

PM22

ICoD platform meeting

15 october 2022

kaunas lithuania

design is possibility

MEETING GUIDE

international
council of
design

Hosted by:

Lithuanian
Design
Association

TOPIC 01

SELF REFLECTION

When Victor Papanek said in his 1971 book *Design for the Real World* that “there are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a very few of them” he was confronting designers with the environmental impact of their day-to-day choices. A small choice, repeated in a production run of hundreds of thousands, has very tangible impacts. This continues to be true today, whether the designer in question is designing clothing, websites, sofas, video games or anything else. We are making choices on behalf of consumers and the smallest details of our choices can have large and unexpected impacts when multiplied. If we go further than the manufacturing component, designers are a key part of another system that has important impacts on culture, consumption, society and the economy: the fabrication of desire. We are part of a consumer system that stimulates wants, creates trends and ‘hype’ around products, lifestyles and even political movements. In its current incarnation, this power of persuasion is mostly used to stimulate sales of endless products. But this need not be the limits of its application. Design can be used to transform the way people think about how they want to live. How they experience change. It can be used to subvert paradigms and offer new and innovative solutions to many of the problems we confront.

As design organisations and institutions, we must not be afraid to discuss, dissect and disagree on what design is, does, and can do. Self-examination is a crucial step in the maturing of any profession. There is nothing like lively debate to resolve our internal contradictions, transform our ideas, and ultimately form a solid basis for looking forward. An exploration of how we understand what we do and how we explain it to others.

TOPIC 02

HOPEFUL PROFESSION

The act of designing is inherently hopeful. Reduced to a fundamental essence, **designing is imagining ‘ideal’ futures in order to build them.** We strive to make safer, more efficient cars, to devise systems to more clearly transmit information, make more comfortable shoes, more sustainable packaging, etc. But none of this is in a vacuum. The designs we create must balance the needs and effects on individuals and societies. They must balance the aims of the client, the desires of the user, the impacts on other sectors of society, the cultural influences it creates and more. We measure the environmental impact. We reflect on the social impacts of a product’s manufacture, transport, and use. We consider safety. We consider cultural meanings and influences.

The Council has long taken the position that design is a profession. We do not mean by this, that it is a means to make a living. An economic transaction is not enough to establish a professional standing. **Professionalism is an ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good work than to economic gain and to the quality rather than the economic efficiency of work.** In other words, what differentiates a profession from a ‘job’ is that a professional puts the quality of the work and the professional reputation before the financial incentive. A professional thinks of themselves first and foremost at the service of society, in small and large ways.

QUESTIONS

- ? **What are you seeing as signs of change in the profession?**
- ? **What are the germinations you are starting to see that indicate seeds of hope?**
- ? **What are you hopeful about?**
- ? **What unexpected possibilities are beginning to take shape?**

TOPIC 03

REFRAMING SUSTAINABILITY

The narrative around sustainable design seems to be stuck on recyclability, ‘reducing’ impacts and ‘circular design’. We are not against any of these ideas. Anything that can be done to improve now, should be. But we would like to propose that – as a profession – we start to consider more radical aims. *Whilst still in a model of excess production and consumption, can we ever really get ahead of the sustainability challenge?* We propose that designers need to fundamentally re-frame their role in the economic system. **Designers should be starting to think seriously about how to drastically reduce consumption and production (UN SDG 12).** Although seemingly counter-intuitive we believe this is not only possible but an opportunity for design to challenge itself and innovate. Designers have a variety of useful skills. Our capacity to make things desirable need not be applied only to produce and sell products that go out of fashion. *What if we applied our skills to repackage existing goods? Or to create systems to allow multiple users to share items? What if our contribution is to design entirely new ways of thinking about consumption altogether?*

GUEST EXPERT



Philipp Pattberg is full professor of transnational environmental governance and policy at the Institute for Environmental Studies, VU Amsterdam, where he chairs the Environmental Policy Analysis Department. Philipp also directs the VU Amsterdam’s transdisciplinary and interfaculty research platform on sustainability, the Amsterdam Sustainability Institute (Amsterdam Sustainability Institute - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (vu.nl)). Philipp has published widely on questions of institutional change and transformation, effectiveness and accountability in environmental governance, and the increasing complexity of sustainability.

TOPIC 04

DESIGN IS FOR PEOPLE

So much of what the common person knows of design is not to their benefit. The term ‘user-centered design’ has become code for understanding the user’s wants and faults so well that the designer can use this to manipulate them into outcomes that actually benefit a third party. In the tech world, UI/UX design has become so good at manipulating users into outcomes, that whistleblowers have come out against these practices, creating the beginning of tech ethics. The advertising world has similar talents and ethical grey areas. This is an issue in most all types of design. We are focused on making products or services that excite the user whom we are learning about with alarming accuracy. While this knowledge makes the products ‘seamless’ ‘easy’ and ‘addictive,’ it is not actually for the benefit of the user. It is inherently manipulative and unethical. As a consequence, our profession is starting to suffer from an erosion of public trust.

Let us stop thinking of the user of design as a consumer, to be manipulated into buying something or behave in ways that benefit a corporate structure. Instead, **let’s start imagining the end user as a citizen of the world benefitting from ‘good’ design to increase their wellness and our societies’ capacity to thrive.**

We will look at how design can improve the lives of people through the following lenses:

- How cities can use design to increase the quality of life for their citizens
- How the Council is starting to look at the role of design organisations in effecting change in our societies
- How one of our Members has used design (and the design community) to support refugees fleeing war
- How to teach a new cohort of designers to solve problems in the face of increasingly complex issues in the world

TOPIC 05

SEEING THE POTENTIAL

The challenges presented by not only the pandemic, but climate change, population growth, and technological disruptions will further challenge society in years to come. We see immense potential in these complicated times. Design is well-suited to approach complex problems. As a professional community it is for us to begin positioning design and designers to confront these issues. Professional associations should aim to reach out of their silos and find bridges to collaborate with government, city planners, industry, as well as other professionals. Educational institutions need to prepare their students to see their role more holistically. Designers have a responsibility beyond their clients, to consider the well-being of humanity.

“Big hairy” problems deserve audacious solutions. Disruption is coming and designers can be a positive influence in this or be swept away in the changes that will accompany it. Our increasingly interconnected global community will need to rely on the expertise and imagination of those who are building a new kind of future. We posit that designers can and should be a driving force in this. Design is a profoundly optimistic profession. We imagine better futures and build them, through small and large gestures.

QUESTIONS

- ? If design is an act of future-making, how can it be applied in new ways? Who are the potential champions that can help place designers in roles to implement these futures?
- ? What is the responsibility of educational institutions to teach designers non design skills like critical thinking, political science, a basic understanding of scientific methodology, philosophy, etc.? How does one ensure that future designers are equipped to make the ethical and moral decisions they will need to make? That they will have the confidence to use their skills in ways we have not yet imagined?
- ? Sometimes to design is a political act. When we are determining what an ‘ideal future’ should look and feel like, we are incontrovertibly making choices between the needs and desires of a target group versus the impacts on other parts of society. How far does the designer’s responsibility extend?
- ? What are the opportunities created by the global crisis of the past few years? What has changed for the better? How do you envisage these positive changes developing in the future?



15 october 2022

Saturday

08.30 REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE

09.00 INTRODUCTION

Introductory remarks

Ana Masut CANADA

International Council of Design (ICoD)

Host Welcome

Algirdas Orantas LITHUANIA

Lithuanian Design Association (LDA)

ICoD introduction

Johnathon Strebly CANADA

International Council of Design (ICoD)

9.25 Roll call

All participants

9.55 Design is possibility

Disruption is coming and designers can be a positive influence in this or be swept away in the changes that will accompany it. Our increasingly interconnected global community will need to rely on the expertise and imagination of those who are building a new kind of future. We posit that designers can and should be a driving force in this.

Alisha Piercy CANADA

International Council of Design (ICoD)

10.10 BREAK

10.40 PLATFORM TOPIC

TOPIC 01 SELF-REFLECTION

Errors of the past

As design organisations and institutions, we must not be afraid to discuss, dissect and disagree on what design is, does, and can do. Self-examination is a crucial step in the maturing of any profession. There is nothing like lively debate to resolve our internal contradictions, transform our ideas, and ultimately form a solid basis for looking forward. An exploration of how we understand what we do and how we explain it to others.

Johnathon Strebly CANADA

International Council of Design (ICoD)

10.50 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

TOPIC 02 HOPEFUL PROFESSION

- ? What are you seeing as signs of change in the profession?
- ? What germinations are you starting to see that indicate seeds of hope?
- ? What are you hopeful about?
- ? What unexpected possibilities are starting to take shape?

Moderator:

Michelle Renee CANADA

International Council of Design (ICoD)

11.15 BREAKOUT SESSION

SPEED DATING

All participants

12.05 LUNCH

13.35 PANEL DISCUSSION

TOPIC 03 REFRAMING SUSTAINABILITY

With the climactic pressures being felt, consumption and production will drastically change. Today, designers are largely actors that work within the paradigm of making (desirable) things that will be bought and disposed of, at the request of industry. We propose that our capacity to make things desirable need not be applied in this way. What if our contribution is designing entirely new ways of thinking about consumption altogether?

Panelists:

Ana Masut CANADA

International Council of Design (ICoD)

Philipp Pattberg NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam Sustainability Institute

Moderator:

Alisha Piercy CANADA

International Council of Design (ICoD)

14.35 PLATFORM TOPIC

TOPIC 04 DESIGN IS FOR PEOPLE

Instilling a design culture within the City of Montréal

Building on 30 years of municipal actions in design, the City of Montréal adopted in 2019 the Agenda 2030 for Quality and Exemplarity in design and Architecture. A policy that engaged the City and its partners to use design as a tool to improve the experience of its citizens. The presentation will highlight the scope of this policy through examples of initiatives led by the City's Design Office.

Patrick Marmen CANADA

Unesco City of Design – Montréal

14.50 BREAK

15.20 PLATFORM TOPIC

Beyond 2050: Reimagining Design Education in Singapore

Singapore's first-ever national level Design Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) sets a bold 30-year vision that by 2050, Singapore will have developed the next generation of creative thinkers, problem solvers, and a global resilient workforce that will use design to help the nation thrive in the future economy. Proposing three recommendations to lay the foundation for an industry-relevant design education by 2050 and beyond.

Dawn Lim SINGAPORE
DesignSingapore Council

15.35 Taking ownership of the design discourse

Today, "design" is as misunderstood as it is ubiquitous. Indiscriminate use of the concept of "design" precludes any acceptance of designers as professionals. To ensure a future in which the potential of design is realised, designers themselves have to exercise control over the design discourse.

David Grossman ISRAEL
International Council of Design (ICoD)

15.50 United for Ukraine

How the design community can come together to help designers in need. How the Association of Polish Graphic Designers reacted to the war and refugee crisis.

Olena Pianovska POLAND
Association of Polish Graphic Designers (STGU)

16.05 BREAKOUT SESSION 02

TOPIC 05 SEEING THE POTENTIAL

- ? If design is an act of future-making, how can it be applied in new ways ?
- ? What is the responsibility of educational institutions to teach designers non design skills? How does one ensure future designers are equipped to make the ethical and moral decisions they will need to make?
- ? When we are determining what an 'ideal future' should look and feel like, we are incontrovertibly making choices between the needs and desires of a target group versus the impacts on other parts of society. How far does the designer's responsibility extend?
- ? What are the opportunities created by the global crisis of the past few years? What has changed for the better?

All participants

16.40 RECAP OF DISCUSSION

16.50 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Johnathon Strebly CANADA
International Council of Design (ICoD)

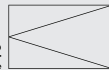
17.00 END OF PLATFORM MEETING

17.30 AWARDS CEREMONY

18.00 RECEPTION

With special thanks:

Kaunas 2022
European Capital of Culture



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COUNCIL FOR
CULTURE

