The Moral Dimensions of Design: the re-emergence of the design manifestos and their effect

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the re-emergence of the design manifestos and their effect
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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Signed
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Abbreviations

AGDA  Australian Graphic Design Association
AIGA  American Institute of Graphic Arts
CND  Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
EU  European Union
FTF  First Things First
GDA  The Society of Graphic Designers of Canada
Icograda  International Council of Graphic Design Association
IDAD  International Design Action Day
MTA  Metropolitan Transit Authority
SIA  Singapore Institute of Architects
UK  United Kingdom
US  United States
USSR  Soviet Union
Abstract

Design is an activity whose function in society is to provide experiences, information and impact to our everyday life. Since the introduction of the First Things First 2000 manifesto in the late 1990s, many designers, educators, critics and theoreticians have derived their views from the form and content of this manifesto and from the impact of design on society.

Not since the original First Things First design manifesto presented by Ken Garland in 1964 has there been such a wide response to the way that design is practised and taught. The extent of engagement by the design community has varied greatly in attempting to define its role in practice, theory and education. These manifestos and many alike re-emerged long after the original to create awareness and prompt designers to reflect on their approaches to design process and practice.

This thesis examines the re-emergence of the design manifestos since the 1990s to articulate what these manifestos tell us about the morality of design. By doing so, I have hypothesised that these manifestos offer moral dimensions to design by espousing ethical, social and civic values. These moral dimensions invite, specifically, graphic designers to look closely at their actions as design agents and to incorporate research, theory and practice as a unit of design process. In so doing, the graphic designer will work towards a user-centred outcome while showing sensitivity to their society, culture, politics, technologies and natural environments.

The thesis also presents my project explorations drawn from my hypothesis of the moral dimensions of design to extract insight to the graphic design process and practice encouraged by the six manifestos. This highlights that design offers infinite possibilities within any given context to the community of users and determines that the incorporation of responsibility must be part of everyday design practice.
Introduction

The concept of the moral dimensions of design suggests a philosophical idea rather than a practical act. Design is an activity that reflects a designer’s capacity to communicate visually. This activity is a situated act, whereby a graphic designer considers the articulation of the message in a specific context. This situated act in turn presents problem solving issues particular to graphic design practice, in which the visual communication solutions become virtually infinite. Graphic design practitioners willingly accept this as the core of design practice, virtually erasing the essential importance of design responsibility.

Design theoreticians, educators, writers and practitioners recognise many important aspects of the social impact of design that shape our visual culture (Poynor, Bruinsma, Helfand et al). This impact critically highlights the importance of defining the graphic designer’s role and responsibilities inherent in visual communication. Therefore, the moral dimensions prescribed of design – ethical, civic, and social values – become a necessary framework within which the responsible designer performs. By applying theories and methods, a designer acts upon his/her acquired knowledge of the design process to research, analyse, and individually achieve an outcome. This study sets out to develop an understanding of the graphic designer’s framework of responsibility and terms of reference. To do this, the study will explore several design manifestos that re-emerged in the 1990s as a basis for identifying the responsibilities of design, and will also articulate what these manifestos tell us about the morality of design.

This thesis is structured in two parts, ‘The Manifestos’ and ‘The Journey’. It begins with ‘The Manifestos’, an analysis and evaluation of six design manifestos; their effect on graphic design and graphic design practice, on defining the function of a graphic design, and on the responsibilities of the graphic designer. ‘The Journey’ presents an insight into the moral dimensions of design presented from a personal perspective, through life experiences as a student and practitioner of graphic design, to explain my own process. I discuss my engagement with the moral framework drawn out of the six design manifestos, highlighting the process of design thinking, action and response.
A manifesto is a statement made public. A manifesto is a declaration that seeks change and provides insight to a situation at a critical time proclaimed by either an individual or a group.

A manifesto is audacious, provocative and dogmatic; it seeks change and calls for responsible action. The motivation for this research arose out of questioning the value of graphic design, its social impact, and a desire to investigate the extent of the responsibility of the designer. I have chosen six design manifestos for this particular reason, dating from the early 1960s to the early 2000s. These manifestos define what graphic design is, explicitly challenging the reader to reflect and take action by accepting their responsibilities as a designer, and to build human-centred outcomes for the community encompassing social, cultural, economic and natural environments. A paper presented by Poggenpohl and Ahn (2002) states that the basic aim of a manifesto is ‘a call to action that stimulates and co-ordinates agency’ (p. 46), and that a manifesto relies on three beliefs in order to be successful. These beliefs are dependent on knowing that a change has occurred or some new insight has altered understanding of a situation; that a human agency can change circumstances into something more desirable; and that the timing is advantageous for both the manifesto and the change it seeks. It is a public statement rather than a private one (Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002, p. 46).

Figure 01: A design process – engagement of the designer, client and the audience in this figure identifies design as a unifying element. (Park, J. 2006)

The brief for my project utilises this moral framework to demonstrate the effectiveness of the manifestos. This exploration recognises that graphic design is engaged in a process of relationships developed between design (graphic design/visual communication) practice, the project and the audience (see figure 01). These relationships are constrained by the limits of the individual brief, yet the possible outcomes are infinite, indicating that building an effective relationship between client and designer is essential to responsible design. By applying my personal beliefs and experience gained through engagement with this study to the manifestos’ moral and ethical framework, I have developed what I call a ‘design park manifesto’ which restates the role and responsibility of design. The study aims to demonstrate that the moral dimensions of design must become a core part of graphic design practice.
The six design manifestos differ in style. They represent a shift in graphic design disciplines at critical times in design history and address an increasing awareness of the designer’s role as a mediator of culture. The manifestos presented are also provocative, presenting idealistic challenges to designers and to the disciplines of design as it is traditionally taught and practised. Poggenpohl (2002) further stresses that the style of the manifesto as a rhetorical form must show strength and be audacious. Where, who and what group presents it is of great significance.

Rhetoric engages in messy human communications that encompass the interpretation of events, alternative actions and ethics, opposing values, or dramatic retellings that hinge on the presenter or the source of the information rather than in truth (Poggenpohl in Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002, pp. 46-47).

The six manifestos chosen have a common thread – their rhetorical form – which is assertive, oppositional, and passionate. Their function is to evoke, question, debate, discuss and, most of all, to be a call to action.

The six design manifestos are (see appendices):
A.4. The Icograda Design Education Manifesto, presented by Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl and Sang-Soo Ahn, Seoul, South Korea, 2000
A.5. First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit, St. Moritz, Switzerland, 2001

These manifestos affirm the function of design as social art, posing the question on where we are in the context of the body of globally integrated work of contemporary visual communication. Jan Kuypers (1994) articulates that without societal context design ceases to exist:

Design works on the borders of all social pressure groups. To groups that concern themselves with economic, legislative and technological subjects, design provides cultural answers, at best the immeasurable elements of being just right for me, just right for now, a pleasure to see, to use, to cherish (pp. 27-28).

Kuypers (1994) further expands that designers must spearhead a drive to turn our societal orientation from goals typified by the measurable, the material, the digitally precise, the pursuit of dominance on every market place, and the exclusive aim for profit, towards goals that include in their values the immeasurable qualities of caring, of accepting responsibility as participants in the life of others, close and far (p. 28).
Hence, the role of these manifestos is to expand and confirm the ever increasing responsibilities brought about by changes and challenges in everyday circumstances.

In seeing we absorb and process what we see – a multitude of visual stimuli which we then interpret cerebrally to make sense of our environment. It is therefore essential that visual communication through graphic design recognises our ability to transform messages and alter meaning according to life experiences. This transposition of meaning is dictated by a design brief, but the design outcome must incorporate and reflect responsible design practice. ‘The Journey’ section of this thesis expresses my own exploration of the importance of the graphic designer’s role and the responsibility of design. The formation of my own manifesto is drawn out of my research and the pull-out text is subtly indicated throughout this thesis, which acts as a trigger to engage the reader in the process of navigating the message of the design manifesto to discover my conclusion concerning the morality of design.

Conceptual Framework: Research Purpose
The purpose of this study is to construct a conceptual framework in order to present a polemic of graphic design process. The aim is to understand the content and context of the manifestos presented, evaluating moral dimensions inherent within the context of graphic design practice through examination of the definition and the role of graphic design. To achieve this objective, the study will cover some essential graphic design history, and explore the conception, implication and effects of the manifestos in order to develop moral dimensions explicitly identified in chosen manifestos, develop a design brief to test the function of manifestos, and produce a set of images exploring the research. By doing this, an in-depth understanding of the social impact of graphic design will help to determine the function of the manifestos and further reinforce the importance of responsible graphic design practice. The conceptual framework emerging from this study will also contribute to on-going debate and discussion, sharpening the focus on responsible design among graphic designers.

Methodology: Research about Design
A recent analysis by Lunenfeld (2003) outlines three key modes of design research that encompass research into design, research through design and research for design as identified by Sir Christopher Frayling of the Royal College of Art in the 1990s (Frayling in Lunenfeld 2003, p. 11). Lunenfeld (2003) posits that research into design includes the traditional historical and aesthetic studies of art and design. Research through design is project-based, and includes materials research and development. And finally, research for design is the hardest to characterize, as its purpose is to create objects and systems that display the results of the research and prove its worth (p. 11).

However, no one method can define and identify design research methodologies. Downton (2003) offers that ‘design is a way of inquiring, a way of producing knowing and knowledge; this means it is a way of researching’ (p. 01).
Therefore, this project will acknowledge Downton’s emphasis on ‘research about design’ by addressing the questions: what is graphic design, what is it about, what is it for, and why do we have it? By asking these questions, the study will provide a conceptual framework for the project.

In Design Research Downton (2003) proposes this theory and discusses a number of methodologies. He describes design evolution as a formal model of ‘creativity’ – the process of researching through designing.

Human ability to transform implicit knowledge to representational structure enables modification and change; the capability to transform knowledge into representational structures underlies the ability to make novel modifications and changes within, or through, those representations; and the establishment of the right representation may be considered to be a creative act (Oxam in Downton 2003, p. 103).

Here, Oxam is referring to the process of designing at the ‘ordinary level of every-day’ as an essential concept that lends impact to the role and responsibilities of the designer. Therefore, this aspect will be examined closely to assess the impact of the manifestos.

Downton reiterates that the design process is a personal account; as such, this process should be truthfully documented, self-reflected and self-interrogated to gain further insight into the development of the designing process. This reflection of design process further challenges ‘the human ability to transform implicit knowledge to representational structure’ (Oxam in Downton 2003, p. 103) in a number of ways. This human ability will be explored in my project process by addressing re-representation of an analysed image (see figure 02) to demonstrate the potential to transform implicit knowledge into a representational structure.

The component of re-representation of images will utilise Derrida’s deconstructive theory as a foundation to assess and analyse the juxtaposition of images and text in contemporary (visual) culture. Derrida’s theory is also effective in identifying the self-reflective practice of a designer where the effective knowledge of design is not essentially a structured process.
It is about assessing binaries to develop possibilities in a contemporary context. According to McCoy (1997), Derrida suggested that a cultural construction, such as an idea, a value, or a sentence can be disassembled, or taken apart, and decoded—its parts examined for “meaning.” The parts can be reassembled into another whole that may, then, take on a different meaning. The rearrangement of the parts into various wholes opens a way of exploring the complex nature of signs and moves communications into the complicated landscape of multimeaning, layered contexts, thus marking a shift from binary, yes–no signification to a more subjective, multidimensional interpretation of meaning (McCoy 1997, p. 149).

Derrida says of Deconstruction,

Something has been constructed, a philosophical system, a tradition, a culture, and along comes a de-constructor (who) destroys it stone by stone, analyses the structure and dissolves it... One looks at a system... and examines how it was built, which keystone, which angle... supports the building; one shifts them and thereby frees oneself from the authority of the system (Derrida in Broadbent 1991, p. 36).

The production of the project component of my research will utilise Donald Schön’s ‘reflection-in-action’ methodology, where in a good design process, this conversation with the situation is reflective. In answer to the situation’s back-talk, the designer reflects-in-action on the construction of the problem, the strategies of action, or the model of the phenomena, which have been implicit in his moves (Schön 1983, p. 79).

Also, the brief for my project will be considered in the context of ‘Wicked Problems’. Wicked Problems as defined by Rittel are a class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values, and where ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing (Rittel in Buchanan 1996, p. 14).

This theory of reasoning in design addresses a number of aspects of self assessment and reflection by a designer. It proposes that it is not a matter of right or wrong, rather that the process is concerned with closely examining designing as an ethical practice that encourages the designer to work with civic responsibility and moral insight. Therefore, Rittel proposes that design is more about process and synthesis of research, thinking, creativity and concepts. Rittel also identifies that no one method can be utilised in the design process, referring to design methods as ‘Wicked Problems’. The ten properties of ‘Wicked Problems’ are:

1. Wicked problems have no definitive formulation, but every formulation of a wicked problem corresponds to the formulation of a solution.
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rules.
3. Solutions to wicked problems cannot be true or false, only good or bad.
4. In solving *wicked problems* there is no exhaustive list of admissible operations.
5. For every *wicked problem* there is always more than one possible explanation, with explanations depending on the Weltanschauung of the designer.
6. Every *wicked problem* is a symptom of another, “higher level,” problem.
7. No formulation and solution of a *wicked problem* has a definitive test.
8. Solving a *wicked problem* is a “one shot” operation, with no room for trial and error.
9. Every *wicked problem* is unique.
10. The *wicked problem* solver has no right to be wrong—they are fully responsible for their actions.

*Weltanschauung* identifies the intellectual perspective of the designer as an integral part of the design process.
(Rittel in Buchanan 1996, pp. 14-15)

Finally, the research will conclude with an analysis of these findings to evaluate self-reflection-in-action, provide a personal outcome on the effects of the design manifestos, and present a visual articulation in the form of a series of images.

The process and development of this study took many exploratory paths into design engagement, from a human rights perspective to that of the responsibilities of the designer. The project found ground in defining and analysing the ‘First Things First’ manifesto written by Ken Garland in 1964. This led to investigating the moral dimensions of the chosen design manifestos and their effect. Thus, the focus of this study is the manifestos in the context of contemporary visual culture, re-defining the nature of graphic design, the role of graphic design through design process, and research about design.

The re-emergence of the manifestos in the late 1990’s highlights the changing attitude from the division of design practice from theory to that of a multi-disciplinary process where theory and practice are integral in their search for a responsible framework for the future.
THE MANIFESTOS
Introduction

The thesis begins with an introduction to the 1964 *First Things First (FTF)* Manifesto’s background and revival in 2000 to set the scene for the analysis and evaluation of six relatively recent design manifestos. The manifestos are presented with a reflection on graphic design history and western historical events to identify the significance of the manifestos’ message to designers concerned with graphic design discipline and practice. Further to this, the moral dimensions of these manifestos are presented to lead the reader on a journey that defines design as an activity in a social, cultural and personal context.

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* 1995

The world that spectacle holds up to view is at once here and elsewhere; it is the world of the commodity ruling over all lived experience. The commodity world is thus shown as it really is, for its logic is one with men’s estrangement from one another and from the sum total of what they produce.
The Manifesto

The design manifestos emerged and re-emerged at specific times and places to address the need to stimulate change in design disciplines and philosophies. The design manifestos define the capacity and conditions required to actively change and proclaim important design issues relevant at the time. They re-affirm the beliefs and insights about design presented in our everyday life. Their function is to provoke designers to take action, address specific needs and clarify the responsibilities of the designer, on the premise that design has significant social impact in contemporary visual culture.

In 1963, one of the most eminent and respected graphic designers in the UK, Ken Garland, read a statement during a meeting of the Society of Industry Artists at London’s Institute of Contemporary Arts. This statement became the first design manifesto to take on the issues of the practice and role of design, along with defining the responsibility of the designer.

Garland’s initial reading was intended as a polemic statement of visual communication practice at the time. Garland stressed the importance of design focus as essential to thoughtful and useful communication. He encouraged substance in dialogue and the sharing of experiences to engage in ongoing communication between designers, design educators and students. His statement made great impact on those present at the meeting, and his ideas received immense encouragement; endorsement of his statement was offered immediately. Garland recalls,

As I warmed to the task I found I wasn’t so much reading it as declaiming it. It had become, we all realized simultaneously, that totally unfashionable device, a Manifesto (Garland in Poynor 2002, p. 7).

Garland later stated in an interview with Jane Lamacraft that By the end of 1963, I had been running my own business for a year and a half and I knew the kind of clients that I enjoyed. I found that the older generation of designers, who included many of my friends – I don’t want to suggest that there was anything hostile in our relationship – had missed a few pointers. The graphic design business was prepared to be a servant for whatever clients came along, and designers did not perhaps think too much about what they were working for, what influence it was having environmentally, politically, socially. I thought it wasn’t a bad idea that we should think a bit more about this because, after all, in those days we all had an affiliation to a left-wing party. We wanted social change and we felt we ought to be part of it (Lamacraft, 2000).

The most important aspect of this manifesto did not lie in the fact that it was necessary nor how it was received within the graphic design discipline and the graphic design industries. In January 1964, with twenty-one signatory endorsements from a range of design educators, designers and photographers, four hundred copies of the FTF manifesto were published. The endorsement of this manifesto then continued in the public
On 24 January 1964, the manifesto appeared in its entirety on Tony Benn’s weekly column in *The Guardian* newspaper. Tony Benn was also a Labour Member of Parliament at the time. Benn backed the manifesto with this statement:

The responsibility for the waste of talent which they have denounced so vehemently is one we must all share. The evidence for it is all around us in the ugliness with which we have to live. It could so easily be replaced if only we consciously decided as a community to engage some of the skill which now goes into the frills of an affluent society (Benn in Poynor 2002, p. 7).

That same evening, Garland was invited to appear on the BBC TV News program to read out a section and discuss the manifesto as a result of *The Guardian* article.

The success of the *FTF* manifesto spread, creating interest in the cause and support for its message from Europe, the United States and even from Australia. Garland’s *FTF* also appeared in three more publications in *Design*, the *SIA Journal* (which built an issue around the *FTF*), the Royal College of Art magazine *Ark* and the year book *Modern Publicity 1964/65* where it was translated into French and German. Through his company Ken Garland and Associates (formed in 1962) and as a private individual, Garland continues to design, publish, write, and give public talks and lectures keeping faithful to his belief and statement as a designer/educator. His most prominent work outlined in the *FTF* and projecting his beliefs was for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

For Garland and others alike the success of the *FTF* 1964 manifesto is significant. Despite enthusiastic endorsement, the challenges and proposed changes were not as widely implemented as they were generously endorsed at the time. In 1998, Garland’s *FTF* was republished in *Adbusters*, a subversive anti-consumerism magazine produced in Canada. The accompanying article highlighted the need to refresh the debate about the responsibility of the designer.
The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing, would suffice to solve most of the world’s problems...

M.K. Gandhi, n.d.

The re-emergence of the FTF Manifesto

The birth of the first manifesto brought many designers and design educators to think critically of the future of graphic design practice and discipline. The FTF 1964 was closely connected to the economic and political climate of the time. The FTF 1964 manifesto encapsulated the essence of design debate around social goodness and engagement in responsible action. This chapter examines why the FTF manifesto re-emerged and how it impacted design perspective on a social scale.
Transposition of the 1960s ideologies and design theories into a number of different disciplines took effect predominantly from the 1980s, and they continue to shape and redefine design and the role of design. In graphic design practice, the postmodernist movement paved the way forward. No longer aiming for universal communication, postmodernism in design sought to embrace the world as it is and in terms of design methodologies, practically ‘anything-goes’ applied. Graphic designers also took the art of self-expression to new heights in visual representation, blurring the boundaries between visual communication of the message and the representation of visual communication. In *No More Rules* Rick Poynor (2003) identifies that

Designers were visual interpreters of the emerging mood and they made the assumption that their audiences were sufficiently literate, in a visual sense, to decipher and enjoy a broad range of graphic signals that were often extremely subtle. It may be that, precisely because it was so successful in capturing attention, early postmodern design carried the spores of its own cooption and failure. From the outset, it embodied an implied critique of design’s norms, values and limitations. As the 1980s unfolded, designers began to apply postmodern theory to a more self-conscious deconstruction of design’s inbuilt assumptions and of its persuasive power as public communication (p. 37).

In the United States (US) from the late 1960s, social, cultural and political revolution was taking place. Demand for free speech, equal human rights, women’s liberation, civil rights and Vietnam War protests were at the forefront of public expression. By the 1980s, demand for moral corporate values and attention to environmental issues were ripe. The film *Wall Street* (1987), directed by Oliver Stone reflects the moral corruption induced by wealth and promoted by the large corporations. The film’s main character Gordon Gekko (played by Michael Douglas), a wealthy and extremely successful (but venal) corporate raider made a famous speech from which the expression ‘greed is good’ found a place in common parlance. This speech was a reflective indication of the state of business and financial affairs in the US. It described the ruthless, profit-obsessed corporate culture of the late 1980s and 1990s and by extension became associated with unrestrained free-market economic policies. Barbara Kruger, an artist, graphic designer and educator reflects the power of such images and the capacity of signs to affect deep structures of belief implied in her work and by situating the visual messages in the public domain. Kruger aims to ‘intervene in stereotypical representations, disrupting their power, displacing their hold, and clearing a space for enlightened awareness’ (Linker 1990, p. 12). To Kruger,

power is not localized in specific institutions but is dispersed through a multiplicity of sites, operating in the range of discursive procedures that govern sexuality, morality, the family, education, and so on (Linker 1990, p. 27).

Through Kruger’s work, we discover the coercions of the media enabling us to develop the means to confront social, cultural and political issues as a visual voice.
Concurrent with the advent of economic and technological progress, the late 1980s saw the end of the Cold War. The re-emergence of the design manifestos in the late 1980s can also be identified as having close connection with economic and political changes arising from the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet empire and the progressive development of the European Union (EU). The fall of Soviet Communism in 1989 and most notably the fall of the Berlin Wall, redefined the state of the world’s future from one of acceptance of the status quo to one of a world with potential for a new and dynamic future for Europe. Radical thinkers from the Soviet Union (USSR), young, educated and urban members of the Communist elite, gradually recognised the need for radical change in order to hold their own with the capitalist West. Whereas the Industrial Revolution engaged in the growth of the economy through mass production and consumerism, in this new age, microtechnologies and global communication were seen as the most valuable assets to strengthen a nation’s economy and military power. The USSR’s then president Mikhail Gorbechev’s attempts at reform helped end the Cold War, dissolving the Soviet Union. His actions earned him the Nobel Peace prize in 1990. Many Eastern European countries formerly under Soviet rule gained their independence and the possibility of a united Europe was reawakened. In the early 1950s, a handful of European statesmen including Konrad Adenauer (Germany), Winston Churchill (Great Britain), Alcide de Gasperi (Italy) and Robert Schuman (France) envisioned a united Europe.

There would be a new order in western Europe, based on the interests its peoples and nations shared together, and it would be founded upon treaties guaranteeing the rule of law and equality between all countries (European Union, n.d.). The fall of the Soviet Union and the re-emergence of the united Europe vision also prompted designers, educators and thinkers to re-address the future of world design, design that represents human values.

The first manifesto that reflects the unification of Europe is the Munich Design Charter. This charter is presented as a platform in which new arguments, categories and intellectual dimensions are offered by a group of experts and designers from different European countries who met in 1990 in Munich. Therefore, it is not presented as a dogmatic belief or ideology, rather as a promotional tool for wider cultural and civic cooperation. The charter addresses the importance of design by stating that design is, therefore, one of the most extensive ethical theorems of European thought, as well as one of the higher and more problem-conscious points of reflection on the project of modernity in Europe. In terms of its genesis, design has always been deeply concerned with all parts of contemporary life: with economy as well as ecology, with traffic and communication, with products and services, with technology and innovation, with culture and civilization, with sociological, psychological, medical, physical, environmental, and political issues, and with all forms of social organization. Given its complexity, design has thus meant working on history, on the present, and on the future (The Munich Design Charter 1991, p. 75).
This charter presents three theorems; ecology of complexity, ecology of the project, and ecology of relations. These theorems ask for consideration of a new dimension of design, to develop new professional skills and education concepts to deal with challenging relationships between humans, their interface with the artificial world as a reality, and with recognition of the relationship between humans and the effect on the environment of human interference.

This charter concludes by saying that the signatories want to confirm design’s role as a culture that accompanies the relationship between man and the artificial world: a discipline set at the very heart of the great problems of this century, a cross-roads for the role of Europe in the world. In our society the development of this new dimension of design will become the yard stick for assessing the quality of life (The Munich Design Charter 1991, p. 77).

This representation of unification of progressive thinking of design discipline and practice expresses the essence of the FTF 1964 manifesto.

Visual communication delivers information and has the power to persuade its audience – the community of users – of a set of values considered by the corporations of the world market as essential. This notion of visual rhetoric continues today. Although the initial impact of FTF did not reach its full potential and no further changes occurred to define its effectiveness, nevertheless the role of design and its effects in society were being addressed by a small group of designers. In the US, design educators were implementing changes in the way that design is studied and understood with continuous enquiry into design theory, practice and debate on the values of design in social and cultural contexts. The timing of the FTF manifesto coincided with a climate ripe for action and the issue of the designer’s role and responsibility continues to be a significant challenge today.

Adbusters is an activist magazine devoted to political and social issues. Its concept stemmed from the 1960s French ‘situationalism’ movement (whose members included Guy Debord), which favoured the use of ‘detournement,’ an interventionist manipulation to subvert corporations’ and organisations’ advertising messages. After coming across the manifesto in a back issue of Eye magazine, Kalle Lasn (founder and editor of Adbusters) felt that its sentiments had become more relevant at the time (the late 1990s). Lasn and Chris Dixon (art director of Adbusters) published the original FTF 1964 in the Adbusters (Autumn, 1998). Dixon and Lasn introduced the original FTF to Tibor Kalman, an American designer, writer and critic. Kalman then suggested the update and relaunch of FTF. Dixon and Lasn invited Rick Poynor, former editor of Eye Magazine, and a design critic, to redraft the original text, updating the language to address current design issues. The endorsement of the redrafted manifesto took some time, resulting in deferral of publication to 1999. Poynor felt that the revised version must be endorsed to gain credibility by readers and validate its support, as did the original FTF. Poynor stresses that the names were a way of helping to get the manifesto noticed in the countries where it was
published—in America, Britain and the Netherlands. An anonymous text is unlikely to have generated the same degree of attention. This is an issue of personal conviction, and it was important for readers to see the names of real people who believed in these things. Also, the manifesto was published in the spirit of the original, and the original had named supporters, including Ken Garland (Pynor in McCarron 2001, p. 115).

In 1999, *FTF 2000* along with endorsements from thirty-three world-renowned designers was published in *Adbusters* (no. 27 Autumn) with the entire issue written and designed around *FTF*. Kalman thought that the timing was right to relaunch *FTF*; coming into the new millennium, social, cultural and global issues were becoming more and more pressing. Many commentators (among them Cranmer & Zappaterra 2003, McQuiston 2004, Glaser & Ilic 2005 et al) have noted that the same concerns—human rights, anti-war sentiment, anti-commercialism and environmental concerns—continue to be dominant issues.

To reach an international audience, *FTF 2000* also appeared in six more publications: *Emigré*, the *American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Journal* in the US; *Blueprint* and *Eye* in London, United Kingdom; *Items* in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; and *Form* in Frankfurt, Germany. The reactions, debate and discussion that followed were extensive, much more so than the editors of all seven magazines anticipated. However, the response was divided. This will be further discussed in the close reading of the two *FTF* manifestos.

An hypothesis can be drawn that as the century came to a close, many designers came to reflect upon their role as a designer and the future of design, since the *FTF 2000* was presented to guide those designers to self-reflect the role and responsibility of design.

The twentieth century saw changes resulting from two world wars which led to the Cold War, the development of nuclear armament and germ warfare, and later to digital warfare. “Operation Desert Storm, 1991”, has been described as the most effective technological war ever because of its reliance on sophisticated technology both operationally and in controlling media output (Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, 1997). Subsequent changes in mass industrialisation brought the further development of digital technology and the globalisation of capitalism. Tiffany Turkington, designer and lecturer from South Africa spoke at the Sydney International Council of Graphic Design Association (Icograda) Conference (1999). In her paper, Turkington addressed the importance of focusing on the ‘humanness’ of design.

The year 2000 opens the curtain on a whole new stage as designers are being pushed to reveal the persona under the characters they rehearse. The people behind the masks will now be asked to play themselves, and designers will rediscover the value of personal interpretation, personal involvement and personal input. It is therefore clear that we will be pressurised to reconsider our function and our roles in society that we have rehearsed for so long (Turkington 1999).

> The importance of focusing on the ‘humanness’ of design.
Further to this Turkington states

the function of design is to communicate. To question whether it exists beyond its function is to return to unsolved past issues. Design continues to walk the tightrope between fine art, commercialism and academia. This is a strong debate that can only be won with compromise. All these areas have the same function: to keep design moving, to continue to develop and clear the necessary paths for it along its journey, no matter how many secondary functions it assumes (Turkington 1999).

Turkington’s concern deals with facing the new millennium with a refreshed view to ‘start finding and practising design that speaks to humanity’ (Turkington 1999). The re-emergence of the manifestos presented for this study offer some insight to how design can be effective and practised responsibly. The following chapters will look at the form and content to articulate how graphic design may be practised.

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.
M.K. Gandhi, n.d.
The Manifestos: Form and Content

Six manifestos have been chosen for this study on the basis that they emerged out of a need to engage in debate in keeping with the social, political and cultural climate of the times. Each manifesto states the need to consider the socio-economic context to define the importance of visual communication in design and its effects in the social arena. Following is a close look at the form and content of each manifesto to gain further understanding of the implied meaning in the context of wider social, political, economic and cultural dimensions. In so doing, it is hoped that this will articulate the importance of the manifestos presented here.

First Things First, written by Ken Garland, London, UK, 1964 (A.1.)

The FTF 1964 defined the need to examine the purpose of graphic design and to look at informing society according to civic values: education, information for cultural aspects and engagement of social awareness. Garland presents these issues as the most important aspects of the graphic designer’s role. Design is not just a tool to persuade the audience through the deceptive and unnecessary advertisement of products such as cat food and stomach powders to roll-ons, pull-ons and clip-ons. Whilst the ideology of imagination is seen as a medium to gain lucrative rewards and prospective status as a designer and as a citizen of a nation, Garland’s concern is the security of ‘our’ nation’s civic, ethical and social dimensions.

The manifesto offers the reader a reflective platform to look back and ask what is my role as a graphic designer, a visual mediator of a client’s message to the audience or a visual communicator of an effective design solution to the community of users?

The main context in which this manifesto was formed was through Garland’s personal interest in social and political issues. He was a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) movement and its main designer (1962–1966). The 1960s was the most pressing post-war period in Europe and the US, with the growing development of nuclear armament in nations such as France and the USSR. For Garland it was important to address design’s social function and the way it is determined by human culture.
The FTF endorses thoughtful and useful communication that has value, encourages substance of dialogue and offers to share experiences. The manifesto is not overly aggressive, yet its compelling issues are addressed forcefully. Although the statement may seem largely forgotten, the passion and drive for good visual sense and communication was well explored throughout the 1960s. The statement made in the manifesto is still effective today, 42 years after its publication, and this is perhaps due to the cyclical nature of historical trends and effects.


The Scandinavian Design Council manifesto grew out of the conference ‘Scandinavian Design 1990 – Towards 2000’, held in Malmo, Sweden in June 8-10, 1990. The re-emergence of European manifestos at this time marks the beginning of a new decade with a positive unity shared in Europe after the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall. The topic of the conference, design and ecology, focuses on human needs in the future, seeking to design a framework for the evolving approach to life that encompassed both natural and human ecological dimensions in an ethical manner. The focus of this manifesto is central to the five Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. These countries all share similarities in the structure of their society, governing body, legal system, economy, political and religious atmosphere. They also have a shared history and their environmental conditions emerged from their social structures and traditions. This manifesto validates their historical unity of cultural, political, social, geographical and linguistic ties, strengthening the message of the manifesto.

The manifesto stresses the need to re-establish the basic values of life. It suggests that these values are of social and cultural concern that need to be addressed in an ethically sound manner. It states the importance of valuing set principles of right conduct (ethical design practice) in the Scandinavian context toward the new ways of life, which are ecologically and economically stable. It also states that continuous assessment of education values and the forceful articulation of design disciplines are essential. However, the placement of the word ‘everyone’ at the conclusion of the statement denotes an inclusive attitude and a willingness to engage positively on a global scale.

Its message incorporates humanistic values such as reason, compassion and scientific thinking towards freedom, justice and improved social conditions, and seeks to discover possibilities in design practices leading towards the perceived new way of life. The vision and the message of authentic Scandinavian design is that ‘the design discipline must forcefully articulate, make visible and emphasise the design message in order to influence both public and private decision-making’ (A Scandinavian Design Council Manifesto on Nature Ecology, and Human Needs for the Future 1991, P. 78). Therefore, design must be built upon context-informed practice.
First Things First 2000, revised by Rick Poynor, Chris Dixon and Kalle Lasn, UK and Canada, 1999 (A.3)

The revised manifesto from the original FTF 1964 manifesto sought to readdress issues raised at the time, which were seen as still relevant at the turn of the century. Rick Poynor introduced the revised FTF 2000 with endorsements by prominent designers around the world. Its main focus was again responsibility and the role of graphic design.

In the early 1980s, graphic design was often referred to as commercial art (Lupton 1996, p. 12). The name suggests that work is commercial, to persuade and to consume. This notion of commercialisation included those that work in the area of information design and environmental design, as well as all aspects of social and cultural sectors. This identifier of graphic design practice needed a prominent position that addressed the deeper effect of visual communication. The terms ‘graphic design’ and later ‘visual communication in design’ were introduced in the late 1980s. Today the notion of visual communication has expanded into a wider context to cover development in the new media. The word ‘design’ (The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary 1999, p. 279) in English is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, it is about intention, plan or plot that reflects connection to cunning and deception. As a verb it is to stimulate. Flusser (1999) identifies the designer as a ‘cunning plotter laying his traps’ (p. 17). This statement stresses that far too much attention is focused on elements that are inessential to the fundamental values of life that are reinforced by all the manifestos presented in this study.

The current situation of more sophisticated commercial messages enabled by technological advances are further escalated by designers who devote their primary effort to endeavouring to visually represent messages to persuade and promote a lifestyle perceived as cool and chic. These visual messages are often without clear context. There are however many that consider the position of design discipline with an understanding of theory and practice. The statement made in this manifesto acknowledges the impact of visual communication on the community of users, determining that design as social art has more impact on societal behaviour in our culture, nationally and globally.

The FTF 2000 manifesto states a clear purpose.

- There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention.
- Many cultural interventions, social ... and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help (Bierut, Drenttel & Heller 1999, p. 5).

This is true yet contradictory. In the 2004 Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA) biennial awards, over 50% of the awards were given to works in creative industry projects. Designers that are aware of cultural and social implications and the impact of design do use techniques and available technology to create an effect that addresses both the content of the client’s requirements and an anticipation of the audience’s action/reaction. While promotion of the creative industries is important and is a necessary part of any practice for growth and for keeping the business viable, the statement here focuses on the substance of that impact and viability.
The manifesto hopes that ‘no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart’ (Bierut, Drenttel & Heller 1999, p. 6). In 2006, has this message really been taken to heart by all visual communicators? The FTF 2000 is the most debated manifesto (Bierut, Poynor, et al) to date within the graphic design industry. There are those for and against the statement made in this manifesto and some who attack it as ‘elitist’. Jessica Helfand (2001) states that

Graphic design is the most ubiquitous of all the arts. It responds to needs at once personal and public, embraces concerns both economic and ergonomic, and is informed by numerous disciplines including art and architecture, philosophy and ethics, literature and language, politics and performance. Graphic design is everywhere…

(p. 137).

How then can the manifesto engage all designers to change their attitudes to take action? This will be explored further in the following sections, introducing critical statements and presenting relevant examples to validate the impact and effect of the FTF 2000 manifesto.

The Icograda Design Education Manifesto, presented by Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl and Sang-Soo Ahn, Seoul, South Korea, 2000 (A.4)

This manifesto represents the true nature of the theme ‘Oullim’ derived from the Icograda conference held in Seoul, South Korea in October 2000. The essence of this manifesto was derived from the Korean word ‘Oullim’, meaning great harmony, together, integration and unity. The aim of the manifesto is to generate a focus and an integrated approach to the future of visual communication design for designers, design educators, students of design and the community at large. The manifesto’s statement is simply to seek change to create moral values as a community in design discipline.

The Icograda Design Education Manifesto incorporated the essence of the Humanist Manifesto 2000 (Kurtz 2000), a Call for a New Planetary Humanism, which is clearly tied to the millennium. The Humanist Manifesto 2000 proposes a ‘planetary humanism’, stemming from a belief that moral conduct and fundamental moral principles are common to virtually all civilisations. The Humanist Manifesto 2000 incorporates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and most importantly offers a message of hope and a wish ‘to cultivate a sense of wonder and excitement about the potential opportunities for realizing enriched lives for ourselves for generations yet to be born’ (Kurtz 2000).

People of different sociocultural backgrounds do in fact apply similar general moral principles, though specific moral judgments may differ because of differing conditions. The challenge for societies thus is to emphasize our similarities, not our differences (Kurtz in Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002, p. 50).

The paper Between word and deed (Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002) presenting this manifesto notes that

The Planetary Humanism that this manifesto presents is post-postmodernist in its outlook. It draws on the best values of modernity, yet it seeks to transcend the negativity of postmodernism and it looks forward to the information age now
Embracing the role of design as an implicator of visual landscape; generating meaning for the community of users through collaboratively working together to solve problems, engaging and exploring possibilities, articulating ideas into experiences, showing concerns for difference in social and cultural structures, and bearing individual responsibility for the ethical, social and civic dimensions that correspond to design action.

Hence, the Icograda Design Education Manifesto urges action in constructive dialogue and to enhance design education. It calls for a focus on integrating history, theory, research and thinking, having regard to its community of users.

This manifesto is a collaborative effort by an international group of designers from Brazil, China, Germany, India, South Africa, South Korea, The Netherlands, and the US. These designers have common values as world citizens, each representing their own country, professional groups or educational institutes with varying discourse. However, they acknowledge differences in geographical location, politics, economy, culture and social demographics with particular personal experiences in design, education, technology, and the media. The introduction of graphic design as visual communication in design is explicitly outlined here, embracing the role of design as an implicator of visual landscape; generating meaning for the community of users through collaboratively working together to solve problems, engaging and exploring possibilities, articulating ideas into experiences, showing concerns for difference in social and cultural structures, and bearing individual responsibility for the ethical, social and civic dimensions that correspond to design action.

The Icograda Design Education Manifesto outlines that a visual communication designer is a professional:

- Who contributes to shaping the visual landscape of culture.
- Who focuses on the generation of meaning for a community of users, not only interpreting their interest but offering conservative and innovative solutions as appropriate.
- Who collaboratively solves problems and explores possibilities through the systematic practice of criticism.
- Who is an expert that conceptualizes and articulates ideas into tangible experiences.
- Whose approach is grounded in a symbiotic conduct that respects the diversity of environmental and cultural contexts without overemphasizing difference, but by recognizing common ground.
- Who carries an individual responsibility for ethics to avoid harm and takes into account the consequences of design action to humanity, nature, technology, and cultural facts (Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002, pp. 54-55).

The paper *Between word and deed* (Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002) presents an introduction to the manifesto outlining the background to its conception and the challenges involved in developing it. The manifesto offers a distinct definition of visual communication in design and expresses that ‘the power to think the future “near or far” should be an integral part of visual communication design’ (p. 55).
The First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit, St. Moritz, Switzerland, December 2001 (A.5) and the Second Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit, St. Moritz, Switzerland, December 2003 (A.6)

Dr. Michael Erlhoff and Prof. Uta Brandes founded the St. Moritz Design Summit in collaboration with Hanspeter Danuser, the head of the local organisation for health resorts and tourism in St. Moritz in 2000. Their concept of an annual three day design summit to be held in St. Moritz with thirty significant designers around the world to discuss social, ecological, economical and direct design oriented problems was formed. The summit was then taken over and organised by the Raymond Loewy Foundation, Switzerland, to provide a high-calibre international discussion to shape the future of design and its links to economy, politics, culture and society.

In 2001 the second summit took place with the main discussion focusing on globalisation and its effects on design. Further discussion concerning the actual definition of and beyond the limits of design intensified and a joint declaration was subsequently agreed resulting in the First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit. The first declaration defines the belief formed by thirty well-known international designers on design. It articulates that design is an essential part of everyday life connecting people to economy, politics, culture and society. It encourages a designer to be brave and explorative, and to embrace challenges as these 30 prominent designers offer to commit their ideas, experience and passion to help people recover self-esteem and self-confidence.

With a growing pressure to be innovative and efficient in the market driven hype of today’s world, the 2003 summit recognised that de-acceleration strategies are needed – slowing down, taking time, reflecting on the place of design in our society – in hopes that this will improve the quality of design, and thus our quality of life (St. Moritz Design Summit 2003a). The St. Moritz summit declared June 21, the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere, as an annual ‘International Design Action Day (IDAD)’.

The declaration supports sensible design with time to reflect on the situation of design and the designer’s position in society. The first IDAD was held in 2004 with participants from Germany, Switzerland and South Africa working together to increase people’s understanding of design. In 2005 the IDAD spread to Cologne (Germany), Tokyo (Japan), Strasbourg (France) and New York (USA) with ‘Stupid design’ as its theme, later launching a website www.stupiddesign.com featuring a collection of proposals for ‘most stupid designs’ from around the world. This set a precedent for the engagement of design’s position in society and for the designer to reflect on his/her actions through examination of design in our everyday life.
The Manifestos: Analysis

The six manifestos each propose that designers do have a purposeful responsibility and their role is to participate in communicating to society. The act of designing is interpreted in varying ways. The FTF 1964 manifesto hopes that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes (Garland 1998, p. 22).

Therefore, the role of design is to engage in heightening awareness of design and increasing its impact on communication to society. The Icograda Design Education Manifesto calls for harmony and balance:

- The variety of and complexity of design issues has expanded. The resulting challenge is the need for a more advanced ecological balance between human beings and their socio-cultural and natural environment (Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002, p. 54).

The emphasis expressed here is on design building an understanding of relationships between humans, our built environment and the natural environment.

When the history of graphic design is viewed from a world perspective, it enables us to see that people of all nationalities have been active designers within their own communities. The manifestos suggest that this act of designing should be reinforced by the recognition of a responsibility towards society; that design has agency in building relationships and communication. Design history traces changes that have affected the human experience through socio-economic and technological revolutions that have increased our understanding of the world through visual communication in a design context. While graphic design forms part of the visual spectrum, the specific significance and history of graphic design has a unique contribution to make to the more general context of design history, thus the importance of graphic design cannot be underestimated.

In Graphic Design: Fine Art or Social Science? Jorge Frascara (1996) presents concerns of the social responsibility in graphic design as the following:

- The impact that all visual communication has in the community and the way in which its content influences people.
• The impact that all visual communication has in the visual environment.
• The need to ensure that communications related to the safety of the community are properly implemented (p. 47).

Frascara also notes that graphic design engages in active dialogue with the client and other professionals to achieve specific communication objectives. This close relationship engages designers in greater connection with society and the world, which is emphasised by an examination of design history where design is presented as a social art born as a new profession when the shaping of things became separated from the art of working things. Without a societal context, which eventually makes what a designer designs, design is less than useless; it does not exist. Design works on the borders of all social pressure groups. To groups that concern themselves with economic, legislative and technological subjects, design provides cultural answers, at best the immeasurable elements of being just right for me, just right for now, a pleasure to see, to use, to cherish. And when such pressure groups present bankrupt conditions affecting our ultimate cultural contribution, we are the first to know. We may not be able to do much about it, but we know (Kuypers 1994, p. 27–28).

The manifestos imply that this knowing and understanding of social issues incorporates relationship-building between the designer and the project through connections to society, and that the act of designing is all about communicating to the community. *FIT 2000* voices the urgency of this connection: many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programs, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help (Bierut, Drenttel & Heller 1999, p. 5).

The *Scandinavian design* manifesto urges that

4. The design disciplines must forcefully articulate, make visible and emphasise the design message in order to influence both public and private decision making (A Scandinavian design council manifesto on nature ecology, and human needs for the future 1991, P. 78).

The tone of the manifestos is mostly exclusive to the process and the practice of design. The *First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit* offers exclusive expertise on design, noting that design is the way of thinking and acting that thrives on addressing complex processes, on navigating contradictions, and on connecting isolated issues (The St. Moritz Design Summit 2001).

The *First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit* also stresses that

As designers, we reject any form of globalisation that ignores social differences and the factual quality of peoples lives.... Design must offer modular systems, transparent strategies, open
sources, intelligent interventions and identify key problems (The St. Moritz Design Summit 2001).

To strengthen the message of the first declaration, the Second Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit identifies the notion of design as ‘Sensible design’. Sensible design rejects zealous support of marketing hype.

We demand the time to reflect on the situation of design and our position in society in order to improve the quality in design and of life (The St. Moritz Design Summit 2003b).

To most designers this ideology of ‘sensible design’ offers greater time for thought and reflection, further understanding of the design process, and self-reflection in design practice and discipline. However, it can also be understood as being yet again another manifesto exclusive to elite practitioners by imposing preconceived ideas that break down the implied meaning and lead to blurred communication of the intent of the manifesto.

The Icograda Design Education Manifesto enables the reader to be inclusive in its message. The manifesto recognises the shift in design terminology and design discipline. It also acknowledges professional limitations, yet defines visual communication design with clarity.

The writers of this manifesto warrant that the message at most dramatises the change in order to be effective. Marian Sauthoff in correspondence with Poggenpohl and Ahn noted that ... contemporary graphic design is marked by transition, fluidity, complexity and convergence ... the impact of digital information technology ... the importance of research and self-reflection ... sustainability and accountability ... the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered education (Sauthoff in Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002, p. 53).

Jan van Toorn added, Design has been entirely incorporated in the radical transformation of social, economic, and cultural life through the advertising and image-design of transnational corporations, culture industry and politics (Toorn in Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002, p. 53).

Hence this manifesto promotes conscious negotiation of issues presented by the writers about design and design education, and it incites the reader to gain a design perspective on the essence of ‘Oullim’ – harmony and balance.

A new concept in design promises to tune nature, humanity, and technology, and to harmonize east and west, north and south, as well as past, present, and future in a dynamic equilibrium (Poggenpohl & Ahn 2001, p. 55).

A Scandinavian Design Council Manifesto on Nature, Ecology, and Human Needs for the Future (1991) explicitly expresses that as designers, 5. We have to establish positive cooperation between designers, industry and users of all categories to ensure the preservation of the richness and variety of our planet and safer and fuller living for everyone (p. 78).
This manifesto, written ten years prior to the Icograda Design Education Manifesto, articulates the essence of ‘Oullim’ cohesively.

The six design manifestos chosen focus on the following aspects of design:

- **Design Discipline** – the manifestos stress the importance of presenting visual communication relevant to the objective of the context allowing for professional limitations.
- **Design Process** – the manifestos function as a call for action toward defining individual responsibility as a designer. They promote the power to change and identify that design has agency, and therefore the capacity, to generate action whereby design can effect change. However, by identifying the necessity of self-reflection, they allow the reader to think and thereby act responsibly. The manifestos are not a guideline, nor a blueprint on how to design. Rather the manifestos’ function is to call for action to change, thereby implementing the effect of change.
- **Design Education** – the manifestos stress the importance of debate and promote the expansion of discussion about design, on design and for design. They seek inclusive discussion to coordinate agency. ‘The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested, it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part through the visual language and resources of design’ (Bierut, Drenttel & Heller 1999, p. 5). Furthermore, the manifestos address the issue of meaningful learning. ‘3. We have to ensure there is continual reappraisal of educational programmes not only for school children but throughout the whole of adult life’ (A Scandinavian Design Council Manifesto On Nature Ecology, And Human Needs for the Future 1991, P. 78). The manifesto seeks to change the education environment from that of a teacher-centred to a learner-centred environment through the recognition of theory and design history as an integral part of design education.

For this project, I have postulated that these six manifestos reflect the need to address ethical, civic and social dimensions in design. It is inherent in our society that we as human beings have embedded values that identify our humanness. In morality, it is the subjective will that allows an individual to define moral values. As Hegel (1967) states, the moral is not characterized primarily by its having already been opposed to the immoral, nor is right directly characterized by its opposition wrong. The point is rather that the general characteristics of morality and immorality alike rest on the subjectivity of the will (p. 76). Therefore the manifestos incite the will to implement positive change in me as an individual to self-reflect on my design practice and to challenge me as a human being. This is further expressed in ‘The Journey’ section.
Meaning must await being said or written in order to inhabit itself, and in order to become, by differing from itself, what it is: meaning.

Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference 1978

The strength of visual communication is its capacity to communicate effectively. The *FTF* 1964 manifesto gave voice to the urgent need to recognise this agency, and to the need to act responsibly. The 1964 manifesto was also endorsed with enthusiasm, while the revised *FTF* 2000 manifesto took some time to be endorsed. The revised *FTF* 2000 manifesto further created divided opinions, prompting many designers to create their own versions of the manifesto. In this chapter, these two manifestos will be examined to articulate their differences and, in doing so, present some understanding of the debates surrounding the revised *FTF* 2000 manifesto.

**Differences**
Firstly, the differences between these two manifestos must be placed in an historic context. The 1960s was a prosperous economic time in the UK, Europe and the US. The promotion of widely available consumer goods and life style was beginning to have great impact on the graphic design profession. It was a time of close collaborative efforts between graphic design and advertising in the creative industry. Prominent designers at the time, such as Chermayeff and Geismar, Paul Rand, George Lois, Josef Müller-Brockmann, Saul Bass, Herb Lubalin and their ilk were contributing to changes of graphic design discipline and rhetoric by exploring technologies, and experimenting with the conceptual process of communicating visually. Garland’s FTF stresses that as visual communicators, designers, copy writers, illustrators, photographers and educators of visual communication must not waste their talents on techniques and apparatus to sell consumer goods and support non-essential consumer culture. Garland advocates the use of talent for a far richer and rewarding purpose, that of education and informing society of the importance of cultural and social issues to bring ‘greater awareness of the world’. Garland also notes that abolition of advertising is not a ‘feasible solution’, nor are ‘gimmicks’ and ‘hidden’ persuasions a worthwhile purpose.

Garland’s statement to use talent effectively and thoughtfully is demonstrated by a specific design movement. The International Typographic Style (also referred to as Swiss Design) emerged from Switzerland and Germany during the 1950s. This movement was spearheaded by those educated at the Bauhaus; the style was further refined at two design schools in Switzerland, one led by Armin Hofmann and Emil Ruder in Basel, and the other by Joseph Müller-Brockmann in Zurich. The International Typographic Style continues to exert its influence today in all textual representation of visual communication.

The movement had distinct visual characteristics: a visual unity of design achieved by the use of a mathematically constructed grid to provide harmonious order, the use of sans serif typography set flush left and ragged right to express the spirit of the progressive age, and the use of objective photography and copy that presented information simply and clearly without exaggerated claims of propaganda and commercial advertising. The movement rejected personal expression and eccentric solution, embracing a universal and scientific approach to design problem solving. It held as its cornerstone that the role of the designer was to objectively communicate important information between components of society, implementing clarity and order as the ideal solution to universal communication.

Josef Müller-Brockmann defined the International Typographic Style and further expressed the use of grid structure in his book, Grid Systems in Graphic Design (1981). Müller-Brockmann used an arrangement of geometric elements and type to express unity, order and rhythmic structure in his visual communication. The der Film exhibition poster (see figure 03) notably demonstrates universal harmony through the use of the golden section (the principle of thirds found throughout nature, art, and applied to architecture and design), considered most aesthetically pleasing by the ancient Greeks. The poster achieved the fundamental objective of the International Typographic Style, a simple and effective communication expressing the content clearly and in visual harmony.
Increasingly, the International Typographic Style was well-suited to the growing global post-war marketplace. Corporations recognised the importance of developing a corporate image and identity in order to reach the widest audience. To corporations, design offered an influential tool to engage in a major way by shaping a reputation for quality and reliability. The International Typographic Style continues to influence the corporate and institutional marketplace today. By utilising a standardised corporate logo, symbol or trademark, a uniform colour scheme and sympathetic typography within a coherent grid structure, consistent style and identity are achieved.

The influences of design practice and design discipline at the time were undergoing constant necessary changes to establish design’s presence in society. The designers shared a common interest in providing purposeful and responsible design to industry and clients for the public. This notion of servicing the client still continues today, although for some time this drive to become a responsible industry lost its essence and focus during the 1980s. However, by focusing on the relationships formed between the designer and the client, this nexus was recognised as an integral part of the design industry and became accepted practice.

In 2005, the Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA) held a National Conference in Noosa, Queensland. Andrew Ashton, founder of Pip & Co. design studio, presented Evaluating Design Effectiveness, a paper that reiterated the importance of the relationship formed between designers and their clients. Ashton identified that the most effective method of measuring design that works is the relationship between the design and client. Happy clients and designers usually seem to have a habit of also working together over years rather than projects. If the design works, the client achieves their goals and is then in the position to commission more work (Ashton 2006).

So how has design evolved to be effective and for whom? In 1963, Britain took an important initiative with the formation of the International Council of Graphic Design Associations.

Figure 03
Müller-Brockmann, J. 1960. der Film (of the Film) exhibition poster. The word der is set in grey with the rest of text in red on black background.
Icograda played an important role in defining design and its practice. Along with conferences, meetings, student competitions, seminars and on-line discussion of design issues, Icograda’s role was and still is to promote ‘graphic designers’ vital role in society and commerce. Icograda unifies the voices of graphic designers and visual communication designers worldwide’ (Icograda n.d.).

Currently, Icograda defines the role of graphic design on their website as follows:

Graphic design is an intellectual, technical and creative activity concerned not simply with the production of images but with the analysis, organization and methods of presentation of visual solutions to communication problems. Information and communication are the basis of world-wide interdependent living, whether in trade, cultural or social spheres. The graphic designer’s task is to provide the right answer to visual communication problems of every kind in every sector of society (Icograda n.d.).

The site defines Graphic Design, Graphic Designer, and Graphic Design Process as expressed by different graphic design associations around the world. Graphic Design as defined by the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario, a Member Association of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada (GDC) states:

Graphic Design is an interdisciplinary, problem-solving activity which combines visual sensitivity with skill and knowledge in areas of communications, technology and business. Graphic design practitioners specialize in the structuring and organizing of visual information to aid communication and orientation (Icograda n.d.).

In 1984, the Articles of Association of the International Council of Graphic Design Associations, September 18, stated that a Graphic Designer is one who has the artistic sensibility, skill and experience and/or training professionally to create designs or images for reproduction by any means of visual communication, and who may be concerned with illustration; typography; calligraphy; surface design for packaging; or the design of patterns, books, advertising and publicity material, or any form of visual communication (Icograda n.d.).

Finally, AGDA defines the graphic design process as a problem solving process, one that requires substantial creativity, innovation and technical expertise. An understanding of a client’s product or service and goals, their competitors and the target audience is translated into a visual solution created from the manipulation, combination and utilization of shape, colour, imagery, typography and space (Icograda n.d.).

These statements all define graphic design as a process of solving problems. The number of problems and solutions can differ from designer to designer within countries, by client definition, audience and problem content. Graphic design
history tells us that graphic design has developed to engage in multi-faceted and multi-dimensional design movements, setting trends within visual communication practices.

From the beginning of 2000, people in developed countries around the world marked the beginning of a new millennium with a common belief that change was necessary to build a better future. While graphic design was presented as solving problems of communication, it was also often presented in the popular media as being concerned with good taste, being up-to-date and/or advanced.

Marshall McLuhan in 1967 published The medium is the message in which he outlined that the medium is the message intended to challenge and change the way visual communication engages with the community of users because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action (McLuhan 2001, p. 9).

He suggested that the new ‘electronic technology’ would make us all members of a ‘global village’. It is this new ‘electronic technology’, and now also digital technology, that has made a distinct mark on the development of design.

What does this mean for the human association of graphic design and design responsibility? The FTF 2000 states that designers who devote their efforts primarily to advertising, marketing and brand development are supporting, and implicitly endorsing, a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact (Bierut, Drenttel & Heller 1999, p. 5). Therefore to some extent designers are conforming to a development of a ‘global village’ in producing a ‘harmful code of public discourse’.

It is this message that defines the difference between the original and the revised manifestos. The original manifesto reflected on the situation in a national context. In a global context, the debate and understanding of capitalism is divided into those that reflect the ‘greed is good’ speak of the 1980s, the lifestyle of the ‘anything goes’ attitude in post-modernist sensibility. Design brought most professionals, educated or self-taught, to embrace the aesthetic nature of imaging. This practice forms part of everyday design practice and is in a constant flux of repetition of similar visual styles in a majority of design outcomes today. I believe that art and design magazines for young adults published in Australia, such as Empty and Monster Children, while claiming to advocate the aesthetics of design, contain a large portion of content which is ‘visual-candy’ rather than an expression of the substance of design, its process and the importance of content.

Appreciation of beauty doesn’t require intelligence (Kant 2005). However, critical thinking and identifying one’s responsibility towards society takes knowledge, understanding and a willingness to accept challenges. Renewed in the spirit of the original manifesto, FTF 2000 proposes ‘a reversal of priorities in favor of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication—a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of design that is everywhere. It is applied to everyday life situations, and at every possible moment it has become incorporated into our daily life experience.'
of meaning’ (Bierut, Drenttel & Heller 1999, p. 5). If design exists only to embrace the aesthetic nature of imaging, then this ‘new kind of meaning’ asks us to re-evaluate how design can function aesthetically in the production of content. However, the statement made in the *FTF 2000* is viewed as creating contradictions in the everyday practice of design by a number of designers and educators. The role of graphic design is to visually communicate, and regardless of whether it educates, informs or persuades its audience, design is everywhere. It is applied to everyday life situations, and at every possible moment it has become incorporated into our daily life experience. In the advertising industry, it is essential to sell, inform and educate; however, as an audience, the choices require us to be informed and thoughtful.

In identifying what design is and how design can be presented responsibly, do designers really need to create a ‘new kind of meaning’ as defined in the *FTF 2000* manifesto? Michael Bierut in *A Manifesto with Ten Footnotes* (2002) presents his disappointment with the way that the *FTF 2000* manifesto is written and presented. Bierut explores the complex nature of design that services the public through corporate clients. He expresses his inspiration taken from Bill Golden, the creator of the CBS logo. Bierut terms it a twenty-one-word manifesto.

I happen to believe that the visual environment ... improves each time a designer produces a good design—and in no other way (Golden in Bierut 2002, p. 31).

Bierut (2002) further expresses that commercial work is a hard earned venture.

Make no mistakes, there is much to be alarmed about in the contemporary world, from the continuing establishment of the corporation as global superstate, to the idiotic claims of marketing mavens seeking to elevate brand loyalty to the status of world religions. Lasn, Dixon, Poynor and the signers of First Things First are right that graphic design can be a potent tool to battle these trends. But it can be something else, something more. For in the end, promise of design is about a simple thing: common decency (p. 31).

Bierut (2002) asks whether a ‘new kind of meaning’ perhaps should be substituted to “meaning,” period? For injecting meaning into every part of their work is what Kalman and Eames and designers like them have always done best’ (p. 30).

The core of design practice should be positioned in a social analysis of cultural and political impact. In *A new kind of dialogue* Andrew Howard (2002) reiterates Bierut’s view on ‘a new kind of meaning’ by stating that design is not an abstract theoretical discipline—it produces tangible artefacts, expresses social priorities and carried cultural values. Exactly whose priorities and values are at the core of this debate (p. 32).

Brett Comb also notes that Design, like so many other institutions today, shows signs of being affected by a crisis of meaning and value. So long as design remains deter-
mined by outside interests, by practical aims and authority, the meanings of the practice will produce a kind of value relativism. The institution of design may overcome this state, and become more vital as it supports the development of purposes, which come from within the art energy and qualities in and through which its products are produced. In philosophical terms, design must arrive at its “unconditional imperative” as a foundation of action (Comb in Bierut 2004).

Therefore, the views on design, about design and for design should be debated at a social level. In identifying that design is a purposeful act within limits, the act of designing should be a conscious act prompting self-reflection on the role of the designer who is also a human being.

In recognising the act of designing, the FTF manifestos reflect the core message to prompt designers to act responsibly. FTF 2000 became an important issue because design has become more seductive and sophisticated. Rick Poynor stresses that as graphic design becomes more sophisticated and pervasive, so there’s an enormous capacity for it to become manipulative and I guess that’s my biggest fear. Design more than ever has a real responsibility to do with the nature of the media world that we all now inhabit (Poynor in Bierut 2004).

The difference between the 1964 manifesto and the 2000 manifesto is embedded in cultural changes now implicitly engaged with globalisation. Poynor also states that there was some sense in the years after World War Two that design’s purpose was to help people’s lives better by designing their environment and information more effectively.... Now there’s a denial of social duty by corporations, so it’s no surprise that we have absorbed a new set of attitudes. That’s the challenge now: how can you reconnect with other people? But it needs larger social and political shifts before you will see any widespread change in attitudes among designers who, inevitably, simply express the values of their day (Poynor in Bierut 2004).

Thus in this wider context and much evolved definition of design, designers should note the paradoxical nature of the manifesto and embrace the essence of its importance.

Bierut identified signatories of the manifestos as ‘usual suspects’. Those who voiced opinions against the FTF 2000 manifesto can also be defined as the ‘usual suspects’. Michael Bierut did not sign the manifesto. He had reservations and still holds this point of view. In an interview with Patrick Burgoyne, Bierut states

What I dislike is the idea that either you can sell out or you can be marginalised and there’s nothing in between... (Bierut 2004).

Previous to this statement, Poynor stressed

I got enough feedback personally to sense that there was an audience for whom it was meaningful. It didn’t offer any specific answers, but it served as inspiration. In terms of it forcing some kind of huge change in the body politic – this is a
ridiculous notion. All it was saying was that you’re a designer, you have to make decisions about your life and where you want to invest your time and talent. Are you doing what you want? Would you consider other possibilities? (Bierut 2004).

While some designers and educators of design argue that the 
 FT F 2000 is elitist, the core essence and aim of the manifesto was achieved from these differences of opinion created by the opposition to the identity and definition of design and design practice. It also strengthens the position of design as an expanding and collaborative process that should be debated in order to keep this expansion as thoughtful and responsible for our future and for everyone.

In Ashton’s statement made at the AGDA National conference in 2005, he stressed that his choice to become a small studio meant that he could engage in open dialogue. This engagement with the community of creative industry provided him and his team, Studio Pip and Co., with the possibility of working towards the idea of developing outcomes. He aims to engage in design to communicate not as a mere function of dressing up products to please the clients. Whilst recognising the importance of the client’s participation in the design process, his view on substance is clear in his statement. He ends by saying that measuring design effectiveness is more than the drivers of business and marketing. The best of creative work comes from happy clients, inspired outcomes and insightful designers – a relationship that is worth working towards (Ashton 2006).

Ashton’s recognition of his responsibility as a designer has identified his limits and in so doing he has chosen to create collaborative efforts to shape a creative and happy client. Although Ashton’s statement of collaborative effort is an essential part of design process, this should lead towards further collaboration within design disciplines to stimulate debate and action of the messages of the manifestos.

The legacy of the FTF 2000 Manifesto is an on-going debate on the responsibility and the effectiveness of design. This is presented in a number of publications such as Looking Closer Four, Citizen Designer: Perspectives on Design Responsibility, How to be a graphic designer without losing your soul, Fresh Dialogue and an Australian publication Open Manifesto. These publications highlight the dichotomy of design practice and discipline with the unifying presence of action, that of thoughtful response and engagement in debate about and on design.

The endorsement to the FTF 2000 manifesto further expanded with Canadian signatories.

Unlike past signatories, this group only agreed to sign on if it were attached to a commitment to meaningful action. Each delegate agreed to perform at least one socially responsible project in their professional work this year, and we are setting up a way for publicly collecting and publicizing these acts as an inspiration for others (Berman in Soar 2002, p. 582).
Many designers have taken on the role of responsible design, most notably a signatory of the *FTF 2000*, Stefan Sagmeister. Sagmeister’s work on the ‘Move our Money’ project (see figure 04) to redirect US defence funds to education and health care has been an effective design practice demonstrating collaborative and community effort. Jonathan Barnbrook’s collaboration with *Adbusters*, creating a number of *FTF* update posters, analysing the political and social implications of buying just one product and ‘The Corporate Vermin that rules America’ poster (Barnbrook), are a call to look at our life situation with humanitarian and environmental concern. These projects and others alike provide an ethical and socially conscious message that is a direct result of the *FTF 2000* manifesto.

Max Bruinsma articulates that the purpose of ethical and socially conscious design comes from two sources.

1. A mentality that estimates content over form and which sees content in terms of (implicit) action, and the acknowledgement that almost anything you can think of doing has an ethical side to it. Since the core of design is to interface information with actions by readers/users (practical or conceptual actions) in a social and cultural context, it follows that design should be aware of its ethical and social responsibilities.

2. As an art historian I have become deeply aware of the ethical and social implications of any cultural activity. Being a central cultural activity, design should be careful not to ignore these implications (Bruinsma 2000).
The purpose of the *FTF 2000* in restating the original manifesto has therefore been to prompt designers to consider politically persuasive dimensions of design. In so doing, it encourages designers to develop a framework for ongoing dialogue with the public on social, cultural and ethical issues.
THE JOURNEY
In seeking comfort, we generally find a quiet corner in life where there is a minimum of conflict, and then we are afraid to step out of that seclusion. This fear of life, this fear of struggle and of new experience, kills in us the spirit of adventure; our whole upbringing and education have made us afraid to be different from our neighbour, afraid to think contrary to the established pattern of society, falsely respectful of authority and tradition.

J. Krishnamurti, *Education and the Significance of Life* 1953

**Introduction**

The thematic relevance of the six design manifestos is presented to identify the relationship between their messages and the practice of design as outlined in the previous chapter. The manifestos stress that the practice of design acknowledges and incorporates human values, which I explore and expand upon in this chapter through an interrogation of my own experiences as a designer. I have hypothesised that the manifestos identify the moral dimensions of design as incorporating ethical, social and civic values. I then engage a framework of the moral dimensions of design that I derive from the exploration of their content in several of my own projects, in order to evaluate for myself the significance of the form and function of the re-emergent manifesto in contemporary graphic design.
The responsible designer

Like the authors of the manifestos, I too came to a different understanding of design thinking through my education and practice. I experienced the same dawning awareness of the moral dimensions of design and our responsibilities as designers. I want to explain my personal discovery a little, then demonstrate how I used the manifestos to construct an understanding to guide me as a designer. I will explain a brief I developed and show how it works in some design experiments.

In order to present a journey to my discovery, I must first go back to my past. When I was growing up in South Korea, I remember that I was always curious about things around me, in nature, in people and in man-made things. I would also collect nuts and bolts because they held things together neatly. At a young age, an Irish Catholic priest had a great impact on me in a way that shaped my belief in humanity. His actions of humility, kindness, warmth, patience and sense of humour have taught me to recognise a sense of responsibility towards others. My childhood life in general was harmonious.

It was not until my arrival in Sydney, Australia that I understood the differences between races and cultures. I also felt the sting of racism. The racism didn’t scar me tremendously as I found that these behaviours stemmed from fear and ignorance. Although I cannot be certain of people’s thoughts or reasons for their actions, I felt that their actions were not of pure hatred. Whilst the experience was not pleasant, this attitude towards me brought back a sense of curiosity about the nature of our behaviour and the rights of being human.

In education and practice, design is often defined as multiple sets of actions in solving problems. A problem is solved in a number of ways through a method of design process to present a possible outcome that best represents the intended message to an intended audience. Since the early 1920s, graphic design was engaged in development of theoretical and academic discourse on design. Mostly borrowed from theories of art and architecture, the essence of the design process is embedded in understanding visual analysis.

When I was a visual communication student in the mid 1990s, designers such as David Carson and Jonathan Barnbrook were breaking the boundaries of modernist theory by exploring and experimenting design possibilities, deconstructive theory was later applied to these explorations. Pure engagement with technology, exploration and experimentation processes became the new bible for students at the time, although most of us only emulated their style without a clear understanding of the impact and process of visual communication. At that time, a number of design lecturers presented their concept of design thinking and practice, which had a great impact on the way that I came to understand design. They suggested that design can combine thought with effective action, and that through research, and by applying design theories and principles to identify the context of any project, a design solution can be implemented with infinite possibilities. They also proposed that, as emerging designers, we should continue to engage in design discourse and become part of the community by building our social awareness. I completed the degree with an instilled knowledge that perhaps design is much more than just solving problems and that there must be something I can do as
a practitioner of design. However, I was searching for easy steps toward achieving ‘how to’ rather than thinking about how I might approach this problem.

Whilst working as a designer, I could not fully engage in the type of designer/client relationship I believed should be possible. I was mainly servicing the clients’ needs (see Garland 1998). Later, I started to implement little elements by slowly communicating ideas about the importance of design solutions to my clients, and encouraging them to consider the position of the audience. This is not an extraordinary effort, and most designers will testify that it is a part of all design practice. I came to understand that most clients really appreciated forming a professional relationship. This is how I came to engage in responsible acts by taking small measures. Attendance at an Icograda conference held in Sydney, Australia in 1999 inspired me to discover what I might do to engage in the practice of design by defining my role as a designer and acting in a responsible manner.

The introduction of the FTF 2000 changed my perception of design and its practice in a much wider context than any other since the beginning of the new millennium. The value of prompting responsible actions was further examined, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of the manifesto’s moral dimensions of design as hypothesised.

**THE JOURNEY**

**THE SIX MANIFESTOS’ MORAL DIMENSIONS OF DESIGN**

**COMMUNICATION**

**PERUSSION**

**REPRESENTATION OF MEANING**

**CONSTRUCTION OF SHIFTING REALITY**

**MANIPULATOR OF TECHNOLOGIES**

**PROCESS OF DESIGN: RESPONSIBILITY OF DESIGN**

**THE SIX MANIFESTOS**

**HYPOTHESES OF MORAL DIMENSIONS OF DESIGN**

**FIRST THINGS FIRST 1964**

**SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN COUNCIL 1969**

**FIRST THINGS FIRST 2008**

**EGON I. DELAIRE DESIGN EDUCATION 2008**

**ST. MIRIN DESIGN SUMMIT 2002**

**SEWERIEN DE CRUYDT, ST. MIRIN 2003**

**PUBLIC DISCURSE: DESIGNER AS AGENT**

**RESPONSIBLE ACT**

Design Thinking – iterative, analytic, creative, imaginative

Design Action – Knowledge of practical, productive and theoretical capacities

Design Response – Social and political act serving society

**DESIGN BRIEF**

(Figure 05 (Park 2004))
Navigating the Manifestos

The six manifestos prompt designers to remember that while design is an act of communication and persuasion, construction and representation of meaning must become a responsible act. By implementing the ‘Wicked Problems’ (Rittel in Buchanan 1996, pp. 14-15) theory, I have hypothesised that the manifestos identify the following moral dimensions of design – ethical, social and civic values.

The messages derived from the manifestos are as follows:

**ETHICAL** – proposing that design is a human activity. The messages of the manifestos state that

- The Designer is a responsible promoter of trade, education and culture.
- Design must promote environmental, social and cultural issues.
- Design requires the promotion of influential processes, responsible to different cultural aspects.
- Design is a responsible process of design thinking.
- Design must address the re-establishment of the basic values of life.
- Design must take into account the consequence of design action on humanity, nature, technology and culture.

**SOCIAL** – proposing that design is everywhere and is part of everyday life. The manifestos suggest that design must address the following to be effective.

- Design is a lasting form of communication, therefore it must clearly represent intended meaning.
- Design is committed to ideas that offer experience and resources.
- Design must become a reflection on design principles.
- Design is an articulation of design discipline which emphasises the design message for the public and private sectors.
- Design education must inspire and facilitate orientation for a more substantial practice.

**CIVIC** – proposing that design is a responsible act, therefore servicing everyone.

- Design is about sharing experiences and resources.
- Design must further establish cooperation between designers, industry and users for the preservation of nature and the environment to create safer and fuller living for everyone.
- Design is about creating a dynamic equilibrium, Chilim – a great harmony.

The hypothesis of moral dimensions of design posits that design has agency and that this act must become a public discourse by implementing responsible acts (see figure 05). The design process is then about engaging in understanding the functions of the design project by recognising the relationships developed from the project, the client and the user. The design outcome must be user-centred, and the manifestos may prompt action to ensure responsible design. However, individual effort must be realised in order to act responsibly. Therefore self-reflection is an important part of design, identifying the development and encouragement of projection and ideation of a purposeful act.

Design Thinking – Intuitive / Analytic / Creative / Imaginative

In Design's own knowledge Luz María Jiménez Navárez (2000) states that design is the process of achieving an idea, i.e. poiesis. Navárez expresses the nature of poietic acts by stating that design is the poetry of matter. Herbert Simon, an American researcher in the fields of cognitive psychology, computer science and philosophy was a pioneer in the field of artificial intelligence. He utilised the poetry of matter in dealing with the science of the artificial. Buchanan (1999) in Wicked problems in design thinking considered Simon's science of artificial as the ‘inventive science of design thinking’. Navárez (2000) states that ‘design thinking blends intuitive, analytic, creative, imaginative thinking, as well as sensibility and expressiveness’ (p. 40).

Navárez (2000) further indicates that design thinking is a holistic, synergic, and continuous whole shaped according to the designer’s personality and social influence which also relies directly on the sensible, expressive, or communicative abilities required to accomplish an idea (p. 40).

Navárez (2000) posits that for a deeper analysis of design as a poietic act, the following must be considered:

- Thinking about doing, which refers to the design process and project.
- Thinking about how to do, which refers to technological production problems.
- Thinking about the consequences of doing, the environmental and cultural impact on design.
• Thinking about the dependence of doing, the financial and productive submissiveness of design.
• And, finally, thinking about “what needs to be done” to achieve institutional and social change (p. 42).

By taking the poietic act and utilising Buchanan’s (1999) ‘Wicked Problems in Design thinking,’ the design thinking for this project must follow the design act of practical, productive and theoretical capacities.

Design Action – Knowledge of practical, productive and theoretical capacities

If we understand man not as a sensory world-entity, not cosmologically, but rather in his personality, what we have in view is a self-responsible being. Self-responsibility is the fundamental kind of being determining distinctively human action, i.e. ethical praxis (Heidegger 2002, p. 183). Praxis by definition is opposed to theory. However, Aristotle distinguished three classes of knowledge: practical, productive and theoretical. Cooper (2003) notes that ‘the human good therefore consists first of all in the perfection of these capacities’ (p. 17). These capacities do not substantiate a universal nature of goodness, as the human good must be understood wholly on its own terms, through intimate knowledge of the conditions of human life and insight into the interconnected capacities making up human nature. This knowledge requires personal experience; it responds to and respects the claims about what is valuable for us that are presented in the mature person’s feelings, as well as the claims presented by abstract and general reasoning (Cooper 2003, p. 17).

The project is a design action and its process is a responsible act. The design process considers ‘design’s own knowledge’ of practical, productive and theoretical capacities.

My Project

This study set out to examine the six manifestos to identify what these manifestos tell us about the morality of design. My project process is explained here to demonstrate the effectiveness of the manifestos’ intended message. The project offers insight to design’s own knowledge by identifying the purpose of design in building relationships between human beings and content, in turn creating life experiences. Thus, the knowledge produced by this design process becomes part of design thinking, design practice and reflexive process – a design approach towards community engagement.

By examining other designers’ work, it was evident that this purposeful act could be driven from a personal perspective. By reflecting on a social issue, the project utilised the hypothesis of moral dimensions defined as a framework to demonstrate that design is responsible for more than the product, and that the designer as agent has the capacity to recognise their responsibility over the possible outcomes.
Chaz Maviyane-Davies’ self-commissioned ‘Rights’ poster series (see images 06 & 07), designed in 1996 and featured in *Area* (Anon 2003), is based on the United Nations Articles on Human Rights seen from an African perspective. Maviyane-Davies, originally from Zimbabwe, now based in Boston, US, demonstrates the effect of design’s own knowledge and his passion to visually communicate and critique a political situation in Zimbabwe. As Anthon Beeke (Anon 2003) describes, Maviyane-Davies combines a great knowledge of craft with a deep insight in the power of words and images. And he knows how to use the Internet to reach a lot of people. With these skills he is one of the rare voices speaking out on the deplorable political situation in Zimbabwe. He demonstrates that graphic design can be fatally dangerous—because to be openly critical in Zimbabwe can get you killed (p. 212).

Another example in *Area* (2003), chosen by Stefan Sagmeister, is a self-commissioned campaign by TRUE, consisting of adhesive subway signage (see figures 08, 09 & 10) created to be placed around New York Subway cars. The designs look like conventional Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) signage with messages of optimism. These works demonstrate that design has agency to be responsible. The responsible act can also be one of self-reflection of social concern.

My project commenced with an analysis of a newspaper article (see figure 11). The article expresses concern for a boy in the US, who has been mistreated by his mother who promoted him as a high achiever through deception. The boy in the article was
considered a genius, however, this article and supporting articles later published state that proof of this boy’s IQ was never validated. To paraphrase Guy Debord’s message in *The Society of Spectacle* (1995), the average person seeking their fifteen minutes of fame is encouraged by the media, with no clear boundaries to the implications of the effect of their actions on another individual – in this instance a young boy, yet to experience his childhood.

First, the article along with the image presented was deconstructed to identify the process of design, identifying that the article demonstrates mistreatment of a boy by his parent and by the media is in breach of the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* Article 3:

> Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (General Assembly of the United Nations 1948).

and Article 4:

> No one shall be held in slavery or servitude, slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms (General Assembly of the United Nations 1948).

Further examination of the article also demonstrated the essence of Guy Debord’s (1995) statement in *The Society of Spectacle* ‘34 The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image’ (p. 24). Hence in this article, ‘the boy’ became an image of an American dream.

I wanted to demonstrate that understanding design principles can effectively be transposed into responsible action. I first recreated the feel of the original image of the boy by photo-

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Figure 11
Little Boy Lost, SMH Weekend Edition Article.

Figure 12
graphing my 9 year-old nephew. The layout was redesigned as a magazine article, which created inherent conceptual problems in the way that I redesigned the piece to communicate the same message. The concept was to identify whether the transference of the message from one context to a different medium could perhaps add value to the essence of the message. My belief was that it would create more impact and emotional value due to the method of visual language. However, my attempt at demonstrating the ‘medium is the massage’ (McLuhan & Fiore 1967) only addressed an aesthetic element of design (see Figure 12).

McLuhan states

All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the massage. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without knowledge of the way media work as environments. All media are extensions of some human faculty – psychic or physical (McLuhan & Fiore 1967, p. 26).

My layout did not reflect the practice of responsible approaches to design and did not include the reader of the message. While the reader was considered, the reproduction of the article and the outcome did not substantiate a purposeful act.

The project also presented a number of key elements that were problematic. In order to substantiate a purposeful act of designing, the project needed to focus on the process of design.

This process was a long examination of self-reflection, building on a framework to address a humanistic message and to demonstrate that visual communication can impact upon society. The message should therefore promote further debate and by doing so, demonstrate that design has moral dimensions to frame design actions and thoughts.

I recommenced the project with a renewed optimism that the process of design is to clearly demonstrate my own design knowledge. The framework derived from the six design manifestos – the moral dimensions of design: ethical, social and civic values – were engaged to communicate the effectiveness of the manifestos and my belief that the hypothesis of moral dimensions can become part of everyday design practice.

**My Brief**

Concept: To implement the framework of moral dimensions as part of my design practice. The design process includes responsible acts derived from my analysis of the six design manifestos with the intended outcome of bringing about an engagement of community understanding on social issues.

Rationale: As a design student, practitioner and educator, I have recognised that responsibility is an essential part of design practice. This project will address the issues that, as a design agent, my capacity to demonstrate moral dimensions in design will prompt me to express my beliefs through design thinking, design action and design response. In Declaration by design rhetoric, argument and demonstration in design practice, Buchanan (1986) states that ‘design is an art of thought directed to practical action through the persuasiveness of objects and
therefore, design involves the vivid expression of competing ideas about social life’ (p. 94). Therefore, the outcome will deal with the need to question social issues and by doing so raise awareness of the responsible agency of design.

To demonstrate that the six design manifestos examined for this study have ‘agency’ (Poggenpohl in Poggenpohl & Ahn 2002) and that my hypothesis of moral dimensions drawn from these manifestos can be implemented in everyday design practice.

My Design Response
I intended to examine and analyse the manifestos and present a view that design has the capacity to act responsibly. My project demonstrates this responsibility by identifying selected social issues and reinforces that, by implementing this information in relation to the content, I have acknowledged my ethical values as a responsible designer.

The project was divided into two parts:
Part one – By utilising design’s own knowledge, therefore addressing a process of achieving an idea developed from selected social issues the project offers an insight to these same issues. I have attempted to express a social commentary through a self-directed process of moral dimensions derived from the manifestos.
Part two – My intent is to demonstrate that a designer as agent is a citizen who builds relationships with freedom to choose and present ideas. As a designer, that capacity as an agent should be reflected in a responsible manner, although this responsibility can be an individual voice and choice.

Everyday images and objects were used to communicate a strong message by implementing my understanding of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Articles 1, 5 and 26 to find a communicative solution to a number of social issues:

The Articles are

1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
5. No one shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. (General Assembly of the United Nations 1948).
The medium in which to communicate effectively was inspired by the historical fact that during the 1960s and 1970s the medium of choice was posters. Posters also have an expressive quality that can be presented in public. I have chosen this medium as it still retains the characteristic expressive quality and effectively voices social, cultural, political and environmental commentaries that create impact on a public audience.

Part one:
The messages by which to demonstrate effective use of the moral dimensions derived from the six design manifestos were firstly developed as a direct response to certain images presented to everyone around the world: the images of torture perpetrated in Iraq’s Abu Ghraib prison. The horror and the shock of these images were heightened by knowing that those who demonstrated their willingness to serve a nation (members of the US armed forces) and to protect its people also took these images.

The importance of these images additionally demonstrates the technological speed with which these become available today. A digital file once transferred has the capability of reaching thousands of people all over the world. The significance of an individual’s power to visually communicate without consideration of the impact of the image or explicit messages demonstrates the importance of sharing design knowledge, because as we see and absorb, we process. This translates into our own image of the world either immediate or remote, which creates a sensation resulting in a movement of thought and transposition of meaning. This is coherently expressed in Walter Benjamin’s theoretical essay, Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache der Menschen (On Language in General and on the Language of Humans), in which he states:

Translation is the transportation of one language into another through a continuity of transformation; continuities of transformation, not abstract domains of equation and similarity, traverse the translation. The translation of language of things into that of humans is not only a translation of the silent into the vocal, but it is also a translation of the nameless into the name. It is also the translation of an incomplete language into a more complete one, which is nothing other than knowledge (Benjamin in Seyhan 1996, p. 232).

This statement identifies the function of visual communication, implying that we have the ability to transform messages and alter meaning through experiences. Therefore it is essential that the project utilises the images implicitly to position the context of the message clearly.

One image that has become an icon, a symbolic image, is the hooded man (see figure 02 on p. 9). This image seems to have developed particular social and political significance and captured the imagination of artists and creative people around the world. The reproduction and re-representation of this image comes in varying guises, alongside iPod ads (see figures 13 & 14), newspapers and journals such as The Human Rights Defender produced by Amnesty International (see figure 15) and The Sydney City Hub (see figure 16). The impact of this image is also expressed in a written form, ‘As I stared at the stain it struck me that my fate lay in the hands of these fat, humourless agents of the state. If they wanted I’d be wearing a pointy hood and standing on a box with wires attached to my goolies. OK,
so may be I exaggerate, but at the time the thought was pretty scary’ (excerpt from Sea otters gambolling in the wild, wild surf p. 188). This demonstrates the terror and sense of imagination that allows almost everyone to understand the concept of inhuman treatment.

My design response was then to take my analysis of this iconic image and present a view that engages with the design process that challenges the viewer to become more subjective so that the meaning can be interpreted in a multi-dimensional form.

The messages on the first set of posters (see figures on pp. 100 & 102 to 105) are:

Figure 17 – Centre of attention

- I AM THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION
- I AM THE MIDDLE
- I AM THE FOCUS
- I AM FROM THE MIDDLE OF VIOLENCE
- I AM THE CENTRE OF HUMANITY
- I AM THE FOCUS OF INJUSTICE AND JUSTICE

All set in capitals in Univers 67 bold condensed placed in the middle as a black bar with white text on top of the image emulating the shape of the hooded iconic figure. I have used Univers as homage to its creator Adrian Frutiger; the linear form of the typeface reflects the essence of the humanistic message of the poster.

Figure 18 – Reflection: a Western thought of the self – I am

- I am duality
- I am the representation of
- I am the represented

From top left clockwise – Figures 13 & 14: Greene, C. 2004. Self-commissioned advertising campaign, a parody of iPod campaign poster series; Figure 15: Opening article spread, The human right defender, vol. 23, no. 3 2004, Amnesty International Australia; and Figure 16: Cover of the Sydney City Hub 2005.
I am the framed
I am the victim
I am the
I am

The text is scratched to represent synthesis of graffiti effect and the psyche of a Western thought in self-reflection. Again the shape of the hooded iconic image is drawn subtly.

Figure 19 – Repetition: violence and revenge – The first man
One man is killed
Another man goes to kill the man who killed the first man
Then another man goes to kill the man who went to kill the man who killed the first man
Then another man goes to kill the man who went to kill the man who went to kill the man who killed the first man
And so it goes on and on.

This was inspired by Albert Camus’ *The first man* (1994). The text is set in Trajan to make the message reflect ancient Roman inscriptions and to identify the permanence of repetitive violence and revenge.

The second set of three posters (Toy≠Play) and a poster/brochure (Weapons of war) explores the self-reflection-in-action on my chosen social commentary. The information and context for these posters were drawn from the United Nations and UNICEF report, *Impact of armed conflict on children* by Graça Machel (2002). The messages are presented as a deconstructed meaning of its urgency to that of byte size triggers to deliberately mislead the viewer. In the ‘Toy≠Play’ posters, once the images are taken away or peeled away, the message is revealed, unfolding its content to the context. The ‘Weapons of war’ poster/
The brochure is about the impact of war on children, where children as soldiers are being exploited. In this the folded brochure works just like a toy catalogue. The exploration is to juxtapose the first world experience against that of the third world. Words such as ‘kill’ and ‘obey’ are placed on some of the images of the ‘boy and girl’ multiple images to highlight the psychological damage to the child victims.

My intent was to engage in thoughtful action as a design agent to demonstrate my capacity and the value of the moral dimensions inherent in design practice. The six design manifestos I have analysed prompted and support this responsible action.

Figures 20a & 20b: Park, J. 2006. Toy≠Play posters

Figures 21a, 21b, 22a & 22b: Park, J. 2006. Toy≠Play posters
Figures 23 a, b, c, d, e, f & g: Park, J. 2006. *Weapons of War* brochure opens to a poster.

My Project Outcome

I set out to present social commentary on two issues that I believe have either been forgotten by the general community or should be reflected on more in order to bring about awareness of these issues. The two issues are war on terrorism and the effects of war on children. The intended outcome is to prompt the community to engage in discussion and action to find out more about these issues.

Instead of using images of real life situations, I have taken a symbolic approach to visually communicate using expressive phrases. This in turn acknowledges my response to the framework of moral dimensions derived from the manifestos, and I have approached this outcome with the idea that awareness of ethical and social responsibilities is an essential part of design practice.

The design action was then presented as posters for their expressive quality.

The first set of posters, consisting of three messages, was designed by me to present an iconic message from a Western perspective of the self in the context of the ‘war on terrorism’. The iconic image of the hooded man was intentionally left out to identify our sense of removal in geographic and emotional experience from the inhumane acts and consequences of war which few of us have experienced.

The second series of posters and poster/brochure is a commentary on a social issue that has been forgotten in everyday life situations. At the present time of unrest and war around the world, either in the name of ‘war against terrorism’ or in the name of protecting nations’ borders, it is those that have no voice that suffer the most. Children do not have the means to articulate inhumane treatment. The advocacy of Princess Diana in her efforts to ban and destroy the use of landmines has lost impetus since her death.

This issue is mostly concentrated on third world countries destroyed as a result of war and it represents their everyday life situation. By examining the Humanist Manifesto I, fifteenth and last statement.

We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life not flee from it; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for a few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow (Bragg 1933).

The series of posters reflects the dichotomy of everyday life situations between the so-called first world and the third world. The project embraces thoughtful and useful communication to provide a message that prompts others to enquire about a person’s commentary on social issues.

The intent was to be expressive, therefore these posters identify that not all life at present is equal or harmonious, and that in order to achieve this harmony, perhaps the viewer must be challenged by a blatantly confronting message.
My project presented me with a greater insight to life situations that are not familiar to me. By engaging in understanding these issues, I have explored the essence of humanity and expressed it in a responsible act. My role as a responsible designer then encouraged me to express and present my own manifesto. The posters developed as a result of this study were only a minor step in my engagement with the design community towards responsible design. However, the result of my manifesto will continue to guide me in remaining a responsible designer.

Conclusion

The aim of this project was to investigate the moral dimensions of design hypothesised from the six manifestos. The impact of the practical project presented as part of this thesis cannot be measured with limited time and without further exposure to a wider audience. However through analysis of design history, research and design process, I have demonstrated that design has agency and as such, a responsibility to act and communicate with concern for the social, cultural, moral, ethical and civic impacts. Design can be engaged in presenting possibilities for better conditions of life.
The role of design incorporates an act of thinking and doing by building a context-informed practice. Craig Bremner (2005) in the second issue of *Open Manifesto* draws the conclusion that the relationship between the theory and practice of design are much closer by the very nature of design’s subjective logic of imaging. Perhaps it is time to renew this relationship and jointly ‘we might work to improve our understanding of the role of design in our lives’ (p. 125). He further expresses the reality that design could contain the possibility of something substantial and beneficial for design. By completing this project, Bremner’s (2005) view is that building a relationship between the discourse of design and practice of design is essential, and that ‘as you reuse the images, which maintain this reality, to consider design more responsibly’ (p. 126).

I have acted with a clear understanding of my role as a designer to articulate that design has agency. The manifestos prompt designers to act in a responsible manner that can guide the designer effectively. By self-reflecting as an agent of visual communication, I have engaged in the process of the possible relationships between the designer, the project and the audience (see figure 01). These relationships offer choices to act as a citizen to engage with society in a responsible manner.

To conclude my thesis, I am presenting my own manifesto, A Design Park Manifesto, demonstrating design’s own knowledge as a responsible design act.

**A Design Park Manifesto**

- Design is a political act in an ethical, civic and moral framework.
- Design is a responsible act serving society.
- Design is a purposeful act within limits prompting self-reflection.
- Design is a visual act promoting choice in our relationships.
- A designer is a human being before s/he engages in design.
- A designer is a human being before s/he is a communicator, shaping the visual landscape of culture.
- A designer is a human being before s/he is a collaborator in shaping society.
- A designer is a human being before s/he is a conceptualiser of limited ideas developed from tangible research.
- A designer is a human being who expresses experiences that provoke self-reflection.
- A designer is a human being who respects the diversity of culture, nature, technology and society and embraces individual responsibilities for a more humane world.

I have set out to demonstrate that design has agency and that this agency requires us to recognise our responsibilities as designers. This thesis gave me the opportunity to explore the notion that my choices of design process, informed by the design manifestos’ prompt to responsible action, enhanced my understanding of the role of design. My design experiments along with my manifesto demonstrate that I have attained a level of control in dealing with the moral dimensions of design.
My hope is that we continue questioning how we shall be practising design in the future in a responsible and effective manner, and that we shall continue to engage in dialogue about design, on design and for design.
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A.1 First Things First Manifesto

A manifesto by Ken Garland, UK 1964

The original First Things First manifesto with twenty-two signatories was first published in *The Guardian*, April 1964

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as: cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, after-shave lotion, before-shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons.

By far the greatest effort of those working in the advertising industry are wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films, television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes. With this in mind we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students and others who may be interested.

Malmö, Sweden 1990

The following manifesto grew out of a conference entitled “Scandinavian Design 1990 – Towards 2000,” held in Malmö, Sweden, 8-10 June 1990. Below is a presentation with a number of stylistic revisions as suggested by ICOGRA. 

The natural conditions of the five Scandinavian countries have influenced the ways and forms of lives of their people. The harsh and cold climate has forced us to accept the practice of

• An awareness of nature
• A human awareness of neighbours and other people we live with
• An economical way of life?

Therefore, and because of the vision we have for the world, we recognised that authentic Scandinavian design does have a message for the future of mankind.

1. We have to re-establish the basic values of life in an ethically sound way.
2. We have to design now the framework for new ways of life, which are ecologically and economically sound.
3. We have to ensure there is continual reappraisal of educational programmes not only for school children but throughout the whole of adult life.
4. The design disciplines must forcefully articulate, make visible and emphasise the design message in order to influence both public and private decision-making.
5. We have to establish positive cooperation between designers, industry and users of all categories to ensure the preservation of the richness and variety of our planet and safer and fuller living for everyone.

Jen Bernsen, Danish Design Center; Ulla Tarras-Walberg Boe, Federation of Norwegian Design; Tapio Perianen, Finnish Society of Craft and Design; Stefan Snæbjørnsson, Form Island; and Lannart Lindkviss, Swedish Society of Crafts and Design.

A.3 First Things First 2000
First Things First Revisited by Rick Poynor, Chris Dixon and Kalle Lason  
Vancouver, Canada 1999

This manifesto was first published in Adbusters, no. 27 Autumn 1999 with thirty-three signatories.

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, art directors and visual communicators who have been raised in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable use of our talents. Many design teachers and mentors promote this belief; the market rewards it; a tide of books and publications reinforces it. Encouraged in this direction, designers then apply their skill and imagination to sell dog biscuits, designer coffee, diamonds, detergents, hair gel, cigarettes, credit cards, sneakers, butt toners, light beer and heavy-duty recreational vehicles. Commercial work has always paid the bills, but many graphic designers have now let it become, in large measure, what graphic designers do. This, in turn, is how the world perceives design. The profession’s time and energy is used up manufacturing demand for things that are inessential at best.

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

There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. Many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programs, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help. We propose a reversal of priorities in favor of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication - a mind shift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.
In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.


A.4 The Icograda Design Education Manifesto
Seoul, South Korea 2000

Collaborative effort bringing together the knowledge of the west and east. The manifesto states a new term for graphic design, the relevance of change, a new definition for the role of the visual communication designer and presents changes in design education.

Graphic Designer

The term “graphic design” has been technologically undermined. A better term is visual communication design. Visual communication design has become more and more a profession that integrates idioms and approaches of several disciplines in a multi-layered and in-depth visual competence. Boundaries between disciplines are becoming more fluid. Nevertheless, designers need to recognise professional limitations.

Many Changes have Occurred

Developments in media technology and the information economy have profoundly affected visual communication design practice and education. New challenges confront the designer. The variety and complexity of design issues has expanded. The resulting challenge is the need for a more advanced ecological balance between human beings and their socio-cultural and natural environment.

Designer

A visual communication designer is a professional:

• Who contributed to shaping the visual landscape of culture.

• Who focuses on the generation of meaning for a community of users, not only interpreting their interest but offering conservative and innovative solutions as appropriate.

• Who collaboratively solves problems and explores possibilities through the systematic practice of criticism.

• Who is an expert that conceptualizes and articulates ideas into tangible experiences.

• Whose approach is grounded in a symbolic conduct that respects the diversity of environmental and cultural contexts without over emphasizing difference, but by recognizing common ground.

• Who carries an individual responsibility for ethics to avoid harm and takes into account the consequences of design action to humanity, nature, technology, and cultural facts.
The new design program includes the following dimensions: image, text, movement, time, sound, and interactivity. Design education should focus on a critical mentality combined with tools to communicate. It should nurture a self-reflective attitude and ability. The new program should foster strategies and methods for communication and collaboration.

Theory and design history should be an integral part of design education. Design research should increase the production of design knowledge in order to enhance design performance through understanding cognition and emotion; as well as physical, social, and cultural factors. More than ever, design education must prepare students for change. To this end, it must move from being teaching-centered to a learning-centered environment which enables students to experiment and to develop their own potential in and beyond academic programs. Thus, the role of a design educator shifts from that of only knowledge provider to that of a person who inspires and facilitates orientation for a more substantial practice.

The power to think the future “near or far” should be an integral part of visual communication design. A new concept in design promises to tune nature, humanity, and technology, and to harmonize east and west, north and south, as well as past, present, and future in a dynamic equilibrium. This is the essence of Oullim, the great harmony.

A.5 The First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit
St. Moritz Design Summit, St. Moritz, Switzerland 2001
As designers, we reject any forms of globalization that ignore social differences and the factual quality of people’s lives.
Design has for too long now acted as an agent of one-dimensional globalization, and has failed to foster a debate on the issues involved.
In transitional and confusing times, everybody seeks guidance, answers, even blueprints.
Design offers none of these.
Design, however, is the way of thinking and acting that thrives on addressing complex processes, on navigating contradictions, and on connecting isolated issues. Design must offer modular systems, transparent strategies, open sources, intelligent interventions and identify key problems.
In the near future, design must embrace misunderstandings, mistakes and so-called misuse by people as a source of innovation and a means of improving cultural diversity.
As designers and communicators, we commit our ideas, our experience and our passion to helping people recover their self-esteem and self-confidence.

A.6 The Second Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit
St. Moritz Design Summit, St. Moritz, Switzerland 2003
As an instrument of the global economy business often makes design decisions without looking to the longer term. Increasingly, design is required to meet arbitrary deadlines, and to act as a facile novelty machine, allowing no time for reflection or an adequate process of development.
Design often contributes to dubious innovations which serve no other purpose but to flood the world with more of everything for those who need nothing.
Sensible design, however, rejects the zealous support of marketing hype, and strikes back. We demand the time to reflect on the situation of design and our position in society in order to improve the quality in design and of life. Therefore, we declare the 21st June of every year the International Design Action Day.
Design is a political act in an ethical, civic and moral framework.
Design is a responsible act serving society.
Design is purposeful act within limits prompting self-reflection.
Design is a visual act promoting choice in our relationships.
A designer is a human being before s/he engages in design.
A designer is a human being before s/he is a communicator, shaping the visual landscape of culture.
A designer is a human being before s/he is a collaborator in shaping society.
A designer is a human being before s/he is a conceptualiser of limited ideas developed from tangible research.
A designer is a human being who expresses experiences that provoke self-reflection.
A designer is a human being who respects the diversity of culture, nature, technology and society and embraces individual responsibilities for a more humane world.