

THE ETHICS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

By

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**Should Graphic Designers abide by an ethical
manifesto approaching the year 2020?**

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Summary of Topic

In the digital age, design has become a vital means of educating and influencing generations. Unfortunately, in a technology obsessed era, design skills are increasingly being used to sell products to the public. The world is currently in a climate crisis emergency with only twelve years to eradicate the problems and maintain earths existence. This study will explore whether designers can play a part in creating a better future to maintain that existence.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine whether a manifesto for designers is needed approaching the year 2020, given significant changes in design and environmental concerns.

Chapter one will be exploring the birth of modern graphic design including the works of Ken Garland who wrote a design manifesto in 1964, which has become a significant reference point for designer's ethics. This leads on to analysing the revisited year 2000 manifesto initiated by Adbusters. To give context, designers from both eras will be discussed, drawing comparisons to ask whether a further updated manifesto would be suitable in postmodern times.

Chapter two will be focusing primarily on how technology has evolved over time and how design has had to progress alongside to remain relevant. Highlighting environmental concerns that have become more apparent through the evolution of technology, and how designers could play a key role in bringing attention to the issues. This will lead to a debate as to whether designers have a responsibility to be raising awareness for the problems that have emerged in the last decade. This will include researching design works by Milton Glaser, designers such as Under the Skin of Endangered Animals and organisation like Adbusters. Whilst looking at the current situation of the British economy, it raises questions as to whether designers can even afford to be ethical?

Finally, the third chapter will explore how design can negatively impact society when used by large organisations who do not have environmental concerns at the forefront of their values. Particularly, I will be looking at the Volkswagen scandal and how design was used to mislead the public into buying a product that was falsely advertised. This evidence highlights the problems in the design industry and asks questions of whether designers should work for unethical companies? Research into designer Mike Monteiro's book *Ruined by design*, offers an interesting outlook to the original question of this study. He proposes an oath similar to the Hippocratic oath taken by doctors to be implemented in the design community as a legitimate solution to the current design issues.

Having researched all these areas, the essay will return to the original question, whether there is a need for a new manifesto for designers in 2020?

Chapter 1

1964 and 2000 Manifesto



Fig. 1: First Things First Manifesto

Artists and designers have been around since the very first human stepped on earth leaving a footprint in the ground, unknowingly leaving a sign, a graphic image. However, “as a profession, graphic design has existed only since the middle of the twentieth century” (Hollis, 1994, p. 8), Previously there were multiple professions for specific skillsets such as typesetting or printing, but everything was separated into individual tasks. Graphic Design did not exist as a single profession. Different designers and artists were doing jobs of a future graphic designer before it evolved into one profession. Over time, the actual processes and ways of printing have evolved as technology has grown, from letterpress, to lithograph to the modern day of digital printing which has allowed the profession to develop and grow exponentially.

Although it is said that design started to become a profession around this time (1950's), it was still developing throughout the following decades and now plays a huge part in the modern world. According to David B. Berman, a Graphic Designer and author “designers have an enormous power to influence how we engage our world” (Berman, 2009, p. 1). This could be due to the fact that most people can associate with images better than words, and the fact that images may have a social barrier but have no language barrier making it the perfect way to communicate to a large audience. Mullick (2017, p. 28) explains that one reason design is regarded so highly is due to the way human beings evolve, children learn to see and associate images with objects much earlier than reading or speaking. They are constantly taking in the world through their own eyes, which allows them to understand certain things, such as behaviours and objects which continue to influence them throughout their lives. This makes the work that graphic designers do vital to the world to communicate current issues, and important day to day things, such as signposts on roads, aircraft safety cards and signage systems in hospitals (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Livingston Energy Aircraft Safety Card

It also makes designers excellent at selling products, which often requires them to design and create brand loyalties. This was especially true in the 1960's, the post war era which saw the British economy thriving. As Émigré (1999) noted jobs were easily had, money was good, and people of all classes were better off than ever before. Subsequently, designers were using their skills to sell more products than ever before by making a company's product look better than their competitor's product. John Commander noted in 1960 that "designers did not see it as their primary concern that their activity should contribute idealistically to the betterment of the human lot" (Poyner, 2004, p. 22).

However, there were some designers who felt differently. A prominent graphic designer of the era, Ken Garland, believed that design should not just be used to sell, and that it could be used to communicate, to educate and to help people. In 1963, he wrote a manifesto putting those beliefs in his own words, to be aimed towards helping designers who "flogged their skill and imagination to advertise consumer products" (Hollis, 1994, p. 166) as he believed that design was needed in balance and not just for commercial use. Garland (1996, pp. 53-55) himself left a paying job to work as a freelance designer, but he still needed clients and worked for companies such as Galt Toys (Fig. 3) and even Shell to sell products. As most graphic designers do as they are often employed to sell something, whether that be children's toys or to design a company's image in order for that image to be 'sold' to a potential customer. Garland felt it was about choosing the right clients, having a balance of all areas of design and being ethical with your design choices. He was not the only designer to feel this way and there were others who shared his passion. In 1964, Garland published 400 copies of his 'First Things First' (Fig. 1) manifesto and

twenty-one other ethical designers, photographers and artists including Geoff White, Robin Fior and Ken Briggs to name a few joined him. They signed it to voice their concerns, as they also felt there were too many designers selling products that people simply did not need instead of focusing and raising awareness on some of the important issues happening at the time. Odling-smee (2007, p. 61) noted that one such issue was Nuclear weapons, a subject that Ken Garland has always felt strongly about and he worked on the protest 'CND' campaign seen in figure 4.

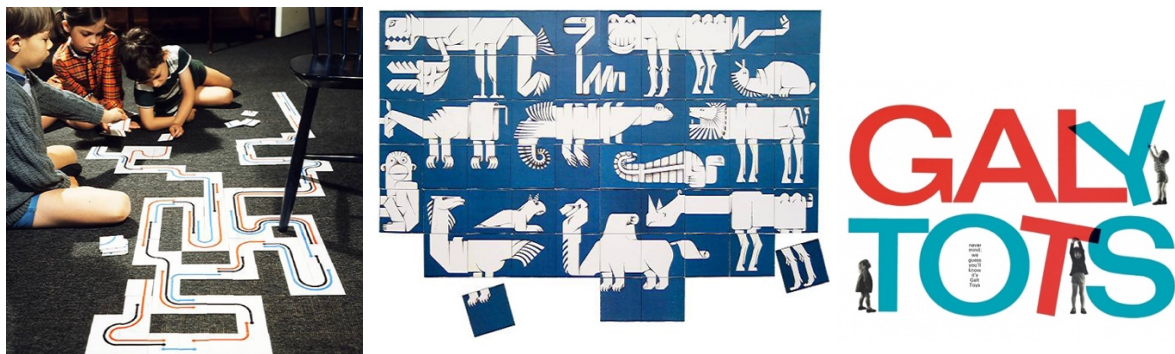


Fig. 3: Galt Toys



Fig. 4: Aldermaston to London Easter 62. Ban the Bomb Movement Walks from Aldermaston to London

However, none of the designers who signed the original 1964 manifesto were really that well established at that time, and arguably are still unknown to many designers today, possibly due to the then limited communication possibilities of printing

processes, rather than the instant digital communication possibilities that are embedded in today's society. One of the established designers of that time who is still relevant to this discussion today, was Abram Games who “believed that designers should create in the interest of humanity and be conscious of their responsibilities” (Games, 2017, p. 184). He was best known for being a prolific graphic designer who designed iconic posters for the government during WW2, but also created some inspirational pieces such as campaign posters for ‘Keep Britain Tidy’ and Anti Malaria (Fig. 5). Tom Eckersley, another well-known designer at this time was also known for designing a poster for ‘Keep Britain Tidy’ and later went on to work for companies who were concerned with environmental issues such as WWF and UNICEF (Fig. 6).



Fig. 5: Keep Britain Tidy & Malaria I'm Looking for You

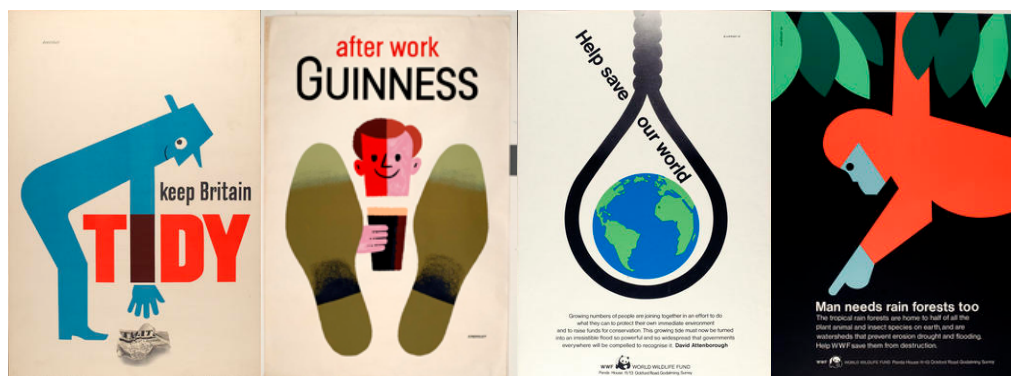


Fig. 6: Keep Britain Tidy, Guinness After Work, Help Save Our World & Man Needs Rainforest too

However, neither Games, Eckersley nor some of the other well-known designers at that time signed the manifesto, even though it was evident through their own practice

that they shared the same ethical beliefs. This could be due to the time the manifesto was published. With minimal technology, the main method of communication would have been through newspapers and the manifesto was published in The Guardian. It is evident from figure 7, that The Guardian was one of the least popular papers of that era which could have contributed to the lack of impact from the manifesto. However, The Guardian gave Garland a platform for his voice and led to him appearing on television which allowed him to share his manifesto with millions of people. This led to the 'First Things First' manifesto reaching a far larger audience and got the backing of over 400 designers. Nonetheless, it also caused a backlash of opinions with a divided audience. Shaughnessy (2012, p. 43) noted that Garland had to defend himself against advertisers and the more conservative forces in design as they felt that they had a responsibility to the client and therefore they should not be concerned with the ramifications of those designs and that Garland was diminishing their work. Unfortunately, this led to the manifesto being overlooked and forgotten as time went on.

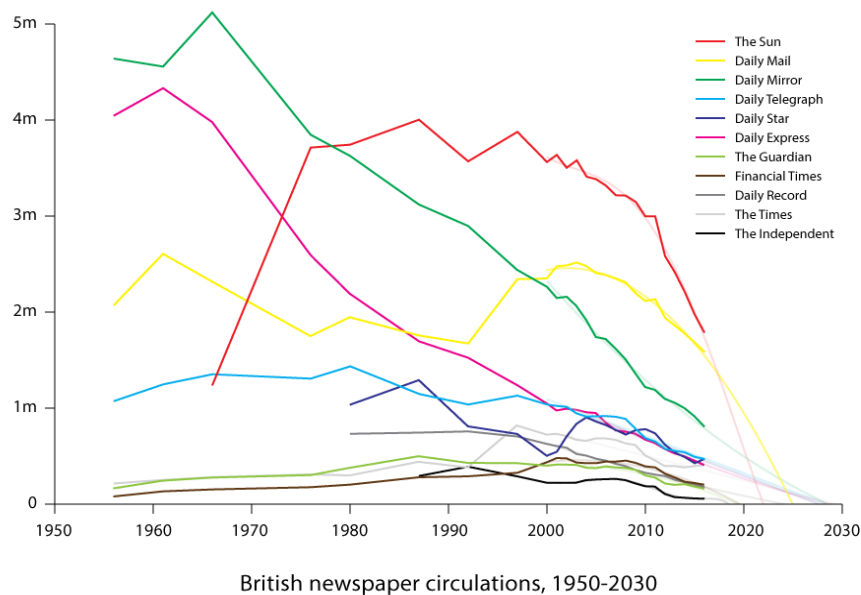


Fig. 7: British Newspaper Circulations

However, in the year 1998, almost thirty-five years after the manifesto was published, the editors of Adbusters, (Kalle Lasn and Chris Dixon) who are known for being a pro-environment organisation that radicalise media and consumerist culture, visited a famous American graphic designer, Tibor Kalman, known as the 'bad boy' of graphic design. Kalman was famous for his radical antics and liked to think of himself as a social activist, notoriously known for a controversial quote: "designers, stay away from corporations that want you to lie for them" (Ridpath, 2011).

Therefore, it would come as no surprise that Kalman was the person who pushed for an updated version of 'First Things First'. Whilst conversing with Lasn and Dixon, they started to talk about Garland's manifesto which drove Kalman to re-initiate the movement stating, "we should do this again" (O'Toole, 2002). Lasn and Dixon embraced this opportunity to revitalise and update a manifesto that had been lost to new designers through the years and published the revisited manifesto in the autumn of 1999 named 'First Things First 2000'. Unfortunately, as declared in Eye magazine (1999) shortly before the relaunch, Tibor Kalman passed away but not before he had a chance to sign the manifesto along with thirty-three other highly known and respected designers, adding more weight to the idea than the 1964 version. Some of the designers to sign were Milton Glaser, Lucienne Roberts, and perhaps one of the more notorious signatories, Jonathan Barnbrook who in the same year took Kalman's quote and made it into a billboard in Las Vegas (Fig. 8). Creating imagery as an act of reiterating the 'First Things First manifesto 2000'.



Fig. 8: First Things First Billboard 2001

Garland was also a co-signatory and gave the project his blessing stating in an interview in 2007 that the manifesto “alerted more people than the original manifesto did” (Garland, 2007, p. 65) which could only be a good thing. However, considering it was reprinted at a time where technology had evolved and the internet was starting to take off, Garland (2007) would have liked to have seen it transmitted in a different form to reach a wider audience. The reprint came at a time where the directors of Adbusters felt that “designers lived and worked like prostitutes, selling their services to the highest bidders without a second thought” (O’Toole, 2002) and wanted designers to remember what an impact they can have on the world and that they have the tools to share information they feel passionate about. Although the reprint did reach a large audience and was printed in the hopes that it would get designers talking, it created the same kind of backlash that the original received with some designers opposed to what was being preached. Lasn (O’Toole, 2002) notes in an interview that it was the older generation of designers who opposed the idea of the manifesto and the younger generation who embraced the ideas and felt some kind of hope that they could go on to design for good causes and change the world for the better. However, just like the first manifesto, the 2000 manifesto failed to make as much of an impact as hoped.

The words from both manifestos are more relevant today than ever before as Shaughnessy stated in 2012 consumer selling “has increased to a level that many people regard as intolerable” (Shaughnessy, 2012, p. 44) which is highly disappointing considering the very concerning issues that are suffocating society as we approach the year 2020.

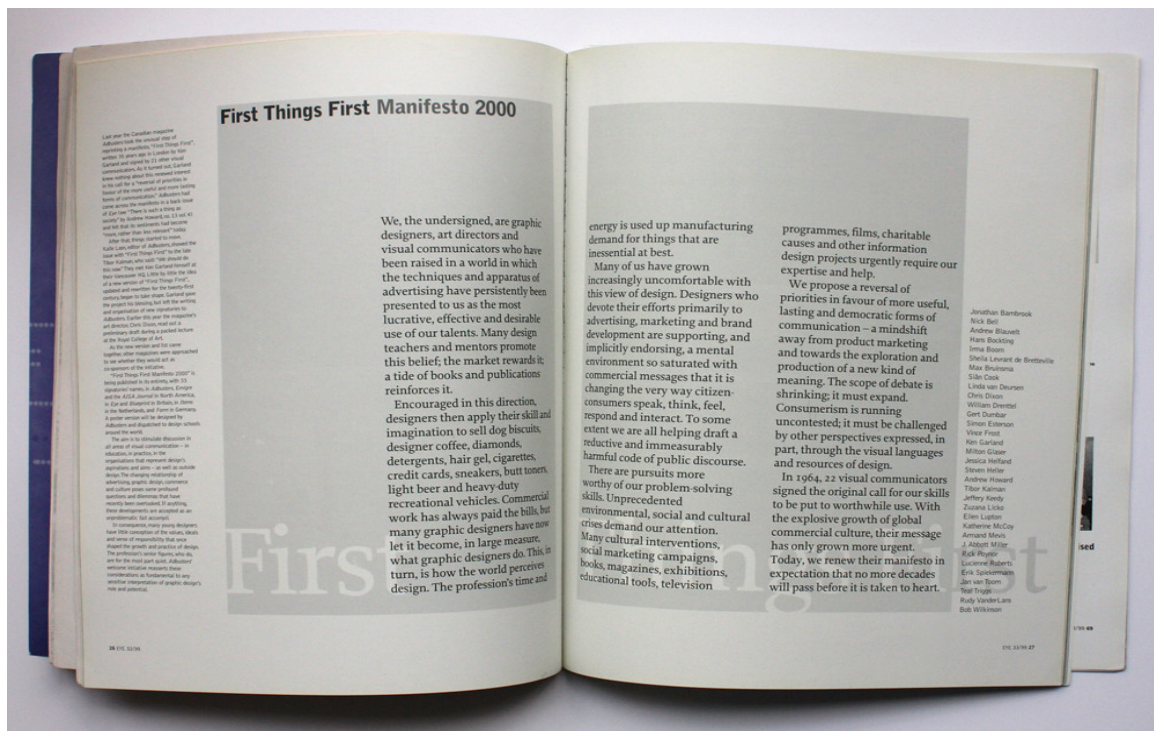


Fig. 9: First Things First 2000

Chapter 2

The 21st Century

The world has changed exponentially since 1964, with new inventions, technology and the rise of the internet. It has arguably evolved even more over the last twenty years since the 2000 manifesto. Technology has grown to be a vital part of the modern day. Lamey (2018) notes it would be difficult to imagine the world without inventions such as the smartphone as the public struggle to function without the devices that have become essential in the 21st century. Technology continues to grow and develop at an astonishing speed. The introduction of the world wide web allows information to be spread globally in a matter of seconds, information is easily accessible, and problems around the world are more evident and visible than ever before, particularly political and environmental issues. However, as social design's visibility has increased, so has commercial design. It has allowed companies to establish brand loyalties with younger generations to sell products faster in the modern era. Advertisements that are used to sell products have grown to dominate all areas of the public's lives and arguably, graphic designers are still the professionals at the forefront of selling products. This in turn is creating a larger number of jobs for designers, whether they want those jobs or not as "not much is sold or traded that doesn't carry the fingerprint of a graphic designer" (Shaughnessy, 2012, p. 44).

Companies such as Apple are introducing new and upgraded products every year, generations have arguably become more materialistic than ever before, making Garland's manifesto more predominantly relevant in today's era than the late 20th century. When asked about this in an interview, Garland (2014) expressed that

designers should be using their skills focusing on issues such as global warming which he felt was the most pressing concern at that time. In 2014 one of the signatories from the 2000 manifesto, Milton Glaser did exactly that. According to Treggiden, (2014) Glaser launched the 'It's Not Warming, It's Dying' project in a hope to create some urgency around climate change. The symbol used, shown in figure 10, was designed to look like life draining away from earth and was displayed as a poster and produced as badges to be worn in support of the campaign.



Fig. 10: It's Not Warming, It's Dying

However, the campaign was widely criticized. Joe Romm (2014) argued that the words used were factually incorrect and the image of earth had a negative impact. Proving how difficult it can be as a designer trying to make a change in the 21st century, where the world is overwhelmed with technology, the public can become so overexposed to certain information that it becomes difficult for important information to enter public consciousness. As good as a designer's intentions may be, there are many opinionated people in this world like Joe Romm that will disagree and find

faults. The precedent was set with Ken Garland's manifesto, when technology was irrelevant and has continued in trend to this day with word and images spreading like wildfire. Barnbrook believes that "when you do get a chance to say something yourself, you might as well say something you believe in" (Barnbrook, 1994, p. 15) and that is what Glaser did.

The campaign may not have had the reaction that Glaser had hoped for, but it did cause a reaction and got people's attention, which for an important cause can only be a positive thing. Interestingly, a lot more information on climate change and global warming is available just six years later thanks to technology and research.

According to The Guardian (Watts, 2018), scientists have estimated that earth has twelve years to eradicate the problems of global warming before earth itself is destroyed. However, Dr Helena Wright (2019) states that twelve years is too optimistic, in reality it will probably happen sooner. This is why Designers need to start using their persuasive skills to inform the public of prominent issues that are happening now, in order for the public to start changing their lifestyles to reduce their carbon footprint before it becomes too late.

Glaser believes that one of the reasons his campaign did not get the reception it deserved was because the "world's ruling powers don't want to act to end global warming" (Glaser, 2018, p. 19). Activists who are aware of this are the environmental campaign group Extinction Rebellion. Snaith (2019) states that they were founded in 2018 by a former biophysicist, Gail Bradbrook and former organic farmer, Roger Hallam. According to the BBC (2019) the activists are using extreme protest techniques like gluing themselves to trains or spraying fake blood on government

buildings, as a way of demanding the Government give global warming the attention it requires by enforcing the 'Three Demands Bill'. One of the demands in the bill being that the Government must tell the truth about the ecological emergency over their concerns that “humans are causing the sixth mass extinction in earths’ history, causing irreparable harm to the life on this world” (Extinction Rebellion, 2019).

These tactics may seem extreme, but with their name being spread through the newspapers and their hourglass logo (seen in Fig. 11, representing time running out for many species), seen through protest marches, stickers and television, they are causing a media storm that is getting the attention of a large audience whether they agree with the cause or not. The world has never seen a threat of this severe magnitude, the planet is in crisis and designers like Glaser have the tools to help and educate by creating powerful campaigns. It would be interesting to consider, what would the reaction be today to a campaign like ‘It’s Not Warming, It’s Dying’?



Fig. 11: Extinction Rebellion Protest & Extinction Rebellion Poster(s)

Fortunately, with the knowledge that the public has available to them in the year 2019, designers are becoming more aware of their practice and ethical designers are no longer “reserved for a few oddball firebrands with the spirit of 1960’s radicalism” (Shaughnessy, 2012, p. 44). It has become commonplace to use environmentally friendly produce and printing facilities and designers are becoming more conscious about the choices they make and the companies they choose to work for. Glaser (2005, p. 9) is one of the designers who agrees with this and is very selective with his clients as he does not want to be involved in any design work that could be harmful to society.

A company who support these values are ‘Under the Skin of Endangered Animals’, consisting of two brothers, Ed and James Harrison who combined their creative skills to create limited edition prints to raise awareness and funds for endangered animals. Both of the Harrison brothers (Under the Skin, 2019) are dedicated to protecting the environment and do what they can to reduce their carbon footprint, with a desire to do something effective that could help the planet. A value they decided to take forward and use in their own company, partnering with sustainable companies and donating twenty percent of their profits from their print sales to help fund animal conservation centres and wildlife foundations. Like Glaser, they choose who they collaborate with in order to support their values in everything they do allowing them to have a very sustainable and ethical approach to their design work. Ed and James both feel very fortunate to be in a position where they can use their design skills to engage others with James stating:

Under the skin is so much more than a series of prints – it is a creative platform to start a down to earth conversation about what is happening, to educate ourselves and others using the power of visual design and to inform our audience about environmental issues.

(Harrison, 2019)

They have decided to dedicate their practice to protecting the natural world, something they feel passionate about, not only to raise awareness but in the hopes that they can empower others to do the same and change their lifestyles. Another company who continue to make a change through their work are Adbusters, the printers of the revisited manifesto. Nicknamed ‘The Renegade Magazine’, they use design as a way to expose the myths and visualise the truths in the world. Adbusters (2019) are a non-profit, pro-environment organisation against mass consumerism who want to change the public's views on trivial matters and open their eyes to the lies that are being spread by large corporate companies (Fig. 15).

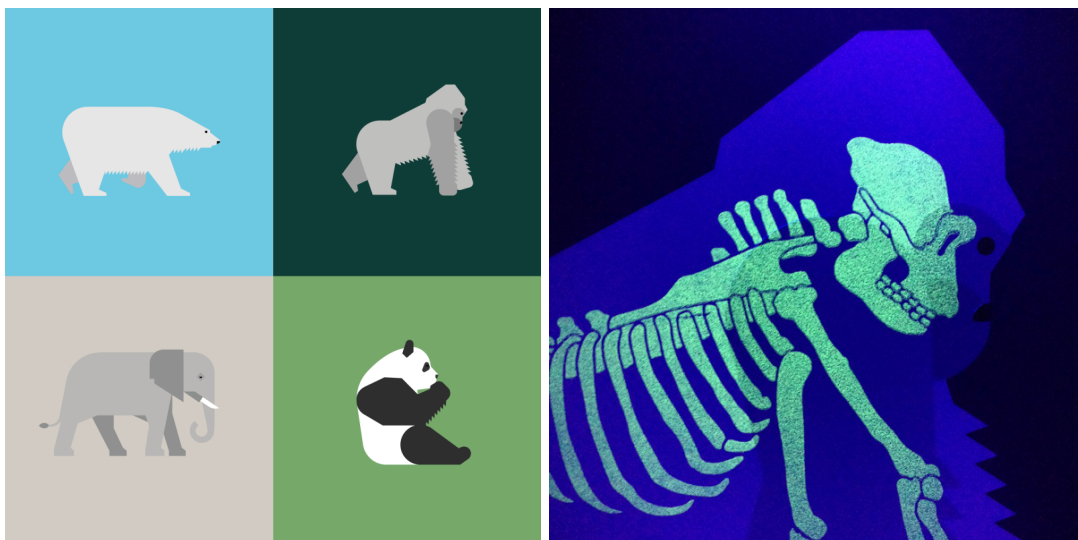


Fig. 12: Under the Skin: Illustration, Brand, Awareness Campaign



Fig. 13: Trump Vs Attenborough

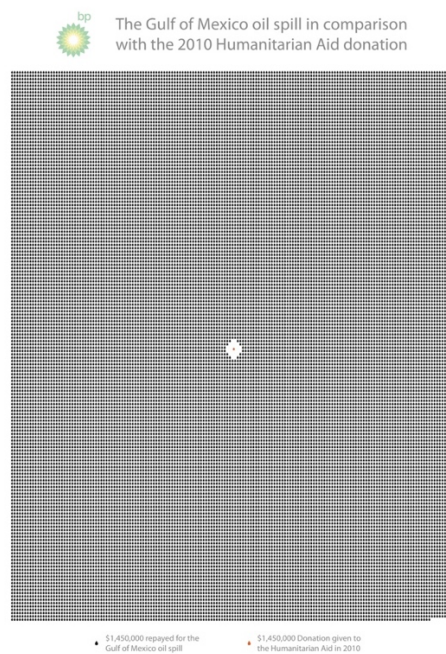


Fig. 14: BP Humanitarian Aid Donation

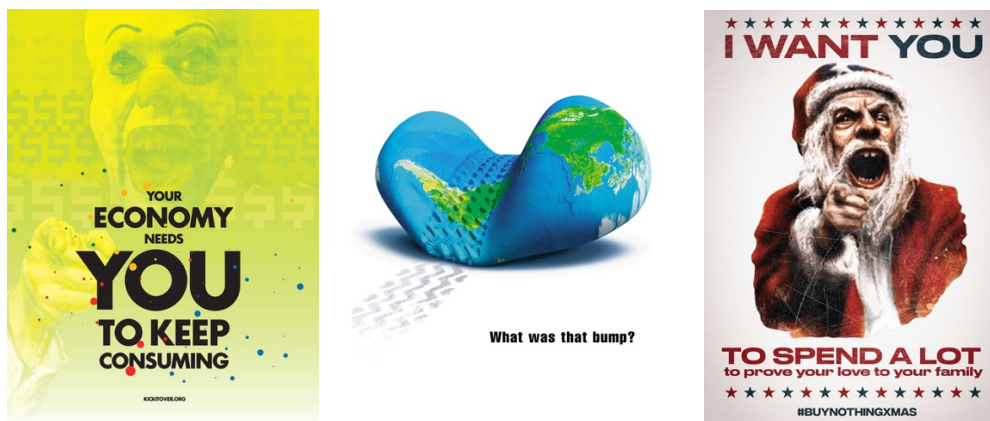


Fig. 15: Keep Consuming, What Bump? & Buy Nothing Xmas

Unfortunately, these designers who are trying to make a difference are competing against a world where the majority of the public may no longer care. According to Riess (2018) as technology has evolved human compassion and empathy has begun to evaporate. As a generation brought up with television and the internet, horrific incidents such as murder and death have lost the psychological shock factor and information is no longer processed as distressing, but commonplace. According to O'Brien (2018) The more technology an individual is exposed to the more desensitized that individual becomes. This desensitization may make it difficult for certain generations to differentiate between the real world and the imitations shown through different media platforms. Therefore, important issues such as climate change, global warming and mass extinction can be overlooked as the public relies on technology to inform, but struggle to believe issues are real due to their perceptions and desires that have been moulded and manipulated through the 21st century media. Berman states that "the eye is the largest bandwidth pipe into the human brain, and graphic designers spend their days designing what goes in" (Berman, 2009, p. 61).

As technology is continuing to evolve, so does consumerism and the younger generations that are growing up with technology are being manipulated through design to believe that they continually 'need' to consume. They are subconsciously being taught materialistic values through the advertisements and design they see and absorb from a young age. This is allowing designers and advertisers to shape the world, but unfortunately as mass consumerism is foremost in the 21st century, designers are unintentionally creating a self-absorbed generation with materialistic values. Graphic Designer, Professor David Crow states:

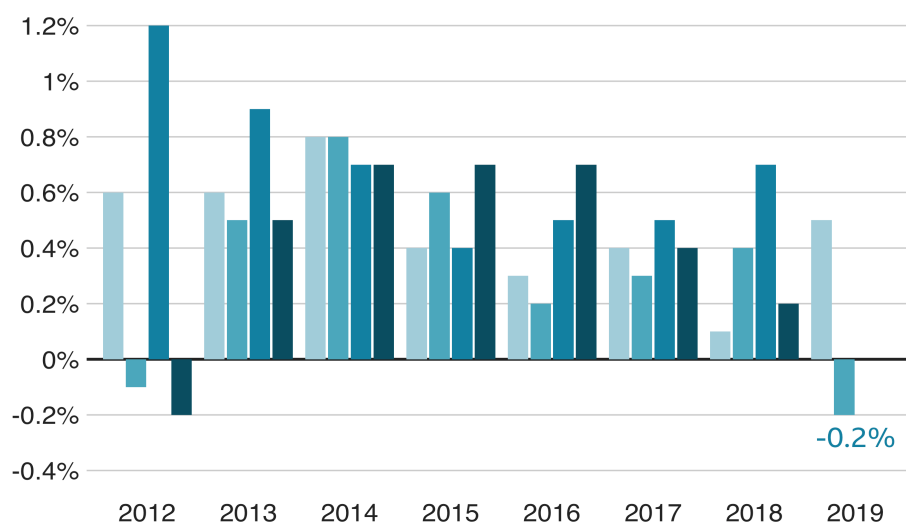
Communication has a hierarchy that is deeply embedded in our societies. All of us carry attitudes, learnt over the years, which organise communication into systems of differences.

(Crow, 2003, p. 9)

Designers have more power than they know, they have the skills and abilities to shape the world, they can use their creativity to create positive changes that could influence people throughout their whole lives. It could be argued that designers have lost their passion and have become social clones working in any job for money. However, it might not necessarily have been their intention to work in that particular area of design. Another primary factor that needs to be considered is the economy. Can designers even afford to be ethical? Partington (2019) explains that due to the current British economy and the uncertain Brexit plans, the value of the pound has plunged currently being considerably lower than before the EU referendum three years ago. The cost of living has increased, and employment has fallen by 56,000.

UK growth falls 0.2%, its worst performance since 2012

GDP, % change on previous quarter



Source: Office for National Statistics

BBC

Fig. 16: UK Economy Shrinks for the First Time Since 2012

The 21st century youth, nicknamed the boomerang generation are struggling to achieve independence. According to recent statistics in The Guardian (Thornhill, 2019), 1997 saw 25% of under 34's living at home but approaching 2020 this figure has increased to 32%, with males being higher at 37%, due to rising house prices and unemployment levels. Unfortunately, money fuels the world, and nearly everyone in the world needs money to live. This can lead to some designers being forced into taking jobs for companies that they do not necessarily want to work for, having to put their own ethics aside. As Yanis Varoufakis states, "The worst thing that can happen to a person is to become so desperate that you decide to sell your soul to the devil" (Varoufakis, 2019, p. 91). There are more jobs for those who are willing to flog products than there are for the self-conscious designer, making it very difficult for a new designer to find an ethical job without the experience they need in a fast-paced industry.

Under the Skin are very fortunate to be in an unusual position where they are able to work on design that they personally believe in. Most designers who are able to promote good causes have been in the industry for a long time such as Glaser, Barnbrook and Garland. Nonetheless, some designers argue that, they should never abandon their own ethics, but instead use them in every job they do or refuse to work for certain clients. A freelance designer, Lina Forsgreen, (Morley, 2018) knows this well as she has turned down jobs from companies because of her own ethics such as McDonald's but states that "putting ethics first can be challenging as it can be difficult to support yourself" (Forsgreen, 2018). However, another designer Meredith Hattam (Morley, 2018) believes that it is very difficult to find a company who are a hundred percent ethical and sustainable and sometimes you have to put

your rent first. This raises the question of whether designers have to put their own ethics aside or could the big companies be setting an example by embracing ethical designers in the modern day?

Chapter 3

The Future

As established in Chapter Two, Design has the power to influence, inform and persuade. However, although this can be used for good causes and issues, it can also be used in the opposite way. One of the companies who used design to deceive their customers were the German car company Volkswagen.

In the year 2015 the world became aware of the 'Volkswagen scandal'. It began in the year 2008 when designers at the car company produced a software known as the "defeat device" that would trick the emissions testing stations, to make it seem that their brand of cars had low enough emissions to meet the toughest environmental standards in the world. When the reality was that their cars were "emitting ten to forty times more nitrogen oxides than allowed by US regulations" (Monteiro, 2019, p. 53). This could have caused huge repercussions to the environment and perhaps contributed to the ecological emergency that is now known. Volkswagen continued to do this until they were caught in 2015, not even considering the impact they were having on the environment. They sold millions of cars within this time and they used designers to help them sell their cars by creating the 'clean diesel campaign'. An engineered deception that would deceive the world into believing they were buying the most environmentally friendly diesel car at the time as that's what designers told them to believe and why should they think any different? As previously established, the public are told what to believe, they have been brought up with graphic designers playing a huge part in what they know, and they trust them. Whether the graphic designers knew that they were deceiving the public or not is unknown, but the company knew, and this caused huge damage to

their reputation. Barnbrook, being an ethical graphic designer used this information to do the opposite and expressed his own thoughts through his design skills. He designed adverts exposing the truth behind the company seen in figure 18 perhaps giving people hope that designers are not always trying to deceive and manipulate the public. Sometimes, designers can share the thoughts of the public and are horrified by revelations such as the Volkswagen scandal as Barnbrook expressed.

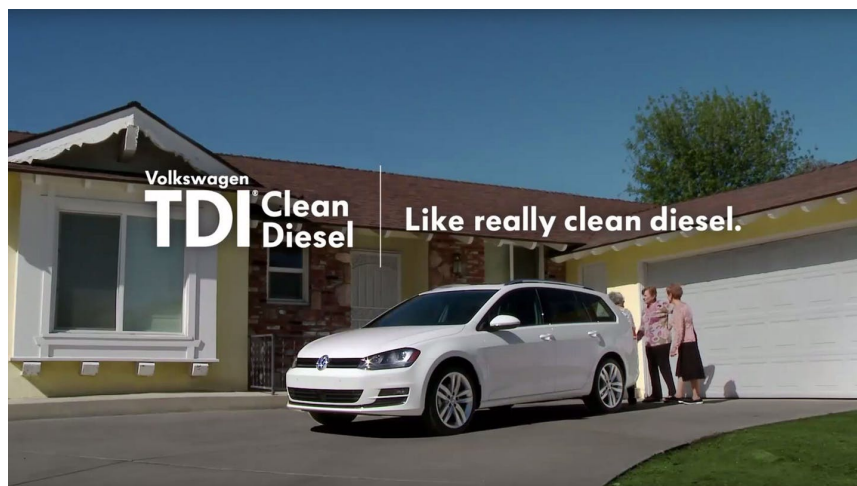


Fig. 17 Clean Diesel Campaign



Fig. 18: Brandalism VW

However earlier this year, Volkswagen released a new campaign ‘rebirth’ in a bid to atone for the damage they had done. They are now looking at producing an electric fleet of automobiles that would benefit earth by supporting climate change with the CEO of the company Scott Keogh stating, “we have a responsibility to do better” (Designboom, 2019). Whether they actually want to make a difference, or they are just trying to save their company’s reputation is a thought that may enter the public’s consciousness as the company’s ethics are now and possibly forever tainted by the scandal. Nonetheless, it leaves the question, with Volkswagen turning their company around and promoting an eco-friendly solution for the future of automobiles should graphic designers work with them and can a designer or the public ever trust them again?



Fig. 19: Rebirth ID.Buzz & A New Mission

In future, designers will need to take responsibility for their professional actions and be ethical in every decision they make including who they choose to work for if designers are going to be able to help tackle issues such as climate change and

global warming. Designer Mike Monteiro believes that designers should be signing an oath like doctors sign the Hippocratic oath before they get a license stating, “the things we make have consequences” (Monteiro, 2019, p. 19). A doctor must abide by the oath, that has clear laws with one being, ‘Do No Harm’. Designers at present do not need to abide by an Oath and can live by their own morals and ethics, whatever they may be. Although it may seem that designers are causing no harm to the world that may not be true. As seen in the Volkswagen Scandal, design was used to push sales of a product that was highly harmful to the environment, causing damage to the earth and to the people who inhabit it.

In 2017, statistics showed that social media affected young people’s mental health and Youngblood (2018) stated that this could have contributed to teenage suicide rates rising 67% since 2010. Shirley Cramer states:

Social media has been described as more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol and is now so entrenched in the lives of young people that it is no longer possible to ignore it when talking about young people’s mental health issues.

(RSPH, 2019)

As discussed, graphic designers are the people who design the content that the young people are becoming addicted to. They are also the people who design the adverts for cigarettes and alcohol which can lead to addiction and possible death. Further confirmation that designers need to be careful about what they produce, learning to say no if they believe that their employer is asking them to do work that could negatively impact society. Berman (2009, p. 92) believes that design can strongly impact a person in turn impacting their future decisions as adults find it almost impossible to break the habits that they learned earlier in their lives. A lot of Designers would be quick to argue that they are just doing their job, but as Monteiro

states “To Design is to influence” (Monteiro, 2018, p. 142) and if an individual believes that their design work is not affecting anyone, they are probably not doing their job right. A Designer's actions impact a variety of people and the best way for a designer to engage with the public is to create work that relates to the viewer. “A vision in graphic design has to respond to society, politics, economy, techniques and culture” (Cyan, 2003, p. 136). Every piece of design in the world has affected someone, no matter how small it may have been and “practically every decision we make as designers has an ethical dimension” (Roberts, 2008, p. 29). Designers could be holding the power to create a better future for everyone but without a designer's code, they are free to unethically deceive the public and continue to mould and shape the next generation's minds as they please. Would a designer's oath be the solution to helping designers to put an end to employment that involves deceiving the public or producing work that is unethical for the planet, the public and society?

Unfortunately, in a world cluttered with information, designers' talents are being wasted, appearing to use their persuasive skills in insignificant areas. It feels as though we are a long way away from making the large changes that are needed to benefit the world for the better. Luckily, “The same design that fuels mass overconsumption also holds the power to repair the world” (Berman, 2009, p. 2). With designers like Glaser and Under the Skin, activists like Extinction Rebellion and organisations like Adbusters there is hope that designers could be heading in the right way to creating an exciting sustainable future, where the planet still stands and society thrives from beneficial design that creates a flourishing world of equality and hope.

When Garland wrote his manifesto back in 1964, there was no way of him knowing how prevalent it would become, or that it would endure to be relevant over fifty years on. So prominent that it influenced designers to revive it in 2000. Nonetheless, both versions were written decades ago and therefore could now be perceived as past issues, even though it is evident through research that the issues discussed in both are more relevant than ever before with the year 2020 fast approaching. If all designers had to abide by a new manifesto or a designer's oath that would benefit the environment and society, the world could become very different. It could force companies to work ethically and allow designers to work for companies without sacrificing their own ethics and values without the economic worries of a current 21st century designer. Glaser believes that "the greatest reward in graphic design is when you do something that changes the human condition for the better" (Glaser, 2018, p. 18). If all designers felt the same way as Glaser and worked towards creating better ethics in design, what might the world look like in ten years' time?



What | design needs
is | ten years /
| of total turmoil...
fuck-it-all | anarchy...
after that | maybe it will
| mean something again...
stand for
| something again...

Fig. 20: What Design Needs (Adbusters Magazine).

Conclusion: 2020 Manifesto

It is evident to see that designers hold a lot of power when it comes to shaping the world. With the world in a global emergency that needs to be solved within the next twelve years, it is more urgent than ever that designers unite the world in change that could save the earth and all that live among it. As a designer myself, I want to be able to participate in design that can positively impact the world. To work for companies who share my own beliefs and ethics and promote good causes.

Although I am concerned that the current economy may make it very difficult for me to stand by my own ethics as a new designer entering this field of work. A manifesto promoting change for designers in 2020 could be perceived favourably with designers with similar values as myself. With the introduction of the internet, a manifesto produced today could be spread globally within minutes, grabbing the attention of the younger generations like myself, who are eager for change knowing the concerns of climate change that have become increasingly evident over the years. If all designers boycotted large unethical corporations it could force companies to change the way they operate and create an eco-friendlier planet. Perhaps this would create a world where companies are fighting to be the most environmentally friendly company instead of fighting to sell the best detergent.

However, I also want to have opportunities to work in other areas of design allowing me a large range of projects that will probably involve selling products or promoting companies. No one is saying a designer should not sell products, in fact that would be highly unrealistic as that will almost certainly continue to be one aspect of a graphic designer's job. Garland himself has always said he is not against designers

selling products. However, it is also a designer's job to inform, to educate and to work in a way that is beneficial to society. Design plays too great a role in influencing the public actions to not be invested in creating a better future. The work of a designer could affect one person, but it could affect millions of people and if the wrong message is being delivered it could have a hugely negative impact on society. All designers need to take this on board.

Ultimately, it is the Government's responsibility to make the public aware of these problems. With Extinction Rebellion protesting against them daily, they are making an impact, changes are being made slowly. With enough organisations, designers and activists following in their footsteps, the government could be facing a rebellion that compels them to lay down laws that eradicate plastics, reduce emissions and protects our forests. Designers can help in doing this by creating powerful visual graphic campaigns that impact the world enough to cause change. Milton Glaser's campaign may not have worked in 2014, but campaign's like this in the modern day could be perceived very differently creating a positive impact on society.

Designers have the skills to create a better world. They need to have the power to say no. No to unethical employers. No to eco-unfriendly companies. No to corporations that do not care about their impact on society. A 2020 manifesto could be the key to doing this. It could rejuvenate the design community to think about their decisions, what projects they choose to work on or who they choose to work for. If designers work together, they just might be able to make a change that would benefit all future generations and with a bit of hope, save the planet.

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