The Expanding Scope of Design

A Survey of Swiss and US Designers on the State of the Design Landscape

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About This Survey

The Expanding Scope of Design is a survey of 17 design leaders examining the current and future state of design. This document is conceived as the annotated version of a presentation that took place at Swissnex in Boston in August 2023. It is meant as a collage of distinct insights and observations, by no means a definitive analysis. This research project was an initiative of strategic design studio Other Tomorrows and Swissnex in Boston and New York.

Other Tomorrows

Other Tomorrows is an independent strategic design studio. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, our multinational team of designers and strategists spans the US, UK, Spain, and New Zealand. We create engaging, meaningful, and inclusive experiences, products, and services. Our team works with visionary leaders and organizations that believe human insights drive meaningful transformation.

www.othertomorrows.com

Swissnex

Swissnex is the Swiss global network connecting Switzerland and the world in education, research, and innovation. Our mission is to support the outreach and active engagement of our partners in the international exchange of knowledge, ideas, and talents. We thereby contribute to strengthening Switzerland's profile as a world-leading innovation hotspot.

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Executive Summary

The rise of generative AI. New rounds of designer layoffs in tech companies. Pervasive environmental and climate concerns. The questioning of Western-centric design canons such as Bauhaus and the Swiss style. The decline of the long-held "genius designer" archetype. New university design initiatives devoid of traditionally trained designers… What's happening in the world of design? It feels like the ground is shifting.

Over the course of nine months, Other Tomorrows and Swissnex in Boston and New York surveyed 17 design leaders from across the US and Switzerland in an attempt to clarify these trends, better grasp how design is understood today, and seek to chart the emerging contours of its future.

Broadly speaking, we found that design is viewed in many ways – as a product, a process, and as a movement that can have a more systemic impact for organizations and societies alike. Upon closer examination, it became clear that today's designers see themselves as operating at multiple points on a spectrum between responding to present needs and anticipating better futures.

Our investigation further revealed a wide range of forces driving change in design, which we grouped into seven themes. Four of these are already well established:

- **Collective brilliance**: the end of the "genius designer"
- **The power of narrative**: crafting the stories behind design
- **The aesthetics of sustainability**: questioning the quest for newness
- **Beyond historical standards**: undoing global sameness in design

Three of them are more recent and still emerging:

- **Responsible design**: advocating for independence
- **Deceleration**: redefining design's role in a culture of impatience
- **Creative intelligence**: adapting to the age of artificial intelligence

As our conversations progressed, a larger question started to emerge: Are we approaching the end of design and its education as a discipline? If design is no longer a discrete discipline, what comes next?

Responses generally fell into three categories:

- **Design as an act of responsibility**: design is responsible not only for dreaming up novel ideas but also for creating safe, inclusive, and equitable outcomes.
- **Design as a shared language for collaboration**: design has evolved into a shared language and process for cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- **Design as a movement for societal change**: design has transcended its role of creating products and evolved into a collective movement to anticipate and shape better futures.

We hope that this expanded definition of design can serve an inspiration when thinking about the future of design and its education.
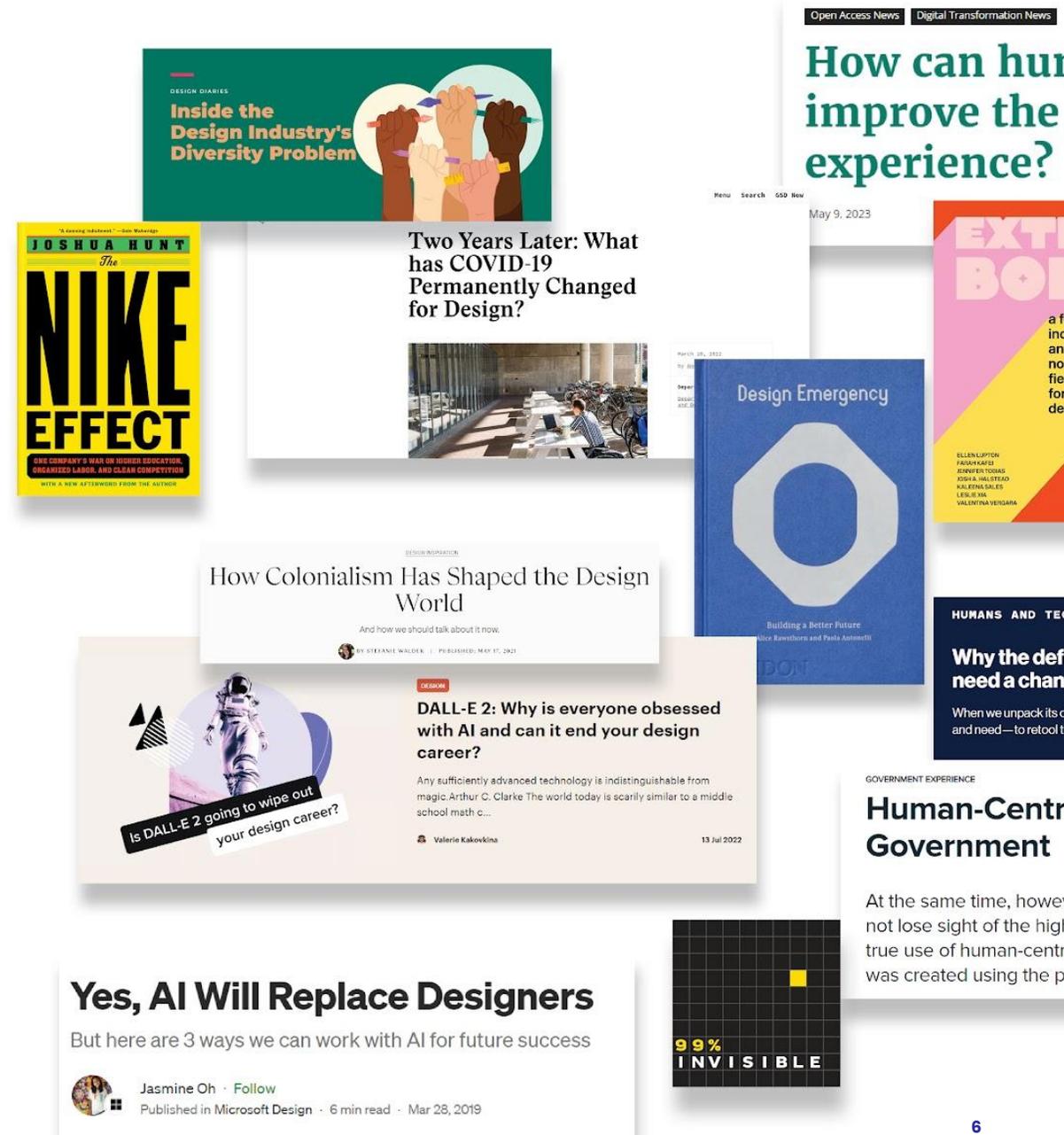
Table of Contents
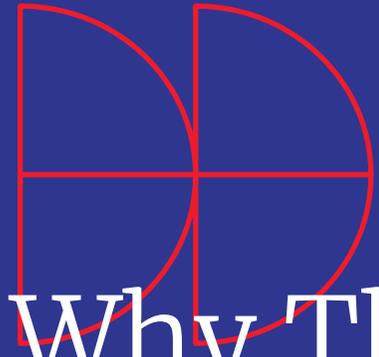
Why This Survey Now?

Amid breakthroughs in generative AI, social justice movements, raging wars, and environmental concerns, the field of design faces a transformative era. In the US higher education landscape, new design initiatives, such as the MIT Morningside Academy for Design, herald a shift in our understanding of design, going well beyond traditional disciplines. This survey is an attempt to better grasp these trends, seeking to chart the emerging contours of design's future.

Major shifts taking place in the design landscape

In the early phase of our research, we found overwhelming evidence suggesting that the focus of the design field has shifted from largely professional and disciplinary concerns specific to traditional domains like industrial design (parting lines, ergonomics, usability, CMF, etc.) or graphic design (grids, ragging, leading, ink traps, etc.), to broader concerns where design operates at a higher, more strategic "meta" level.

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March 10, 2022

EXTRA BOLD

a feminist inclusive anti-racist nonbinary field guide for graphic designers

ELLEN LUPTON
FARAH KAFEI
JENNIFER TOBIAS
JOSH A. HALSTEAD
KALEENA SALES
LESLIE XIA
VALENTINA VERGARA

MIT to launch new design academy this fall

The MIT Morningside Academy for Design aims to address the 'problems that communities are facing,' said founding director John Ochsendorf

By Dana Gerber Globe Staff, Updated March 22, 2022, 2:18 p.m.

Design Emergency

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Alice Rawsthorn and Paola Antonelli

DON

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DECOLONIZING DESIGN
A Cultural Justice Guidebook
ELIZABETH (DORI) TUNSTALL
with illustrations by Xxxx Xxxx

THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN DESIGN

BERRY COLLIE LAKER NOEL RITTNER WALTERS

IDENTITY EXPRESSION & REFLECTION

PROUD SOUTH

ow Colonialism Has Shaped the Design World

And how we should talk about it now.

BY STEFANIE WALDEK · PUBLISHED: MAY 17, 2021

DESIGN

DALL·E 2: Why is everyone obsessed with AI and can it end your design career?

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. Arthur C. Clarke The world today is scarily similar to a middle school math c...

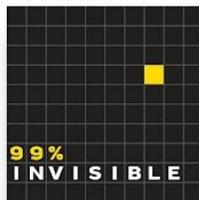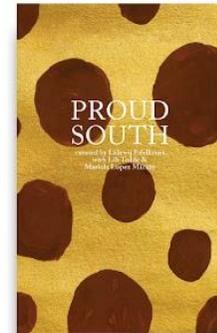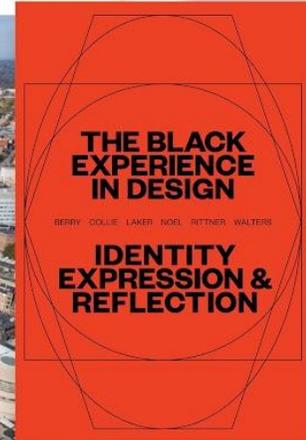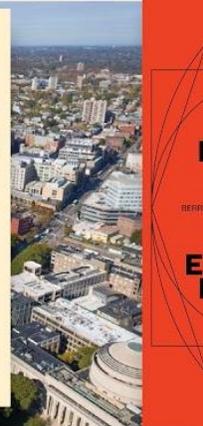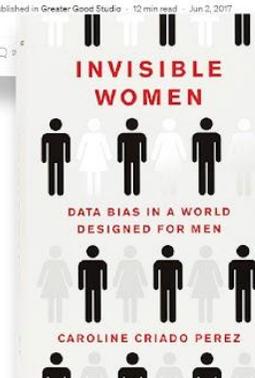Valerie Kakovkina   13 Jul 2022

HUMANS AND TECHNOLOGY

Why the definition of design might need a change

When we unpack its current meaning, we may find that we want—and need—to retool the word yet again.

Design Education's Big Gap: Understanding the Role of Power

George Aye · Follow
Published in Greater Good Studio · 12 min read · Jun 2, 2017

g to wipe out
r design career?

GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Human-Centric Design Is Still Evolving in Government

At the same time, however, government prac
not lose sight of the high bar and rigor requir
true use of human-centric design. Simply say
was created using the practice won't cut it.

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Social Soluti

Tackling Outdated

INVISIBLE WOMEN

DATA BIAS IN A WORLD DESIGNED FOR MEN

CAROLINE CRIADO PEREZ

BLACK, BROWN + LATINX DESIGN EDUCATORS
CONVERSATIONS ON DESIGN AND RACE
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ill Replace Designers

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September 20, 2021 · In Design · By Ida Persson

DIVERSITY IN DESIGN: INCLUSION WON'T FIX A BROKEN SYSTEM

DIVERSITY IN DESIGN

Is design a discipline?

This shift to a more elevated, hybrid understanding of design was already predicted by Bruce Archer[1] in the 1960s, as well as others theorists and scholars several decades ago. Since that time, this new "discipline of design" - operating in both professional and academic circles - has achieved a remarkable level of maturity in a relatively short period of time, accompanied by standardized processes, an established vocabulary, and its own internal struggles. For better, and perhaps for worse, the discipline of design has again reached a point where it needs to reconcile its limits and definition.

Graphic Design
Industrial Design
Fashion Design
User Interface Design
Service Design
Interaction Design
Experience Design
Information Design
Game Design
Human-Centered Design
**Transformative Design**
Design Thinking

[1] Design as a Discipline

"One of the principal assumptions behind the launching of this new journal (1979) is that Design can be identified as a subject in its own right, independent of the various areas in which it is applied to practical effect. The Editorial Board is therefore proposing to publish a series of papers by leading members of the international 'invisible college of Design Studies', which will aim to establish the theoretical bases for treating Design as a coherent discipline of study in its own right."

Bruce Archer, Professor of Design Research at Royal College of Art, London. Excerpt from Design Studies, Vol 1, No. 1 (1979).

Design education is expanding

Recent curricular and departmental changes within academic institutions appear to signal a search for new paths. Leaders in design education in the US from institutions like Stanford, the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and the Rhode Island School of Design are actively shaking up their well-established programs. At the same time, Parsons, Pensole Lewis College, and MIT have recently launched new design research centers, departments, and academies. There is clearly a significant shift taking place.
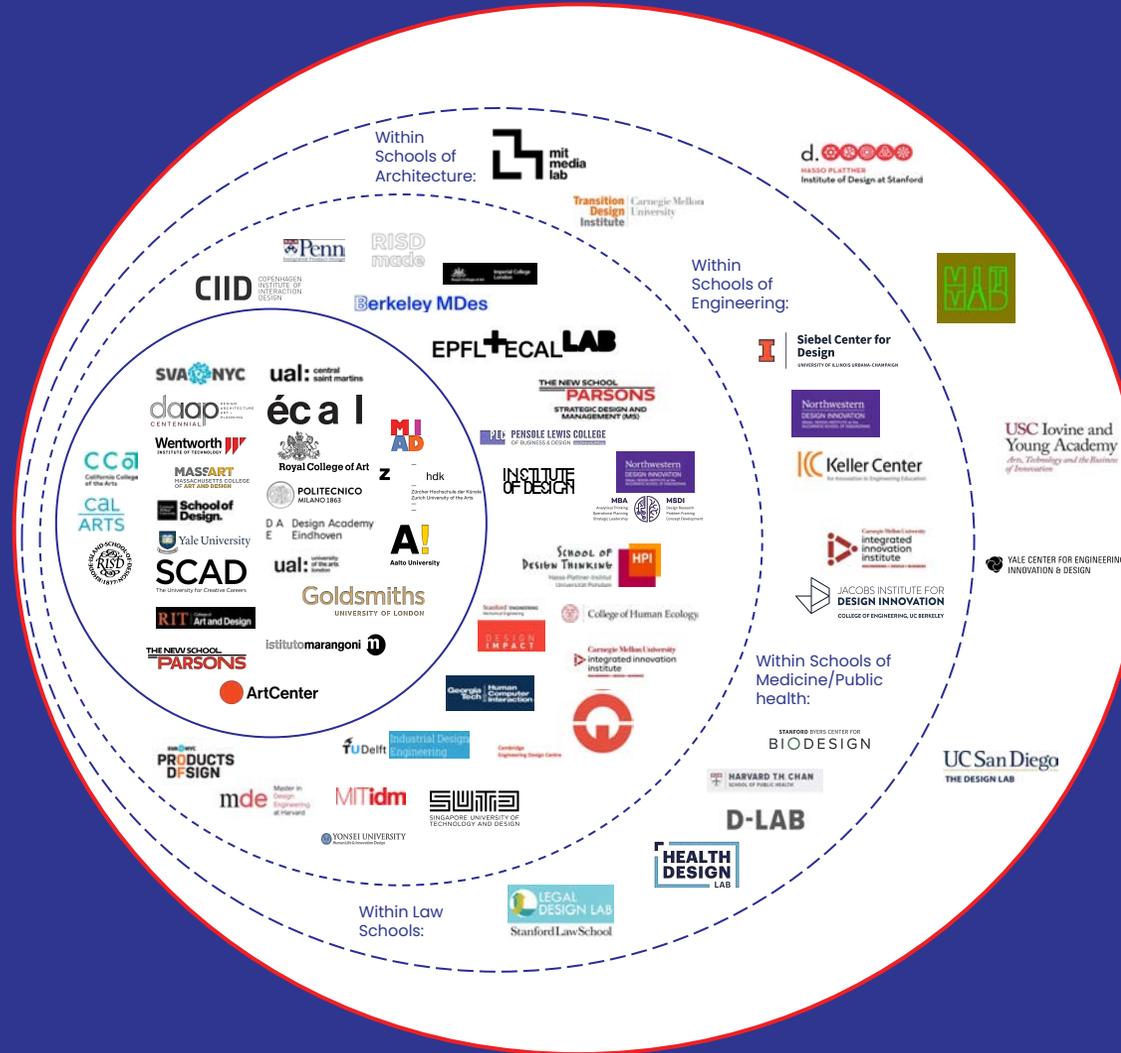
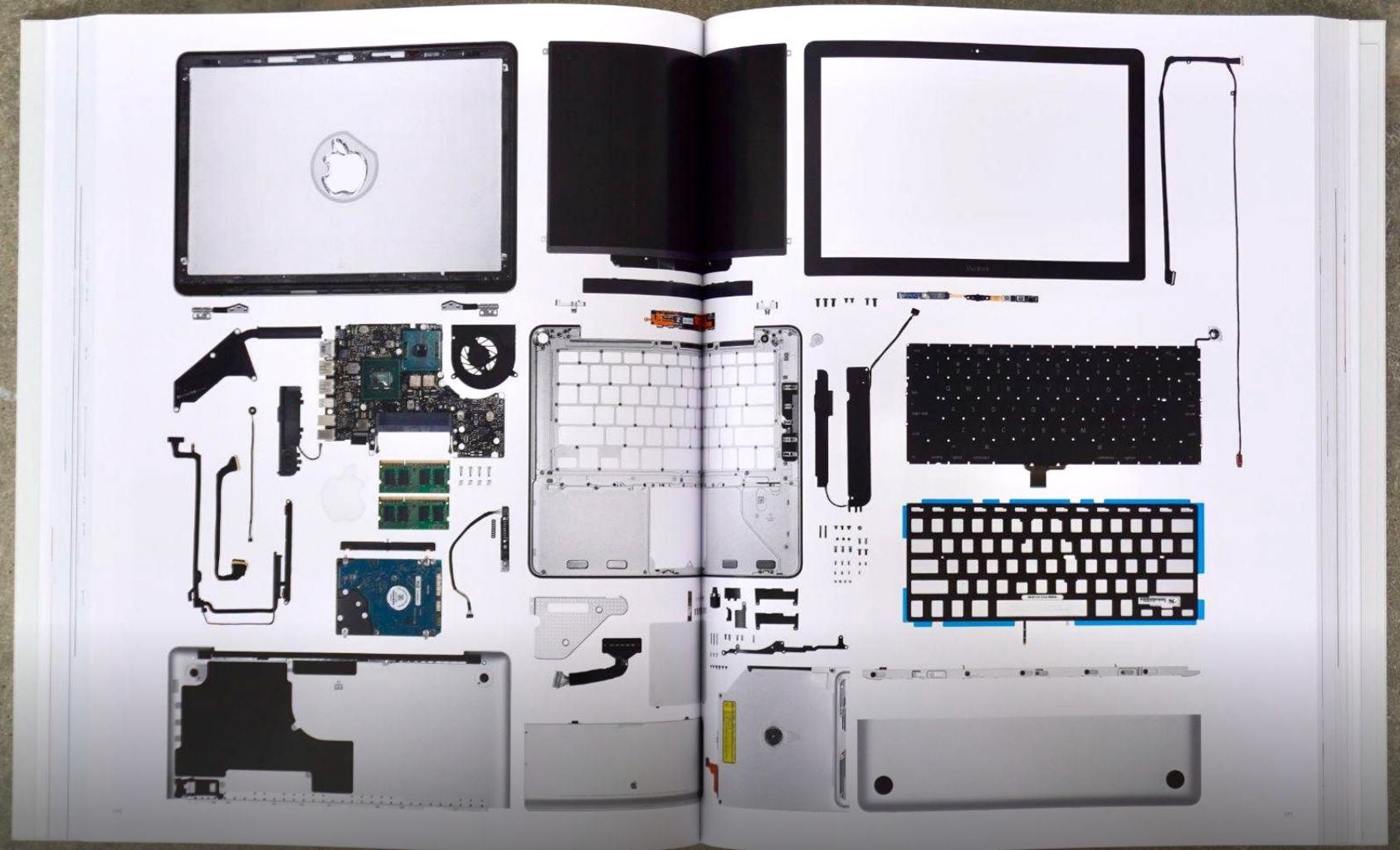**01** Disciplinary Training at Art & Design Schools

02 Multi-disciplinary Design Programs

03 New Design Schools, Labs & Institutions

04 University-wide Design Initiatives

This broadening sense of design is now a necessity

Without a broadening understanding of design and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration with individuals from diverse backgrounds, we wouldn't have been able to create iconic products like the MacBook or the iPhone.

Image: "Designed by Apple in California" book, Andrew Zuckerman, Jony Ive (2016). Photography: Other Tomorrows.

Our current challenges are rooted in systemic issues

These challenges, spanning from social and racial inequity, raging wars, the climate crisis, technological disruption, to global health threats, are intensifying. They stem from deeply entrenched systemic issues that are exceptionally difficult to address.

Image: Protesters at a rally in Minneapolis call for justice for George Floyd after closing arguments in the Derek Chauvin trial ended on April 19, 2021. © 2021 Jason Armond / Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

These challenges cannot be addressed within the boundaries of any one discipline

Image: Security Challenges of Climate Change in Southeast. Creator: REZAS. Credit: AFP via Getty Images.

The scale of the challenges we face has gotten a whole lot bigger

What's at stake?

What should we be doing?

Is academia playing catch-up?

Where do we need to focus in the future?

At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, designers have been disproportionately affected by recent layoffs and austerity measures. The past year has seen a significant number of designers laid off in tech (Meta, Amazon, Google, Twitter, etc.) and across market verticals at companies such as Ford, HarperCollins, Gap, and Disney, to name just a few.

Where is design headed next?

Together, these changes and events signaled a moment to take stock by consulting a diverse group of design leaders to better understand these recent shifts in the design discipline and its role in society, what are the drivers behind this change, and where design is headed next.
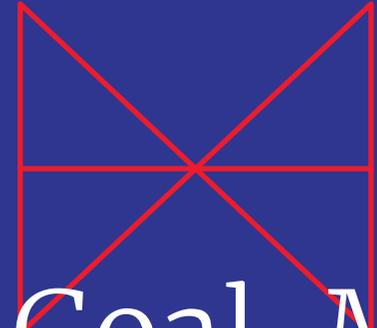
Goal, Methodology, and Participants

Other Tomorrows and Swissnex in Boston and New York conducted this research project in three phases over the course of nine months: initial background research, subject-matter expert interviews, and research synthesis. We selected and interviewed 17 design leaders from across Switzerland and US.

9 months of collaboration between Other Tomorrows and Swissnex

We conducted this project over nine months, split into three phases.

1. Initial background research and hypothesis building

The first phase involved background research, initial mapping of the US and Swiss design landscapes, and hypothesis-building.

2. Subject-matter expert interviews

The second phase consisted of 17 interviews conducted with leaders from different areas of design, primarily based between the US and Switzerland. Our interviews lasted 30-45 minutes and all participants received the same initial questions.

3. Synthesis and report writing

The final phase involved analyzing the themes and trends that emerged during our research and interviews.

These findings were then synthesized to generate this final survey.

Goals of this research and survey

This qualitative methodology worked to address two research goals.

1. Understanding design

Our first goal was to understand the design landscape and a sense of the changes being experienced by today's design leaders.

2. Reframing design

Reframe the shifting design landscape with regard to two major hubs of design activity: Switzerland (a vitally important cultural and design center throughout modern history) and the US (a significant driver of the global economy and the home of many leading design institutions, museums, universities, and companies).
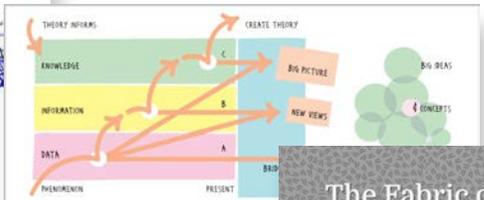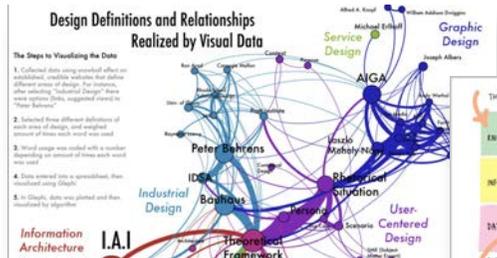
Image: Internal review at Swissnex Boston. Photography: Swissnex.

Design as viewed cross-culturally from Swiss and US perspectives

Constraints of the research

This project's scope was to concentrate on the relative influence of the US and Switzerland on each other and the global design landscape. The 17 designers who
participated in our interviews were primarily from these two countries. Most participants were well-established figures in their fields or represented important design institutions in their respective countries. We consciously tried to include younger voices that would reflect more contemporary perspectives on recent dynamics within design.

Dangers and limitations of a comparative study

Design is a culturally-aware and complex field of study that cannot be easily reduced or constrained. There is an inherent danger in making assumptions based on conversations specific to Switzerland and the US. These countries do not speak for the rest of the world, nor are they by any means monolithic. However, as two significant players in the current design landscape with different historical approaches, our team believes that

there is value in looking at changes through this narrower lens. We hope our approach and the observations in this project will encourage designers in other parts of the world to take a similarly critical look at the state of design in their respective contexts.

We talked to 17 academic and industry design leaders from Switzerland and the US

Maya Ellerkmann

Curatorial Assistant, MoMA. Previous: Curatorial Assistant, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich and Lucerne University.

New York, USA

Davide Fornari

Professor at ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne.

Lausanne, Switzerland

Reto Geiser

Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies at Rice University. Previous: ETH Zurich.

Houston, USA

Marianne Goebl

Managing Director at Artek. Previous: Director at Design Miami.

Berlin, Germany

Christophe Guberan

Designer, Faculty at ECAL and Visiting Researcher at MIT Self-Assembly Lab.

Lausanne, Switzerland

Jessica Helfand

Artist, Writer, and Founding Editor of Design Observer.

Providence, USA

Terry Irwin

Professor and Director of the Transition Design Institute at Carnegie Mellon University.

Pittsburgh, USA

Natasha Jen

Designer, Educator, and a Partner at Pentagram.

New York, USA

Anniina Koivu

Head of Theory Masters
at ECAL.
Lausanne, Switzerland

Eckart Maise

Design strategy and brand
Consultant. Former Chief Design
Officer at Vitra.
Basel, Switzerland

Adrian J. Margelist

Global Chief Creative Officer
at Burton.
Zurich, Switzerland

Sarah Owens

Professor of Visual Communication
and Visual Cultures, and Head of
the subject area Visual
Communication at ZHdK.
Zurich, Switzerland

Mitchell Paone

Partner & Creative Director at DIA.
Former lecturer at HEAD, Geneva
School of Art and Design.
Chamonix, France

Dominic Sturm

Partner at FOND Design,
President Swiss Design
Association.
Zurich, Switzerland

Skylar Tibbits

Founder and co-director of the
Self-Assembly Lab, and Associate
Professor of Design Research at MIT
Boston, USA

Claude Zellweger

Director of Design at Google.
Former VP of Design, HTC
Smartphones.
San Francisco, USA

Maria Yang

Associate Director of the Morningside
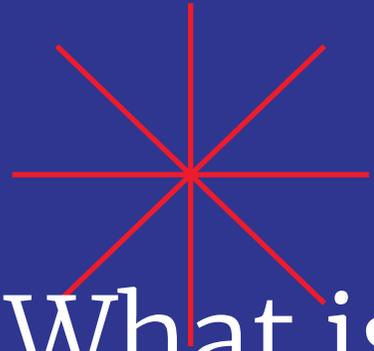Academy for Design & Associate Dean of
Engineering at MIT.
Boston, USA

03

What is Design Today?

To glimpse the future of design, it was critical to first get a better understanding of how design is talked about and defined today. We found that design is often viewed as a product, a process, or as something having a more systemic impact on organizations and societies.

Searching for a shared definition of design for this research

So, where do we begin a study such as this? And what really is this thing we call design?

Design is a powerful force used throughout the world and yet - as hinted by the previous pages - a singular, clear definition remains elusive. Over time, practitioners from a variety of backgrounds have attempted to define design to suit their own needs.

On one side of the spectrum, there are extremely formal and specific definitions like the one by Swiss graphic designer and educator Josef Müller-Brockmann. His definition is a clear articulation of classic Swiss modernism and an assertion of the value of craft, knowledge, and formal rigor. Years later, American multi-hyphenate designer-architect-filmmaker Charles Eames's expansive description foreshadowed the recent definitions of design that are far more open, decentered, and interdisciplinary.

"Objective-rational design means legible design, objective information that is communicated without superlatives or emotional subjectivity."

Josef Müller-Brockmann   1955

"Design is a plan for arranging elements to accomplish a particular purpose."

Charles Eames   1969
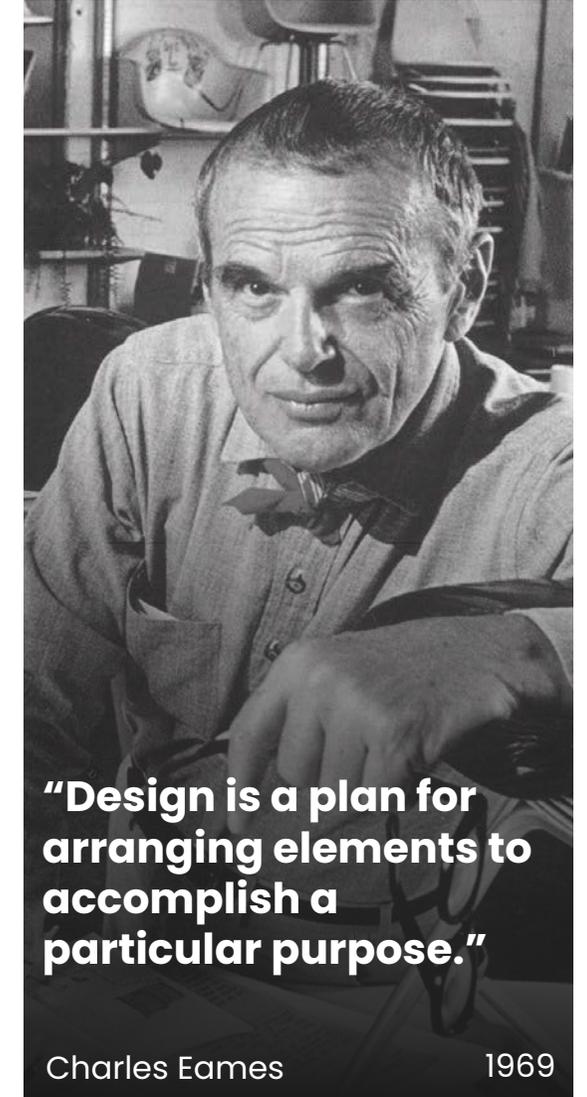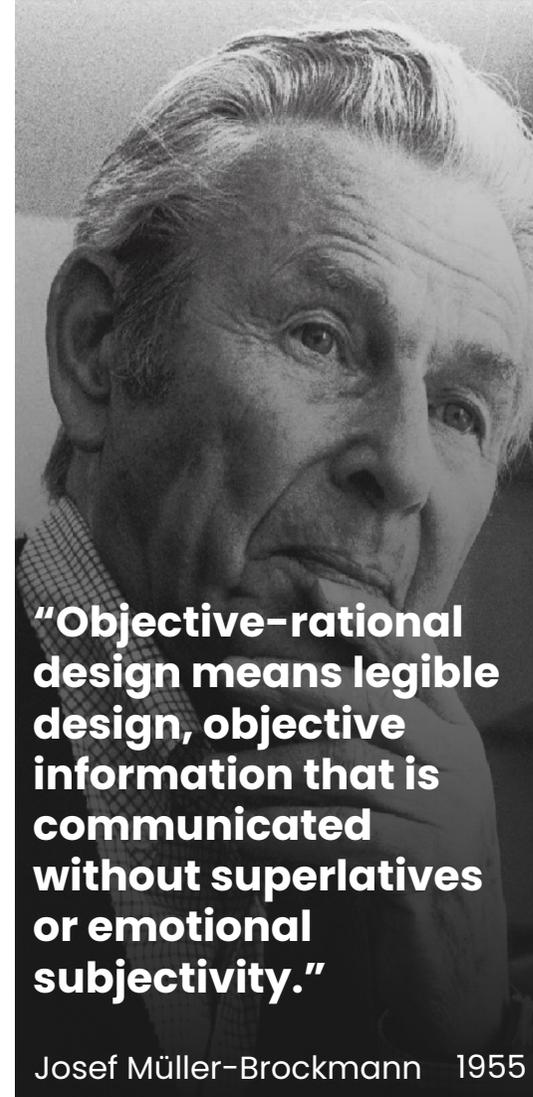
Design has multiple definitions

We initiated the interviews by asking participants to share their personal definition of design. Terry Irwin's quote beautifully captured the challenge of trying to define design.

Each of our 17 participants brought their distinct beliefs and personal experiences to the table, enriching the discussion on what it means to be a designer. As we collected their diverse interpretations, a broader view emerged, revealing shared themes and insights that went beyond individual viewpoints.

Finding a singular definition that works in all contexts for all people is impossible, but in our interviews the definition of design rarely strayed from a broader, higher-level conception.

"There are two sides of the coin when it comes to design. There is ALL of designing all the time, and then some of us also do it professionally."

TERRY IRWIN
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

How do *you* define design?

"My view on it is more about design as a process. What are all the steps in the design process to go from idea to reality? I think about design as a process in that way, and less so as a single domain."

SKYLAR TIBBITS
MIT SELF ASSEMBLY LAB

"Design is a way of giving shape to solve concrete problems."

MARIANNE GOEBL
ARTEK

"The well-known 20th century designer Victor Papanek said 'design is a ubiquitous human activity; we're all designing all the time.' And Herbert Simon, who came from Carnegie Mellon University defined design as 'changing existing situations into preferred ones.' These larger definitions of design are extremely appropriate in the 21st century."

TERRY IRWIN
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

"Design is a more structured form of art expression."

CLAUDE ZELLWEGER
GOOGLE

"Design is a prospective process by nature, not a result. It's not an object or a product, it is something that is always targeting possible futures."

DOMINIC STURM
SWISS DESIGN ASSOCIATION

Different definitions for different audiences

Leaders with institutional affiliations and academic responsibilities tended to avoid a singular definition of design and instead embraced the idea that design is a fluid language or tool set that can be applicable across audiences or contexts.

"I have to say I've become the person who defines design differently depending on who I'm talking to. You could go very meta and say design is a plan for achieving some sort of desired outcome. That's one way... for engineers. I would actually broaden that definition to identifying some sort of human connection like a human need or social impact."

MARIA YANG
MIT MORNINGSIDE ACADEMY OF DESIGN

Design is defined in relation to culture and society

For some participants, the definition of design has remained the same, but the technological or social context has changed around it. Design doesn't change; society and technology do. Some of them described the pervasiveness of social media or generative AI as rapidly redefining the spaces and territories of design practice.
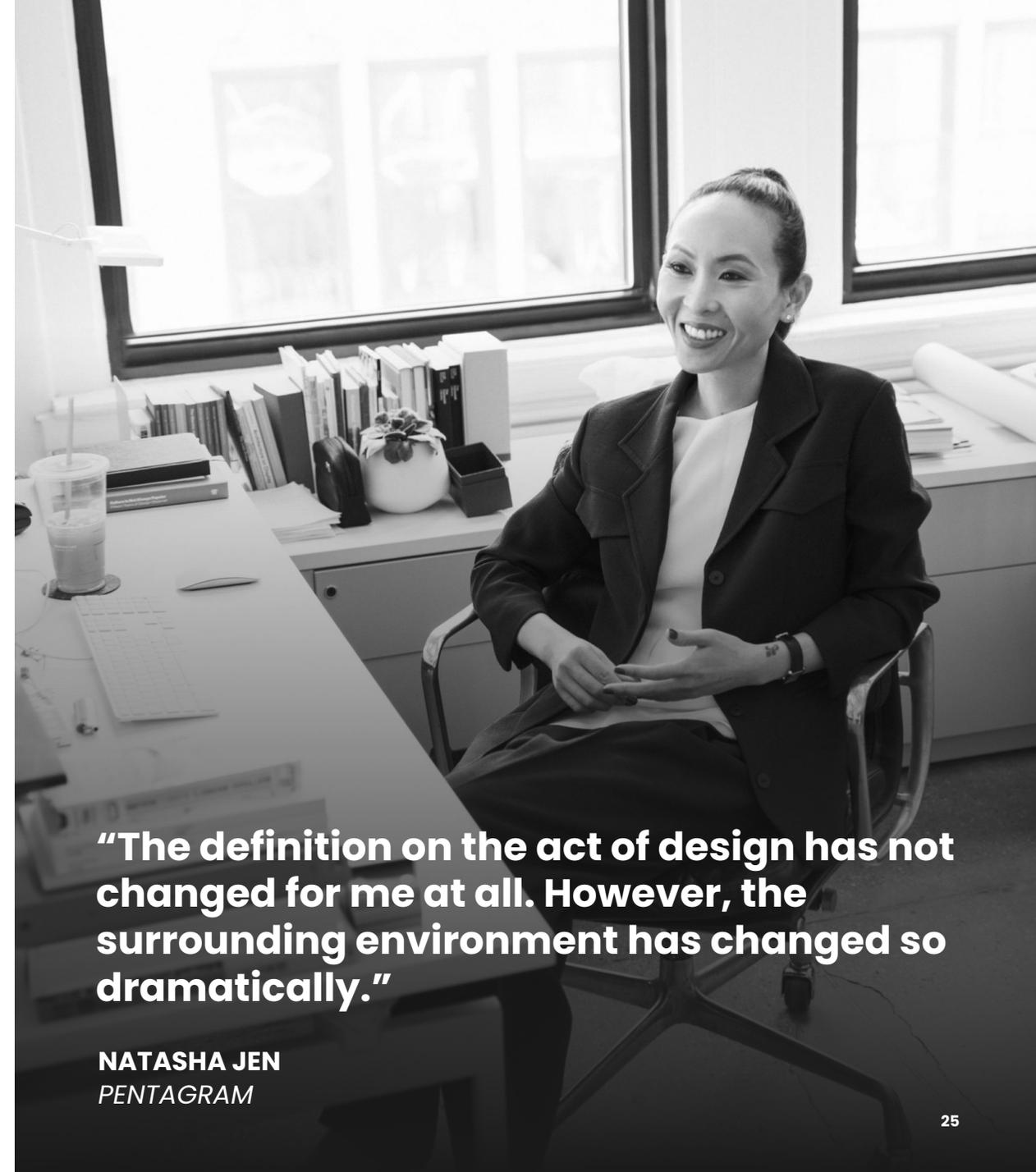
"The definition on the act of design has not changed for me at all. However, the surrounding environment has changed so dramatically."

NATASHA JEN
PENTAGRAM

The definition of design continually adapts to our context

Design is deeply personal and highly subjective. Its definition has never been fixed, never static. Design has always been continuously evolving and reflective of an ever-changing landscape of creativity and problem solving.

The definition of design also evolves and changes depending on one's context and cultural background. As Maya Ellerkmann from MoMA shared, it becomes essential to unlearn preconceived notions and embrace the possibilities arising from the collision of different cultures and viewpoints.

"When I came to the US, I realized that because there are so many different cultures and people coming in and out of this museum, and so many perspectives, I had to open my own perspective — or my own beliefs — and reevaluate that. So now, there is not necessarily a right or wrong... and that's something I had to unlearn."

MAYA ELLERKMANN
MoMA

What do we mean by *design?*

For the majority of the general public, "design" is often associated with physical products. The segment of the population that consider themselves designers tends to see design as a process. An even smaller group of designers (often engaged in academia or the public sector) view design as a tool for societal impact.
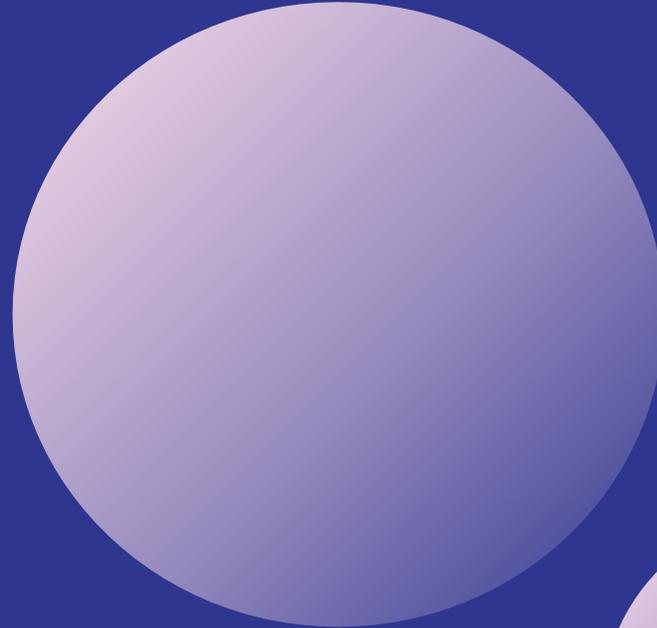
Design as a product

(i.e. graphic, industrial, fashion, etc.)

General and historical definition of design, particularly within a European framing.
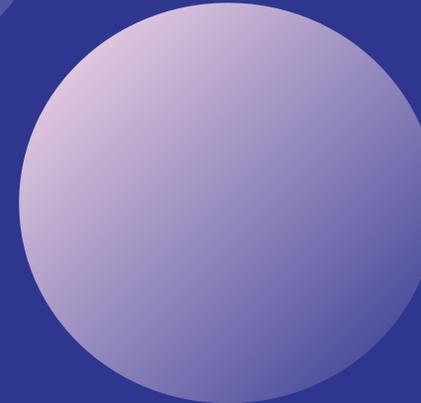
Design as a process

Definition of design among designers, academic, etc.

Design as a tool for societal impact

Definition of design in certain academic circles and the public sector

The design process is being applied beyond things – to ourselves

The expanding definition of design signals, not surprisingly, an expansion in the use of design. Our interviews revealed a radical blurring of traditional sub-disciplinary boundaries. While a general population might draw associations with product, industrial, fashion, interior, or applied art to categorize design, our participants were searching for a broader territory for design exploration and responsibility.

Design as a process rather than an outcome

Most design practitioners and academics we spoke to used design as a verb, as a way of engaging with a brief or challenge. To them, design is a process rather than an outcome. It can be used to target a range of opportunities, from the user experience of a wheelchair to an educational toolkit to a new digital experience to an urban environment.

Design is a tool for societal impact

Other participants pushed the definition beyond a fixed outcome or a process. To them, design is an emerging tool for societal impact and change. From a design education standpoint, Carnegie Mellon University, Stanford, and MIT teach design not as a separate discipline but as a tool to equip engineers, researchers, or other "non-design" experts with the ability to work on product development or social innovation in a way that has a real positive impact.

Mirroring the communities that design impacts and serves, the ways that we describe design are opening up. The "what," the "how," the "with whom," and "for whom" of design are all open for discussion.

The meaning of design is shifting from fixed to fluid

The establishment of the MIT Morningside Academy for Design can serve as the backdrop for these discussions. This initiative illustrates the challenge inherent in establishing a singular definition of design in a context with an abundance of design-related activities such as MIT. The debate revolves around the question of whether or not design should be defined at all.

Rather than excluding anyone from the design realm, MIT appears to embrace an intentionally fluid idea of design that covers areas where design has previously been seen as remote, separate, or not present at all. The "design fellows" of the MIT Morningside Academy for Design are not traditionally trained designers, but people coming from a wide range of academic disciplines.

"At MIT, there's design all across campus, whether it's in systems design, manufacturing, engineering, or even business… so it's not for us to say, 'No, you are not designers. You don't do design.'"

SKYLAR TIBBITS
MIT SELF-ASSEMBLY LAB
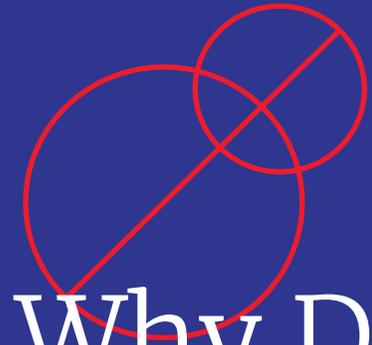
Why Do You Design?

Asking how design is talked about and defined today – what it is – is one thing. But asking our participants *why* they do it allowed us to go deeper into their perceptions and sensibilities. We started to glimpse an expanded scope for design, something that can simultaneously respond to certain needs and anticipate possible futures.

Rather than define "design," let's ask why we do it

Rather than trying to uncover a universal definition of design, we pursued answers to broader and potentially more revealing questions: Why do we design? What drives us as human beings, academics, and professionals to engage in this creative process? What are we hoping to achieve through this expanding design practice? Our hope is to uncover the essence of design in a cross-cultural context by asking participants the simple question: "Why Do You Design?"

"It's really hard for us, as an association, but also for us as professionals, to explain exactly what it is that we're doing in which field, because design as a concept is so ambiguous and constantly evolving as a profession."

DOMINIC STRUM
SWISS DESIGN ASSOCIATION

As human species, we are always looking for betterment

Many of the answers to "Why Do You Design?" addressed human nature and, at its root, human curiosity. Participants focused on individual human agency or on our inclination to improve, edit, and iterate what already exists in the world.

Other responses framed design with an outward perspective, away from the self and toward others. In this sense, Marianne Goebl framed design's ethical or moral dimensions.
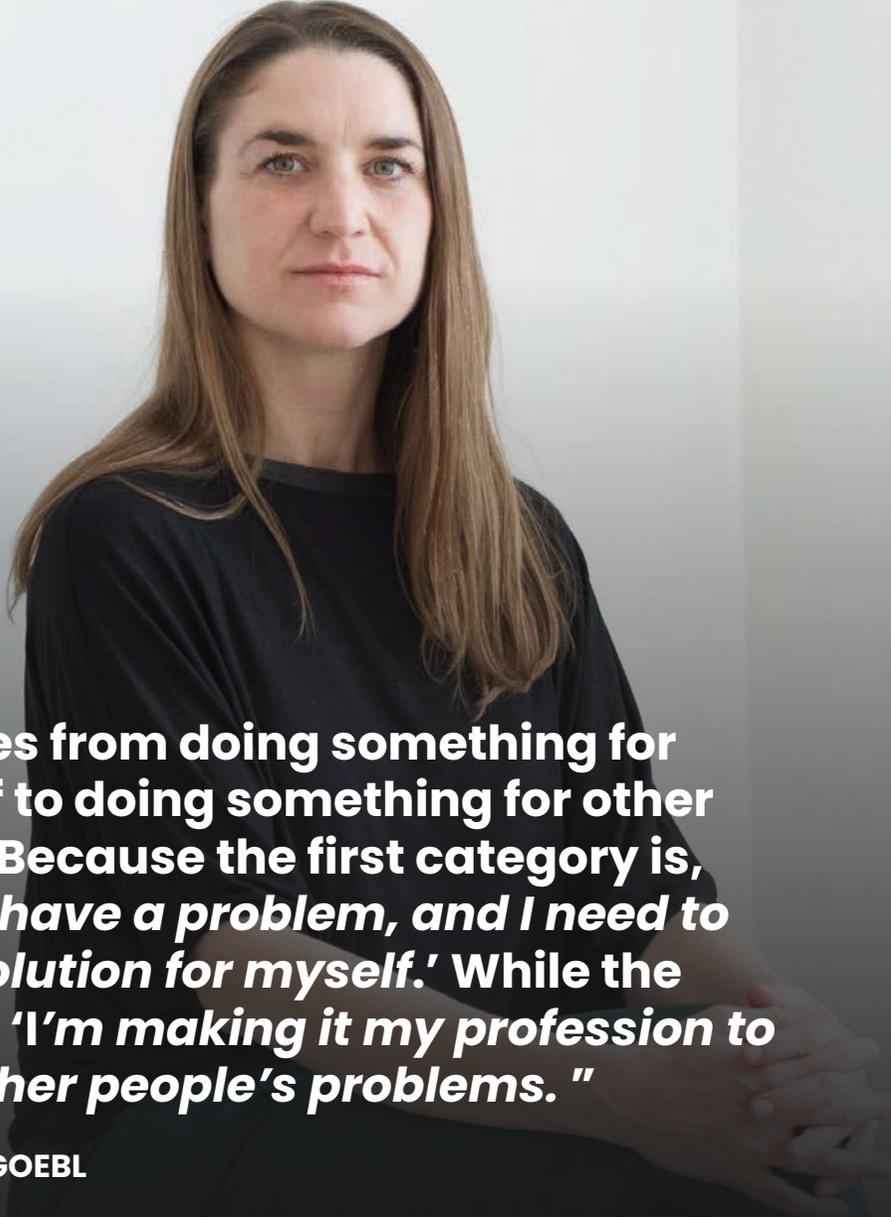
"It moves from doing something for yourself to doing something for other people. Because the first category is, 'Okay, I have a problem, and I need to find a solution for myself.' While the other is, 'I'm making it my profession to solve other people's problems. "

MARIANNE GOEBL
ARTEK

Designing is separated from making by intentionality

Design and making are inherently interconnected, but they can be distinguished by the intentionality of the design process.

Design involves thoughtful considerations such as understanding the context, history, and precedents. On the other hand, making — or hacking — lacks a deliberate plan, and success relies more on a fortunate discovery. Merely producing without a clear concept, vision, or iterative process may not constitute design.
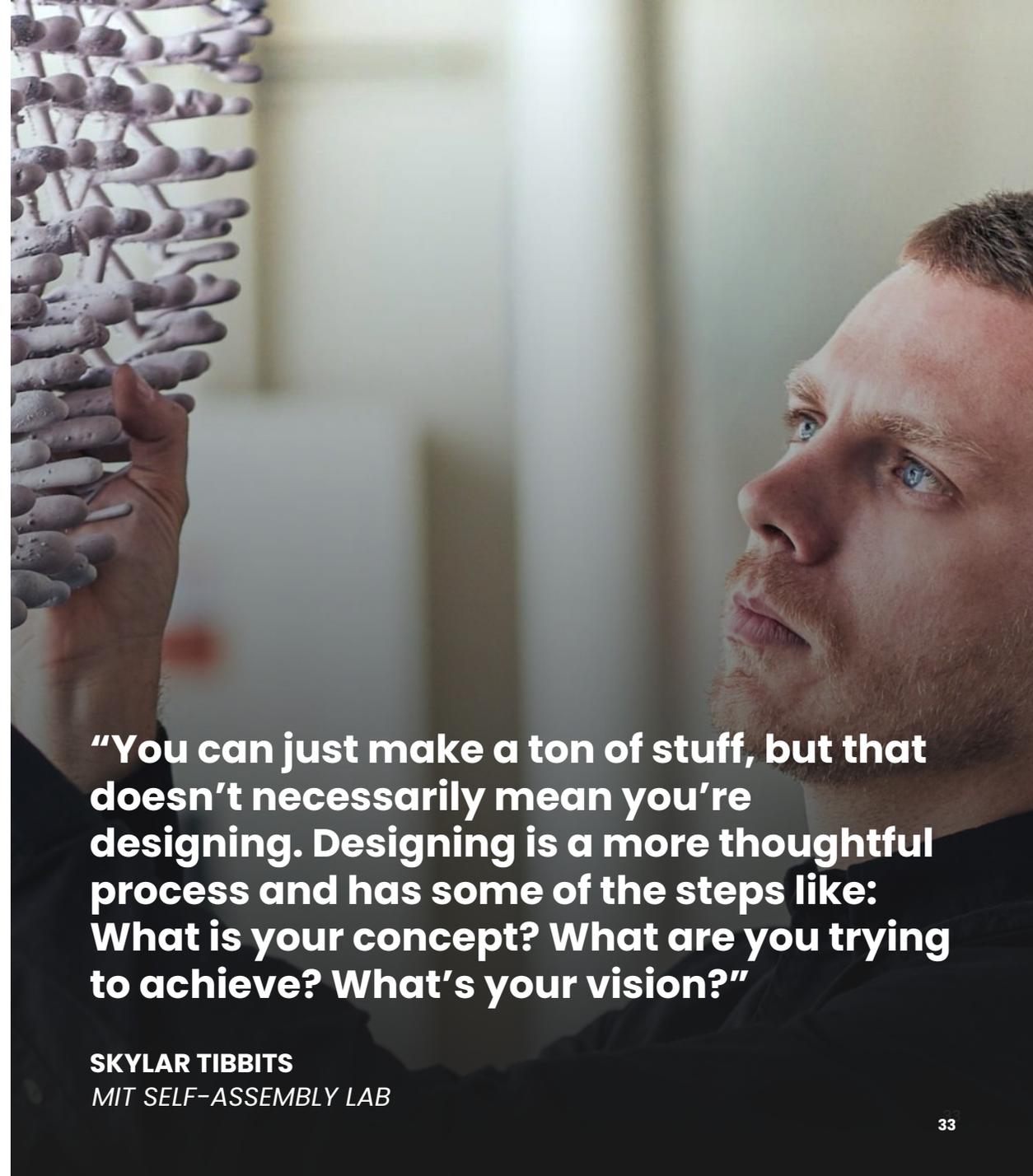
"You can just make a ton of stuff, but that doesn't necessarily mean you're designing. Designing is a more thoughtful process and has some of the steps like: What is your concept? What are you trying to achieve? What's your vision?"

SKYLAR TIBBITS
MIT SELF–ASSEMBLY LAB

Design is a medium to narrate the story behind products

While functionality and aesthetics are still necessary, Anniina Koivu argues that the story behind an object and its connection to people holds greater significance in the contemporary application of design. This perspective aligns with recent design trends that seek to understand objects and their stories within their social and economic context.
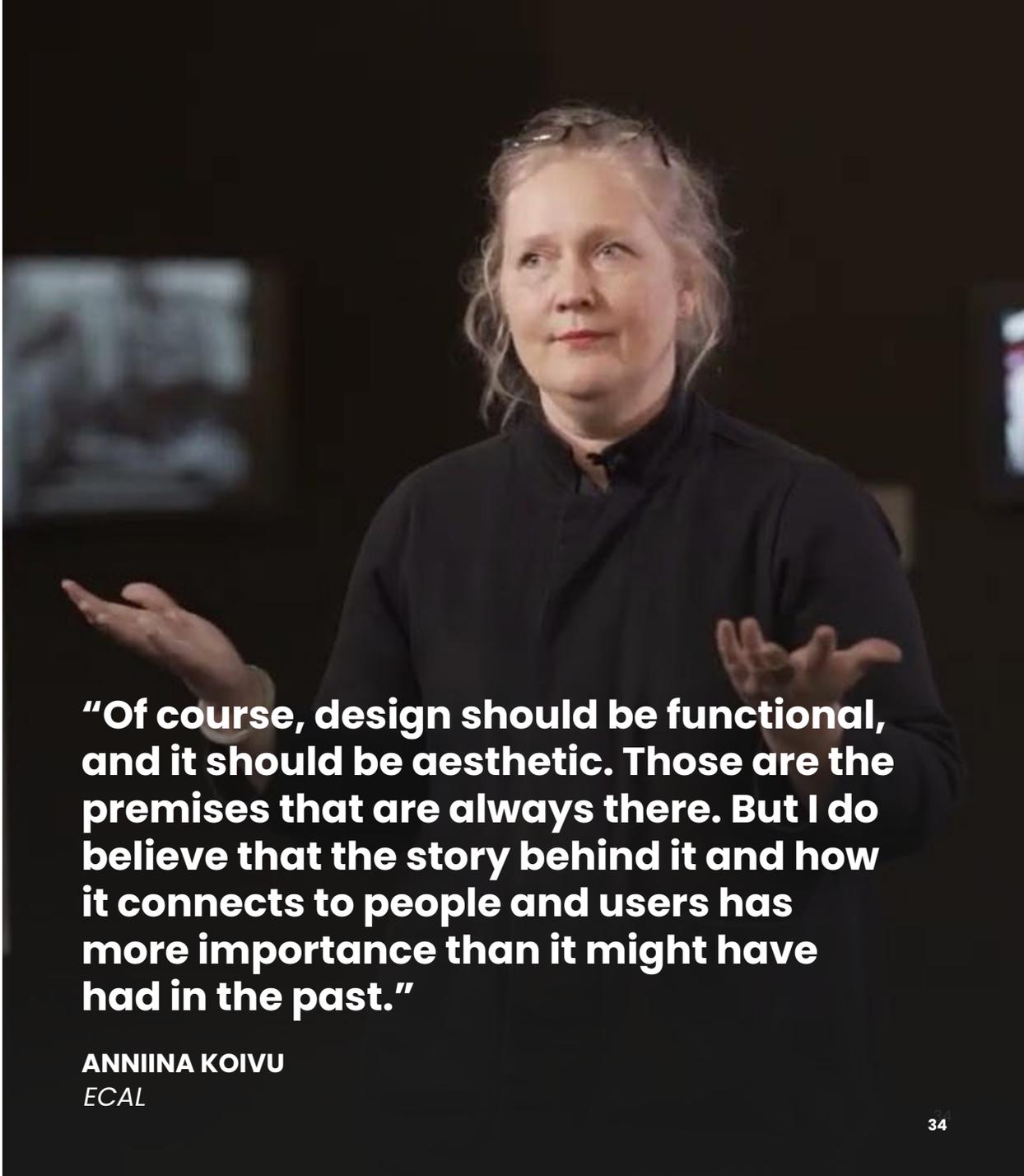
"Of course, design should be functional, and it should be aesthetic. Those are the premises that are always there. But I do believe that the story behind it and how it connects to people and users has more importance than it might have had in the past."

ANNIINA KOIVU
ECAL

Designers aren't just problem solvers, they are problem framers

Problem solving has been at the root of many design introspections, but the story doesn't end there.

Some participants underscored the capacity of design to address abstract challenges and reshape current circumstances into desired ones through storytelling. By contributing to framing the problem or speculating on its limits, designers help articulate the underlying context while building deeper understanding and consensus before seeking solutions. This is a unique ability which may help to explain the renewed enthusiasm for design within academic contexts.
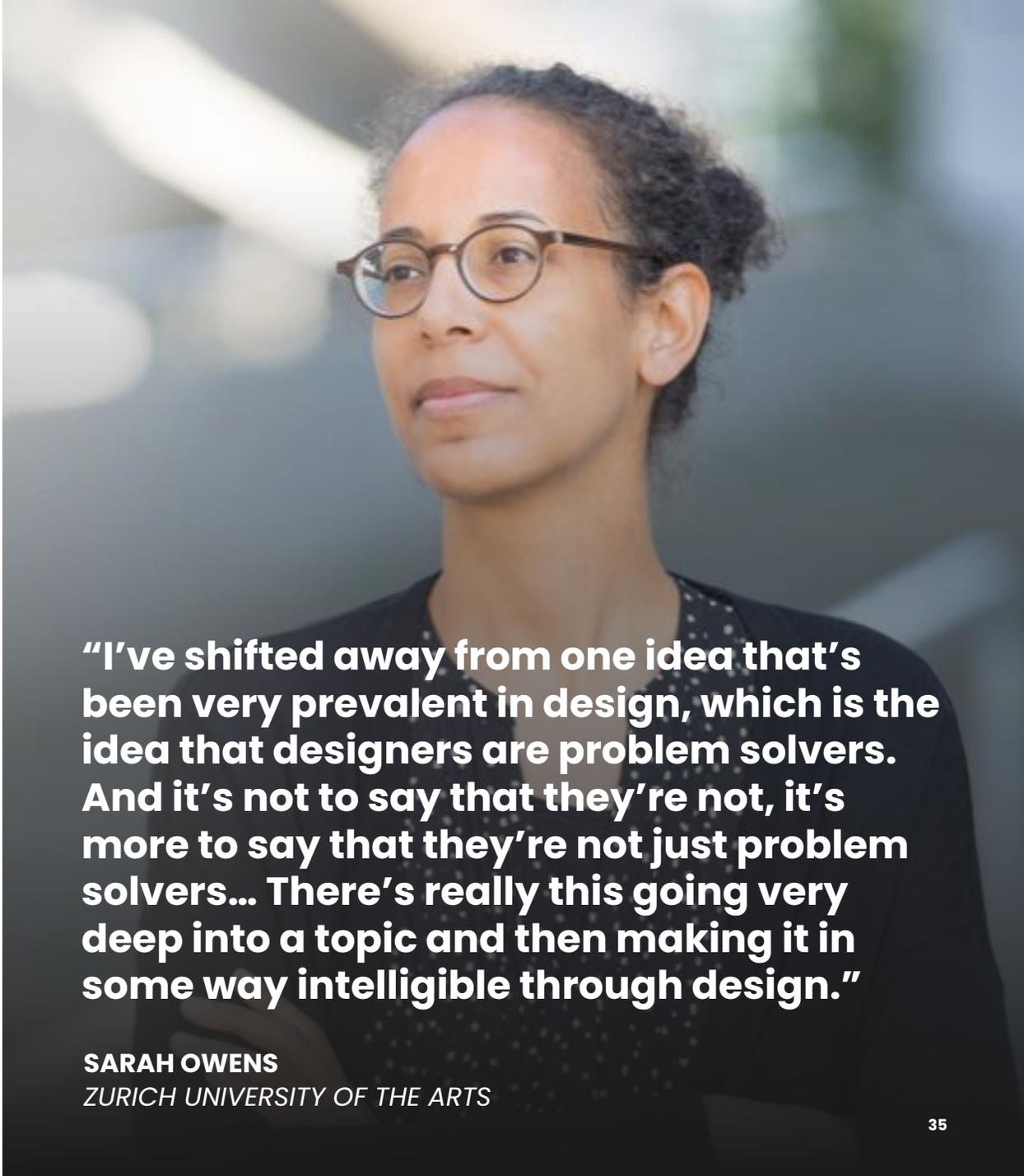
"I've shifted away from one idea that's been very prevalent in design, which is the idea that designers are problem solvers. And it's not to say that they're not, it's more to say that they're not just problem solvers... There's really this going very deep into a topic and then making it in some way intelligible through design."

SARAH OWENS
ZURICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

Design has gone from response to anticipation

Based on our conversations, design has historically responded to specific needs, applying formal techniques and material knowledge to address real-world challenges. However, many participants believe design has evolved beyond being merely responsive or reactive.

Today, design encompasses processes like design thinking and human-centered design, and serves as a tool for envisioning and anticipating improved or alternative futures.

These two uses for design mirror the A/B manifesto[2] developed by Raby and Dunne, who distinguish between affirmative and critical design. On one end lies the affirmative, where design is an instrument for creating and producing tangible outcomes, reacting to the world as it is. On the opposite end is the critical, where design serves as a tool for envisioning and anticipating improved or alternative futures.

A	B
affirmative	*critical*
problem solving	*problem finding*
design as process	*design as medium*
provides answers	*asks questions*
in the service of industry	*in the service of society*
for how the world is	*for how the world could be*
science fiction	*social fiction*
futures	*parallel worlds*
fictional functions	*functional fictions*
change the world to suit us	*change us to suit the world*
narratives of production	*narratives of consumption*
anti-art	*applied art*
research for design	*research through design*
applications	*implications*
design for production	*design for debate*
fun	*satire*
concept design	*conceptual design*
consumer	*citizen*
users	*person*
training	*education*
makes us buy	*makes us think*
innovation	*provocation*
ergonomics	*rhetoric*

[2]Excerpt from A/B Manifesto, Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, 2013

Design exists on a spectrum

In contrast to the idea that responsive and anticipatory design are diametrically opposed, conversations with our participants suggest that design exists along a spectrum (see figure below). They instead viewed design as an ongoing dialogue between identifying problems and attempting to solve them, while anticipating possible futures, creating a middle ground for dialogue, mediation and compromise—a space for new possibilities.

Design moves between response and anticipation

Responsive and anticipatory design may use a range of processes to arrive at different outcomes, but they are part of a broader conversation. Neither design approach nor behavior is more important than the other; both are useful and necessary. It is within this undefined area of dialogue and compromise that new rules are being written. Here, the designer's role is rapidly expanding to navigate between the world of today (responsive) and the world of tomorrow (anticipatory).

Area of Dialogue and Compromise

Responsive

Design as an Instrument to make stuff; problem solving: provides solutions; innovation: in service of an audience; for how the world is now.

Anticipatory

Design as a tool to anticipate futures; problem finding: raises questions; provocation: in service of society; for how the world could or should be.

Design is always framed by society

Our participants were clear that design and the act of designing are tightly intertwined with and defined by the context in which they are created. Our context (cultural, economic, etc.) pushes design forward, constrains its potential, and mediates how solutions are perceived. Unlike other human activities, even in its critical, anticipatory, and speculative mode, design — by nature — cannot separate itself from its cultural context and the society in which it exists.

When we ask, "why do you design?" the answer increasingly involves design's impact on culture, society, and our environment.

We heard from academic leaders that the idea of design as a neutral tool faces strong resistance among younger designers. In the face of climate catastrophe, more students and designers acknowledge that design, as practiced today, is often inherently opposed to nature and the health of our society. To practice design without considering society and the environment is to contribute to natural destruction. This stark realization complicates the narrative, imposing an existential threat on the design field.

From this dynamic, design emerges as a superpower

The dialogue between reaction and anticipation strengthens design, allowing it to reach speculative outcomes that are still grounded in reality and able to meet immediate needs.

Participants described how this dynamic makes design uniquely positioned to lead to successful results within a rapidly changing world. Design can identify problems, find ways to address them, and create outcomes. These strengths have granted design a seat at the table in large organizations.

These forces are expanding the scope of design

The Expanding Scope Of Design

Technology
Gender
Race
Power
Politics
Culture
Climate
Economics

Responsive

Design as an Instrument to make stuff;
problem solving: provides solutions;
innovation: in service of an audience;
for how the world is now.

Anticipatory

Design as a tool to anticipate futures;
problem finding: raises questions;
provocation: in service of society;
for how the world could or should be.

Contemporary Drivers of Change

The design leaders we interview describe a wide range of forces driving change in design. We grouped them into four "established drivers" that have already been impacting the Swiss and US design landscapes for years, and three "emerging drivers" whose influence on design and its practitioners is more recent and growing.

Established drivers
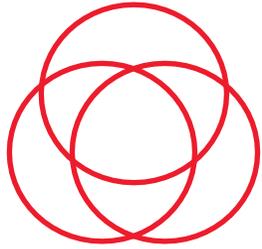
A. Collective brilliance: *the end of the "genius designer"*
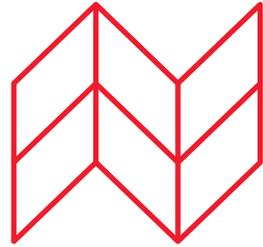
B. The power of narrative: *crafting the stories behind design*
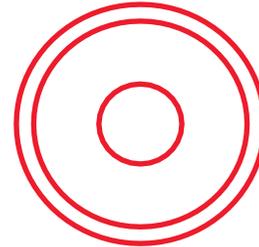
C. The aesthetics of sustainability: *questioning the quest for newness*
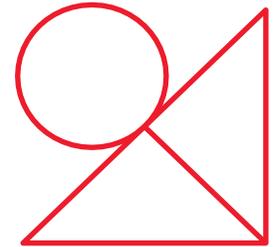
D. Beyond historical standards: undoing global sameness in design

Emerging drivers
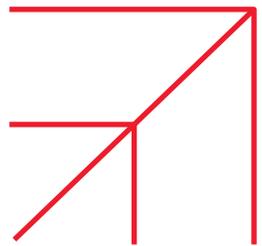
E. Responsible design: *advocating for independence*
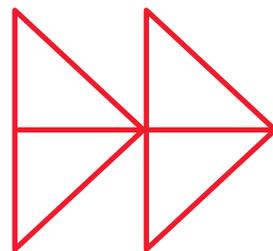
F. Deceleration: *rededefining design's role in a culture of impatience*
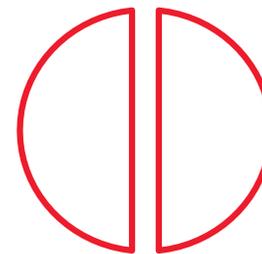
G. Creative intelligence: *adapting to the age of artificial intelligence*

Established drivers
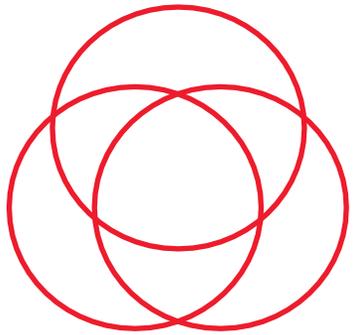
A. Collective brilliance: the end of the "genius designer"

"The genius designer needs to go away. Every famous designer was surrounded by teams of amazing, brilliant people that were actually doing the work."

Skylar Tibbits, MIT Self-Assembly Lab
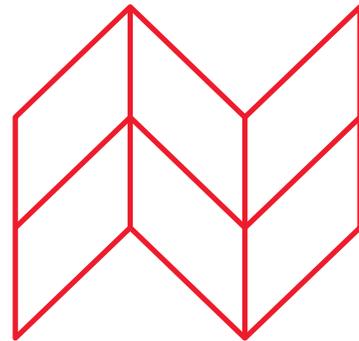
B. The power of narrative: crafting stories behind design

"There are some things that are so obvious that you don't consider them anymore. But there's always an underlying story behind them which renders them somehow more human... and enables us to connect to them more easily. The storytelling around and the background of objects has its worth."

Anniina Koivu, ECAL
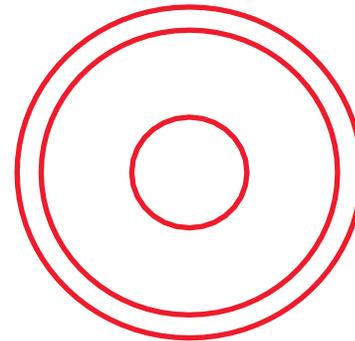
C. The aesthetics of sustainability: questioning the quest for newness

"What's beautiful is that it doesn't need to look beige or green anymore in order to be sustainable. It's kind of becoming an inherent tool. I hope we don't need to say anymore that things are sustainable because they just are."

Anniina Koivu, ECAL
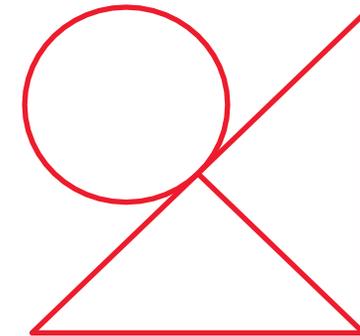
D. Beyond historical standards: undoing global sameness in design

"Some of our principles that we've been growing up with around us, like the Bauhaus being the ground truth on everything, are getting challenged. And I'm really excited about that."

Claude Zellweger, Google

Collective brilliance:
the end of the "genius designer"

The notion of the "genius designer" is gradually fading, paving the way for a new paradigm of collective brilliance. Throughout history, teams of immensely talented individuals supported renowned designers, though society and history rarely recognized their creativity and contribution. We heard from participants that collaboration is perceived as the cornerstone of design today. This change acknowledges that the idea of the singular genius is increasingly untenable in the face of the growing number of design domains needed to solve complex, multidisciplinary challenges.

Radical collaboration to tackle "wicked problems"

Collaboration is especially important when working on large, systemic challenges with societal consequences and interdependencies. In the late 1960s, design theorists Churchman, Rittel and Webber labeled these challenges "wicked problems." By fostering a culture of shared ownership and inclusivity, participants said designers could transcend the limitations imposed by silos and pave the way for a future built by collaborative teams that embrace diverse perspectives.

Collaboration beyond borders: fostering global partnerships

In our conversation, Anniina Koivu cited the Herman Miller x HAY Collection as an example of one of the partnerships breaking down national and continental barriers. Partnerships across companies of different aesthetics, price points, and cultures bring an exchange of ideas that embody the concept of radical collaboration in design.

"Take any given product these days. You can't understand every aspect of it. You need to collaborate with a million people. Everything is becoming hybrid... It's all about systems and teams."

SKYLAR TIBBITS
MIT SELF-ASSEMBLY LAB
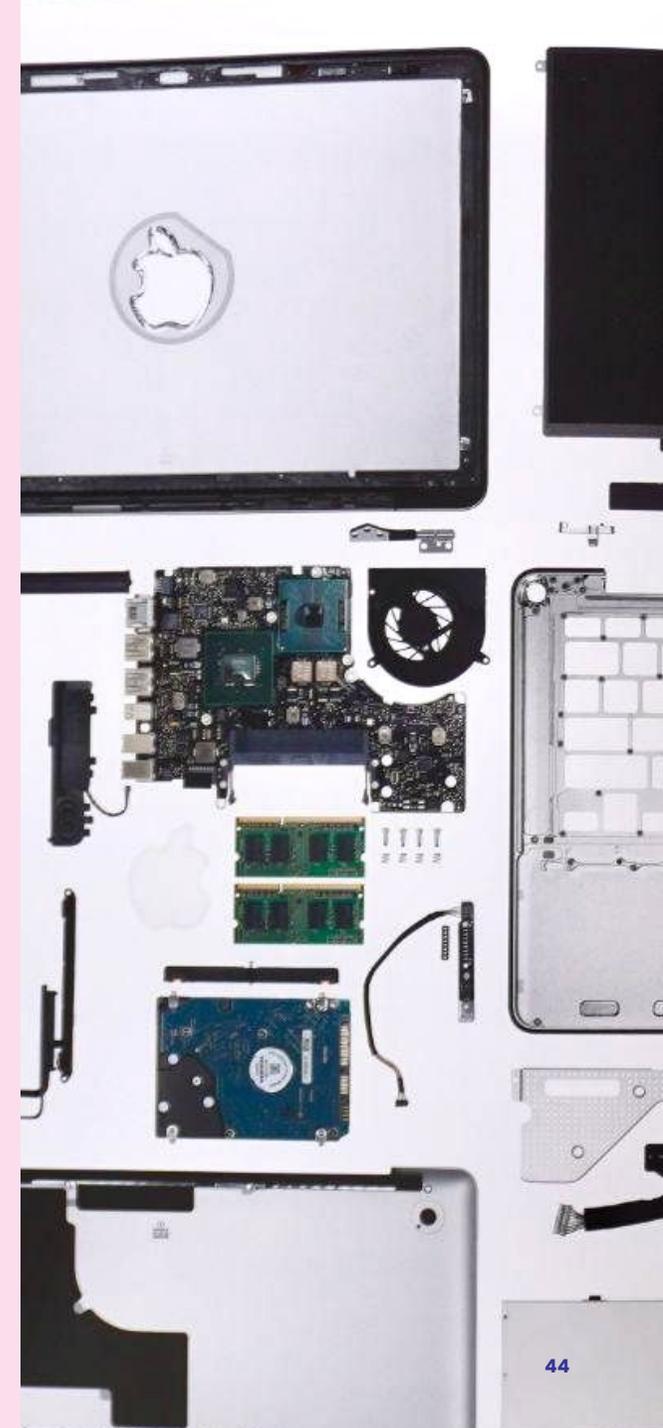
What are the implications for design today?

Academic institutions in both the US and Switzerland are leaning heavily into <u>interdisciplinarity</u>, often encouraging "non-design" students to engage in the process.

While there is a growing orientation toward the collective, there is still a strong reward system in design education for the singular, heroic designer.

› What does this mean for the craft of design? What would Josef Müller-Brockman say?

› What are the contemporary reasons for this?

The power of narrative: *crafting the stories behind design*

Telling stories is as important to design as functionality, aesthetics, and serving needs. Storytelling forms powerful connections between people, cultures, and organizations. It also helps designers imbue meaning into every interaction and craft experiences that resonate. We heard from our participants that the application of storytelling goes beyond product development and marketing, and is part of the practice and culture of design. Our conversation with Anniina Koivu discussed storytelling as one of the driving forces behind design and how designers are expected to apply it to their work and even to their own identity.

Using storytelling as a professional and personal tool

With the proliferation of design and designers across a wider range of disciplines, Koivu indicated it is becoming more important to distinguish oneself as a designer. To do so, she encourages her students to create designs that strike a balance between innovation and practicality. She believes that while it is essential to capture attention, it is equally important to maintain functionality and a down-to-earth approach.

Hidden narratives in everyday objects

Participants expressed that designers are continually in the position of needing to communicate their own value and the value of design. Designers have approached this advocacy differently, but many participants expressed the importance of telling stories about the value design has brought to everyday objects and experiences. Storytelling has always been a vital tool for the designer, but designers are increasingly using it to advocate for their value by telling stories about the world around them.

These are stories and narratives that have often been told within the design community, but they can be used with broader audiences as well.

"Create yourself an identity as a designer. Find a language that is coherent and then that maybe helps you stand out."

ANNIINA KOIVU
ECAL

The Expanding Scope of Design - Image: Totomoxtle (2017) by Fernando Laposse. "Life Cycles: The Materials of Contemporary Design" MoMA, cited by curator Maya Ellerkmann.
Photography: Other Tomorrows.

What are the implications for design today?

Storytelling goes far beyond product development and marketing. Designers are expected to apply it to their body of work, and to their own identities.

Storytelling is not only a tool for practicing design, but also for informing objects with deeper meaning in a time when we should be making less.

> This tension is essential to the design industry today. To what degree is it reshaping academia?

> Is storytelling a more sustainable alternative to product development?

The aesthetics of sustainability: *questioning the quest for newness*

Though sustainability has been part of the design conversation for decades, our participants felt it was only just now becoming an integral aspect of professional and academic practice. Today, designers consistently consider the "end" of a product's life, and new initiatives focus on enabling reuse, repair, recycling, and reclaiming materials.

As the principles of circularity take root, a new set of aesthetic norms is emerging, embracing the beauty found in repurposing, upcycling, and transforming waste into something of value, redefining the aesthetics of sustainability. A book[3] on the topic published by ECAL with contributions from our survey participant Christophe Guberan delves into the intriguing question of how designers can leverage their unique perspectives (rather than

relying solely on material scientists) to reimagine material exploration and its integration into the production process, while collaborating with manufacturers.

Breaking free from the designer's quest for newness

Historically, the designer's role has focused on creating new output, whether a consumer good, a service, or a user experience. However, the drive to produce more is often in tension with the urgent need for sustainable practices across all industries. Designers who have previously directed their efforts to create more and better are shifting their focus, and questioning the endless pursuit of convenience. Designers must answer the question of what it means to be 'new' in this contemporary paradigm.

Working with materials as allies in the design process

As designers consider the impact of their choices, particularly on the environment, there has been a revolution in material exploration happening in parallel. According to Maya Ellerkmann (MoMA), designers now work alongside "*materials as allies rather than passive mediums.*"

As designers increasingly pay careful attention to which objects they create, material research and innovation are receiving much-needed attention. Incorporating new materials is risky, requiring additional time and resources coupled with a risk of failure. Though there are clear successes in the history of design born from these experiments, fear of these risks in a commercial setting often constrains a designers' ability to work in new ways. However, the shift toward sustainability has encouraged companies and designers to see materials as essential allies in working toward more environmentally beneficial solutions.

The Expanding Scope of Design - [3]Aesthetics of Sustainability: Material Experiments in Product Design. Editor: Thilo Alex Brunner. ECAL. (2021)

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"The quests for the new will have to slow down. It's going to be much more important to improve what's already there... bringing on 20 new chairs per company each year just has to stop. The resources are not there for that, and I don't think customers need it."

MARIANNE GOEBL
ARTEK

Aesthetics of Sustainability   *Fast Feet Grinded*, granulated rubber,
                                       outsoles and footwear manufacturing

What are the implications for design today?

Based on our conversations, it seems nearly impossible to talk about design without talking about sustainability.

The idea of working with materials as allies in the design process is also a call for renewed partnership between design, engineering, and material science.

Design is breaking free from the designer's quest for newness.

> Is design truly turning a corner?

> How are academic institutions preparing for this?

> Is a split emerging between design and innovation?

D. Beyond historical standards: undoing global sameness in design

Beyond historical standards: *undoing global sameness in design*

The rise of social media and its saturation of our visual landscape has led to the proliferation of design that perpetuates sameness. Navigating this sea of homogeneity becomes challenging, especially when living in a culture that values speed and convenience. Participants perceived a danger in this seemingly harmless uniformity, and are working to overcome it.

Natasha Jen,from Pentagram characterizes this phenomenon as *"hyper-active-short-time-span digital culture."* In this fast-paced era, perpetual motion and restlessness (hyperactivity) have become the norm, particularly evident in our digital lives, where screens constantly change and evolve dynamically. As a consequence, our attention spans have shortened significantly, now lasting mere seconds. We find ourselves caught in a loop of mindless scrolling, clicking, and swiping, driven by the urge for instant gratification.

On the one hand, the prevalence of global trends and social media platforms like Pinterest and Instagram can benefit designers (or consumers). By promoting accessibility and serving as educational resources, they help cultivate a broad understanding of design aesthetics. However, these platforms also accelerate trends that converge into uniformity and are often disconnected from design's intent and its impact on the planet.

Representation in the design community

Along with a general aversion toward the "sameness" of ideas in design, participants emphasized the importance of incorporating diverse influences in the design process, whether that be introducing indigenous knowledge or ensuring that the design field is representative of the communities it serves.

The consequences of this sameness, therefore, extend far beyond mere aesthetic choices. Uniformity also impacts representation, belonging, and equity within design.

"Some of the principles we've been growing up with around us, like the Bauhaus being the ground truth on everything, are getting challenged. And I'm really excited about that."

CLAUDE ZELLWEGER
GOOGLE

What are the implications for design today?

Social media can make design converge to sameness, eliminating alternative perspectives and masking the profound impact that design has on our world.

Continuing to make opportunities to bring a broader and more diverse audience into the design community is critical to maintaining a leadership position in design.

> Is this convergence also happening in our universities?

> What strategies can we employ to diversify our design community effectively?

Emerging drivers
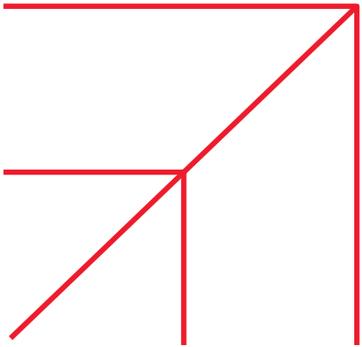
E. Responsible design: advocating for independence

Traditionally, pursuing growth has been synonymous with success, but we heard many designers are challenging this paradigm. They no longer reflexively say "yes" to work. Designers are redefining success on their terms and prioritizing a future that celebrates designing things that "make sense."
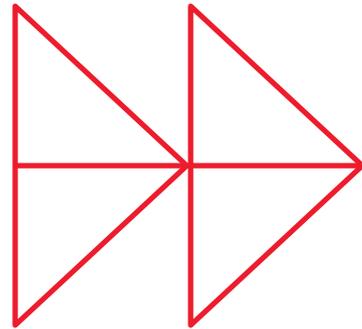
F. Deceleration: redefining design's role in a culture of impatience

As a reaction to the acceleration of the contemporary world, designers are increasingly championing more deliberate approaches that prioritize reflection and recognize time as a valuable resource.
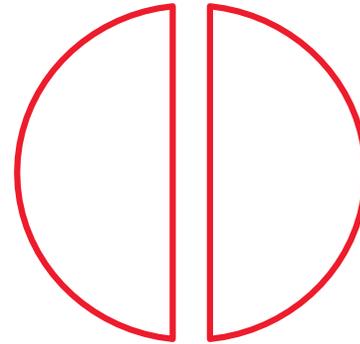
G. Creative intelligence: adapting to the age of AI

Technology – especially AI – has emerged as a powerful design tool, blurring the lines of what it means to be a designer. With the increased accessibility of technology, design has become a public endeavor, inviting everyone to participate. This democratization raises questions about the role of the designer and the essence of design itself.

Responsible design: *advocating for independence*

The theme of design independence surfaced repeatedly in our interviews. The design leaders we spoke with recognized that the expectation to say "yes" to every opportunity diminishes their influence and the quality of their work.

While large, profit-driven organizations follow well-established paradigms that link success and fulfillment to growth, we heard in our interviews that small studios are finding the space to take a very different path. This is particularly the case in Switzerland, which is dominated by smaller studios.

The freedom that comes with being smaller can allow for less-inhibited creativity and free thinking. Without pressure from shareholders or the need to chase constant growth, some of these studios embrace the notion that accepting purpose-driven projects is more important than growing for growth's sake.

Saying "no" to projects

The participants in our panel understood that part of practicing creative responsibility is intentionally deciding which projects not to accept. Some felt that the ability to say "no" should be an essential part of the discussion in design practice. By carefully selecting projects and collaborations, designers

can ensure that their work aligns with their values and purpose. This control affords designers the time and space to develop their practices organically instead of merely following trends or responding to market demands.

Anniina Koivu of ECAL also suggested that saying "no" allows studios to control their environmental impact. The focus has shifted from simply making things look sustainable to embodying sustainability in every aspect of the design process and working on "things that make sense," in Koivu's words, "Small studios are exploring the creation of new materials, production techniques, and consumption patterns while fashioning the desirable from the undesirable."

"When you get a brief and it doesn't make sense to you – let's say, 100 million monobloc plastic chairs – how many people would actually say 'no' to it? But at least it's part of the discussion, so I guess the more and more the discussion goes on, people will also get more sensitive about it."

ANNIINA KOIVU
ECAL
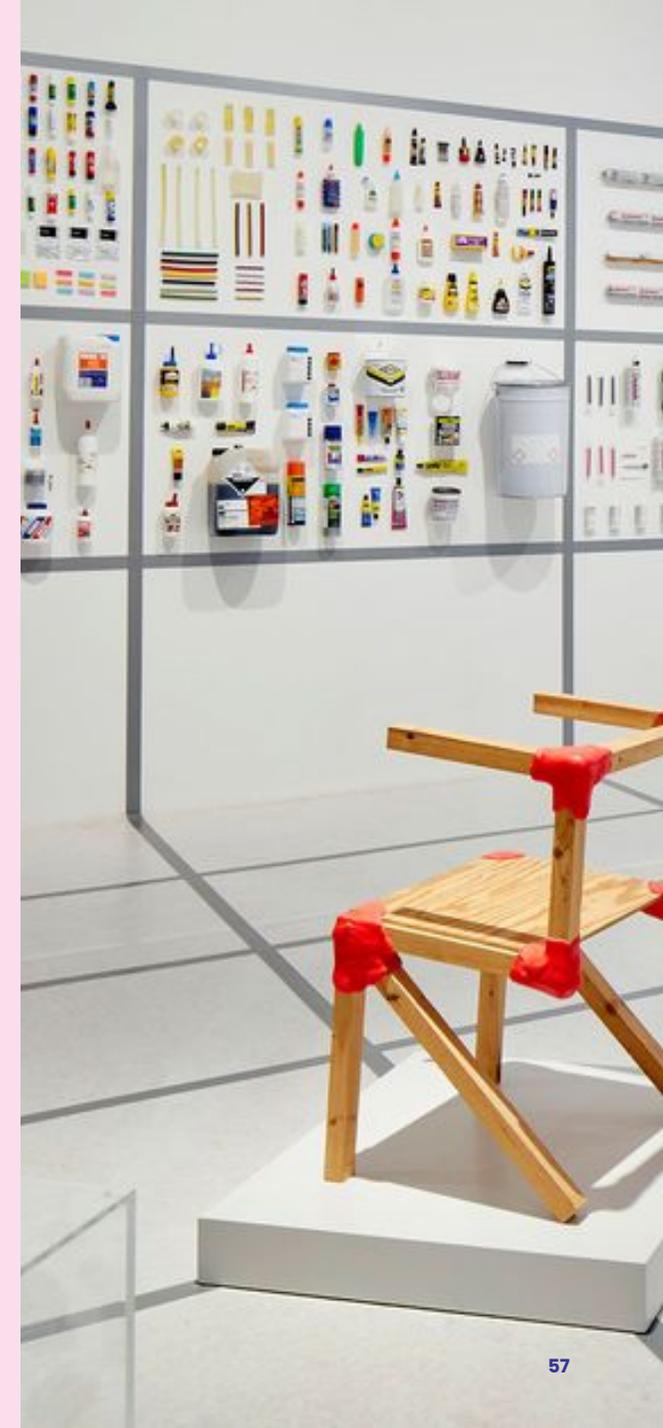
What are the implications for design today?

The topic of quality was often cited in our discussions, particularly among Swiss designers, as a seemingly self-evident benefit of design in the Swiss context.

Designers are clearly taking stronger positions on what work they are and aren't willing to do.

> Do we still care about "quality?"

> What more can we do as educators to encourage and support this trend?

Deceleration: *redefining design's role in a culture of impatience*

Our perception of time is changing, and that is having a profound impact on design, both in terms of the quickened pace of the design process and in design's nearly instantaneous dissemination and reception.

As Jessica Helfand states: "I think designers understand time in a different way." While design sprints and agile methodologies (and perhaps generative AI) are great tools that improve the efficiency of the process, our participants felt designers also need to embrace the patience required to evolve a project and embark on the iterative journey, where multiple iterations are created and refined over time.

What's the role of time in this shifting landscape?

While there is clearly a tension here, designers are championing more deliberate approaches that prioritize reflection and recognize time as a valuable resource for design. Increasingly, designers are working to decelerate and discover ways to engage in meaningful research, thoughtful observation, and iterative processes.

At the same time, the pace of social media encourages instant responses and quick solutions. Efforts to slow down the design process are in direct conflict with our culture of impatience and instant gratification, which limit the designer's ability to reflect deeply and consider the broader implications of different design choices.

"It's so easy for designers to be seduced by speed, by beauty, and by the capacity to innovate quickly. That's not necessarily playing to our implicit strengths as humans who have families and children and grandchildren and really should be thinking about our imperiled planet."

JESSICA HELFAND
DESIGN OBSERVER

What are the implications for design today?

Time itself is a valuable resource for design, and it has never been more scarce. Designers are searching for ways to recover time in the design process, to give themselves and their process room to breathe.

> Acceleration often accompanies the future, but can designers create time through deceleration?

Creative intelligence: *adapting to the age of AI*

Designing in the age of Artificial Intelligence

Technology — especially generative AI — has emerged as a powerful design tool for design, blurring the lines of what it means to be a designer. With this technology's low barrier to entry, design is becoming more accessible, inviting anyone to participate. This democratization raises questions about the essence of design itself. Is it merely a set of skills or a form of creativity that can be commodified?

If design is everywhere, what are the implications for the professional design services industry? When everyone possesses the tools, who is qualified to be a designer? Participants suggested that the actual practice of design is going to change radically due to the unprecedented tools that are available to us. AI is already challenging the traditional pricing models associated with design projects, and potentially redefining the entire landscape.

Will AI remain a tool or become a medium of design itself? Without a clear path forward, the academics we spoke with felt it was essential to question what we are teaching and emphasize the importance of craftsmanship in conjunction with AI's capabilities: "If I'm teaching how to rag text perfectly in books in design school, AI should be able to do that already. How to collaborate, come up with good ideas, and good creative thinking? Collaborating with AI — that is where the focus should be," said Mitch Paone from DIA.

Natasha Jen from Pentagram described AI as a world-altering force, highlighting the potential future applications of these new technologies while expressing concern about society's readiness for the changes they bring, especially considering AI's potential to independently create even more sophisticated tools on its own. "This is actually world-altering," she said. "Disruptive is a pretty mild word. You see it unfolding in front of your eyes on a daily basis. What kind of world are we entering? We're not prepared for this."

"We invented all the industrial tools. Then there was a digital revolution where we invented all the digital systems. Those are really profound changes... but what's interesting in my opinion is that we are entering a new era, in that the tools that we made can actually make tools themselves... and that's AI."

NATASHA JEN
PENTAGRAM

What are the implications for design today?

AI is poised to profoundly transform the practice of design in almost every form and context.

AI is a particular area where Switzerland and the US are in leading positions and already collaborate.

> What is the role of human judgment and design sensibility in this equation?

> To what degree will designers be a part of these initiatives?
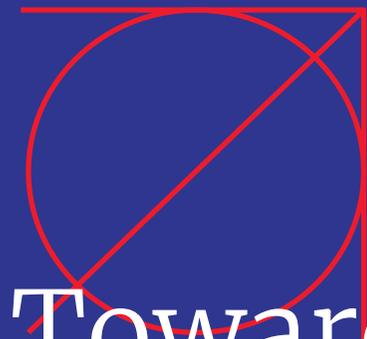
Towards an Expanded Definition of Design

As our interviews progressed, a larger question started to emerge: Are we approaching the end of design and its education as a discipline? If design is no longer a discrete discipline, what comes next? Responses generally fell into three categories: design as an act of responsibility, design as a shared language for collaboration, and design as a movement for societal change.

Towards an expanded definition of design

Design as an act of responsibility

Embracing design as a creative act of responsibility is essential to the future of its practice. The ethical role of the designer is becoming a core part of design education and is embedded in the tools and methods we use to teach.

> **Awareness:**
As a designer, my actions have profound repercussions (political, planetary, etc.).

Design as a shared language for collaboration

Beyond a discrete discipline, design has evolved into a shared language and set of processes that allows for an unprecedented degree of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Design, as a shared practice, can be used to confront complex systems and seemingly intractable social challenges.

> **Collective Action:**
As a collective, we share the challenges we face.

Design as a movement for societal change

Numerous participants emphasized the unwavering commitment of the next generation to consistently and instinctively prioritize societal and planetary concerns, including diversity, equity, circularity, etc. in their design agendas.

> **Agency:**
We embrace design as a means to actively change our situation. We get to shape our world.

Design as an act of responsibility

As the world undergoes rapid change, the role of the designer is expanding beyond its traditional boundaries. No longer confined to traditional craft domains, designers have transformed into curators, planners, policymakers, ethicists, business leaders, and systems thinkers. Moreover, design processes are now a standard part of many business school curricula and corporate structures.

In this expanding role of design, many of the professionals we spoke with felt an urgent need for designers to take greater responsibility for the impact of their work on the world around us. Within this framing, design has moved well beyond crafting aesthetically pleasing and innovative solutions to also ensuring the creation of safe, sustainable, and equitable environments.

This sense of collective responsibility harkens back to the early "responsible design" ideals described in Victor Papanek's book[4] "Design for the Real World" more than 50 years ago.

As designers become more entangled in the world and empowered by these discussions, they are becoming increasingly aware that they have the right, and the responsibility, to engage in design initiatives that align with their values and those of their communities. This responsibility demands that designers transcend their roles as mere creators, and ask the existential question of whether their work should exist in the first place.

How do we embrace responsibility in a world plagued by crises?

Our academic participants noted that the need for responsible design is strikingly evident when students observe their surroundings and confront threats to environmental, social, and political stability.

Sarah Owens emphasized that designers must transcend traditional problem-solving approaches in order to be able to deal with complex and systemic issues that may be impossible to solve or are irreducible to design problems.

Embracing design as a creative act of responsibility is essential to the future of the practice; it is becoming an essential part of design education and the tools we use to teach.

[4]Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change. Victor Papanek (1971)

"A lot of students are feeling this constant level of crisis and the threat of the collapse of environmental systems, social systems, and political systems. That's something that I'm trying to discuss with them. How do we deal with this? How can we not be paralyzed? And on the other hand, how can we stay active within that?"

SARAH OWENS
ZURICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

Design as a shared language for collaboration

Beyond a discrete discipline, design has evolved into a shared language and set of processes that allows for an unprecedented degree of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Not surprisingly, given the last few decades of design's disciplinary evolution, our interviewees acknowledged design's ability to allow practitioners from radically different areas of expertise to collaborate and find novel solutions. Design is no longer limited to a specific medium, a usability challenge, or a formal grid. It can be used to confront complex systems and seemingly intractable social challenges. This is a seismic shift.

Nevertheless, some participants voiced concerns about whether everything and anything can now be considered design. Skylar Tibbits from MIT stated that

"If everything is design, then nothing is design. That's the risk." They worried that this broad definition might dilute design's significance and that it could be dangerous to blur the boundaries of the field too much.

What's the ideal environment to teach this shared language?

Design education is adapting and stretching beyond traditional art and design schools. In the US, there is a notable rise in multi-disciplinary graduate design programs combining design with a blend of business, engineering, policy, etc. These programs, like Stanford's d.school and the recently-launched MADE program at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, offer design education that stretches beyond traditional disciplinary definitions by teaching design tools

and processes that empower engineers, researchers, and other professionals from non-design backgrounds to engage in product development and social impact design. While less common in Switzerland, programs like the EPFL+ECAL Lab are emerging to fill this space in spite of the country's more rigid separation of technical institutes from its art and design universities.

Participants emphasized how designers (and non-designers) are transcending disciplinary constraints to apply holistic approaches to creative problem-solving in both the Swiss and US contexts. Restricting design to rigid boundaries and structures increasingly seems counterproductive, and there are several curricular experiments that are exploring ways to strike a structural balance.

"In the US, you can really navigate between fields and that's very good. You can take a design course as a mechanical engineer. In Switzerland, if you want to study engineering you have to really focus on the topic, even if we try to do some cross-disciplinary classes between EPFL and ECAL. We try to be a specialist in a topic and less of a generalist."

CHRISTOPHE GUBERAN
ECAL - FACULTY AT ECAL, FORMER COLLABORATOR AT MIT SELF-ASSEMBLY LAB

Design as a movement for societal change

Throughout this research, participants described design as having transcended its conventional disciplinary boundaries, evolving into a powerful force for driving societal change and envisioning better futures. In academic and practical terms, Richard Buchanan[5] anticipated this over 25 years ago when he described design as a new liberal art, one that could truly confront the complex challenges – the "wicked problems" – that lie ahead. Today, beyond simply making things, contemporary design is closely aligned with the leading concerns of the humanities and sciences: the climate crisis, racial and social justice, income inequality, well-being, and the future of technology. Design now has a seat at the table, and sometimes even leads the conversation.

The academics we spoke with pointed to various domains of higher education in the US that integrate design methodologies to cultivate systems-level thinking. Institutions like the Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design and Carnegie Mellon University's Transition Design Institute have merged social and ecological design principles into their esteemed master's and PhD programs. Meanwhile, Switzerland has notably brought designers into public sector processes, fostering government agencies that welcome design's engagement.

Swiss design has long enjoyed a strong reputation. In Switzerland, broad support and optimism for design seem to demonstrate a shared belief that design can improve the quality of life and that designers can and should play a leading role in tackling complex societal challenges.

Does greater institutional support encourage greater support for institutions?

Numerous participants emphasized the unwavering commitment of the next generation to consistently and instinctively prioritize social issues, including diversity and equity, in their design agendas.

Perhaps where the concerns are very large, the support must be very large as well. This massive scale shift is indicative of a reciprocal relationship between institutional support for design and a resulting support for institutions among designers, whether those are governments, universities, or other large organizations. While the US and Switzerland have different approaches to supporting their design communities, there is little doubt that, at an institutional level, both countries share a belief in the power of design to create change.

[5]Wicked Problems in Design Thinking. Richard Buchanan, MIT Press (1995).

"If you want to work on big problems with large consequences, you will have to do it in radical collaboration with people from other disciplines, working in a co-design process with the stakeholders connected TO and affected BY the wicked problem in question. But you will have to bring some type of expertise to the party."

TERRY IRWIN
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

How is the expanding scope of design impacting *you?*

Other Tomorrows and Swissnex left this series of interviews convinced that design is continuing its evolution as a dynamic superpower, and that there has never been a more exciting time to identify as a designer.

We hope these conversations spark more dialog within the design community. We encourage you to critically examine your assumptions about the meaning of design in today's world and its potential for the future. We invite you to reflect on the following questions. We would love to hear from you!

How can you respond to this expanding scope of design?

What does generative AI mean for design education?

How can you promote collective brilliance over the "genius designer" myth?

How can we go beyond the Western canon, making space for a richer mosaic of design cultures?
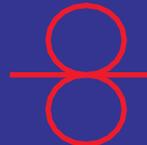
How can design can help us decelerate and make time?

Do you describe yourself as a designer?

swiss arts council

prohelvetia

swissnex

Benjamin Bollmann, CEO, Boston and New York
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