philosopher and psychologist with an unrememberable name (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi) defined this concept. A flow experience is something that makes you feel much happier; you can even get flow with a really good friend over coffee.

Thank you!

The interview took place in Helsinki, 6.2.2011

4

CHAPTER 4: CONSUME

~~“First, design must be seen increasingly as the process that creates meaningful experiences for people.”~~

RACHEL COOPER AND MIKE PRESS

4/5: CONSUME (air)

v. con-sumed, con-sum-ing, con-sumes

v.tr. 1. To take in as food; eat or drink up. See Synonyms at eat. 2. a. To expend; use up: engines that consume less fuel; a project that consumed most of my time and energy. b. To purchase (goods or services) for direct use or ownership.

Humans live in an environment filled with a large variety of material objects. Every day, we touch and use these objects that can fulfill a diverse range of different functions. The world of material culture we live in provides insight in our culture – anthropologists would be lost without archeological finds of man-made objects. They are bearers of meaning, culture and social interaction. Unlike images, ideas and words, artefacts have a physical presence – they can be touched, moved, used, and transformed.

Food, after fulfilling a basic human need, is a complex sign system affiliated with cultural capital, subjectivity, gender and social class. According to sociologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, cooking is a metaphor for the way the ‘raw’ images of nature are ‘cooked’ in culture so that they may be used as part of a symbolic system.¹ Food constantly crosses the boundaries of the natural and cultural realm, making the cook “a type of cultural agent who links the raw product with the human consumer. His role is to ensure that the natural becomes cooked and undergoes a process of socialization.” Food has been one traditional topic of examination for semiotic theory because of its closeness to the average individual’s life. “Food is said to be semiotic because it transforms meaning with preparation. Food that is eaten by a wild animal raw off of a carcass is obviously different in meaning when compared to food that is prepared by humans in a kitchen to represent a cultural dish.”²

The beauty of food as a material to work with lies in its short-lived character. Once it has been eaten, all that is left are memories and the experience. Together with chef Antto Melasniemi and food activist Salla Kuuluvainen, we prepared an ephemeral dinner for the guests of the fourth event. A small workshop preceded the dinner, during which the first half of the guests prepared the starters for their *avecs* who joined us a little later. Root vegetables turned into cutlery, plates were shaped from crisp bread dough, beer served from ice glasses, and wax bottles melted away during this ephemeral dinner experience...

¹ Hanson, S. (2009) *A Decade of Levi Strauss*, viewed on 21.1.2011.

² Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (1993)

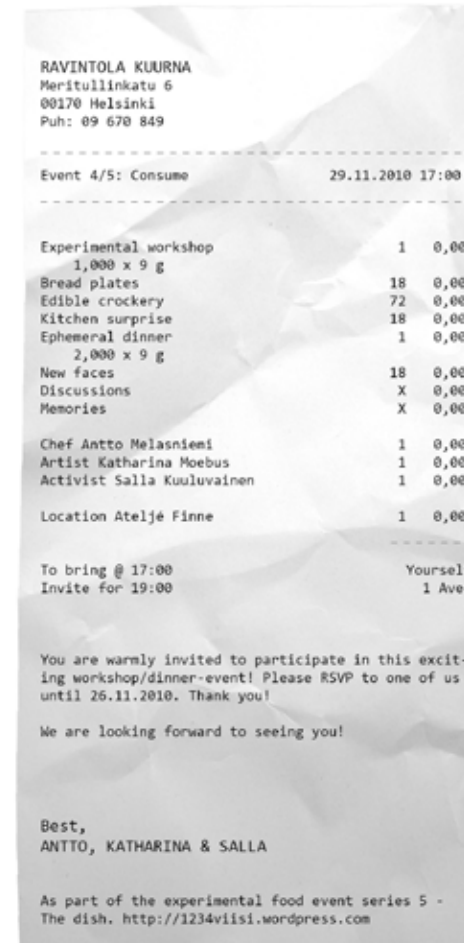


SEMI-PRIVATE SPACE: RAVINTOLA KUURNA

Ravintola Kuurna is one of the two Antto Melasniemi co-owned Helsinki restaurants. It is famous for its cozy and intimate interior. Located in Kruununhaka, it is nearby the sea and well hidden in one of the common living areas. The initial plan was to have the event in the other of the two restaurants, Ateljé Finne in Töölö - a former artist's work space - but then things turned out to be easier to organize and execute in the smaller-sized Kuurna.

When I first asked Antto to cooperate with me on this project, he was immediately enthusiastic to join. He has been one of the only gastronomers in Helsinki who look beyond the normal of what a restaurant can offer. Actively, he has been cooperating with famous Finnish designers, lately in the pop-up restaurant HelYes!, which was presented first during the London Design Festival 2010.

Antto also has been collaborating extensively with ex-designer Marti Guixé on a range of projects. The newest project coming up this summer will be a solar kitchen temporary restaurant at the Southern tip of Kalasatama.



(above) The invitation to the 4th event looked like a shopping bill – (left) The tablecloth was made from shopping bills collected throughout time; the bottles were made from wax and lit during the dinner.



(left) Kuurna ceiling. The restaurant is tiny but cozy. (right) The work station for the root cutlery workshop.



(left) During the workshop preceding the dinner, we made plates from Kuurna's famous crispbread dough.
(above) Michelle enjoying it.

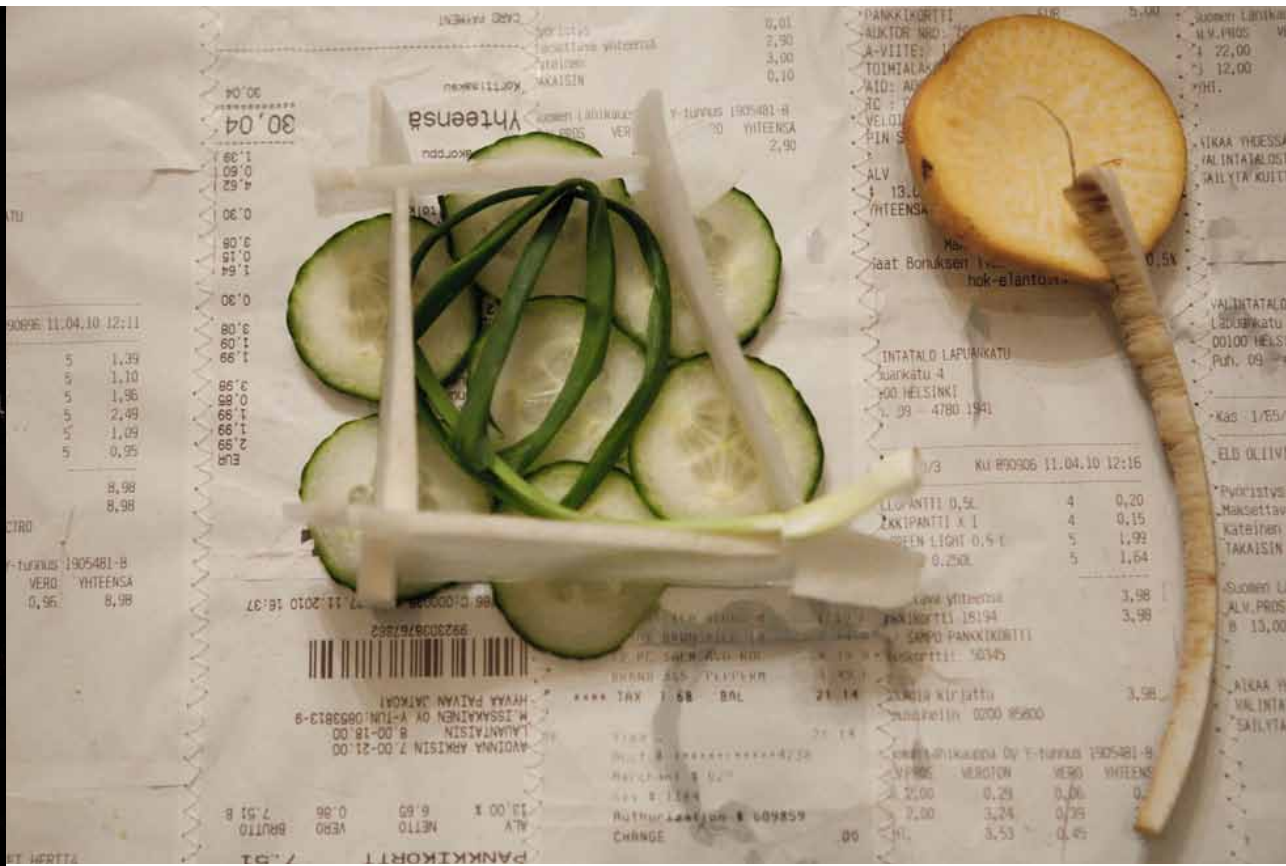








(right) The table is set for the first course.



The creations were arranged on glass plates, so that the tablecloth could be seen through the food; receipts full of ephemeral stories...



(left to right) Antto preparing the main dish. Beetroot bowls with goat cheese and rucola; Salla with bread plates; Preparations in the kitchen.



Antto holding up one of the ice-beer glasses. They did not prove to be very functional, but the beer was cold.
(right) Salla setting the table with bread plates.

(right) The guests having the first course. The dinner was ended with a dessert made from berry sorbet and cookie plates.





ARTIFACTS

“Objects are not just an expression of a solution to a particular problem at a particular time, but embody ideas about how life can be lived in a dynamic process of innovation and refinement beyond the constraints of time and place.”¹

According to online encyclopedias, an artifact is any object made or modified by a human. It is hard to clearly pin down the day humankind started to shape its environment. Design was something that came very naturally with humans discovering objects in nature that could be functionalized. Then, men started to use the capacities of their hands to transform natural material into useful shapes and forms, usually imitating nature. Another dimension set in when humans started to form material into shapes that were not precedent in nature by using their own imagination.

Languages, as a highly abstract form of referring to the physical reality, would emerge. Only by the common agreement of the social group using it, the words acquired meaning. Mind tools became just as important as hand tools, and language was the tool for the communication of ideas. The abstraction of physical reality by the use of words and drawings are of purely cultural offspring – they do not have a direct reference to physical forms found in nature. According to John Heskett in *Design: A very short introduction*, the hand, the senses and the mind form together the “coordinated trinity of powers” by which humans have asserted control over the world.

The designed artifact is on its simplest level a form of communication. What it conveys depends on the framework within it functions. Archeologists study the material culture of past societies to learn about their perceptions and behaviors. In contrast, non-material culture refers to the nonphysical ideas of a culture, such as beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations and institutions. Symbols, language, values, and norms are four of the most important factors that sociologists take into account when studying the non-material culture of a society. Through stories, knowledge of ancient and current artifacts is delivered to us as Krippendorff states: “The meanings that artifacts acquire in use are largely framed in language”². In his book *The Semantic Turn*, Krippendorff describes and extends the role of product semantics in the design of artifacts. According to him, the emphasis on the functionality of artifacts should be shifted to a more human-centered approach, considering the social and cultural meaning of human interactions with artifacts. Most prominently, this approach became important in new challenges of

1 Heskett, J. (2005) p.12.

2 Krippendorff, K. (2006)

design; for instance the design of user interfaces in personal computers. User interfaces make the user experience of a technology not understood by most tangible and enjoyable in the first place. The consideration of the meaning of artifacts in use, language and the whole life cycle of the artifact can help to make a design long-lasting and more meaningful. Krippendorff refers to Ludwig Wittgenstein's definition of meaning as use, claiming that "humans do not see and act on the physical qualities of things, but on what they mean to them".³ The discourse about the meaning of artifacts and usability ultimately led to the formulation of design as a science, the 'science of the artificial', as Herbert Simon coined it in 1969. Other than natural scientists who concentrate on what exists, design science puts its focus on what will possibly be. Design science contributes to the design field through design research, design methods, and reflective practice by developing new tools, exploring new materials and technologies, analyzing the narratives and uses of artifacts and futures, and testing alternative designs, with the ultimate goal to use design as a positive change agent for the future (see p.386, Design research).

Fuad-Luke categorizes artifacts according to their intention and dynamic. According to him, there are four different types of artifacts: propositional, demonstration, service, protest, and entrepreneurial artifacts⁴. Propositional artifacts explore or embody theory or practice expressing something that actually demonstrates its sustainability, suggesting visions for changing the status quo. Demonstration artifacts demonstrate positive alternatives to the status quo; service artifacts serve to provide humanitarian service; protest artifacts prompt reflection on the morality of the status quo; entrepreneurial artifacts attempt to challenge the status quo of the market place, produced in small batches or mass production. The dynamic of an artifact describes, according to Fuad-Luke, the characteristic of its design: whether it is open, hybrid, or closed. An open design dynamic invites the user to modify or complete the design, whereas the latter is the exact opposite, a static finished design.

To take this debate further, we should take a closer look at the meaning of a work of art. "A work of art in the visual arts is a physical two or three dimensional object that is professionally determined or popularly considered to fulfill a primarily independent aesthetic function."⁵ Marcel Duchamp opposed the traditional idea that the art object should be a unique product of an artist's labour, representing his technical skills and methods. (see p.121, Dadaism) Ever since, the physical qualities of an art object and its identification as an artwork has been distinguished by art theorists. Items are being dis-

3 Ibid. pp. 47

4 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 83.

5 Gell, A. (1998) p.7.

tinguished into the categories of fine art, craft, applied art, or design objects, depending on the context and viewpoints. Identifying something as 'a work of art' has been consistently subject of debate, reconsideration, and redefinition.

In 1935, cultural critic Walter Benjamin wrote his famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Today, it is considered one of the documents modern theory of culture and media is founded on.⁶ Art in itself has, according to Benjamin, been a tool to record history. Its uniqueness is bound to time and place. With the invention of different tools of reproduction, such as copperplate engraving, the printing press, photography, and many others, works could be reproduced and distributed widely. At the same time, the work of art deprived its 'aura' – the certain distant unseizable feeling that comes with an original art piece.⁷ French philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard opposes this view by claiming that the capability of an art object to mediate depends on the illusion that it is the "product of the intentionality of a particular individual creator."⁸ Mechanical reproduction does not itself destroy the status of an art object as a mediator; he refers to it as an 'aesthetic disillusionment' of the painting to evoke the illusion of reality.⁹ Contemporary art has lost the power of illusion to an 'irruption of objective irony' in the world of objects.¹⁰

Artifacts and artworks both carry messages across space and/or time between people who are not present simultaneously. Everyday objects are often taken for granted because we use them whilst artworks or old artifacts are mostly displayed in museums and exhibitions, where they act as mediators of the past, future, or different cultures. "The medium is the message" because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action"¹¹, writes McLuhan in 1964.

Design critic Richard Buchanan claims the need for the establishment of a design rhetoric: he refers to Aristotle's remarks on the rise of rhetoric as an art of persuasion. According to Buchanan, "design is an art of thought directed to practical action through the persuasiveness of objects and, therefore, design involves the vivid expression of competing ideas about social life."¹² While not all messages are intentional and well-understood, objects enable a form of social interaction. Tim Dant puts forward a claim to think about: "Our relationship with mediating objects are perhaps the nearest to our relationship with other people."¹³

6 van Reijen, W., van Doorn, H. (2001) p. 155–161.

7 Benjamin, W. (1939) p. 477.

8 Dant, T. (1999) p. 157.

9 Zurbrugg, N. (ed.)(1998) p.17.

10 Ibid. p.13

11 McLuhan, M. (1994 [1964]) p.9.

12 Buchanan, R. (1985) in Margolin, V. (ed.)(1989) p 94.

13 Dant, T. (1999) p. 174.

CONSUMERISM

Consumerism is a social and economic order that is based on the systematic creation and fostering of a desire to purchase goods and services in ever greater amounts. The term in itself carries a critical attitude towards consumption and is often associated with the writings of sociologist Thorstein Veblen. Veblen examined the emergence of the middle class at the turn of the 20th century through processes of industrialization and globalization. In his publication *Theory of the Leisure Class*, considered one of the first books critical towards consumerism, Veblen defined the concept of conspicuous consumption which describes the acquisition of goods and services motivated primarily to display social status and wealth. The same phenomenon can be observed until the present day – the consumer can annex certain meanings bore by objects and brands simply by buying and wearing or displaying them. Such consumer goods serve as symbols and tools of identification within certain groups of society that share similar values.

The turning point for consumerism to arrive was the Industrial Revolution, when mass production unleashed mass consumption. Before, time and money of the working class was scarce and consumer activities simply not possible. The Industrial Revolution created a new economic situation – products were available in massive quantities at low prices, which made them available to a new consumer class. The ‘American Dream’ was born: basically everybody could be rich. Making money became a motivation to attend college, replacing higher values such as doing good for society. Madeline Levine observed this as a large change in American culture: “a shift away from values of community, spirituality, and integrity, and toward competition, materialism and disconnection.”¹⁴ According to critics of consumerism, products or brand names can be substitutes for healthy human relationships lacking in societies. They are part of a general process of social control in modern society: those societies that are built upon a capitalist economy rely on consumption and use up resources at a higher rate than other societies. Like economist Victor Lebow stated in 1955: “Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction and our ego satisfaction in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate.”¹⁵ Over time, consumer products have deliberately been manipulated to lose their value quickly and are indeed being discarded in shorter time intervals. What makes a product valuable, and how can a designer create stronger bonds between the

¹⁴ Levine, M. (2007)

¹⁵ Lebow, V. (1955)

product and the consumer?

Libertarian thinkers oppose the thoughts of the anti-consumerist movement by saying that deciding for others what goods are necessary for living or not was totalitarian. Considering the global overshoot of human society – consuming 30% more material than is sustainable from the world’s resources – the question is maybe not about others deciding what to consume, but to consume less and only as much as is environmentally sustainable. A move towards ‘de-materializing’ the systems of production and consumption towards a lighter industry and a more service-orientated market might offer possible solutions to the problem. John Thackara claims this challenge to be a design issue: 80% of a product, service, or system’s environmental impact is decided at the design stage.¹⁶ He presents examples of a product-service system that provides people with products, tools and equipment in real time. ‘Use, not own’ (see p.277) is the mantra of industrial ecologist Ezio Manzini, who published a whole catalogue on daily life services that enable people to make use of a system based on shared capabilities that encourages new networks and communities (see p.331).

There seems to be an even attractive alternative to the consumption patterns that we know; not only does it increase social interaction and has the potential to build communities, but it also makes life a lot ‘lighter’.

EPHEMERALIZATION

“The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

II Corinthians 4.1:18

Ephemerization is a term coined by R. Buckminster Fuller and describes the ability of technological advancement to do “more and more with less and less until eventually you can do everything with (converging towards relatively little use of material) nothing.”¹⁷ Fuller’s vision was that ephemerization will result in ever-increasing standards of living for an ever-growing population despite finite resources. Fuller saw the concept of ephemerization as an inevitable trend for humanity, progressing from compression to tension to visual to abstract electrical.

If we consider the increasing digitalization of our material world – photography, books, letters, communication, music, etc. – we seem to be reaching a point of becoming lighter. We seem to own less and less with the emergence of new digital technologies. By keeping

¹⁶ Thackara, J. (2005) p. 17.

¹⁷ *Ephemerization*. Wikipedia, viewed on 25.2.2011.

a hard disk drive with a few Gigabytes, one can easily store his whole life and knowledge in bites and pixels. Yet, the hope that information technology could replace our industrial society is a fallacy – the hidden costs lay in the material and energy flows invested in the manufacture and use of microchips. Most information technology devices have an extremely short lifetime and are disposed before their impact has been leveled out. Thackara puts it like this: “Information technology has been added to the world; it has not made it lighter.”¹⁸

How can the world be made lighter? By making products last longer? By creating ‘emotional bonds’ between product and user to increase the lifespan of a product’s use? By individualizing products to increase their value? Or by making products more durable and timeless, so that they never go out of fashion? According to research done by the Dutch design group *Eternally Yours* on that issue, designing a product to last a long period of time does more harm to the environment than good if the product is energy-inefficient.¹⁹ Anticipating an ‘emotional bond’ between the user and the object is doubted as a strategy, since true emotional relationships between users and objects are rather rare and impossible to design. Rather, it evokes the impulse to purchase even more because certain qualities of a product arouse an understanding.²⁰ Customized design and individual production do not present solutions to the problem either, even though they produce “charming products”, which are eventually nothing else but romantic materializations of clichés.²¹ Personal appropriation is another way of offering users the chance to leave their own marks on a product. The ‘do create’ project by Droog proposed a range of objects that were only ready after the user had used his own creativity or even brutal force to appropriate the object - such as hammering a metal cube to a chair, or smashing a vase in order to receive individualized objects no assembly line could produce. The project did not offer any answers but raised new questions: does design need to offer such a feature of self-individualization? People appropriate their products anyway. Instead, the *Eternally Yours* project suggests a description of ‘Vivian’, the fictional ideal product:

“It is relatively small and dark red. Three wheels provide it with ample mobility, and it is strong enough to withstand the weight of two people. It is affordable, brand new and beautifully made out of stainless steel and cheap plastic. It is easy to clean, makes dull coffee and is wooden housing smells like wooden housing should. Only one inch wide, it has a height

18 Thackara, J. (2005) p.15.

19 Van Hinte, E. (2004)

20 Ibid. p.81.

21 Ibid. p. 83.

of 112 centimeters. It is up to date and old-fashioned. Rumor has it that there is one in the old residence of the Mayor of Barcelona. Entirely consisting of foam, it is smooth and soft. It cuts bread too. It is difficult to master, but holds enough power to run for sixteen hours, cleans floors and is upholstered with flower patterned linen. It is water resistant and the rear part is bright orange. It has a microchip, a disc and a small screen and it opens with a nylon zipper. It is Vivian.”²²

Maybe, the ideal product simply does not exist and what we really need to look for is a turn towards a de-materialized society: an ‘ephemeralized’ community that is based on sharing, services, and experiences.

USE NOT OWN

The *Natural Step Framework (TNS)* proposes three conditions of a sustainable society whose members’ needs are met worldwide: “Minimize the waste of matter and energy; Reduce the movement and distribution of goods; Use more people and less matter.”²³ New systems that deliver all the material necessities such as food, clothes, shelter, and mobility need to be redesigned in order to implement these principles in our society which is still based on global industries. The shift to a new system, a service-based economy, is one of the most important features to achieve these goals. The German design expert, author and professor Michael Erloff describes in his 2001 essay *Nutzen statt besitzen* (German=‘Using instead of owning’), how heavy and expensive tools such as washing and drilling machines, cars, and also buildings such as offices and cinemas are often owned by people but only frequently used. He proposes a new approach: to design activities and systems for such objects and places that use up the whole potential by sharing and using them together. The *Sustainable Everyday* project mentioned above – led by Ezio Manzini and Francois Jégou at the Politecnico di Milan – proposes similar ideas: 15 design schools from around the world were invited to envision possible design solutions to everyday scenarios to bring forward the physical and social transition towards a sustainable society. In the UK, Guy Julier examined activism in the context of the social actors, stakeholders and structure of Leeds, at whose university he executed his research, to find out that design activism “builds on what already exists, on real-life processes from greening neighbourhoods to transforming communities through participatory design action.”²⁴

The integration of private and common space enables the creation of communities who

22 Ibid.

23 Thackara, J. (2005) p.16.

24 Julier, G. (2008) p. 2.

choose to live together. In Hong Kong, many recent buildings are constructed upon those values of sharing. Car-sharing is already established in many countries and cities around the world, internet platforms such as ‘*Mitfahrgelegenheit*’ in Germany offer the possibility to hook up with lonely drivers to get from one place to another. Timebanks (Helsinki version: *Stadin aikapankki*) offer citizen-organized online platforms where services are the value of exchange, replacing money with actions and tools as a commodity. A re-evaluation of value is at stake – what is it worth in exchange to walk a dog? Other than money, these alternative ways of paying are subjective to one’s own value system, which can make anybody rich since everybody has something to give in exchange for a service. (see p.327, Value)

CRITICAL DESIGN

After all this discussion about de-materializing our everyday lives remains one question: what is left to the role of the artifact? We will never cease to need objects, but maybe they will serve to a larger extent as tools than as commodities. Critical or Discursive Design takes on a different approach to the debate; it creates objects whose primary intention is to communicate ideas and encourage discussion. They raise awareness of psychological, sociological and ideological issues. This type of design is less visible in the common design market and is more likely to be encountered in exhibitions, magazines, books and movies. According to Bruce M. Tharp, critical design is the discipline where art and design rub most closely against each other. Unlike art, critical design objects function in the everyday world as objects of utility, but their main function is the creation of discourse. Currently, Tharp is in the process of writing a book about this emerging discipline. On the website belonging to it he writes: “We define discursive design as a category of product design that treats artifacts principally as transmitters of substantive ideas, rather than as mere instruments of utility. The primary intent of the discursive designer is to encourage users’ reflection upon, or engagement with, a particular discourse; the goal is to affect the intellect. As distinct from objects of art, architecture, and graphics, which can all be agents of discourse, products have particular qualities that offer unique communicative advantages. Discursive design leverages functionality (use-value) to achieve the primary goal of delivering a deliberate message, one potent enough to spark contemplation, discussion, and debate.”²⁵ It will be exciting to see the outcomes of the book, since the chapters listed in a preview of the list of contents seems to promise some answers to pressing questions about design: Today’s design problems; Design as distinct from art and craft?; Four fields of design practice (Commercial Design, Respon-

²⁵ Tharp, B. (2007) *Discursive Design*, viewed on 15.1.2011.



Dunne & Raby and Michael Anastassiades, Hideaway Type 2, (2004); Huggable Atomic Mushroom, (2004-05); Technological Dreams Series: No.1, Robots; Robot 3 Sentinel (2007).

sible Design, Experimental Design, and Discursive Design) (see p.383); Discourse and precedence; Context, effect, mode, and style; Creators, curators, critics & consumers; and Future discourse.²⁶

Most prominent figures in the field of critical design is the design duo Dunne & Raby, two architects who also teach in the interaction department of the RCA in London. They use design as a medium to stimulate critical discussion and debate amongst designers, the industry and the public about social, cultural and ethical issues with a main focus on technology. They design hypothetical products to explore the impact of different imagined futures, photographic scenarios serve as a means of communicating those impacts. Those products rather meet emotional and psychological needs than functional ones. The focus lays on experiences, not the objects themselves. The objects serve as a conduit to an experience beyond the object. Dunne & Raby call their Design field ‘Design Noir’, as it is the opposite of the Hollywood blockbuster.²⁷ It focuses on complex narratives in the context of everyday life. Values are the raw material shaped into objects; materializing unusual values in products is one way design can be instrumentalized as a powerful tool of social critique. The artifacts become interesting because of their potential functionality and use, people are given the opportunity to imagine themselves using them and create own narratives in their heads. Dunne & Raby distance themselves from making art – according to them, critical design objects need to be placed in real life as products, not art objects. Humour and satire play an important part in the conception of the objects.

According to the duo, a lot could be learned from fine art where there is a long history of critical strategies for asking questions through objects and stimulating debate. Also architecture has always challenged experiences, whereas design is still struggling to reach “this level of intellectual maturity”²⁸. Design as critique finds its roots in the practice of

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Dunne, A. & Raby, F. (2001) p. 42.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 58.

Italian Radical Design based on the framework of Superarchitettura in the '70s, which put its focus on criticizing prevailing values in society and the design community. Critical design builds on this heritage and expands it on contemporary culture. During the 90s, one could observe a general tendency towards more conceptual design, with Droog design being the best known example. Dunne & Raby mention names such as the artists Krzysztof Wodiczko and Natalie Jeremijenko, designer Jurgen Bey, ex-designer Marti Guixé (see p.284) – who both have produced works for Droog Design – and interaction designer Elio Caccavale as examples of makers of critical design.

DROOG

“They won’t change the world but they do give meaning to our culture.”

Renny Ramakers

Droog design was founded in 1993 in the Netherlands by Gijs Bakker and Renny Ramakers. The name ‘*Droog*’ (dry) derives from the simplicity and dry humor of the objects produced by the collective. From their first presentation in the Milan Furniture fair on, *Droog* continued collecting design ideas and objects that reflected the new conceptual spirit of the 90s. They initiated experimental projects involving other designers and artists and executed commissions by companies. *Droog* has expanded to the *Droog Foundation*, which is in charge of producing and distributing their product range, with its headquarters in Amsterdam. Their practice is recognized as a crucial contribution to design discourse and innovation, having inspired a lot of discussion and imitation amongst students and professionals of the design field. In the early 90s, time had come for design to rebel against the kitsch and colourfulness of the mid-80s with Memphis being the key figure of design parodying itself. *Droog* stood out because of its minimalist simplicity, still containing humour to create an emotional empathy with the user. A bundle of light bulbs, a stack of standard lamp shades, or a pile of old dresser drawers all commented on similar topics: “It is a comment on many things: on plenitude, over-consumption, the pretensions that beset the profession,”²⁹ said Ramakers of Tejo Remy’s piece.

“Original ideas (and) clear concepts which have been shaped in a wry, no-nonsense manner,”³⁰ describes best the way of thinking of *Droog*, as formulated in their statutes. Bakker and Ramakers realized collective exhibitions of the designers whose products they were producing would have a bigger impact if shown together, making an array of young designers known in the contemporary design scene. Since the mid-90s, they have

29 Ramakers, R. (2002)

30 Ibid.



(from left to right) Tejo Remy, ‘Chest of Drawers’ (1991); Rody Grauman, ‘85 Lamps Chandelier’ (1993); Marcel Wanders, ‘Set Up Shades’ (1989); Jurgen Bey, ‘Tree-trunk bench’ (1999).

worked closely together with universities, and have since developed the *Droog* concept by experimenting with new products, new designers and new industrial partners, staying loyal to their initial principles. “The criteria are flexible and shaped by developments in product culture and the designers’ own initiatives,” states *Droog*. “The only constant is that the concept has validity today; that it is worked out along clear-cut, compelling lines; and that product usability is a must. Within this framework literally anything goes.”³¹

EATING DESIGN

“There is no material that comes as close to human beings as food.”

Marije Vogelzang, Eating designer

You are what you eat – how true is this saying? From my experience of working as a cashier in a supermarket, I have to admit that I could never withstand making up profiles of the customers. While scanning their groceries, I imagined their different ways of living. Like all products we buy, consume, and wear, particularly food is an expression of how we live and who we are. As eating designer Marije Vogelzang says – of all products, food is the one that gets closest to your body. Everything we eat actually becomes part of our system. It affects our health, our well-being and the way we look and act. It affects emotions and can arouse memories. In her book *Eat love*, Vogelzang describes eight different dimensions of food that she provides as an inspiring starting point for people working with food:³²

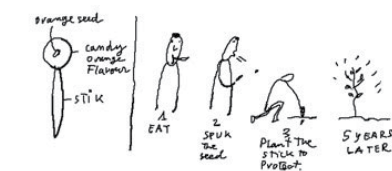
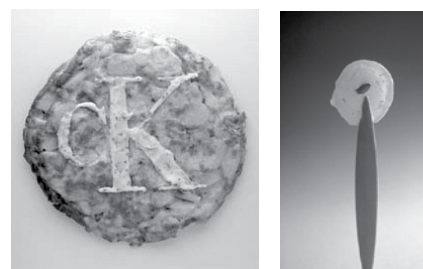
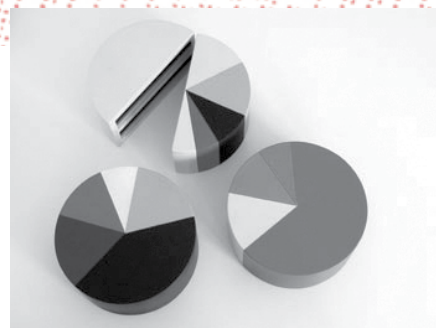
the senses – nature – culture – society – technique – psychology – science – action

Looking back in food history, certain foods obtained specific roles in a nutritional class hierarchy and cultural data base, so that eating certain foods distinguished one group

31 Design Museum. *Droog*, viewed on 27.2.2011.

32 Vogelzang, M. (2010)

(left) Marije Vogelzang: *Connection Dinner* (2006); *Funeral Dinner* (1999); *Photosynthesistree* (2008); *Sharing Dinner* (2005).



(right) Marti Guixé: *Olive Atomic Snack* (2000); *I-cakes* (2001); *Sponsored Food* (1997); *Oranienbaum Lollipop* (1999).



from another. To cultivate food and shape it into man-made products such as bread and wine was looked at as an indication of civitas – Roman and Greek writers such as Procopius wondered e.g. about Lapps who only lived off hunted animals without cultivating any food from the earth. Pride of the nutritional and cultural identity, and maybe also the lack of understanding for other food cultures, characterized all groups.³³

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, food is highly semiotic because its use and preparation through humans transfers a cultural meaning to it. A dish represents the history, values and culture of the cook.

Vogelzang emphasizes the difference between *Food design* and *Eating design*: “Food is already perfectly designed by nature”³⁴ For her, the shape is just a tool to tell a story. She looks at the background and content of the food that she picks out as a central theme in her diverse events and performances, always considering the different dimensions of food mentioned before. *Eating designs* are ephemeral products, memorable experiences that are attainable for everybody since we all need to eat. “I was not the first designer to be involved with food. But I soon noticed that most designers were almost exclusively concentrating on the presentation, the styling of the food. The aesthetic aspect is very important (...). But it has to do more than that. You can see that in the photographs which in the end are the only thing that remain of all these short-lived projects. The photographs show that I design not only the food but also the experience that goes with it, the actions.”³⁵ Graduated in 2000 from the Eindhoven Academy in the Netherlands, she opened up her first business *Saai* in Rotterdam, which changed to *Proef* right after when she opened up her first restaurant. Ever since she has done commissions and projects for exhibitions, cultural events, schools, institutions, companies and other clients. In 2006, she opened up the experimental design and food laboratory-design studio *Proef* in Amsterdam, where she works together with her small team of assistants: a cook, a business manager, organizer, a junior designer and two or more interns on new projects.

Marti Guixé, another key figure of the field, has a different approach. He calls himself an ‘ex-designer’ and is generally regarded as the ‘enfant terrible’ of the design scene. In the past ten years, he has concentrated his focus on *Food design*, which he defines by quoting Inga Knölke on his website, “a food designer is someone working with food, with no idea of cooking. (...) Food Design makes possible to think in food as an edible designed product, an object that negates any reference to cooking, tradition and gastronomy. Guixé as a Food Designer builds edible products that are ergonomic, functional, communicative,

33 Montanari, M. (1994) p.5.

34 Vogelzang, M. (2010) p. 73.

35 Ibid.

interactive, visionary but radically contemporary and timeless.”³⁶ In an interview with Octavi Rofes, Guixé explains how he regards food as a product just as any other everyday item that designers design – only that the food industry hides its artificiality by presenting it as a natural thing. Guixé criticizes that gastronomy produces a kind of authentic tradition without considering what really is contemporary for our culture. According to him, all he does is adding a layer of contemporality to food by regarding it as a design project: considering its usability, ergonomics, shape, materials, naming, packaging, and rituals of use. The results are his edible objects which differ entirely from normal food presented by the industry and gastronomy. He strips the food down to the object, removed from its functional element. How food disappears “transformed into energy”³⁷ is what makes it contemporary – a light product that has a vital function, is practical, possibly ritual or relational and even ecological. The initial function of keeping you alive is overturned by a more complex question: what you want to do with your body, in the immediate future and in the long term. Instead of being a functional object, food design is instructional – therefore, according to Guixé, it must be honest.

FOOD ACTIVISM

Food is a cultural commodity that preserves and encourages social rituals and builds community. It is a common basic need to all humans. The production of food and how we relate to it is one of the most important things in our everyday lives. According to the account of the book *crEATe* about the current state of food production, the situation looks terrifying – globalization and established trading routes have established a system of non-self-sufficiency in national food production. Domestic food security is dependent on global prices. Increased urbanization means also that most food needs to be transported because it was grown elsewhere. Climate change causes unpredictable weather conditions which make crops insecure. China as a rising nation affects the world food market with its changing eating habits – dairy products are becoming more popular and make global prices rise. Rising prices of corn and grains caused food riots in the developing world; the global rise in food prices and environmental concern have caused food to become a political issue. What we choose to eat is a political statement that has never been as strong as it is now.³⁸ Consumers start to be aware of the fact that even small actions such as what kind of food to buy where can have a positive impact on nature, community and oneself.

36 Guixé, M. (1997) *Food Design*, viewed on 27.2.2011.

37 Swartz, J., Rofes, O., Finessi, B. (ed.), Guixé, M. (2010) p. 101.

38 Raymond, M. & Sanderson, C. (2008) pp.8.



(from left to right) Our own 'home restaurant' experiment 'Ketju' (2010) – menu & set table. Dumpsterdiving literally; Anna Haukka from Kaupunkiviljelijät in their Kalasatama community garden (2010).

In the past years, different areas of concern in the chain of food production came up and were answered by various expressions of food activism in Western societies: dumpster-diving, guerilla restaurants, kerbside cuisine, vertical farming, city gardens, guerilla gardening, home cooking, slow food, food events, eating design, a turn towards traditional local cuisine or a vegan, vegetarian, or raw food diet. Self-sufficiency seems to be the only way out of a non-transparent industry that sells, for instance, animal products produced in most inhumane ways. Vegetables come from all different corners of the world with amounts of pesticides difficult to comprehend. Organically produced goods sometimes come from far away, and consumers often even feel like it is only a marketing tool than a set of principles. The confusion amongst consumers is big and people start to organize themselves in grassroots movements independent from business and government. For instance, the local environmental organization *dodo* has formed the group 'city-gardeners' (*kaupunkiviljelijät*), a group of volunteer people and enthusiasts who maintain several urban gardens in the city of Helsinki. One of them was situated in Kalasatama, the old Helsinki harbour, and united forces with the oven group for a shared event: a harvest party of the vegetables from the garden and the inauguration of the oven (see p.53). Similar movements can be seen all around the world, e.g. just last fall 2010 in Oslo, the art and design event fair *Gentle actions* took place where environmental art, citizen activism and urban gardening were presented under the umbrella of new and emerging art forms. Amongst many other events in the programme, there was a row of food-related happenings such as workshops held by food activists/artists Sandor Ellix Katz (fermenting methods), Jana Fröberg (porridge) and Rebecca Beinart (sourdough bread).³⁹

In 2006, I visited Berlin and came across a special kind of restaurant: a secret home restaurant, located in someone's own apartment and turned into a restaurant once a week. There were no fixed prices, people paid using the 'magic hat' principle. One could

39 Gentle Actions, viewed on 25.11.2010.

walk around in the flat, open the fridge in order to get more drinks and entirely feel at home. Similar projects can be found internationally, e.g. the *Ghetto Gourmet* in Oakland, California. Jeremy Townsend and his brother Joe started their 'pirate restaurant' in 2004; once a week, they would invite friends, strangers from the street and the supermarket to create a more cozy and intimate – and cheaper – dining experience than restaurants could ever achieve. In 2006, *Ghetto Gourmet* became a 'wandering supperclub' and visited galleries and homes all over the States. Townsend likes to call it 'online social dining project'⁴⁰ and in the past years it has developed into a trend in the States and the UK.

Another way of protesting against prevailing food consumption and production is dumpster-diving, also known as binning or skipping in the UK. Considering the fact that 50% of all produced food is thrown away worldwide, dumpster-divers protest by salvaging the food from the waste bins and eating it themselves. Many people feel disgusted by the simple thought of eating waste, but from my own experience I can state without any difficulty that the food thrown away in the supermarkets is, at most times, entirely edible. The act of dumpster-diving is only a part of the Freeganist lifestyle which is an alternative way of living based on limited participation in the conventional economic system and minimal consumption of resources. Community, freedom, cooperation, and sharing are the basic values in opposition to a society based on materialism, competition, conformity, and greed.⁴¹ *Freeganism* started in the mid 1960s and originated in the anti-globalization and environmentalist movements.

Guerrilla gardening goes back to the 1970s, when Liz Christy and her Green Guerrilla group in 1973 built a garden on a private deserted lot in the Bowery Houston area of New York.⁴² Guerilla gardening takes place in many parts of the world – according to statistics, more than thirty countries are documented. The term guerrilla gardening is applied quite loosely to describe different forms of radical gardening. Primarily, it describes gardening as a political gesture rather than mere horticultural goals. Community gardens are another approach to guerilla gardening; their main character is that they are integrated in the urban sphere, mostly legal and encouraged by governments because they improve the sense of community and connection to the environment.

According to a newspaper article, community gardens encourage an urban community's food security, decrease the reliance on fossil fuels for transport of food from large agricultural areas and reduces a society's overall use of fossil fuels to drive in agricultural machinery.⁴³ The gardens also combat the alienation of modern urban people from food

production by getting in close touch with the source of their food. The sharing of food production knowledge with the wider community creates stronger communities and a sense of independence from the industry within the urban context.⁴⁴

FOOD IN ART & DESIGN

Food has always been a favourite object in Renaissance still life depiction of beautifully arranged fruit bowls and richly set tables – the depictions often contained strong allegorical and religious symbols, especially before 1700. As a material itself, it was maybe first used in art of the 60s – valued for its ephemeral and banal character by pop artists such as Claes Oldenburg and performance artists such as Joseph Beuys and often used in performances of movements such as *Fluxus* and the *Wiener Aktionisten*. In 1964, Calvin Tomkins wrote "So many young artists . . . seem to have hit on food as the ideal subject matter"⁴⁵ in the article *Art or Not, it's Food for Thought* of the *Life* magazine. Pop and fluxus artists were increasingly interested in making artwork, performances, poetry, music, and films using the ephemera of everyday life. The mundane stood in direct opposition to the subjects traditionally considered worthy of "high" or fine art.

Beuys was famous for employing materials such as honey and butter in his sculptures, both can be converted to energy if eaten. Beuys' favourite material was fat because of its alternating states (from liquid to solid, depending on the circumstances), and thus "embodies the move from chaos to form that was basic to his theory of sculpture".⁴⁶ This physical mutation was similar to the flexibility of "inner processes and feelings." Employing ephemeral materials such as edibles stood as a symbol of art that cannot be stopped from decay and questioned the museum piece that can be preserved over the centuries.

Lucy Orta, English-born and educated as a fashion designer now based in Paris, works a lot on a social level by examining the mechanisms of communities and the relationships between individuals and their environments. She is the former Head of the Man & Humanity Master in Industrial Design for the Design Academy Eindhoven, a pioneering master program focussed on social and sustainable design solutions which she co-founded in 2002. Today, she is Professor of Art, Fashion and the Environment at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. With works such as *Refuge Wear* (1993-1996) she focuses on marginalized groups such as homeless people by trying to give those groups excluded from consumer culture an identity. Her work expands the

40 Raymond, M. & Sanderson, C. (2008) p. 30.

41 *Freeganism*. Wikipedia, viewed on 19.2.2011.

42 *Guerrilla Gardening*. Wikipedia, viewed on 19.2.2011.

43 Kishler, L.(2010) San Jose Mercury News (18.3.2010).

44 Harris, E (2009) p. 24-27.

45 Tomkins, C. (1964)

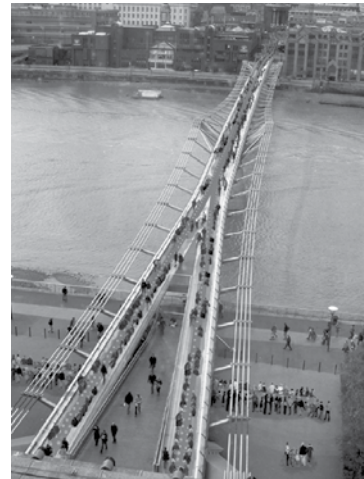
46 Rothfuss, J. + *Energy*. Walker Art Centre, viewed on 28.2.2011.

(right) Martino Gamper (2008). *Total Trattoria. 5.5 designers* (2006/07) *Self Food Factory;* (2009) *Guide to Free Farming.*



Typical fauna

Pain's eclectic range of fauna represents an abundance of animals. From all animals, you can select the ones that have been composed as traditional food sources, you will certainly find all you want to eat in your appetite.



Edible Finns (2002) 'Lahti' Eating Performance; Joseph Beuys (1973) *Stuhl mit Fett*. Rirkrit Tiravanija (2002) *Untitled*. Lucy Orta (1999) 'Hortirecycling Enterprise - Act II - Processing Unit'. Lucy + Jorge Orta (2006-2010) '70 x 7 The Meal, Act I City of London'.

reassuring boundaries of many disciplines such as fashion, architecture, performance, design, theatre, and the visual arts. Orta thematizes a big range of topics, and all of them are, on some level, of a social nature – for instance, her reaction on the incredible amounts of food waste was the work *Dans le même panier* (All in One Basket, 1997) where she and volunteers collected the abundant vegetables and fruits from fresh markets to conserve them in jars and exhibit them along with videos and interviews. A chef created an outdoor buffet with all the leftovers, the jars were sold to pay the project. The Viennese intervention *Hortirecycling Enterprise - Act II* was a continuation of the project, in which volunteers collected discarded fruit and vegetables from the Vienna Naschmarkt with real tools and units for the collection and processing of the food. Not only the recovery of food, but also the “collective liturgy”⁴⁷ connected to its consumption is important to Orta. Massive food events such as the *70x7 The meal* series encouraged communities to sit down with their neighbours for a shared dinner. Orta organized, together with her husband Jorge, a series of lunches focussing on the number 7 as a formula for the number of guests invited, introducing new rituals to hospitality. In the exemplary work *70x7 The Meal, Act IV Dieuze*, the entire population (2,000 people) of a small French village sat down at a 300m long table to share the same meal.

Evidently, food is an important “cultural vehicle for reciprocal understanding”⁴⁸ The act of sharing a meal together creates a spontaneous and unpredictable socially conducted situation – aspects that many other artists have focused on in the past decades. Contemporary artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, often mentioned in connection with Nicolas Bourriaud (see p. 129), is noted for his dinner installations, where he turns the gallery into a space of culinary enjoyment. The involvement of the audience is a core element of his work, which he achieves by sharing meals, cooking, reading or playing music, and providing architecture or structures for living and socializing, such as the collaborative work *The Land* (1998), an experimental evolving community involving contributions by several artists in Thailand.

The Finnish art collective *Edible Finns*, consisting of Jan-Erik Andersson, Pertti Toikkanen and Kari Juutilainen are performing with food since the '90s. They combine their performances with a good amount of humour on Finnish culture and identity and have performed in galleries, museums, openings, and on the streets.

The art and design studio *Futurefarmers* works on installations that move between spheres of design, art, technology and science. Their main focus lays on food production and consumption, energy use, and future scenarios. *Futurefarmers* investigates social

47 Pinto, R., Bourriaud, N., and Damianovic, M. (2003) p. 69.

48 Ibid.

issues through participatory art projects, putting forward participation resulting in uncontrollable outcomes.

Many designers have been dealing with food as a topic of interest without specializing on it. Italian London based designer Martino Gamper for example regularly invites people to galleries, where he performs himself as a cook and serves the audience with his food, served in an atmosphere entirely designed by him. He attempts to make the dining experience complete with objects, tools, and food all shaped by the same person. The Paris based French design firm *5.5 designers* have worked for Droog on an eating event for the closing of the exhibition 'Workers/Designers' (2006/2007) named *Self Food Factory* (2007), involving people dressed up as industrial workers sitting on the assembly line and literally producing the food for each other. "The start was hilarious, with everybody changing their clothes for typical factory clothing. Then the ingredients were combined, flavours were mixed and the guests created their own favourite taste. Every 5 minutes the factory bell announced a new course, reminding the workers to finish their meal."⁴⁹ Beyond that, the design team has also created a catalogue on urban farming (*Guide to Free Farming*, 2009), which is rather to be seen as a humorous commentary on the possibilities of urban self-sufficiency one could have if one only wanted. Hunting pigeons, cutting down dandelions, and devouring all kinds of city insects belong to the long list of possibilities.

Food is a very visible part of consumer culture. As the metaphor 'taste' suggests: what you choose to eat plays an important part in the creation of one's individual 'cultural capital': table manners, knowing the right wine to drink with which food, the exclusiveness of ingredients and such expresses our backgrounds and identities – 'We are what we eat'. The book *crEATe* suggests six different current typologies of eating: *zeno youth*, *extreme connoisseurs*, *food thrifits*, *armchair explorers*, *ethical eaters*, and *cultural chasers*⁵⁰, of which all share one common characteristic – what we eat is increasingly defined by a complex set of views, attitudes and aesthetics. It is and will increasingly be a topic of art and design due to all its potential to make culture and create a sense of community.

49 Droog. *Workers/Designers*, viewed on 28.2.2011.

50 Raymond, M. & Sanderson, C. (2008) pp.160.



“I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE FLOODING THE WORLD WITH EVEN MORE STUFF.”

PEOPLE'S PROFILES

Name: Salla Kuuluvainen

Profession: Food activist

Born and lives in: Helsinki, Finland

Free time: projects (“I don't have free time!”)

What is your background education?

First, I studied Japanese culture and language at the Helsinki University, but at some point I realized it was not really my thing. I always wanted to study something creative, and didn't really know what I wanted. So I set out to travel the world to find myself and was gone for almost 2 years. In Australia, I met great alternative people, where I learnt many things about alternative lifestyles, like e.g. Permaculture, eco-villages, and all these things that you cannot really find in Finland; alternative lifestyles without electricity and running water. When I came back to Finland I wanted to share all these things. I tried to find similar-minded people, which turned out to be not so easy. Then I decided to move to Porvoo in 2007 to study textile art, which I liked a lot, but still got me into a crisis because I didn't feel like flooding the world with even more stuff. In Porvoo, I was working in a daycare centre and prepared food for the kids, where I got into cooking and food production. I also was in touch with a Permaculture circle, and when I finished school and moved back to Helsinki, I started to get more involved with the city gardeners and other organizations. I decided to concentrate on food activism and now, I am working for KVT in the communication, while doing all my projects alongside. I am trying to creatively make the world a better place, without seeing any borders for art and activism, and to involve people in it.

How did you get involved with city gardening?

When I attended a Permaculture course, I heard about dodo having City and Food as the 2009 year theme. I was really interested in getting involved, so I started to participate in the dodo activities. We built a garden in Pasila together, where we had many events and parties. The media attention was huge, we were interviewed many times. Last year, we had many new projects coming up because of all that media attention - many people were interested to do work together, and the amount of gardens grew fast among the city, with new gardens in e.g. Kalasatama and Viikki. We set up a website and everything

started to just grow bigger and bigger. I believe we actually created the first city gardening group in Finland, and it was great to see all these people getting involved in our activities in such short time. Now, we are about 15 core people, but maybe about 500 who are actively involved in the several projects.

What did you do in Berlin last year?

There was an international meeting about 'Urban gardening and local empowerment'. People from all over the world -about 20 different nations- gathered to network and exchange our experiences. The people from Bosnia did a team project after the war, involving 800 participants from different ethnical backgrounds to create peace amongst the people. One guy told about the White house gardening projects with Michelle Obama in Washington DC, who had simply won a competition in the Internet, and had become known through social media. From Holland, there was a guy who organized really big food festivals, and cities ordering gardens from him. From Barcelona were also many guys who are keeping blogs and many small gardens in the city. It was great to meet all these people, because it showed the range of possibilities for city gardening. In Berlin, we visited the Prinzessingarten, which functions basically like a company, with a restaurant, workshops and courses, and a vegetable garden. The place is in the middle of Kreuzberg, always full of people and something going on. The people just rented the space from the city and got support as a starting enterprise. It was great to see that there is so many people from all over the world were doing the same thing, facing similar problems, and trying to improve urban life.

How do you see the situation for activism in Finland? Finnish lifestyle?

In Finland, it is difficult to discuss certain topics, there is not really a lot of (mental) space for alternative living. There is a lack of truly communal space in urban environments. Only now there is a lot of foreigners coming, people from different cultures who are engaging in expanding local culture. When you try to present new ideas, people can become jealous so easily. The good thing about Finland is the fact, that many things don't exist yet, so it is really easy to establish new things. In Berlin, there is a mass of nice projects, so it is really hard to stick out of the crowd. Here, it is hard to get projects appreciated, even though Finns are usually highly-educated, people are for some reason not very innovative and brave.

And you still plan on staying in Finland?

Oh yes, I have travelled so much already, and I would like to bring all the things I have

learnt to this country. I feel like I can share my knowledge and do all these projects here, even if its is not always easy.

What is your biggest dream?

That I could see positive changes in the world while I am still alive.

Your thoughts about the future?

We cannot continue the way we live now, there is just too many people and we are producing too much waste. We have to radically change our lifestyle, in order to be able to continue. I am a little bit afraid of the future, because it seems like people don't see the need to change. People don't believe that climate change is actually taking place. In the end, everyone can just do as much as he can as an individual, and everybody has to know what is best for himself. I really hope that people understand that it is important to do something, and to realize that it is not even that difficult.

Potential of activism/art/design? Your relationship? Future practice?

I see a lot of design that is just frustrating me, design for design's sake that I have studied myself, which is just turned inwards towards itself. It just doesn't seem to make ANY sense to me that these things are existing. I feel like design should service other things, like e.g. making the world a better place, e.g. making things easier for people. But if it only exists for itself, I doubt that sort of stuff. Creativity is a very important gift in people, and it should bring joy and happiness and be an inherent part of life. I don't understand why some things are called designed and other aren't, it is like defining what is worth to be called art.

How do you define happiness? What is most important to you?

For me, it is like a blossom. It is about making most of your potential and recognizing it, also to make other people realize what they are able to do. I also enjoy facing challenges and working with them. At the same time, I enjoy the very simple everyday experiences of life, like preparing food with other people. There are two types of happiness, the one that you dream about and the one that you experience every day.

Thank you!

The interview took place in Helsinki, 13.2.2011.

5

CHAPTER 5: SALVAGE

~~“Art no longer wants to respond to the excess of commodities and signs, but to a lack of connections. The loss of the “social bond”, and the duty incumbent on artist to work to repair it, are the words on the agenda... It’s not only the forms of civility that we have lost, but the very sense of co-presence of beings and things that constitutes a world.”~~

JACQUES RANCIÈRE

5/5: SALVAGE

tr.v. sal·vaged, sal·vag·ing, sal·vag·es

- 1. To save from loss or destruction.*
- 2. To save (discarded or damaged material) for further use.*

What is waste? When does our perception of an object change, when does it turn into something that deserves to be thrown in the garbage bin? The food that is being thrown away in Europe would be enough to feed the world's starving population twice. Still, supermarkets throw away bananas with black dots and bread that expires 'officially' one or two days later. Which leads us to the next question: in a world of abundance, what determines our relationship to stuff? How can the longevity of a product be increased, how is it intentionally shortened by the industry?

The 5th event stood in the spirit of community, sharing, values, and building up networks. During the course of the events, I have met and gotten to know people from different generations, backgrounds, and opinions, which was very enriching as an experience, but also important for the future. With this open invitation to my own flat, I wanted to reach out to all those people I had met, enlarge the network by making them invite their friends - in the manner of Facebook-networking-, draw attention to an important topic of society - the creation of unnessecary waste - and share a part of my own cultural background - German 'Knödel', a typical dish used to recycle stale bread.

The final event was also the chance to wrap up all I had learned, and bring the event series together as an entity: go through the visual material, print out pictures, and present the event series in a small home gallery in the hallway. A good way to end the year and find conclusions to all the issues this project touched.



PRIVATE SPACE: HOME

All events moved throughout various locations of Helsinki, covering a range of differing conceptions of space. Starting in Kalasatama, which I called 'true public space' because of its intrinsic character as a place where freedom of creation is still possible, the project moved to the Aalto University School of Design and Art of Helsinki, to a fireplace on the museum island Seurasaaari, to the restaurant Kuurna in central Helsinki nearby the harbour, to eventually end the project cycle at my own home in downtown Punavuori.

To invite complete strangers into your private four walls has become an unusual act – to strip naked in front of people you don't know well, showing them how you live, cook, sleep, and wash. It reminds me of Rachel Whiteread's work *House*, in which she casted the insides of a house in concrete, literally turning the private inside out.

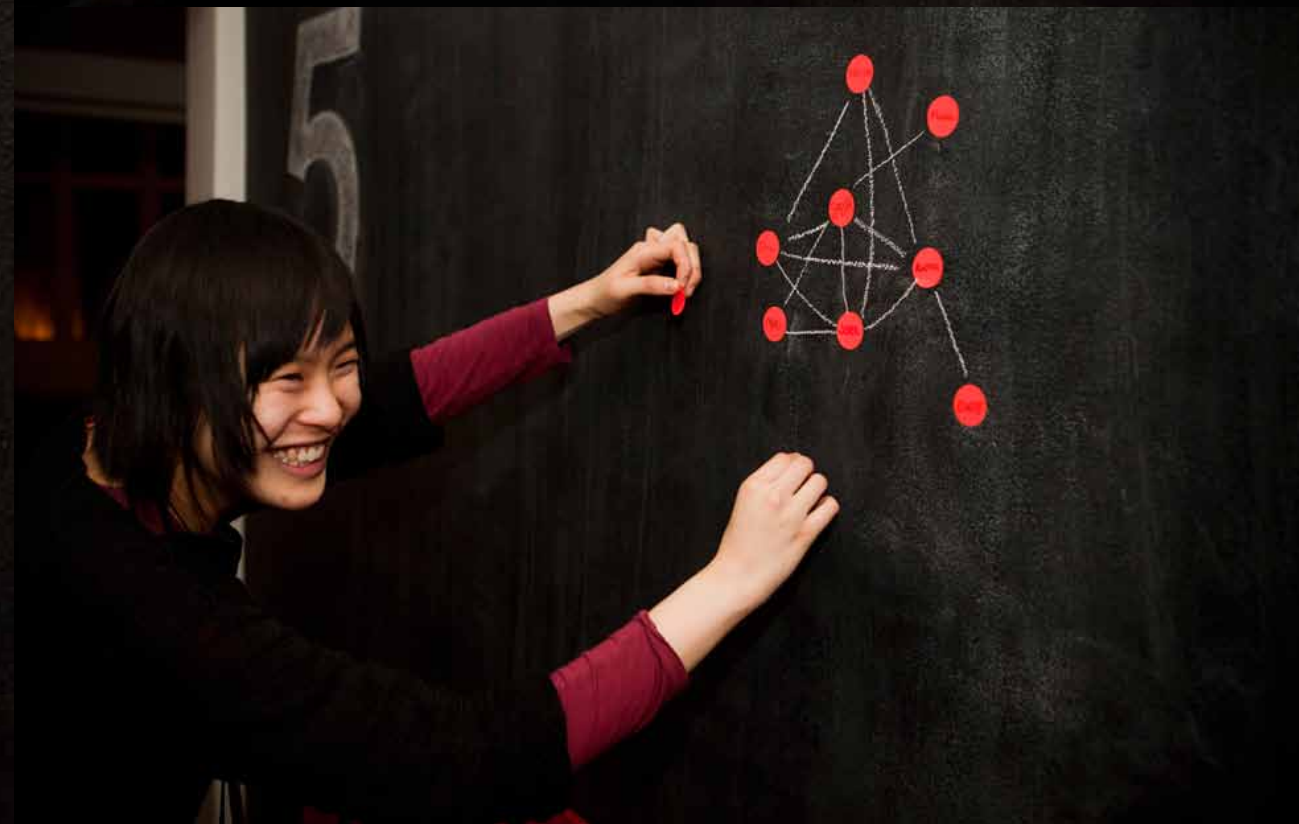
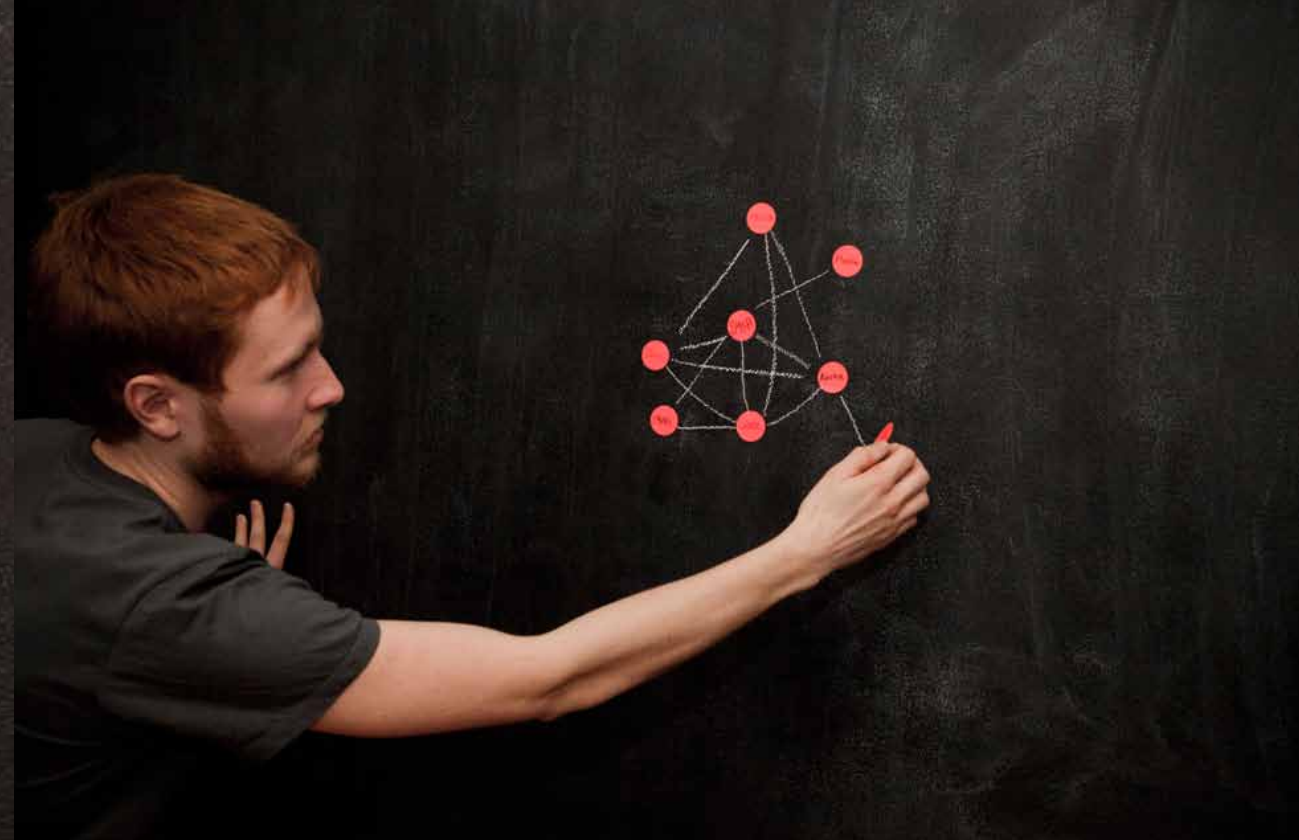
If we look at what the last decade has done to our perception of privacy with terrorism causing increased surveillance and data access to governments and security forces, it has in a way also increased the feeling of community by having created a new sense of togetherness. We have all become vulnerable, have similar problems and desires. Everybody needs a space where he can feel secure, and usually, that place is called home. With internet communities and social networks such as Couchsurfing and Facebook, private space has received new connotations. Sharing private data and information has hailed a new kind of trust amongst people – nobody is a stranger any more.





5C

Welcome!





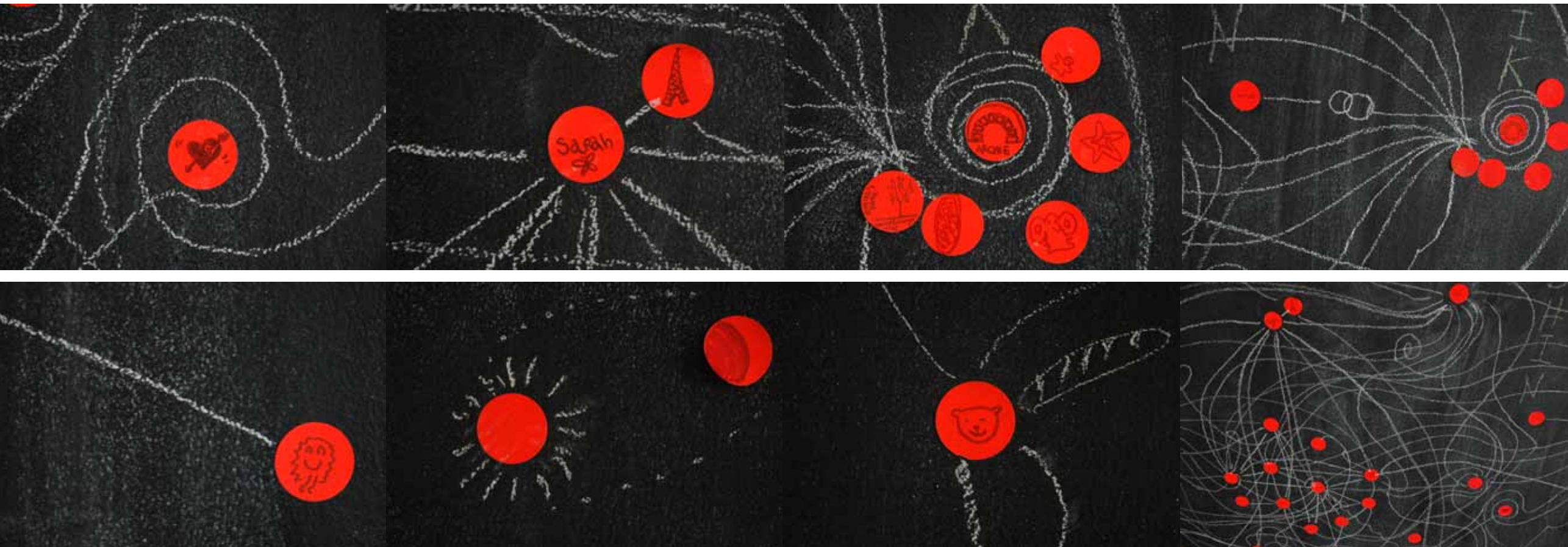


(left to right) 1. Cut stale bread into small cubes. 2. Chop parsley and onions. 3. Fry the onions. 4. Mix. 5. Add warm milk. 6. Shape Knödels. 7. Boil until the Knödels come to the surface.
(next page) Salla with beetroot Knödel-dough. (right) Trying the first Knödels - delicious! (with melted butter and grated parmesan...)





(left) In our hallway was a small exhibition of pictures from the events. (right) The network is growing bigger and bigger.



On the many stickers were more characters than just people – fish soup, aliens, love, teddy bears, and, of course: Archie.



(left) Two presents for the guests to take home: bread bags printed with the recipe for making Knödel to be filled with the leftover stale bread from the table and the 5-bottles (right). (next page) Some weeks later.



CRADLE-TO-CRADLE

In product design, life cycle assessment (LCA, also known as life cycle analysis, eco-balance, and cradle-to-grave analysis) is “a technique to assess each and every impact associated with all the stages of a process from cradle-to-grave (i.e. from raw materials through materials processing, manufacture, distribution, use, repair and maintenance, and disposal or recycling).”¹ LCA is a tool that helps avoid negative environmental, social and economic impacts of a product. The steps of such an assessment include the analysis of the relevant energy and material inputs and the environmental releases, the evaluation of the potential impacts caused by those inputs and releases, and the interpretation of the results in order to make informed decisions.

Lifecycle assessment typically takes cradle-to-grave models into consideration, which analyse the lifecycle of a product until its recycling or disposal. The cradle-to-cradle approach takes this concept one step further: they consider the last stage as no solution to the problem of waste and consider waste as food, which can be integrated back into natural systems. William McDonough’s *Hanover Principles*, coined in connection with the Hanover Expo 2000, describe roughly how to achieve this:²

- 1. Insist on rights of humanity and nature to coexist in a healthy, supportive, diverse, and sustainable condition.*
- 2. Recognize interdependence. The elements of human design interact with and depend upon the natural world, with broad and diverse implications at every scale. Expand design considerations to recognizing even distant effects.*
- 3. Respect relationships between spirit and matter. Consider all aspects of human settlement including community, dwelling, industry and trade in terms of existing and evolving connections between spiritual and material consciousness.*
- 4. Accept responsibility for the consequences of design decisions upon human well-being, the viability of natural systems and their right to co-exist.*
- 5. Create safe objects of long-term value. Do not burden future generations with requirements for maintenance or vigilant administration of potential danger due to the careless creation of products, processes or standards.*
- 6. Eliminate the concept of waste. Evaluate and optimize the full life-cycle of products and processes, to approach the state of natural systems, in which there is no waste.*
- 7. Rely on natural energy flows. Human designs should, like the living world, derive their*

¹ US Environmental Protection Agency. (2010) *Defining Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)*, viewed on 20.2.2011.

² McDonough, W. and Braungart, M. (1992)

creative forces from perpetual solar income. Incorporate this energy efficiently and safely for responsible use.

8. Understand the limitations of design. No human creation lasts forever and design does not solve all problems. Those who create and plan should practice humility in the face of nature. Treat nature as a model and mentor, not as an inconvenience to be evaded or controlled.

9. Seek constant improvement by the sharing of knowledge. Encourage direct and open communication between colleagues, patrons, manufacturers and users to link long term sustainable considerations with ethical responsibility, and re-establish the integral relationship between natural processes and human activity.

The phrase “Cradle to Cradle” itself was coined by Walter R. Stahel in the 1970s. The current model was initiated by Michael Braungart and colleagues at the Environmental Protection Encouragement Agency (EPEA) in the 1990s. In partnership with Braungart, William McDonough then released the critically acclaimed publication *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things* in 2002. The book read itself like a manifesto for the design approach and explains how the model works. Foremost, *Cradle to Cradle* design takes a biomimetic approach to the design of systems. The processes of nature are the leading model; healthy and safe metabolisms in which materials circulate as nutrients. It encourages industry to use and circulate high-quality organic and synthetic materials in a safe production system to protect and enrich ecosystems. The essential goal of creating an efficient waste-free system is a model not limited to industrial design and production only, but can also find application in urban environments, buildings, economics, and social systems.

GLEANING

Gleaning is the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers’ fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. Some ancient cultures promoted gleaning as an early form of a welfare system.³ Agnès Verda’s documentary *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse* (“The gleaners and I”/’Elämä on kaunis’ in Finnish, which means: Life is beautiful), released in 2000, is about people, who collect thrown-away things, ranging from food over household articles to tools and furniture, with different motivations such as simply economical necessity, political and ethical protest against abundant consumerism and food production, and holistic life philosophy.

³ *Gleaning*. Wikipedia, viewed on 28.2.2011.

The documentary *Taste the Waste* shows that optically incorrect products are already sorted out before they even reach the market, left to rot on the fields. The same thing happens in the supermarkets – as soon as there is a brown spot on a banana it goes to the dump without asking the customers if they are even keen on buying perfectly-shaped mono-sized green bananas. It is assumed that customers want shelves to be exploding with variety and a plethora of never-ending products even half an hour before closing time. This leads to an abundance of edible and still valuable food, turning all in the sudden into unwanted waste and being thrown away. The term ‘waste’ does not even do justice to the latter. One might think that the employees could at least diminish small parts of the ‘waste’ for their own needs, but by law that would be considered theft. Furthermore, strict hygiene laws in Finland and many other countries forbid the distribution of the leftover food amongst the poor. Some supermarkets make exceptions, but most of the ‘waste’ goes to the bin.

It is no surprise that a movement started to spread worldwide: dumpster-diving (see p.286) (in Finnish: *dyykkaaminen*). In 2002, YLE has screened a documentary about a community in Espoo, that only lives from discarded food and stuff found on dumpsters⁴. In Germany and the States one can find so-called food banks, charity organizations that collect unwanted supermarket and wholesale food and distribute it amongst the needy. The world’s first food bank is the St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance in Arizona, called into life by John van Hengel in 1967. By now, similar concepts can be found on six continents in almost every region of the world.⁵

VALUE

The concept of value is a social construct defined by the culture using the concept.⁶ The concepts of value, use value, utility, exchange value and price have troubled thought by philosophers and economists going back to Aristotle and Adam Smith. Economists tried to estimate the value of a good to an individual alone and extend that definition to goods which can be exchanged, from which the concepts ‘value in use’ and ‘value in exchange’ came into being. ‘Value in use’ describes, according to Marx, the characteristics of a product which enable it to satisfy a human need or want.⁷ Therefore, the use-value exists as a material reality next to social needs regardless of the individual need of any particu-

⁴ YLE. (2002) *Dyykkarit*, TV Documentation (24.3.2002).

⁵ St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance, viewed on 27.2.2011.

⁶ *Anthropological theories of value*. Wikipedia, viewed on 25.2.2011.

⁷ Marx, K. (1867)

lar person, which is generally accepted by society, not only by the producer. Adam Smith noted that commodities such as diamonds might have a high exchange-value, but may not satisfy basic needs, therefore they do not inherit any use-value whereas a basic commodity like e.g. water has a very low exchange-value, but a high use-value.

Jean Baudrillard critiqued Marx's and Smith's concepts of value as too simple: according to him, both concepts followed the idea of genuine needs relating to genuine uses. Baudrillard argued that needs are not innate but constructed. All purchases have a social significance and are therefore fetishes. Referring to Roland Barthes, he stated that objects always say something about their users, which makes consumption more important than production. The "ideological genesis of needs"⁸ comes first, the production of goods follows in order to meet those needs. Baudrillard coined four value-making processes:

1. *The functional value of an object; its instrumental purpose.*
2. *The exchange value of an object; its economic value.*
3. *The symbolic value of an object; a value that a subject assigns to an object in relation to another subject.*
4. *The sign value of an object; its value within a system of objects.*⁹

John Ruskin approached the economic concept of value from a moral point of view in his 1860 publication *Unto This Last*: "It is impossible to conclude, of any given mass of acquired wealth, merely by the fact of its existence, whether it signifies good or evil to the nation in the midst of which it exists. Its real value depends on the moral sign attached to it, just as strictly as that of a mathematical quantity depends on the algebraic sign attached to it. Any given accumulation of commercial wealth may be indicative, on the one hand, of faithful industries, progressive energies, and productive ingenuities: or, on the other, it may be indicative of mortal luxury, merciless tyranny, ruinous chicanery."¹⁰

In a capitalist society, exchange value is created by the market – demand and supply determine the price value of a product. Scarcity produces value, not abundance. It seems like in a society of over- and mass-production, objects are losing their value more quickly and are therefore more easily disposed. Products are deliberately designed to obsolescence in order to produce the idea of new needs that overthrow the value of 'old' products. Even though the technology exists to make products that are recyclable and updatable – particularly important for technological devices that grow old within months – the market asks for products that leverage continuous buying patterns.

8 Baudrillard, J., Levin, C. (1972/1981) p. 63.

9 Baudrillard, J., Levin, C. (1972/1981)

10 Ruskin, J. (1860/2007) p. 42.

The abundance of choice in supermarkets is outrageous if we consider the amount of food that goes to waste – 50% of all produced food lands in the bin¹¹. This amount is made up of the products resulting from three production steps: the production, the distribution, and the consumption. During the production step, raw material is sorted out for reasons such as deformations that do not meet market standards; in distribution, massive amounts of food products are thrown away because supermarkets try to compete with a plethora of fresh and perfect products; during consumption, food is thrown away because consumers buy, cook, and serve themselves too much at home, cafeterias, and in restaurants. But can we call this abundance of food waste? Or does that waste still equal food, like it does in the *Cradle-to-Cradle* approach?

The Online-Thesaurus defines waste as a noun with synonyms such as: "*garbage, refuse, debris, dreck, dregs, dross, excess, hogwash, junk, leavings, leftovers, litter, offal, offscourings, rubbish, rubble, ruins, rummage, scrap, slop, sweepings, swill, trash*". The verb is defined as: "*spend or use without thought; dwindle; with the following synonyms: atrophy, be of no avail, blow, burn up, consume, corrode, crumble, debilitate, decay, decline, decrease, deplete, disable, disappear, dissipate, divert, drain, droop, eat away, ebb, emaciate, empty, enfeeble, exhaust, fade, fritter away, frivol away, gamble away, gnaw, go to waste, lavish, lose, misapply, misemploy, misuse, perish, pour down the drain, run dry, run through, sap, sink, splurge, squander, thin, throw away, trifle away, undermine, wane, wear, wear out, wilt, wither*".¹²

The United Nations Statistics Division describes wastes as "*materials that are not prime products (that is products produced for the market) for which the generator has no further use in terms of his/her own purposes of production, transformation or consumption, and of which he/she wants to dispose*".¹³

It is appalling to realize that we use the term 'waste' as a verb meaning to spend or use something without thought, and at the same time as a noun which refers to refused unwanted material. Would it be a contradiction to say: We are wasting waste, simply by calling good products waste and therefore wasting it? Who does waste belong to? 500.000 tons of bread is thrown away yearly in Germany; since bread has the same heating value as wood, we could spare one nuclear power plant if industry would make use of that fact. The food that is thrown away in Europe would be enough to feed the world's starving population twice. For the production of the 'trash bread', an area of 200.000 ha would be needed and as much greenhouse gases blown in the atmosphere as 300.000 cars would

11 ARD. (2010) *Frisch auf den Müll*, viewed on 28.2.2011.

12 *Garbage*. Thesaurus.Com, viewed on 28.2.2011.

13 OECD (2003) *Glossary of Statistical Terms*, viewed on 23.1.2011.

emit. A reduction of the trash to only half of its amount would mean a 10% reduction of greenhouse gases – as if every second car would be erased from our streets.¹⁴

Valentin Thurn's recent documentary *Frisch auf den Müll- Die globale Lebensmittelverschwendung*, shown in fall 2010 on the German public TV-channel *Das Erste* tackled the whole problem of 'wasting waste'. The movie has its own website in English and German, where you can find articles and more information and possibilities to take action by spreading the word and sharing own experiences. The debate stirs up question that can only be answered according to one's individual values: When does something turn into waste – is it defined by its context, its characteristics, or by declaration?

SOCIAL DESIGN

Social design is a design process that contributes to the improvement of human well-being and livelihood. The ideas of Victor Papanek have contributed greatly to the agenda of social design. According to him, designers and creative professionals have a responsibility and the potential to cause real change in the world through good and responsible design. By carefully selecting the materials they use they can, for instance, create more ecological products. Papanek also put an emphasis on rather designing for people's needs rather than their wants, including those 'target groups' that belong to the underconsumers which make up about 90% of the world population.¹⁵ Victor Margolin, a design historian, points out the "designer's ability to envision and give form on material and immaterial products that can address human problems on broad scale and contribute to social well-being."¹⁶ Furthermore, Margolin argues that whilst the primary purpose of design for the market is to create products for sale, social design is primarily focused on the satisfaction of real human needs. Fuad-Luke draws parallels between social work theory and social design – the interaction between client systems and environmental domains is part of social practice, which would, by improving any of the domains, result in an improvement of the satisfaction of human needs. Since the transition towards sustainability is seen as a main challenge of the social design agenda, it aims primarily at creating solutions that enable citizens to participate and become active than at providing them with more products.

Jacque Fresco, an industrial designer and visionary of social and technological future systems, applies social design as a method that interacts with tradition and the economy. He views the future of society as a whole that needs to be redesigned by using the scien-

14 ARD (2010) Ibid.

15 Smith, C. E. (2007)

16 Margolin, V. (2002)



Jacque Fresco (2010) *Venus Project, Circular City*; Torben Vestergaard Frandsen (2005) *Life Straw*; WorldBike, Ed Lucero a.o. (2002-05) *Big Boda load-carrying bicycle*.

tific method. Rather than focussing on income but on capabilities, social design could contribute to a general development of life and lead to an improvement of livelihood¹⁷, as promoted by Amartya Sen. Fresco is the founder of the *Venus Project*, an organization that works on a Utopian vision of the future which is promoted as a healthy and sustainable alternative to the current monetary system that rules and destroys our planet. No single area of design is able to bring forward true sustainable social change if not working together as an open system with multiple actors. Communication, product design and architecture need to join forces to follow a common set of goals. A growing number of artists use social design in reference to their work and are laying the founding stones for an ongoing collaboration of the design and art world. Artists like *Superflex* and *FOS* are exhibiting their design within the art world, but refer to themselves as designers with roots in the tradition of the social art of the beginning of the 20th century and the 60s.

COMMUNITY

Community in general is a loose term to describe a group of interacting organisms sharing a populated environment. Applied to humans, people of similar intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs, risks, and a number of other conditions form a community. The concept of community has always been subject to debate; traditionally, it describes a group of interacting people who live in a common location – something which has changed significantly since the advent of the internet, opening up the possibility to gather online without regard to the physical location of the members. Being part of a community affects the identity and cohesion of the single participants.

German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies termed two different types of human association:

17 Sen, A. (2000)

‘Gemeinschaft’ (community) and ‘Gesellschaft’ (society).¹⁸ According to Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* is generally perceived as a more cohesive social construct, which is explained in a shared will its members have agreed on (‘unity of will’). Family and kinship ties, a place or belief shape typical ‘Gemeinschaften’. Opposed to that, *Gesellschaft* describes a group in which the members are purely motivated by self-interest to participate. In the real world, Tönnies adds, most groups are a mixture of those two classifications.

Communities can be broken down to three categories: geographic communities, cultural communities, and community organizations that range from family networks to professional associations at different scales. According to Scott Peck, author of *The Different Drum: Community-Making and Peace*, community can be consciously built in a process of deliberate design which goes through four stages:

1. *Pseudo-community: Where participants are “nice with each other”, playing-safe, and presenting what they feel is the most favourable sides of their personalities.*
2. *Chaos: When people move beyond the inauthenticity of pseudo-community and feel safe enough to present their “shadow” selves. This stage places great demands upon the facilitator for greater leadership and organization, but Peck believes that “organizations are not communities”, and this pressure should be resisted.*
3. *Emptiness: This stage moves beyond the attempts to fix, heal and convert of the chaos stage, when all people become capable of acknowledging their own woundedness and brokenness, common to us all as human beings. Out of this emptiness comes*
4. *True community: the process of deep respect and true listening for the needs of the other people in this community.*¹⁹

Community building can be achieved using a various methods, on a small scale by arranging simple events like pot lucks and book clubs or, on a bigger scale, by organizing construction projects and community festivals that involve as many local participants as possible, relying on citizen force rather than outside contractors. Citizen action is usually termed community organizing, where organized groups seek collaboration with governmental officials and are building non-governmental power networks. Such groups are open and democratic and encourage decisions based on consensus focussed on the profit of the community. The three basic types of community organizing are grassroots organizing, coalition building, and institution-based community organizing.

Cohesion and social networks are part of the social capital of a society. Social capital as a term is defined by Robert D. Putnam as “the collective value of all social networks and species and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each

18 Tönnies, F. (1887)

19 Peck, M. S. (1987) pp. 86-106.

other”.²⁰ According to John Thackara, social capital is harder to measure than industrial or natural assets; still, it plays a vital part in the economy of a modern state. It might be a solution to the care crisis that prevails in most modern countries. Sociologist Emile Durkheim linked the social connectedness to suicidal rates, supporting the claim that strong social ties contribute to the general health of a society. Studies conducted in a number of countries have proven this further, stating that “people with higher levels of support recover faster (...) and live longer.”²¹ Longer lifespans in turn worry policy makers in terms of how to finance the abundance of elderly people. The ‘myth of senility’ (old people rotting away in nursing homes) is, James Pirkel opposes, not true: less than 5 percent of the over-sixty population lives in institutions. Elder people have knowledge and experience that is worth sharing; the question that remains is: how can we involve old people in present communities and do good for all parties? Social inter-generational contact is important for people of all ages and can often achieve more than a elaborate health system. The general introduction of more conviviality would be a fruitful source of increased happiness. The term appeared in Illich’s *Tools for Conviviality* and means:

1. *a jovial, sociable, friendly, and lively disposition or nature; 2. the good humor and festivity indulged in occasions of celebration; Synonyms: cheer, festivity, joviality, merriment, liveliness, sociability, affability, geniality; Antonyms: seriousness, boredom, silence, depression.*²²

The loss of community in many Western countries is a problem of industrial societies; church and family bonds have become more and more meaningless, education and childcare is being taken care of by institutions. According to sociologist Ray Oldenburg’s theories in his book *The Great Good Place* people need three places: 1) the home, 2) the office, and, 3) the community hangout or gathering place.²³ This third place is missing in many societies and citizens are trying to create this place by establishing alternative communities of exchange of physical and ideological nature.

ALTERNATIVE TRADE

Many people yearn for alternatives to the current economic system. Often, unconventional goods such as favors, services, food and old stuff is bargained amongst neighbours, creating small-scale black markets independent from taxes and money. Local

20 Putnam, D. (2000) p. 19.

21 Thackara, J. (2006) p.114.

22 *Conviviality*. Your Vocabulary building and Communication Training Centre (2007) Viewed 28.2.2011.

23 PPS. (2006) *Ray Oldenburg*, viewed on 28.2.2011.

people organize themselves in clubs and networks to trade alternative goods such as the *Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS)*. Their currency is not money but barter, a currency that takes all kinds of non-market labour into account. Time dollars are described as “a currency for rebuilding the core economy of family, neighbourhood and community”²⁴ by Edgar Cahn, the founder of the LETS-like currency. The following four core principles underlie the Time dollars concept:

- *Assets: Every human being has the capacity to be a builder and contributor*
- *Redefinition of work: Contributions of women, children, families, immigrants are not taken for granted any more, subordination, discrimination, and exploitation belong to the past. Work must be redefined to include whatever it takes to rear healthy children, make neighbourhoods safe and vibrant, and care for the frail and vulnerable*
- *Reciprocity: No more dependencies, one-way acts must be replaced with two-way transactions.*
- *Social capital: Investment in families, neighbourhoods, and communities, creation of social capital through trust, reciprocity and civic engagement.*

Other than the world money system, *LETS* are independent from the world market and are immune towards recession, claims Margrit Kennedy, the pioneer of the German movement.²⁵ The collaboration tools and social software for these communities still need to be designed. Mapping existing networks helps to identify hubs for intervention. Social networks enable the process, but “all real living is meeting”,²⁶ claims Martin Buber. He finds encounter to be the basis for our relationships with one another and the world an antidote to technology push.

The ‘Red paperclip story’ is a nice example of how alternative trade can challenge the concept of value: blogger Kyle McDonald started with a red paperclip on July 14, 2005, and after fourteen transactions became the owner of a house on July 5, 2006. He traded the paperclip for a fish-shaped pen, a hand-sculpted doorknob, a Coleman camp stove, a Honda generator for an “instant party”, a Ski-doo snowmobile for a two-person trip to Yahk, British Columbia, a cube van for a recording contract with Metal Works in Toronto, a year’s rent in Phoenix, Arizona, one afternoon with Alice Cooper, a KISS motorized snow globe, a role in the film *Donna on Demand*, and finally, for a two-story farmhouse in Kipling, Saskatchewan.²⁷

24 Cahn, E.S. (2001)

25 Kennedy, M. (1995) cited in Thackara, J. (2006) p. 147.

26 Buber, M. quoted in Thackara, J. (2006) p. 132.

27 McDonald, K. *One Red Paperclip*, viewed on 25.2.2011.

SMALL WORLD

As mentioned before, building communities is not limited to physical space any more. The internet and social network sites allow to keep in touch with old friends and family members in a way never known before. According to studies, people living in the US are only six degrees apart from each other, meaning that two randomly picked persons are separated by only five introductions of other people between them. The *Small World Experiment* was conducted by psychologist Stanley Milgram in 1967 by having participants send a parcel to a target person they were not acquainted with, asking them to send the package to a person they knew personally and who would be likely to know the target person. Milgram had “the desire to learn more about the probability that two randomly selected people would know each other.”²⁸ Although the results were highly controversial because of the low success rate, similar experiments were conducted with success rates of up to 85%. With the introduction of Facebook and applications such as the Friendswheel, the ‘Small World phenomena’ became more and more familiar to people and proves one thing to be true: our global community is getting smaller even though the population is getting bigger and bigger. The feeling of belonging to a global community that is connected to each other worldwide moves the fact that we are not all equal into a new focus. This new awareness seems to be the new zeitgeist of the 21st millennium.

Zeitgeist is a feeling that not everybody senses – it is observed by certain people such as futurologists, trend forecasters and especially creative people like artists and designers who usually have a special ‘antenna’ for the pulse of time and are major agents of change. Google offers a service called ‘Google zeitgeist’, which collects and publishes terms mostly searched for by the global internet community in a year. The ‘Google zeitgeist’- 2010 movie defines the year 2010 as a ‘year of struggles, achievements, and tragedies’, and lists, amongst many others, the following topics: the European debt crisis, the US unemployment rate, Thailand’s political crisis, synthetic biology, the first face transplant, the large hadron collider, international space station, solar impulse, Burj Khalifa, the Gulf oil spill, Pakistan floods, earthquakes in Haiti and China, wikileaks, the Soccer worldcup in Southafrica, the ash cloud in Iceland, and the Olympics in Canada.²⁹

In 2008, a documentary film bearing ‘Zeitgeist’ as a title was released, directed and written by Peter Joseph, a multimedia artist from the US. The movie asserts a number of conspiracy theory-based ideas, including the Christ myth theory, alternative theories for the parties responsible for the September 11th attacks and the claim that bankers

28 Jeffrey, T. and Milgram, S. (1969) pp. 425-443.

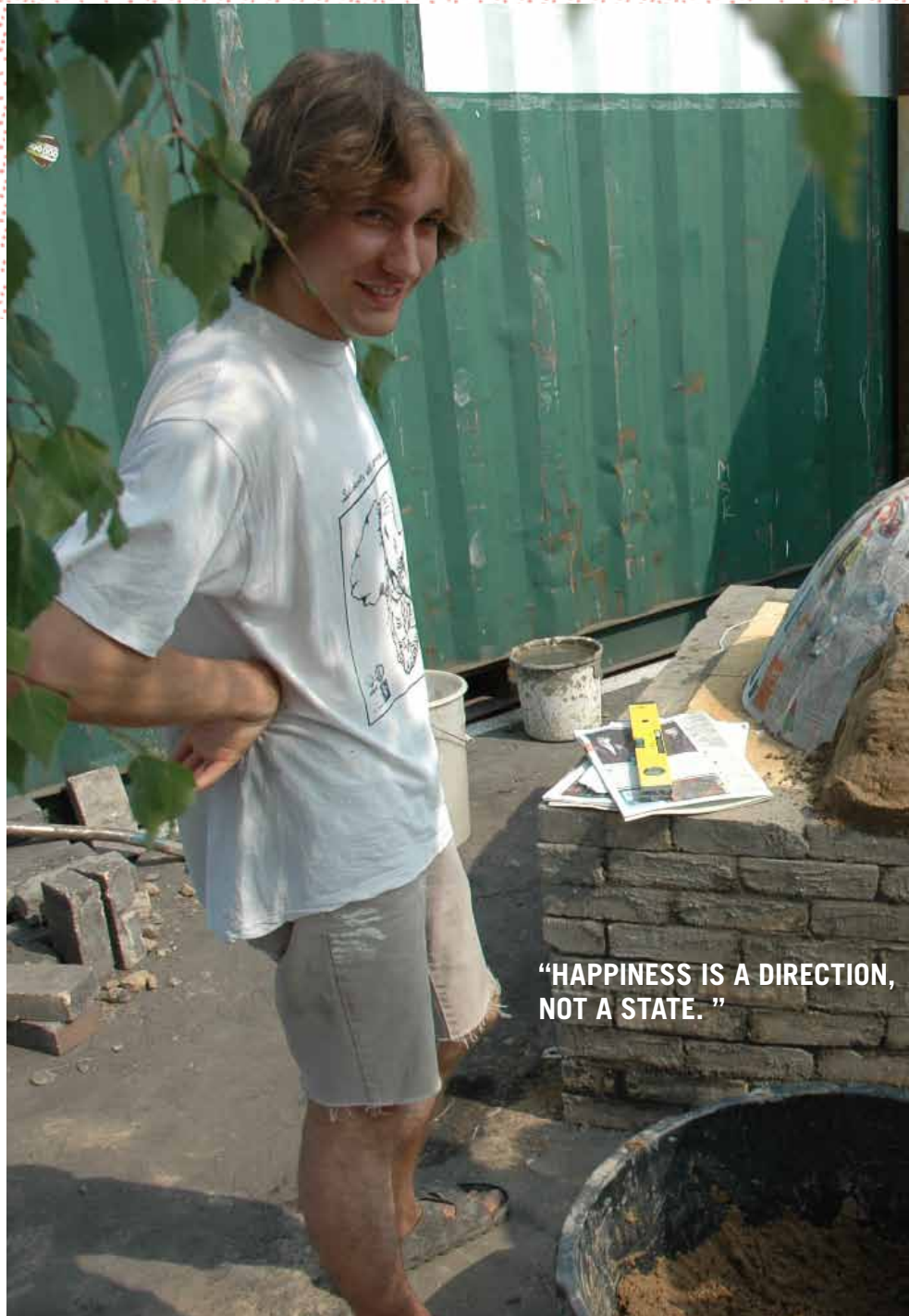
29 Google. (2010) *Google Zeitgeist 2010*, viewed on 20.2.2011.

manipulate the international monetary system and the media in order to consolidate power. The film has been criticized for factual inaccuracies and the quality of its arguments. Nevertheless, it apparently enjoyed great popularity and was followed by a sequel: *Zeitgeist: Addendum* focuses further on the monetary system and advocates a resource-based social system influenced by the ideas of Jacque Fresco and *The Venus Project* (see p.331). A third film called *Zeitgeist: Moving Forward* was released on 15 January, 2011, focussing on human behavior, technology and rationality.

Even if those movies have their inaccuracies, they propose a society built on equality and well-being instead of the status quo. If we look at the current situation – face to face with climate change, the challenges of sustainability, unemployment and economic crises – such a proposal seems to be more than justified. The movement encourages people to gather forces, stand up and do something about it, independent of governments that provenly do not seem to be independent enough of the economy to act truly democratically. I cannot find any other explanation for the USA not signing the Kyoto protocol, just like the developing countries China, India and Brazil are not willing to limit their progress by making any amendments to sustainable development.³⁰

Flash mobs and rising citizen movements show that it is possible to intervene in the public sphere by introducing projects that move on the borders of legality. Social stratification was, is and will always be opposed to equal well-being in human society. We must work towards a global equality as a global community, which means that we cannot keep up the status quo of the ruling monetary system based on debt, a trade system based on profit, and an economy based on consumption. These systems are the main factors creating the inhuman inequality on the planet. We have the tools and the knowledge to change this unbalance – the time for a social revolution has come.

30 United Nations (2009) *Kyoto Protocol: Status of Ratification*. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 14.1.2009.



**“HAPPINESS IS A DIRECTION,
NOT A STATE.”**

PEOPLE'S PROFILES

Name: Daniel Milligan

Profession: brick-laying bookshelver, food activist, biologist

Born in: Seinäjoki, Finland

Lives in: Helsinki, Finland

Free-time: Swimming, playing my guitar

What is your background education?

I did the IB in Kairo and then completed my Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology in Edinburgh after first doubling in linguistics. Then I moved to Finland to learn Finnish and take a break from my studies. I will continue my studies in Helsinki next year; if that doesn't work out I might just go to the Middle East and become a street peddler. Or rather, a hummus vendor!

How did you get involved with food activism?

Food is a major tool of conviviality. Coming from a developing world to live in Europe brings up a lot of questions in terms of food production and where the whole food comes from. Questions of sustainability and ethical questions regarding the respective rules of labour and the use of technology and the contradictory nature of agricultural policy were part of my motivation to get more interested in food. First time I went skipping was with a bio-fuel activist from Newcastle. Even though I lived a stonethrow away I couldn't take the first plunge alone. That led to my involvement with monthly 'Food Not Bombs'-actions, which means to ask for food that would be thrown away from small stores.

What would be a Food-Not-Bombs-action you participated in?

One of the major ones would be the one that coincided with Buy-Nothing-Day, of course on the busiest shopping street in town. We were playing music and distributed food to Christmas shoppers. Since shopping is not really an intrinsic thing to do, it was quite challenging to do these actions and bother people with our .. of course the challenge when you hand out free food is to find spots where you don't steal other street food sellers their customers.

How did your food consumption change according to the countries where you lived in? What are your thoughts about living in a city?

In Finland, space is not the premium the concern, but the conditions of the land where food can be grown is very small. After touring around Southern Scotland on my bike and seeing the level of totally comprehensive clearing of land that was entirely in the hand of modern agriculture, I decided to be a vegetarian. I had to see it for myself before I could actually care about it.

The biggest contradiction is the aesthetics of the countryside compared to the practicality of living ecologically in a city. It is the condition of having all that compared to the idea of living independently on the countryside, which there is few stories of people doing that but for society as a whole you gotta wonder if that is a realistic solution to the future we face.

What are your thoughts about the future of design?

I get a lot out of the creative fields, but when it comes to getting something back a simple scientist like me has to realize that it takes a lot of effort. There were times when artists and scientist worked together much more and there was not so much of a distinction. Nowadays, there is so much automation that there is not so much more to add to it if scientists don't acknowledge the rules in scientific development, especially in chemical biology.

What are your first associations when you are confronted with the term design?

Alvar Aalto, genes, iBook, Levi Strauss, and oh, those can openers that you can get at S-market but in Britain, you know, the Finnish ones. That is true Finnish design!

How do you define happiness?

It is like a Goldfrapp-song that you can hear in a shopping mall. Happiness is a direction, not a state.

What is your biggest dream?

I dream about always having a dream.

Thank you!

The interview took place in Helsinki on February 23, 2011.



dessert

[French, from Old French *desservir*, to clear the table : *des-*, *de-* + *servir*, to serve; see *serve*.]

A usually sweet course or dish, as of fruit, ice cream, or pastry, served at the end of a meal.*

~~“To be a designer is a cultural option: designers create culture, create experience and meaning for people.”~~

RACHEL COOPER AND MIKE PRESS

ANALYZING THE PROCESS

About a year ago, I started to think about what to do for my MA thesis. I remembered my BA project for which I created a concept for a mobile platform that combined information, gastronomy, and action to create awareness on topics of sustainability. That was in 2007, when the term was not as well-established as it is nowadays. Within only a few years, the word became such a buzz word that everybody grew tired of it. It became an inherent part of the design philosophy and is part of the educational program of children, youths and adults alike in all fields of society.

Like John Thackara so truly writes, in a world changing as fast as ours it is not possible to define specific rules for design - “complex systems like ours don’t sit still while we redesign them”, a “sense-and-respond kind of design seems to work better: Desired outcomes are described, but not the detailed means of getting to those outcomes.”¹ American designer John Carroll adds up to this by defining design in today’s world as such: “its ultimate objective and approach have to be discovered, not specified.”²

That became my ultimate goal: to discover new objectives and perspectives on design. First, it was not really clear to myself how to approach the research agenda that I had defined for myself; how could I combine research with practice? Inspired by my very own passion - food-, and linking an observation to one of the key problems I have always seen in design - distorted relationships towards production and consumption -, I slowly started to develop the idea of doing my research by experimenting with the theoretical constructs of my research plan. All the key words are inherent parts of the events.

One of the most important learning processes for me was to work with the unpredictable character of an event: it was impossible to know beforehand who and how many would participate, how the outcome might be affected by that, and how participants might possibly contribute to the success and shape of an event. The whole beauty of planning these events lay in pre-conceptualizing certain things whilst leaving most of it open to the participants. Initially, I was not sure how easy it would be to just let go and let others decide who are not even from a creative field. I learnt that Beuys and Papanek are right: everybody is an artist and a designer. I learnt that design is over-valued, and that people know how to solve situations themselves. Our task must lay elsewhere.

The biggest achievement of the project was to experience all these events and workshops together with people that I got to know during the process. The increasing network of

¹ Thackara, J. (2006) p.213.

² Carroll, J.M. (2000)

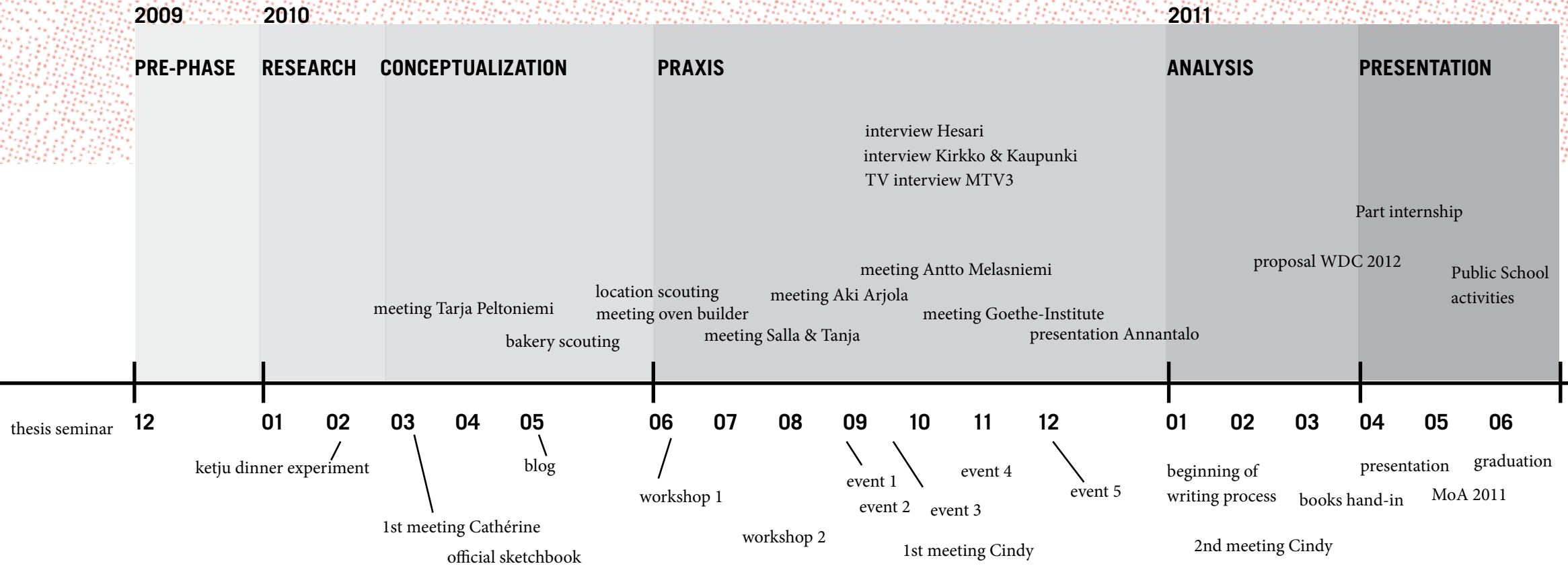
CRITICAL THEORY
 PRODUCTION PROCESSES
 CO-DESIGN
 PARTICIPATORY DESIGN
 METADESIGN
 DIY
 FACILITATION
 HUBS
 INTERNET
 OPEN SOURCE
 PUBLIC SCHOOL
 SOCIAL MEDIA
 TALKOOT
 WEB 2.0
 WIKIPEDIA
 ACTIVISM
 AVANTGARDE
 DADAISM
 SITUATIONISTS
 ADBUSTERS
 CULTURE JAMMING
 STREET ART
 SOCIAL SCULPTURE
 RELATIONAL AESTHETICS
 DESIGN MANIFESTOS
 FIRST THINGS FIRST
 10 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DESIGN
 THE DESIGNER'S ACCORD
 ARTS & CRAFTS
 BAUHAUS
 CONSTRUCTIVISM
 DESIGN EDUCATION
 CRAFTS
 FUTURE

UTOPIA
 WORK
 HAPPINESS
 INDUSTRIALIZATION
 GLOBALIZATION
 LOCALITY
 ENVIRONMENTAL ART
 SUSTAINABILITY
 SLOW MOVEMENT
 ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
 SLOW DESIGN
 DESIGN ACTIVISM
 ARTIFACTS
 ARTWORKS
 CONSUMERISM
 EPHEMERALIZATION
 USE NOT OWN
 CRITICAL DESIGN
 DROOG
 EATING DESIGN
 FOOD ACTIVISM
 FOOD IN ART
 FOOD IN DESIGN
 SEMIOTICS
 LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT
 CRADLE TO CRADLE
 GLEANING
 VALUE
 SOCIAL DESIGN
 COMMUNITY
 ALTERNATIVE TRADE
 SMALL WORLD

individuals from different backgrounds and fields and everyone's interest in the project affirmed one basic belief about humans: no matter who we are and where we live, we all have the same basic needs and hopes. The project showed me the goodness of human nature and that there might be hope for hopelessly idealistic people like me.

The biggest challenge of this new kind of research was how to deal with the vast variety of topics and possibilities and how to put them into shape. To use metaphors as underlying concepts was of big help, a method I also used for this book. The ephemeral nature of the project asked for different modes of documentation and information retrieval. Through photographs, a blog, interviews, objects, video recording, questionnaires and a sketchbook diary I collected a huge amount of data which had to be analyzed and organized after each event. Only after having finished the last event, it became possible to see the overall picture of the project and how everything was interconnected. Therefore, I clearly separated the practical part from the final analysis to be able to re-assemble the single episodes and their outcomes into one big picture. The five events still stand for themselves, like separate meals that can be enjoyed separately or together in a row (depending on the size of appetite).

Like a dessert underlines, sweetens and ends a meal, this last part of the book is intended to wrap up my research, define answers to my research questions and come to a final conclusion. The reader will be left with a sapid aftertaste in the mouth – hopefully with the desire for more to come.





1/5: Fertilize (earth)
5.9.2010, Kalasatama Konttiaukio

2/5: Grow (water)
20. - 27.9.2010, Aalto University TaiK

3/5: Prepare (fire)
23.10.2010, Seurasaari museum island

4/5: Consume (air)
26.11.2010, Ravintola Kuurna

5/5: Salvage (love)
5.12.2010, my home

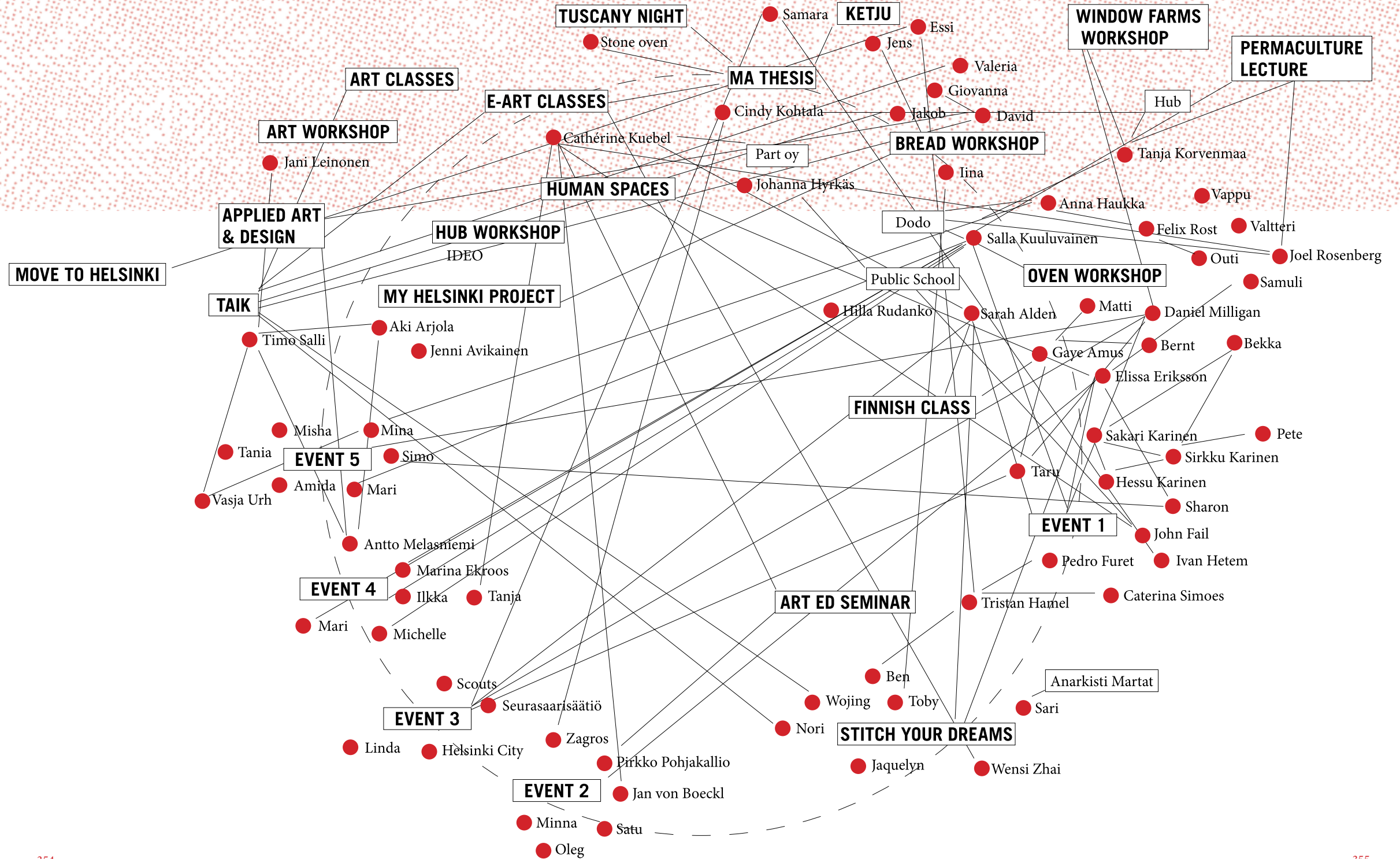
20 people, word stamps, an oven, new recipes, rieska.

Many people, 1 workshop, 1 installation, 1 harvest dinner, 12 guests, reikäleipä.

9 people, 1 pot, 1001 stories, the moon, piimäleipä.

12 people, 1 workshop, 1 cook, 1 activist, 1 artist, melting glasses, crisp bread plates.

23 people, stale bread, analogue Facebook wall, Knödel.



2010 June-August: Workshop/ networking phase
June: Baking workshop

The baking workshop was basically the first experience in the whole series of happenings and events of the project. I was fearing it to fail completely, with nobody showing up, and the baker getting angry and impatient because she actually has better things to do than using her rare free time to show some art students how to bake. Instead, the experience was inspiring and giving me faith that everything could be possible. I paid the material, all labour was voluntary, which was, throughout the whole project, a principle without which I would not have been able to finance everything myself.

What did I learn?

Bakers are friendly people passionate about their job. Otherwise, you would not do it. It is not a job to make big dough. You only knead the dough, but don't earn it. Hahaha
People who participated were enthusiastic about the baking. I should actually interview them a little later about the experience and whether it has affected their thoughts and behavior sustainably.

July: Organizing events/workshops

My faith to achieve anything was big, my hopes were gradually shrinking, due to only negative answers concerning the organization of the oven workshop. I felt like this oven was crucial for the whole process of the events to get started, because everything could be connected to it, as the very basic "tool" to connect people, create a public gathering place, and organize the first event as a fertilizing starter for the others to come. But all attempts to get professional oven builders involved in the project failed- I even met one, but shortly after our meeting, he told me he was too busy to take part. My last and desperate attempt was to put the workshop as a class on the Public School website, and shortly after, while I was spending a short summer holiday in Germany, I received an answer from an enthusiastic woman called Salla Kuuluvainen, a food activist from Helsinki.

August: Oven-building workshop @ Hub/Kalasatama

This workshop was the most incredible one and of all happenings, created the biggest impact on people and created the biggest network in the aftermath. It is amazing, how an oven can connect 15 people who were strangers to each other one week and best friends the week after. A lasting friendship from which many new ideas and projects emerged. As an experience, it only shows and proves to myself, how important it is to involve people in a design and building process, so that you get connected with the result. If people only get served, they consume and leave without sustainable effect. If they create something lasting with their very own hands, it becomes their own. It is hard to get detached from something like that. There is no other way for me to explain this wondrous process, which is still going on, evolving every week in new directions. In a way, I wish I could achieve a similar effect with the other events – I guess, as a single person it is just impossible. But all of them had the potential to be continued, and I am hoping to continue parts of the project with more time, effort, different minds and work force. As a group, it might be difficult, but more fun, because people can imitate, co-create, transform, individualize, and make a project their own, without having to own the intellectual property.

2010 September: Beginning of the event series

1) Fertilize: 05. Sept. 2010 @ Kalasatama

About 20 people came and about 10 different Rieskas were tried out, brought as a recipe, or invented on location. People really got into the making process and would ignore me completely, which was great because I tried to document the whole process with my camera, while Cathérine was filming.

For some reason – maybe because I did not explicitly explain what they were for – , not many were using the word stamps.

2) Grow: 20. - 27. Sept. 2010 @ Taik

The stitching was great, because it really is a handicraft forgotten by most people. You could notice the surprise and fascination of the people who never got in touch with it before. Even if it might commonly have the notion of being a female hobby solely practiced by bored housewives, nobody really seemed to care to even bring up this topic, and both male and female representatives were present and stitching enthusiastically. Even if people would not be able to finish their work, they wanted to come back to finalize what they had begun- everybody seemed to be actually proud to be part of the installation. Something you could tell your friends and family about.

The installation itself was fun to watch because it kept changing every day.

3) Prepare: Full moon 22. Oct. 2010 @ Seurasaari

Most important element/tool for the "processing" of the food made in this event will be fire, which makes me think of the philosophy of the raw food movement, meaning eating only raw and uncooked. All food stuff is eaten in its most natural original state, without being prepared or treated. According to them, heating up food over 46 °C destroys many vitamins and enzymes that help digestion. It is an interesting philosophy, I am not sure if I agree with it completely, anyway, here is the link, it is worth a read: <http://www.rawsuperfoods.com/raw+living+foods/index.htm>
Another way of cooking food is the one-pot-method (which will be used for the upcoming event). Slow long cooking at a low temperature preserves the vitamins, whilst making a tender and delicious hearty meal. Here is a link:

I think, this is the event I am most insecure about. I had a personal low and was completely out of energy. I am very unsatisfied with the photographs and the documentation. What I really loved about it was the amount of people who actually made it out there in the cold dark winter night. Come on, that is simply amazing! Maybe it is the simplicity of the idea that makes me suspicious. It does not really sound like there was anything special about the event, even though there was- and people even said in their reviews how much they loved it. Maybe, the art and design context does not always have to be so obvious.

4) Consume: 6. Nov. 2010 (All Saint's Day) @ Ravintola Finné

Meeting with Antto and Salla was quite successful. It was short, but fruitful- Antto even wants to sponsor the event, and I don't think I am able yet to grasp the dimensions of luck I have to be able to have him on board. To have Salla join the project makes me feel a bit lighter in terms of responsibilities- not everything only weighs on my shoulders, which is really pleasing. I am looking forward to experimenting with food with her in our kitchen. I am sure, this event will be lots of fun, even though the topic is actually quite political and serious.

Jan van Boeckel's review preys on my mind- was my whole project too superficial so far? Is it understandable to people who are not involved? Samara still did not understand the whole concept of my thesis even though our whole flat is covered in material and stuff that was involved in the process. Maybe, I have to consider more how people out of the art and design world think and make the project more accessible to them.

I have to admit, I don't really like over-explained artworks. That's why I am leaving everything quite open to the participants and try not to take away possible ways of interpreting them. Sarah actually rewarded that aspect in her review, which maybe equals out Jan's attitude of missing more literature and film references in my work. And those references will be done in the theoretical part, but I don't want to spoil the intuitive fun people have participating in the projects by making them superserious with overexplanation. I really don't like that! I should maybe stop nagging...

5) Salvage: 22. Nov. 2010 (Monday, one month after 3)) @ my home

supermarket tour with video: why can we not take the trash?
Dumpster diving
bread sculpture that people can take apart in bags with a recycling recipe
invitation of those who help to my place/ make knödel together

2.11.2010

Crisis day. I am doubting everything I have done so far. I don't feel like I am really reaching anybody with what I do. I really hope with workshops, and the exhibition of all the materials that I will have after having done the whole event series, I can reach more people. I guess, all the events must be seen rather as experiments than ready-planned and perfected food happenings. Each event is dynamic and I can only influence to a certain point what will actually happen. People who participate, circumstances of time, weather, atmosphere, and group dynamics all come together and form something unpredictable.
In the process, I am also learning and getting to know more theories and philosophies, that make me doubt everything at once. Bread as a metaphor? Should I really continue with that?

17.11.2010

After about two weeks of doubting everything, having a new round of energy that I hoisted from a few days of inspirational rest working at a movie festival showing political documentaries, spending a weekend with a Californian couchsurfer, and being overwhelmed by wanderlust, back I am to business.

I sent a questionnaire to all people in my reach that have participated in the events. So far, I have received about 7 replies, which are very important for me and the progress of the last half of the practical part, but also for the evaluation of the impact on people and building up networks, that have emerged from the events. I want to draw a map of all the connections been made during the whole process, with all people involved, even those, who did not want to help.

I am afraid of the 5th event. I am not sure if I should do it as big as I planned to. Maybe I should go back to the initial plan of just having it at home and inviting my neighbours. The big event could be done next year, when I am sick of writing and feel like getting active again. Hmm...

Let's see how far I will get today with my material sourcing. I have to get up my ass and just ask for all the bread and coupons possible. Maybe I should really start a movement amongst those

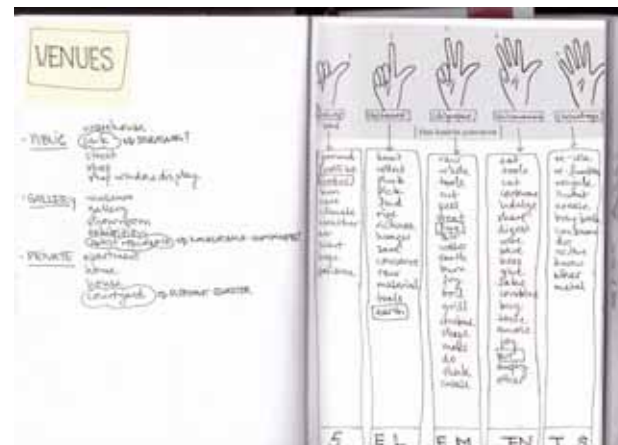
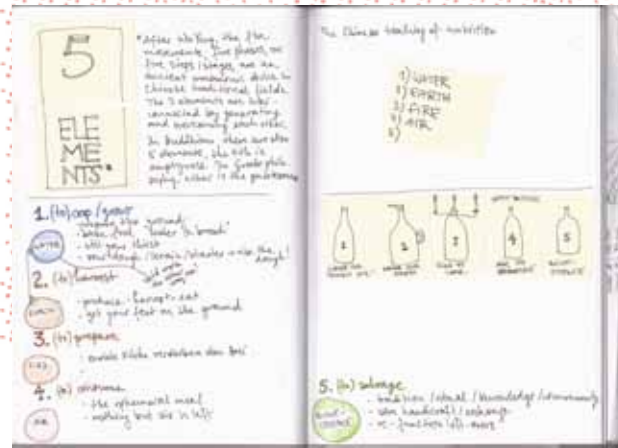
interested in food rescuing. No?

Just came back from a supermarket trip- basically the biggest one in the centre, the big Kamppi K-Market. Before, I wandered around in between the high shelves filled with luring food products, and had a hard time not to buy anything. I talked to an employee, if I could meet the manager. I did, and he told me they give everything to church. Hmm, good answer! But where do I get my waste bread from then?

After Event 5:

The event was a nice closing event. I made a small exhibition of pictures related to each event, with candles burning in all the 5 bottles. Feels good to be able to call it the last event, and to be off to some relaxing holidays. It was quite a hassle to fight my way through all those 5 events, but really worth all the experiences and people I met during the process. Now, I feel like I am ready to start writing and reflecting about everything that has happened. I hope I will be able to wrap up everything in a way understandable for the majority of people. There are so many layers to this project, and so many goals I would like to achieve, that I really need a good plan, otherwise I will only get lost in space.

It was a true pleasure to prepare and show a dish to the guests at the 5th event and to host them at my own home. People actually had never eaten Knödels before and really liked them. I really hope I could inspire them to try it out more often! It was also a good chance to draw a map of connections, which I still keep unchanged in our kitchen. It is not quite complete yet, so I need to add several dots.





The project and its single events evolved mostly spontaneously during the course of their duration. After I had defined a research plan of sorts and a timetable for the events, I only had to execute the whole program. It involved a lot of production work such as contacting people, retrieving information from different sources, discussing with my tutors and friends, and getting people involved.

The choices of location had a major impact on the content and program of each event because it always meant different actors and environments to deal with. Human spaces affect the interactions between people. Certain spaces gather and attract certain crowds. Some

spaces are public, but still not accessible to everybody. I wanted to create a range of locations in order to attract the attention of as many different people as possible, ranging from the art student to the design professor, over 'normal people' from the street from different generations with different interests and aspirations. The context in which art and design is found is paramount to its interpretation and perception, so I wanted to experiment with different contexts to see how they change the nature of the event. Does art only belong to the museum and design only to the gallery and showroom

space? Or can it be part of our everyday lives, and still be identified as design?

I spent a lot of time cruising quarters and streets of Helsinki on my quest for the location I had imagined. Sometimes, as it was the case in particularly the first, third, and fourth event, I had to adapt and change the whole concept according to what location and materials I achieved to organize. This dynamic process was often very surprising, and sometimes frustrating, but with time, I learnt to enjoy the unpredictable nature of the planning process.

The most difficult part was really to get the

project started – my first plan was to organize only three events and set them all up in connection to design and art events around the year, such as Habitare, MoA 2010 and the Helsinki Design Week.

After some time, I realized that it was up to me to create the context by choosing the right locations. After my troubles of finding a good spot for the first event, I also realized: you can 'make places' by bringing simple basics such as an oven to them.





STATE OF THE WORLD IN 2011 | SHORT HISTORY OF DESIGN & ART | DESIGN VS. ART? | BETWEEN THE DISCIPLINES | DESIGN TODAY, DESIGN TOMORROW | DESIGN RESEARCH | DESIGN THINKING | TENDENCIES IN DESIGN PRACTICE | NEW ROLES FOR DESIGN | THE DESIGN ACTIVIST

STATE OF THE WORLD IN 2011

When I started thinking about a project for my Master thesis, the year 2010 had just begun – a new decade of the 21st century. It felt a little futuristic, as if we would slowly approach the times depicted in all the science fiction movies from the 80s and 90s, just as it did ten years ago with the much-feared turn of the millennium. As in any decade, many far-reaching events have taken place. I stumbled upon an article on *Spiegel Online*, which was taking a view back and defined the years after 2000 as a decade of crises: “the 9/11 crisis, the climate crisis, the financial crisis, and the crisis of democracy”.¹ A ray of hope is given by the Internet, claim the authors. Philipp Blom, author of the book *The Vertigo Years* about Europe in the years between 1900 and 1914, compares the beginning of the 20th century to the beginning of the millennium. This decade is marked by a surge of innovation that has condensed and accelerated modern life caused by new technologies, primarily the Internet and mobile phones. A hundred years ago, the automobile and the telephone had accelerated life; it was a nervous time full of new inventions and ideas. People looked forward to a future full of hope and utopian visions. Today, the situation looks different: “We don’t want a future, we want a present that doesn’t end”;² Blom describes it. Mostly, people in the West are worried that things could get even worse. They have been affected most by the crises. If we turn our heads towards the East, the situation looks entirely different: China is a rising power and predicted to become eventually more powerful than the United States in the coming years. The Chinese are excited about the future and start to embrace technological progress and consumption with the same enthusiasm we used to do ourselves.

The decade began full of hopes, which were crushed with the planes that flew into the World Trade Centre in 2001. All in the sudden, it became clear that evil can come from our neighbours and that everything in a globalized world is interconnected. Viruses such as the swine flu, collapses of stock markets, and Chinese air pollution affect the global community. In the same way, the world is interconnected through new communication technologies which have brought people worldwide together. Dense networks of friends and acquaintances are maintained globally by using means of virtual communication. Google enables the access to global human knowledge, everybody can be informed in real time about what is happening anywhere on the globe. As the authors put it: “Everyone can now be at home anywhere in the world.”

¹ Kurbjuweit, D., Steingart, G. and Theile, M. (2009) *The Lost Decade. What the World Can Learn from 10 Years of Excesses*. Spiegel Online, retrieved 10.1.2011.

² Blom, P. cited in Kurbjuweit, D., Steingart, G. and Theile, M. (2009)

Western countries finally realized that they depend on the poorer regions of the world. Developing countries have suddenly acquired power that they can use to apply pressure to the more developed world. They seek to achieve similar living standards practiced by the West for years, even though climate change does not allow any nation in the world to keep up such a lifestyle. Slowly, a new conscience about the global impacts of one's individual behaviour is coming into being, each individual can contribute by shifting habits towards more sustainable lifestyles. The challenge is to try to convince the global community – including the developing countries – to adapt similar strategies to protect the health of the planet together.

Most distinguishing for of our time is the fact that the world has become very small. No matter where one lives, everybody is affected by almost anything that is happening elsewhere, let it be the consequences of climate change or by terrorist attacks throughout the world. Everybody is a global citizen. The world at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century is a world scarred by four crises, but nourished by the hopes that come with the technological developments that is connecting people and building global communities.

A changing world also means that new jobs emerge and established fields of practice need to be redefined. Design, as a determining factor of what the world around us looks like, plays a major role in the future of our global community. It seems to be a pressing issue to redefine the role of design. Foremost, new perspectives on design practice need to be established in order to prepare students and professionals to take part in this journey.

BACK TO MY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

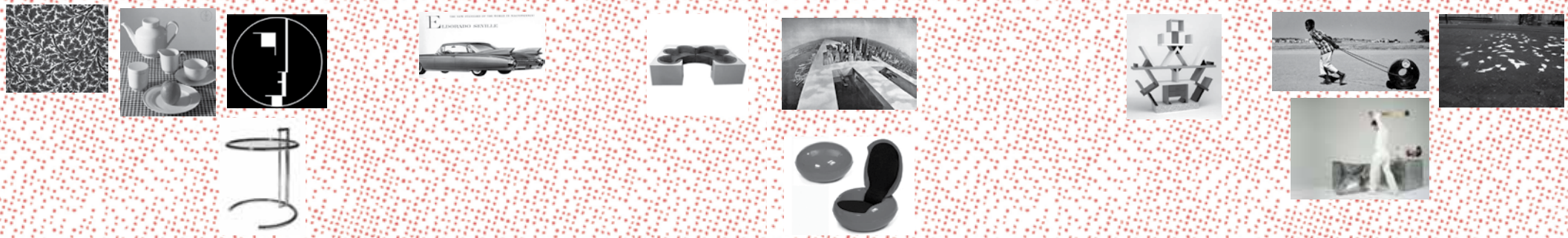
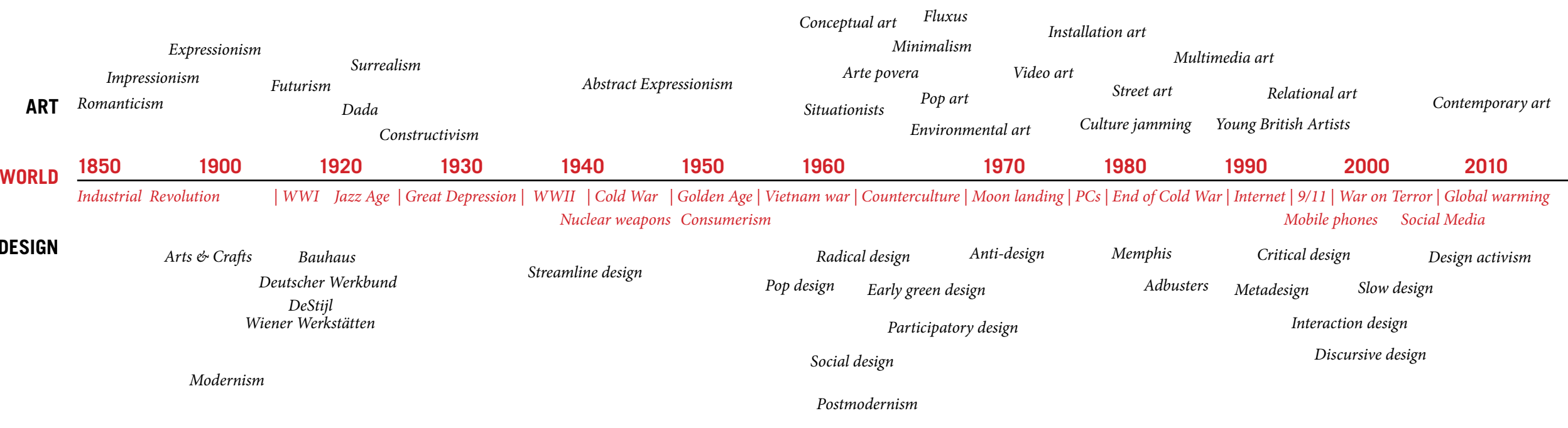
- > *What is the role of the designer/artist?*
- > *What is the relationship between art & design?*
- > *What is the future of design practice and the design activist?*

In the prologue of this book, I formulated several research questions that accompanied me throughout the process of the project. Eventually, the three questions above solidified: about the role of the artist, the relationship between art and design, and the future of design practice and the design activist.

Given that our society is in a state of massive change, moving towards a post-industrial globalized knowledge society, the role of the designer is changing consequently. Design practice is blurrier than ever before with different disciplines fancying each other and constantly new -isms and definitions coming up. I focussed primarily on the relationship between design and art since their tools and visions both have similar potential for positive social change, as proven in all the examples mentioned of design and art activism (see p.230, p.284, p.287). Yet, the public still associates design practice most commonly with industry and business, dependent on client briefs and primarily used as a tool to increase profit through advertisement, branding and functional product design suited to mass production. However, design seems to free itself from its dependencies to seek new ways of improving people's lives in ways similar to those of the art field. We need new ways of describing our profession in order to truly change perspectives and design practice (see p.292). If we assume that ethics will be embedded in all future human activity, what might be the future of design practice and the design activist? What is the current state of design practice, and is there hope for such idealism?

In order to understand the relationship between art and design and why and how it could possibly affect the redefinition of design practice, the main-section of this book has presented a range of influential ingredients from the past, present, and future. To get an overview impression of how the history of design, art and the world are inter-related to each other, I placed all of their time lines next to each other on the following pages. All of them are closely related to each other and have nourished each other over the course of time. With the current state of history, as described in the previous article, and the phenomenon that history tends to repeat itself, time seems to have come for both disciplines to move back together and exploit their potential for true positive change.

Combining three histories



-> What is the role of the designer/artist?

SHORT HISTORY OF DESIGN & ART

If we take a step back and look at the timeline of three combined histories (art, design and the world), certain peak decades of activist movements parallel in both the design and art fields become apparent. The Industrial Revolution triggered the Romantic movement at the end of the 19th century and led to the emergence of the Arts and Crafts movement in the 1880s. The two world wars had an immense impact on social movements, such as the early Avant-garde of the 20th century – the Futurists with their machine-language, the Dadaists rejecting rationality, the Surrealists embracing dream worlds, and the Situationists encouraging counterculture and revolution.

The first relevant organization which attempted to use design as a powerful tool to improve people's lives was the *Deutscher Werkbund* in Germany, founded under Hermann Muthesius in Munich in 1907. It was inspired by the thought of Ruskin, but aspired to combine the idealist social ideas about production processes with utilitarian production methods together with the industry. An affordable but functionalist design with a social imperative was the highest goal of the organization, influenced by American architect Louis H. Sullivan's famous line 'form follows function'.¹ Members included architects, artists and designers, including Walter Gropius who founded the Bauhaus little later in 1919 (see p.170). Its international followers in art, design and architecture such as DeStijl and Constructivism based their ideas on the democratic approach of the Bauhaus. During that time, the boundaries between art and design were blurry and not attempted to be distinguished by the public.

While Europe stimulated a profound body of design theory that stressed the role of art and craft, the US advanced in industrial technology and organization which profoundly changed design practices. Giant businesses generated a wave of innovative products that changed every aspect of life and culture in America. Products needed to be changed constantly, mass advertising campaigns took care of inducing consumers to buy abundantly. The auto-mobile is the best example of these developments – Henry Ford's T-model was launched in 1907 and quickly became accessible to the masses. Alfred P. Sloan from General Motors believed in product variety and introduced the use of basic components for several lines, topping them with different surface appearances to meet as many market needs as possible. Designers emerged as stylists, specialists who were employed to generate visual forms different from those of competitors. After WW2, design was advocated as a high-level strategic planning activity vital to the competitive success of

¹ Designwissen (2008) *Kampf dem Ornament*, viewed on 28.2.2011.



large firms. Design was not any more only about giving form, but about giving firms an appearance, a corporate identity.

In the growing world of consumer products, Modernism was twisted into different directions such as Streamlining, Organic Design, Utility Design and Good Design. Two pioneers of the organic design and architecture movement were Frank Lloyd Wright in the States and Alvar Aalto in Finland, celebrated abroad and in his home country as the prime figure of good design. They wanted to humanize Modernist thought with the use of organic shapes and natural materials so that buildings and objects would blend easily with humans and nature. Aalto's human-centred interpretation of Modernism aimed to improve people's well-being and everyday life through the fabric of architecture. In a speech that he held in 1957 in London, Aalto stated: "We should work for simple, good, undecorated things" and he continues, "but things which are in harmony with the human being and organically suited to the little man in the street."

Even though their intention was of social nature, Fuad-Luke is of the opinion that their contribution to a wider social benefit has never taken place. I do not agree with that statement entirely, since I have experienced living in Finland for two years now and have to admit that Aalto's influence is omnipresent – in everyday life, design education, and the overall image of Finnish design. The use of natural materials has ever since been put to practice, and Aalto's version of the simplicity of Modernism has never ceased to influence Finnish design. His designs can be found in every home, without representing unaffordable design items that have lost their initial idea of being available to the masses. Another Finnish designer, who I would call a design activist of sorts, was Kaj Franck. He is greatly admirable for his altruistic design approach. "The only possibility for resolving the technical aspects of utilitarian wares consists in being both radical and socially committed"², Franck claimed. He designed many of the famous glassware produced by Iittala and porcelain for Arabia which only use geometrical shapes and colors that can

² Art Directory. *Kaj Franck*, viewed on 28.2.2011.

be combined in any way the customer wishes for. According to him, an object had to be durable, robust, easy to clean, functional, do justice to the materials used for it and indispensable to be designated good and beautiful. His philosophy goes hand in hand with Iittala's slogan 'design against throwawayism.'

After the end of WW2, the Golden Age of Capitalism set in the Western world and lasted until the 1970's with the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in 1971. During this time, there was world-wide economic growth and employment, even in countries badly devastated by the war, such as Germany, France, Italy and Japan. The major powers were determined to avoid another Great Depression that had followed the first world war. The 'long boom' had many social, cultural and political effects – the baby boom, an increase in consumerism, the civil rights movement, the sexual revolution, opposition to the Vietnam war, and postmodernism in art, culture, and social science. The American Dream, a job for life, a spouse, some kids, a house, a dog, a garden, and the picket fence enclosing it seemed to be attainable to anyone. To keep the boost up, people were encouraged to buy with abandon. The Modernist mantra of the everlasting design classic took a back seat, people wanted to express different kinds of lifestyles by the outer appearance of the things they owned and purchased. With short-lived fashions came more waste which soon resulted in some critical voices in the design world. The architect Richard Buckminster Fuller for instance advocated the light use of the Earth's resources. In the mid-50s, the architect Richard Neutra showed his concerns about the state of things in his book *Survival through Design*. He surprised with his user-centred method of operation, always putting client needs in focus after putting the "artist's own stamp" on his works, which was apparently highly unusual back then.³ Vance Packard wrote a trilogy of books about the deceit that comes about with the consumer society and advertising: *The Hidden Persuaders*, *The Status Seekers*, and *The Waste Makers*. To really get social change rolling, it needed the angry post-war generation and a new ethics after Modernism for the creative arts – the time for the 60s had come.

The entire Western value system went through a re-evaluation since the 1950s and 60s, with a peak in the Social Revolution of 1968. Post-modernist ideas in philosophy and the analysis of culture and society were closely investigated in critical theory, a way of thinking that is most often associated with the Frankfurt School (see p.44). Jürgen Habermas identified self-reflection and emancipation leading to critical knowledge, which was different from natural sciences or the humanities. He was of the opinion that the era of modernity marks a move away from the liberation of enlightenment, towards a new form of

3 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 41.

enslavement.⁴ He also redefined critical social theory as a theory of communication. The role of language and symbols stood in the centre of attention and became fundamental to his ideas and those of e.g. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Roland Barthes, and Jaques Derrida. Their focus lay on the processes of production, synthesis and construction, by which the phenomena of human culture come about. All of them had a common interest in those processes that were often linguistic or symbolic. According to Wittgenstein, language is inextricably interwoven in the fabric of life, and philosophers should "bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."⁵ His writings had a great impact on social science and the art world, conceptual artists like Joseph Kosuth referred strongly to Wittgenstein and his analysis of the meaning of a word as a sign. The Modernist mantra of stripping bare all designed artifacts and buildings of significance to its pure form and function had eventually become weary. The Modernist era came to an end – Postmodernism had begun.

Postmodernism is rather an idea than a movement and many currents in the art and design world, social science and philosophy can be put under its roof. Its basic idea is to dissolve the distinction between high culture and mass culture and to overcome or merge the boundaries between art and everyday life.⁶ All in the sudden, anything could be art because there could be an underlying meaning in anything. Marcel Duchamp had already paved the way for the conceptualists with his ready-made objects in 1917 (see p.121), until today. With a look at parallel design movements, one can recognize how conceptualism has heavily influenced the idea of an object. Is a chair only a chair, an object to sit on, or is it the picture of a chair, is it a status object, a piece of art, a statement? Art infiltrated everyday objects, language everyday life. It seemed like some of the idealistic ideas of philosopher, artists and designers of the 60s had actually reached their goal.

Postmodernism embraced human plurality and was therefore a welcome relief after years of negating the human condition. This celebration of cultural pluralism led to a search for the improvement of the relationships between objects, spaces, the built environment and human fulfilment. A new design language, 'pop design' came into being. Radical design movements emerged, such as the Italian Radical Design and Anti-Design movements, out of which sprang well-known groups such as *Archizoom*, *Superstudio*, and *Gruppo Strum*. In the mid-seventies, groups like *Studio Alchimia* under Alessandro Mendini and *Memphis*, led by Ettore Sottsass, expressed their critique towards func-

4 Outhwaite, W. (1988) p. 6.

5 Wittgenstein, L. (ca. 1945-49)

6 Jencks, C. (1986)

tional design through their fun, political, and deconstructionist objects. These Italian movements, as Fuad-Luke writes, are doubtless the ones who “prepared the ground for a healthy pluralism and the seedbed for the emergence of Postmodern thought.”⁷ *Archizoom Associassion* was a design studio founded in 1966 by the four architects Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello and Massimo Morozzi and the two designers Dario and Lucia Bartolini. They produced a diverse range of projects, amongst which their large scale urban visions of life in the future. In collaboration with *Superstudio*, *Archizoom* invented the term ‘Superarchitecture’, which meant to involve Pop in architecture and design in order to evoke unconventional uses of those disciplines. The range of projects covered everything from objects to clothing to large scale architecture and urban living concepts which encouraged generations to follow to continue the fight for the liberation of the constraints of architecture.

Ettore Sottsass, who turned into one of the leading key figures of Italian design, founded *Memphis* in 1981. He negated the representational character of objects. Rather, he aimed at a reflection of the temporary everyday which was prone to be only ephemeral. While working as a design consultant for the Italian company *Olivetti* for many years, he worked on a range of radical sculptures and objects, developing his critical attitude about consumerism: “I didn’t want to do any more consumerist products, because it was clear that the consumerist attitude was quite dangerous.”⁸

Parallel to the agitations in social science, philosophy, architecture, art and design, a new sensitivity towards ecology was born. When the photographs from the Apollo space mission revealed the fragile beauty of our planet, a new impulse was given to the environmental movement. According to early environmental thinker Ian McHarg, the values of the economic system must embrace biophysical realities and human aspirations⁹ (*Design with Nature*, 1969). In the same year, the *International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID)* held a conference in London with the title ‘Design, Society and the Future’ to encourage thoughts about the interplay of economy, the environment and society in the design world. Viktor Papanek’s much quoted book *Design for the real world*, released in 1971, had a strong impact on the design community (see p.330). It postulated the social and environmental responsibility in a designer’s work, asking for a shift of the attention towards the 20% of the human population who represented the consumer society towards the 80% of disadvantaged people. The middle East Oil crisis in the mid-70s encouraged another upheaval in collective design thought. Life cycle

thinking and life cycle analysis (see p.325) were launched by the political administration to become more energy efficient. In 1976, the *Royal College of Art* in London organized a symposium under the name ‘Design for Need’ with Papanek as the main speaker. It heralded a long-lasting debate about universal, inclusive, and user-centred approaches in the design field.

DESIGNER VS. ARTIST?

“As we move forward through the 21st century”, notes Barbara Bloemink, curatorial director at the *Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum New York*, “distinctions between design and art are likely to become increasingly difficult to define.” Designers tended to have a different view on what distinguishes design from art. Norman Potter clearly differentiated between the tasks of a designer and the tasks of an artist in his account on *What is a Designer* in 1969 (see p.175) According to him, a designer “works through and for other people, and is concerned primarily with their problems rather than his own.”¹⁰ An artist, in contrast, must only be true to his own vision. This contrast is most commonly made when it comes to questioning the difference between both professions: the designer deals with practical issues and conforms to functional restrictions, whilst the artist has all freedoms to do whatever he wishes to in pursuit of his self-set agenda. According to Potter, a designer essentially plans, solves problems, and supervises – he supplies the makers of his designs with clear instructions, but does not complete the production of his designs. A designer “must be capable of more detachment than the fine-artist” and “able to weigh up a problem dispassionately on its own terms (as well as his).”¹¹ The artist, on the contrary, is deeply involved with the materials and the issues he deals with. Potter sees the real connection between both professions in “the benefit of a shared visual sensibility”.¹²

Rick Poynor, design critic and author, suggests that it is not as straightforward as Potters distinction sounds. In his 2005 article ‘Art’s Little Brother’, Poynor analyses the relationship of the two professions, stating that “designers have always had an inferiority complex when it comes to their relationship with artists and art.”¹³ According to him, design plays a much bigger role in culture than ever, arguing that it might even have become the more significant activity. He is displeased about the way design is treated as a superficial “lifestyle issue” and argues that many designers increasingly use their creations as a

7 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.42.

8 Sottsass, E. in McGuirk, J. (2007) *Icon Eye Magazine*. icon 046. April 2007.

9 McHarg, I. (1992)

10 Potter, N. (1969)

11 Ibid. p. 18.

12 Ibid. p. 19.

13 Poynor, R. (2005)

means of personal expression and commentary. Many artists are fascinated with the role of design in society and commerce and make it a theme in their artwork or even make their own designs. Since both professions work with similar techniques such as photography, video and computers, both often have to transfer the production to others, so that Potter's definition of the main differences between the artist and the designer might have become outdated.

The question about the level of detachment of the designer to his work is crucial to the question of taking over responsibility – if the designer's role is only to plan some steps in the production process and is detached from the actual production – possibly in China or other low-wage countries –, he loses the responsibility to his design in the moment the project is over. Unlike an artist who identifies himself with what he does, every single project is considered within the framework of his self-defined professional identity. If an object is exhibited, it is affiliated with the artist's name and becomes part of his portfolio. The piece of art does not enter everyday life and does not affect people in the same crucial way design does – “design designs”¹⁴, as I have quoted Tony Fry before: design always affects the way people interact and live.

On the other hand, art possesses a kind of freedom and status that is superior to that of design – in a conversation with designer Hella Jongerius, Louise Schouwenberg provokes her interview partner by stating “you envy the freedom and higher status of art, yet flirt with the clichés and the jargon of the art world. (...) Conversely, artists flirt with design because they think it's less isolated and less highbrow than their own area. Design has to meet criteria of usefulness, but art doesn't.” Jongerius' answer: “Designers ought to start raising the stakes. (...) I believe in the potential of intelligent design. Artists do have more scope to tackle big subjects, certainly. They can shock people, and they can grab spectators by the throat.”¹⁵

The artist's role was typically to go deeper, to be a visual thinker and to deal with ideas. Artists denied notions of beauty as being to simple-minded and moved art on a detached pedestal hard to understand for common people. I see many people turning their backs towards contemporary art because its gestures are too overblown to be understood. People need forms, beauty, and aesthetics to seek and find meaning. As Poynor states: design does not have a problem to serve people with it.¹⁶ Emerging contemporary art practice goes in similar directions – art of today wants to be involved with the everyday, similar to the demands of past avant-garde movements.

14 Fry, T. (2009)

15 Coles, A. (ed.) (2007) p.90.

16 Poynor, R (2005) Ibid.

Many artists and designers have been clearly and consciously working between the two professions, such as artist Donald Judd and designer Ron Arad who both concentrate on chairs in their work. According to Poynor, this sort of ‘designart’ possesses a sense of mystery: “the mystery comes from the way that our expectations of form's conventional possibilities and limits are overturned. The sensory, intellectual and emotional satisfactions they offer as pieces to look at, think about and react to – as well as to use – are akin to the experience of sculpture.”¹⁷ Many designers critique colleagues who attempt to cross the line, opposing any kind of authorship in the spirit of the modern movement. Others see industrial design as the “real visual art” of the 21st century (Stephen Bayley)¹⁸.

What the whole debate comes down to is the fact that new opportunities open up by enlarging our notion of what design practice might be by embracing other close disciplines such as art. Poynor sees design as “a means of personal and cultural expression with the potential to equal and even exceed art's reach.”¹⁹ He views the rise of design as the “gradual reunification of art, in the pre-modernist, ‘decorative’ sense, and everyday life.” Why should art and our social, mental and spiritual well-being be kept apart if the first is so important to the latter? People always mention function as the most distinctive feature between design and art – both professions create works that are primarily functional, only the context and expectations of the public are entirely different. If designers and artist work in different contexts than those usually expected, the boundaries start to blur. In the end, Jongerius and Arad share a true opinion: who cares if it's art or if it's design? Why the distinction?

-> *What is the relationship between art & design?*

BETWEEN THE DISCIPLINES

“All men are designers.” Viktor Papanek | *“Everybody is an artist.”* Joseph Beuys

During a short workshop in the beginning of my MA studies at TaiK, we worked on the task of creating a piece of art for the gallery of the young Finnish artist Jani Leinonen. He asked us, the ‘designers’, to do ‘art’, which made us ponder intensively about the question what the actual difference between art and design is. According to him, design is polite whereas art is nasty. In other words: design tries to solve problems, whilst art makes them visible. Maybe, it is only the result that is different, but the role is quite similar or comparable: the designer observes, criticizes and improves social conditions just as much as the artist does. It is interesting how categories create a sense of order, but at the

17 Coles, A. (ed.) (2007) p. 97.

18 Poynor, R (2005) Ibid.

19 Ibid.

same time they create the problem of having to label everything as either the one or the other. What about those products and projects, that stir thought, but are executed by a designer? Is it the authorship only, that turns an artefact into a piece of art or design? The once so important authorship of both the designer and the artist is shifting towards collaborative practice, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions from the original creator. The shifting focus of both disciplines on less object-based experiences makes it even more difficult to distinguish between design and art. Both disciplines seem to have moved back together again. Design wants to be more like art – meaningful and working for a better society – and art wants to be more like design by fulfilling the clear function of transforming society. If we think of design enabling experiences, it cuts across the disciplines again; art museums have become spectacular and events and installations involving the spectator are usually perceived rather as art than as design.

Ever since art has moved out of the museum, it has become difficult to differentiate between art and design objects. A lot of art is found on the streets, and a lot of design found in museums. The categorization is not really possible if everything – life, our environment, our cities – is considered art or designed by someone, if we listen to Joseph Beuys' and Viktor Papanek' claims. New design approaches such as discursive design (see p.278) move “beyond traditional styling or commercial problem solving”, by embracing “a more expansive role for the designer as sociocultural critic, educator, and provocateur.”²⁰

If we think of a characteristic feature inherent in current design and art movements, it is co-authorship and the transdisciplinary use of existing knowledge. As Roland Barthes already wrote in his famous 1967 essay, “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author”²¹, a common tendency is apparent: authorship is not what counts in tomorrow's society, but readership. And readership means to not only be a consumer, but an active *prosumer* – a fusion of the professional/producer and the consumer.

We do not start from 'blank sheets of paper' but always combine what our experiences and knowledge can contribute to the outcome of a project. Thackara mentions this in his closing chapter to his *Design in a complex world* book: “Rather than expect to design everything from scratch, we should search far and wide for tried-and-tested solutions that others have already created.”²² This attitude goes hand in hand with the copyleft movements of the Internet and the open source philosophy of the world wide web (see p.70). It is a development that calls for a basic re-organization of the relationships amongst different disciplines, organizations, people, cultures, and lifestyles. If we think of scientists

20 Tharp, B. (2007) *Discursive Design*, viewed on 15.1.2011.

21 Barthes, R. (1977)

22 Thackara, J. (2006) p.218.

and the way they have always shared their results with their peers in order to achieve common goals together, there is a lot that can be learnt. We must give up the idea of authorship and reconsider the “relationship between the people who make things and the people who use them”²³

If characteristics such as authorship “die”, what distinguishes the disciplines from each other? If frameworks used to define the rules, what happens when both, designers and artists have the same clients? And if artists start to adapt design thinking in their work, and both disciplines shift their focus on making the world a better place, there is only one thing left to say: either way, design and art profit from each other and it is important to include methods and thinking from both practices in creative education and practice. Design and art should belong to the school curriculum of all people, because it expands the ability to recognize, answer and solve problems of our world.

During my research, I noticed how much easier it was to explain my project by referring to myself as an artist, labeling the events as ‘art events’ rather than ‘design exercises’ executed by a ‘design researcher’ or designer. As an artist, you immediately gain freedom and people generally expect only artists to work that way: as independent workers that are able to produce their art according to their own schedules and frameworks.

Design practice should gain a similar freedom and should also be perceived differently by society: as change-agents that are setting their own agenda, as cultural observers and specialists in design thinking who are serving primarily society instead of business. Design research (see p.386) - the *science of the artificial*, as coined by Herbert Simon - contributes to the debate of how to improve design practice by creating “a body of intellectually tough, analytic, partly formalizable, partly empirical, teachable doctrine about the design process.”²⁴ Tim Brown, director and founder of IDEO, has massively expanded the perception of the potential of design by establishing and employing the term ‘design thinking’ (see p.388) for problem-solving in different fields of practice. Nevertheless, as Kohtala mentioned in our interview, there seems to be a big gap between the theory established by design research and actual design practice. The majority of professionals and laypeople still perceive and employ design in traditional ways and have a hard time to adopt their perspective to what is really needed in today's world. Kohtala points out the 2010 *Provoke* report on ‘The Changed Role of Design’ to prove her point. The report refers to a division of design into four groups by the *Next Design Leadership Institute*, representing four levels: traditional design, product and service design, organisational transformation design, and social transformation design.²⁵ As the report proves, current

23 Thackara, J. (2006) p.212.

24 Simon, H. A. (1969)

25 Provoke Design Oy (2010) p. 14.

Finnish design practice is stuck at the second level.²⁶

A healthy transdisciplinary practice that combines design thinking with social critique and artistic methods can bring about more innovation than using methods from merely one field. Thinking out of the box does not only imply to think differently, but also to look beyond what the own discipline has to offer. Thackara points out social critics and artists, avant-garde media artists in particular, as candidates to provide “aesthetic stimulus”²⁷ to provoke fresh thinking. He sees design as a useful mediator between artists, computer scientists and users to yield new applications and concepts for new tools to be harnessed in a good and fruitful way.

Transdisciplinarity is an attitude towards the world that goes beyond interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary; it is a holistic vision of the human as an undefinable being of diverse rationalities and logics. The concepts of ‘definition’ and ‘objectivity’ are subject to re-examination, according to the *Charter of Transdisciplinarity* which was adopted at the *First World Congress of Transdisciplinarity* in Portugal in 1994 and formulated by the Romanian physicist Basarab Nicolescu. “As the prefix “trans” indicates, transdisciplinarity concerns that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all discipline. Its goal is the understanding of the present world, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge.”²⁸ The transdisciplinary vision goes far beyond the fields of exact sciences and demands a dialogue between the humanities, the social sciences, the arts, and the spiritual experience by considering the various approaches to time and history in a “transhistorical horizon.”²⁹ Furthermore, the recognition of the planet Earth as our home is one of the imperatives of the philosophy; every human being is entitled to a nationality, but is also, as an inhabitant of the same planet, a ‘transnational being’. These two layers of citizenship are the goals of the transdisciplinary research and can be considered highly important in regard to any discipline’s future.

One of the main conclusions is the recognition of the need for a new mindset towards knowledge-sharing and creation. “Open source is doing for mass innovation what the assembly line did for mass production.”³⁰ If the model of design practice is based on collaborative, open and evolving principles, the main focus of what is designed also has to change. As Fuad-Luke puts it in his closing chapter of his book *Design Activism*: “we

26 Ibid. p. 26.

27 Thackara, J. (2006) p.220.

28 International Center for Transdisciplinary Research, viewed on 10.2.2011.

29 International Center for Transdisciplinary Research, *Charter of Transdisciplinarity*, viewed on 10.2.2011.

30 Goetz, T. (2003)

need to avoid another pitfall that has frequently hijacked design. Design tends to focus on imagining and engineering the future with its emphasis on concepts, prototypes, scenarios and virtual 3D visualizations.”³¹ Business and governments tend to use design as a strategic tool for their future profit. Rather than trying to preconfigure the future, design needs to turn towards shaping the present. New visions of beauty (coined as ‘beautiful strangeness’ by Fuad-Luke) can create a present that embraces a wider societal arena whilst being adaptable to the fast and unpredictable changes of the future to come.

-> *What is the future of design practice and the design activist?*

DESIGN NOW, DESIGN TOMORROW

“Design is the conception and planning of the artificial, that broad domain of human made products which includes: material objects, visual and verbal communications, organised activities and services, and complex systems and environments for living, working, playing and learning.”

Victor Margolin & Richard Buchanan (1995)

Seen from a very broad view, design can be grouped into three categories as coined by Potter: *things, places, and messages*. Different design skills and professions have evolved ever since the Industrial Revolution by education and corporate demand. Design became an independent profession in the early part of the 20th century, employing people from different background such as art, illustration, engineering, theatre, window display, and advertising. The first UK design consultancy was established during World War II, chaired by Herbert Read, in order to network designers and engineers for the industry. After the war, design became an important part in building up economies and several Design Councils and associations were established worldwide. During the 60s and 70s, many design consultancies began to appear, the 80s heralded the ‘designers’ decade’ with design becoming a cult. Design labels and brands were omnipresent and consumerism boosted. In the 90s, this design bubble burst with recession and many companies reduced the employment of design consultancies. That industry has reconstructed itself ever since that time. Nowadays, it is generally agreed on that design is a critical part of business success and most firms invest in design strategies and thinking in order to increase profit.

Findeli defines the physiognomy of design as consisting of four main developments of the past: 1. the decorative arts tradition, going back to the beginning of human culture, 2. the theoretical and discursive tradition in design, going back to movements of the

31 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p.188.



19th century such as the Bauhaus and post-modern discourse, 3. the professional tradition going back to the late 20s of the United States, and 4. the relatively young technological and managerial furrow of service and management design.³²

Bruce M. Tharp recently tried to make sense of the mess that prevails in today's design landscape, which was one of the starting points in my research. "Try [to] make sense of the range of the terms floating around out there: user-centered design, eco-design, design for the other 90%, universal design, sustainable design, interrogative design, task-centered design, reflective design, design for well-being, critical design, speculative design, speculative re-design, emotional design, socially-responsible design, green design, conceptual design, concept design, slow design, dissident design, inclusive design, radical design, design for need, environmental design, contextual design, and transformative design."³³ Tharp attempts to give back a more solid face to design activity after it has been scattered by too many different terms which caused difficulties to understand the profession: "Without a compelling, indeed, taxonomic, way of organizing design activity, we are selling ourselves short; we not only have difficulty understanding the profession ourselves, but also in communicating to the world our potency, range, and potential impact." He coins four major fields of design: Commercial Design, Responsible Design, Experimental Design, and Discursive Design. Commercial Design (example: the *iPhone*, 2007, Apple Inc.) is what is commonly understood as industrial/product design. The primary intent and task of the designer is to create useful, useable, and desirable products that customers can afford and that generate adequate profit. Responsible Design (example: *One Laptop per Child*, 2005, Yves Béhar) is driven by a more humanitarian approach. The designer works to provide useful services and products to the underconsumers that are largely ignored by the commercial market. Ethics, compassion, altruism and philanthropy form the basis of the design philosophy. Experimental Design (example: *Front's Rat Wallpaper*, 2005) intends to explore, experiment, and discover, the process being more important

32 Press, M. and Cooper R. (2003) p. 164.

33 Tharp, B.M. & S. (2009) 4 Field of Industrial Design. (5.1.2009) Viewed on 20.2.2011.

than the outcome. It is driven by curiosity in e.g. a material, a technology, or a concept and such. The primary intent is to explore possibilities with less regard to making profit. Discursive Design (see p.278; example: Dunne & Raby's *Compass Table*, 2001), as described before, refers to utilitarian objects whose primary purpose is to communicate ideas in order to encourage discourse. These objects can be considered 'thinking tools', as they raise awareness and perhaps understanding of psychological, sociological, and ideological issues.

The evolution of design has been influenced to a big extent by education. Until the mid-60s and 70s, most design skills in the UK were developed in art schools and then colleges of art and design. Students were taught by using the atelier teaching method, which meant a small group of students was tutored by a designer or artist on certain design tasks. These tutors were mostly part-time and also involved in practice. During the 1980s, there was an eminent growth in higher education numbers and a reduction of funding for that area. Class sizes grew, and the part-time teaching of design professionals was reduced, putting a new emphasis on the theory and history of design. A founded body of knowledge was lacking, and first had to be established. Other than the professional status of engineers and architects, designers have never been accredited as such - anybody can call oneself designer, since the professional status is not protected. Maybe, this is also one of the reasons of the constant difficulty of defining what design is about. In Italy, most designers come from a background of architecture. In the US, design students study design modules in combination with broader subjects of the arts and humanities. In order to receive a professional design education, students have to first receive a BA in Fine Arts.³⁴ In 1944, John Vassos and Kostelow and other designers attempted to bring through an amendment to the New York State Education Law that would have established an educational and licensing framework for designers; it was not passed. The *Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA)* has defined a minimum of industrial design education for research methods, problem-solving methods and communication techniques.

34 Press, M. and Cooper R. (2003) p. 167

Design is not a profession that is easy to map - there is a plethora of theoretical contents, skills, and methods to acquire, but no common set defined by education or the profession. In our interview, Timo Salli pointed out the problem of disciplinary boundaries, only to be seconded by Kats: “we are not a discipline, nor should we be one, despite our prototheory, scholarly materials, or university courses. We need to be inclusive, not exclusive: we will need new skills and insights as our current inquiries change.”³⁵ The question is then: what are the core skills of a designer, according to the emerging demands on design?

DESIGN RESEARCH

The main intent of design research is to better understand and to improve the design process by establishing an academic body by investigating the design process in its many fields. According to Fallman, the very basic form of a model for Interaction Design Research is a triangle consisting of three extremes: design practice, design studies, and design exploration.³⁶ These extremes taken together establish the discipline of interaction design research. Fallman distinguishes the three activities as three different ‘interfaces’: design practice is an ‘interface towards industry’, design studies an ‘interface towards academia’, and design exploration an ‘interface towards society at large.’³⁷ Fallman constitutes the belief that moving in between the areas produces the most interesting and rewarding results. Moving in between different positions of design provides the designer with different sets of goggles, which offers new perspectives and widens the horizon. Interestingly, Fallman refers to contemporary art practice when talking about design exploration, which “is clearly linked to some of the ideals of contemporary art, as well as to the interpretative attitude of many humanities disciplines”.

Design research as a discipline goes back to the 1960s, heralded as the ‘design science decade’ by the radical technologist Buckminster Fuller, who called for a “design science revolution” to overcome the human and environmental problems that could not be solved and overcome by politics and economics only. His call culminated in the establishment of the Design Research Society in 1966 in the UK, followed by the foundation of the postgraduate Department of Design Research at the London Royal College of Art by L. Bruce Archer who stood in as the first Professor of Design Research. Archer described the need for the new discipline as such: “The most fundamental challenge

35 Ibid. p.196

36 Fallman, D. (2008) p. 5.

37 Ibid. p.18.

to conventional ideas on design has been the growing advocacy of systematic methods of problem solving, borrowed from computer techniques and management theory, for the assessment of design problems and the development of design solutions.”³⁸ Herbert Simon established the term of a *science of design* looking for “a body of intellectually tough, analytic, partly formalizable, partly empirical, teachable doctrine about the design process.”³⁹

Donald Schön expanded the term of the ‘design science movement’ by criticizing the fact that design science tried to define solving methods for well-formed problems only, but professional practice has to face ‘messy problematic situations’ in real life. He proposed “an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict”, the “reflective practice”.⁴⁰

In the 1970s, design methodology was rejected by many of the early pioneers, such as J. Christopher Jones, who disliked “the machine language, the behaviourism, the continual attempt to fix the whole of life into a logical framework.”⁴¹ Over the years, Bruce Archer developed the field further by emphasizing the “designerly way of thinking and communicating that is both different from scientific and scholarly ways of thinking and communicating, and as powerful as scientific and scholarly methods of enquiry when applied to its own kinds of problems”.⁴² Nigel Cross expanded that statement with his book of collected essays *Designerly Ways of Knowing*, referring to Donald Schön’s view on ‘the reflective practitioner’ mentioned before. Since the 1980s, design research has come of age with the emergence of the first journals of design research and a major growth in conferences, doctoral education in design and, eventually, the founding of the *International Association of Societies of Design Research* in 2005.

Most designers do not consider themselves as researchers, but basically, research is an inherent part of every design practice. Both processes go through a process of searching for knowledge that inform the different stages of the creative process. For design practitioners, design research is primarily about the following three areas: searching for understanding, for ideas, and for solutions. The new buzzword ‘Design thinking’ – a broad approach to design methods – comes in useful in all these stages.

38 Archer, L. B. (1965)

39 Simon, H. A.(1969)

40 Cross, N. (2001)

41 Jones, J. C. (1977)

42 Archer, L. B. (1979)

DESIGN THINKING

Design thinking is a framework of creative methods to find practical solutions to problems or issues with the consideration of an improved future. Design thinking describes the ability to “combine empathy, creativity and rationality to meet user needs and drive business success”⁴³. The core goal lay on the “building up of ideas”; therefore, in the early process of an ideation phase, outside the box thinking and failure are encouraged in order to reach a maximum amount of input from the participants and range of ideas. The divergent stage is about “creating choices”, followed only then by “making choices” in the convergent stage⁴⁴, when stronger ideas are democratically singled out and pushed in further rounds. Unlike analytical thinking, design thinking is an open process that values and encourages the input of all participants with an emphasis on taking on the risk of failure, since this can often lead to the best solutions.

The design thinking process consists of seven different stages: define, research, ideate, prototype, choose, implement, and learn.⁴⁵ In each of these stages, problems can be reframed, new questions asked, and more ideas pronounced. During the whole process, the best answers are chosen by the team with a specific method - the butterfly effect.⁴⁶ The method is entirely unscientific, but very useful when it comes to singling out ideas out of a huge mass of data. The method was invented by Bill Moggridge and simply consists of handing out little post-it ballots to the participants of a project, asking them to attach them to those ideas that should get pushed further. “The process is not about democracy, but it is about maximizing the capacities of teams to converge on the best solutions.”⁴⁷ The steps are not linear; they can occur simultaneously and can be repeated. The potential of design thinking lays in its objectivity – design is always very subjective whilst design thinkers usually share a common set of ideas about how to drive innovation. Design thinking has been recognized as a promising method for future practice and therefore shares a lot of academic interest through research projects and symposiums on the field.

In an interview with Anne Mette Laursen in 2010 on the question of how design thinking might expand the design tradition, Michael Keissner, CEO of Hatch & Bloom stated: “We do not relate to the design tradition, and it is not on our agenda to expand the tradition either. We consider ourselves as part of a wider context. Some of our strongest

partners and allies involve business leaders, public administrators, doctors and nurses, programmers, artists, scientists and engineers. In this way, we are starting a new tradition. At the end of the day, it is not about being a designer, it is about changing larger agendas.”⁴⁸ Keissner sees the future of design with “a much stronger focus on human life, human experience and human emotion.” He views design as a way of thinking, seeing, understanding and acting in order to design life-improving solutions and ultimately, create meaning.

Fuad-Luke criticizes the *Design thinking* approach suggested by Tim Brown as too focused on business: “There was no mention of design as a strategic tool for business to address sustainability or its societal responsibilities. Design needs to break out beyond the visions of business.”⁴⁹ According to him, design research and education seem to be one step ahead of design practice, referring to the conference *Changing the Change* in Turin in 2008. The European project *DEEDS* resulted in the meeting of the global design community, setting an agenda of 24 core principles for ‘designing sustainability’: “Design research has to feed the social learning process towards sustainability with the needed design knowledge. That is, with visions, proposals, tools and reflections to enable different actors to collaborate and to move concrete steps towards a sustainable knowledge society.”⁵⁰

All the results of the conference are embraced by the term *SCALES*, which stands for Special skills, Creating change agents, Awareness, Learning together, Ethical responsibilities and Synergy and co-creating. On the new designer role, the conference pulled together this definition: “Designers as connectors and facilitators, as quality producers, as visualizers and visionaries, as future-builders (or co-producers). Designers as promoters of new business models. Designers as catalyzers of change.”⁵¹ The design and research community seems to be active – what does that mean for design practice?

TENDENCIES IN DESIGN PRACTICE

A wide range of organizations transform themselves into service providers – it seems like design will be rather a service than a manufacturing activity. Companies such as IBM that once sold computers have adopted a whole range of business transformation services and consider themselves service providers. The real action in our complex world takes place among the organizations that develop new services and infrastructures.

43 *Design Thinking*. Wikipedia, viewed on 14.1.2011.

44 Brown, T. (2009) p. 67.

45 Simon, H. (1969) p. 55.

46 Brown, T. (2009) p. 83.

47 Ibid.

48 Laursen, A.M. & Kjærgaard, K. (ed.) (2010) *Interview with M. Keissner by A.M. Laursen*. p. 38.

49 Fuad-Luke, A. (2009) p. 189.

50 *Changing the Change* (2008) Conference in Turin 2008.

51 Ibid.

According to statistics from a 2010 study executed by the UK design council⁵², 85% of businesses consider design as an integral part of their operations. Large firms consider design as important for commercial success (82%), and almost half of smaller businesses see design in a similar way. Yet, sustainability in consumer products is not considered a major issue for most firms: 30% thought there existed no demand at all. According to the study, most common use of design is marketing and corporate branding (to 71%), communication and media design being the most common design disciplines in need. Design is widely used by manufacturers and business, but apparently, there is an increase in the service and academia sector.

The International Council of Industrial Design has published a report on a project called 'Design for Future Needs', run for the European Commission by a group of European design and business organisations. The project aims to help policy makers through foresight and design methods respond to future needs, emerging issues and environmental and technological change. "Design is a broadly transferable process for giving physical shape to people's needs and desires for the future. Here, it is the designer's creativity and intuition, often assisted by more formal external research, that generates the future vision. Design is widely used by manufacturers, and increasingly by service businesses and in academia. But, because it has been seen essentially as a process that leads to an actual product, it has hardly been exploited as a tool in policy-making."⁵³

In the *ICID* report about 2010 design activities throughout Europe, a certain trend is tangible: co-creation, social design, and new business practice; open and more human design for all, including all possible target groups. For instance Estonia with Tallinn being Cultural Capital 2011 follows the trend. The city has coined their concept for the cultural year as follows:

*"Tourism for all – Tallinn For All. The globalization of markets, the ageing of the population in developed countries and the increasing respect for the diversity of consumers and their needs are significantly relevant to the growth targets of private enterprise and individuals' desire to improve the quality of their lives and bring about a more just and equal society. Design for All as intervention in environments, products and services with the aim that everybody, including future generations, and without regard to age, capabilities or cultural origin, can enjoy participating in our societies. To achieve this broad goal, we must follow two basic principles: 1. Facilitate the use of products and services; 2. Ensure that users take part in the product design and evaluation processes."*⁵⁴

52 UK Design Council (2010) Design Industry Insights.

53 ICSID (2003) Design for Future Needs, viewed on 7.2.2011.

54 ICSID (2010) Regional Report Europe, p. 20.



The social sculpture we got into by chance in Tallinn on April 4th, 2010, as part of the 52-project of Tallinn Cultural Capital 2011.

I happened to visit Tallinn last year in Spring and by chance stumbled upon one of those public art interventions (see photos).

In Italy, last year there was a competition by the *Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design Torino* (IAAD) with the following premise: "This year the overall theme of the contest is dedicated to the ethical-social and environmental function of the design: the creative skills of design as a tool for creating objects and communication campaigns aesthetically pleasant, functional, but with a strong social consciousness and environmental."⁵⁵ The trend seems to be evident in design reports, competitions, and exhibitions, but apparently still struggles to find application in the world of practice. In Denmark, the exhibition *It's A Small World* concentrates on the four main themes 'Sustainability, Human Scale, New Craftsmanship and Non-Standardised Praxis', with the intention of initiating a dialogue about the expectations towards a sustainable world. But again, the catalogue displays very 'designerly' aesthetic objects, presents new tools and methods such as digital crafting, and puts the most famous design names on a pedestal. In an interview with William McDonough, co-author of *Cradle to Cradle*, he is asked about his attitude towards 'New Craftsmanship' and 'Non-Standardised Praxis', which allows for new software and technology to co-exist with the designer's (and the consumer's) desire for expression, personality and uniqueness. He refers to mass customization as a tool and the C2C concept as a principle: "a tool only has value for the purpose to which it is put. A hammer is a good tool if it helps to build your house. It's a bad tool if it hits you over the head! It is what we do with the tool which defines its value."⁵⁶ The same thing counts for technology: "the worst culprits are those apologists of the new economy wearing liberal and countercultural hats, [who] eulogize decentralization, nonlinear causality, and the impossibility of control - but fail to explain why these trends are so wonderful when centralized power, extreme social inequality, and ecological devastation are increasing

55 Ibid. p. 29.

56 Laursen, A. M. & Kjærgaard, K. (ed.) (2010) *Interview with William McDonough by Dominic Balmforth*. p. 18.

in the world”⁵⁷ writes Harry Kunzru, wondering about the dystopian character of most future fictions. Rather than designing science-dominated futures scenarios, we should ask for “social fictions”⁵⁸.

NEW ROLES FOR DESIGN

*“Forget design as a territory and practice that can be laid claim to, stop talking to yourselves, give up on repackaging design within design, and start talking to other people, other disciplines, broaden your gaze, engage the complexity of design as a world-shaping force and help explain it as such.”*⁵⁹

Tony Fry, Design Futuring

“Left to the market alone, the future will be dumb”⁶⁰ – that is how Mike Press and Rachel Cooper introduce their chapter about the new designer. As Italian design legend Ettore Sottsass said: “When you talk about the market, it’s not so much how good the potatoes are, but how good you are at selling potatoes.”⁶¹ Press and Cooper call market-led innovation not only dangerous but dumb – it separates production from consumption, ignores ethical considerations, and puts its main focus on the brand experience instead of real life user-experiences. Globalization has fostered these contradictions and with designers being able to advocate new behaviours, it is up to them to define their new roles. Tony Fry, author of the book *Design Futuring - Sustainability, Ethics and New Practice* suggests designers a new sense of responsibility by considering the impact of any design product: “What humanity brings into the material world, via design and its instruments of production, has always been directive of futures.”⁶² According to him, design practice cannot simply add sustainable practices onto its foundations; the whole nature of design practice has to fundamentally change. Not only a transformation of design and ways of designing have to take place, a new kind of designer needs to emerge. “All design practices have to change and break from exclusive service to the status quo.”⁶³ Fry demands. Like Sottsass, Fry suggests that “designers must place the current needs of the market in second place to the politico-ethical project of gaining sustain-ability.”⁶⁴ However, he

57 Kunzru, H. (2001)

58 Thackara, J. (2006)

59 Fry, T. (2009)

60 Press, M. and Cooper R. (2003) p.196.

61 Wired (2003) *A Conversation About The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*.

62 Fry, T. (2009) p.35.

63 Ibid. p. 45.

64 Ibid. p.46

emphasizes not to abandon all economic considerations but to strategically reposition them in united force of design leaders, advocates and progressive educators. Fry suggests an entire redirection of the world, a huge project similar to that of the Industrial Revolution. All practices that worsen the current status quo need to be redirected. Redirection is more radical than reform but less disruptive than revolution. According to Fry, design can serve as a leader of that redirection.

There are many different ways and strategies to approach the problem – some try to ‘humanize’ market mechanisms by working within or for the large corporations, others ensure user needs and experience by embedding it in the process of product development, whilst others extend the role of the craftsman by addressing sustainable issues, and others entirely turn their backs to the corporate sector – such as *Adbusters*, *Reclaim the Streets* and others by “sowing seeds of a genuine alternative to corporate rule”.⁶⁵ This form of design activism is raising important questions touching corporate power, civic space, the nature of work, and cultural choices. All different strategies support each other by working towards the same common goal: to create a sustainable today and tomorrow.

Some characteristics of the ‘new designer’ are common to all approaches and comprehensively depicted in the chart *The new designer*⁶⁶ by Press and Cooper: first of all, the designer is an intelligent maker who uses his craft skills and knowledge to solve problems. Craft knowledge is fundamental to understand detail, quality and how things work. The ability of reflective thinking is essential to creative problem-solving and belongs to the very basic capabilities of a designer. Secondly, the designer is a knowledge worker – by actively learning throughout life, a new understanding of problems and knowledge creation can emerge. Paola Antonelli, MOMA curator of design describes designers as “society’s new pragmatic intellectuals ... changing from form giver to fundamental interpreter of an extraordinarily dynamic reality.”⁶⁷ As a result of applying and creating knowledge for other people, the designers needs to be a good communicator and flexible networker. Working with all different kinds of people is an essential ability of the designer, which leads to another important skill, being able to connect practice with entrepreneurship. As we have learnt in previous chapters, patterns of work are changing. Only by seeing ourselves as ‘individual enterprises’, we can successfully set our own agendas and survive as a social and sustainable entrepreneur. An understanding of business and marketing, combined with ecology, are important for the survival in a new landscape of work environments. And last but not least, the designer is an active

65 Klein, N. (2000)

66 Press, M. and Cooper R. (2003)

67 Antonelli, P. (2008) p.17.

citizen – citizenship links individuals and involves empathy. There are many different kinds of citizenships, but the principle of belonging to the world is an important basic understanding of sustainability.

A new vocabulary needs to be established to describe the designer – the term itself has lost its meaning. In a lecture of Alasdair Fuad-Luke at TaiK last year, he proposed several new descriptions and made-up words such as ‘enabler’, ‘socio-donneur’, ‘imagineer’, ‘free agent’, ‘catalysts’ and ‘capacity builders’. On the blog by architect Roy Hyde, other new terms can be found such as ‘visionary pragmatist’, ‘community enabler’, ‘trans-disciplinary integrator’, ‘social entrepreneur’, ‘practicing researcher’, ‘design management thinker’, and ‘long-term strategist’.⁶⁸ Thackara pushes the definition even further by encouraging people to “design connections between you and new people, knowledge, and disciplines. Design a new way to collaborate and do projects. Whatever you choose to do, don’t try to do it alone. We are all designers now.”⁶⁹

According to Thackara, traditional design thinking focuses on form and structure. Actions are described in blueprints, implemented or produced by other people. Instead of such a top-down approach, designers must see the whole context and respond to the quick changes that are constantly taking place. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, complex systems do not sit still while we are redesigning them. We must develop an understanding of the dynamics and morphology of systems and shift our focus on principles of relationship, connection, communication, and interaction.⁷⁰ Thackara has defined seven frameworks for designing in a complex world that support this shift⁷¹:

- from *blueprint and plan to sense and respond*
- from *high concept to deep context*
- from *top-down design to seeding side edge effects*
- from *blank sheets of paper to smart recombination*
- from *science fiction to social fiction*
- from *designing for people to designing with us*
- from *design as project to design as service*

We must shift our perception of designing on the world to designing in the world, meaning that being a designer is more about facilitating actions rather than being the author of finished works. If design was once about shaping the world, now it is about steering it.

68 Hyde, R. (2010) *Potential Futures for Design Practice*, viewed 12.2.2011.

69 Thackara, J. (2006) p.226.

70 Thackara, J. (2006) p.213.

71 Ibid.

“THE COMPLEXITY OF TODAY’S PROBLEMS WOULD NECESSITATE THESE ROLES TO BE TAKEN UP BY THE “COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE OF A TEAM.”

BRUCE MAU

Design in a world as complex as it is now means to continuously observe and measure people and environments. “Context is key”, says Peter Ducker, a business man, about designing in system-rich environments. It matters in an interconnected world, when small changes can affect the bigger picture, in a good or bad way. Designing in the context also links to the concept of global thought and local action (see p.221), since it considers the overall picture – the people, the environment, and the cultural implications.

The public still struggles to really understand what or who designers are. Like artists, they are perceived as possessors of natural creativity, blurring the boundary between both creative professions. Fuad-Luke affirms the insight I gained through this project by claiming it to be of possible advantage for a design activist to be perceived by the public as an artist. For me, art was the most important inspiration in this project, and I pledge for more irrationality, idealism, and poetry in all practices: “Designers should be unreasonable. Yes, they should empathise, acknowledge the needs and aspirations of others, and recognize the imperative of sustainability. (...) they need the confidence and vision to make wholly unreasonable demands on a world that has neglected the needs and aspirations of most of its inhabitants. Our future depends on it.”⁷²

72 Press, M. and Cooper R. (2003) Ibid. p. 200.

“A SYNTHESIS OF ARTIST, INVENTOR, OBJECTIVE ECONOMIST, AND EVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIST.”

BUCKMINSTER FULLER

“EVOLVEMENT FROM BEING THE INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS OF OBJECTS OR BUILDINGS, TO BEING THE FACILITATORS OF CHANGE AMONG LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE.”

JOHN THACKARA

THE DESIGN ACTIVIST

If we take a look back at the different possibilities, methods and emerging new methodologies in design and art practice, there seems to be hope for Design activism to become an established way of looking at things. Spanning from social design for over- and underconsumers, participatory design methods, design thinking, metadesign, slow design and its principles, service design, critically designed artefacts, communication design aiming at the creation of awareness and/or changing behaviour, design activism offers endless possibilities to create a positive impact on the way we live. New perspectives of looking at production methods such as halfway products, co-creation, considering object-user relationships, ethical products, downloadable product schemes, ephemeral objects, cradle-to-cradle, and experiences instead of objects offer insights in a possible sustainable future. Redirective and transformative projects that employ information, concepts, prototypes, stories and scenarios as a means to affect society are proof of the potential and importance of design. The *UK Design Council 2007 project Dott 07* (see p.231) is a good example: it concentrated on the topics food, health, school, transport and energy in a year of community projects, events and exhibitions. The project explored what life in a sustainable region could be like – and what role design plays in it. The question about how the project is connected to design is answered as follows in the report of the project: “Eighty per cent of the environmental impact of today’s products, services and infrastructures is determined at the design stage. Design decisions shape the processes behind the products we use, the materials and energy required to make them, the ways we operate them and what happens to them when we no longer need them. (...) Our expectations have grown and our spending has increased – but we are frustrated that not all our demands are being met.”⁷³

⁷³ UK Design Council (2007) *Dott 07 Manual*. p.7.

The artist/designer Lucy Orta (see p.289) is a perfect example of the designer-artist-activist debate: referred to as an artist, she uses ‘design’ to affect social issues. She proves once more the relevance of working between the disciplines. As Fry suggests, design could establish itself as a ‘meta-discipline’ facilitating an exchange of knowledge and dialogue between disciplines. “Disciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are like four arrows shot from but a single bow: knowledge.”⁷⁴ Redirective practice would allow knowledge to be transformed into action – action executed by every participant of society. Thackara wraps it up in one sentence: “People are too often described and thought of by designers as users or consumers when we really need to think of them as actors.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ International Center for Transdisciplinary Research, viewed on 20.2.2011.

⁷⁵ Thackara, J. (2006) p.221.

THE NEW DESIGNER:

ENABLER, SOCIO-DONNEUR, IMAGINEER, FREE AGENT, CATALYST, CAPACITY BUILDER, VISIONARY PRAGMATIST, COMMUNITY ENABLER, TRANS-DISCIPLINARY INTEGRATOR, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR, PRACTICING RESEARCHER, DESIGN MANAGEMENT THINKER, LONG-TERM STRATEGIST, REFLECTIVE THINKER, REDIRECTIVE PRACTITIONER, PRAGMATIC INTELLECTUAL, KNOWLEDGE WORKER, COMMUNICATOR, NETWORKER, ACTIVE CITIZEN, INTELLIGENT MAKER

EPILOGUE

For my own development as a designer, this project has had an immense impact – finally, it feels like I have found what I have been looking for throughout my whole studies. I was always wondering how I could possibly be creative and do good at the same time. After having found out that working with materials and people rather than with computer screens and moving around letters was primarily my thing, I first thought product design on a small-scale basis could be my thing. After many different design exercises, I realized that I enjoyed doing one-off pieces but still struggled to see any long-term sense in them. I came to one conclusion: design the way it used to be is a thing from the past. The recognition of this fact reminds me of an anecdote my cousin told me – her 8-years-old daughter asked our grandma what machine was hanging on her wall (an old dial phone). We could not believe that she had never seen such a thing and did not recognize it as a phone. Having grown up with cell phones only, her perception of a phone was different than ours. I have the feeling the same thing might happen to the perception of design. There still is a long way towards that goal, but the urging need to change the public's and the designer's perception towards our own profession is paramount to the pressing issues of sustainability. In this book, I have used the word more freely and frequently than I ever used to dare – which is good to a certain extent, because it only means that the word has become part of a common understanding. To me, sustainability means the recognition of the fact that we all make up a global community; the resulting conclusions follow automatically. It is not necessarily about climate change (there are still people neglecting that it actually takes place) – it is about recognizing how to make happiness inherent part of our lives worldwide.

If we remember the artist movements from the start of the 20th century, it seems like art has ever since acknowledged its task of commenting and observing society. Art for art's sake and design for design's sake belong to a history when societal order called for a hierarchy defined by consumer artefacts. We need to recognize that the role of art, design and the artefact has changed irrevocably. I would never claim people should stop making things – but I think the way they are made and consumed should always be subject to consideration. If everybody felt responsible for the things he buys and consumes, the world would be a different place today.

The food metaphor used in this project was appropriate in manifold ways: like Lévi-Strauss referred to the cook as 'a type of cultural agent' who transforms nature into culture (see p.243), the designer has similar responsibilities. It is up to us to define what kind of 'cooks' we want to be and what kind of 'dishes' we want to create.

To conclude, there are five – what else – key findings I have made during this project: First, we need to break out of our disciplines and embrace the philosophy of transdisciplinarity by sharing knowledge and experience. Second, we need to see the world as a whole and consider everything we do as affecting a complex system, which leads to the third conclusion that we need to recognize all living beings as part of that system. Therefore, we must accept global citizenship and try to formulate a common agenda for all of us. Without equality, there cannot be sustained happiness. Fourth, new work patterns, redirected disciplines, and systems of exchange must emerge to replace the status quo.

And fifth and finally: we should always stay 'hungry and foolish' – being sustainable does neither mean to stand still nor to go backwards, but to explore new and fresh perspectives. After all, design can overcome its crisis – by freeing itself from business imperatives and shifting its focus on people and meaningful experiences.

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FERTILIZE,

vb (tr)

1. to provide (an animal, plant, or egg cell) with sperm or pollen to bring about fertilization; 2. to supply (soil or water) with mineral and organic nutrients to aid the growth of plants; 3. to make fertile or productive fertilizable, fertilisable adj

GROW,

v. grew (gr), grown (grn), grow-ing, grows

1. To increase in size by a natural process. 2 a. To expand; gain: The business grew under new owners. 2 b. To increase in amount or degree; intensify: The suspense grew. 3. To develop and reach maturity. 4. To be capable of growth; thrive: a plant that grows in shade. 5. To become attached by or as if by the process of growth: tree trunks that had grown together. 6. To come into existence from a source; spring up: love that grew from friendship. 7. To come to be by a gradual process or by degrees; become: grow angry; grow closer.

v.tr. 1. To cause to grow; raise: grow tulips. 2. To allow (something) to develop or increase by a natural process

PREPARE,

vb [from Latin praeparāre, from prae before + parāre to make ready]

1. to make ready or suitable in advance for a particular purpose or for some use, event, etc. to prepare a meal to prepare to go; 2. to put together using parts or ingredients; compose or construct; 3. (tr) to equip or outfit, as for an expedition

CONSUME,

v. con-sumed, con-sum-ing, con-sumes

v.tr. 1. To take in as food; eat or drink up. See Synonyms at eat.; 2. a. To expend; use up: engines that consume less fuel; a project that consumed most of my time and energy. b. To purchase (goods or services) for direct use or ownership.

SALVAGE,

tr.v. sal-vaged, sal-vag-ing, sal-vag-es

1. To save from loss or destruction.; To save (discarded or damaged material) for further use.