Dialectic

A scholarly journal of thought leadership, education and practice
in the discipline of visual communication design

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in the discipline of visual communication design

Contents

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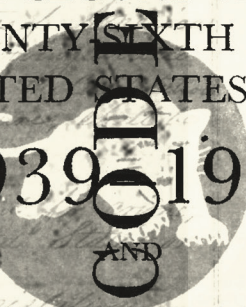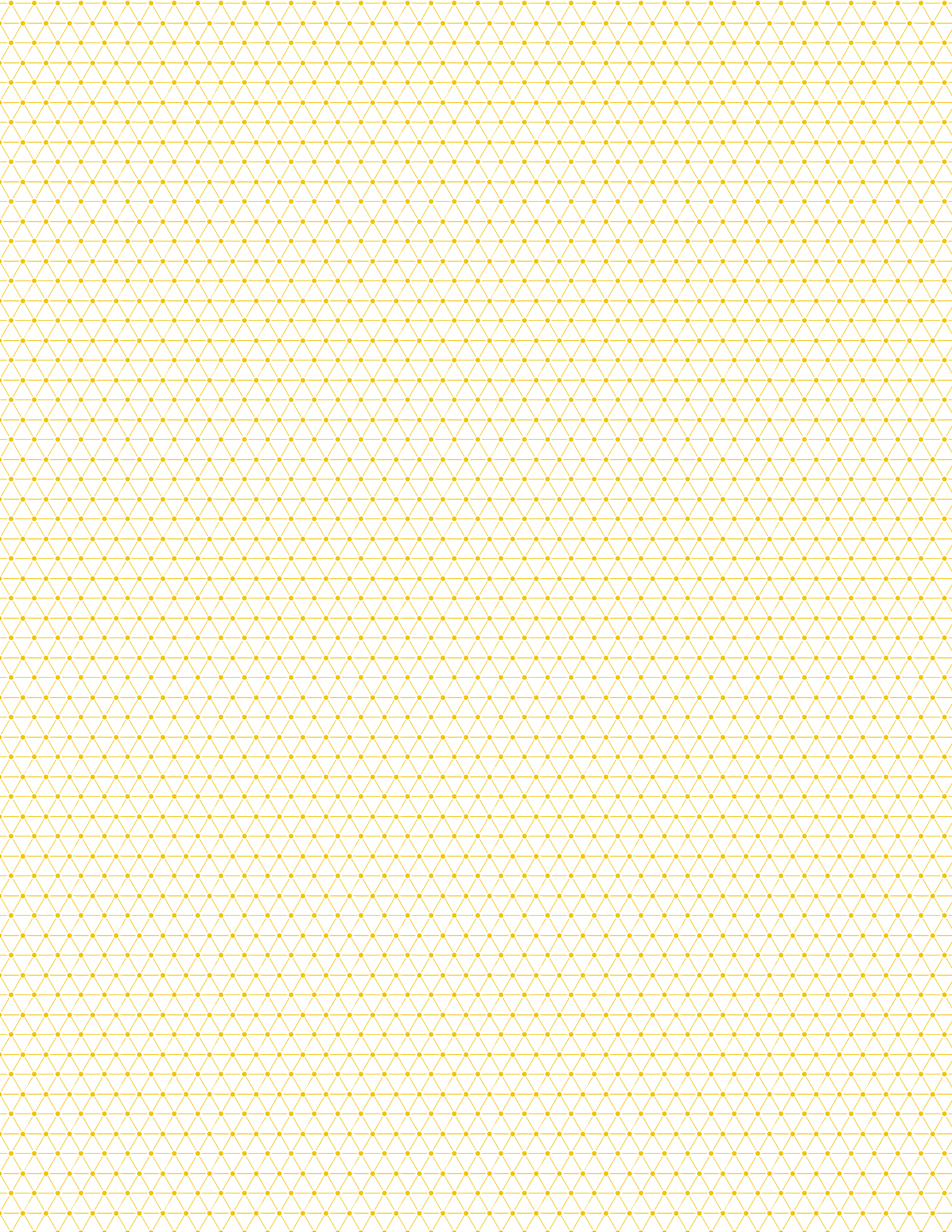
Prioritizing Our Values: A Case-Study Report that Examines the Efforts of a Group of University-Level, Communication Design Educators to Collectively Construct Inclusive and Equitable Design Teaching Practices in a (Post-) Pandemic Era

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Edited by *DIALECTIC'S* internal editing team led by Michael R. Gibson and Keith M. Owens with assistance from Evelyn Denson

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A Positionality Statement

As university-level design educators—and, more specifically, women and women of color—who represent groups that have been systematically marginalized in the U.S. and in many other so-called developed and developing nations, and who experience the impact of sexism and racism in our daily lives, the authors recognize that equitable design teaching practices are essential to the effective sustenance of their pedagogy because they fundamentally affect how they interact with others, especially their students. Specifically, they define *equitable teaching practices* as those that equip all

students with the tools, resources, and quality of instruction and learning environments necessary to foster and sustain effective design learning, such that each individual learner in a given design classroom has the opportunity to thrive as a knowledge seeker and builder within that setting. Each student comes into a design classroom informed by a unique set of life experiences, socio-cultural biases, and distinct levels of expertise. The authors bear witness to the impact and results of *in*equitable teaching practices (also known as debilitating teaching practices [1]) when these result in students being disadvantaged and losing opportunities to contribute and grow within given design learning environments. In this context, *"disadvantaged"* refers to a student or students being excluded from design learning activities due to their being unfairly and cursorily assessed as possessing knowledge acquisition, construction and synthesis abilities that are "less than" those possessed by other students of similar age and experience [2]. The authors believe that professional career development for all students preparing to embark on and sustain design careers should include the intellectual and emotional preparation and skill-building necessary for working in a diversely populated and rapidly evolving world, regardless of an individual student's socio-economic and socio-cultural background.

The audience for the explorations and analyses described in this case study is diverse. Although the authors do not personally know all of the design educators who participated in and contributed to the pledge initiative chronicled in this article, they do know that these people represent a broad range of university-level institutions, programs, experiences, and students, and the data that was collected during this case study is framed by a shared viewpoint that diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral and essential to the effective facilitation of design education. The authors primary objectives as they formulated and operated the activities that inform this case study included determining whether or not this pledge initiative, which henceforth in this piece will be referred to as the *Value Design Education Pledge*, or, more simply as *"the pledge,"* was 1) sustainable and successful for design educators, and 2) meaningful, effectively consequential, and worthwhile for design educators and/or their students.

Additionally, despite the lack of data in the scholarly literature that currently informs design regarding the effect of virtual/remote learning on the efficacy of design education specifically, there is an abundance of data regarding the broader impacts of virtual/remote learning on many different types of students and disciplines. Consequently, this case study builds on existing trends (such as the increased emphasis on accounting for student mental health and maintaining awareness of and about multiple types of learners [3]) that inform education research, while also contributing key insights into the specific field of inquiry that is framing this case study in design education.

Abstract

The *Value Design Education Pledge* was co-developed by the co-authors of this article: Associate Professor Anne H. Berry, Associate Professor Meaghan A. Dee, Assistant Professor Penina Laker, and Associate Professor Rebecca Tegtmeyer, with contributions by Kelly Walters (Assistant Professor, Communication Design, Parsons, The New School, New York City, N.Y., U.S.A.), to develop and promote long-term, inclusive, and equitable teaching practices that could positively affect design

education. The pledge was initiated in the wake of events that transpired during the spring and summer of 2020—namely, the COVID-19 global pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests, both of which evolved across the United States during that time. It was also undertaken in recognition of 1) the changes and challenges that evolved as a result of remote and online learning having to be implemented across most U.S.-based, university-level and K–12 design education programs, and 2) the need for pedagogic accountability when decisions have been taken by faculty and administrators to commit to inclusive and equitable teaching practices.

This case study provides an overview of the timeline of events and the decision-making that preceded the development of the pledge, including the first AIGA (the professional association for design, and the primary funder of this journal) Design Educators Community (DEC) virtual roundtable in May 2020 that spawned a draft of actionable items and outcomes from educators (working at K-12, non-traditional, undergraduate, and post-graduate levels) who participated in the pledge initiative. As a key point of planning and emphasis, the *Value Design Education Pledge* was developed to meet two key goals. The first was to facilitate manageable and sustainable commitments to students and communities for design educators already overburdened by the strain of adapting curricula and the course materials that support them. The second was to encourage remote and online learning in ways that could effectively provide emotional and academic support to design students throughout the progression of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the social, political, and cultural upheavals that accompanied it. The authors research fueled the generation of ideas for further exploration of initiatives that could effectively support these goals, including:

- developing mechanisms for measuring design students' learning before and after they leave particular classes and programs;
- identifying ways to emphasize that the outcomes of design processes can provide humanistic, tangible, and positively transformative products, services, experiences, and systems; and
- building better mentor models that could be facilitated inside and outside of a variety of types of design classrooms.

While the disciplinary focus of the pledge as it was initially developed was centered on design education, the authors believe that several items and ideas that emerged from operating it can be adapted to benefit education across a broader array of disciplines.

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1 Subini, A., Handy, T., Miller, A.L., & Jackson, E. "Animating Discipline Disparities Through Debilitating Practices: Girls of Color and Inequitable Classroom Interactions." Teachers College Record, 122.5 (2020) pgs. 1–46.

2 Ibid.

3 Abramson, A., "Capturing the benefits of remote learning: How education experts are applying lessons learned in the pandemic to promote positive outcomes for all students." American Psychological Association, 1 September, 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.apa.org/monitor/2021/09/cover-remote-learning (Accessed February 1, 2023).

Prioritizing Our Values:

A Case-Study Report that Examines the Efforts of a Group of University-Level, Communication Design Educators to Collectively Construct Inclusive and Equitable Design Teaching Practices in a (Post-) Pandemic Era

ANNE H. BERRY, MEAGHAN A. DEE, PENINA LAKER, & REBECCA TEGTMEYER

Introduction and Contextualization

In the spring of 2020, as the infectious disease Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) began making its way across the United States, the science around what the American public could do to protect itself from the rapid spread was evolving in real-time. [4] The subsequent spike in COVID-19 infections and deaths was marked by a nationwide shut-down of schools, organizations, and businesses, as well as the perpetuation—and politicization—of misinformation and disinformation [a] across social and some mainstream media. The pandemic erupted on the heels of the publication of the U.S. Department of Justice's *Report on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election*, which identified the roles of misinformation and disinformation in influencing the 2016 U.S. presidential election, exposing vulnerabilities within American society [5] that later manifested themselves in the rejection of science and the results of scientific research with respect for many U.S. federal and state-based organizations issuing calls for masking mandates and widespread vaccination. [6] During this time of fear, economic uncertainty, and mass death, concerned educators teaching at all levels across the country rallied to provide support and stability for their students who were struggling with isolation, mental health challenges, physical health challenges, and family loss.

[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "CDC Museum COVID-19 Timeline," CDC.gov. Online. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html (Accessed April 28, 2022).

[a] *Although the terms "misinformation" and "disinformation" are used somewhat interchangeably and both refer to incorrect, false, or misleading information, disinformation is distinguished from misinformation by its definition as a deliberate attempt to deceive and is "often covertly spread" (Merriam-Webster, 2019; Wardle, 2017).*

[5] U.S. Department of Justice. "Report on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, 2019. Volume I." Online. Available at: https://www.justice.gov/storage/report_volume1.pdf (Accessed July 23, 2019).

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Bolsen, T. & Palm, R. "Politicization and COVID-19 vaccine resistance in the U.S." Progress in molecular biology and translational science, 188.1 (2022): pgs. 81–100. doi:10.1016/bs.pmbts.2021.10.002.

7

Nazempour, R. and Darabi, H., "Nelson, P.C. Impacts on Students' Academic Performance Due to Emergency Transition to Remote Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Financial Engineering Course Case Study. Educ. Sci., (2022):p. 202. Online. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12030202 (Accessed April 19, 2023).

The response to the sudden changes necessitated by the public health crisis resulted in most American educators—from early childhood education to the doctoral level—having to pivot from in-person teaching modalities to ones that required the rapid implementation of remote and online learning. This occurred despite most of them not having adequate training and the resources necessary to do this efficiently or effectively, regardless of their disciplinary associations. [7] Design educators were suddenly having to confront many of the same challenges regarding their abilities to effectively facilitate learning among their students as educators in most other disciplines. In May of 2020, the AIGA's Design Educators Community (DEC) held a virtual roundtable discussion to address this crisis that was hosted by Associate Professor Anne H. Berry, Assistant Professor Penina Laker, Associate Professor Meaghan Dee, Associate Professor Rebecca Tegtmeyer, and Assistant Professor Kelly Walters.

Friday // 05.15.20 // The Value of Design Education

I feel instinctively that design education is important. But how do I (we) communicate or demonstrate that value?
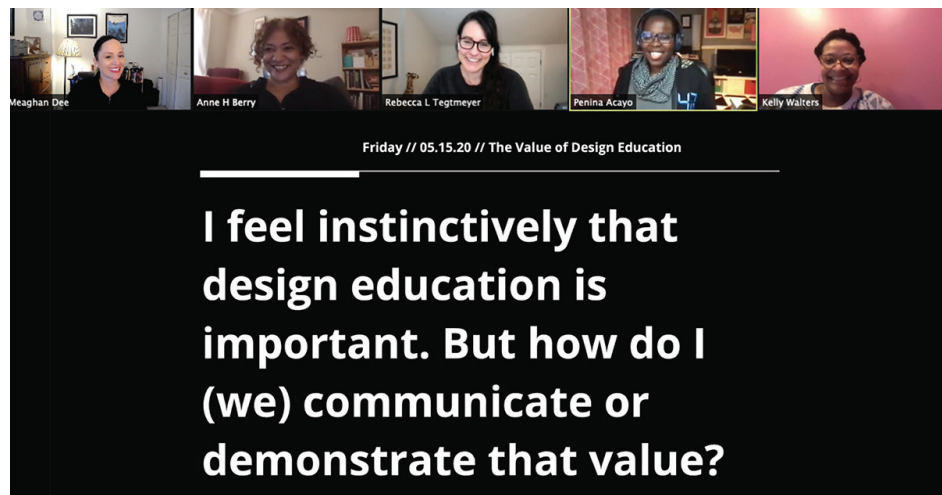
FIGURE 1: This image depicts a virtual roundtable facilitated in May of 2020 by the AIGA's Design Educators Community (DEC) during which the co-authors of this case study—Professors Meaghan Dee, Anne H. Berry, Rebecca Tegtmeyer, and Penina Laker—hosted a variety of critical discussions among about 35 university-level design educators that addressed how they might begin to effectively alter their teaching practices to accommodate pandemically induced restrictions on in-classroom, face-to-face learning. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

It was shortly after this event, as many American design educators paused to reflect and catch their collective breath after having dealt with the sudden disruption of teaching schedules, learning plans, assessment responsibilities, as well their research, scholarly and creative agendas, that the Black

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Mahdy, M., "The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Academic Performance of Veterinary Medical Students," Front. Vet. Sci., 06 October, 2020, Sec. Veterinary Humanities and Social Sciences. Online. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2020.594261 (Accessed April 19, 2023).

9

Goyal, N., Abdulahad, A., Privett, J., Verma, A., Foroozesh, M., and Coston, T., "Student Grade Evaluation, Survey Feedback, and Lessons Learned during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comparative Study of Virtual vs. In-Person Offering of a Freshman-Level General Chemistry II Course in Summer at Xavier University of Louisiana," Educational Sciences, 12.3 (2022). Online. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12030226 (Accessed February 24, 2023).

10

ADL. "ADL Debunk: Disinformation and the BLM Protests." Online. Available at: https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/adl-debunk-disinformation-and-the-blm-protests (Accessed April 27, 2022).

11

Corley, C. "Black Lives Matter Fights Disinformation To Keep The Movement Strong," NPR, last modified 25 May, 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.npr.org/2021/05/25/999841030/black-lives-matter-fights-disinformation-to-keep-the-movement-strong (Accessed April 2, 2022).

12

Chin, J. "Covid fueled anti-Asian racism. Now elderly Asian Americans are being attacked," Washington Post, 9 February, 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/02/09/attacks-asian-american-elderly-/ (Accessed April 25, 2022).

Lives Matter (BLM) protests began in various locations across the country. They served as a painful reminder that even a global health crisis could not stymie the pervasiveness of American racism. The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police, as well as the subsequent increase of anti-Asian violence in the U.S., required additional socio-cultural, economic, emotional, and intellectual responses. Trying to conduct "business as usual" in many American design learning settings in the midst of several waves of social, cultural, and political upheaval became unrealistic. [8] On top of this, for many college students across the globe, "the COVID-19 pandemic [had] induced a variety of negative emotions, including frustration, anxiety, and isolation." [9] Compounding this, there began to be a flood of misinformation and disinformation that sought to undermine the peaceful intent of many BLM protests [10,11] which also began to fuel anti-Asian hate in many areas of the U.S., and fomented false ideas about how several unfounded conspiracies had caused the outbreak and exacerbated the rapid spread of the virus. [12] Many of these efforts also disputed the efficacy of vaccines that U.S. government Center for Disease Control (C.D.C.) had certified as safe and recommended for broad public use as a means to prevent further spread. [13,14] During the transpiration of these tumultuous events, there was a high demand for American design educators to demonstrate unequivocal support for their students as they struggled to sustain the levels of engagement in their coursework necessary to build the knowledge and skills they would need to advance their careers. As the pandemic grew in severity and the BLM movement simultaneously increased its momentum, there were calls for these efforts to be coupled with inclusive and equitable learning experiences. Questions remained, however, about the ideal methods for doing this effectively. How could design educators address these growing challenges without creating additional burdens for weary students and faculty?

Along with the many other design educators (in the U.S. [15] and internationally [16]), the co-authors of this piece, found themselves having to address the effects that a bevy of new social and economic challenges were having on their students that began with the global onset of the pandemic in March of 2020 (and would last until roughly May of 2021). These were the direct and indirect results of U.S. government-mandated school and workplace closings, and the subsequent losses of income, disruption of familial and other support networks, and (for some) an inability to consistently

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Vaccines & Immunizations: How to Address COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation," CDC.gov. Online. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/addressing-vaccine-misinformation.html (Accessed April 25, 2022).

14

Alba, D. "Virus Misinformation Spikes as Delta Cases Surge," The New York Times, 11 August, 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/10/technology/covid-delta-misinformation-surge.html (Accessed April 26, 2022).

15

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). "CDC Museum COVID-19 Timeline," August 16, 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html (Accessed February 16, 2023).

16

United Nations. "The virus that shut down the world: Economic meltdown," December 30, 2020. Online. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1080762 (Accessed February 15, 2023).

access the internet. Together, these students' abilities to effectively engage in their coursework, access university facilities and resources, and maintain the social and cultural networks that many of them were relying on to bolster their educational and emotional experiences were disrupted. This confluence of events emphasized the responsibilities that many design educators the world over had to assume if they were to effectively facilitate the kinds of learning that had suddenly become essential and went beyond the need to educate emerging designers about the formal and theoretical underpinnings of visual communication design.

The primary responsibility the authors felt they had to assume under the circumstances was—and remains—to empower emerging designers to develop their skills and bases of knowledge in ways that actively create the cultures that contextualize and fuel theirs' and others' perceptions and actualizations of the societies within which they live, or to shape and positively sustain their creations. The authors contend that *culture* is made up of the values, beliefs, underlying assumptions, attitudes, and behaviors shared by a group of people, and they define *creating culture* as the intentional commitment to developing and maintaining sets of community standards that afford equitable opportunities for all community members to advance their lives and careers. The authors further contend that it is essential to provide an ideologically open and inclusive space within which their diverse constituencies of students can plan and engage in a wide variety of positive learning experiences. Additionally, the authors believe that participants in a community create a positive culture within it by favoring and satisfying the good of the many rather than favoring and satisfying individual desires, and that the co-creation of classroom values is essential to reaching this goal. The authors have learned that fostering a sense of belonging among those who constitute a given culture is imperative to creating and sustaining it in ways that achieve the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of those who live and work within it.

Additionally, the authors contend that this can be accomplished most effectively and efficiently by ensuring the facilitation of a collective sharing and distribution of knowledge that reflects our common values as design educators. This was a primary goal of formulating, operating, and analyzing the results of the case study. The authors acknowledge that design students are informed by a multitude of intelligences and learning styles, and, as such, knowledge should be disseminated and constructed among

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van den Hooff, B., & de Ridder, J. A. Knowledge sharing in context: The influence of organizational commitment, communication climate and CMC use on knowledge sharing. Journal of Knowledge Management, 8.6 (2004): pgs. 117–130; (p.119).

18

Maxwell Lane, M. & Tegtmeyer, R. Collaboration in Design Education. London, U.K.: Bloomsbury, 2020, p. 16.

19

Dewey, J. Logic: The Theory of Inquiry. New York, U.S.A.: Henry Holt and Company, 1938, p. 140.

20

Conklin, S. & Garrett Dikkers, A. "Instructor social presence and connectedness in quick shift from face-to-face to online instruction." Online Learning, 25.1 (2021): pgs. 135-150. Online. Available at: https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v25i1.2482 (Accessed on September 5, 2022). "Empathic facilitation" is defined as "demonstrating an understanding of others' situations through processes and practices" (p. 142).

them across multiple modalities (e.g. through discussion, writing, the iterative and heuristically informed creation of visual artifacts, systems, and products, etc.).

Sharing knowledge is described in this article as "the process where individuals mutually exchange their implicit (tacit) and explicit knowledge to create new knowledge" [17] to leverage collective expertise and contribute new insights. In their book *Collaboration in Design Education,* Marty Maxwell Lane and Rebecca Tegtmeyer (a co-author of this piece) [18] posit that it is necessary to exchange and share knowledge in order to build on and expand it, an idea that can be traced back as far as John Dewey's early work regarding teaching and learning. [19] Establishing an environment for knowledge sharing in a given design classroom culture begins with creating trust and openness, which the authors hereby postulate are core values in design education. These values are the foundation that the authors believe is crucial to create the conditions that shape the development and sustenance of what they are defining as a positive classroom culture. Initiating these values at the beginning of a course of study in design, or in the early days of the operation of a particular design class, demonstrates the goals that the authors believe design educators should strive to attain as they attempt to guide learning activities and behaviors that benefit and inspire design students. Finally, the authors have learned and now believe that attaining these goals enables students to operationalize design processes that contribute to more equitable, inclusive, and holistically informed community cultures.

Examining the Effects of Virtual Learning Policies and Practices on Design Educators and Their Students

At the onset of the pandemic, educators teaching across many disciplines—including design—instinctively understood the need for patience—specifically, patience with the development and implementation of curricular initiatives, course- or classroom-specific teaching practices, and learning outcomes—on behalf of both them and their students. Reframing expectations, adopting "empathic facilitation" models that prioritized student wellbeing and flexibility, [20] and keeping a sense of community when many were feeling disconnected took precedence over keeping hard deadlines for project completions and exacting standards for particular student project deliverables. A study conducted by a group of four chemistry professors at Xavier University of Louisiana found that, "[a] lack of a sense of

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Goyal, N., Abdulahad, A., Privett, J., Verma, A., Foroozesh, M., and Coston, T., "Student Grade Evaluation, Survey Feedback, and Lessons Learned during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comparative Study of Virtual vs. In-Person Offering of a Freshman-Level General Chemistry II Course in Summer at Xavier University of Louisiana," Educ. Sci., 12 (2022): p. 226. Online. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12030226 (Accessed March 15, 2023).

22

Verschelden, C. Bandwidth recovery: Helping students reclaim cognitive resources lost to poverty, racism, and social marginalization. Sterling, Virginia, U.S.A.: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2017.

community has also been reported in the literature as a weakness in virtual learning."[21] Relatedly, in *Bandwidth Recovery: Helping Students Reclaim Cognitive Resources Lost to Poverty, Racism, and Social Marginalization*, author Cia Verschelden states, "research consistently points to belonging as a critical factor in college success." She goes on to note that, "belonging" comes with its own set of challenges for first-generation and non-majority students, and further articulates that peer support and "social connectedness" remain critical components for motivation and engagement, particularly for marginalized students.[22] Knowing that being deprived of close contact with their in-classroom learning community could have detrimental effects on students and student engagement, many educators recognized the necessity of diligently cultivating virtual, remotely accessible learning spaces. By embracing and then sharing new virtual communication and teaching technologies, tools, and methods for creating as much stability on behalf of their students as they could, some design educators whose practices are described in this study were able to effectively adapt their teaching practices to meet the new, virtually facilitated learning needs of many of their students. Two years later, design educators returned to in-person class meetings, utilizing some of the same tools and resources that had become a crucial part of remote instruction, including a renewed push for inclusive and equitable teaching practices that they had learned could positively contribute to the establishment and sustenance of a positive classroom culture.

The May 2020 AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) DEC (Design Educators Community) virtual roundtable was initially organized to help design educators critically discuss what might become best practices for planning and facilitating remote/virtual teaching across the design education landscape. This event became the catalyst for guiding a broader discussion and an initiative that was centered around determining how a specific array of approaches and methods for framing and facilitating contemporary design education should *and should not* affect the learning experiences of design students preparing to enter professional practice in the 2020s and beyond. These efforts then evolved into an initiative that would come to be known as the *Value Design Education Pledge*. Though the move to online teaching was temporary (six months to a year, in most cases) for most American and internationally located design educators, the impact of the disruption on educational systems and the individuals that develop, design, and utilize them has required additional thinking and planning

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Abdrasheva, D., Escribens, M., Sabzalieva, E., Vieira do Nascimento, D. & and Yerovi, C. Resuming or Reforming? Tracking the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education after two years of disruption. Paris, France; Caracas, Venezuela: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2022.

about issues that include the following: how to structure curricula and the courses that constitute these, and how to conduct assessments of students' work output and learning over time.[23] Most importantly, many of the design educators initially involved in this roundtable exchange expressed that they were being affected—in some cases profoundly—by a pandemic-induced fatigue. As the group discussed this phenomenon more deeply, the exchange spawned a series of ideas rooted in the need to re-imagine and re-shape how some aspects of design curricula and the learning experiences that constitute them, particularly in the U.S., should be structured and facilitated in new ways. Of particular interest and importance were ideas that could effectively address how design and design education *were affecting and being affected by* the sweeping socio-cultural, political, and economic changes that had transpired—and were still transpiring—since the onset of the pandemic. The group also quickly reached a consensus that any changes they might suggest regarding curricular structures and classroom learning experiences would have to be implemented in ways that could satisfy two key criteria. The first was that they would have to be formulated and implemented in ways that ensured that they would be effectively and efficiently *manageable* and *sustainable* for those who would be charged with doing this. The second was that this would have to be accomplished without adding to what many in the group felt had become an undue and almost unbearable set of burdens imposed upon them since the onset of the pandemic that involved incorporating new types of planning, teaching, and documenting their and their students' activities.

Articulating the Principal Rationales for Instituting the Value Design Education Pledge Initiative

The *Value Design Education Pledge* is a set of working principles that evolved into an initiative to construct a foundation for enacting long-term, positive changes in and around how the learning experiences that constitute design education are planned, operated, and assessed. Specifically, these involve a commitment to demonstrating accountability for the direct and indirect effects that design decision-making has on given societies writ large, and the varieties of population groups that comprise them, as well as professional designers, design educators, design researchers, design scholars, audiences, user groups, student bodies, specific classroom populations, and even individual students. This initiative was instigated with the participation of and

contributions from 100 design educators that represented university-level design programs in the U.S., as well as Spain, Iran, Canada, and India in the Fall of 2020 (diagram 1). Two years later, in the Spring of 2022, national attention in the U.S. was once again focused on discussions involving diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in a wide variety of educational environments as national, "mid-term" elections there took place. This also occurred in some countries outside the U.S., such as France, Italy, the U.K., and Germany, where issues such as wealth disparity, rising energy and food costs, and immigration all contextualized discussions around these kinds of initiatives. (Some of these efforts sought to increase the number of faculty and research positions in institutions of higher education that could be filled by people who would advocate for the planning and facilitation of DEI initiatives, police reform trainings, reframing admissions policies according to DEI principles, etc.). Resources that highlighted the contributions of members of marginalized communities to a wide variety of social, technological, economic, and public policy endeavors that were broadly perceived as effective were

Institution Types Represented by the 100 Design Educators
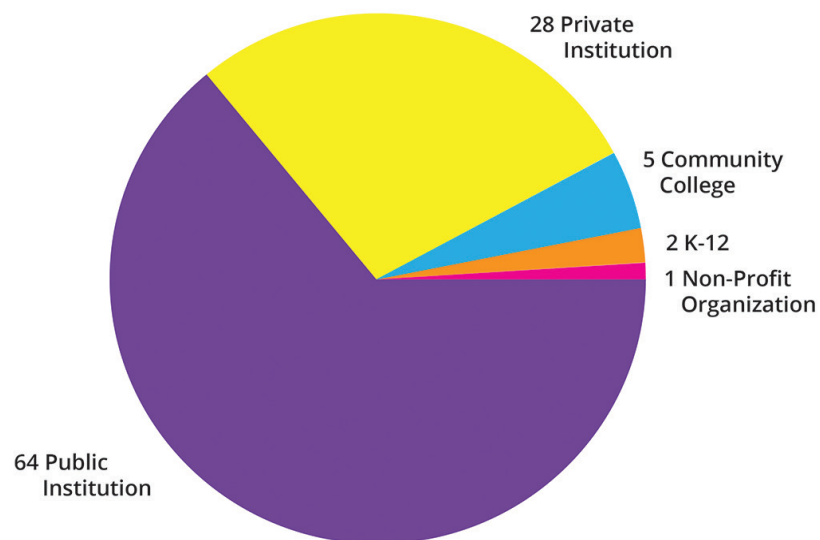
DIAGRAM 1: The AIGA DEC (DEC = Design Educators Community) is comprised of educators teaching within K-12, non-traditional, undergraduate, and post-graduate levels. This diagram depicts the various types of teaching and learning institutions represented among the constituency of the 100 educators who participated in the initial *Value Design Education Pledge* initiative (93 were from the United States, and the remaining seven hailed from countries outside the U.S.). *Source: Diagram provided by Rebecca Tegtmeyer.*

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American Library Association. "State of America's Libraries Report 2022," 1 April, 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.ala.org/news/sites/ala.org.news/files/content/state-of-americas-libraries-special-report-pandemic-year-two.pdf (Accessed March 29, 2022).

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Fortin, J. & Heyward, G. "Teachers Tackle Black History Month, Under New Restrictions," The New York Times, last modified 13 February, 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/12/us/black-history-month-schools-teachers.html (Accessed April 3, 2022).

made accessible to a wider variety of student audiences. A significant uptick in the number of banned and challenged books by Black and/or LGBTQ+ authors also occurred during this time in many parts of the U.S., [24] and these were accompanied by legislative efforts in several states that were designed to prevent teaching various aspects of Black history. [25] These were (and still are) examples of the effects that misinformation and disinformation can and do have on American learning environments, as well as those situated in many other parts of the world. They also provide evidence for why dedicated efforts for creating and sustaining socially and culturally healthy (i.e. inclusive and equitable) learning environments for educators and students continue to be necessary.

Each of the 100 design educators that participated in and contributed to the *Value Design Education Initiative* chose to focus on two or more socio-culturally rooted and guided endeavors that emerged from the following categorically organized list of six commitments. These were articulated as pledges that they promised to actualize and support in their respective classrooms and, more broadly, across the scope of the curricula they were responsible for shaping and teaching:

1) Commit to being anti-racist
2) Commit to upholding all (design) histories
3) Commit to distributing knowledge
4) Commit to demonstrating the broad impacts of design decision-making
5) Commit to creating culture
6) Commit to defining and promoting healthy student life experiences

These six pledge ideas, or commitments, have been articulated to address the needs and aspirations—from narrow to broad—of the increasingly diverse groups of students to whom we, as design educators, are accountable. This became the approach for further defining the essential principle or principles that each pledge sought to address. Actionable strategies were then created to serve as starting points to help the 100 participants effectively implement these endeavors, or "pledges," across their various curricula, within individual courses, and as essential aspects of individual project or assignment parameters. A collection of resources, such as peer-reviewed articles from

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McIntosh, P., "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" first appeared in Peace and Freedom Magazine, July/August, 1989, pgs. 10-12, a publication of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A..

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Benson, E., Jennings, J., & Gibson, M.R. "Dezombies and the Coming Design Apocalypse: Confronting the Urgent Need to Increase Racial Diversity and Environmental Awareness in University-Level American Communication Design Programs." Dialectic, 1.2 (2017): pgs. 129-154.

scholarly journals [26,27] and book chapters that inform design education and practice, AIGA *Eye on Design* articles (available at https://eyeondesign.aiga.org), and other web-based resources were amassed, curated, and shared to support the development of other possible undertakings that could improve the array of content that would come to constitute the *Value Design Education Pledge*. An online-facilitated, follow-up survey was also conducted for a period of 90 days across the AIGA Design Educators Community during the summer of 2020 to collect more suggestions for ideas and action items, and this was further augmented with information cultivated from an additional virtual discussion session facilitated by the authors.

A Description of the Timeline and the Decision-Making Processes That Guided the Development and Execution of the Value Design Education Pledge Initiative

The following section of this article articulates the timeline of events the authors forumlated and operated and that allowed us to develop and execute this initiative (diagram 2).

March 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic began, which triggered a rapid shift to remote and online learning in and across pre-Kindergarten to doctoral-level learning environments around the world.

Timeline of Events

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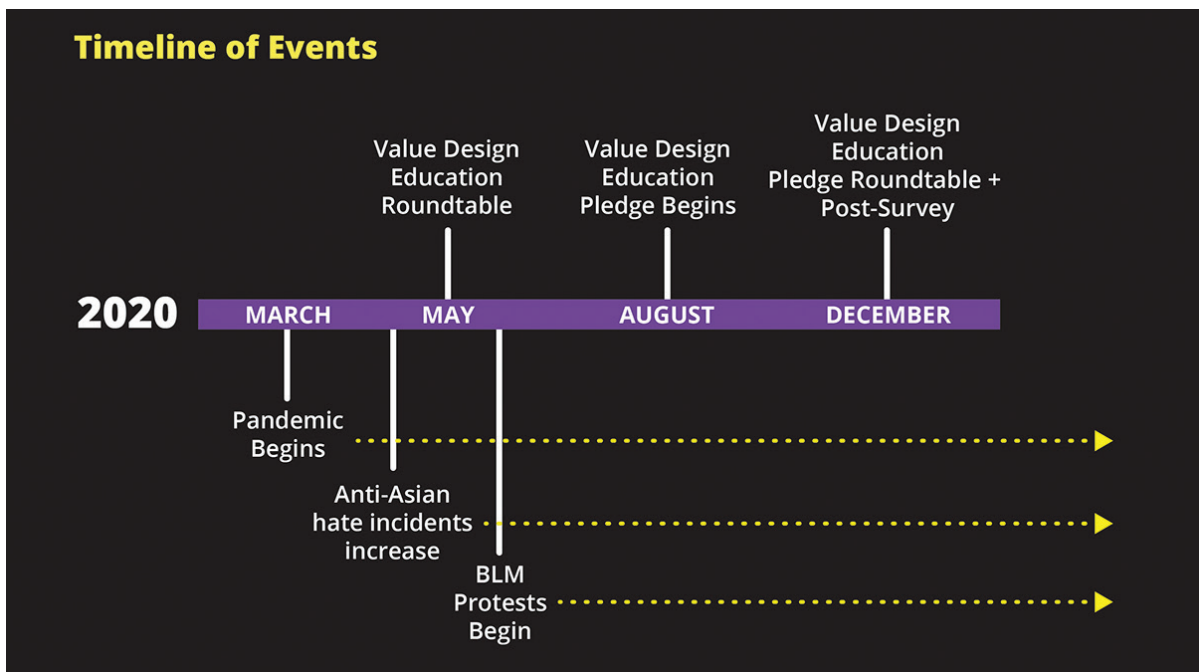
DIAGRAM 2: The *Value Design Education Roundtable* occurred as a critical response from a small group of U.S.-based design educators to a series of social, cultural, economic, technological, and public policy issues that proved to be challenging for many people around the world to deal with during the first few months of the pandemic. As the dialogue that began in the spring of 2020 evolved and expanded, it prompted the formulation of the *Value Design Education Pledge*. This timeline of events depicts the evolution of the *Value Design Education Pledge* initiative in relation to U.S.-based and global events that were affecting both teaching and learning across design education during this time. *Source: Diagram provided by Rebecca Tegtmeyer.*

April 2020

Associate Professor Anne H. Berry of the Department of Art and Design in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. contacted her colleagues on the national steering committee of the AIGA Design Educators Community (DEC) about the possibility of engaging other design educators across the U.S. and abroad in discussions about their efforts regarding making the transition to online teaching. She also raised questions to this group about how best to address what she was quickly learning were some of the most significant challenges to teaching design in the unforeseen circumstances that now faced design educators who were being challenged to teach effectively as the pandemic progressed. What she articulated at this time is expressed as follows:

> *How can we continue providing quality learning experiences for our design students when 1) we are accustomed to (and find value in) our in-person interactions with them, and 2) we don't necessarily know how long we will be teaching online?*

May 2020

The Value of Design Education During a time of Online Teaching virtual roundtable discussion was hosted by the AIGA's Design Educators Community (DEC) [28]

    AIGA DEC Steering committee members Associate Professor Meaghan Dee of Virginia Tech, Assistant Professor Kelly Walters of the New School at The Parsons School of Design and Rebecca Tegtmeyer of Michigan State University coordinated a virtual event that involved hosting Anne H. Berry and Penina Laker (two of the authors of this piece) as they

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Design Educators Community. "Virtual Event Recording: The Value of Design Education," AIGA.org, 22 May, 2020. Online. Available at: https://educators.aiga.org/virtual-roundtable-the-value-of-design-education/ (Accessed March 29, 2022).

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What do you value?

This pledge is a part of a larger commitment—
to be responsible to society, graphic designers,
design educators, audiences, class groups,
and individual students. We hope you will commit
and take actions that support your pledge.

Value Design Education Pledge // 2020

Friday // 05.15.20

The Value of Design Education

During a time of Online Teaching

Anne H. Berry
Cleveland State University

Penina Acayo Laker
Washington University in St. Louis

FIGURE 2: The *Value Design Education* virtual roundtable discussion was held on Friday, May 15, 2020, and was moderated by co-authors and design educators Anne H. Berry (Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.) and Penina Laker (Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.). Over thirty participants listened to Professors Berry and Laker share their perspectives and approaches to ensuring value and equity across the spectrum of their students' learning experiences in both their classrooms and in their interactions with community organizations. Group discussions included responding to the following questions: What value do we provide to our students, our institutions, and our collaborators as design educators? How do we measure and demonstrate that value? Additional questions were prefaced by the statement: we can't recreate in-person experiences online. Given this fact, what are some reasonable expectations we should set for ourselves? For our students? Source: *Image provided by the Authors.*

value I bring as a design educator.

33% Somewhat Confident

67% Very Confident
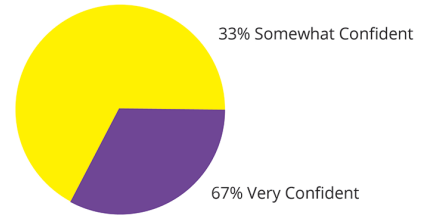
**My institution acknowledges the value
that I bring as a design educator.**

41% Sometimes
Acknowledges

30% Consistently
Acknowledges

4% Barely
Acknowledge

26% Neutral
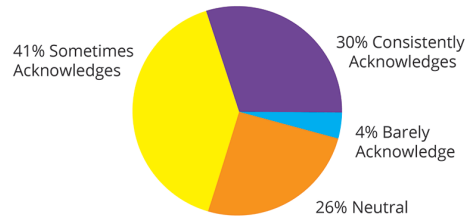
My students see value in their design

44% Highly Value

4% Neutral

52% Somewhat Value
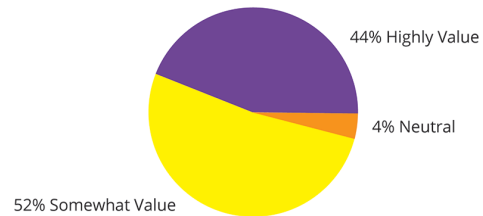
DIAGRAM 3: As led by the authors, the *Value Design Education* virtual roundtable opened with a short poll that queried the participants about how confident they felt in bringing value to their students and programs as a design educator. This diagram represents the poll results. *Source: Diagram provided by Rebecca Tegtmeyer. .*

facilitated the roundtable discussion about the value of design education (figure 2). The event began with a short Zoom-facilitated poll that queried the approximately 30 participants about how confident they felt in bringing value to their students and programs as design educators, as well as how their institutions acknowledged whatever they defined as value in and around the facilitation of design education (diagram 3). Reflections about how the value of design education could still be made manifest during COVID-19-induced classroom shutdowns formed the basis of this roundtable discussion, as participants discussed how the lack of in-person instruction, limited or no access to supplies and computer labs, and the lack of interaction within physical communities was affecting their abilities to teach and their students' abilities to learn.

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Over 30 participants listened to co-authors and discussion facilitators Anne H. Berry and Penina Laker share the perspectives, approaches, and methods that have helped them to ensure that their students' learning experiences—whether these were occurring in their classrooms or in the communities that surrounded them—were imbued with equity and value. (A central focus of this initial conversation about the value of design education centered on defining what kinds of learning experiences could be facilitated most effectively as COVID-19 induced classroom shutdowns were being imposed. These included implementing and sustaining virtual connections with students and experimenting with new modalities of teaching.) After Professors Berry and Laker shared the knowledge and understandings they had constructed, smaller break-out discussion groups were formed that were asked to respond to the following two questions:

1. *As design educators, what value do we provide and can we provide to our students, our institutions, and ourselves during the evolution of the most severe disruption to our pedagogy and pedagogical practices that has occurred in the past 100 years? How do we measure or demonstrate various aspects of this value/these values? and,*

2. *Given that we can't recreate in-person experiences online, what are reasonable expectations to set for ourselves? For our students? For those we work with in the communities around us?*

The following key points surfaced as a result of engaging in these break-out discussion groups:

- We now have more and better ways to measure the efficacy of our teaching, particularly in areas like UX/UI; analytics and usability testing allow us to evaluate metrics in ways we couldn't before.
- As educators, we are providing mentorship, facilitating experiences, counseling students, and modeling behavior; we are also actively engaged in helping students identify opportunities to grow, develop, and build their skill sets (soft skills, design aesthetics, etc.) and the bases of knowledge and understandings that inform their critical thinking abilities.
- Students value the one-on-one feedback their faculty provide because it offers them a personalized response to their design

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decision-making processes as well as undivided, critical attention from their mentors.

- As design educators, we tend to be good at talking about the value internally (i.e., to each other), but need to develop better ways of communicating our value externally to stakeholders, prospective students, and community partners; we articulate value beyond research funding, to encompass the overall student experience.

This roundtable event also generated other ideas for broader consideration among the design education community, such as developing mechanisms for measuring students' learning before and after they leave our classes and programs, and co-creating methods for mentoring design students inside and outside of the classroom.

Summer 2020

The discussions that occurred during the May roundtable event motivated the authors to think of ways to elevate the discourse they had helped initiate to a higher level of active engagement with a more diverse array of design educators. As so many across the design education landscape were facing the specter of having to continue teaching remotely in the Fall of 2020, the authors felt it was critical to sustain the conversation that they had started the previous spring that had been focused on course planning and teaching. They met frequently during the summer months of 2020 to analyze the data they had documented in notes from the roundtable, and to brainstorm ideas that could effectively guide what would be the best "next steps" that could be taken. As their discussions evolved, they decided that their primary goal should be to develop an initiative that:

1) would make it easy for design educators to participate and contribute,
2) was reasonably feasible to put into practice,
3) would leverage existing resources and tools, and
4) would facilitate continued growth, accountability, and adaptation as the various aspects of the social, economic, technological, political, and environmental forces that affect and are affected by design education continue to evolve.

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August 2020

The authors launched the *Value Design Education Pledge* [29] across the online communication networks operated by the AIGA Design Educators Community (DEC).

The call for participants was promoted and shared across all of the AIGA DEC social media channels (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook). This call directed those interested in participating to a webpage on the AIGA DEC website that articulated detailed instructions for participating. This included a video introduction that featured commentary and instructional language from Professors Berry and Laker (figure 3 and figures 7-14), as well as a downloadable PDF that articulated each of the pledges in clear and concise language. [30]

In the call for participation, the authors posed the following preface question-and-response to help introduce the *Value Design Education Pledge* initiative to the AIGA Design Education Community (DEC):

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Design Educators Community. "Value Design Education Pledge," AIGA.org, 20 August, 2020. Online. Available at: https://educators.aiga.org/val-uedesigneducation/ (Accessed March 29, 2022).

30

Design Educators Community. "Value Design Education Pledge," SCRIBD. Online. Available at: https://www.scribd.com/document/473018467/Value-Design-Education-Pledge#download&from_embed (Accessed April 1, 2022).

FIGURE 3: Still images taken from the video introduction to the *Value Design Education Pledge* that featured co-authors Professors Anne H. Berry and Penina Laker articulating instructions about how other design educators could participate in this initiative. This video was featured on the AIGA DEC website during the summer and fall of 2020, and was accompanied by the call for participation. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

Value Design Education Pledge:

I commit to being anti-racist, to uphold all design histories, to distribute knowledge, to demonstrate impact, to create culture, and to support student life experiences.

What do you value?

This pledge is a part of a larger commitment—to be responsible to society, graphic designers, design educators, audiences, class groups, and individual students. We hope you will commit and take actions that support your pledge.

Value Design Education Pledge // 2020

PLEDGE 1 / 6

I commit to <u>being anti-racist</u>.

ACTION: I will be engaged (read + listen) and contribute to the current dialog. I will actively educate myself about the systems of oppression.

Value Design Education Pledge // SOCIETY

PLEDGE 2 / 6

I commit to <u>upholding all design histories</u>.

ACTION: I will highlight design contributions from under-represented cultural and social groups that do not have roots in modernist or Bauhaus methods.

Value Design Education Pledge // GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

PLEDGE 3 / 6

I commit to <u>distributing knowledge</u>.

ACTION: I will actively disseminate revised pedagogical methods with my peers through a variety of avenues. These can be low or high commitment activities.

Value Design Education Pledge // DESIGN EDUCATORS

PLEDGE 4 / 6

I commit to <u>demonstrating impact</u>.

ACTION: I will define and determine what impacts are present from the get-go (tangible or intangible). I will document and share these with myself, students, and other stakeholders.

Value Design Education Pledge // PEOPLE + AUDIENCES

PLEDGE 5 / 6

I commit to <u>creating culture</u>.

ACTION: I will give students opportunities to engage and interact with each other in fun ways. I will facilitate activities in the online space that enable students to share their voice in a safe environment.

Value Design Education Pledge // CLASS GROUPS + ENVIRONMENT

PLEDGE 6 / 6

I commit to <u>promoting healthy student life experiences</u>.

ACTION: I will prioritize and encourage student mental health; reconsider what assumptions I might be making about students and their access to tools, resources, and opportunities. I will also revisit and analyze my syllabi, project briefs, and assessment practices.

Value Design Education Pledge // INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

FIGURES 4-11: The authors met regularly following the initial *Value of Design Education* virtual roundtable discussion to brainstorm ideas and to develop a set of approaches to fostering and facilitating learning experiences for their design students and their collaborators that could eventually be adopted by other design educators. They initially discussed many possible goals, but in order to make what they were proposing manageable for a wide variety of design educators, they narrowed their ideas down to the six the pledge statements depicted here, and that were originally introduced on p. 19. The structure and content of these statements have been informed by many of the people and communities that they perceive as being affected by the

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work of design educators: the societies within which they teach and work, professional designers, other design educators, the audiences for whom they teach their students to design (and for whom they themselves design), specific social classes and other socially organized groups, the physical and cultural environments within which their and students' work is perceived and acted upon, and the individual students that they teach. The images presented here were posted on Instagram to promote the *Value Design Education Pledge* initiative. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

What do you value?

Re-imagining and then re-building a given university-level design curriculum so that it can be equitable and inclusive within the timeframe of a single academic year, or at least more equitable and inclusive than it is currently, may not be feasible for many design educators in the U.S. and abroad. Many institutions require several types of approvals to actuate any major curricular overhaul, and these can occur at the department- or university-level, even requiring approval at the state-level or by one or more accrediting bodies (especially at the graduate level). However, incremental modifications such as 1) the inclusion of shared classroom norms **b** *and anti-racism statements to course syllabi, 2) broadening the scope of resource materials so that students can easily find credible references for design work created by and/or on behalf of underrepresented population can be an important part of implementing positive changes and then sustaining them over the course of at least a semester. In light of this, design educators are hereby encouraged to commit to one of the six pledge statements (as articulated on p. 19 of this piece), and then adopt one or two corresponding action items so that these can be incorporated into their Fall 2020 curricula, in either a single course or across several design courses in a given program.*

A Google Form, which posed the following questions, was used to track interest and participation:

- Name + Email + Institution
- What courses are you teaching during the F20 semester?
- What mode of instruction are you using for the F20 semester?
- What *Value Design Education Pledge(s)* are you committing to during the F20 semester? (We encourage you to limit your pledge commitments to two)

b *According to American educational psychologist Jere Brophy, classroom norms are "...a teacher's stated expectations for student behavior..." and they constitute "... a dependable system of rules and procedures [that] provides structure for students. This structure helps students to be engaged with instructional tasks, and communicates to students that the teacher cares for them." Finally, Brophy states that, "...authoritative implementation of rules includes communicating care and respect for students, teaching students what is expected of them and why this is of value, and responding to students' actions and interactions in ways that help them to become more responsible self-regulated learners." Brophy, J.E.* Motivating students to learn, second edition. *Boston, MA, USA: McGraw-Hill, 2004: pgs. 4-24.*

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- How do you plan to actualize the one or two *Value Design Education Pledges* to which you have committed with YOUR students in YOUR/THEIR classroom settings?
- What resources do you foresee needing to make this happen?
- Are you willing to participate in a follow-up discussion mid-way through the F20 semester?

The authors used email to follow up with participants who filled out this form in order to confirm their participation. The authors also provided participants with a PDF that listed resources cultivated specifically to support each *Value Design Education Pledge* from existing articles in the AIGA DEC archive (table 1). Additionally, they emphasized accountability by encouraging educators to share their pledge(s) with their students and colleagues at the beginning of the semester. Participants could commit to the pledges through September 15, 2020.

The authors then used email to plan and announce a special virtual roundtable discussion to allow pledge participants to share their knowledge and perspectives that was to be held in December of that year (2020). Once participants completed the survey, the authors asked them to complete a Google Form that would provide us with content to guide and fuel the December discussion. The Google Form asked participants to respond to the following questions:

- Name + Email + Institution
- What pledge(s) did you commit to for the F20 semester?
- What actions did you take this semester in response to the pledge(s) you took?
- What actions + results turned out differently than you expected?
- What actions + results were successful? Why + how?
- Other comments, suggestions, or actions you took that you would like to share?

December 2020

The authors hosted a virtual roundtable discussion for approximately three-dozen participants. This event was dedicated to discussing participants' pledge commitments, the actions they took as a result of committing

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Value Design Education Pledge

	PRINCIPLE	PLEDGE	ACTION
SOCIETY	Design educators must be anti-racist and challenge existing social structures.	**I commit to being anti-racist.**	I will be engaged (read + listen) and contribute to the current dialog. I will actively educate myself about the systems of oppression.
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS	Design educators must uphold all design histories beyond the Western influences.	**I commit to upholding all design histories.**	I will highlight design contributions from underrepresented cultural and social groups that do not have roots in modernist or Bauhaus methods.
DESIGN EDUCATORS	Design educators must distribute knowledge to their peers.	**I commit to distributing knowledge.**	I will actively disseminate revised pedagogical methods with my peers through a variety of avenues. These can be low or high commitment activities.
PEOPLE / AUDIENCES	Design educators must demonstrate tangible and intangible evidence of impact on audiences.	**I commit to demonstrating impact.**	I will define and determine what impacts are present from the get-go (tangible or intangible). I will document and share these with myself, students, and other stakeholders.
CLASS GROUPS + ENVIRON-MENT	Design educators must create culture in the class community.	**I commit to creating culture.**	I will give students opportunities to engage and interact with each other in fun ways. I will facilitate activities in the online space that enable students to share their voice in a safe environment.
INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS	Design educators must support and promote the individual life experiences of their students	**I commit to promoting healthy student life experiences.**	I will prioritize and encourage student mental health; reconsider what assumptions I might be making about students and their access to tools, resources, and opportunities. I will also revisit and analyze my syllabi, project briefs, and assessment practices.

TABLE 1: After individual university-level design educators confirmed their individual willingness to participate in the *Value Design Education Pledge* initiative, the authors provided resources to support their contributions that were curated specifically to support their student's learning as they engaged in coursework rooted in ideas articulated in the actions/definitions that were correlated with specific pledges. Many of these resources were provided in the form of existing articles in the AIGA DEC archive. Additionally, this chart was shared with all participants. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

to actualize these with their particular groups of students in their respective classrooms, and to allow participants to recount what they felt were their greatest successes and struggles. Examples of some of the actions taken by participants as they operationalized the various pledges they had committed to supporting included modifying specific course syllabi and projects, hosting student discussions, and inviting guest speakers to address issues related to their chosen pledges. To better facilitate this roundtable discussion and to offer a viable means to capture the group's thoughts and reflections, the authors used a virtual messaging board created in *Padlet*, an online tool that enables collaborative content collecting (figure 12).

Analyzing the Outcomes That Resulted from Facilitating the Value Design Education Pledge

Each of the six pledge items corresponds to a specific group of people (various members of society, graphic designers, design educators, people/audiences, class groups/environments, individual students) that affect and are affected by the decisions that design educators and their students routinely make (table 1). Actionable items/strategies were created by the working group as starting points to help design educators effectively plan and then implement the principles articulated in each of the pledges in a variety of classrooms. A collection of resources from other AIGA articles was also shared, including the Design Teaching Resource,[31] compiled Anti-Asian Racism and Violence Resources,[32] and the AIGA Design Educators Community compiled Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion Resources.[33] Outcomes from the AIGA DEC community were collected through a follow-up survey and virtual discussions.

Of the 100 responses that the authors received from graphic design educators (again, 93 came from the United States, and 7 were fielded from international sources), 67% pledged a commitment to being anti-racist (within given societies), 56% pledged a commitment to promoting healthy student life experiences (on behalf of individual students), 53% pledged a commitment to creating and helping to sustain authentic cultures (in ways that benefitted particular class groups/social environments), 51% pledged a commitment to upholding all design histories (so that contributions from a broad, not necessarily mostly white and western group of designers could be critically examined), 45% pledged a commitment to distributing knowledge (between design educators and those who collaborate with them), and 32% pledged a

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AIGA, Resources. Online. Available at: https://teachingresource.aiga.org/resources (Accessed March 15, 2023).

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AIGA Design Educators Community, Anti-Asian Racism and Violence Resources. Available at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17ME0tbKrmACUlELrkt-71DjO7t1VOVX5YgpQMPfALEc4/edit#gid=0 (Accessed March 15, 2023).

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AIGA Design Educators Community, Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion Resources. Online. Available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tpAhZ8xzXiEngDE5egzpuF-h3O82KZbZglpgvkNp7smo/edit (Accessed March 15, 2023).

commitment to demonstrating the broad impacts of design decision-making (on a wide variety of people/audiences). (This information is depicted in diagram 4).

Design educators shared plans for how they intended to act upon the selected pledge(s) and action items within their respective classrooms, as well as within their own research endeavors and practices, and finally within their respective institutions. A brief summary of the
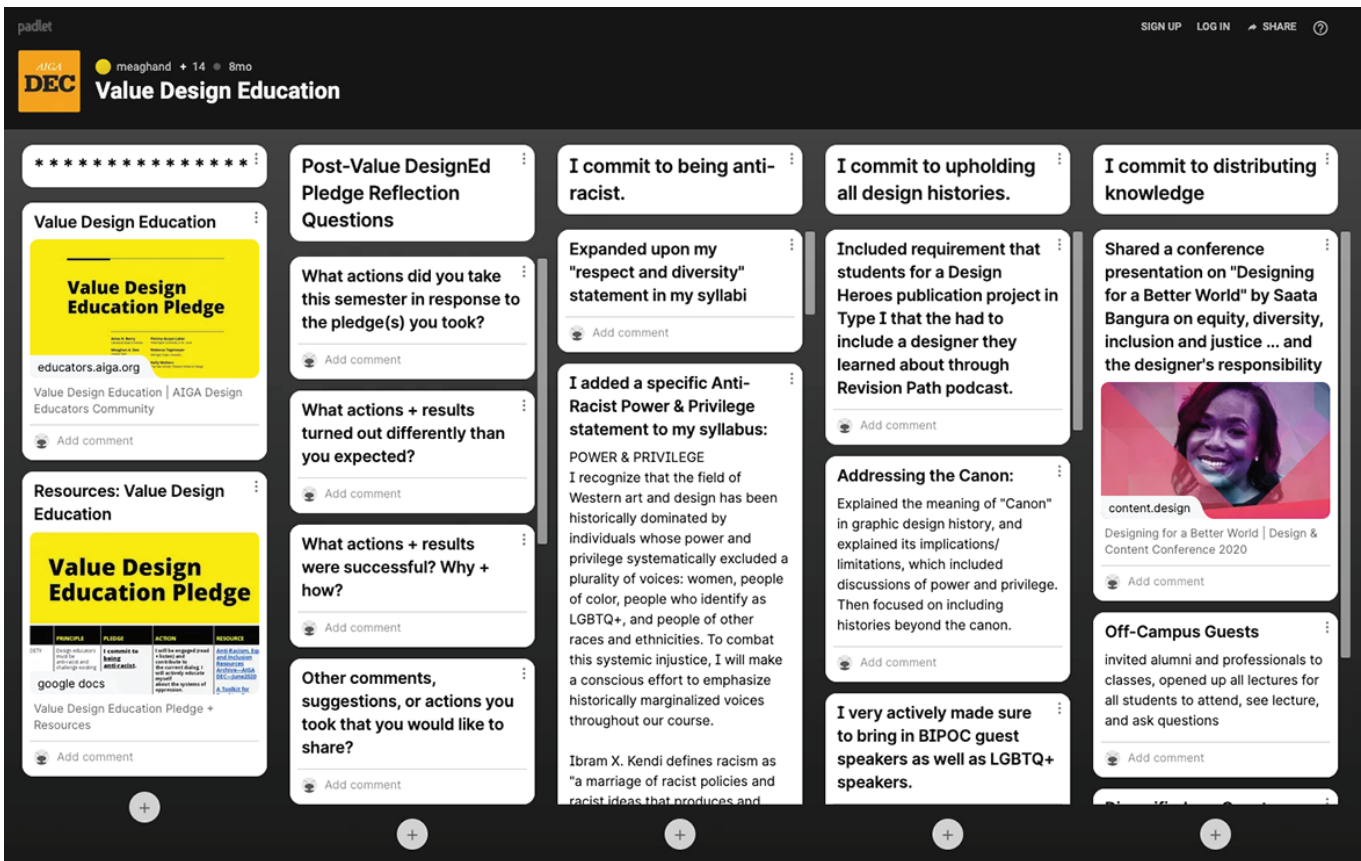
FIGURE 12: A virtual roundtable discussion that included approximately three-dozen participants who identified as design educators was held in December 2020. This event was dedicated to allowing individual participants' to present and discuss their experiences actualizing whatever pledges they had committed to addressing with their students in their classrooms, the actions that were taken as a result of engaging in the pledge, and the resulting successes and struggles that many participants experienced as they attempted to facilitate these as essential components of learning experiences during the height of the pandemic. A Padlet board was created to document this discussion that was populated with content generated by the roundtable participants. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

responses from participants to each of the six pledge items (diagram 4)—
items which were proposed by design educators who contributed to the *Value
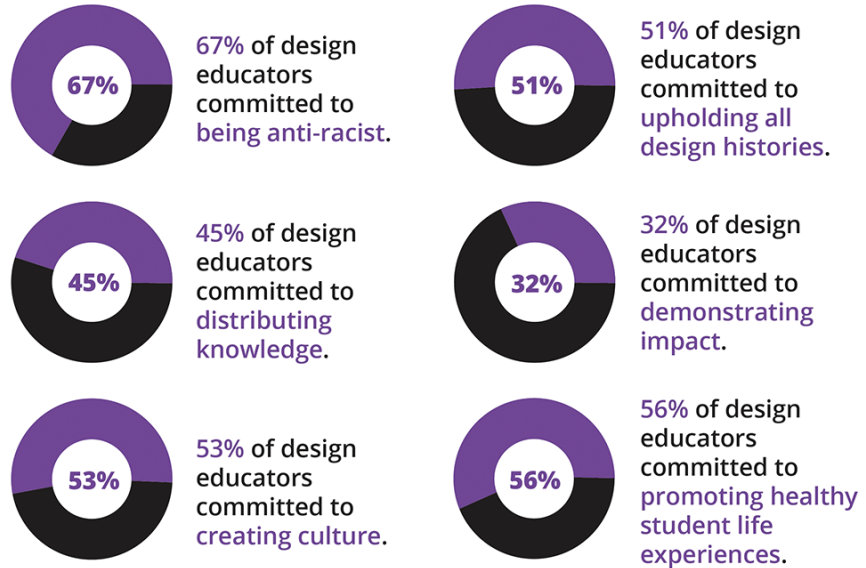of Design Education Pledge*—are articulated as follows:

I Commit To Being Anti-Racist.

This pledge holds design educators accountable for the effects that their
decision-making has on the well-being of one or more societies in the world
(table 2) as they strive to identify racist policies, practices, and procedures
and replace them with antiracist policies, practices, and procedures. It also
calls for design educators to 1) promote understandings among their stu-
dents about how racism is a systemic issue, 2) to sensitize them about the
racist ideas that have been socialized across the American (and the South
African, British, French, Japanese and many other socio-economic, socio-
political, and socio-economic landscapes around the world), and 3) make
them aware of the racist biases that these ideas have helped nurture in the
minds of people the world over as a result. This pledge also more broadly
posits that educators should strive to fulfill societal roles that question and,
on occasion, challenge existing socio-cultural structures, as well as work to
foster the awarenesses necessary in their students to respond to, and, as they
deem necessary, challenge them. Meeting these challenges requires design
educators to thoughtfully and diligently read and listen to anti-racist per-
spectives from a wide variety of speakers and authors from around the world
and contribute to the critical dialogues that are evolving within and around
this issue.

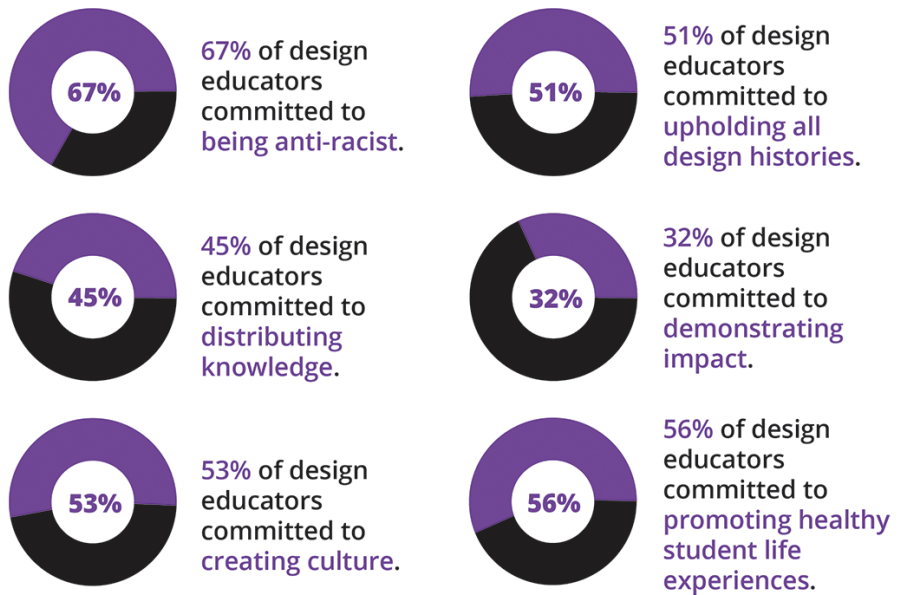|	PRINCIPLE	PLEDGE	ACTION
SOCIETY	Design educators must be anti-racist and challenge existing social structures.	**I commit to being anti-racist.**	I will be engaged (read + listen) and contribute to the current dialog. I will actively educate myself about the systems of oppression.

TABLE 2: An articulation of the content that constituted Pledge #1. *Source: Image
provided by the Authors.*

A Depiction of the Value Design Education Pledges That Were Committed to by the 100 Design Educators Who Took Part in this Initiative

67% 67% of design educators committed to being anti-racist.

51% 51% of design educators committed to upholding all design histories.

45% 45% of design educators committed to distributing knowledge.

32% 32% of design educators committed to demonstrating impact.

53% 53% of design educators committed to creating culture.

56% 56% of design educators committed to promoting healthy student life experiences.

Pledges Committed to by the 100 Design Educators

67% 67% of design educators committed to being anti-racist.

51% 51% of design educators committed to upholding all design histories.

45% 45% of design educators committed to distributing knowledge.

32% 32% of design educators committed to demonstrating impact.

53% 53% of design educators committed to creating culture.

56% 56% of design educators committed to promoting healthy student life experiences.

DIAGRAM 4: At the onset of the *Value Design Education Pledge* initiative, participants pledged a commitment to one or more of the six pledges. This infographic indicates the priorities of the 100 design educators who participated in the initiative. *Source: Diagram provided by Rebecca Tegtmeyer.*

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Examples of actions taken as part of the commitment to being anti-racist:

- Including an *Anti-Racist Power & Privilege* statement in the course syllabi.
- Incorporating empathy-building exercises into class activities.
- Revising project briefs to be more inclusive of examples from underrepresented and minority groups.
- Uplifting the work of underrepresented designers from the US and beyond.
- Participating in and contributing to university and local school district diversity, equity, and inclusion committees and initiatives.
- Assuming on the role of mentor and counselor, particularly when working with first-generation or at-risk students who might be navigating the college experience for the first time and, as such, bearing a large amount of external pressure from home, peers, etc.
- Actively measuring (with evidence-based data) the value that design educators can and do bring to addressing and, as necessary, combatting this issue, and then broadly sharing credible, well-vetted information and sources.

I Commit To Upholding All Design Histories.
This pledge holds design educators accountable to the critical study of and about our discipline, both through the study and practice of graphic, visual communication, and, more recently, user experience and interaction design, as well as fashion, interior and industrial, or product, design (table 3). As educators, they are in a position to uphold and afford opportunities for our students to construct knowledge of and about the myriad of design histories that extend beyond western influences and the so-called western canon. Design educators do this by highlighting design contributions from underrepresented cultural and social groups whose traditions and bases of knowledge are not rooted solely in modernist or Bauhaus methods.

Some examples of actions taken by design educators who participated in the December 2020 discussion as part of their commitment to upholding the broadest possible array of design histories are articulated below:

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- Addressing the limitations implied by the western canon and identifying the power and privilege dynamics that are and have been promoted by this limited and limiting view of design history.
- Broadening the canon of histories that examine and explore design that account for influences and ways of thinking that are inclusive of the widest variety of global cultures possible.
- Reevaluating the variety of project examples and outcomes of design processes that are shown to and critically discussed with students.
- Extending invitations to designers with disabilities and BIPOC/LGBTQ+ designers to speak and work with students.

	PRINCIPLE	PLEDGE	ACTION
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS	Design educators must uphold all design histories beyond the Western influences.	**I commit to <u>upholding all design histories</u>.**	I will highlight design contributions from underrepresented cultural and social groups that do not have roots in modernist or Bauhaus methods.

TABLE 3: An articulation of the content that constituted Pledge #2. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

I Commit To Distributing Knowledge.

This pledge holds design educators accountable to their peers and their discipline(s) writ large by asking them to re-evaluate how and why they engage in the formulation and operation of research, as well as the dissemination of understandings and knowledge that stem from this as they affect (or could affect) how design education is taught and practiced (table 4). Design educators have a responsibility to contribute to the bodies of knowledge that inform their respective discipline(s) by sharing the outcomes of their research and pedagogic practices. These can be expressed as new ideas, insights, and examples of knowledge and understandings that they have acquired or constructed by engaging in these activities, and should be shared by publishing them in peer-reviewed and other, more broadly accessible publishing platforms.

Some examples of actions taken as part of the commitment to distribute knowledge are articulated below:

- Sharing outcomes of research and creative activities addressing issues such as design justice, environmental racism, and equity-centered design practices at credible, well-acknowledged academic and professional conferences.
- Hosting guest lectures and speaking opportunities from members of underrepresented groups that allow them to address issues rooted in equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Encouraging student engagement with invited BIPOC designers/guests.
- Seeking out, when appropriate, opportunities to collaborate with colleagues—from within the realms of design education and without—from other university-level institutions who have committed to working on similar topics.

	PRINCIPLE	PLEDGE	ACTION
DESIGN EDUCATORS	Design educators must distribute knowledge to their peers.	**I commit to distributing knowledge.**	I will actively disseminate revised pedagogical methods with my peers through a variety of avenues. These can be low or high commitment activities.

TABLE 4: An articulation of the content that constituted Pledge #3. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

I Commit To Demonstrating Impact.

This pledge holds design educators accountable to the various audience members and user groups with whom they work as co-designers, or on whose behalf they endeavor to create artifacts, products, systems, services, and communities (table 5). The authors recognize that building and sustaining trust with those with whom you work, and/or on whose behalf you work, involves developing strategies to define and measure what impacts look like from both the perspective of the designer and that of the audience or user group who are affected by the decisions made by the designer and his, her or

their collaborators (see table 5 for action item on demonstrating impact).

Some examples of actions taken as part of the commitment to demonstrate impacts are articulated below:

- Providing students with opportunities to create work that positively affects various aspects of the lives of those who live in their local communities.
- Designing "with" rather than "for" people living in specific communities that are proximal to them, or who are located farther away but may still be affected by decisions made by particular designers, design educators, and/or their students.
- Defining strategies that effectively measure the societal and community impact of a given project's deliverables and/or outcomes.
- Prompting students to track the efficacy of the work they develop, design, and disseminate (e.g. via petitions, social engagements, online data collection and analysis, etc.) as a means to assess whether it improved a given situation or set of circumstances.
- Acknowledging and addressing how issues of power, positionality, and privilege affect the populations of those living in the vulnerable communities with whom they collaborate or engage in design processes on behalf of.

	PRINCIPLE	PLEDGE	ACTION
PEOPLE / AUDIENCES	Design educators must demonstrate tangible and intangible evidence of impact on audiences.	**I commit to demonstrating impact.**	I will define and determine what impacts are present from the get-go (tangible or intangible). I will document and share these with myself, students, and other stakeholders.

TABLE 5: An articulation of the content that constituted Pledge #4. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

I Commit To Creating Culture.

This pledge holds design educators accountable to the respective socio-culturally-based class groups/environments with whom they collaborate or work on behalf of, most especially their own students, and the need to create and facilitate the evolution and dissemination of the customary beliefs, social norms, and material traits of a given racial, religious, or social group, which are otherwise known as its *culture* (table 6). Design educators contribute to these endeavors by giving their students opportunities to engage and interact with each other in ways that allow them to broaden their bases of socio-cultural knowledge and understandings and, as necessary, deepen their critical thinking abilities.

	PRINCIPLE	**PLEDGE**	**ACTION**
CLASS GROUPS + ENVIRON-MENT	Design educators must create culture in the class community.	**I commit to creating culture.**	I will give students opportunities to engage and interact with each other in fun ways. I will facilitate activities in the online space that enable students to share their voice in a safe environment.

TABLE 6: An articulation of the content that constituted Pledge #5. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

Examples of actions taken as part of the commitment to create culture:

- Facilitating activities in online and in-person spaces that enable students to share their respective social and cultural voices in a safe environment.
- Minimizing stress by initiating a consistent flow of communication with students, with particular respect to their social and cultural backgrounds, as adjustments are made to specific assignments and course expectations.
- Encouraging community building as a way to help students connect with their peers and with people who live and work in communities that are affected by their decision-making.
- Developing better methods and mechanisms for maintaining

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communications with alumni and following them throughout their careers.

- Serving as "bridge-makers" who make essential ideas and concepts clear in ways that have the potential to be understood by a wide audience.

I Commit To Promoting Healthy Student Life Experiences.
This pledge holds design educators accountable to the mental health and well-being of their students (table 7). The unique nature of design pedagogy—which requires introspection and self-awareness on the parts of design students so that their approaches to designing with or on behalf of those who are different from them are guided by empathy and understanding—tends to demand that the facilitation of learning experiences that support and promote the mental and physical well-being of our students. Design educators do this most effectively when they reconsider the assumptions that guide the planning and execution of their teaching strategies and tactics, when they model behaviors that their students can positively emulate, and when they prioritize student mental health by revisiting language in their syllabi and their assessment materials that could exclude or marginalize students.

	PRINCIPLE	PLEDGE	ACTION
INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS	Design educators must support and promote the individual life experiences of their students	**I commit to <u>promoting healthy student life experiences.</u>**	I will prioritize and encourage student mental health; reconsider what assumptions I might be making about students and their access to tools, resources, and opportunities. I will also revisit and analyze my syllabi, project briefs, and assessment practices.

TABLE 7: An articulation of the content that constituted Pledge #6. *Source: Image provided by the Authors.*

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Some examples of actions taken as part of the commitment to promote healthy social and cultural life experiences on behalf of design students are articulated below:

- Encouraging working alliances among students as a means to foster and facilitate learning experiences that are socially and culturally informed from broad perspectives.
- Promoting a healthy, balanced lifestyle by demonstrating effective daily life planning and self-awareness activities.
- Seeking out community learning experiences from other faculty and on- and off-campus organizations that can be modeled in classrooms and curricula.
- Being aware of signs of mental, physical, and emotional fatigue among students, and then acting appropriately and empathetically.
- Being clear and direct about what is expected from students as given learning experiences/assignments progress according to a particular course schedule.
- Recognizing that different institutions and programs serve different communities of students, and that the learning experiences planned and facilitated cannot be "one size fits all"—for example, the challenges and needs a community college student faces may differ markedly from those faced by a student enrolled in a 4-year institution.

Institutional Support Opportunities For Value Design Education Pledge Action Items

Although the primary audience for the *Value Design Education Pledge* is design educators, and administrators, the institutional guidelines they foster and promulgate can also support these pledges and initiatives.

Exploring the Most Common Challenges Faced by Design Educators

The data the authors collected from their surveys and from hosting the array of conversations they had with design educators as this endeavor progressed allowed them to identify several common challenges, or barriers, to

Pledge	Available Resources From The AIGA Design Educators Community	Resources That Institutions Can Implement
I commit to being anti-racist. I will be engaged (read + listen) and contribute to the current dialog. I will actively educate myself about the systems of oppression.	Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion Resources Archive—AIGA DEC—June2020 Anti-Asian Racism and Violence Resources A Toolkit for Breaking Down Racialized Design in the Classroom, Racism Untaught	Provide students and faculty with access to learning resources that feature BIPOC designers and their work Invest in tech resources for students and faculty to reach people in times of limited mobility — Such as through supporting legislation for universal access to WiFi Facilitate connections to communities of color (e.g. hosting conferences, promoting cross-collaboration and outside partnerships) Create more space and time for instructors to plan inclusive teaching Allocate funding to support these ongoing initiatives
I commit to upholding all design histories. I will highlight design contributions from underrepresented cultural and social groups that do not have roots in modernist or Bauhaus methods.	Beyond the Bauhaus Perspectives and Reflections Can We Teach Graphic Design History Without the Cult of Hero Worship?	Designate honoraria for guest lectures from BIPOC designers and underrepresented groups Expand access to more textbooks, articles, and information providing knowledge of design history
I commit to distributing knowledge. I will actively disseminate revised pedagogicalmethods with my peers through a variety of avenues. These can be low or high commitment activities.	Contribute to the DEC Website Submit a paper to Dialectic Share a project on Design Teaching Resource	Support student and faculty attendance at conferences and events Acknowledge and encourage academic research and pedagogy in this space
I commit to demonstrating impact. I will define and determine what impacts are present from the get-go (tangible or intangible). I will document and share these with myself,students, and other stakeholders.	A Blended Perspective: Social Impact Assessment in Graphic Design AIGA Design Futures: Core Values Matter Discursive Design and the Question of Impact: Perspective, Pedagogy, Practice	Provide training to faculty Establish models for evaluating and measuring impact
I commit to creating culture. I will give students opportunities to engage and interact with each other in fun ways. I will facilitate activities in the online space that enable students to share their voice in a safe environment.	Critiques + Community | SHIFT Virtual Summit 2020 Panel: Who Gets to Teach? | SHIFT Virtual Summit 2020	Create safe environments for learning Make technological support readily available to better facilitate remote learning and teaching Fund purchases for students and faculty to make remote learning more equitable
I commit to promoting healthy student life experiences. I will prioritize and encourage student mental health; reconsider what assumptions I might be making about students and their access to tools, resources, and opportunities. I will also revisit and analyze my syllabi, project briefs, and assessment practices.	Value Design Education Checklist Confronting Stress & Anxiety: Mental Health Techniques for Design Educators	Hire counselors and mental health professionals to meet the needs of students health and well-being Offer training for faculty on how to manage mental health related challenges in the classroom Foster a culture of care

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Neal, K. "College Students More Concerned About COVID-19 Than Ever, New Survey by TimelyMD Finds," TimelyMD, 12 January 2022. Online. Available at: https://timely.md/college-students-more-concerned-about-covid-19-than-ever/ (Accessed March 27, 2022).

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Mayo Clinic Staff. "Job burnout: How to spot it and take action." 5 June 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642 (Accessed February 8, 2023).

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Wexner Medical Center, "Survey: Anxiety, depression and burnout on the rise as college students prepare to return to campus," The Ohio State University, 2021. Online. Available at: http://osuwmc.multimedia-news-room.com/index.php/2021/07/26/survey-anxiety-depression-and-burn-out-on-the-rise-as-college-stu-dents-prepare-to-return-to-campus/ (Accessed March 28, 2022).

37

Fidelity Investments, "On the Verge of Burnout: Covid-19's im-pact on faculty well-being and career plans," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020. Online. Available at: https://connect.chronicle.com/rs/931-EKA-218/images/Covid%26FacultyCareerPaths_Fidelity_ResearchBrief_v3%20%281%29.pdf (Accessed April 2, 2022).

effectively facilitating design education experiences at the university level. These were—and are—primarily:

- Mental health-related issues as experienced by both students and faculty.
- Defensiveness and pushback when addressing socially, culturally, politically, or economically sensitive issues in the classroom.
- Working to equitably help people who are struggling with access to food, the internet, software, and computer access.

Mental Health-Related Issues

Throughout the pandemic, many design education and other university faculty faced an unprecedented array of mental health crises among their students—and this continues to be true. A survey of nearly 1,700 university-level educators conducted by *TimelyMD* in January of 2022 revealed that 88% of the students queried said that there is a mental health crisis at U.S. colleges and universities. [34] Burnout among students was also reported to be at an all-time high. The Mayo Clinic defines burnout as "a special type of work-related stress—a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity". [35] The Ohio State University conducted surveys of their student body in 2020 and 2021. The first responses they received and analyzed in August of 2020 reported student burnout at 40%, and by April of 2021, it was up to 71%. [36] However, students have been and still are not the only ones in university-level settings facing mental health challenges: faculty have also been and still are experiencing higher rates of mental health challenges and burnout. In October of 2020, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* surveyed 1,122 university-level educators from two-year and four-year institutions from across the United States and found that, since the start of 2020, 35% of faculty considered leaving higher education altogether, 74% said their work-life balance had deteriorated, and 82% said their workload increased. [37]

At the onset of the pandemic, many faculty and students were operating in survival mode. But what at first seemed like a sprint that would last only a few weeks turned out to be—in some university-level settings around the world—a marathon that lasted five to seven months. Or, in some cases, for more than two years. As such, many strategies and tactics for

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addressing pandemically induced challenges to teaching and learning have proven difficult to maintain. One contributing factor to faculty burnout, particularly in design education, is that the counseling services in many institutions were overburdened, which forced them to have to turn to others (often other faculty) for mental health support. Most university faculty are not trained mental healthcare professionals, nor is it a part of their job description to provide emotional support for their peers or their students. However, over the past two-plus years, many faculty, including design educators, have had to fulfill roles as first points-of-contact in these crises.

The authors also gathered advice from design educators about how to effectively confront the mental health struggles they and their students now commonly face. One suggestion included providing direct access to disability and mental health resources to students. This begins by faculty having to learn what disability, mental health resources, and reporting systems their institution provides, and then making this information readily accessible, while reminding students that this type of help is available and accessible on their campuses. Additionally, the authors learned the importance of identifying local and remote resources that are accessible to faculty at their respective institutions. Many institutions across the globe now require faculty to incorporate mental health resource information in their syllabi. However, a number of these requirements and resources came in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and were often developed by working faculty groups who were not subsequently asked to provide this information to students living in these now post-pandemic times. Some faculty, including several in the design education community, have integrated health and mental health statements into their syllabi. Co-author Rebecca Tegtmeyer, a member of the design faculty at Michigan State University, used the following language, which is an adaptation of an MSU syllabi statement: [38]

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Pyle, K., "Ideas for Inclusive Language for Course Syllabi," Michigan State University, 2020. Online. Available at: https://natsci.msu.edu/sites/_natsci/assets/File/Diversity/PDF/InclusiveStatement_syllabi_2020.pdf (Accessed April 10, 2022).

Almost all of us are struggling with a unique set of challenges these days, brought about by the remote start, COVID-19 pandemic, economic fallout, ongoing efforts for social justice, and other experiences.

While I am not a trained mental health professional, I am someone you can reach out to if you're struggling, whether or not your concerns pertain directly to this course. Our conversations will be confidential, though please

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remember that all faculty are mandatory reporters if issues of violence, sexual harm, or harassment are disclosed. I do ask that if you are having any personal difficulties (that are affecting your participation) please notify me sooner than later so we can discuss options for you to move forward.

I'm a good listener, and I can help connect you to campus and other resources that are here to help you. As your course instructor, I am committed to helping you successfully complete this course, but it's even more important to me that you experience our classroom as a space that is open, inclusive, and supportive.

*I am a Mom and a commuter, and I do my best to make it on-time for class, however, sometimes situations do arise that cause me to be late to class. I will try to notify you all sooner rather than later if this occurs.

Rebecca's statement made room for her students to share information about their needs for emotional support *and* revealed some of her own challenges (being a mom and a commuter) that are rooted in meeting her pedagogic responsibilities. This allows her students to be empathetic about her circumstances, and, in so doing, helps them build empathy for those who face both familiar and unfamiliar situations as they attempt to engage in their studies. The statement articulated above may be adapted for use by anyone reading this piece who wishes to include similar language in their own materials.

Addressing Issues Involving Defensiveness and Political Pushback Among University-Level Design Students

Another challenge some university-level design faculty reported as they tried to facilitate anti-racist activities in their classrooms was defensiveness and political pushback from their students. One faculty member offered that, "...one student unfortunately misunderstood racial justice as being racist against white people." Racial justice is *not* an attack on any one group or race, but rather, as defined by the *American Civil Liberties Union*, it strives to "...preserve and extend constitutionally guaranteed rights to people who have historically been denied their rights on the basis of race."[39] More broadly, especially in many places in the U.S., there has been and continues to be

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Americal Civil Liberties Union, "Racial Justice," ACLU, 2023. Online. Available at: https://www.aclu.org/issues/racial-justice. (Accessed February 18, 2023).

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Legal Defense Fund, "Critical Race Theory," NAACP Legal Defense Fund and Educational Fund Inc., 2023. Online. Available at https://www.naacpldf.org/critical-race-theory-faq. (Accessed on February 18, 2023).

strong resistance to the teaching of "critical race theory," (defined by the *Legal Defense Fund* as, "...an academic and legal framework that denotes that systemic racism is part of American society—from education and housing to employment and healthcare. Critical Race Theory (CRT) recognizes that racism is more than the result of individual bias and prejudice. It is embedded in laws, policies and institutions that uphold and reproduce racial inequalities. According to CRT, societal issues like Black Americans' higher mortality rate, outsized exposure to police violence, the school-to-prison pipeline, denial of affordable housing, and the rates of the death of Black women in childbirth are not unrelated anomalies."[40]) Critical race theory is often misinterpreted and misunderstood as a strategy that can guide how one or more faculty members in a variety of types of learning environments teach their students about the history of racism, most particularly but not limited to the U.S. As such, it is often used in attempts to silence faculty with regard to how they teach a wide variety of race-related issues across disciplines in the K-12 sector. In the U.S., and in most other so-called G20 nations around the world where design education is taught at the university level, those in higher education generally have more freedom of speech and action, and some university-level institutions are much more supportive of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives than others, especially in American states and nations around the world with legislative bodies that are not dominated by various right-wing political factions. To effectively address the kinds of pushback and defensiveness described above, the authors encourage utilizing broadly available printed and online resources that suggest ways to address these (well-edited newspapers tend to be a good place to start looking...), as well as participating in workshops facilitated by educational organizations and non-government organizations (NGOS) that support socially, culturally and politically inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. Well-vetted academic lectures offered within university-level institutions can also be great sources of inspiration and credible information, and often afford attendees opportunities to gain knowledge and understandings from outside their disciplines.

A few ways design faculty in the U.S. and abroad have worked to positively frame anti-racist work in design classroom settings are rooted in the collective generation (along with their students) of one or more sets of guiding classroom principles, or "classroom norms." Sharing these between students and those who teach them has been shown to be effective. For example,

co-author Penina Laker, of Washington University in St. Louis, co-created the following principles regarding engaging in anti-racist approaches to teaching and learning in design classrooms with her students:

> *"We are committed to the ongoing work of anti-racism and we ask you to do the same. To move forward, we must acknowledge the role that designers have contributed to the creation and perpetuation of unjust systems and institutions. We also realize that this work takes time and sustained involvement; let us all work together and approach new knowledge with a learning mindset."*

Co-author Meaghan Dee of Virginia Tech provided a list of anti-racism resources available through her institution and more broadly (in the form of podcasts and books), and included a *Respect & Diversity* statement in her syllabus that reads as follows:

> *"Students in this class are encouraged to speak up and participate during class meetings. The class will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences—and every member of this class must show respect for every other member of this class. Additionally, if you have a preferred name or pronoun, please let me and your classmates know. And please do not hesitate to correct me if I make a mistake. My preferred pronouns are she and her. All are welcome here."*

Acknowledging that student perspectives are not homogeneous can be an important step in facilitating broadly informed classroom discussions. Additionally, faculty can provide ground rules for debate and discussion, and then actively foster them. Just as it takes time and thoughtful, concerted effort for a design educator to become skilled at facilitating critical discussions about the outcomes of his, her, or their students' work, it will likely also take time and thoughtful, concerted effort to foster these abilities among given groups of design students.

Exploring more diverse ways to provide help equitably

The pandemic amplified many university students' personal struggles. With the abrupt shift to remote and online teaching and learning, students and faculty often lacked computers, or access to them (internet access was much

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less reliable, especially in more rural or mountainous areas), as well as software, and other crucial resources like library materials. Students who moved "back home" often had to share computers with younger siblings who were also attending virtual classes. Inconsistent computer or internet access led to many students having to resort to using their cell phones to call into Zoom-facilitated class sessions, which proved problematic for many.

Design faculty around the world responded to these challenges by modifying their attendance policies, increasing flexibility with project deadlines, and emphasizing a wider variety of types of student engagement than they had in pre-pandemic times. For example, Meena Khalili, a professor of design and interaction at the University of South Carolina in the U.S., adjusted the attendance statement in her course syllabi to focus on project completion as follows: "Attendance in this in-person and remote course will be assessed through on-time delivery of all work including but not limited to all projects, blog posts, feedback, surveys, reading responses, sketches, and uploads of any kind pertaining to [the operation of] this course."

Many university students, from lower-level undergraduates through the doctoral level, also faced increased food insecurity during the pandemic, which was amplified when cafeterias and food venues on campuses the world over shut down, and community food banks that serve university students saw sharply increased demands. Additionally, countless design students and faculty had to add the responsibilities of increased childcare and eldercare to their teaching and learning loads. Some institutions responded by providing extra resources to support these efforts, but others did not or could not, and if they were available, they were not always widely advertised. For example, one American university-level design educator had a student come to her when they were struggling to pay their rent. The educators asked around and found out about a pandemic relief fund, which provided several hundred dollars to help the student in crisis pay her landlord.

Though the pandemic exposed widespread disparities regarding access to resources for educators and students across numerous campus communities worldwide, many of these had existed before the pandemic, and have continued to exist afterward. However, the disparities involving access to these present opportunities for design educators to imagine and create new pathways forward for learning and skill-building. Course and curricular modifications—such as highlighting design contributions from underrepresented cultural and social groups, prioritizing student mental health, and making

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Cameron, M., Lacy, T.A., Siegel, P., Wu, J., Wilson, A., Johnson, R., Burns, R., and Wine, J. (2021). 2019—20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20): First Look at the Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on Undergraduate Student Enrollment, Housing, and Finances (Preliminary Data) (NCES 2021-456). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Online. Available at: https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2021456 (Accessed September 5, 2022).

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Moody, J. "Most Colleges Resume In-Person Classes," Inside Higher Ed, 6 January, 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/01/06/colleges-resuming-person-classes-amid-omicron (Accessed February 26, 2023).

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Bartlett, T., "The Antiracist College: This may be a watershed moment in the history of higher education and race," The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 15, 2021. Available at https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-antiracist-college (Accessed on September 7, 2022).

course resources and activities more accessible—address barriers to student success, and help achieve greater educational equity across the most broadly populated cross-sections of student populations universities around the world have ever seen.

Conclusion

Within the United States, "...87 percent of students, [from pre-K through the doctoral level of study]... experienced a disruption or change in their enrollment, with 84 percent having some or all classes moved to online-only instruction" at the outset of the pandemic during the spring of 2020.[41] By January of 2022, the vast majority of American colleges and universities had returned to in-person instruction.[42] The aftermath of these disruptions has allowed university-level design educators to shift their collective thinking about they will plan and operate the increasing variety of learning experiences they are now called upon to facilitate on behalf of their students, and how they might improve in areas that account for far more than effectively dealing with the threat imposed by having to teach during apublic health crisis. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently published the following about teaching and living in a watershed moment on the timeline of university-level educational history, particularly in the U.S.:

> *"It would be easy to downplay the significance of any particular announcement: a renamed auditorium here, a workshop there. After all, nearly all the topics highlighted in these many statements—diversifying the faculty, improving graduation rates for students of color, examining bias in the curriculum—have been bandied about on college campuses for decades. At the same time, the number of changes and the scope of the commitments made in recent months are striking. Some critics see these moves as pandering to student activists, or perhaps buying into a particular ideology. But supporters and detractors alike may come to see the summer and fall of 2020 as a watershed moment in the history of higher education and race."*[43]

The forced adaptation to online learning that began occurring in design programs in the U.S. and around the world in the spring of 2020 has caused hundreds of them to either begin or continue to implement hybrid forms of educational instruction that involve blending in-person instruction with

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Cubbison, E., Nobre, P., Sellers, K., and Bullgart, A., "5 Considerations for Designing the Future of Higher Education," Gensler, August 9, 2021. Available at https://www.gensler.com/blog/5-ideas-for-designing-the-future-of-higher-education. (Accessed on September 5, 2022).

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Abdrasheva, D., Escribens, M., Sabzalieva, E., Vieira do Nascimento, D. & and Yerovi, C. Resuming or Reforming? Tracking the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education after two years of disruption. Paris, France; Caracas, Venezuela: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2022.

learning experiences that are facilitated online. According to the international global architecture, design, and planning consultancy Gensler, "68% of students and 74% of educators [now] want a hybrid approach."[44] Worldwide, institutions of higher education have become better equipped to respond to future emergencies because the experience of rapidly shifting to online teaching and learning during COVID-19 created a viable and sustainable foundation for facilitating models upon which they could build. Although in-person teaching and learning will likely not be replaced, virtual and hybrid models have and will continue to be a more significant part of higher ed.[45]

Many of the participants from the discussion sessions the authors moderated shared that they thought the discipline of visual communication design is moving away from a focus on engaging in design processes that yield artifacts and moving toward engaging in design processes that yield experiences or services, or new ways of making, thinking, doing, or shaping public policy. Richard Buchanan's *Four Orders of Design* is one model that reflects how this kind of thinking is now affecting how design education is planned and facilitated, so that "…[it moves] from critically exploring that which is tangible and visible to that which is abstract and invisible, yielding interactions and experiences as outcomes of design processes and systems."[46] As such, design education is evolving; students are challenged to work in teams and to plan and engage in identifying and framing opportunities that yield various types of benefits to their communities, empowering individuals and groups living and working within them, and allowing them to discover or re-discover, or, as necessary, invent their social and cultural identities. These approaches to designing educational experiences for emerging designers are proving valuable as a means for them to better to assess the wide variety of effects their decision-making processes now have.

Some design faculty who participated in the discussions also reported that the changes they made to their course plans (such as creating socio-culturally inclusive and validatory principles and norms for their classrooms) and broadening project parameters (to encompass underrepresented populations/designers/communities) increased critical discussion in their classrooms. Additionally, some participants also revealed that their students came to value sustained interactions with their peers more highly than they had during their pre-pandemic learning experiences, and that they felt a greater sense of connection to them. Other faculty found themselves assuming roles in their classrooms that involved much more active listening.

Educators observed that sharing real-life examples and personal stories can be powerful ways to connect with students, but could also leave them feeling vulnerable by exposing a side of themselves that they often choose to keep out of the classroom. Some faculty said they struggled with "how personal to get with their students," and how available to their students they thought they should be outside of their classrooms. The changes that the pandemic imposed on many long-practiced design classroom teaching practices broke down many traditional boundaries between faculty and their students (such as the mutual sharing of cell phone numbers), as their students came to rely more heavily on their instructors for emotional support than they might have during pre-pandemic times. As a result, many faculty felt as if they were able to "bring their whole self into the classroom" (including sharing their own experiences, that often extended beyond sharing their knowledge of design strategies and principles), and found that their students were newly empowered to learn differently, which led them to operate a more proactive and engaged approach in the classroom, and by developing deeper connections with their communities.

Incorporating the *Value Design Education Pledge* items into their teaching, course-planning and curricular planning and facilitation inspired some of the university-level design faculty that participated in this initiative to fundamentally restructure some of their classroom activities. Many included activities that afforded students opportunities to be more self-reflective, and that involved them having to take time to think more broadly and deeply about their respective levels of social awareness, and the responsibilities they have to assume on behalf of their audiences, user groups and clients as designers. Many students also focused on critically examining more contemporary issues in the design classroom, which infused their work outcomes with heightened levels of social, cultural, and political purpose, awareness, and impact. When faculty provided a more welcoming classroom environment, students faced tough questions and explored current events with higher levels of respect and kindness. Karin Jager, Associate Professor of Graphic and Digital Design at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbottsforf, BC, Canada, opined that "...I was deeply moved by the issues students chose to focus on. [They] began to connect with purpose, awareness, and impact in their work." Nancy Wynn, Associate Professor of Graphic Design and Chair of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Merrimack College in North Andover, MA, U.S.A., shared that "...[my]

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students would embrace tough questions and current events with respect and kindness. Their thoughtfulness, exploration, conversation, and critique of each other's work went beyond my expectations." Many educators shared that while some students were indifferent or resistant to the discussions and projects, others became much more involved. Additionally, as Professor Jason Tselentis of Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC, U.S.A. stated, "...students felt proud about the work that was 'more personal' to them, but were also a tad more private about that work." Inspiration drawn from students' own experiences positively influenced their engagement, despite a degree of reticence in sharing those ideas. And though receiving critical feedback can still present challenges for many design students, particularly when they are emotionally invested in work that is deeply personal to them, providing guidelines for (and fostering) classroom respect between students (both toward one-another and their instructors) can ensure that critiques of student design work are constructive and meaningful (i.e., they strive to improve each participants' design knowledge and abilities as well as elevate them emotionally).

In reflecting upon the essential ideas that were developed to support the instantiation of the *Value Design Education Pledge*, the authors strove to place increased focus on promoting faculty well-being and mental health. [c] Additionally, although the authors viewed hybrid and remote learning as a temporary challenge, an EAB (Educational Advisory Board) report on "The Pandemic Ripple Effect" cautions about the long-term effects of "Social Disengagement, Mental Health, Availability of Transfers, and Unfinished Learning in K12" on the overall preparedness of students for college education. [47] The authors believe that it is crucial for design educators to strive to ensure that students learning in these virtual spaces are able to effectively construct knowledge and gain new understandings while working within them. During the pandemic, virtual learning among all student populations in the U.S. jumped by 97% (from 2019 to 2020), with 75% having to take at least one distance-learning course, and 44% taking exclusively online courses. [48]

The authors research fueled the generation of the following key ideas:

- reminders about the need to accurately measure design students' learning before and after they leave design classes and programs, particularly in the midst of and in the aftermath of a global

[c] *Venit, E. "The Pandemic Ripple Effect: Four Potential Long Term Impacts on College Enrollment and Student Success." EAB, 2022. Online. Available at https://eab.com/insights/blogs/student-success/pandemic-ripple-effect/ (Accessed 6 February 2023). According to an Active Minds Survey, which was reported in the EAB white paper, "three quarters of students reported that their mental health worsened during the pandemic, with 18% saying that it 'worsened significantly.'"*

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Buchanan, R., "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking," Design Issues, 8.2 (1992), pgs.5–21. Online. Available at https://web.mit.edu/jrankin/www/engin_as_lib_art/Design_thinking.pdf?utm_campaign=Explorations%20in%20Design&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Revue%20newsletter (Accessed 20 February 2023.)

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Ibid.

48

National Center for Education Statistics, "Postbaccalaureate Enrollment. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences," 2022. Online. Available at: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/chb (Accessed September 7, 2022).

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pandemic when outcomes and methods for measuring outcomes may have shifted;

- identifying ways to emphasize to campus and community stake-holders, academic administrators, and prospective students, that the outcomes of design processes can provide humanistic, tangible, and transformative products, services, and systems; and

- building better mentor models inside and outside of the classroom.

While the authors primary goal for planning and operating the *Value of Design Education Pledge* initiative was to improve the scope of ideas and approaches that frame and guide contemporary design education, they believe that the *Value Design Education Pledge* items can be adapted to education more broadly. In the book *What Inclusive Instructors Do: Principles and Practices for Excellence in College Teaching*, the authors, representing a range of academic fields—including education/teaching and learning, biology, nursing, and public policy—speak to the efficacy of these same values in the classroom. In short, inclusive teaching practices are necessary to make education more accessible to more students. Additionally, inclusive practices provide a sense of belonging which has been shown to contribute to higher achievement, "particularly for students from marginalized groups." [49]

Regardless of how design faculty are faring in the aftermath of a demanding two- to three-year period imposed by the COVID pandemic during which they were forced to teach design processes using virtual means, design educators must remain committed to creating positive learning experiences on behalf of their students. The experiential knowledge the authors constructed for success helped ensure that they felt safe, supported, and included. For some, this might mean including equity and inclusivity statements in course syllabi and making sure that the work of a diverse range of designers are featured in various design classrooms and the assignment parameters that guide the learning expriences that transpire within them. For others, it may mean engaging with communities, locally and on-campus, by forging and sustaining partnerships and continuing journeys of self-education by reading broadly—including in disciplines outside design—and/or by building long-term relationships with other university faculty, activists, and community advocates. As one faculty member responded in our survey "I certainly have more work to do," as do we all.

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Challenging the Cultural Hegemony of Industrial Society: Reinterpreting Illich's Definition of Conviviality

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Abstract

In his previous work the author has concentrated on threats to the environment [1,2] and the effects of vernacular in African design.[3] In this essay, the emphasis is on a one-to-one comparison of industrially manufactured goods to African craft-produced equivalents. Citing both William Morris and Ivan Illich, the author argues for a reinterpretation of the latter's concept of conviviality in a systemic effort to change to the way we make things. Industrial production has resulted in a disaster of unrecycled and unrecyclable manufactured waste. It is thought that return to a more modest, individual approach to making might lessen the destructive tide.

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Reinterpreting Illich's Definition of Conviviality

DAVID C. STAIRS

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Lee, H. et al. AR (Assessment Report) 6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 13 March, 2023. Online. Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/ (Accessed May 26, 2023).

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Zerzan, John, Twilight of the Machines. Pt. Townsend, WA, USA: Feral House, 2008.

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Sheldon, G, director. Closing the Loop, a film narrated by Dr. Wayne Visser. Closing the Loop, 2018. 1 hour, 33 minutes

Are Humans Parasites on the Ecosystem?

Since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 6th Report [4] was released on August 9th, 2021 just prior to the opening of COP26 ("COP" is an acronym for "Conference of the Parties"), the UN's Glasgow Climate Summit, there has been a growing crescendo of environment coverage in the worldwide media. Unfortunately, this has yet to transform industrial capitalism [a], the socio-economic juggernaut John Zerzan refers to as a "death trip" for our planet. [5] Documentaries about the circular economy [b], like 2019's *Closing the Loop*, [6] which follows Cambridge fellow Wayne Visser on a global investigation of efforts to abandon linear production (take/make/dispose), seem tone deaf in the way they substitute methodological fixes for systemic change. The many participants profiled in these narratives are so busy pursuing technical solutions to environmental crises, that at no point do any of them question the model of industrial-grade economies of scale pervading the global marketplace. It is taken for granted that this model is our ultimate salvation, rather than something that could be smaller, leaner, or that could operate closer to local production.

a. *Industrial capitalism* arose in and across several economies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as advances in large-scale, mechanized machinery made it possible to mass produce, distribute and

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monetize large amounts of goods relatively cheaply and quickly in multiple markets across the globe. As it evolved, it afforded opportunities for a select few to own or control enormous portions of industrial systems and the resources that fueled them while simultaneously ensuring a marked division of labor. This had the effect of concentrating enormous wealth in the hands of individuals or organizations, which allowed them to effectively assert and sustain monopolies to control many industries and socio-cultural features and conditions.

b. As opposed to an economy that is structured linearly, which involves harvesting materials from the Earth, transforming them into saleable goods and then discarding them as waste, an economy that is structured in a so-called circular manner seeks to eliminate waste by using no longer useful or desirable products as resources from which to make new ones. The essential goal of a circular economy is to avoid the production of waste from the outset of the development, design and production process.

Whether they are talking about fast-fashion, food waste, recycling initiatives, or waste to energy, the experts all avoid the elephant in the room: our planet's carrying capacity. This makes sense for corporations that are driven by bottom-line exigencies, especially publicly traded ones that must meet legal and financial obligations to their shareholders, but for the natural environment it has been disastrous. Here, the psychosis of growth feeds the insanity of wealth concentration for the benefit of a few.

This would be a "wicked problem" [7] custom-made for design practitioners were it not for the fact that designers are complicit in fueling the corporate hysteria that has resulted in damage to the collective commons. The design profession has evolved into production siloes that focus on magnitude of production at the expense of the environment. In the fifty years since Papanek's *Design for the Real World*, design's combined professions (in architecture, fashion, communication, experience, environmental, and industrial design) have ridden the wave of short-term profit right out of the 20th century only to crash into the cataclysm of incipient ecological collapse.

Design criticism has been slow to respond, or even uncritical of this phenomenon. In fact, much of design journalism has often played the role of public relations in the ways it has promoted the design, manufacture,

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Buchanan, R. "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking." Design Issues, 8.2 (1992): pgs. 5–21.

marketing, and history of industrial production without accounting for their adverse effects. Books like Thomas Rinaldi's *Patented* (2021), which reproduces the patent drawings of 1,000 inventions ranging from rockets to fountain pens, including the plans of some of the 20th century's most heralded designers, are celebrated triumphally with no mention of how these products affected landfill volume, depleted resources, or increased energy consumption. While Rinaldi's book might be less obtuse than coffee table books like Taschen's *1000 Chairs* (2013), such celebrations of industrial novelty only support the linear take, make, and dispose business-as-usual track we've been trundling down for 150 years.

An alternative exists. In the craft-based societies of Africa, examples abound of the ways people extend, supplant, and imagine substitutes to economy-of-scale production. I argue that this DIY mentality is endemic to societies that have not been bloated by plethora-of-choice commerce, which encourages people who have little to substitute locally made objects for bespoke, industrially produced international brands. Such alternatives obviously have limits. Certainly, to my knowledge no African has come up with a substitute for the microelectronics in an iPhone. But in many more ways than Western society has been willing to admit, ranging from William Kamkwamba's homemade electricity-generating windmill in Malawi [8] to the jerry-rigged jugaad vehicles of India, tinkered together in the "making do" meaning of that word, developing world peoples have proved resourceful under challenging circumstances. I would like to propose a one-to-one comparison of ten everyday African items to ten largely industrially produced and distributed items that I believe demonstrates the limitations of our Western design mindset. While there could be craft examples used to support my argument that have been sourced from other parts of the world, I limit myself to Africa, as that is where my first-hand research took place.

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Kamkwamba, W. & Mealer, B. The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind. New York, NY, USA: Penguin Group, 2015.

Costume Jewelry

Cobalt blue with Aventurina Murano glass beaded necklace ($49.95)

Italian glassmakers have produced handmade beads since the 13th century. The process generally entails snipping glass tube into small sections and inflating them. Glass making requires intensive energy.

Rolled paper beads ($10)

African women have produced rolled paper beads since the 1980s as an income supplement. Varnished paper beads are not only attractive, but recycle an obvious waste material.

Truck Bed Liners

Chevy rubber truck bed mat ($99-$499)

Bed mats and bed liners can be purchased either from the vehicle manufacturer, as with this one, or from a variety of independent brands. They are available for most makes and model years, and range in price from $100 for a mat to $500 for a custom full liner.

A truck bed liner seen in Kampala, Uganda

This bed liner was made from strips of used tires. Tire treads are for sale on the roadside in Africa, and are used in a variety of applications. The overall cost of this bed liner is unknown, but is easily less than $100.

Clothing Irons

Proctor-Silex electric iron (about $30)

In addition to being more expensive than many African households can afford, this electric iron uses power that is not only dear, but only semi-available. Its only real advantage is its steam capability, but this can be accomplished with any iron using a damp towel.

A terra cotta charcoal iron made by John Kituttu, Mbale, Uganda

Climate change affecting snowfall in the Ruwenzoris has also reduced the level of Lake Victoria, the main source of hydropower for Uganda and Kenya. As a result, electric irons have been replaced in many areas by charcoal ones.

Durable Milk/Yogurt Containers

Refillable glass milk bottle

Refillable glass bottles have largely been replaced by either HDPE jugs, or "Tetra" style waxed cartons. The glass is more elegant than its replacements, displaying the purity of its product. Requiring more energy inputs to make, its 25x refillable capacity more than offsets its production costs. Its use is now rare.

Ankole wooden bottle

The Banyankole people occupy parts of contemporary Rwanda and Uganda. They are pastoralists, herding Ankole long-horned African cattle. This vessel is carved wood, but these can also be made of ceramic. Beautifully balanced with a heavy bottom, they do not tip over, and the woven cap keeps insects away.

Lunchboxes

**Aladdin Steve Canyon Lunch Box
(originally $10)**

Stamped metal lunch boxes with television or cartoon graphics are fond memories for many American kids. From 1950 to 1987 Aladdin was the industry leader for branded tin-litho lunch boxes— mine was a 1956 version of the Errol Flynn Robin Hood. This 1959 example shows Milton Caniff's Steve Canyon, who was not only a funny paper stalwart from the '50s to the '80s, but also had a television series starring Dean Fredericks.

Krest Box ($10)

Like the antique milk bottle listed above, many contemporary drink containers in Africa are refillable, creating a plague of sharp crown cap waste on the ground. On the other hand, the caps are a readily available resource. This Kenyan latching carrier serves the added function of socially conscious upcycling.

Design and Conviviality

Perhaps the most radical critique of the effects of industrial society of the past fifty years is found in Ivan Illich's 1973 book *Tools for Conviviality*, in which Illich redraws post-industrial society in terms of convivial modes of production.[c] The notion that an average person deserves the opportunity to make decisions about a healthful life for themselves and their family closely aligns with Illich's criticism of corporations, which are in a continual grab for increased power, as well as of the educated professions that tailor medicine, finance, management, education, science, and the law to expanded industrial growth.

> c. Illich argued for people's need to take control of the tools and processes of production that shaped their everyday lives, and deemed this approach "convivial production." He believed that their ability to participate in these processes would allow them to live more meaningful and productive lives.

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Berkeley, CA, USA: Hey Day Books
(1973): p. 14.

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ibid. Illich p.101.

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ibid. Illich p.79.

At the dawn of the environmental movement, Illich realized more than many the importance of self-regulation and suggested the "universal renunciation of unlimited progeny, affluence, and power on the part of both individuals and groups." [9] Of course, the gulf between obscene affluence and wretched poverty that Illich observed during his time in New York City, Puerto Rico, and Mexico has only widened as our obsession with industrial growth and economic expansion has further polarized society.

A convivial society, as opposed to the utilitarian one we currently possess, would practice frugality, recognizing that collectively agreed upon limits to acquisition could be applied to the general good. While this will seem an anathema to people obsessed with wealth, societies throughout history have consistently proven the general benefits of collectivity, from the Roman aqueduct system or the construction of medieval cathedrals to the development of the Interstate highway system. Freedom cannot mean "freedom without limits," a concept Libertarians do not quite understand, as evidenced by the absurd level of firearm-related deaths in America (nearly 49,0000 in 2021 according to the CDC). Illich was not interested in reducing industrial production to the highest endurable levels the environment could tolerate, an action that would result in what he termed a "kakotopia," or malignancy, [10] but in a social reconstruction and a return to a balanced relation to the planet where people ceased to be "destructive consumers" enslaved by their tools.

Is Illich's alternative practicable? Advocating for a pace of life of under 20mph and a scale of life more humane than modern megalithic metropolises has not caught on, obviously. But the stress resulting from modernity's tempo, and the subjugation of individuals to industrial society's gigantism has resulted in the deterioration of the biosphere and of our collective mental and socio-cultural health. What good is a vehicle that can attain speeds of 80 mph in the gridlock that exists around most modern cities? Illich called for "counterfoil research" to create guides to detect "stages of murderous logic" in tools, and the development of tools that "optimize the balance of life." He wrote, "When maddening behavior becomes the standard of society, consider cellphone obsession, people learn to compete for the right to engage in it. Envy blinds people and makes them compete for addiction." [11]

Illich believed a redesigned world was possible through the collective and judicious use of clear language and the demystification of law and science. He foresaw that, as population reached the limits of growth, and industry strained to provide beyond the planet's carrying capacity, social cohesion

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ibid. Illich p.95.

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Author Unknown. "Treasury Sanctions Over 40 Individuals and Entities Across Nine Countries Connected to Corruption and Human Rights Abuse," U.S. Department of the Treasury, 9 September, 2022. Online. Available at: https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1155 (Accessed May 26, 2023).

would fail on many levels and the political and economic powers governing corporate-based states would face a crisis many times worse than the Great Depression. Such governments have co-opted both the law and the judiciary to promote the myth of unending industrial growth. This myth has saddled us with the many and growing examples of climate-change damage to society and the ecosphere we are witnessing. In order to bring about a social "inversion," where people agree and apply a process to convivially control society's tools, we will need to de-bureaucratize the law, and effect "the passage of laws setting upper limits to productivity, privilege, professional monopoly, and efficiency." [12] Although passage and policing of such laws will seem like pie-in-the-sky to some, international environmental agreements like the Montreal Protocol on ozone, the International Criminal Court's handling of war criminals, or the Magnitsky Act's [13] blacklisting of human rights abusing international money launderers proves that cooperation and diplomacy create positive change. Closer to home, Social Security and Medicare are good examples of taxation for cooperative social benefit.

Is Ecological Apocalypse Avoidable?

Of course, it's not possible to make a direct comparison between

Sandals

Foam rubber flip flops ($3)

These foam rubber single thong sandals are cheaply mass manufactured and exported from Asia by the millions. Intended for no more than a season or two, they are soon replaced with a new pair, often becoming unused landfill.

Lugabire, or million-milers ($1)

Tire sandals, made from repurposed Marshall sidewalls, are much more durable. Available for less than a dollar, they are worn by the working poor, a common sight on the streets of many African capitals.

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Hats

Hyp Gear all cotton baseball cap ($20)

This common baseball cap is made of black dyed cotton. It is comfortable, although it fades to brown in time, and cotton dying is destructive. Typical of such hats, it is mass produced, and at $20 is not cheap. Mass production of cotton is one of the world's greatest polluters.

Bark cloth hat ($10)

Bark cloth is produced across central Africa from fig tree bark, a renewable resource. This craft item, with its cylindrical design, is similar to a 19th century baseball cap, but is made from more durable material.

Toys

Buddy-L tanker (originally $7)

The Texaco truck was a limited-edition licensed toy manufactured in the 1960s. Made of enameled pressed steel, it is durable enough to outlast generations of play to ultimately become a valuable collectible (today $100+).

Wheeled jet ($5)

This jet was fashioned by a Kenyan artisan from a re-purposed vegetable oil drum (spout visible on the tail). Swept wing with slung mount engines, the wheels are made from the tops of spray cans glued together, a collectible for a truly recycled future.

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Shirts

Nike Pro Stretch Men's T ($28)

Nike's fast-fashion mass manufactured sweat-wicking T is everything if you are going to be around water. Problem is, it is brought to you by a company with a checkered history of paying low wages to developing world workers so high-paid professional athletes can look good promoting its stuff.

Ghanaian Men's Shirt ($25)

This orange and green shirt is made of batik-dyed cotton with all its flaws and imperfections. Batik has a long history in West Africa. Collarless, with a buttoned pocket, it is intended as a custom high-end craft garment, a not unusual sight on the streets of African cities.

Kerosene Lanterns

Coleman "Sunshine of the Night" Lantern ($100+)

This Big Hat Model 228F from 1967 is a fine example of the type. Made of heavy-duty steel, Coleman lamps were designed to be pressure-pumped to release an even spray of fuel to the flame. These beautiful lamps have an international collector's club.

Hurricane Lamp ($5)

A lantern made from a recycled milk tin, the dome is sheet metal, with the globe made from cut strips of plate glass. The flame emits from a piece of rope soaked in the fuel. Not a high-end item, but practical.

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Cody, D. The Victorian Web: Literature, History, and Culture in the Age of Victoria, 3 January, 2013. Online. Available at: https://victorianweb.org/authors/morris/morisco2.html. (Accessed May 26, 2023).

mass industrial manufacturing and craft production. Even in William Morris's time (1834-1896) industrial production had far surpassed craft, with Morris self-admittedly "ministering to the swinish luxury of the rich." [14] In the century and a half since then we have had plenty of time to assess the effects of the rise of mass consumerism, and its' tragic aftermath.

As our date with the apocalypse rushes toward us— an ecological train wreck for which no one wants to accept responsibility— and human population continues to expand, there are many who are unwilling to abandon the mass production model. Some argue that while it has lifted millions of the world's people out of poverty, it has also stranded billions on the bottom of the wealth pyramid. The sad truth that the planet's carrying capacity is not sufficient to support 7+ billion humans at current Euro-American levels of affluence still does not dissuade many from attempting to improve their material situation, while billionaires are obsessed with consolidating their excessive wealth.

Efforts to correct the problem of industrial overproduction through on-demand manufacturing and niche marketing are only part of the solution. Recycling or upcycling have proven too limited to effect change, and downcycling is more often the real end of product life. African markets are jammed with bales of exported used clothing. Off-shoring recyclables is proving just as grotesque as ocean dumping of trash. Pumping industrial waste into concrete manufacture as an effort of last resort, like schemes for carbon sequestration in mines and wells or using sewer sludge as fertilizer, only expands the crisis. Cement and concrete are among the world's largest CO_2 emitters, and heavy metals from waste sludge do not make for healthy soils. Even our renewable resources, like wind turbines and solar panels, create problems when multiplied to the number that would be needed to maintain current levels of usage. Polysilicon manufacture, and rare earth extraction pose their own issues, not to mention the land-use debates of solar or wind farm siting. Reusing and recycling, while necessary, really need a very large push from conservation and industrial reduction. The "collaborative consumption" of the sharing economy, as capitalized by Airbnb, Zip Car, and Angi has not yet materialized in manufacturing. The primary problem for "sharing" in manufacture has always been a matter of supply-chain verification. In other words, a manufacturer like Herman Miller can neither guarantee nor insist that its subcontractors are pursuing sustainable practices.

I have been asked to propose ways in which designers could begin to develop convivial approaches to the crisis. My immediate response would be

to replace competition with cooperation. A start might be to cease boasting about the Fortune 500 corporations one has worked for, recognizing that such entities are a major part of the problem. Jointly owned companies are primarily beholden to their shareholders, are focused on market domination, and spend millions attempting to lobby legislation that will secure continued short-term profits. Another idea could be to stop supporting trade shows and conferences with exorbitant attendance fees, instead donating the high cost of participation to environmental, community, or social justice initiatives, and reducing your air-travel carbon footprint in the balance.

Designers want to know that their peers are developing responses to collectively agreed upon problems, and some design writers have attempted to address our worsening situation. Anne Chick and Paul Micklethwaite's *Design for Sustainable Change* [15], and Elizabeth Resnick's *Developing Citizen Designers* [16] are anthologies that compile suggestions and case studies some will find useful. For more thorough studies, one should read McDonough and Braungart's *Cradle to Cradle* [17], or Julia Watson's *Lo-TEK*, [18] this last a look at some amazing examples of indigenous design that suggests the potential of convivial approaches. But it needs to be stated that many of the best examples of low-impact social design solutions, from neighborhood tool-sharing to community barn-raising, from urban-foraging to second-hand clothes shopping will not be found in books, but are common sense solutions for effectively meeting age-old human needs. The point is that non-formally trained individuals have much to teach professional designers trapped in an industrial capital rat race, so I am reluctant to suggest that solutions lie within the professions.

The example comparisons that have showcased in this article exemplify instances of how small production wedded to imaginative repurposing can create not only beauty, efficiency, and value, but self-sufficiency for their creators. They preserve local and cultural identity while reducing the impact of large-scale waste production. We must abandon our hegemonic insistence upon the reasonableness of Western design and manufacturing to dominate world markets. Overproduction, long the holy grail of industrial capitalism, is already shaping up to be its epitaph. It's past time for us to accept that progress, at least in a manufacturing sense, is not our most important product.

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Biography

David Stairs is a design educator living in Michigan. He is the recipient of multiple Fulbright grants to Uganda (2000-2002) and India (2012), and a Sappi Ideas That Matter grant with Sydnee Mackay (2003). Stairs started Designers Without Borders in 2002 with the intention of assisting organizations in the developing world, especially in Africa. In 2006 he founded the Design-Altruism-Project, and has posted material on their web presence since. In 2019 he released Digging the Suez Canal with a Teaspoon, a documentary that visits ten designers and design educators practicing social design. His monograph on African vernacular design, Okuwangaala, is forthcoming. Stairs has taught graphic design and design history at Central Michigan University since 1994. He is the proud father of two sons, Christian and Lucien, with whom he has widely travelled. David can be reached via email at: *Stair1dc@cmich.edu*

En el Frente (On the Front): How Activist-Designers in the Chicano Movement Developed a Distinctive Visual Language to Fight for Social Justice in the U.S.

ALEXANDRIA CANCHOLA[1] AND JOSHUA DUTTWEILER[2]

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Abstract

Note: In this essay, the term "Chicano" is used because it was the identifier claimed by historical participants in the Mexican American Movement in the United States throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The Mexican American Movement is a term that has been expanded since its inception in the mid-1960s and that has addressed many different social, cultural, political, and economic issues, but it mostly focused on four: land ownership, workers' rights, and educational and political equality. [1] In the context of this discourse, the authors offer that the Mexican American Movement is synonymous with the Chicano Movement. The authors also utilize the contemporary term *Latinx* to refer to a person of Latin American origin or descent. [2]

Along with other civil rights movements like Black Power, women's liberation, and gay rights that were initiated and sustained in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s (and beyond), the Chicano movement (also known as *El Movimiento*) advocated for social justice by using independent publications to amplify its message. Independent publications are defined in this context as periodicals produced without approval from established publishers and presses or against the wishes of a dominant governmental, or institutional group. [3] Newly accessible and affordable design technologies such as offset printing and production technologies brought about a rise of independent publish-

ing in the U.S. in the 1960s—especially in urban American settings—and helped fuel the rise of the American activist-designer. The ability to utilize these types of publications to disperse information quickly to targeted audiences allowed for the correction of at least some of the disinformation about the Chicano movement that had begun to appear in the traditional, American "white press," and in the so-called mass media of the time. [4] For example, the independent Los Angeles newspaper and magazine *La Raza* observed in 1969 that neither the *Los Angeles Times* nor the *Herald Examiner* published many stories about Mexican-Americans, and in the stories they did print, 80% had been, in the words of one scholar, "sensationalized reports of crimes allegedly committed by Mexican-Americans." [5] Activists within the Chicano community designed and wrote these publications to serve as a record of social, political, cultural, and economic events, and encourage their readerships to act by unionizing, boycotting products, and marching in demonstrations to advocate for social justice. After documenting and critically analyzing the Chicano publications archived at research centers at universities in California and Texas, the authors observed the repeated usage of a unique genre of formal patterns utilized in the compositions of the cover designs of many of these Chicano publications. The authors are using these critical observations to posit that these graphic compositions constitute a distinctive Chicano visual language that consists of original, stylized deployments of imagery, icons, and masthead typography, and that this visual language was operationalized to visually communicate the socio-cultural locations of the issues these publications were addressing in ways that would effectively resonate with their particular audiences. The visual languages that affected the compositions of the covers and, in some cases, the interior page spreads of these independent Chicano publications (i.e., newspapers, newsletters, flyers, and small magazines intended for readerships in areas such as Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California) were critical to the formation and sustenance of the Chicano visual and socio-cultural identity and the role these played in visually communicating the ideals of the Chicano movement across the American southwest.

The visual essay and narrative organized for Dialectic is titled *En El Frente*, which translates from Spanish to English as *"On The Front."* It documents and analyzes some of the ways that the assertions and formal arrangements of these uniquely Chicano visual language elements and compositions were used in these publications by the designer activists who created them to advocate for social, economic, and political justice in and around their communities. Between approximately 1966 and late 1979, over 300 Chicano publications from 150 communities (mostly in the American southwest, but also in Chicago, Illinois, Brooklyn, New York and Washington, D.C.) were designed and distributed across the United States, and together they constitute an important addition to the predominantly white American design canon. [6] By making this particular historical analysis of periodical publications designed and written by Chicanos more accessible to contemporary design practitioners in the U.S. and around the world, the authors seek to expand the canon of historical approaches to engaging in and executing visual communication design processes in ways that might positively influence these processes, particularly in the U.S., so as to make them more broadly informed, equitable and inclusive.

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En el Frente (On the Front):

How Activist-Designers in the Chicano Movement Developed a Distinctive Visual Language to Fight for Social Justice in the U.S.

ALEXANDRIA CANCHOLA & JOSHUA DUTTWEILER

A Contextual Analysis of the Front Covers of Chicano Independent Publications

The turbulent economic, political, and societal unrest that shook many areas in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s fueled the cultural conditions necessary to facilitate the activation of the group that evolved into the radical minority Chicano movement (or *El Movimiento*), as well as the rise of movements and campaigns for social justice that were facilitated by other parallel American political and socio-cultural groups. These included but were not limited to Black Power, women's liberation, and gay rights. [7] The Chicano movement was an initial attempt to shape a unified ideology that served the interests of the Mexican American working class. [8] Independent publications written, designed, and distributed by Chicanos served as important engines that guided and drove the construction and sustenance of the Chicano movement. They proved to be instrumental in helping Chicanos establish communities and helped define both their collective and more localized identities. These publications proved to become, in the words of one scholar, the "primary educational tool and propaganda [vehicles that supported]… the movement," and helped to articulate a definition for what it meant to be Chicano. [9] They recorded and critically analyzed the injustices and violence faced by Chicano communities across the U.S., and issued and promoted calls for Chicano workers to unionize, boycott products, and march in demonstrations as ways of organizing and advocating

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McMillian, J.C. Smoking Typewriters. p. 4.

for social justice. [10] This visual essay and the narrative that accompanies it explores and examines how various aspects of their graphic design work supported their missions.

The authors began their endeavor by visiting the Special Collections archives at the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Southern California, and the University of California at Los Angeles. Each of these Special Collections housed editions of independent Chicano publications that had been published in the 1960s and 1970s in California and Texas. Both of these states were hubs of several organizations that were integral to the development and sustenance of the Chicano movement and the social, economic, and political activism that it guided and fueled during the 1960s and 1970s. [11] These archives house the corpus of Chicano independent publications that were written, designed, and distributed in the U.S. during this time. Critically assessing the graphic design of these publications, which also involved comparing and contrasting the different thematic and aesthetic approaches that were undertaken by their designers, would have been difficult-to-impossible without being able to see and contemplate their wide variety firsthand, as many of them have not been digitized. Analyzing them has the potential to reveal new design knowledge and understandings, which could not have been shared without this undertaking. This process of studying these publications within these archives, and particularly the designs of their covers, and then compiling and curating a collection from among them to understand and expand the historical canon to include the work of Chicano designers and authors is akin to that of other contemporary research projects such as *Gráfica Latina* and The Pe*ople's Graphic Design Archive*. [12]

As the 1960s progressed and newly improved offset printing processes made the printing of a broad array of publications more affordable, the production and distribution of independent publications across the U.S. (and much of the rest of the so-called developed world) became much more widespread. [13] Within the American Chicano community, the number of publications grew rapidly, from less than 10 at the end of 1964 to more than a hundred by the end of 1969. [14] There was great diversity among these publications, which included newspapers published by non-governmental organizations, such as The United Farm Workers' *El Malcriado* (*The Spoiled One*) and The Texas Farm Workers' Union *El Cuhamil*, the Brown Beret's *La Causa* (*The Cause*) and *Regeneración* (*Regeneration*), as well as newspapers

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Andrade, F. M. "The History of 'La Raza' Newspaper and Magazine, and its Role in the Chicano Community from 1967-1977:" pgs. 18–19.

published by independent community publishers, such as *Caracol* (*Snail*), which was published in San Antonio, Texas and *El Grito del Norte* (*The Cry of the North*), which was published in Denver, Colorado, and independent publications produced by university students, such as UCLA's *La Gente* (*The People*). The Chicano Press Association was created by activists in 1969 to serve as an internal organ of communications between these publications and their readerships by sharing a given community's local stories about history, literature, and news-based concerns with other Chicano publications across the U.S. [15] This helped this diverse but philosophically united group of publications maintain consistent communications and helped galvanize support for the Chicano cause across the country. [16]

These publications strove to give voice to the issues that mattered most to American Chicanos during this time, covering politics, labor rights, economic, and social justice concerns to counter and correct much of the disinformation disseminated in many American mass media portrayals of the Mexican American experience, or to supplement a lack of information about it that was then all-too-prevalent in the traditional, mostly white-controlled American media of the time. [17] These publications were an important, and, in some American locations, the only means for Chicano audiences to gain information about, much less interact with, the Chicano movement.

Chicano newspapers were typically distributed on urban street corners, where they were stacked in piles for passersby to pick up. To attract reader attention, the newspapers that comprised the Chicano Press often adopted popular American underground press cover styles of the day that incorporated compositional approaches such as the use of photographic collage and simple line drawings to communicate ideas of outrage, protest, rebellion, and freedom. They also incorporated several distinctive visual elements into these designs that, as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s, became recognizable as some of the key components and motifs inherent in the visual identity that sought to communicate the core ideas that informed the Chicano movement. These components and motifs can be seen throughout the array of Chicano press newspaper covers that are depicted within this visual narrative, such as imagery that represents or is derivative of Aztec, Mayan, or Olmec art, are deployed within geometrically simple combinations of shapes and linework in asymmetrically balanced compositions. By incorporating art and design work that was socio-culturally significant and relevant to their Chicano target audiences, the designers of many of the Chicano press newspapers were able to

81

18

Rodriguez, E. "Covering the Chicano Movement:" pgs. 219–220.

19

Garcia, M. T. Chicano Generation—Testimonios of the Movement. Oakland, CA, USA: University Of California Press, 2015: p. 15.

20

Fernandez, J. "Reimagining the Mexican Revolution in the United Farm Workers' El Malcriado (1965-1966)." MA thesis, University of California, San Diego, 2018: p. 19.

21

Benton, C., Benton, T. & Wood, G. Art Deco, 1910–1930. London, UK: V&A Publications, 2003: pgs. 57–64.

22

Heller, S. "The Daily Heller: Mexican Graphics, Original and Derivative," PrintMag, 16 November 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.printmag.com/daily-heller/the-daily-heller-mexico/ (Accessed August 15, 2022).

23

Heller, S. "The Daily Heller: Mexican Graphics, Original and Derivative," PrintMag, 16 November 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.printmag.com/daily-heller/the-daily-heller-mexico/ (Accessed August 15, 2022).

visually communicate messaging that helped mobilize these historically under-represented groups toward social, political, and economic action. [18]

The *En El Frente* (*"On The Front"*) visual narrative has been designed to function as its own independent Chicano publication. The authors seek to engage and enlighten the audiences for our work and the readers of this piece by emulating the front pages of historic Chicano newspapers. In each section of the visual essay, the authors imitate important elements of editorial design and analyze design decisions made by Chicano activists and activist designers to make the techniques visible to readers. We employ the unique visual style of those publications in our work by incorporating iconography rooted in Mexican and Mexican American art and design work, as well as bold phrases that were featured in posters of the Mexican revolutionary period (November 20, 1910–February 5, 1917). Like the Chicano activists, the use of iconography in this visual essay creates a conceptual and historical connection to the ongoing fight for social justice that historically faced the Mexican people. The visual connection to the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the figures of Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, and La Adelina empowered and unified the Chicano move-ment by emphasizing references to the revolutionary heritage of many Mexican American people. [19] Like the Mexican Revolution, the Chicano movement strove to empower the poor and the working class by advocating for, and, in some instances, directly or indirectly implementing social and political reforms. [20] Additionally, the authors make use of printing methods and imagery that art historians Charlotte Benton, Tim Benton and Ghislaine Wood refer to as "Aztec-inspired art deco," [21] a genre of art and architecture that employs heavily stylized, geometrically basic, block-printing techniques, as well as the incorporation of syncopated patterns comprised of abstract forms. [22] Examples of this can be seen in the visual essay *En El Frente's* masthead (page 1), and in the decorative page borders (pages 2, 4–6) as well as in the 1971 and 1972 ver-sions of front covers of La Gente (page 9). [23]

As we navigate our present moments of civil and societal unrest in the United States, and the ongoing fight for social justice that has and contin-ues to accompany it, revisiting parallel moments in American history provides an opportunity to learn from how and why past designers devised the visual communication strategies that they did, and then created and disseminated work guided by these to promote and foment advocacy and activism. Many current cultural, social, technological, economic, and political issues that affect the lives of Latinx communities in the U.S., such as working in unsafe

conditions, earning non-livable wages, and having to deal with immigration insecurity and police violence, bear striking resemblance to the labor strikes, deportation policies, police violence, and lack of equitable education occurring in many areas of the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s that inspired the Chicano movement. The authors hope that this critical examination of the visual languages, imagery, and compositional structures employed across the design of many independent American Chicano newspapers published during the late 20th century encourages contemporary designers, historians, and design students to consider the power of community-focused publications to facilitate positive action and social change. Whether the intent is to provide a means to alter undesirable sets of circumstances or as a means to engage and support contemporary design practice, gaining a deeper understanding of the design decision-making that guided the development of this work has the potential to yield new design work that is relevant and actionable.

The increasing disappearance of community-run newspapers — whether this occurs in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world, and whether these appear in print or as online entities—results not only in less-well-informed societies, but in the creation of an information vacuum that, especially since the widespread advent of social media, tends to be filled with mis- and dis-information. [24] Social media platforms allow for individuals to report their often myopically informed, not deeply considered opinions on local levels and these platforms utilize algorithms that control the visibility of certain types of content, and, "can modify patterns of individual exposure in opaque ways, often prioritizing content that provokes extreme reactions from users." [25] In other words, these algorithms can and do limit what many social media users see and read within narrowly confined realms of content and context. The gradual consolidation of news companies over the past 20 or so years has left many American communities without the ability to add their critical perspectives to the often singularly biased, white-majority national news stories that have become prevalent across the U.S. The effect of not reporting, much less analyzing, locally sourced and relevant information is felt widely in the United States and has resulted in the kinds of societal polarity that exacerbates issues such as immigration, labor rights, policing, and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In closing, the authors advocate for contemporary designers in the U.S., along with design researchers, scholars, historians, and students, to look to the designer activists that helmed the independent Chicano publications

24

Hendrickson, C. "Local Journalism in Crisis: Why America Must Revive Its Local Newsrooms," Brookings, 12 November 2019. Online. Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/research/local-journalism-in-crisis-why-america-must-revive-its-local-newsrooms/ (Accessed August 4, 2022).

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Ardia, D., Ringel, E., Fox, A., & Ekstrand, V.S. "Addressing the Decline of Local News, Rise of Platforms, and Spread of Mis- and Disinformation Online," Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life (CITAP), UNC Center for Media Law and Policy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 22 December 2020. Online. Available at: https://citap.unc.edu/local-news-platforms-mis-disinformation/ (Accessed February 15, 2021).

83

that were published in the 1960s and 1970s for cues regarding how they might effectively advocate for social, economic, and political justice. A few examples of independent publications from contemporary designer-activists or organizations are described as follows.

- Isabel Ann Castro, co-founder of *St. Sucia*, a contemporary Latina/x feminist magazine based in San Antonio, Texas from 2014 to 2018 that covered topics such as reproductive justice, education, gender identity, and immigration, used this publication to describe her experiences of creating a contemporary publication as a continuation of the independent Chicano publications that operated in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s. [26]
- Guadalupe Pardo is a south Texas-based Latinx designer and artist who began producing the zine T*he History of Policing in the Rio Grande Valley* in 2019, which makes use of archival material from independent Chicano publications from the 1960s and 1970s to help frame and inform their examination of the history of abusive policing in Texas' Rio Grande Valley. [27]
- Latinx artist Julia Arrendondo writes about her experiences involving the independent publishing of zines such as *Guide to Being Broke and Fabulous, Guide to Being Alone, Easy Magic, and Baltimore Break-ups: A Pop-Up Memoir*, as "a practice of empowerment... sharing iconography/narratives that attract like-minded individuals... when no other platforms were available for support." [28]
- Sherwood Forest Zine Library in Austin, TX, USA holds an archive of work by contemporary artists and designers who have produced independent publications exploring topics such as labor movements, activism, and other grassroots efforts that have paralleled the content that was published in independent Chicano publications across the U.S. from the 1960s and 1970s. [29]

Contemporary iterations of these types of publications continue to empower local communication from activist-designers who communicate directly with their communities, and who provide valuable information concerning their collective well-being and assistance as they advocate for social, political, and economic justice. They, and the independent Chicano publications that appeared in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s that preceded them, can serve

26

Zapata, C. "Don't Mess with Tejanas: Texan Feminist Artists And Zine Publishing As Resistance," Hemisphere: Visual Cultures Of The Americas 12 (2019): pgs. 98-104.

27

Pardo, G. "The 'Animals' of Mcallen PD - A History of RGV Policing." Edited by A. Vela and J. Ramirez. Trucha RGV, 29 July 2022. Online. Available at: https://truchargv.com/mcallen-pd/ (Accessed August 15, 2022).

28

Arrendondo, J. "Zines," Julia Arredondo, 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.juliaarredondo.com/zines (Accessed September 23, 2020). "Striketober/Labor Zines," Sherwood Forest Zine Library, 5 January 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.sherwoodforestzinelibrary.org/copy-of-black-issues-policing-prote (Accessed July 15, 2022).

29

"Striketober/Labor Zines," Sherwood Forest Zine Library, 5 January 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.sherwoodforestzinelibrary.org/copy-of-black-issues-policing-prote (Accessed July 15, 2022).

as inspirations for contemporary designers, students, researchers, scholars, and historians who seek to address and combat disinformation and injustice both within contemporary Latinx communities and beyond them.

Visual Essay Image Citations

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          Papers, Special Collections
and Archives, Mary and Jeff Bell Library, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi,
          Corpus Christi, Texas.
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          Gallo--First-Chicano-in-Southwest (Accessed 20 April 2022).

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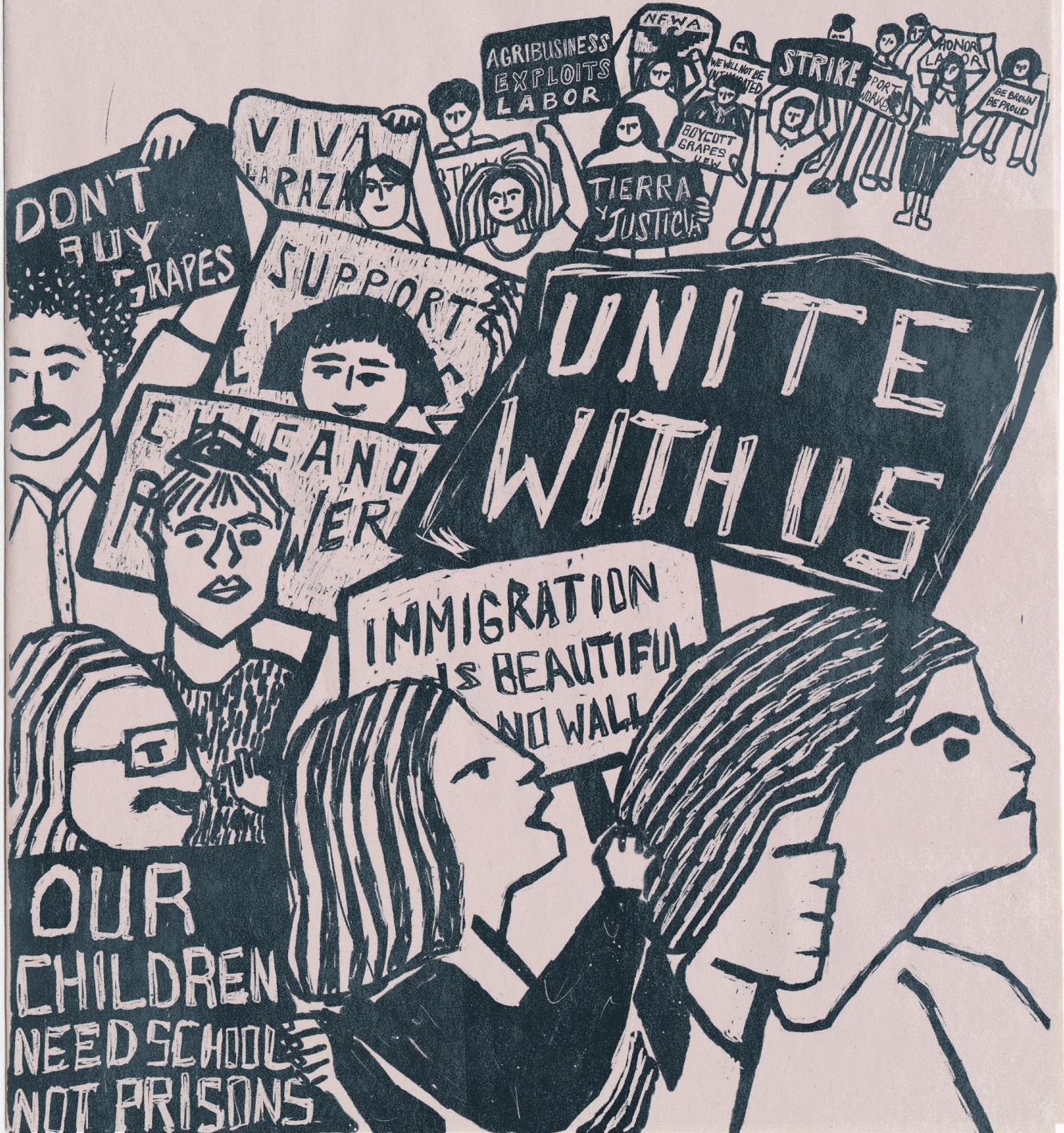
New Technology New Voices!

LA LOMITA, 1973

Chicano newspapers generally belonged to one of three categories: organizational, independent-community, and university.[1] Publications were typically eight-page tabloids designed, written, and edited by a collective of activists who were motivated to serve "la causa" (the cause).[2] It took only about $200 in the 1960's to start a newspaper.[3] Instead of using advertisements to generate revenue, publications sought subscriptions or donations from their audience in order to remain truly independent and avoid conflicts of interest (Figure 2). Because of the affordability of offset printing, most Chicano publications were sold for mere cents or freely offered to raise awareness and encourage activism within the movement.[4]

While larger, white-controlled media outlets often failed to report the harsh working conditions, economic inequality, and social oppression of Mexican Americans in the 1960's and 1970's, independent Chicano publications became a critical outlet for local news and information absent from the national narrative.[5] Activists argued Chicanos needed their own publications to combat disinformation in their communities because the racist mainstream press could not be trusted.[6] Reporters from the Texas Farm Workers Union (TFWU) publication *El Cuhamil* (San Juan, TX) commented on the disrespect broadcasters showed workers, for example laughing on air when the union lost an election. "Because we are meek," the paper exclaimed, "the educated think we are stupid and they abuse that humbleness that characterizes

us to the point of defrauding us."[7] Chicano publications like *El Cuhamil* sought to energize their readers to resist such characterizations.

Cesar Chavez was an integral figure in launching and uniting the Chicano movement. In 1965, Chavez established the United Farm Workers' (UFW) publication *El Malcriado* (Keene, CA) to give the farmworkers a "voice" where they could speak to the injustices they endured. Through the paper Chavez pleaded with the audience to cast their fears aside and unite. Chavez recruited Bill Esher, a New Yorker who had headed west to work as editor of the newspaper.[8] Chavez understood the process of

EL MALCRIADO, 1968

7   "One Day," El Cuhamil, 1 August 1975.
8   Adair, D., with Esher, B. "El Malcriado ' The Voice of the Farmworker': Origins, 1964-1965." Farmworker Movement Documentation Project, 16 March 2009. Online. Available at: https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/billEsher.pdf. Accessed January 3, 2023.

"NOW, BEFORE YOU PASS OUT, MR. GOMEZ ... DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER WORDS FOR OUR LISTENERS ON YOUR CHARGES OF ALLEGED POLICE BRUTALITY?"

CHICANO TIMES NOV-72

THE CRUSADING SAN ANTONIO MEDIA
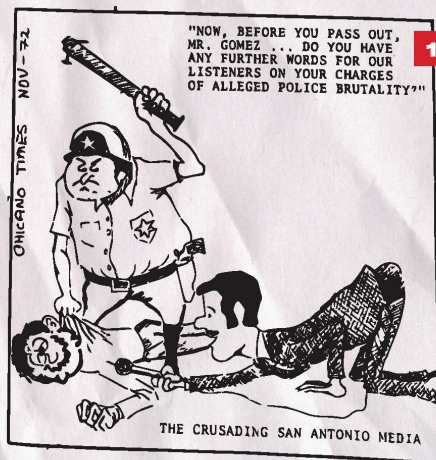
CHICANO TIMES, 1972

Fig 1: Comics were often utilized to satirize police brutality and mainstream media because it was such a successful tactic in communicating to a bilingual readership. The impact of this technique is powerful in its ability to communicate the situation with humor and rally for support.[1]

1   Zavala, P. M. "Forging a People: Visual Culture in the Illustrated Press of Post-Revolutionary Mexico" (PhD diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2019). P. 226.

1   Estrada, J. "Chicano Movements: A Geographic History," Mapping American Social Movements Through the 20th Century. Online. Available at: https://depts.washington.edu/moves/Chicano_geography.shtml (Accessed April 5, 2022).
2   Adair, D. "El Malcriado 1968-1970: David Fishlow, Doug Adair, Mark Day, editors." Farmworker Movement Documentation Project, 16 July 2009. Online. Available at: https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/elmalcriado05.pdf. Accessed March 1, 2023.
3   Rodriguez, M. S. Rethinking the Chicano Movement (New York: Routledge, 2015). P. 118.
4   Andrade, F. M. "The History of 'La Raza' Newspaper and Magazine, and its Role in the Chicano Community from 1967-1977" (PhD diss., California State University, Fullerton, 1979). Pgs. 18-19.
5   McMillian, J. C. Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). P. 12.
6   Rodriguez, E. "Covering the Chicano Movement: Examining Chicano Activism through Chicano, American, African American, and Spanish-Language Periodicals, 1965-1973" (PhD diss., University of California, Riverside, 2013). Pgs. 1-2.

CONTENTS

AUTHORS & DESIGNERS

Joshua Duttweiler
Alexandria Canchola

COVER ILLUSTRATOR

Alexandria Canchola

EL CUHAMIL NEEDS
-- TYPEWRITERS
-- JUST-O-WRITERS
-- LIGHT TABLES
-- LAY-OUT SUPPLIES
-- IN ONE WORD EVERYTHING

SEND TO
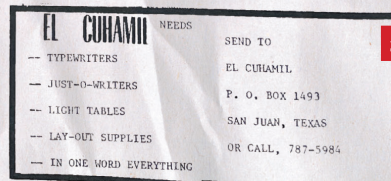EL CUHAMIL
P. O. BOX 1493
SAN JUAN, TEXAS
OR CALL, 787-5984

Fig 2: This solicitation, featured in a 1976 issue of *El Cuhamil*, identifies a few of the tools and supplies needed by the designer-activist seeking to communicate their message through print. The comical phrase, "in one word everything," suggested their current lack of resources.

producing the newspaper from typing and paste-up to the late-night search for cover images. The Farm Worker Press did not have much equipment to put the paper together; they began with an IBM executive electric typewriter and eventually upgraded to a "Justowriter" machine that typed copy into tidy columns. To save on photography expenses, the Press relied on scissors and glue to cut pictures out of newspapers or magazines. This economically efficient system served the movement without taking funding away from the union. At the height of distribution, *El Malcriado* had a bi-weekly circulation of over 10,000 copies.[9]

The activists responsible for putting out most of these publications were volunteers who were not professionally trained in design, but their work became visually refined as time progressed (Figures 8 and 9).[10] A comparison between the first issues of *El Malcriado* and the last shows that the page design shifted over time, eventually showcasing standard features of publication design such as use of a column grid, exceptional typesetting, and a consistent typographical hierarchy. Because the publications were typically designed by small collectives working collaboratively, it's difficult to determine if one specific person oversaw layout.[11] Gloria Arellanes, from the Brown Beret's organizational newspaper *La Causa* (Los Angeles, CA), commented on how Chicanas in the organization determined the layout, wrote stories, and created graphics together in the evenings after the Beret's free clinic closed for the night.[12] *Caracol* (San Antonio, TX) was the only publication we researched that listed the designer alongside traditional roles such as typesetter, illustrator, and editor.

Supporters of the movement were recruited to work on the newspapers. Carlos Marentes explained that he did not have funds to donate to the Texas Farm Workers Union (TFWU) so Antonio Orendain, leader of the TFWU, suggested he get involved by working on the newspaper. Marentes recalls that a member of the Board of Directors told him that he was in charge of TFWU's newspaper *El Cuhamil*: "It is your duty, your responsibility." Marentes proudly shared that when he

¡ES TIEMPO!, 1971

Fig 3: This imagery, which shows an eagle devouring a snake, refers to the foundation myth of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan. In this story, the Aztec leader Huitzilopochtli ordered his people to settle in the place where they encountered this scene. This famous image is part of the Mexican coat of arms and found on the Mexican flag. Chicano activists used this symbol to make an intentional ideological connection between the historical Aztec empire and modern Chicano identity.[2]
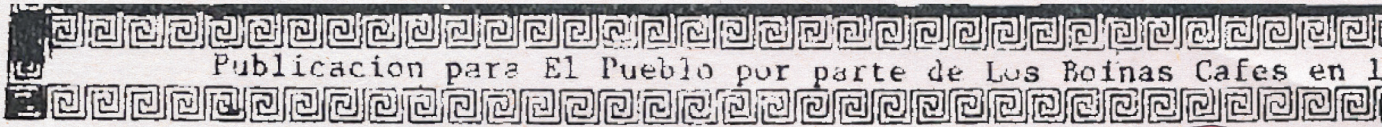
2   Garcia, H. R. "Beholding Chicano History: Iconography and the Chicanx Movement," Athanor 37 (March 2019): pgs. 53-58, https://doi.org/10.33009/fsu_athanor116673.

began, they published 500 papers every month and at the end of his tenure they were printing 3,000-5,000 papers every two weeks across the nation.[13] Anna Nieto Gomez, one of the founders of *Hijas de Cuahtémoc* (Long Beach, CA), a groundbreaking publication of Chicana feminist activism discussed how they would assemble the newspaper: "We typed

out the articles with an electric typewriter, we used cement glue to paste the writings, poetry, and artwork onto newspaper layout boards. When we were finally ready, we set up public speaking engagements to raise money to pay the printer."[14] Access to common tools, a passion for the cause, and the necessity to rapidly spread information inspired activist teams to continually publish.

9   Rodriguez. "Covering the Chicano Movement." P. 68.
10   Rodriguez. "Covering the Chicano Movement." P. 41.
11   McMillian. Smoking Typewriters. P. 11.
12   Rodriguez. "Covering the Chicano Movement." P. 84.

13   Rueda, C. "Oral History Interview of Carlos Marentes." South Texas Stories, 9 September 2016. Online. Available at: https://library.tamucc.edu/exhibits/s/sta/item/276 (Accessed September 1, 2022).

14   Gomez, A.N. "50 Years of Chicana Feminism: Celebrating the Hijas De Cuauhtémoc." UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. YouTube. 18 November 2021. 21:56. Available at: https://www.chicano.ucla.edu/events/panel-and-performance-50-years-chicana-feminism-celebrating-hijas-de-cuauht%C3%A9moc. (Accessed 1 September, 2022.)

Publicacion para El Pueblo por parte de Los Boinas Cafes en l

UNITY! THROUGH ICONS

A key distinction of the Chicano movement was a call to the former glory of the Mexican-controlled Americas in today's Southwestern and Western United States. This mythical and ancestral region, known as "Aztlán," evokes Chicano identity and pride as descendants from great Mesoamerican civilizations that predated colonial dominance and Anglo theft of land.[15] Aztlán was a rallying call to embrace this new identity: "la raza" or "the race." It was important for Chicanos to find pride in their Mexican heritage (indigenous ancestry, specifically) during a time of heightened racial and ethnic discrimination.[16]

Chicano publications referenced Aztlán in both name and imagery and were critical in building the imagination of this mythical land, making it a reality through print.[17] Titles such as *Hijas de Cuahtémoc* (Long Beach, CA), *El Latino Americano* (San Diego, CA), *¡Es Tiempo!* (Los Altos Hills, CA) show symbols, graphics, and patterns inspired by Mexican Mesoamerican traditions (Figures 3-7). They were typically placed near the masthead where readers could quickly identify symbols connected to the Chicano movement even when a newspaper was folded. Common in editorial design, covers often displayed their city and country of origin as a location in Aztlán instead of the modern United States. *¡Ahora!* was distributed from Center, Colorado, Aztlán; *Barrio* from Corpus Christi, Tejas, Aztlán; and *Regeneración II* from El Valle, Tejaztlán (a clever Spanish word combination referring to the Rio Grande Valley of Southern Texas).

Many of the publications from this period were influenced by the

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15   Rodriguez. "Covering the Chicano Movement." P. 18-19.
16   Fernandez, J. "Reimagining the Mexican Revolution in the United Farm Workers' El Malcriado (1965-1966)." (MA thesis, University of California, San Diego, 2018). P. 21.
17   Rodriguez. Rethinking the Chicano Movement. P. 123.

EL GALLO 25¢

La Voz De La Justicia
VOL. 10 NO. 2 MARCH-APRIL, 1978
DENVER, COLORADO AZTLAN

EL GALLO, 1978

NATIONAL SEMANA DE LA RAZA

EL ALACRAN, 1971

Fig 4: The tripartite head is composed of three faces: one (white) facing the viewer and two profiles, one (green) pointing left and the other (red) right. This image symbolizes the colonized heritage of the Chicano people: half Spanish and half indigenous, together they form the whole Chicano figure in the middle. This "mestizo" figure glorifies the transcultural history of the Chicano people, celebrating the complexities of their rich history.[3]

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3   Mahler, K. "Reclaiming Aztlán: The Visual Rhetoric of Pre- Columbian Imagery in Chicano Murals." Summer Research, 2011. Online. Available at:, https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1121&context=summer_research (Accessed November 1, 2022).

design and visual iconography of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and looked to showcase affiliation with the cause. Logos provided visual consistency and political unity across these widespread publishers. *El Malcriado*, (Keene, CA) the official newspaper of the UFW used an upside-down Aztec pyramid as its logo (Figure 5). The UFW's recognizable branding was visually sparse and simple enough to replicate by photocopying, becoming the unofficial emblem and cultural icon of the Chicano rights movement.[18] *El Malcriado* aided the UFW's notoriety, relying on the geometric "Aztec" eagle. *Nuestra Lucha* (Toledo, OH), *¡Ahora!, ¡Es Tiempo!* and *La Lomita* (Robstown, TX) also used a variation of the eagle to visually unify the greater UFW movement (Figure 7).[19]

This logo was stamped by growers on the bags of grapes to show solidarity with union workers. Strikes and boycotts helped build recognition of the eagle icon throughout the country. One grower, Henry Ryder, asked to sign a contract with the United Farm Workers Union solely to win back customers. "I just want that Union label so that I can sell my grapes."[20] The black eagle icon featured on publications, campaigns, and products gave people a way to visually connect the union's efforts and messaging.

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18   Zapata, C. "Branding 'Death' In A High-Tech Boycott: United Farm Workers And The Wrath Of Grapes Campaign." Jollas: Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies, 10.1 (2019): Pgs. 49.
19   Andrade. "The History of 'La Raza'." Pgs. 18-19.
20   Cohen, J. "Gringo Justice: The United Farm Workers Union, 1967-1981." Farmworker Movement Documentation Project, February 2008. Online. Available at: https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essays/essays/Gringojustice.pdf. Accessed January 3, 2023.

a region de El Valle, Tejaztlan

REGENERACIÓN
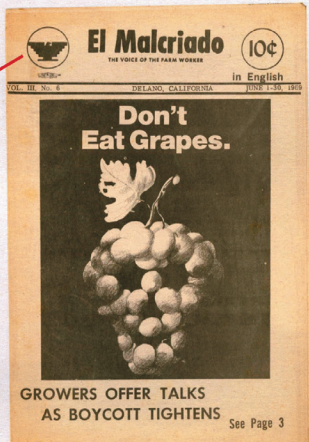
EL MALCRIADO, 1969

CARACOL, 1976

LA LOMITA, 1973

CARACOL, 1976

ALAMBRES DE NEL, 1976

Fig 6a: The Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl played a critical role in the Aztec creation story. *Fig 6b:* The use of Pre-Columbian iconography reinforced the connection to historical fights for social justice, lending a mythical, spiritual quality to the movement's political struggles. *Fig 6c:* The newspaper includes Mesoamerican geometric patterns as borders and dividers. *Fig 6d:* Here, again, is the eagle and snake imagery that refers to the foundation myth of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan

LA CAUSA DE LOS POBRES, 1976

¡ES TIEMPO!, 1971

¡AHORA!, 1971

LA GENTE DE AZTLÁN, 1973

LA LOMITA, 1973

En El Frente   5

91

BARRIO

1973

"BI-LINGUAL, BI-WEEKLY BARRIO NEWS"

Mastheads Call Attention

The masthead identifies a publication and must have enough weight to stand out from a cluttered background. Newspaper mastheads benefit from being distinctive, recognizable, and appropriate for the topic and audience. Like logos, a good masthead is still recognizable when partially obscured.

The masthead typography of Chicano publications from the 1960's and 1970's denoted various sources of influence. Activists worked to combine text and images into layout. They built a visual narrative linking post-Mexican Revolution art ideologies, indigenous populations, colonial-era Rococo and Victorian styles, Aztec-inspired patterns (Figures 6c-d), elements from Mexican street–brush script, informal calligraphy, and woodblock and linocut lettering.[21]

The mastheads of Chicano publications play with aesthetic conventions associated with Mexican or indigenous design and reposition such typographic explorations outside the expected standards of professionalism. There is a noticeable break from clarity of communication to that of visual engagement and connection with "la causa." It would seem the ability to inject the right personality of rebellion into the work was far more critical. Many Chicano publications adopted an urgent and dynamic visual style in their mastheads. Techniques such as woodcut or linocut illustrations appear in the mastheads of *La Lomita* (Robstown, TX), *Inside The Beasts* (San Diego, CA), *Caracol* (San Antonio, TX), and *El Grito del Norte* (Española, NM).

The mastheads appear transgressive (though due to a gap in the historical record, it is impossible to know if their creators intended for them to be so). Mastheads like *Barrio* (Corpus Christi, TX) look handcrafted which could be interpreted as a rejection of corporate mainstream news organizations. Outside of the *Chicano Times* (San Antonio, TX), most of the mastheads of the era appear to be a celebration of Chicano culture; there is a sense of informality and an emphasis on strong and decorative typographical forms. The dynamic compositions and styles function as mechanisms for generating attention and creating community. The lack of immediate legibility however does not preclude recognition altogether. Instead of abiding by design's rules or philosophies, the mastheads often draw design inspiration from sources outside of printed media. *Caracol's* masthead (1975-76) incorporated a snail to represent "a spiral of self-expansion and was inspired by Oliver Wendell Holmes's poem 'The Chambered Nautilus.'"[22] The swagger and flair of its design make for a more memorable identity. There is a bold dialogue between the merging of word and image.

These publications also connected to the Chicano identity through their use of language. Most of the masthead titles are in Spanish, even though the majority of the publications were either written in English or bilingual. As scholar Chon Noriega has observed, "For Chicano artists, playing with words involves two languages, Spanish and English, as well as all the hybrid spaces between them: 'calo', Spanglish, code switching, and interlingual puns."[23] In this way, despite often targeting an English-speaking audience, the publications would use Spanish to associate themselves with the

21   Heller, S. "The Daily Heller: Mexican Graphics, Original and Derivative," PrintMag, 16 November 2021. Online. Available at: https://www.printmag.com/daily-heller/thé-daily-heller-mexico/ (Accessed August 15, 2022).

22   Goodyear, R. "Caracol." Handbook of Texas, 1 December 1994. Online. Available at: https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/caracol (Accessed November 15, 2022).

23   Noriega, C. A. "Postmodernism: or why this is just another poster." In Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphics Arts in California, edited by C.A. Noriega, p. 22. Santa Barbara, California : University Art Museum, University of California, 2001.

6   EN EL FRENTE

August/September 1975

January 1976

July 1976

November 1976

October 1977

April 1978

May 1979

October 1979

June 1981

March 1982

Fig 8: Over the years, *El Cuhamil's* masthead iconography subtly changed. The image of the shaded oak tree continued to be refined and simplified. By using the farm worker icon, they visually separated themselves from the United Farm Workers Union by branding themselves with unique iconography created specifically for the Texas Farm Workers Union.

El Malcriado
"La Voz del Campesino"
1965-1971

EL MALCRIADO
1972-1975

Fig 9: *El Malcriado* was rebranded only once during its twelve-year run. The switch to an all caps condensed sans-serif reflects a shift to a more commanding tone. The photo background evokes a sense of unrest that feels more closely aligned with the sentiment of the Chicano Movement.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

movement. Intentional design decisions like screaming headlines, shocking images, Chicano symbolism, and bilingual typesetting encouraged readers to mobilize and fight injustice. *¡Ahora!* (Center, CO) is representative of this strategic design strategy – a publication title in Spanish with bilingual articles to communicate with multiple audiences.

Not all the publications of the era rebelled against conventional newspaper design. In fact, those that didn't often saw higher readership. *El Malcriado* had the largest circulation and appealed to a wide range of audiences, seeking partnerships with political allies to impact legislation. With only one rebrand, *El Malcriado's* masthead changed little over the course of its twelve-year run (Figure 9). Its enduring identity contrasted with other publications that struggled to settle on a visual identity. Transformations of *El Cuhamil* (San Juan, TX), *La Gente* (Los Angeles, CA) and *Caracol* show evolution in the masthead over time. *El Cuhamil* (Figure 8) was in constant flux, with elements of its masthead changing almost every year. Loud, bold, decorative lettering shifted to simplified typographic forms that looked polished but lacked the personality of its initial brand.

At their core, the mastheads capture cultural spirit and Mexican heritage to create Chicano identity.

¡AHORA!, 1971

Fig 10: Translation: "The voice of the farm worker" This slogan was featured prominently in early editions of *El Malcriado* and was updated in 1972 to "The official voice of the United Farmworkers" conveying a more authoritative voice to the newspaper.

The LATIN MESSENGER *"Por Mi Raza Hablara El Espiritu"*
August 1967

BRÓNZE
November 1968

La Hormiga
October 1968

Chicano Student Movement
November 1968

CSM CHICANO STUDENT MOVEMENT
March 1969

EL GRITO DEL NORTE 15¢ *a cry for justice in northern new mexico*
December 1969

EL GRITO DEL NORTE
August 1971

MI RAZA PRIMERO! **¡CORAJE!** 10¢ *"ES MEJOR MORIR DE PIE QUE VIVIR DE RODILLAS"*
1969

LA LUCHA
1970

Chicano Times
1970-1977

¡AHORA!
February 1971

el Alacran
May 1971

INSIDE THE BEAST *A Progressive Third World Voice*
October 1972

LA VOZ DE ROBE DONATION 15¢ **LA LOMITA**
May 1973

AZTLAN
1972

LA VERDAD
1969

AUTORIDAD
1970

LA Verdad *PUBLICACION QUINCENAL DE LA COMUNIDAD CHICANA*
1974

LA OMITA F.W.U. 1972
May 1975

EL BARRIO
September-October 1970

BARRIO
November 1971

PAPEL CHICANO
1970

PAPEL Chicano
1970

PAPEL CHICANO *Serving the Barrios of Houston, Tejas* 10¢ Volume 1 Issue 11 February 3
1971

PAPEL CHICANO
1971

EL MESTIZO 15¢
1976

El MESTIZO VAMONOS RECIO PUBLICATIONS P.O. BOX 17111 EL PASO, TEXAS 79917 VOLUME 4, NO. 1 JAN. 1977
1977

EL MAIZAL VOL. 1 NO.1 San Antonio, Texas May 1977
May 1977

FREE COPY **EL Latino americano**
March 1978

An Index of Chicano Mastheads

CARACOL
SEPTIEMBRE 25¢
September 1974

CARACOL
August 1975

CARACOL
September 1976

BASTA YA!
LOS SIETE DE LA RAZA
1969

Basta Ya!
El Periodico Para Defender
LOS SIETE DE LA RAZA
1969

¡BASTA YA!
1970

¡BASTA YA!
1971

ALAMBRES DE NEL
September 1976

Floreciendo
May 1979

LA GENTE
May 1971

LA GENTE
March 1972

LA GENTE
de AZTLÁN
April 1973

LA GENTE
DE AZTLÁN
March 1977

EL GALLO 25¢
La Vos De La Justicia
March 1978

HIJAS DE CUAUHTEMOC
1968-1973

Las HIJAS DE CUAUHTÉMOC
1968-1973

HIJAS DE CUAHTEMOC
1968-1973

la cucaracha
Free! ¡Gratis!
Vol. II, Pueblo, Colorado, Aztlan   Marzo, 1977   No. 2
1977

LA Cucaracha
1978

LA CUCARACHA
1979

LA CUCARACHA WEEKLY SEMANARIO
1980

CALIFORNIA

May 1971
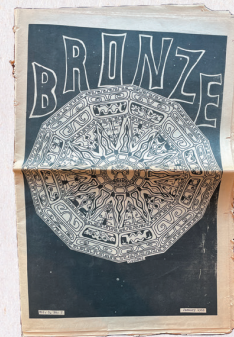
February 1969

January 1968

March 1971

October 1972

June 1972

July 1967

October 1968

June 1974

September 1976

September 1976

October 1972

March 1969

TEXAS

March 1971

October 1972

pencil drawing "Zen Paisaje" – Carlos Rosas May 1976.
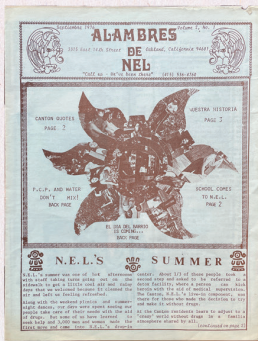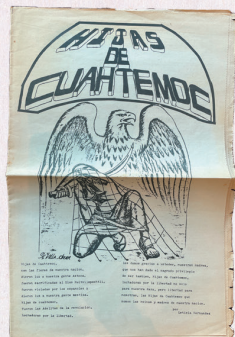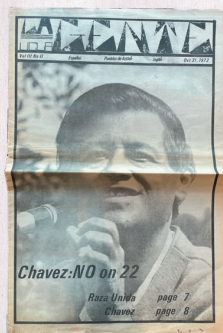
May 1976

May 1973

May 1976

SOUTHWEST

February 1977

September 1972

February 1971

March 1968

PUBLICATION LANGUAGE AND AFFILIATION KEY

- Bilingual
- English
- Spanish
- Unknown

- UFW
- College/University
- Community

CARACOL, 1975

Worth a Thousand Words

As illustrated on the covers of these publications, the bond between art and activism was key traits of the Chicano movement. These covers were printed with a combination of bilingual text and bicultural imagery relying on cultural specificity, symbols, and visual metaphors to convey their message. Artwork within these publications was blended with Mexican iconography, Catholic religious symbolism, and self-referential pre-Columbian-inspired motifs (Figures 6a-d), creating a distinct aesthetic to advance the Chicano movement. Important figures from the Aztec culture, like deity Quetzalcoatl, appeared in order to establish connection between the movement and the mythology of the Aztec empire (Figures 6a). Pictured on the covers of Chicano publications from the 1960's and 1970's were scenes of revolution, solidarity, indigeneity of the community, labor, boycotts, and motherhood. These representations contrasted with the negative stereotypes of Chicanos present in mainstream media.

Beginning in 1965, the United Farm Worker's (UFW) national boycott of California table grapes, known as the Delano grape strike, influenced the art and design of Chicano publications across the country. The papers urged readers to join the boycott in solidarity. Perhaps because the UFW's leader, Cesar Chavez, admired the woodcuts and pen-and-ink drawings that emerged from the Mexican Revolution, the UFW's paper, *El Malcriado* (Keene, CA), "drew a link between the farm workers' struggle for justice in the U.S.A. and the peasant struggle for justice in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920)." Important figures of the Mexican Revolution, like Emiliano Zapata, graced the early covers of *El Malcriado* along with well-known slogans like "Better to die on your feet than live on your knees..."[24]

24 Adair, with Esher. "El Malcriado 'The Voice of the Farmworker' Origins, 1964-1965."

EL MESTIZO, 1975

Boycotts

LA CAUSA, 1969

Community

BARRIOS UNIDOS, 1976

CATHOLICISM

EL GRITO, 1971

Revolution

BRONZE, 1968

MOTHERHOOD

LA GENTE, 1972

indigenous roots

EL MALCRIADO, 1965

Andy Zermeño was the first artist commissioned by Cesar Chavez to create artwork for the UFW. Zermeño used cartoons (Figure 12) to communicate broadly across bilingual and bicultural audiences. His iconic characters Don Sotaco, Don Coyote, and El Patroncito were often published both inside and on the cover of *El Malcriado*. Don Sotaco portrays a union farmworker striking against agribusiness and representing the capacity of the individual to stand up in the fight against oppressive institutions. Don Coyote was a sleazy labor contractor who cheated farmworkers, and greedy El Patroncito was the pompously powerful agribusiness employer.[25]

Many other publications including *El Cuhamil* (San Juan, TX), published in South Texas, borrowed this comic style.

With the Civil Rights Movement taking place simultaneously, *El Malcriado* showcased an alliance with this parallel movement by including an image created by Black artist Elizabeth Catlett of a Black Madonna and Child (Figure 13) printed in 1965, on the cover of the newspaper's 18th issue. In the following issue, *El Malcriado*'s editor Bill Esher described the movement's excitement as more Americans confronted the injustices suffered by vulnerable populations.[26]

Doug Adair, a writer for *El Malcriado*, speaks of the "explosion of activity in the student and especially Chicano communities" as activists visited the *El Malcriado* office asking how to begin their own newspapers. The UFW supported their endeavors by providing them with a type of mentorship, offering guidance on
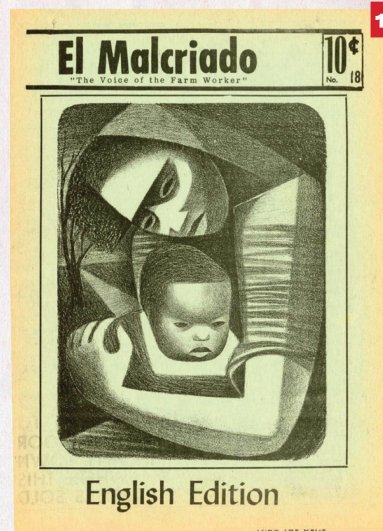
layout and paste-up, as well as permission to use stories and cartoons from *El Malcriado* in their own publications. This camaraderie between publications also existed between organizational and independent-community newspapers. Adair comments, "We also had an easy relationship with the radical and alternative press."[27] These partnerships between publications allowed for an aesthetic cohesion to develop across Chicano publication design.

Many Chicanas were involved in the movement, and some even created publications that were entirely female led. In the publication *Hijas de Cuahtémoc* (Long Beach, CA) women shared their perspectives and experiences. Anna Nieto Gomez, founder, remembers, "The newspaper was beautiful, the cover page was a graphic of a strong looking woman holding a machete breaking out from underneath a gigantic net." While some arms of the movement told women to return to their traditional roles, publications like *Hijas de Cuahtémoc* offered demonstrations of resistance (Figure 15). For Gomez, being an activist offered women the opportunity to work as equals with men. Women made their own decisions and over time the Chicano Press shared women's resistance with published essays by Chicana feminists who wrote about the conditions of and for women in the movement.[28]

27 Adair, with Esher. "El Malcriado 'The Voice of the Farmworker' Origins, 1964-1965."
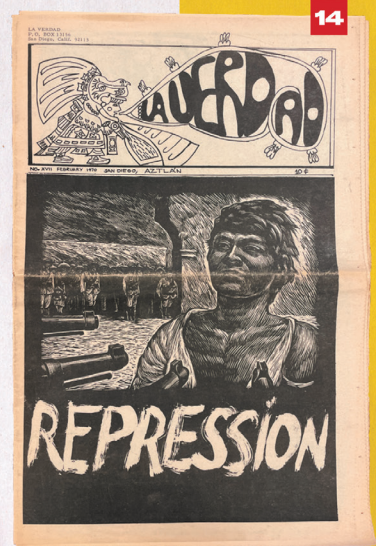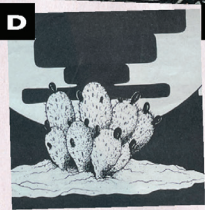28 Gomez. "50 Years of Chicana Feminism." 16:01.
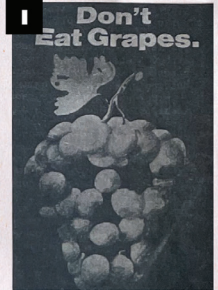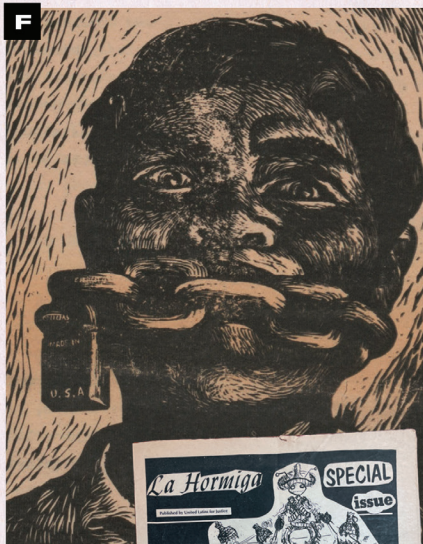
EL MALCRIADO, 1965
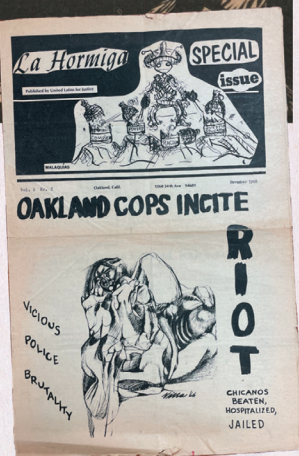
25 Chatfield, L. "Introduction by LeRoy Chatfield." Farmworker Movement Documentation Project. Farmworker Movement Documentation Project, March 2008. Online. Available at: https://libraries.ucsd.edu/ farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/snoc/00-MOVEMENT%20INTRODUCTION.pdf. (Accessed January 3, 2023).

26 Chatfield. "Introduction by LeRoy Chatfield."

LA VERDAD, 1970

LA HORMIGA, 1968
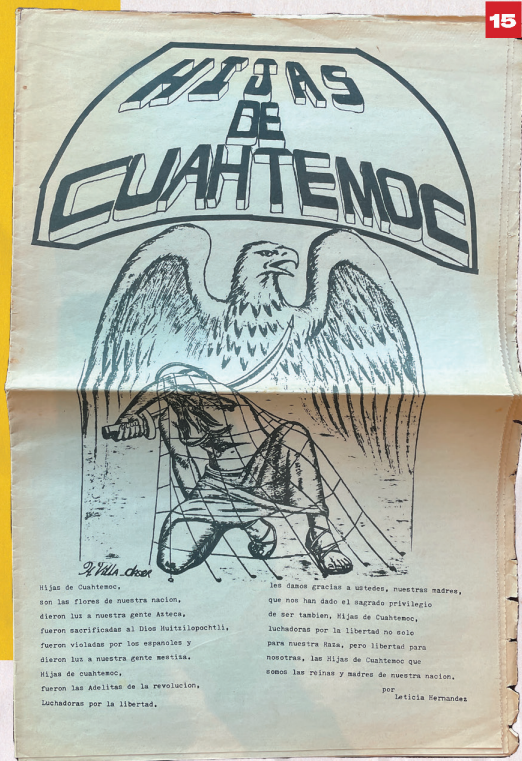
HIJAS DE CUAHTÉMOC, 1971

LA GENTE, 1973

EL GRITO, 1973

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS
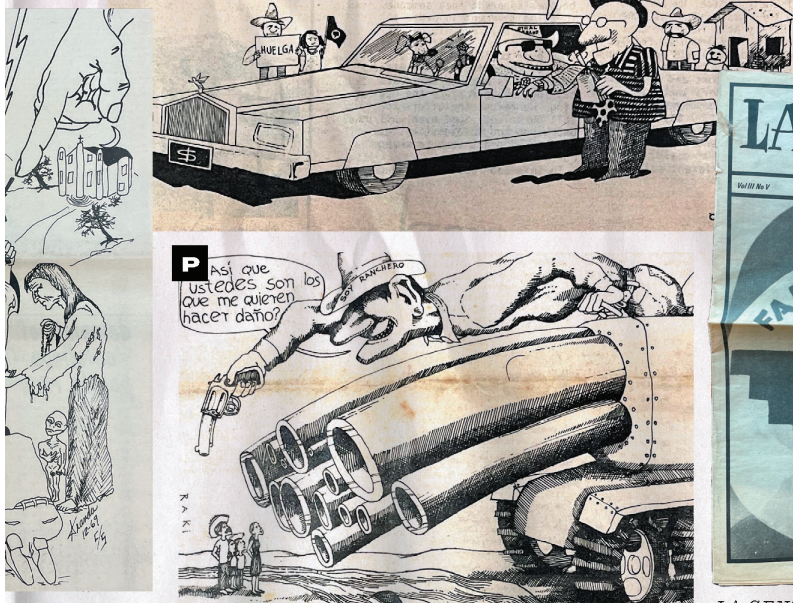**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13**

Several of the Chicano publication covers utilize print-making methodologies such as lithography and relief. This graphic style features dynamic linework and rough, hand-carved illustrations of black ink on light newsprint (Figures 14). The stark contrast of positive and negative space creates readability and demands attention. This aesthetic is a form of branding, a way to show that these publications belonged to the cause.

The covers of Chicano publications heavily relied on photography and collage. A few of the university-student Chicano publications listed photographers on their staff. The cover of UCLA's *La Gente De Aztlán* (Los Angeles, CA) gave Carlos Garcia a byline as photographer.[29] However, many of the photos that graced the covers were submitted by readers. Sometimes they went unattributed or were turned into collages. A 1973 issue of *El Grito del Norte* (Española, NM) commemorates the movement in New Mexico with a large collage made up of photos submitted by the paper's readers (Figure 16).[30]
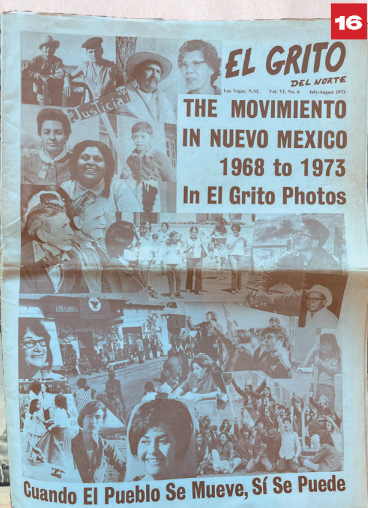
The imagery of the movement is defined by the freedom found within independent publishing. Designer-activists of this period created newspapers that communicated the Chicano experience through art, design, and writing, forever capturing and mobilizing the movement.

The imagery of the movement is defined by the freedom found within independent publishing. Designer-activists of this period created newspapers that communicated the Chicano experience through art, design, and writing, forever capturing and mobilizing the movement.

29   *La Gente De Aztlan*, April 1973.

30   "Gracias, Fotografos!," *El Grito del Norte*, July-August 1973.

EL CUHAMIL, 1979

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Biography

Alexandria Canchola designs, illustrates, and creates immersive large-scale installations that are inspired by personal and socio-culturally informed narratives, explorations of diverse color palettes, experimentations with letterforms, and filmmaking. Her idiosyncratic approach to design stems from her desire to empower diverse groups of people and individuals, and make a positive difference in their lives by crafting and disseminating engaging and meaningful design and artwork. She has fulfilled many creative and design-rooted roles on behalf of publications, small businesses, and non-profits as she striven to synthesize their original, creative ideas with hers.

Alexandria has a Bachelor of Arts from University of Texas at Austin, and an MFA in 2D Design from University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She is an Assistant Professor at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi who eagerly working to assist her students in their quest to construct and acquire knowledge so they may fully understand the power they wield as designers in communicating ideas that have the potential to instigate and sustain positive change. She can be reached via email at: *alexandria.canchola@tamucc.edu*

Joshua Duttweiler is a designer, artist, and educator. His multi-disciplinary practice encompasses personal, collaborative, and client-based projects that are focused on social justice and community building. Largely inspired by his ever-changing locations, his work is a critical exploration of historical and present-day societal systems and constructs. Joshua asks his audiences to consider the spaces they occupy from a wide variety of perspectives as means to allow them to hear and respond to new voices.

Joshua holds an MFA in Graphic Design from Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. He regularly exhibits and curates work nationally and internationally. He currently resides in Corpus Christi, Texas where he is an Assistant Professor at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi. As an educator, he seeks to empower his students to positively change the world with their empathetically informed, original ideas for creating visual communications, systems, and services. He can be reached via email at: *joshua.duttweiler@tamucc.edu*

¡No más! A Call for Designers to Stop Recolonizing Artisan Communities in Emerging Economies

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Editing provided by *Dialectic's* Internal Editing Team

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Abstract

Although globally the artisan sector [a] is the second largest employer in many emerging economies, and is valued at more than $750 billion dollars [1], most artisans [b] are underemployed and socially marginalized [2]. Traditional artisans in these countries primarily occupy lower income levels, indigenous communities are often at the margins of contemporary consumer-producer society, and overall digital and literacy divides create a dependence on intermediaries (individuals and organizations who command higher salaries) to support production, quality control, shipping, and banking; amongst other fundamental aspects of running a craft-based business. This article critically examines the roles that artisan sector brand [c] founders and designers [d] have played in maintaining this inequitable status quo, and suggests how their contributions may be reimagined in the service of social, political, and economic justice and in ways that can help artisans around the world realize greater benefit(s). This position paper has been co-authored by a founder of an accessories brand which has actively engaged in co-creation with indigenous artisans in Colombia, a designer who works as a creative consultant across the Colombian artisan sector, and a design educator and social activist who has conducted primary and secondary research about the global artisan sector. It summarizes a common design process used in commerce-based engagements between designers and artisans, and suggests

that the "solutions" these yield are extractive and even recolonizing [e]. Additionally, this piece examines and interrogates how designers and their work on behalf of well-branded clients (such as *Macy's* [3], *Levi's* [4], *IKEA* [5], and *Kate Spade*, [6] to name but a few examples) that utilize intermediaries such as brokers, buyers, and exporters to source craft goods produced by artisans the world over contributes to their economic marginalization. The authors' 25+ years of combined project-based experience in design is informed by a diverse set of perspectives, which span a spectrum of working within the academy and working on behalf of a variety of non-for-profit and for-profit businesses. The work we have undertaken with artisan communities of weavers, beaders, and quiltmakers in Colombia, Guatemala, and the United States confirms that intermediaries are complicit in maintaining a well-established status quo among artisans that tends to result in their being impoverished and exploited. If designers and the founders of artisan brands are in fact committed to improving the livelihoods of the artisans with whom they work, they must decide to either initiate and then sustain a radical shift in how they engage with artisan communities or stop seeking goods from them altogether. To support this idea, we are calling for designers to radically change how they engage with artisans as they collaborate on the making and marketing of products in ways that prioritize sustainable futures for themselves and their children. We also invite designers to consider how much artisan communities (especially indigenous groups) can teach us about planning and engaging in more sustainable ways of working that are centered around processes that yield mutual benefits and that foster more equitable collaborations. Our goal is to promote sustainability and decolonization, and, parallel with this, to guide and fuel socio-cultural, political, and economic justice and a fairer and more equitable future for artisans working and living around the world.

a *In the context of this piece, the term "artisan sector" refers to the economic activities related to and the actors that facilitate the work produced by **artisans**, defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries as "A worker in a skilled trade, a craftsperson; (in later use) esp. one utilizing traditional or non-mechanized methods to make things with [his, her or their] hands." Furthermore, references of "traditional artisans" and "indigenous artisans" refer to craftspeople who learned their skills as part of their cultural upbringing, most often from an elder such as a parent or grandparent.*

1 MARC Group, "Handicrafts Market: Global Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2023-2028," IMARC, 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.imarcgroup.com/handicrafts-market (Accessed March 25, 2023).

b *This piece focuses on "artisans," who are handicraft workers creating a product, accessory, garment, etc. using skills and bases of knowledge that were passed down to them via familial and/or cultural lines.*

2 Scrase, T. "Precarious production: globalisation and artisan labour in the Third World," Third World Quarterly, 24.3 (2003): pgs. 449–461.

c *The term "Artisan sector brand" refers to for-profit companies and other organizations that have created and sustained regional or global brand recognition among relatively large consumer groups around the world, and that commercialize products made by artisans. This article focuses mainly on the most prevalent among these brands, which in fact are largely not informed or guided, much less led, by artisans, and which tend to rely on exploitative models.*

d *The term "designers" refers to design practitioners, researchers, scholars, and educators (from several disciplines that include industrial, interior, communication, fashion, and textile design). Although there are designers from other disciplines working in the artisan sector, these are the areas of expertise that are most prominently represented. Additionally, the design work described in this article that emanates from the artisan sector typically serves one of two functions: (1) to provide creative direction (and often detailed instructions) to artisan-producers regarding the goods they have been directed to produce, and (2) to serve as a socio-cultural and socio-economic bridge between a given artisan community and an external marketplace.*

e *"Recolonization" means to colonize* again*. The authors' firsthand experience regarding working with artisans has been mainly with those located in Guatemala and Colombia who are primarily descendants of peoples who were colonized by the Spaniards in the late 1500s. The choices that designers make to impose external social, cultural, economic and political frameworks on indigenous peoples are examples of what the online Oxford English Dictionary explicates in its definition of "colonize," which is "to make submissive to or accepting of traditional western power structures through education, cultural influence, etc."*

3 Thomas, H. "Macy's Partners with Traditional Artisans to Help Rebuild Economy and Culture in Earthquake-Devastated Haiti," Macy's, 21 September 2010. Online. Available at: https://www.macysinc.com/news-media/press-releases/detail/979/macys-partners-with-traditional-artisans-to-help-rebuild. (Accessed March 25, 2023).

4 Velasquez, A. "Levi's Expands Partnership With Latin American Artisan Organization," Rivet, Sourcing Journal, 13 December 2022. Online. Available at: https://sourcingjournal.com/denim/denim-brands/levis-expands-partnership-with-latin-american-artisan-organization-mercado-global-396420/ (Accessed March 25, 2023).

5 Author unknown. "Contemporary Design Meets Traditional Craft," IKEA, 20 March 2023. Online. Available at: https://www.ikea.com/us/en/new/contemporary-design-meets-traditional-craft-pub8fe0fc00. (Accessed March 25, 2023).

6 Sydney, P., Nicole, s., and Bird, T. "On Purpose: Creating a New Manufacturing Partner," in Global Economic Empowerment Report, ed. U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Washington D.C., USA, 16 December 2014. Online. Available at: https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/blog/post/kate-spade-co-working-artisanal-suppliers-and-increasing-revenue/42356 (Accessed March 25, 2023).

¡No más! A Call for Designers to Stop Recolonizing Artisan Communities in Emerging Economies

VALENTINA FRÍAS, CYNTHIA LAWSON JARAMILLO, & VALENTINA PALACIOS

Introduction

For decades, designers have been encouraged by thought leaders, their peers, their professional organizations, and their disciplines at large [7] to evolve their design practices in ways that can be qualified as "socially responsible" and "socially innovative." Thus, guided by intentions rooted in striving to ensure positive social, economic, and sometimes political and environmental impacts, many designers have leapt into the artisan sector with the goal of improving the livelihoods of the artisans with whom they interact to produce a wide variety of goods. The potentially positive roles designers can play across the varied communities of artisans around the world has been affirmed by many global organizations like *Aid to Artisans* and *Artesanías de Colombia* because they facilitate, "an interface between tradition and modernity, helping match craft production to the needs of modern living." [8] In fact, the default model for designers working in collaboration with artisans, within which we have participated, and which is used by established and emerging companies, NGOS and nonprofits, as well as governments across the Global South, typically involves a designer being hired to travel to a given community to engage with its artisans in various ways that, in the end, result in a product line or accessories collection that will be exported and sold in mostly G20 nations.

Those connections between artisan-produced goods and the markets within which they are sold do not usually originate from within a particular

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Papanek, V. Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change. Chicago, IL, USA: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1984, and Eames, C. and Eames, R. "The Eames Report April 1958," Design Issues 7.2 (1991): pgs. 63–75.

8

Craft Revival Trust, Artesanías de Colombia S.A, and UNESCO. Designers Meet Artisans: A Practical Guide. New Delhi, India, Bogotá, Colombia and Paris, France: Craft Revival Trust, Artesanías de Colombia SA. and UNESCO, 2005: p. 4.

9

Lawson, C. "'Designed by' versus 'Made by': Two Approaches to Design-Based Social Entrepreneurship," The Journal of Design Strategies, 4.1 (2010): pgs. 34-40.

community of artisans, but instead are imposed on them by the designer with whom they are collaborating, or a brand manager, founder, merchandising director, or project donor. This "Made By" model [9] is very much predicated on designers "parachuting in" to communities of artisans across the Global South for brief periods of time, usually from one week to one month. They arrive with market-ready and trend-aligned designs most often targeted at buyers in western Europe and the United States, and they bring these ready to hand off to artisans to execute. Additionally, although the projects that the authors have undertaken with the variety of indigenous artisans with whom we have worked purport to be the results of "human-centered" and "co-designed" processes, they are almost never produced within a span of time that allows for the artisan to function as a creator rather than as a maker. (Most artisans are approached because of their mastery of practicing a given craft, which helps ensure that the goods they produce will be produced effectively and at a high level of quality by a given deadline.) Most artisans are also rarely allowed enough of a production timeline to afford them opportunities to fulfill any types of creative roles regarding the development of the goods they are commissioned to make. All of these factors combine to ensure that most artisans never get the opportunity to work as anything other than inexpensive labor tasked with creating artifacts that range from ceramic ware, decorative wood carvings, woven pieces, baskets, jewelry, and thousands of other items that are eventually sold to buyers often far from where they were made. Although the artisan sector is the developing world's second largest employer, the more than 200 indigenous and traditional artisans with whom we have worked directly in Guatemala and Colombia live in poverty or have at least one basic human need that is unmet (e.g., they live in precarious housing conditions, and only have access to low-quality schooling and healthcare). Within the communities that most of these artisans live and work, each of the authors has heard many stories of a designers' well-meaning efforts to increase the economic and social fortunes among a particular artisan group not yielding positive results. A common example of this helps to illustrate the magnitude of this problem: many artisan communities are often talked into taking on a high quantity of one-off projects that forces those working within them to re-organize themselves to fulfill on time. The businesses that hire these communities to do this incentivize these transactions by promising them more work in the future, which is a promise that is all too often not kept.

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Chappe, R. & Lawson Jaramillo, C., "Artisans and Designers: Seeking Fairness within Capitalism and the Gig Economy," Dearq, 26 (2020): pgs. 80–87.

11

Rosenbaum, B. "Forward," in Artisans and Advocacy in the Global Market: Walking the Heart Path, ed. by Jeanne M. Simonelli, Katherine O'Donnell, and June C. Nash. Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA: Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2015: p. xii.

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Lockwood, T. Design Thinking: Integrating Innovation, Customer Experience and Brand Value. New York, NY, USA: Allworth Press, 2010: p. xi.

The business models of many artisan sector brands rely on their paying local, in-country minimum wages (these are not necessarily "fair" nor "living") to artisans in exchange for their production of craft products (or so-called *intermediate goods*, such as textiles) that can be marketed globally. Instead of perpetuating gig economy-like models [10] that neither offer sustainable income nor social security to those artisans who produce them, the authors propose the following question as a means to suggest a positive alternative for operating these business models, at least from the artisans' points of view: what if designers stopped continuing to demand that the artisans they commission to produce to sell in Western markets conform to Western socio-cultural perceptions and frameworks for what artisan-produced work should look like? While the maintenance of various aspects of a given artisan community's invaluable cultural heritage is often the starting point for a designer or brand founder's interest in supporting that community, the demands imposed by global market forces usually require some modifications to many of the traditional skills that these artisans practice. These can include but are not limited to the incorporation of new techniques and machine-based production methods into an artisan community's specific working processes in order to improve production efficiency. Both of these practices have been shown to contribute to the disruption of an artisan community's socio-cultural and even political and technological fabrics. The scholarly work of anthropologist Brenda Rosenbaum has highlighted that "...global markets have led to the deeper impoverishment of artisans, to commodification and alienation, and to the loss of important cultural traditions." [11]

Most collaborative projects undertaken between designers and artisans default to being guided in their development by traditional "design thinking" methodologies, [12] and creative control is rarely shared with the latter group, insisting on externalizing the *designing* to the designer or consultant with claims that they are culturally closer to the craft good's final marketplace. Furthermore, though these design-led engagements may at times kick off with a thorough assessment of community needs, client-driven projects often have quick timelines which need to move rapidly toward commercial ready-for-sale product lines. Maria Cristina Gómez, an indigenous Wayúu artisan from La Guajira in northern Colombia, in a semi-structured interview with Professor Lawson Jaramillo at the craft fair Expoartesano in Medellín reflected on these requirements of speedy work and generally on the framework imposed upon her by designers, "By imposing [market] expectations, designers are asking us

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Sarah Jane Moore and Yulia Nesterova, "Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Knowing For a Sustainable Living," ed. UNESCO Futures of Education, Paris, 2020, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374046.

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"Together, On Purpose," Kate Spade, accessed March 20, 2023, https://www.katespade.com/social-impact/on-purpose. and Erica Martin, "Sustainable Hemp Products for a Cleaner Tomorrow," Mosaic (blog), Ten Thousand Villages, January 19, 2022, https://mosaic.tenthousandvillages.com/sustainable-hemp-products-cleaner-tomorrow/.

to become industrialized. We're launched into the void." She also affirmed interest in working with designers to generate additional income through the sale of their craft goods but remained most concerned about one-off projects as they do not lead to ongoing partnerships, and therefore do not result in sustainable income for the artisan community. How might designers shift their ways of working to position artisans as true partners and not simply workers-for-hire? The shift should celebrate the artisan as a creative practitioner and master of their craft and adapt to their cultural norms and temporal frameworks (especially in the case of indigenous communities). What becomes possible in models in which the frameworks are not necessarily driven by capital and consumerism, but by people (artisan livelihoods) and values (indigenization)? With literature pointing to indigenization as a path towards sustainability [13], products that come out of the artisan sector are well poised to be as ethical and sustainable as the brands' marketing materials claim to be [14].

What follows is an overview of the process the co-authors have used and have observed as typical for intermediaries working with artisans who wish to market their work in societies beyond their own. Within the context of our academic work in the DEED Research Lab (co-founded and directed by Professor Lawson Jaramillo), we have supplemented knowledge gained through fieldwork with secondary research, drawing from academic literature from anthropologists, social impact designers, in-progress work from graduate students of design and craft, and mainstream publications focused on the current business trends of artisan sector brands. The co-authors include notes from ethnographically guided fieldwork engagements, and suggestions for more sustainable, and decolonized, ways forward.

Identifying an Artisan-based Community with Which to Partner as a Co-Designer

When artisan-designer projects commence after a period of trust-building, they're more likely to result in mutually beneficial outputs, with artisans participating as true partners and with creative input. These initiatives often start with a designer (or artisan brand founder) circumstantially living in proximity to a community skilled in a particular technique or medium; and that immersive experience serves the designer or founder to understand first-hand the community's needs, their histories, and the role craft has played in their culture and daily life. Though the duration of that life-in-community is an important factor in the project's evolution, what is most critical is how the

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Beatrice Lorge Rogers and Kathy E. Macías, "Program Graduation and Exit Strategies: A Focus on Title II Food Aid Development Programs," Washington, D.C.: Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project, Academy for Educational Development, November 2004. https://www.fantaproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/TN9-Exit-Strategies-Nov2004.pdf.

16

"Guiding Principles," Parsons DEED Lab at The New School, Accessed on March 23, 2023, https://deed.parsons.edu/guiding-principles/.

17

Heather Vrana, "The Precious Seed of Christian Virtue: Charity, Disability, and Belonging in Guatemala, 1871–1947," Hispanic American Historical Review 1 May 2021, 101 (2): 265–295, https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-8897490.

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Nicole S. Berry, "Did We Do Good? NGOs, Conflicts of Interest and the Evaluation of Short-term Medical Missions in Sololá, Guatemala," Social Science & Medicine, Volume 120, 2014, 344-351, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.05.006.

designer or founder address issues of positionality, power, and privilege in the business model they develop. Most projects the co-authors have experienced firsthand for the past 15+ years unfortunately begin with a desire to bring artisan-produced goods to a particular market, and the assumption that artisans-as-laborers will be the means to achieve this. In addition to the questions of time and goal-setting, how a designer is introduced to a given community also sets the tone for potential collaboration. Ideally, the arrival follows a formal invitation from the artisans, and includes a commitment from the designer or founder to long-term support, rather than the flimsy promise of a single collection of artifacts that that can be sold only once. Furthermore, of equal importance to their arrival and introduction to a particular group of artisans, designers must also clearly specify when a given project will end, a factor that is often guided by how many resources may be available to complete it. [15]

In one fieldwork program in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Guatemala, Professor Lawson Jaramillo and the DEED Lab team struggled to build trust with the local artisan community of Mayan backstrap loom weavers. It took several working sessions over a period of weeks to realize that the major barrier to open and honest communication was, in fact, how the Lab's team had been introduced to the community. The local town government (the governor's office of San Antonio Aguas Calientes, with which not everyone in the artisan group was politically aligned), had suggested the DEED Lab team was arriving with monetary help, which was not at all the intention, and in fact goes against the Lab's ethical fieldwork framework [16]. The team tried their best to begin their work with this artisan community as active listeners (see Figure 1) and facilitating workshops in which artisan voices and concerns would be centered. Despite these efforts, the artisan community's expectations were biased from the very start. The Lab's interests to assess the community's needs and offer workshops that would benefit their craft activities had not been properly described, which was clearly further exacerbated because of the realities of the Guatemalan context — decades of top-down charity [17] and short-term religious missionary work with little evidence of impact [18], and centuries-old histories of colonization and the psychological and physical trauma that accompanies it.

Designers, educators, and researchers need to develop a broadly informed and deeply examined understanding of a specific community (through secondary research focused especially on histories and ideally also time spent in situ) to know exactly how long-term artisan-designer initiatives should be implemented and sustained. If artisans are to benefit in meaningful

FIGURE 1: A community meeting facilitated by New School students with artisans and their children, in front of the San Antonio Aguas Calientes' Governor's Office, Guatemala. Photograph by Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo.

ways from their interactions with designers and founders, then these initiatives must center the needs, time, and creativity of the community, to avoid solely extractive interactions. To avoid imposing Western frameworks, designers must be prepared for delays due to familial or weather events that affect the artisans' abilities to engage in their work, they must appreciate the local spatio-temporal frameworks, and meaningfully honor artisans as creative practitioners and not just as inexpensive labor.

Objectively Assessing the Needs and Wants of Artisan-based Communities

The second step in artisan-designer collaborations that are expected to go beyond just one project or collection, is usually an assessment of community needs. Though this well-intentioned framework is meant to align support

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Davalos, M. "Poverty & Equity Brief Colombia," World Bank Group, 10 April, 2021. Online. Available at: https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/AM2020/Global_POVEQ_COL.pdf. (Accessed April 14, 2023).

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"Información de Artesanías de Colombia S.A. para el Cuarto Reporte de Economía Naranja," Artesanías de Colombia. Online. Available at: https://artesaniasdecolombia.com.co/Documentos/Contenido/37773_2020_-_informe_de_artesani%CC%81as_de_colombia_para_cuarto_reporte_naranja_2020_vf.pdf (Accessed April 26, 2022).

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Julio Enrique Soler B., "Globalisation, Poverty And Inequity," Social Watch (blog), Soler B., J.E. "Globalisation, Poverty And Inequity." Social Watch (blog), 28 September, 1997. Online. Available at: https://www.social-watch.org/node/10587 (Accessed April 20, 2022).

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"Maestros Ancestrales — Club Colombia," Club Colombia, 19 October, 2017, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3K053vehyM. (Accessed April 14, 2023).

initiatives with local necessities, it is challenging for designers or other intermediaries to make room for meaningful input if they've arrived with the pressures of a sponsor (corporate or non-profit donors) who expects a ready-for-sale collection as the outcome. This is yet another reason why commercial initiatives are not the path towards long-term sustainable support — the diversity and scale of community needs are most often misaligned with the for-profit goals of such endeavors.

As an example, consider Colombia where 76% of artisans live below the poverty line [19] (defined in 2019 by the World Bank and the former Encuesta Continua de Hogares as $57 USD per month), 40% of the sector resides in rural areas, [20] and 81% of poor rural homes lack a connection to potable water. [21] Now imagine being a designer who travels to the region of La Guajira, home to the indigenous Wayúu people, and one of the country's driest places. You arrive with a corporate sponsorship [22] and the pressure of a timeline that is expected to result in an artisan-made collection to be displayed in Colombiamoda (Colombia's "fashion week"), and maybe (hopefully?) even marketed to an international audience via one of myriad U.S. and Europe-based trade shows. You know better than to jump straight into a co-design workshop and therefore facilitate a needs assessment activity with what is hopefully a group of community members that can effectively represent its various constituencies. You expect to hear them speak about "income generation," "craft making," "artisan knowledge," and "cultural heritage" because that is what you—as a designer—have come prepared to facilitate during the evolution of the workshop that you have planned according to your limited and perhaps assumptive understandings of and about this community. Instead, community members wish to tell you about the kinds of challenges they must confront to get through each day successfully: "we need sustainable income," "we don't have clean drinking water," and "our children's school doesn't have teachers."

In many ways, arriving with a sponsor already makes a needs assessment less useful. Designers and other intermediaries should strive to first assess what the community really needs (see Figure 2), and then figure out together how to appropriately partner with its members, if at all. The community members often know best how to invest resources that come their way, and do not need to also be overburdened by an expectation to produce goods and products to prove they are worth our admiration and support.
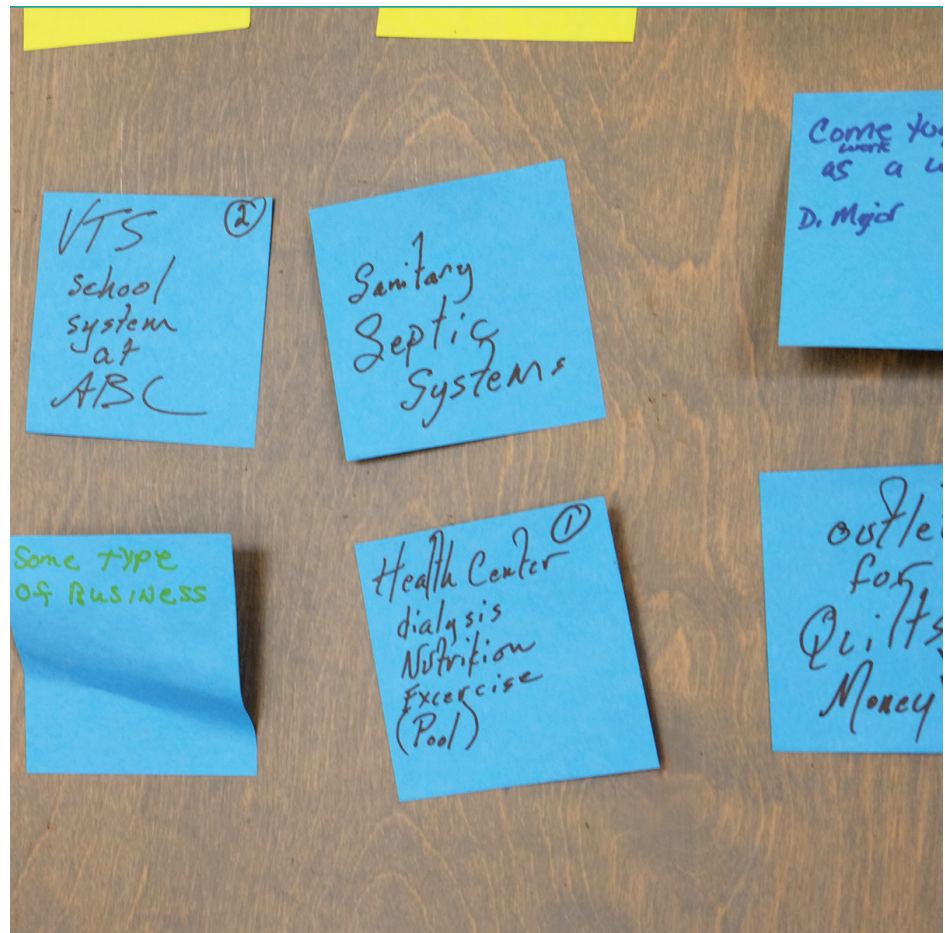
FIGURE 2: Documentation from a *Needs Assessment* workshop operated with quiltmakers in Gee's Bend, Alabama (United States) that reveals needs rooted in community health and well-being, education, and economic opportunities that exist well beyond the scope of any craft-centric initiative. Photograph by Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo.

Building and Sustaining Capacities for Co-Designing and Producing among Artisan-based Communities

"Whose capacity are we building? Why and with whose input did we determine what capacities are needed?" These are questions that designers who wish to work with artisans must pose as they begin to plan the kinds of making endeavors with given groups of artisans if these are to prove mutually beneficial, and, in even the near term, sustainable. When designers introduce capitalist-based frameworks into indigenous communities, they are immediately confronted with a *lack of*. Specifically, this means that between artisans and their intermediaries (who are often designers), there are many instances where designers have access to logistical and technological infrastructures, technologies, socio-cultural networks and paradigms, and economic systems that the

artisans do not. These include but are not limited to being able to access digital technologies and having the literacy necessary to operate them effectively, as well as English fluency, the ability to produce quality at scale, and experientially gained knowledge of what is marketable in the United States and Europe. Therefore, the reason designers determine that capacities need to be built is often because they are in fact introducing goals, expectations, and ways of working that are commerce-centric and that actually counter indigenous ways of living. Like the impositions brought by the Spaniards to the Americas in the 1500s, designers often engage in ways of planning and working that in fact replicate many of the consequences of colonization. And the insistence on relying on the operationalization of such frameworks, as mentioned above, has led to doing more harm than good in many of these communities.

A contemporary example of capacity-building (gone somewhat awry) is the case of the "tejido en chaquiras" (literally, "weaving in beads") in Colombia (see Figure 3). Jhonier Puchicama Castillo, a fourth generation beader, shared with designer, researcher and co-author Valentina Palacios that this technique, even though it is marketed as indigenous craft from the Embera community, was actually brought to Colombia just a few decades ago by local artisans who had attended a craft conference in Panama. On the one hand, it's a wonderful example of how communities can choose to advance their own livelihoods by learning new skills. On the other hand, it puts into question the cultural heritage goals that drive many of these initiatives. Though perceived as an ancestral Embera technique, "tejido en chaquiras" in fact was recently learned.

Artisan sector consultant, designer and co-author of this article Valentina Frías participated in a project in 2021 that highlights how resource-constrained living and making can affect creativity. This project took place within the *Orillo Initiative* (@orillo.artesanias on Instagram), in Turbo, Colombia. This artisan community lives in the Urabá region, where the vast majority of Colombian banana and plantain exports are grown. During a *Zero Waste Set Design* workshop (in this context, the term "set" refers to a physical construction against which photographs can be taken), which was planned as an exploratory way for the artisans to make products from what they could find on their own land, the community members worked together to brainstorm, collect plants, and build a photography set in the backyard of the group leader's home. To create additional benefits for the community, the workshop was also designed to support the development of a storytelling strategy, or

FIGURE 3: Analicia, a woman from the Embera Katios Tribe, while she was beading with "chaquiras" (beads) as part of a Fe Handbags campaign in Medellín, Colombia. Analicia was one of the 200+ members of this tribe who were displaced from Chocó, Colombia to Medellín during the Colombian civil war that transpired between 1964 and 2018. Photograph by Andrés Ochoa.

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FIGURE 4: The Orillo artisan initiative in Turbo, Colombia needed high quality photographs of their handicrafts. Here depicted are two artisans in the set they designed, using only locally found natural materials, during the *Zero Waste Set Design* workshop led by artisan sector consultant and co-author Valentina Frías. Photograph by Valentina Frías.

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strategies, that would effectively communicate key aspects of the Orillo culture to a broad audience (with the sets created as backdrops for their artisanal work to be photographed, as seen in Figure 4). Though the access to supplies to develop crafts is limited, clearly this was not necessarily an obstacle for the community's potential creative process. Orillo also did not need new capacities. Instead, they had a lot to teach Frías about the artisans' land and resources, as well as about the creativity that can emerge even when supplies are scarce.

What occurred in Orillo is a clear example of a community identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognized, assets. If co-author Frías had arrived with a brief to create a particular, extant type of a set design against which photographs could be shot, then she and the artisan community would've most likely focused on building with materials that are typically used to design these types of sets (e.g., wood and fabric). Instead, because she designed a workshop guided by much more open-ended parameters, which included prompts for those involved to explore the local land and its resources, the community chose plantain leaves (typically used solely as fiber for their craft goods), as well as dried flowers, coconuts, and other biowaste that would otherwise have been discarded, to design this set. This is an example of an *Asset Based Community Development* (ABCD) strategy, which is guided by a set of principles that, if effectively applied, can help ensure sustainable, community-driven development. [23] The premise of ABCD is that communities can propel the development process that guides a particular initiative themselves by making use of often unrecognized, local assets, and, in so doing, respond to and create local economic opportunities. This premise aligns with anthropologist and design educator Dori Tunstall's invitation to consider "design thinking [as] based on our ability to be intuitive, to recognize patterns, to construct ideas that have emotional meaning as well as being functional, and to express ourselves in media other than words or symbols." [24] In this way, we can all apply design thinking and design anthropology by taking advantage of already-existing capabilities and work towards design innovations without necessarily insisting on having to utilize new and external knowledges. We can commit to changing roles and create spaces within which historically marginalized communities can show us their know-how as a means of enhancing our own.

Exploring the Dynamics of Designers Who Co-Design With Artisans
The artisan sector is one of the contexts within which the binary relationship between designers and non-designers seems to be comfortably accepted by

23
Author Unknown. "What is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)?" Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation, October 2019. Online. Available at: https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Document/WhatisAssetBasedCommunityDevelopment.pdf (Accessed April 20, 2022).

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Tunstall, E (Dori). "Decolonizing Design Innovation: Design Anthropology, Critical Anthropology, and Indigenous Knowledge." In Design Anthropology, edited by Gunn W., Otto, T., Smith, R.C. London, UK: Routledge, 2013: pgs. 232–250.

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brand founders, designers, and consumers alike. "Designer" is a label typically reserved for people who have received knowledge and training of and about their particular design discipline in a formal, higher education setting—such as a college, university, or academy of art and design—who engage in creating visual communications artifacts and systems, products, environments, apparel, experiences, and more on behalf of paying clients or organizations who wish to use these outcomes of design processes to enhance the efficacy and efficiency of various aspects of their operations, or to generate or improve revenue streams, or to guide the development and implementation of new ways of making, doing, or thinking. This boundary between "designer" and "artisan" therefore runs along lines of socio-economic privilege, economic and political access, education, and socio-cultural class. In situations where they are mindful of their advantages, designers seem to be turning to the approaches and methods that guide the process of co-design as a means to facilitate more non-hierarchical and more equitable collaborations between themselves and those who do not possess their unique combination of skills and knowledge. Unfortunately, many co-design processes that transpire between professionally trained and educated designers and artisans often evolve according to an insistence on the part of the designer that he, she, or they has as much to contribute to the realization of a product or product line rooted in indigenously informed craft techniques as the indigenous artisan who possesses centuries-old knowledge and understandings of these. And sometimes—perhaps—the designers do possess some of this knowledge and these understandings, but these are of much less importance if the primary goal of a given co-design project is to sustain a dying craft or technique. This begs the following question: How might the design methodologies, and the methods that stem from them, that guide these types of co-design endeavors vary if the so-called "non-designers" (a.k.a. artisans) are instead accepted as "designers with other names"[25] (see Figure 5)?

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Calderón Salazar, P. & Gutiérrez Borrero, A. "Letters South of (Nordic) Design." Nordes 2017: Design and Power, 7 (2017): pgs. 1-5.

In some cases, designers or brand founders have a clear idea of the wants and needs of a given group of consumers, as well as how to align these with a marketing strategy as they approach a particular artisan community to commission work from them. This often involves utilizing pre-established designs that are formally aligned with reports generated by trend forecasting companies, such as the *Worth Global Style Network* (*WGSN*). In these cases, as the authors have observed on several occasions, the creativity and mastery of the artisan tend not to be celebrated, recognized, or fostered. Instead,

FIGURE 5: Display, Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena in Guatemala City, Guatemala that includes examples of Mayan textile design consisting of a man's shirt and pants and a woman's blouse, as well as a roll of cloth. Photograph by Alik Mikaelian.

individual artisans or artisan-based communities receive a bag or bags that contain the exact materials, patterns, and dimensions of whatever it is that has been specified for production, and then they are told that they must follow and execute these plans and patterns exactly and with materials provided in order to receive payment. In other models, intermediaries who may or may not have design knowledge, or designers, first immerse themselves into a specific artisan-based community for a short time to attempt to understand at least some aspects of the richness of their culture, and then appropriate these as so-called "inspiration(s)" for a collection of goods or products without incorporating any critical input from the artisans, or yielding any benefits to them from the sales of the collection they helped inspire. Challenges inherent in this model arise especially when sacred, ancestral patterns and symbols are used to construct

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the formal core of a specific product or collection of them. Navigating the appropriate usage and incorporation (or adaptation) of these kinds of elements into this type of collection is a major ethical challenge for those from outside the cultures of indigenous artisans who wish to work with them, or to commission them, to produce broadly saleable goods and products.

The Colombian shoe and accessories brand, *Wonder for People* was able to effectively address this problem in their work with the indigenous Kamsá community, located in the Sibundoy Valley of the Putumayo Department in the southern portion of the country. As described directly to co-author Valentina Palacios by the brand's co-founder, Maria Claudia Medina (who is not indigenous), *Wonder for People* was concerned about culturally mis-appropriating the community's indigenous symbols into their lines of goods and products. To avoid this, the brand designer and one of the Kamsá tribe members co-designed a new set of symbols that could be used into some of the brands visuals. "*Trazos*" (which translates to "*Strokes*"), as both parties came to refer to this set of symbols, are based on the importance of tobacco to the Kamsá people and the healing power that they believe it has. Although some questions remain regarding the cultural heritage and authenticity of the *Trazos* (because they were used in goods and products by *Wonder for People*, though not necessarily ancestral in origin), this approach to an artisan and a brand designer engaging in the co-creation process is a positive example of working in ways that encourage and empower artisans to fulfill roles as creative practitioners rather than mere producers. This also allowed them to be celebrated as holders of important aspects of their community's cultural knowledge and understandings.

If they are well-planned and well-facilitated, co-design approaches and processes can effectively expose artisans to and immerse them in new practices in ways that are beneficial to them. In this way, co-designing affords artisans and artisan-based communities to engage in activities that align with the more empowering and culturally celebratory descriptor "Designed By," rather than the much less empowering and culturally dismissive "Made By."[26] One optimal instance, which involved artisans being exposed to and then immersed in a new way of designing and then making in ways that allowed them to construct knowledge that they could incorporate into future work, occurred during 2021 in the Guajira area of far northern Colombia. A charitable foundation and several members of the Wayúu community who live there developed a collection of products for sale during the local Christmas season

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Lawson, C. "'Designed by' versus 'Made by': Two Approaches to Design-Based Social Entrepreneurship," The Journal of Design Strategies, 4.1 (2010): pgs. 34-40.

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(which is celebrated in many major Colombian cities using products adorned with Western imagery of pine trees and lights, and with traditionally western European red-and-green color palettes). This design process that was planned and operated was undertaken in part to rescue a cord-making technique that was in the process of being forgotten within the artisan group, and then apply it to products that could be sold in a high-demand, local urban market (who purchased them for use as Christmas decorations). Today, the new ways of making cords that are based on utilizing older, indigenously informed techniques, has the potential to remain a part of the creative toolkit of the Wayúu artisans community for generations as it simultaneously fulfills a demand within the regional accessories market.

In addition to these small-scale commercial examples, the authors also see great potential and value in open-ended projects framed and facilitated as creative residencies which include contributions from artisans and artists or designers who are not necessarily part of a given artisan-based community. One such example is *Oax-i-fornia,* [27] which paired art and design students from the California College of the Arts (CCA) with artisans from Oaxaca, Mexico for brief yet intensive periods of collaboration. Over the span of several days, each artisan-student pair was tasked with co-creating something that was informed by an amalgam of their skills and accrued bases of knowledge, but was beyond the scope of either of their usual areas of practice. One example of this involved a product design student being paired with an indigenous textile weaver who worked together to jointly design and produce an outcome that incorporated both of their skill sets and sensibilities but that was neither solely a product nor a woven textile. The final exhibitions of these artifacts highlighted the results of knowledge and skill sharing that allowed for creativity and co-creation to be more important than attempting to satisfy market demands or trends. It's no coincidence that this idea "incubator" was hosted within the relative safe ideological and practical space of the academy, where disconnection from commercially and socio-culturally imposed constraints is most possible.

In the end, designers need to be clear, and accountable, for their contributions and impact. If their goal is to foster tradition and cultural manifestations in and among artisan-based communities, they should strive to avoid causing artisans to engage in production methods that will detach them from those that are deeply rooted in and guided by their historical and cultural bases of knowledge. With this stated, it should also be understood that the ultimate

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Cabra, R. "Oax-i-fornia: Generative Intersections and the Design of Craft." Iridescent, 2.4 (2012): pgs. 15-31.

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goal of these endeavors should be to elevate and center the lives of artisans in ways that meet their needs and satisfy their aspirations, even if doing this means a loss of ancestral knowledge—after all, it is theirs to hold, share, and even relinquish.

Critically Examining How Artisan Brand Products Are Marketed and Sold

The typical designer-artisan project the authors have described thus far in this piece culminates in marketing and selling handmade products (or so-called intermediate goods, such as textiles) to typically urban and online marketplaces in major country capitals, as well as across the United States and Europe. Across our shared experiences, we've observed that this step is likely to be overseen by a designer/brand founder, and, in slightly larger organizations (those with more than ten employees), it often involves contributions from additional, specialized teams of people who may be responsible for overseeing logistical issues such as shipping and receiving, or devising, implementing, and analyzing marketing strategies, or managing payable and receivable accounts.

The authors have studied two general models. The first includes non-profit organizations such as *Mercado Global, Global Goods Partners*, and *Nest*, and entails a process whereby a large buyer is identified (such as, in the case of *Mercado Global,* the clothing company *Levi's*, and the personal style company *StitchFix*) who orders a certain number of items made by artisans, with very high expectations regarding the quality level of whatever goods are produced. In this model, organizations enter into a work agreement with artisans with the intention of having them produce an array of goods intended for sale in a particular retail environment. The second includes smaller brands such as *Wonder for People* and *Duka*, which, at times, also represent a significant portion of a larger organizations' business portfolio, and which operates a business model that facilitates direct sales to consumers. In this model, the brand often absorbs the expenses of buying inventory from artisans in the hope that it can be sold to individual consumers via transactions facilitated by their websites. [28]

Instagram has become a central operational component of both of these types of marketing strategies. It has proved to be an excellent storytelling platform across which to articulate various aspects of the lives and livelihoods of many artisan communities, and, in so doing, it allows brands to showcase

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"Case Studies." Parsons DEED Lab at The New School, 2020. Online. Available at: https://deed.parsons.edu/projects/case-studies/. (Accessed on September 2, 2022).

more than just the products they are attempting to sell: they can also depict who makes these products, as well as how and where they are made. As a result of this, many of these initiatives have started to incorporate workshops designed to familiarize artisan communities with the workings of the internet and some social media platforms. Unfortunately, there remain many examples of artisan groups who were not able to continue leveraging the technological access they were introduced to via this type of workshop-based training program. With that stated, the authors note that it is a welcome sign to begin to witness a rise in artisans' direct participation in how content of and about them is contributed to and manipulated on social media platforms. Even though the goal of many of these endeavors may still be commerce-based, these models teach artisans skills they may one day be able to apply in a wide variety of future contexts. For example, early in the Covid-19 pandemic, designer and co-author of this piece Valentina Frías taught technology inclusion workshops to improve the staging and photographic skills of Wayúu artisans in La Guajira, Colombia. The goal was to teach them how to independently maintain an Instagram account that allowed them to author and post news about their community (see Figure 6). This account was transferred to them in February 2021, and the community has since been able to effectively apply what they learned.

While the artisan-run approach may feel more inclusive, there are certainly challenges reflective of the gaps in socio-cultural and economic understandings between many Western consumers and these communities of artisans who produce the artisan-based goods they consume. For example, as she operated marketing campaigns to promote a new collection of artisan-produced products she had launched, brand founder and co-author of this piece Valentina Palacios experienced greater sales conversion rates when using photos in which Western buyers could picture themselves in familiar settings sporting a specific artisan-produced product. This involved examples such as depicting a scene within which a handmade, artisan-produced product was modeled by someone on an urban street of a major metropolitan area in the U.S. or western Europe. This proved to be a more effective means of marketing these products than relying on visual communication strategies that emphasized depictions of artisans and/or the [often rural] contexts within which they worked. In instances such as this, the artisan and designer/brand founder will need to decide what is more important: increasing the sales of a line of

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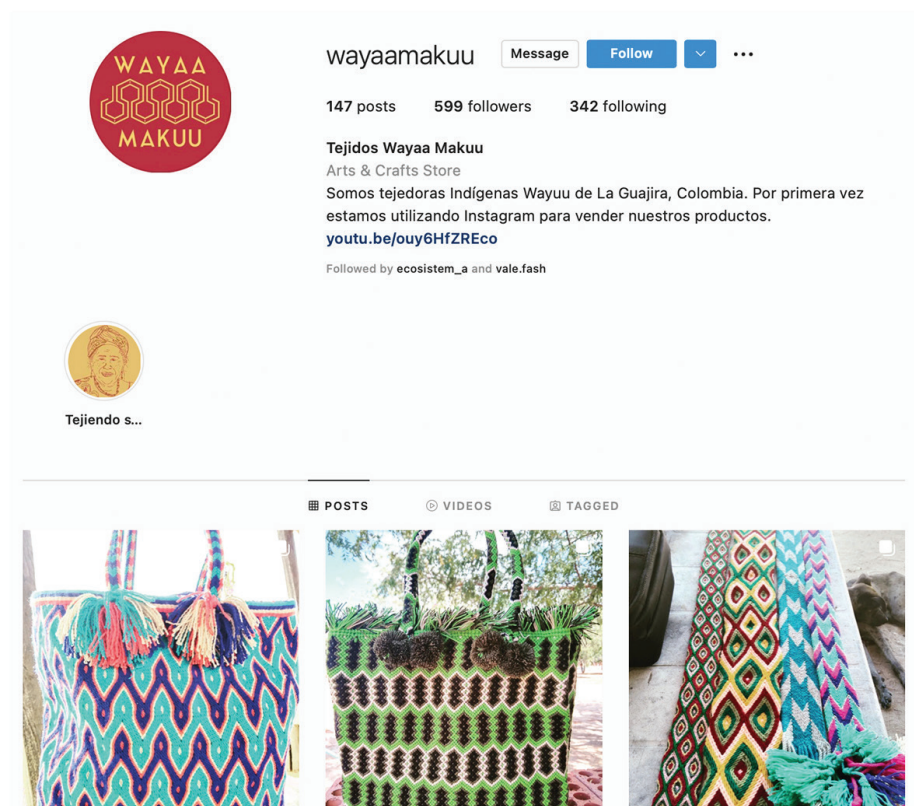
FIGURE 6: Screenshot of Wayaamakuu's Instagram account homepage, which depicts elements of the branding that were co-created by a team of artisans from the Wayúu community in La Guajira, Colombia, part of the community marketing strategy.

artisan-made products or encouraging accurate depictions of artisan communities across social media accounts they control.

Additionally, once the decision is made to promote products from a given artisan-based brand on specific social media platforms, the brand owners and promoters need to be up front with consumers if representatives from that artisan-based community are not necessarily open for business 24/7, [29] and they need to be clear about how inquiries from prospective customers can be shared (via direct messages or otherwise). Since the immediacy and speed of social media do not necessarily align with the spatio-temporal frameworks of many artisan communities, the authors also encourage a shift in the thinking of consumers, who need to understand that their frequent calls to establish more sustainable and resilient supply chains are or will be causal factors in slower rates of production and shipping, which also correlate with slower communications and less frequently updated media presences. Based on their experiences

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Bennett, M. "Why 24/7 business is the future." The Telegraph: Business, 13 April 2022. Online. Available at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/ready-and-enabled/the-future-of-24-7-business/ (Accessed March 25, 2023).

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working with artisan communities in Central and South America, the authors are also optimistic about the abilities of many artisan communities to operate made-to-order business and production models. These would entail artisans only beginning a given production schedule after they receive a credible and concretely financed order from a given consumer or brand owner, as all involved will have a clear understanding of how this schedule will evolve from the moment it is commenced until it is fulfilled.

Strategizing and Operating Ways Forward That Center Sustainable Artisan Livelihoods

Designers can and do play myriad roles across the artisan production sector, but for those among us who wish to work with artisans in ways that positively affect them, we must be willing to set aside the business-as-usual expectations of commercial projects (such as ensuring the maintenance of our normal project fee structures, client retention and exclusivity agreements, and iron-clad, intellectual property rights protections). Instead, we must work toward facilitating more inclusive and equitable ways of working with artisans who do not enjoy the legal and economic protections that those of us who work in so-called developed nations take for granted. It is also high time to answer the multitude of calls for accountability in design practice [30] and leave the traditional, often exploitative role it has played in the history of designers who work with continually marginalized and impoverished artisans. Realizing and maintaining *actual* positive social, economic and, as far as it is possible, economic impact have become more important than merely expressing our good intentions if we're serious about implementing and sustaining inclusive models of support, and fostering an artisan-centric sector within which the artisans wield as much power as the designers and other intermediaries with whom they collaborate.

Designers, educators, researchers, and scholars who have worked with and on behalf of artisan communities are familiar with the following scenarios: the individual artisan who shows up to the workshop early on sunny days and late on rainy days, or the group that is unable to complete a particular work order on time because their socio-cultural tradition demands a month-long mourning for the passing of a loved one, or the buyer that is frustrated that the turnaround time for the production of a given array of goods will not transpire with Amazon-like speed. Yet, while many designers and industries are sourcing from handmade, craft-based, and

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von Busch, O. & Palmås, K. The Corruption of Co-Design: Political and Social Conflicts in Participatory Design Thinking, New York, NY, USA and London, UK: Routledge, 2023: p. 23; Aye G., "Design Education's Big Gap: Understanding the Role of Power," Greater Good Studio (blog), Medium, 2 June 2017, https://medium.com/greater-good-studio/design-educations-big-gap-understanding-the-role-of-power-1ee1756b7f08 (Accessed March 25, 2023).

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artisanal makers as a response to urgent calls for environmental sustainability from many consumers around the world, designers and their clients need to cease imposing external frameworks on indigenous communities who—for centuries—have engaged in more people-and-planet-friendly ways of living and of making.

The processes described and contextualized in this article can serve as an initial template for allowing designers to evolve more equitable, mutually beneficial strategies for guiding their collaborations and agreements with artisans. (Whether marketing and sales enter into these, in small or large scales, will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis). The authors perceive great opportunities for designers who are willing to shift away from working modalities that entail them merely serving as conduits who facilitate order filling that call for directing artisan-made goods into specific markets toward working modalities that involve working with artisans as active listeners, facilitators, and collaborators. Instead of co-designing products in ways that call for artisans to work toward specifications with which we provide them, we invite designers and their clients to co-create an artisan-centric process that affords artisans to lead design processes strategically and tactically. Additionally, instead of continuing to insist on capitalist models for defining and providing the primary means for sustaining the livelihoods of artisans, we believe that designers should adopt the thinking articulated by anthropologist Arturo Escobar to effectively reimagine a way forward: "We cannot exit the crises with the categories of the world that created the crises (development, growth, markets, competitivity, individual, etc.)." [31] Operationalizing this approach will most likely not yield a hugely profitable and financially sustainable way forward, but it's time we stop insisting that the existential problems that the artisan sector must confront to sustain itself can be solved through continuing to operate traditional business models.

Let's welcome, learn from, and co-create new "categories of the world" to reclaim and re-invent these concepts in ways that can be used to guide and support artisans as they engage in new ways of planning and making that will hopefully challenge rather than perpetuate the inequities that limit their social, political, and economic opportunities. By doing this together, we can redefine, reframe, and actualize old and new ideas about knowledge, design, mastery, privilege, and power.

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Biography

Valentina Frías is a Colombian fashion and textile designer with a bachelor's degree from Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. Her interests lie in examining and advocating for creative processes that are rooted in the expression of authentic cultural heritages made manifest using traditional craft techniques and analog media. She has served as a consultant for Fundación ACDI/VOCA LA since 2020, where she is currently part of a women's artisanal project in La Guajira, Colombia. (Fundación ACDI/VOCA LA works to transform environments and create opportunities for effective inclusion, based on programs that generate social and environmental value that contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.)

Additionally, Valentina is developing her auto-ethnographic project called Memorabilia, which includes a wearable, textile archive of memories that have been expressed by her crafting of discarded materials. The main objective

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of her work is to create an amalgam between art direction, craftsmanship, community design, and the preservation of ancestral memory in Colombia. *ma.valentinafrias@gmail.com*

Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo is a Brooklyn-based Colombian artist, technologist, and educator. At Parsons School of Design in New York, New York, U.S.A., she is the Dean of the School of Design Strategies and a Professor of Integrated Design. An internationally exhibited artist, her current research focuses on social design, community engagement, and the artisan sector via the DEED (Development through Empowerment, Entrepreneurship, and Design) Lab, which she co-founded in 2007 and currently directs. She is an active member of the design education networks of AIGA and the Future of Design in Higher Education, and a co-organizer of the annual conference Digitally Engaged Learning. Cynthia earned her B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, and a Master of Professional Studies (MPS) in Interactive Telecommunications from New York University's ITP (Interactive Telecommunications Program). She can be reached via email at: *cynthia@newschool.edu*

Valentina Palacios is an MS (Master of Science) Candidate enrolled in the Strategic Design & Management program at Parsons School of Design in New York, New York, U.S.A., and a Research Fellow of the DEED (Development through Empowerment, Entrepreneurship, and Design) Lab. Previously, Valentina founded Fe Handbags—a Colombia-based social enterprise that worked in partnership with indigenous communities to create luxury handbags and accessories that incorporated ancient, indigenous art. The mission of the organization was to empower marginalized indigenous women by helping them to achieve financial independence while breaking the cycle of poverty for these artisans and their children. Part of what inspired Valentina to create her company was her desire to showcase the beauty and depth inherent in Colombian culture to people living around the world. She has confidence in the power that individual actions can have to initiate and sustain positive social, cultural, and economic change, and that these can help many of the world's peoples to evolve into living within more inclusive and equitable societies. She can be reached via email at: *palav293@newschool.edu*

The *Cyberfemism Index* Project: A critical exploration of its evolution, as well as the development of the website and book that support it

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Abstract

In this essay, *Dialectic* Associate Editor Leslie Atzmon interviews designers Mindy Seu and Laura Coombs, who collaborated on the design of the *Cyberfeminism Index* website and book. *Cyberfeminism Index* is a crowd-sourced, constantly evolving gathering of online activism and net art. The site (*cyberfeminismindex.com*) includes over 700 posts from a diverse international group of hackers, scholars, artists, and activists. Seu and Coombs published a snapshot of the online index in printed form. These posts feature "techno-critical activism in a variety of media," according to the book publisher *Inventory Press,* "including excerpts from academic articles and scholarly texts; descriptions of hackerspaces, digital rights activist groups, and bio-hacktivism; and depictions of feminist net art and new media art." [a] In this conversation, the two designers discuss the evolution of the project as well as the design of the site and book. (According to Megan Jean Harlow in her book *The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Women in Today's World, Second Edition,* "Cyberfeminism is a feminist approach which foregrounds the relationship between cyberspace, the internet, and technology. It can be used to refer to a philosophy, methodology or community." [b] Interviewees Coombs and Seu both also offer their definitions of cyberfeminism in the ensuing interview.)

a *Cyberfeminism Index* page book blurb, Inventory Press. Online.
Available at: http://www.inventorypress.com/product/cyberfem-
inism-index (Accessed 18 May 2023).

b Harlow, M. J. The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Women in
Today's World (Second Edition). New York, NY, USA: SAGE
Publications, Inc., 2013; pgs. 430-433

The *Cyberfemism Index* Project:

A critical exploration of its evolution, as well as the development of the website and book that support it

LESLIE ATZMON, LAURA COOMBS, & MINDY SEU

Introduction

Leslie Atzmon: Can you tell me a little about yourselves?
Mindy Seu: I'm currently an Assistant Professor of [Art and Design] at Rutgers University and I also teach at Yale University. My practice feels quite multi-hyphenate—not only do I work on design commissions—I'm also teaching, creating lecture-performance, curating, and writing... always in collaboration. I describe myself as medium-agnostic, and I typically fall into bodies of research and let that inform that final output.

Laura Coombs: I am a graphic designer in New York City. I am Head of Design at the *New Museum of Contemporary Art* and work frequently with its technology incubator *NEW INC* [https://www.newinc.org/] and its affiliate net art organization *Rhizome* [*https://rhizome.org/*]; I lead an eponymous studio designing visual identities, websites, and publications for artists, architects, and cultural organizations and institutions; I am a Lecturer in graphic design at Princeton [https://arts.princeton.edu/]. My practice moves between my own studio, the museum, lecturing, and teaching in a fluid way, and, like Mindy, I am always collaborating. Before becoming a graphic designer, I grew up in a small town in north Texas, studied architecture at Cornell University, and spent some time in New York City working on architectural projects—building complex material geometries with intricate fabrication technologies—before

studying graphic design under Sheila Levrant de Bretteville at the Yale School of Art [https://www.art.yale.edu/].

LA: *Mindy, do you teach design across disciplines and media as well, or mainly communication/graphic design?*

MS: At the undergraduate level, I primarily lead design studios, while my graduate classes feel like R&D for my own research, from lecture performances, archival criticism, and network culture, among others.

LA: *Mindy, can you briefly tell me a bit about your other work: performance, curating, writing, etc.?*

MS: I've become tired of Keynotes and Powerpoints, so I began thinking of alternative ways of presenting, from browser-based lectures (inspired by artist Emma Rae Bruml) about internet history and the metaverse, to those using the book-as-interface with Augmented Reality, built by artist Tommy Martinez. It's a way to *demonstrate* new media while discussing new media. I love feedback loops. All of these talks serve as fodder for essays, like *"The Metaverse is a Contested Territory"* for Pioneer Works, [c] *"The Internet Exists on Planet Earth"* for Source Type, [d] and the *"Poetry of Tools"* for the first Are.na Annual. [e] Lectures feel like a way to publicly workshop these ideas, and I'm very open about process and in-progress work. My curatorial projects are about the anthropocene and slimy interfaces, like the *Scalability Project* with Roxana Fabius and Patricia M. Hernandez for A.I.R. Gallery and *Wetware* for Feral File, respectively.

LA: *How did you two meet, and how did you decide to work on this project together? Did Laura work on the site as well, or just the book?*

MS: I was familiar with Laura's work before we first met at a panel at Pratt Institute organized by Other Means [f] in 2019. Our first date was at a Thai restaurant in Nolita, and we've been fast friends ever since.

LC: We indeed met on a panel at Pratt Institute and shared a taxi afterwards. By the time we reached our destinations, we planned the lunch at *Lovely Day*, [g] and we were already friends.

Actually, I did help in a tiny way with the site *cyberfeminismindex. com*. I contributed a typeface we nicknamed "Arial Symbol" that automatically creates the encircled numbers or cross references you see on the site when a special syntax is used in html. When a number enclosed in parentheses, ex. (700), appears in html, it calls the encircled 700 glyph from the typeface.

[c] Pioneer Works (PW) *is an artist and scientist-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit cultural center in Red Hook, Brooklyn that fosters innovative thinking through the visual and performing arts, technology, music, and science.*

[d] *Source Type is an online resource operated by a diverse group of visual artists and graphic designers in New York, NY, USA and Zurich, Switzerland that showcases various illustrations, essays, poems, typeface designs and a broad array of artwork.*

[e] *Are.na provides an online repository for artists, designers, writers, to save the content they create, create and curate collections over time, and initiate and sustain working relationships with other artists, designers, writers who share interests and motivations.*

[f] Other Means *is a graphic design studio in New York City founded in 2012 by Gary Fogelson, Phil Lubliner, Ryan Waller, and Vance Wellenstein.*

[g] *A small restaurant in Nolita (Lower Manhattan), New York, NY, USA serving Irish and Thai cuisine.*

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LA: *Just briefly, for both of you, how do you feel that collaboration enhances what you do?*

MS: Collaboration and discourse are essential for my practice—they feel generative. I find collaboration to be a much faster and more energizing way of working.

LC: I believe collaboration has allowed me to grow the most as a designer—I have been lucky to work with brilliant designers like Mindy, and although I love working alone as well, my collaborators have shaped my thinking and my work in unexpected and generative ways that I would have missed without them. I always joke that I can collaborate with anyone—this is true, but it's also a continuous life goal that coincides with wanting to be a life-long learner and to stay curious about how my design practice can evolve unexpectedly.

THE CYBERFEMINISM INDEX PROJECT

LA: *Can you please describe the project Cyberfeminism Index?*

MS: The *Cyberfeminism Index* is an umbrella project with multiple containers... first a spreadsheet to a website, then a book activated through performative Augmented Reality readings. It's constantly mutating and expanding, like a living index.
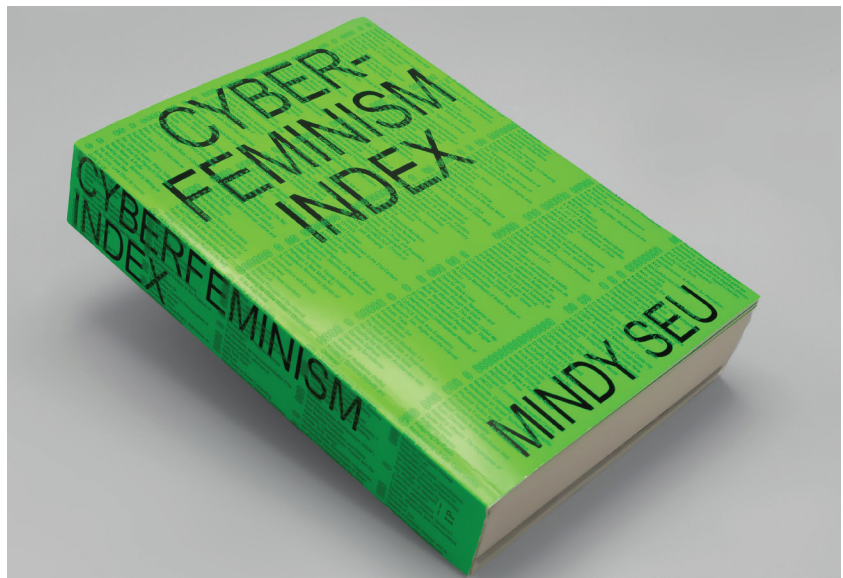
h Inventory Press *publishes books on topics in art, architecture, design, and music, with an emphasis on subcultures, minor histories, and the sociopolitical aspects of material culture. It is based in Los Angeles, CA, USA.*

FIGURE 1: The *Cyberfeminism Index* book. Image courtesy of Inventory Press. **h** Image by Inventory Press.

LA: Can you discuss the structure of the project and how it evolved/es in more detail?

MS: I started a bibliography-as-spreadsheet in grad school because I was trying to compile resources of theory and practice related to creative and critical uses of technology. So many of my peers were engaged in this space and I wondered why there wasn't an aggregator of these important works. I didn't know where it would lead—it was only meant as a tool for myself. But once I put it online, asking for feedback and additional examples, it snowballed from there and transformed into a collective, crowd-sourced and open-source index. I scraped bibliographies compiled by others, talked to peers who referred me to others, and this spiderwebbed into the foundation of the project. Then, in 2020, Rhizome **i** commissioned this as a website, and I was able to work with friends to build out the project. Angeline Meitzler, an artist and programmer, developed an online database where people could submit entries. We also worked with programmer Janine Rosen for additional frontend support and then Charles Broskoski, co-founder of Are.na, for the PDF generator, since all readers are able to export their selections as a PDF file. Paul Soulellis, a RISD Professor and the creator of Queer.Archive.Work, **j** once wrote that downloading is a political act, especially in a time when we no longer own our content. This was an important premise, because it allowed people to create different snapshots of the website at specific moments in time.

During the pandemic, I focused on creating a snapshot of this website as a draft manuscript. With the help of several grants from the Graham Foundation, the Pratt Institute, and Rutgers University, among others, we were then able to segue into over a year of editing and designing. Even after this, when the book was published by Inventory Press, we ran into the cursed post-COVID supply chain and the book release, which was originally set for November 2022, was pushed to January 2023.

LA: What role does augmented reality play in the structure and function of the site and book?

MS: The book as interface... of course books are already interactive, but Augmented Reality allowed us to show the liveness of the images. I worked with Tommy Martinez to create a bespoke app that could be used for the performative readings, overlaying videos of the net artworks and websites atop their respective static images in the book.

i *The following information was adapted from rhizome.org on June 28, 2023: "Rhizome champions art that has originated as a result of people working on and across digital platforms, and the cultures that have arisen and been sustained as a result of these interactions. It operates and supports commissions, exhibitions, scholarship, and digital preservation. Founded by artist Mark Tribe as an email discussion list [that included] some of the first artists to work online, Rhizome has played an integral role in the history of contemporary art that is engaged with digital technologies and the internet... Since 2003, Rhizome has been an affiliate in residence at the New Museum of Contemporary Art [newmuseum.org/] in New York City."*

j *The following information was adapted from rhizome.org on June 28, 2023: "Queer.Archive.Work, Inc. (QAW) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) library, publishing studio, and residency serving the communities in and around Providence, RI, USA and beyond. QAW was incorporated in the State of Rhode Island, USA on March 2, 2020 to support artists and writers with free, open access to space and resources for experimental publishing, with a special focus on queer practices."*

FIGURE 2: Mindy Seu gives a performative reading of the *Cyberfeminism Index* at the *New Museum* (New York, NY, USA) at its book launch on November 14, 2022. A video of *All New Gen* by *VNS Matrix* [k] is overlaid atop the respective book spread using an AR app created by Tommy Martinez. (*VNS Matrix* was an artists' collective based in Adelaide, Australia that was formed in 1991. They are among the first artists known to have used the term *cyberfeminism* to describe their work and their approaches to creating it.) Image courtesy of Mindy Seu. Image by Shina Peng.

CYBERFEMINISM AND INDEXING

LA: What is cyberfeminism?

LC: Funny, we have an image in the colophon that asks that very question, "What is cyberfeminism?"

MS: Yes! The "What is cyberfeminism?" artifact appeared on artist Helene von Oldenberg's page on the Old Boys Network website. The Old Boys Network was a cyberfeminist alliance founded in Berlin and active from around 1997–2001. Von Oldenberg asked the public for their thoughts about cyberfeminism, and the question was met with a lot of confusion. Ultimately, the term shifts by region, by person, truly embracing a constantly mutating definition. The simplest way to describe this would be the critical use of technology, often in the form of net art and online activism.

[k] VNS Matrix *was an artists' collective based in Adelaide, Australia that was formed in 1991. They are among the first artists known to have used the term* cyberfeminism *to describe their work and their approaches to creating it.*

LA: Helene von Oldenberg's page on the Old Boys Network website is one of the entries in the index?

MS: Her page is seen in the video of the Old Boys Network displayed through AR.

LC: The Old Boys Network appears frequently in *Cyberfeminism Index*. This image—catalogued as image 102d—is tied to entry 102 in the book.

LA: Can you give a couple of examples of the way that people have defined/expressed cyberfeminism; possibly examples you could describe from within the project?

MS: For the exhibition *Wetware* on Feral File (feralfile.com/exhibitions/wetware-tkl), we asked selected artists in the book to answer this very question.

Artist Shu Lea Cheang focuses on the mutation in her response: "The mutation is the most normal process in our proceedings; the way we perceive the world should always be in mutation. Maybe the next generation of cyberfeminism doesn't need to be named: neither cyber, neither feminism, but definitely mutating. When you talk about a mutating medium, do you still use the same name? Or do you call it C.F. Variant 10.0?"

Cornelia Sollfrank, a seminal net artist and member of the Old Boys Network, describes cyberfeminism in terms of its expanded children: "Cyberfeminism … was related to these ideas and utopias of the '90s. Which is why I decided to work with a different term: technofeminism. Cyberfeminism is associated with specific things that were very strong, very extreme, and very anarchic. So we can't pretend that we are in the same state we were in 20 years ago. I try to elaborate with technofeminism how … it has evolved. Back then, we reduced cyberfeminism to the technical infrastructure and how it related to our heads. We have since learned so much more… and that we cannot distinguish technology from our environment, or from our bodies."

LA: Why is it important to make the cyberfeminist information in your project available to people?

MS: Regardless of whether people had ever encountered the word "cyberfeminism," there is a clear techno dystopian thinking about the internet today. Seeing an aggregate, however subjective, of techno critical works offers an alternative to this. It relays so many examples, across three decades, of hackerspaces, manifestos, syllabi, artworks, activism that suggest how technology is embedded into society, and how different people can affect its use and

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development. Whenever I'm feeling forlorn about the state of the internet now, the *Index* feels like a spotlight on the rhizomatic strands of a movement of people truly caring about the relationship between human and machine and attempting to fix these tools.

LA: How would you define the term index?

MS: Unlike an archive, which points inward, an index is essentially a finding aid, pointing outward. It brings together disparate objects in a porous container.

LA: What about indexing? Can you discuss why you chose to address cyberfeminist information in this way versus, say, in an essay?

MS: An index of different voices shows how cacophonous this history truly is—it's not meant to be a singular objective history, but rather a co-authored collection of multiple subjective histories. Not everyone agrees, not everyone works in the same way, but there is a throughline of a critically assessing technology's impact on our worlds.

LC: I think we rarely see such an aggregate recording of web activity told mostly through the artists' own words. The index form is powerful in this regard—it shows more than it tells. The book is also framed with beginning and ending essays, and includes a section called "Collections" that is a compilation of curated walkthroughs or tours of the book by various artists and scholars. In this way, the book is a hybrid of text and index.

FIGURE 3: A spread from *Cyberfeminism Index*. Image courtesy of Inventory Press. Image by Inventory Press.

LA: Can you please discuss how the indexing works in the project?

LC: The book is organized as a series of lists—of titles or images or names—all organized chronologically and/or alphabetically. Neon green encircled numbers (1–703) act as cross references, connecting entries throughout the book and weaving all the sections together.

MS: The book and website show various hypertextual journeys that readers can take. We tend to think of hyperlinks with a digital connotation, but this concept was inspired by many analog precursors, like cross-references, bibliographies, and footnotes. Entries have some version of a title, author, year, region, external links, and images, and they are connected together through hyperlinks and cross-references with other entries that might complement or juxtapose their content.

THE BOOK AND SITE

LA: You pointed out in a talk you gave recently that the book records a moment in time, whereas the site is evolving. What are the pros and cons of different information media for a project like this?

LC: There is power in this physical material form as an academic citational object that will live in academic and public libraries globally. I'm also reminded of something Sheila Levrant de Bretteville said to me once when I asked why the requirement for the fulfillment of the graphic design thesis at Yale is a physical book: "Books are forever." A book is a moment in time, but lasts for essentially all time. This everlasting snapshot of the web translated into a book offers new ways of making this content academic—now these 700+ activities on the web can be cited as academic textual references instead of URLs only.

MS: I see the book as a virus in a way… it's a grassroots effort, but it's inserted into "legitimizing" institutions, like the Library of Congress, to act as a record of revisionist internet history. The book, then, is meant to live as a snapshot of a moment in the website's mutation. The website continues to be a living index, crowdsourcing in perpetuity.

LA: How is the information organized on the site? In the book? How do they relate?

MS: Having different containers for the *Index* has revealed the affordances of each medium. Even if it's a similar body of content, different aspects are highlighted depending on how you access it. On the website, it's dynamic, it's

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sortable, it's searchable. In the book, it's chronological and alphabetical, as an index of indexes, with different entry points shown through highlighted pull quotes, full bleed images, and of course, extensive hyperlinking.

PROJECT DESIGN

LA: What were your design parameters for the site? The book?
MS: For the website, Angeline and I focused on two primary questions. How do websites age? How do we visualize citations? We wanted to make sure the website could last as long as possible. According to *Forbes*, the average lifespan of a website is a mere 2.5 years. By using HTML "defaults" and avoiding any third-party JavaScript libraries and new scripts, the site became more durable and also happens to adopt the appearance of retro-sites.

LC: The book is a study in economy in a few ways. The book is the maximum "medium" size that fits on a press sheet, creating the least amount of paper waste possible. From there, the bulk of the book is duotone (neon green and black) and printed on an economical, fluffy, recycled newsprint. There are only a couple of signatures printed in 5/5 (CMYK + neon green). We incorporated the neon green into the 4-color images in order to translate the bright colors that appear on screen and on the web into print. Neon green happens to be a color that lives happily on the web, but is impossible to reproduce in print without the materiality of fluorescent ink. I imagined the green as both a practical material, linking all the content together, and also, as a gooey slime, seeping into the images.

The book's content was transferred from cyberfeminismindex.com to a set of edited Google Docs and spreadsheets. The book design is a set of styles and templates in InDesign. Our colleague, Lily Healey, scripted the Google Docs into InDesign styles, creating a seamless bridge from information to design. The InDesign styles are not so precious in terms of 'perfect' typesetting, and were not overly manicured after the scripting process. We embraced clunkiness in typesetting, as another way to express a living index.

The images in the book are all in their native resolution from their original placement on the web. They were each placed into the book design, many of them simply a tiny thumbnail, and many are then enlarged to a full page or full spread. As the images are enlarged, their resolution remains intact—you can see the materiality of the internet over time by how pixelated or blurry the images are throughout the book. We were not

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precious about the images on purpose, allowing them to remain as they were at the time they were created. I've been describing this 'native resolution' as a kind of shorthand.

One interesting note about one aspect of design. The cover was designed in an afternoon one day when I was at Mindy's—very early in the project. I designed about 5 different directions I imagined we could take the cover design. We were having tea and hanging out casually. We chose the cover design that day and it hardly changed throughout the rest of the process. Neither of us were bothered by hyphenating "cyberfeminism"—somehow it seemed to offer another reflection on that word, and allowed it to be giant, and hyper-present.

That giant-size type used for the book's title and editorial credit on the cover occurs on the interior of the book, mostly in the form of pull quotes. To me, this was a nice way of equating the authors and unique voices inside the index with the index's editor/author—it's another design attribute that allows it to feel like a collective work.

FIGURE 4-5: Spreads from *Cyberfeminism Index*. Images courtesy of Inventory Press. Images by Inventory Press.

LA: What were your influences for the design?
LC: *Whole Earth Catalog's* use of textual hyperlinks, the Talmud, Rhizome's *The Art Happens Here: Net Art Anthology*, the textual styling hierarchy in Lucy Lippard's *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, some mass market newsprint books I've collected from Japan and other places…

MS: And also the *New Woman's Survival Catalog*, McMaster-Carr's hardware catalog, the phone book…

LA: Can you talk a bit more about how these catalogs and the Talmud influenced this work?

MS: The *Whole Earth Catalog* was a countercultural publication series that, as described by Steve Jobs, was like "Google before Google." A curated search engine bringing together resources about ecology, dome-building, and a back-to-the-land ethos. *New Woman's Survival Catalog*, created by Susan Rennie and Kirsten Grimstead, was billed as the "feminist *Whole Earth Catalog*," focusing instead on feminist bookstores, aid for sexual assault survivors, a guide to getting divorced, etc. Creating a sourcebook, a subjective, rhizomatic web of references, was a huge inspiration for the *Cyberfeminism Index*. The *Talmud*, then, is important from a wider angle: Ted Nelson, the inventor of the concept of hypertext, among others, notes the influence of this religious doctrine to his conception of the hyperlink—connections are made visible due to the structure of the page, with the nested columns.

FIGURE 6: Laura Coombs and Mindy Seu present a table of object influences at Pioneer Works (Brooklyn, NY, USA) for the *Cyberfeminism Index* book launch on December 11, 2022. (*Pioneer Works* [*PW*] is an artist and scientist-led 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural center in Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY, USA that fosters innovative thinking through the visual and performing arts, technology, music, and science.) Image courtesy of Pioneer Works. Photo by Walter Wlodaryczk.
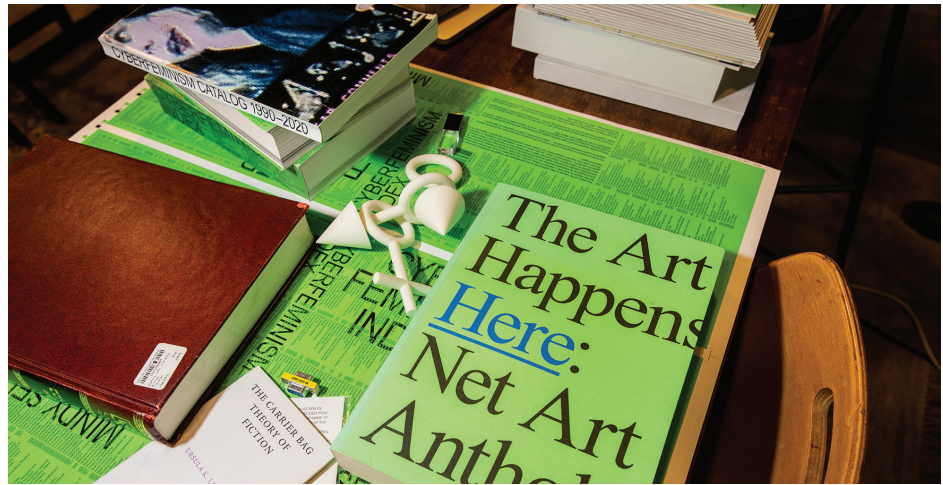
FIGURE 7: A close-up of the table of object influences at Pioneer Works for the *Cyberfeminism Index* book launch on December 11, 2022. Courtesy of Pioneer Works. Photo by Walter Wlodaryczk.

THE FUTURE

LA: Where do you see this project going in the future?

MS: Projects like these require ongoing, invisible labor. Its creators take an oath of maintenance: editing the submitted entries as well as the technical work of website upkeep. It also serves as a reminder of how we, all netizens, have a say in how the internet will continue to evolve and become increasingly ubiquitous.

LA: Will this work lead to any other projects for either of you?

LC: *Cyberfeminism Index* and other projects have continued to reveal an ever-expanding network of like-minded collaborators. For example, I had been working as a designer with Rhizome since 2017. Then, they commissioned cyberfeminismindex.com in 2020. Rhizome then commissioned us together to redesign their website, rhizome.org, in 2023. These relationships and the projects they evolve into are natural and exciting. There have also been a number of projects Mindy and I have collaborated on together in the meantime while finishing *Cyberfeminism Index*—a cover for Verso Books, an illustrated essay for Sourcetype in which we used a symbol from the *Index*, workshops for the Southland Institute [I] and the Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, CA, USA, a commissioned artwork for IDEA magazine, an exhibition at WRM gallery in Seoul curated by Chris Hamamoto and Jon Sueda, and other endeavors. In

[I] *The following information was adapted from southland.institute/main.html on June 28, 2023: "The Southland Institute (for critical, durational, and typographic post-studio practices) is dedicated to exploring, identifying, and implementing meaningful, affordable, sustainable alternatives in postsecondary design and art education in the United States." It operates its programs and events and facilitates its learning experiences in Los Angeles, CA, USA.*

those projects, we were commissioned together because of our shared interest in cyberfeminism, language, technology, and the internet. Meanwhile, I have several book design commissions and visual identity projects ongoing with collaborators in Los Angeles and New York.

MS: Themes of techno-criticism and alternative citational practices are visible in all of my works. I'm working with Tommy Martinez once again to develop a physical directory of cyberfeminism artifacts for the Amant Foundation [m] in Brooklyn. Feminist economies and my research on online sexual labor will be expanded in an upcoming article for *Wired* Magazine. And most recently, I participated in "How can we gather now?," a conference organized by Asad Raza and Prem Krishnamurthy for the Washington Project for the Arts. [n] It's exciting to uncover and expand on these persistent throughlines in technological care work.

LA: *Thank you both. This is a fascinating project, and I'm eager to see how it evolves.*

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[m] *The following information was adapted from amant.org on June 28, 2023: "Amant is a non-profit arts organization in Brooklyn, NY, [USA] founded in 2019. We are a non-collecting learning institution, which gives us the freedom to focus on experimentation, process, and dialogue through exhibitions, public programs, and artist residencies."*

[n] *The following information was adapted from wpadc.org on June 28, 2023: "Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) is a platform for collaborative and experimental artist-organized projects, dialogue, and advocacy. Artists curate and organize all of our programming—as an extension of their own intellectual research.*

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Biography

Leslie Atzmon is a designer, design historian, and design critic who teaches at Eastern Michigan University. She holds a BS in Biology, and a BFA and MFA in Graphic Design. She was awarded a PhD in Design History from Middlesex University, UK in 2007. Atzmon has published in *Eye, Design and Culture, Communication Design, and Design Issues*. She edited the collection *Visual Rhetoric and the Eloquence of Design* (Parlor Press 2011) and co-edited *Encountering Things: Design and Theories of Things* (Bloomsbury 2017) with Prasad Boradkar and *The Graphic Design Reader* (Bloomsbury 2019) with Teal Triggs. Atzmon and her colleague Ryan Molloy were awarded a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) ArtWorks grant from 2012-2014 to run experimental book design workshops, and to edit, design, and produce the book *The Open Book Project*. Atzmon's most recent work is on the topic of design and science. In 2016, she was a Fulbright Fellow at Central Saint Martins in London investigating the topic of Darwin and design thinking. In 2019, Atzmon curated the exhibition *Design and Science* (and edited a collection, also entitled *Design and Science* [Bloomsbury 2023]). She is currently writing a monograph on fin de siècle design and science. Leslie can be reached at: *latzmon@emich.edu*

Laura Coombs is a graphic designer in New York, New York, USA who designs visual identities, visual languages, and publications in collaboration with institutions, artists, architects, and publishers, including MIT Press, Verso Books, Park Books, Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, Harvard GSD, Carnegie Museum of Art, Lisson Gallery, New Museum, and Rhizome, among others.

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In addition to leading her own studio, she has been Head of Design at New Museum of Contemporary Art since 2017, directing all print, digital and environmental graphics for the institution, its art and technology incubator NEW INC, and its net art affiliate Rhizome. Work from her design practice has been recognized globally by entities including the AIGA, the Art Director's Club, the Brno Biennial, the Type Director's Club, the Tokyo Type Director's Club, the D&AD, the AIA, and the Center for Book Arts. Recent writing has been published on Source Type and in *The Serving Library Annual 2022/2023*. She has lectured at institutions including Strelka Institute in Moscow, Harvard University, Princeton University, Columbia University, UPENN, Yale School of Art, Cooper Union, Sci-Arc, Pioneer Works, Carnegie Museum of Art, OCAD, and Art Center, and has taught workshops at MICA, the Southland Institute, and the Otis College of Art. Coombs holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Cornell University and an MFA in Graphic Design from Yale School of Art. She currently teaches Graphic Design Thesis at Pratt Institute, and, since 2018, is Lecturer in Graphic Design at Princeton University. Laura can be reached at: *coombs.l@gmail.com*

Mindy Seu is a designer and technologist based in New York City. Her expanded practice involves archival projects, techno-critical writing, performative lectures, design commissions, and close collaborations. Her latest writing surveys feminist economies, historical precursors of the metaverse, and the materiality of the internet. Seu's ongoing Cyberfeminism Index, which gathers three decades of online activism and net art, was commissioned by Rhizome, presented at the New Museum, and awarded the Graham Foundation Grant. She has lectured internationally at cultural institutions (Barbican Centre, New Museum), academic institutions (Columbia University, Central Saint Martins), and mainstream platforms (Pornhub, SSENSE, Google), and fulfilled residencies at MacDowell, the Sitterwerk Foundation, Pioneer Works, and Internet Archive. Her design commissions and consultation include projects for the Serpentine Gallery, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and the MIT Media Lab. Her work has been featured in *Frieze, Dazed, Gagosian Quarterly, Brooklyn Rail, i-D*, and more. Seu holds an M.Des. from Harvard's Graduate School of Design and a B.A. in Design Media Arts from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is currently Assistant Professor at Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts and a critic at Yale School of Art. Mindy can be reached at: *mindyseu@gmail.com.*
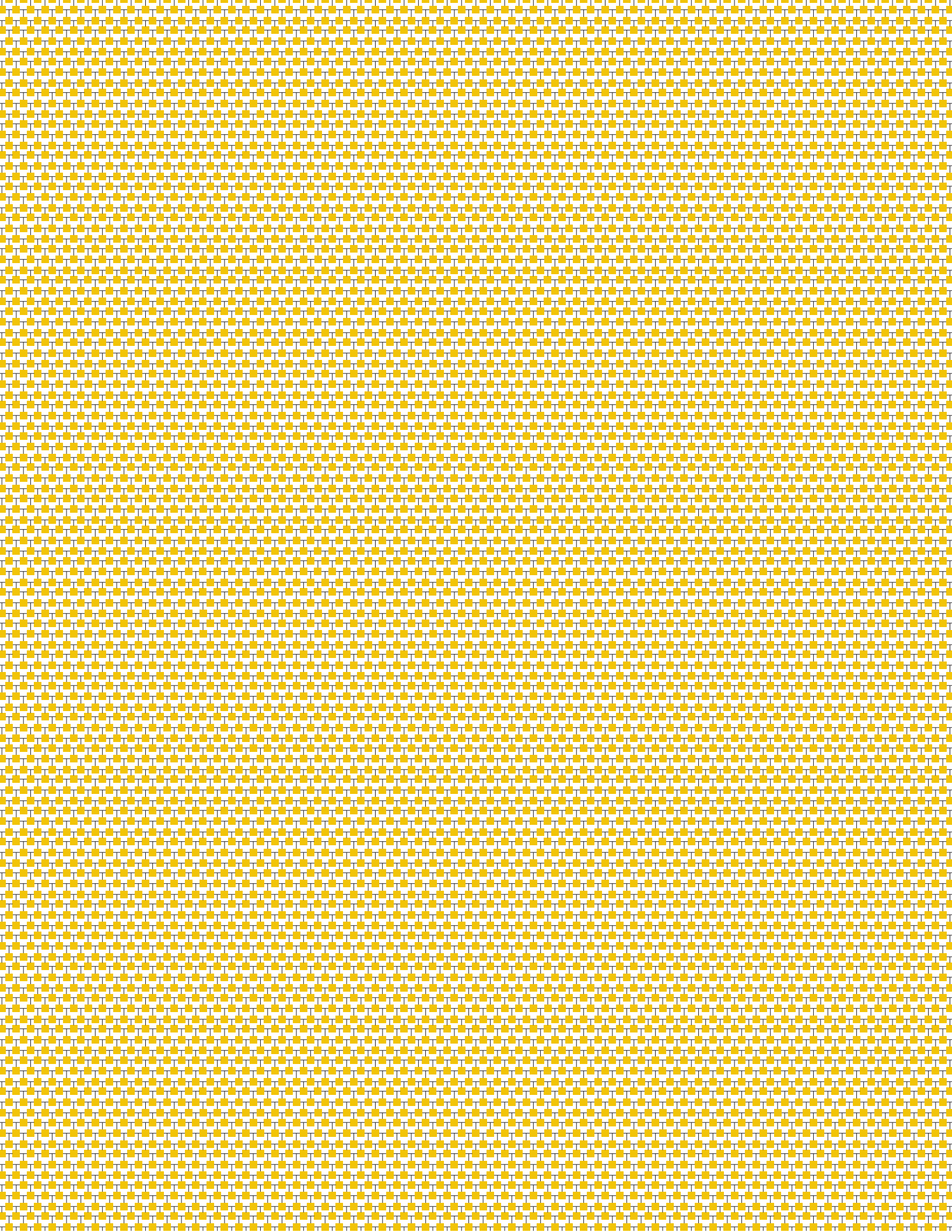
The typographic structure of *Dialectic* employs typefaces from four different families: Fira (Sans and Mono), Freight, Idealista, and Noe Display.

Fira Sans was introduced in 2013 as Feura Sans, and was designed by Erik Spiekermann, Ralph du Carrois, Anja Meiners and Botio Nik-toltchev of Carrois Type Design. Fira Sans and Fira Mono (the latter was designed as a monospaced variant of the former) are based on Speikermann's typeface designs for the FF Meta family of typefaces, which originated in the 1980s. Fira is classified as a humanist, sans-serif typeface family.

The Freight family of typefaces—"Big," "Display," "Sans," and "Text—was designed by Joshua Darden in the early 2000s and is comprised of over 100 styles. The Freight families are currently licensed through Darden Studio, and, with the exception of the "Sans" variants, may be classified as a display, serif typefaces.

The Idealista family was designed by Tomáš Brousil and released in 2010. It is comprised of ten style variations and five weights. It may be classified as a geometric, sans serif typeface, and is available from MyFonts.com.

The Noe Display family was designed by Lauri Toikka in 2013 and is available through the Schick Toikka digital foundry. It is comprised of four Roman and four italic variants, ranging in weight from "regular" to "black." It may be classified as a display serif typeface, and shares some formal characteristics (sharp, angled serifs, high contrast between thick and thin strokes) with the Noe Text family.