



#1

A DESIGN IS MORE THAN JUST A DESIGN

“With my sunglasses on, I’m Jack Nicholson.
Without them, I’m fat and 60.”

The Ray-Ban was developed in 1937 by specialist eyecare company Bausch + Lomb of New York, in response to concerns from the US Army Air Corps about pilots suffering from vision-related headaches and altitude sickness. The new glasses blocked 85 per cent of visible light, as well as a lot of annoying glare, making them much loved by military aviators. But not only by them: the flying link also made the product an unexpected success on the consumer market because of the cool design. A great piece of unintentional branding. ■

#4



LOOK AHEAD

Off the coast of an Indonesian island.

As designers, we are usually most interested in the immediate impact of our work. We often overlook its more indirect effects. For example, the ecological disaster in our oceans caused by the use of plastic packaging. And the phenomenon of fake news, unforeseen even by the likes of Mark Zuckerberg. The time has now come for designers to look beyond today and tomorrow. Dare to think big, but also to understand the long-term consequences of your work. You could prevent a whole lot of future nightmares. ■



#7

PUT ON A SHOW

Watch and learn from Mad Men.

Designers love to tell their clients how long and hard they have thought about an idea or concept. Usually at deadly dull presentations. We're just not that good at them. Compare our efforts with those by the advertising boys and girls. Now they know how to sell something... In Mad Men, Don Draper has to announce the name of Kodak's latest product: a rotary tray for a slide projector instead of the standard straight one. As if starring in a movie thriller, he slowly ramps up the tension by comparing the new concept with the circle of life before finally, climactically, announcing its name: the Carousel. That's how it should be done. Don't give a presentation, put on a show. ■



#16

BEWARE OF PURPLE!

Prince, the King of Purple.

Designers can squabble endlessly about colour. But steer clear of purple! After all, you very rarely see purple buildings or cars. The problem? Purple is considered totally unable to express style in a durable way. Yet there are exceptions. Prince Rodger Nelson (RIP) made purple the trademark colour of a hugely successful career. And the Pope and Milka cows have managed to get away with it, too. Nevertheless, I still say: always approach purple with the utmost caution. ■

FedEx

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ENJOY CONFLICT

The FedEx logo, winner of more than 40 international awards.

The FedEx logo is world-famous and an icon for designers. It makes clever use of an aesthetic principle known as conjunctive ambiguity. That is, the combination of two apparently conflicting images in a way which actually creates a positive resonance between them. Look carefully and you will see that the white space between the “E” and the “x” forms an arrow. You can’t see the arrow and the letters simultaneously. I’ve never known anyone who didn’t smile when they first spotted that. ■

#46



EMBRACE COMPLEXITY

“The inspiration for a running innovation that feels like this (without actually looking like this).”

In the world of design, products which were once standalone objects – things like the coffee machine and running shoes – are now evolving into combinations of products and services forming part of a greater system. Take Nike+, for instance. In a connected world, everything is linked with everything else. Not an easy concept to get to grips with, but an exciting one. And as a designer, you’re the one who has to make the connections. ■

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WABI SABI!

Kintsugi: the beauty of imperfection.

Why do we find an old table more appealing than a new one? Why do we keep fishing those worn-out old jeans out of the rubbish bin? The Japanese have a term for it: wabi sabi. Devised in the fifteenth century, this combines the concept of simplicity and understated elegance (wabi, the essence of things) with the beauty which comes with the passage of time (sabi). By appreciating imperfection, you are more rooted in the here and now. ■



58

USE THE POWER OF A METAPHOR

Le Corbusier, LC4 chaise longue, 1929.

For the LC4, Le Corbusier found his inspiration in the idea of a cowboy sitting back, feet up and smoking a pipe. That metaphor resulted in an iconic chair, designed in collaboration with Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand. ■

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DESIGN THINKING IS THE MAKING OF YOU

The building blocks.

Design has its origins in making things. After all, anything you make first has to be designed. But now we realize that the way you come up with a design can also be applied usefully in other areas. We call it “design thinking”. From the legal profession to managers, good designers see this as the new miracle path to innovation and improvement. But it takes more than just copying a designer’s way of working. Good designers are curious and interested in what’s happening in the world around them. They understand effortlessly what is required, whilst at the same time possessing the creativity needed to satisfy the different interests involved. Design thinking is more than a process, it’s a way of being. ■

