

do good design

HOW DESIGNERS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD
PROFESSIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE

"I hated this book"
— Joe Plus Corporation

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2009

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New
Riders

DAVID B. BERMAN FGDC,
R.G.D.

WITH A FOREWORD BY ERIK SPIEKERMANN

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do good

HOW DESIGNERS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

David B. Berman, FGDC, R.G.D.

Berkeley, California | January, 2009



Why does this book need a title page? Why repeat what is already on the cover? The publisher says we have to have a title page for historical reasons and copyright issues. Maybe someone should tell publishers: if we removed the title page from every book published, we could save, on average, 3.1 billion pages of paper a year in the United States alone.

Speaking of saving paper, if you wish to share this book without giving yours away, bear in mind that it can be purchased at safari.peachpit.com in electronic format. But wait: According to BBC Two, data farms now use as much energy as the entire car manufacturing industry. And the store of knowledge is doubling every five years. By 2020, the carbon emissions produced in generating energy for the Internet will be the equivalent of those produced by the airline industry. Tough choices: read the book.

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How Designers Can Change the World

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Ne csak jó design-t csinálj, hanem tégy jót is vele!

Non fate solo buon design,
ma fate del bene.
Nedělejte jen dobrý design, dělejte ho pro dobro věci.
لا تصمم جيداً فقط،
بل افعل جيداً

Não faça solo buon design. Faça o bem.

좋은 디자인만 하지 말고
좋은 일을 하라!

Don't just do good design... do good!

デザインだけではなく、本当に「良い」ものを。

Godt ikke bare
godt design,
godt det
godt!

Ne faites pas
que du bon design,
faites du
bien!

Godt ikke bare
godt design,
godt det
godt!

נישט נאר טון,
גוטע
דיזיין,
די גוטע
טון.

Delajte dobro,
ne samo
dobroga oblikovanja.

No hagas sólo buen diseño,
hazlo bien!

做好设计不够，还须行善有益。

I've written "Don't just do good design... do good!" in the prevailing language of each place this journey has taken me to. (So if yours is missing, invite me over!)

To D.o.M. and D.o.D.
for instilling in me the knowledge
that social justice is not optional.

... and thank you to Naomi Klein
for urging me to write this book.



Why we chose Malloy to manufacture this book

This book was printed by Malloy Incorporated, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Malloy is one of the few organizations within the book industry that has obtained both Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certifications. The goals of the FSC and SFI are similar, and involve detailing objectives for the protection of endangered species, wildlife, soil quality, and water quality. The FSC is an international network, founded in 1993 by environmental groups concerned with global tropical deforestation and unsustainable logging practices.

The book is printed on Spring Forge PCW-30 D56 540 ppi paper, with a 10-point coated Candesce cover stock, using soy-based inks, and under custody certification with the FSC. The page imposition was optimized to minimize waste (using suctioning for all trim, and recycling of all waste paper and plates). The bleeds (ink that runs off the edges of pages) did not result in any additional paper used, due to the shaving required by the book-finishing process.

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New Riders is part of Pearson, a global company that is committed to social responsibility and making a positive impact on the world. Pearson includes many brands you've likely heard of: Peachpit Press, the Financial Times Group, the Penguin Group, and DK Travel Guides. Pearson also partners with Safari Books Online (safari.peachpit.com), which is helping to save forests by publishing electronically. Pearson is on track to become a climate-neutral global business by the end of December 2009 (and David Berman already is). Pearson supports the Anne Frank Trust, and is a signatory to the UN Global Compact. Particularly admirable is their Made With Care initiative, which calls for publishers to produce their product using the most ethical and environmentally-friendly processes possible. Visit <http://pearson.com/environment> for Pearson's full environmental policy.

AIGA Design Press is a partnership of New Riders and AIGA, the professional association for design. AIGA's mission is to advance designing as a professional craft, strategic tool, and vital cultural force. AIGA is also committed to imparting the value of sustainable design at every level of practice and production.

FOREWORD

by Erik Spiekermann



PHOTO: SUSANNA HILDEBRAND

When the *First Things First* manifesto from 1964 was about to be republished by *Adbusters* for the new millennium, I readily signed it. As the manifesto put it, "designers... 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." Who wouldn't agree with the conclusion that "our skills could be put to worthwhile use"? I signed, because the list of colleagues and friends who had already signed was impressive, even intimidating. And the original signatories from 1964 were pretty much all my heroes.

I did, however, add a paragraph stating slight misgivings. It is easy, after all, to put your name on a list of famous designers and bask in the reflected glow of their presence. But does that change what we would do in our studio the next morning? Would I tell my 70-some employees that from now on, we would be do-gooders only, send our "commercial" clients away and wait for more worthy projects to find the way to our door? Didn't the other signatories also do work for hire, for clients who use our work to sell more of whatever they are selling? Is all selling bad? Is designing books always good because there are no bad books? Designing signage for a public transit system is good, airport signage is bad because only The Rich can afford to fly? And how about signage for shopping centers? Bad? Amusement parks?

As opposed to architects, who honestly think that the world would cease to exist if they stopped working, we graphic designers know that the world would probably carry on pretty much the same without our services. Things may look a little less colorful and some companies might sell less without our help in communicating their services or goods, but lives will not be lost. There are, however, situations where graphic design, or rather the lack of it, has cost

lives. In 1997, a fire raged through Düsseldorf airport in Germany. Thick smoke made it difficult to see the emergency signs, which were also not placed where they should have been, too small, and too badly lit. Sixteen people died because they could not find their way out. As a result, we were hired to not only design new signage that was legible, well-lit, and visually appealing, but we also worked with the planners to make sure the signs were put where they would be visible. The architects wanted the signs “out of the way of the beautiful architecture,” as they put it, which would have repeated the previous mistakes. We had to insist that we were not hired to simply make the place pretty, but actually make the airport function properly. Behaving responsibly is not asked for in Requests for Proposals, but without asking questions that haven’t even been asked, we would just be window dressers.

My first responsibility is to my family and to my extended family, the employees of my studio. They look to me for their livelihood. They all became designers because they wanted to make something – something that was better than what had been there before. Of course we discuss what sort of projects we take on and what type of clients we work for. Some issues are quickly resolved: we wouldn’t work for a cigarette brand, although some of us still smoke. But we have worked for automotive brands, and most of us still have cars, although essentially cars are very, very bad.

Whether what we design is good or bad is difficult to judge. We live in this society, and we benefit from the material wealth it offers. As Max Bill put it, we apply 90 percent of our efforts to making something work, and we should apply the remaining 10 percent to making it beautiful. “Designers have enormous power to influence how we see our world, and how we live our lives,” David writes in this book. I could not agree more, and I think that we all need to be constantly aware of what we do, for whom we work, and how our work affects others. But whatever our good intentions

may be, we cannot ignore the reality that design is a business and has to live by the rules of business. As we have seen recently, **those rules need to be rewritten**. There is hope for more awareness and responsibility, even in the world of commerce that we’d rather not belong to but cannot escape from.

In my 30 years of running a design studio, I have come to the conclusion that there is one thing we can do that nobody can stop us from. We alone decide *how* we work. Whatever the restrictions and limitations of the commercial world that buys our services, we create our own processes. *How* we deal with our employees, our suppliers, our clients, our peers, and even our competitors is totally up to us. How we make something is very important, and it is the one thing we can influence without much interference. We’d still have to fill out tax returns, make sure the computers are running and the rent is paid, but the way we work with each other and with our clients is where we can be different. As we take in the big picture of what this book is all about, let’s begin by looking at our immediate reality. Charity starts at home.

Erik Sp-

Erik Spiekermann is an author, information designer, and typographer. He founded MetaDesign and FontShop, is Honorary Professor at the University of the Arts in Bremen, and has an honorary doctorship from Pasadena Art Center. He was the first designer to be elected into the Hall of Fame by the European Design Awards for Communication Design. He lives and works in Berlin, London, and San Francisco. His studio, Spiekermann Partners, employs 30 designers.

FOREWORD TO THE CHINESE EDITION²

by Min Wang



PHOTO: ZHENG BIN

In 2006, David Berman gave a lecture at our School of Design. It resonated for both teachers and students because it reflected keenly on the work, the responsibilities, and the identity of the designer, touching on the school's slogan:

"Design for the People." Afterward, I told him my hope that this book would be published in China someday. A huge design industry was born of our booming economy, almost overnight. Thousands of designers tirelessly service the economic engine, sparing no time to think of David's issues. This book will cause our designers to explore who they are and what they do.

Perhaps we chose to be designers to create beautiful objects. But do we bring something unexpectedly negative to society, along with that beauty? Are we helping make our environment unlivable?

We think of ourselves as designers, not decision makers; lacking a strong voice to change society's behaviors. We fail to admit our responsibility for the decline of the natural environment. We must reevaluate, and discover our share of influence.

We are often urged to put commercial interests first. But when one re-examines our social responsibility, you see the truth in David Berman's words: to do good rather than just do good design benefits both society and the enterprise.

It's an honor to be a colleague of David's on the Icoграда board. David pushes designers around the world to reflect on their duties, and to design for universal access. His actions have a large influence on many people, and thus on the global environment.

Design that is conducive to the planet and to humanity is good design. Design that is aesthetic and benevolent is good design. In the end, we must bring these aspects together.

Min Wang is dean of the Central Academy of Fine Arts School of Design, China's premier design school, and design director for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

LETTER FROM AIGA

by Richard Grefé



PHOTO: AIGA

AIGA is publishing this vital reflection on the power of design because David Berman understands – and communicates with such intensity, sincerity, and clarity – that creativity has the potential not only to defeat habit, but also

to affect positive change.

AIGA's connection with David's indomitable esprit and steadfast commitment to social principles occurred when he brought to my attention the environmental and social standards he had advocated for Canadian designers. Milton Glaser, who has long had a similar commitment to the responsibilities of designers, joined me in adapting AIGA's standards of professional practices to David's language, adding the responsibilities that a designer has to his or her audience. Now, David's perspective is at the core of the designer's ethos in North America.

In 2008, AIGA China published the standards in Chinese, where there are one million students just beginning their design careers, and these standards are the only expression of professional expectations.

Margaret Mead had it right: "Never doubt that a few committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has." Let's see what David's very public statement, this book, can do to change our expectations.

Creativity can defeat habit. And we are counting on it.

"This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire, but it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise it is merely wires and lights in a box."

EDWARD R. MURROW (1908–1965)
March 15, 1954, speaking about television

Richard Grefé is executive director of AIGA, the professional association for design in the United States.

A designer is

INTRODUCTION

IN THE YEAR 2000, I sold the successful graphic design agency I had founded at the age of 22. I chose a new career path, to achieve a balance between working for clients who are helping repair the world and sharing how to do that with others.

This book is a reflection of that quest. Its message is for designers, for those who buy design, and for those who consume design.

Graphic designers (some say “communication designers”)⁴ create a bridge between information and understanding. Industrial designers add usability and appeal to objects. Interior designers invent where we live.

Designers have an essential social responsibility because design is at the core of the world’s largest challenges... and solutions. Designers create so much of the world we live in, the things we consume, and the expectations we seek to fulfill. They shape what we see, what we use, and what we waste. Designers have enormous power to influence how we engage our world, and how we envision our future. How much power? I intend to shock you.

Everyone is now a designer. We live in an era that encourages us to develop our very own personalized interfaces with the world. Each time you resize your Web browser window, DVR your television programming, build an MP3 playlist, or customize a ringtone, you join a design team. Add in the crowdsourcing technologies of Web 2.0, and your role becomes far broader. Indeed, **I believe that the future of our world is now our common design project.**

Those who know me are aware that until now I’ve been a designer, a strategist, an expert speaker on a mission... but not a book author.

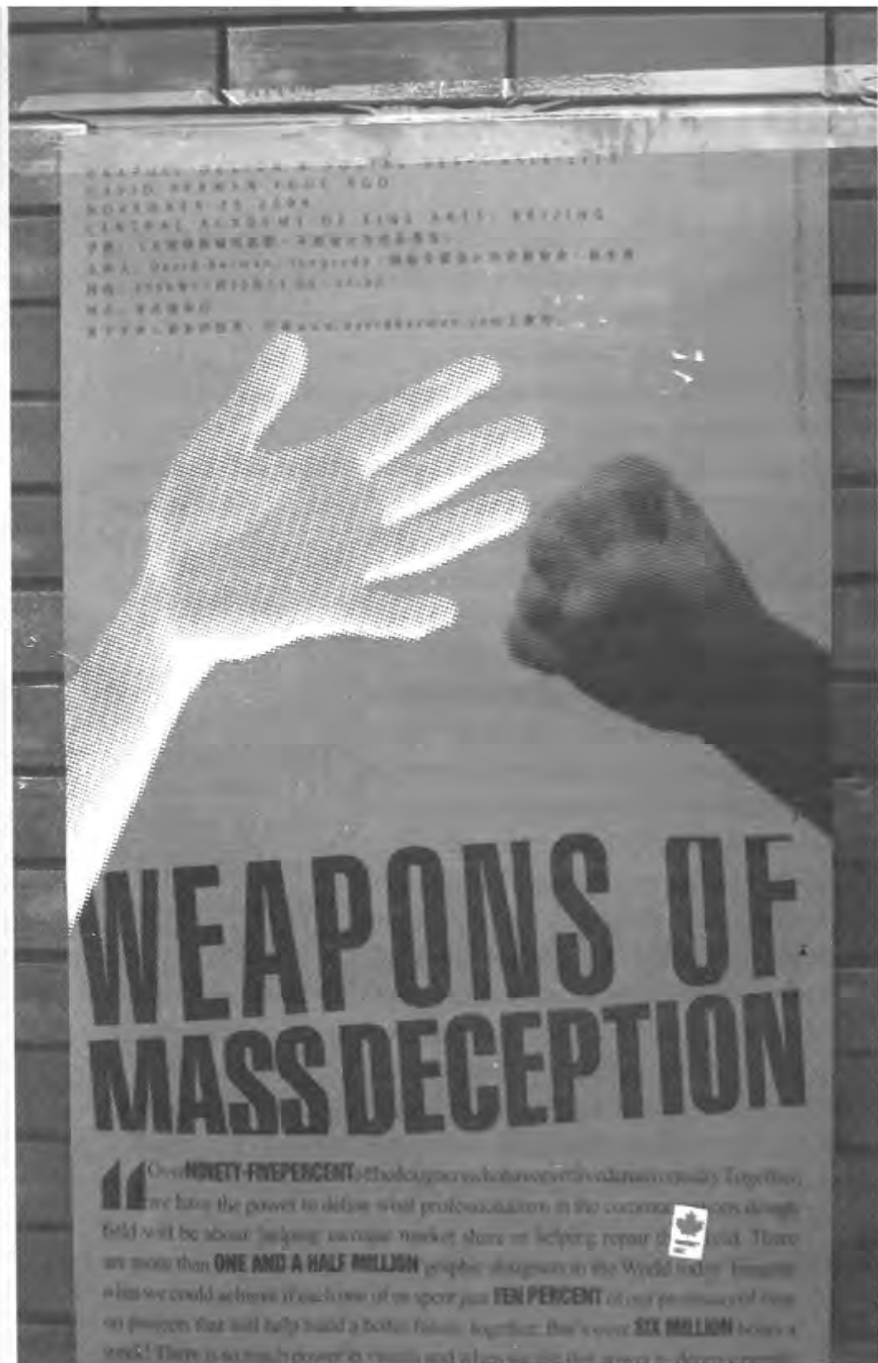


PHOTO: DAVID BERMAN

Promotional poster for speech in Beijing, December 2006^{3a}

“an emerging synthesis of artist, inventor, mechanic,

Within the low-tech medium of a book, I'm told that, no matter how intrigued you may be with these words and pictures, there is over a 70 percent chance that you won't read it cover to cover. And I can't corner you in the hallway later, as I could if you slipped out on one of my presentations. Because you may wander from this book and unintentionally never return, I want to share the essence of my argument right now.

So before you get distracted by your iPod, a Twitter, or someone phones or texts you, here are the core thoughts:

Designers have far more power than they realize: their creativity fuels the most efficient (and most destructive) tools of deception in human history.

The largest threat to humanity's future just may be the consumption of more than necessary. We are caught up in an unsustainable frenzy, spurred by rapid advances in the sophistication, psychology, speed, and reach of visual lies designed to convince us we “need” more stuff than we really do.

Human civilization, trending toward one global civilization, cannot afford to make even one more major global goof.

The same design that fuels mass overconsumption also holds the power to repair the world.

We live in an unprecedented technological age, where we can each leave a larger legacy by propagating our best ideas than by propagating our chromosomes.

Designers can be a model for other professionals for identifying one's sphere of influence, and then embrace the responsibility that accompanies that power to help repair the world.

So don't just do good design, do good.

objective economist and evolutionary strategist.”

BUCKMINSTER FULLER (1895–1983)

I am going to share with you how we can use design to help repair (or destroy) our civilization. The specifics are pertinent to all design and communications fields, while the principles of how one can make a difference are transferable to any profession. With my graphic design background, I draw most of my examples from what I know best: graphic design, advertising, and branding.

There has never been a better nor more important time to discuss responsible design. Back in 2002, I had my first chance to speak outside my native Canada, at an international design conference in the Czech Republic. My *How Logo Can We Go?* speech was a maverick's presentation, the only one about socially responsible design. Just five years later, in October 2007, I moderated the social responsibility themed day at the Icoграда World Design Congress in Cuba, and almost every speaker *every* day tied their work to the difference that designers can make for the world. In 20 countries, I've seen, heard, and felt the change that is in motion globally. But will the shift be too little, too late?

Designers who publish books usually show you their designs. But in this volume, I'll instead focus on the work of others: some of the most influential design of our age. While you probably won't know the designers' names, you will recognize their work.

At the end, I will make an appeal to your true self. Don't panic: I won't ask you to give up your job, earn less money, or even have less fun. I will ask you to commit to becoming part of the solution.

If you're already convinced but short on time, then skip now to the pledge on page 146.

Otherwise, as with most design problems, the place to start is in defining the goals, challenges, and constraints: doing so is typically more than half the solution. So here follows the “creative brief” for the design challenge of our lifetimes.

“If we do not change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed.” CHINESE PROVERB

1 START NOW

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT that you’re just over 20 years old. You know exactly what you want to do with your life: you’ve found your passion. You’re proudly paying your own bills doing what you love. Life is good.

I first discovered my passion publishing a magazine in high school. At University of Waterloo, it was all-nighters at the student paper, neglecting my degree program in computer science. By the late 1980s, I had followed my muse to a tiny design studio above a pawnshop in old Ottawa South. Like so many other young people who realize that designing is who they are, I was jazzed with creating, exploring, and pushing the limits of my perfect little world-within-a-world of grids, fonts, and Pantone® colors, long before desktop publishing would make such terms household words.

I could shut out the messy world and strive to surround myself with beautifully designed things. There was delight in staying up all night spinning two-inch font filmstrips through my Typositor, hand-rolling adhesive wax onto phototype galleys, refining kerning pairs, and unavoidably breathing photo chemicals. X-Acto blades, Letraset, and Rubylith... in the morning, I would zoom around town with a huge portfolio case strapped to my bright-red scooter, wearing cotton crayon shoes and all-black everything else.



PHOTO: STEVE EICHLER

In front of David Berman Typographics, Hopewell Avenue, 1988



PHOTO: DAVID BERMAN

Cult Shaker transit ad, Copenhagen, 2003. Cheap caffeine, alcohol, and sex in a bottle



So when that hot⁶ feminist girlfriend tore into my microcosm, claiming that graphic designers like me were responsible for destroying forests in support of the systematic objectification of women by using pictures of their bodies to help sell products... well, my first reaction was to deny everything. But then I took notice of example after example, and promised to do something about it.

A youthful, creative, male mix of social justice, lust, and angry young hubris naively scooted me off to my first-ever meeting of the local chapter of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada. Hastily written eco-feminist manifesto clutched in my hand, I was intent on changing the code of ethics of my profession. Little did I know that ride would span 16 years and take me to more than 20 countries and counting, vastly exceeding my naïve expectations. But more on that later ...

March, 1988

Presented in writing and verbally to the GDC Ottawa Chapter AGM

We, as graphic designers, have the ability to control to a great degree the choice of images used in the work we produce.

In the field of visual communications, our opinions are well respected and influential. I believe that with this power comes social responsibility.

It has never been more well-understood how women in our society are discriminated against. Not only are women exploited both mentally and physically: they are also subordinated economically and socially.



How design failed democracy

Fast-forward 12 years, to the turn of the millennium, when it dawned on me that designers not only had the potential to be socially responsible, but also may actually hold the future of the world in their hands. Here's an example.

The most influential piece of information design in my lifetime may very well be the butterfly ballot used in Palm Beach County for the November 2000 U.S. presidential election. The number of votes mistakenly cast for independent Pat Buchanan instead of Al Gore, due to the misleading layout, was well in excess of George W. Bush's certified margin of victory in Florida, and enough to result in Bush winning the presidency nationally. **The poor design of this ballot is therefore likely responsible for the failure of the United States** to sign the Kyoto Accord on climate change, the 2003 invasion of Iraq in search of weapons of mass destruction,⁷ and a long list of controversial White House decisions during the eight years that followed.

AIGA's Design for Democracy is currently working with the U.S. government to clean up the ballot mess, which has compromised the mechanics of democracy.⁸ As a result of its efforts, in June 2007, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission issued voluntary guidelines for the effective use of design in administering federal elections. However, in the 2008 election, its recommendations were only

"It's very easy for me to see how someone could have voted for me in the belief they voted for Al Gore."

PAT BUCHANAN?

reflected in the ballot design of perhaps six states. The United States continues to have thousands of different ballot designs, with varied technologies, for electing one president.¹⁰

Responsible government should provide voters with a consistent ballot, designed by information design experts. In Canada, as in most Western democracies (let alone in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, which ironically provide their citizens clearer ballots than the U.S. does), anything other than a professional and consistent national ballot design would be an affront. It is oddly inconsistent that, by law, the United States Food and Drug Administration requires consistent nutrition facts on every one of thousands of food package designs, while the U.S. government fails to legislate the use of a consistent, well-designed ballot and voting procedures across its 51 states and districts.

South Africa got it right the first time, in their 1994 election. The vast majority had not voted before, with a substantial portion illiterate. A simple ballot including candidate photos worked well.

The influence of design on election outcomes does not stop at the ballot box. Candidates spend most of their war chests on ads. Many of these messages are oversimplified and intentionally misleading, cunningly combining pictures and words out of context. *Advertising Age* columnist Bob Garfield admits "Political advertising is a stain on our democracy. It's the artful assembling of nominal facts into hideous, outrageous lies."¹¹ In 2004, U.S. presidential candidates spent over a billion dollars¹² disingenuously manipulating opinions, rather than simply presenting straightforward information that helps voters make an intelligent choice. President Obama was the third-largest advertiser in the country during the 2008 campaign,¹³ including an unprecedented online effort focused on positive messages.

Palm Beach County ballot, Florida, 2000: even Pat Buchanan was shocked at his proportion of the Jewish and black vote. With many pages of voting (11 offices, 9 judicial contests, and 4 referenda) to complete, many voters wrongly marked the second hole from the top to indicate their "Democratic" intention.

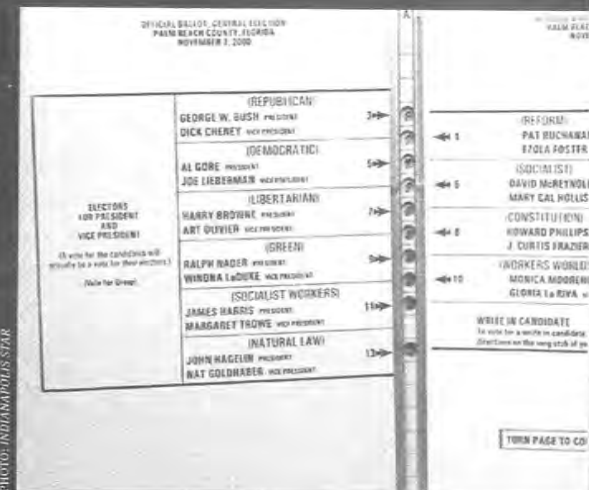
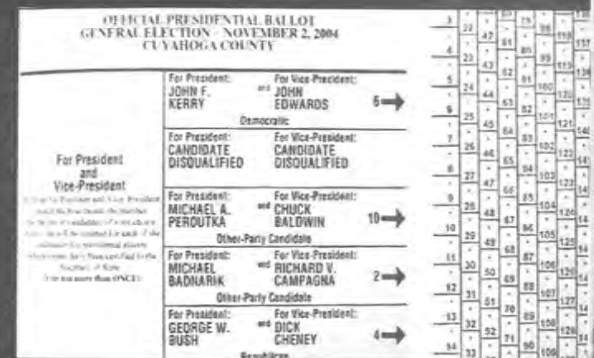


PHOTO: INDIANAPOLIS STAR

Not the solution: it was just as difficult to vote for George W. Bush for president in Ohio in 2004.¹⁴ Voting for Kerry was easy: mark box 6. But how do you vote for President Bush?



One of many sample ballots created by AIGA's Design For Democracy for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. Their recommendations were reflected in ballot design used for the November 2008 presidential election within at least 6 states.

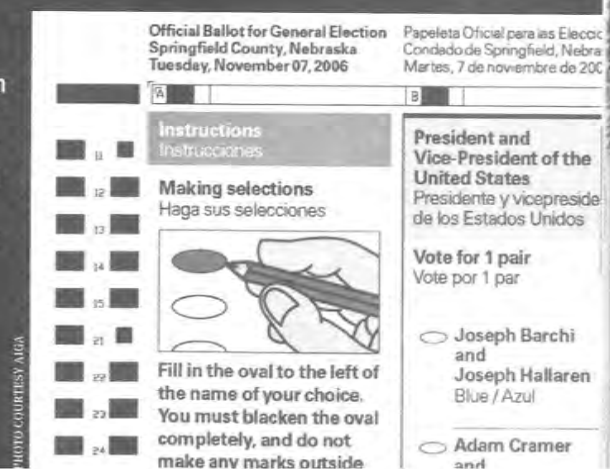


PHOTO COURTESY AIGA

How have these manipulations become the norm? If the American public is to be equipped to choose the best leaders, we either need mandatory media literacy education starting in elementary school, or **legislation that prohibits lying with imagery as strongly as current legislation prohibits lying with words.** Meanwhile, good design can encourage youth to seize the cynical 54 percent U.S. election turnout rate as an opportunity.¹⁵

“Drink Milk. Love Life.”

That same chad-hanging election year, my daughter Hannah and I were on the way to her school. She was eight (and a half!) years old. As we passed by a beautiful bill-board that proclaimed “Drink Milk. Love Life,” Hannah, who does not like drinking cow’s milk, had questions.

HANNAH: “David, I don’t drink that milk. Does that mean I can’t love life?” [Yes, she’s always called me David.]

DAVID: “No, of course not.”

HANNAH: “Do I love life less than kids who drink a lot of milk?”

DAVID: “No, Hannah, they just made that up to try to convince you to drink more milk.”

HANNAH (after a long pause): “Why are they allowed to say that if it isn’t true?”

“We do not inherit this land from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” HAIDA PROVERB



persuasion

Good question, Hannah. At the time, I was preparing to speak at a design conference in Vancouver. Like most designers, I had planned to show my best work. But in that moment with my daughter, an idea hit me: instead of speaking about my own design work, why not instead speak about the influence of *all* design work?

What could become possible if designers used their power to influence choices and beliefs in a positive and sustainable way? **Imagine: what if we didn’t just do good design... we did good?**

Many conferences, keynotes, and seminars later, I’m still traveling with that message. On the way, I’ve learned as much as I’ve taught, often from those who are younger.

I met a young boy in rural Tanzania. He was clutching a plastic bag, decorated with the Camel cigarette brand, the only camel he is likely to meet in his lifetime.



PHOTO: DAVID BERMAN

Tengeru, Tanzania

DOING GOOD

Survivors Village and The Genocide Memorial Park honoring genocide victims from the Rugereri area, where over 800,000 people were slaughtered within 100 days in 1994. "Some designers feel that there is no meaning in what they do. I hope I can inspire some to find the good to be done."

Cuba was an unlikely place to meet American Alan Jacobson. In 2005, Alan traveled 6,000 miles to work with artist Lily Yeh's Rwanda Healing Project. There, he led the transformation of

In 2002, I spoke at a design conference in Amman, Jordan. We took a day trip to Petra – an ancient city majestically carved entirely from the surface of rock, and certainly the eighth wonder of the world. There I met a young woman and her camel. They live in the nearby town of Wadi Musa, where the largest sign in the town proclaims the “Superior American Taste” of a local cigarette brand.



PHOTOS: DAVID BERMAN

Bedouin friend, Petra, Jordan. (The cat is my traveling companion, Spice, one half of twins: Blackie stays home with my daughter)



Wadi Musa, Jordan

On the flip side of my world, back home in Canada, my daughter has never seen a cigarette billboard: all tobacco advertising likely to be viewed by children is illegal in Canada.¹⁶

Cigarettes are among the most highly advertised products in the world. Big Tobacco will spend over \$13 billion this year¹⁷ promoting their cleverly designed disposable nicotine-delivery system. Their goal: to convince all three of these youth to start smoking cigarettes, within their teenage years, until they die.



PHOTO: GEBERUNITED

The cigarette: highly effective British industrial design from the 1880s

[All \$ in the book are U.S. dollars.]

In proudly free Western societies, we like to tell parents that it's up to them to control what their kids see and don't see. It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. I would add that it takes a society to raise a generation. Striving to be a good parent, I will help my daughter make clever choices around tobacco, and hope that she will live a long and healthy life, perhaps well into the next century.

When that 22nd century arrives, and our children's grandchildren look back on these remarkable days in which we lived, what will history recall as our most crucial issue?



PHOTO: HANNAH LANGRISH

My daughter, Hannah

A teenage civilization

The potential impact of any global threat to humanity is far greater when combined with the current trend toward homogeneity of civilization design. Let me explain.

Human civilizations have come and gone, risen and fallen. Although most scientists believe our species has been around for at least five million years, this approach to social organization is only around 6,000 years old (10,000 at most).¹⁸ However, as science philosopher Ronald Wright points out, after 6,000 years of experimenting with civilization design, we humans now find ourselves sailing together into the future on the one huge remaining ship of a combined global civilization.¹⁹ Whether or not we welcome or like the idea of globalization, we are witnessing in our lifetimes our evolution into a singular, merged human community – the largest ever. There are no more geographic New Worlds to discover: only a shared destiny.

Wright goes on to describe civilization as God having let loose a special group of primates – the human animal – into the laboratory of life, giving them the power to tinker with life itself. What scares me the most about this image is that we are all now living inside the experiment: if we accidentally destroy “the lab,” we have no home left, either for ourselves or our future generations.

For good or for bad, our globalized inventiveness is fusing our destinies into one civilization. So together, humanity must choose wisely, and in this lifetime. Our common future is our common design challenge.

With or without us, evolution moves forward by trial and error. But if the future is to include a recognizable human civilization, we cannot absorb one more major miscue.

I hope that, 100,000 years from now, our descendants will look back on those first 6,000 “childhood” years of the Big Bang of civilization as the successful adolescence of humanity: that awkward time when there were many civilizations would be a distant memory. Maybe we will be remembered for somehow overcoming

our adolescent delusions of immortality and inane infighting, bringing forward the best of all cultures, and designing a sustainable future together: that we found a way to meet our needs without compromising the ease for future generations to meet theirs.

Wright's ship analogy describes our situation well. Consider that many miles of open sea are needed to turn a huge ship around: In the event that an iceberg appears on our horizon, we must start changing direction far in advance, to avoid crashing into it. If we wait too long, we pass the event horizon, with no choice but to resign ourselves to witnessing our demise in painfully slow motion.

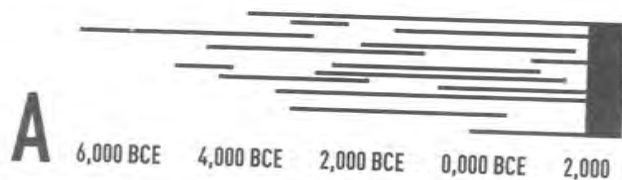
Design has the potential to help steer us to a safer course.



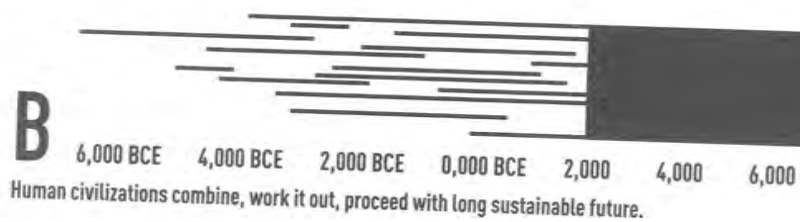
FROM CHARLATAN ARCHIVE (SEE NOTE 20)

“As Homo sapiens’ entry in any intergalactic design competition, industrial civilization would be tossed out at the qualifying round.” DAVID ORR²¹

Which future should we choose?



A 6,000 BCE 4,000 BCE 2,000 BCE 0,000 BCE 2,000
Human civilizations combine, then shortly implode. End of experiment.



B 6,000 BCE 4,000 BCE 2,000 BCE 0,000 BCE 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 12,000 14,000 16,000 18,000 20,000 22,000 24,000 26,000 28,000
Human civilizations combine, work it out, proceed with long sustainable future.

So which iceberg threatens us the most?

Is it terrorism? I don't think so. Though timely and freshly horrible in our minds, terrorism is not a new phenomenon and has yet to pose a serious threat to civilization. (I *do* think it is worth pondering why intelligent, and not particularly radical, people



Italy's Diesel brand presents a bizarre juxtaposition of Asian poverty and American poverty

from around the world are increasingly angry at and offended by Western culture. Perhaps they are outraged about being lied to continually by the most sophisticated deception process in history. More on this later.)

Perhaps the iceberg is a pandemic. A global pandemic is a highly probable catastrophe that deserves attention, including well-designed messaging to mitigate its effects. The spread of infectious disease is not new. In today's world, infectious diseases spread farther and faster than before, due to international travel

and shipping. The likelihood of a global pandemic of deadly, drug-resistant influenza or tuberculosis grows every day. Health authorities tell us that the question is not if, but when. Nonetheless, the worst scenario, while devastating, wouldn't likely end civilization as we know it.

Is the iceberg financial collapse? Or corruption? We'll consider design's role in these ills in the next chapter; however, we have overcome this type of challenge in the past and we will again.

No, the answer is "none of the above." When our children's children look back at the biggest issue of our era, they will see the most deadly threat as the devastation we wrought on our physical environment.

It is unfortunate that the culture that was the most influential of the 20th century also happens to be perhaps the world's most environmentally unsustainable.

**"There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth.
We are all crew."**

HERBERT "MARSHALL" MCLUHAN (1911-1980)²²