MADE
IN CHINA

DESIGNED
IN CALIFORNIA

CRITICISED
IN EUROPE

DESIGN MANIFESTO

EVERYTHING HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO PERFECTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

When everything is destined to be designed, design disappears into the everyday. We simply don't see it anymore because it's everywhere. **This is the vanishing act of design.** At this moment design registers its redundancy: our products, environments and services have been comprehensively improved. Everything has been designed to perfection and is under a permanent upgrade regime. Within such a paradigm, design is enmeshed with the capitalist logic of reproduction. But this does not come without conflicts, struggles and tensions. Chief among these is the situation of design in a planetary procession toward decay. Our dispense culture prompts a yearning for longevity. The computational compulsion to delete brings alive a desire to retrieve objects, ideas and experiences that refuse obsolescence. **Society is growing** more aware of sustainability and alert to the depletion of this world. For the ambitious designer, it's time to take the next step: designing the future as a collective relation attuned to life.

Given the crumbling and fragmentation of design as a discipline, it's time to take stock. **All experiences can and will be designed.** However, such expanded definition can easily lead to a culture of generic indifference. A cold professional style is killing our senses, numbing aesthetic pleasure.

image to gain prominence beyond the physical. Generated by sensor chips and enhanced through machine learning, each depiction is more spectacular and seductive than the last. In today's visual culture, images are more real than real. There is nothing beyond the image. After Virginia Woolf: "Nothing seems real, unless I post it."

Still, the real can't be discarded so easily. A longing for matter, beyond the immaterial and somnambulist reality of the new, empty image, drives current image makers to 3D software packages and printers. Maker labs, equipped with the latest techno tools, pop up everywhere, in schools, libraries, and neigh-bourhoods. These are the workshops of the crafted image of the future. In this post-digital stage, we once again add objects to the physical realm, broadening our world and returning design to its haptic origins. **Designers exchange knowledge, share tools, and collectively develop a mentality appropriate to this new social design.**

Outside the maker spaces and fab labs, design-ers roam the land in a quest for authentic and crafts-based processes for growing food and other products. This seems to be a direct response to the heavy-handed discipline of design, which perpetuates the consumer industry. Another example of the new craving

for craft is the design hacking of the technically complex objects that surround us. From smartphones to Apple Watches, smart key finders and digital assistants, all gadgets are being dissected to critically probe their design. It won't be long until designers will follow up such analytical exercises with a radically altered view, which may once again stir up our design-filled brains.

The outlines of a novel post-digital craft slowly appear, even in experiments that do not surpass the level of preliminary probing. The fluid, round and distorted aesthetics of the 21st century sharply contrast with the rigid, serial formal language of Modernism, which has ingrained itself within design for decades. We know that new social meanings become apparent first in art and design. Just as Piet Mondriaan, in his quadrangular way, once sensed a budding world of systems, today's fluid and hybrid post-digital aesthetics mimics the liquid social cohesion of the network society, in which individuals coagulate before swiftly detaching. Offset against **smoothly rendered floating forms** that look like elastic cells and cylinders, we see lumbering, torn, layered, unfinished images, with cut-off limbs, bent perspectives and distorted landscapes. It is precisely the imperfection of these glitches that gestures to a new style, a new aesthetic, challenging our fragmented imagination anew.

I DESIGN, U DESIGN

RULES ARE BECOMING DISCARDED CRAVING

YOU CAN EITHER HAVE CREATIVE FREEDOM OR CORPORATE CONTROL

DESIGN HAS SWALLOWED THE WORLD TECHNO-SOCIETY

PERPETUAL CATCH-UP

A HYBRID REALM IS EMERGING WITHIN THE FIELD OF DESIGN

TURN YOUR CREATIVITY INTO MONEY

URGENCY IS KEY!!

THE ASSOCIATION OF CREATIVITY AND THE CONSUMER MARKET HAS BEEN A FOUNDATION OF CAPITALISM SINCE THE START SUBSUMED BY DESIGN

CONSUMPTION MARKETED AS SELF-EXPRESSION

THE "CREATIVE INDUSTRY" MONOPOLIZED CREATIVITY AND CONSUMERS FOLLOWED

CULTURAL CATEGORIES CRAVING A **ARE BEING ANNULLED** QUICK PROFIT

COLD CASH ? ? ?

THE CREATION OF CULTURAL QUALITY IS A PRECONDITION FOR MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER, MORE CREATIVE PLACE

WONDROUSLY PROFITABILITY **INCLUSIVE MONIKER** EXPLOIT

THE DESIGN OF NATURE *****D|

CREATIVE INDUSTRY PROFIT-ORIENTED PRACTICES

IS ALWAYS IN A HURRY

INTERNALLY PROMISCUOUS HYBRID

DISCIPLINES ARE LOSING THEIR FRAMEWORKS

CREATIVITY FOR ALL
PROTO-TYPING

CREATIVITY BY PROXY

MINIMIZE YOUR COGNITIVE

DECORATIVE ADDED VALUE

LOAD

DESIGN GOES EVERYWHERE
Creativity for All

In the aftermath of the democratization of design, creativity has become hedged in by capital and the market. Emerging first in UK policy circles under Tony Blair, the notion of "the creative industry" gained firm prominence with Richard Florida's 2002 book *The Creative Class*. But the association of creativity and the consumer market has been a foundation of capitalism since the start: consumption marketed as self-expression. But this creativity was always carefully mediated and managed, becoming a creativity by proxy: the "creative industry" monopolized creativity and consumers followed. Certainly there have always been designers with both cultural motives and cultural knowledge, but their products were often too exclusive for the market of daily amenities. Or they were watered down by the industry, becoming the decorative icing of **one-size-fits-all products**. This "treason of the creative class," to draw upon Julien Benda's trahison des clercs, is echoed by an endless stream of design products, by the gentrification of neighborhoods once built for the lower income classes, and by the retreat of a laissez faire government, which leaves art and culture — in other words, creativity — to the market.

cialization of society has finally captured the creative sector. However our lives have not necessarily become depleted of culture. In the 21st century we are, once again, on the hunt for cultural value, placed as we are within an open, democratic, profitable, sustainable, digital, and material playing field.

Now that our entire society has been thoroughly designed, the time has come for ambitious maverick designers to search for the cracks in the cultural-economic system. **Where are the fracture points in our financial bedrock?** Where are the fissures leading to new ways of creating and being? A counter-voice is desperately needed. After the moral bankruptcy of the creative industry, it's up to the design society to fill in the blanks. That doesn't just mean more conventional products, wrapped in an anarchistic retro-punk skin. **Resistance is not an Amazon category** or a label slapped on to add value. Instead, what is urgently needed is this: the design of a radically different way of living. Growing prosperity has turned the common citizen into a lecherous consumer.

SEARCH FOR THE CRACKS IN THE CULTURAL-ECONOMIC SYSTEM

that inform the engineering of parametric politics. Designers are also culpable here and can't assume they're handed a "Get out of Jail" free card. So why not exploit this insider knowledge, turn informant, and take revenge on machinic control? Indeed, unless designers betray the system they helped construct, the idea that alternatives might be conjured up really is nothing more than pure fantasy.

People are oiling the economic machine; they make the mechanism run smoothly. Far from being scarce, this human oil is multiplying at great speed: humanity will double in a few decades. Our personal data drives the development of systems. And **we are all too willing to share** it: how much we earn, which groceries we buy, where we travel, and who we talk to. "The concept of 'deletion' doesn't really exist for FaceBook; efforts to 'delete' are just new data points about how you feel about what you are now trying to hide from view." (@robhorning, 1 March 2019) Our data shows what kind of people we are and to which categories we belong. Thus, populations are sorted and provided with data personas by algorithms. In order to shape our conduct, governments and businesses meticulously track it, collecting all possible data on us. We are being spied on. Cash money dematerializes, electronic gates close and the only way we'll get access to transportation, products and services is

ENGINEERING PARAMETRIC POLITICS

by sharing our personal data by means of credit cards, public transport passes or passwords. Soon, we'll have to use our voices, our faces, or fingerprints as laissez passer. Think we're exaggerating? Just have a look at China today.

Technology has pervaded the entire design field, from architecture to interaction design, from fashion to product design, from graphic to gaming design. Both emerging and established designers have to come up with solutions for the privacy problems they are confronted with. We hope that **privacy breaches are a design issue**, but designers often are mere executors of strategic decisions made well before they were employed. Yet even at the

What happens when anything can be labeled design? We simply don't see it anymore because it's everywhere. This manifesto investigates the design inflation: is design taking over contemporary arts and aesthetics, turning the world into a uniform visual soup?

"What if politics would be at the end a question of design? This is the bold thesis of this manifesto: social design, biotech design, environmental design, gender design and self-design replace government, health, ecology, and identity politics. Love it or hate it, but read it before your ideas are re-designed by someone else." **Paul B Preciado**, Contemporary writer, Philosopher and Curator, Paris, France.

"It's cruel, but fair. You'll want to read this manifesto one scalding page at a time. Take plenty of breaks to web surf for cool memes." **Bruce Sterling**, Science Fiction writer, Turin, Italy.

"Design escaped norms and became normal. This new normality is banal and, therefore, starts to be subversive again." **Uta Brandes**, Professor Gender Design, Cologne, Germany.

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