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05 Design Dis/order
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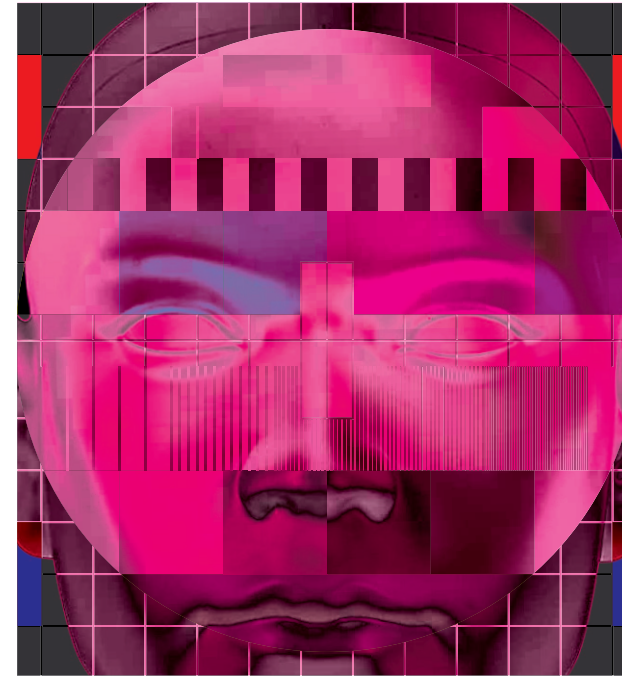

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Tom Bieling

Design as Dis/order

The interplay between order and disorder in our lives and the world around us is like a captivating dance performance between two contrasting yet interconnected performers. Imagine that order is the melody, bringing structure and harmony to our existence. It is like a well-composed piece of music, offering us guidelines and stability. On the other hand, disorder is the improvised movement, wild and unpredictable like a dance improvisation. It brings spontaneity, experiment, and new possibilities into our lives. It is the interplay of these two elements that animates the stage of our existence. Like an (improvised) ballet, life unfolds in a constant interplay between order and disorder. Sometimes, we follow the structured choreography, while at other times, we feel free and uninhibited by the rhythm of disorder. It is this dynamic balance between order and disorder that gives depth, meaning, and vibrancy to our lives. It allows us to adapt, learn, and grow while experiencing the tension and excitement of the unknown.

Design resides precisely at the intersection of all these elements, where order meets spontaneity, structure encounters imagination, and stability harmonizes with experimental approach. It is a realm where meticulous planning converges

with *artistic* expression, where form, function, emotion and speculation intertwine in a delicate dance. Design navigates the balance between established principles and the urge to break boundaries, fostering both familiarity and novelty.

At its core, design is about orchestrating coherence amid the chaos, channeling chaos to inspire new patterns, and sculpting order to embrace the unexpected. It thrives in the fusion of structured frameworks and the freedom to explore uncharted territories, creating solutions that are both plausible and revolutionary.

Thus, design and order are intimately connected in their relationship to disorder. Design – that is a common view – typically entails a structured, intentional arrangement aimed at achieving a specific purpose or aesthetic. It often strives for coherence and clarity, embodying a sense of orderliness. However, disorder is not necessarily antithetical to design; it can often serve as a catalyst or inspiration for innovative design concepts. Disorder can prompt the need for design by highlighting inefficiencies or deficiencies in existing systems or objects. Design, in response to disorder – that is another common view – seeks to bring structure, clarity, and consistency back into the chaos. Moreover, some design intentionally incorporates elements of disorder or randomness, to add interest or provoke thought, challenging conventional notions of order.

Disorder thus also becomes an object of design and can in turn be consciously used as a design element. In their book *Designing Disorder: Experiments and Disruptions in the City*, Pablo Sendra and Richard Sennett delve into the intricate relationships between (urban) design, social structure, and life

in modern cities. Sendra and Sennett explore how cities are planned, constructed, and organized, and how these structures influence the behavior and interactions of individuals within urban environments. In this context, they examine the impact of urban design on social dynamics, the formation of communities, and individual well-being. Based on this, they discuss the potential negative consequences of certain design choices that may lead to fragmentation, social inequality, or other issues within urban areas. The approach goes back to Sennetts *Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life*, published in 1970, in which he explores the relationship between personal identity and urban life. Sennett examines the idea that a certain level of disorder or unpredictability in urban environments and personal experiences is not necessarily negative but can have positive impacts on the development of identity and social relationships. He argues that some degree of disorder or unpredictability in urban structures and human interactions contributes to adaptability, creativity, and resilience. By engaging with unpredictable situations, people can learn to cope with uncertainty and respond flexibly to change. Sennett also emphasizes the importance of diversity and interaction in urban communities, exploring how different social groups can interact and learn from each other.

In this sense, this also correlates with the starting position of this DESIGNABILITIES issue: while design often strives for order, disorder can act as a catalyst, prompting the development of new perspectives or reimagining existing ones, which challenges the notion that order and structure are the only means for personal development and social cohesion.

In this issue, we approach the topic from seven different angles: In his position piece **The Politics of Potential**, Craig Martin examines how mundane objects are targeted for pre-emptive control by legislative mechanisms, particularly the UK's Public Order Act 2023. The Act criminalizes possession of objects that could potentially be used for protests, even when the objects lack such functionality. The author argues that this legislative approach limits the creative potential of protest objects and challenges civil disobedience. He suggests that activists must find innovative ways to design protest objects that defy pre-emptive control and continue the tradition of civil disobedience.

One of his last texts, which Michael Erlhoff wrote shortly before his passing, discusses the role of design in shaping societal norms and information dissemination. **Yellow Submarines** highlights howdesign has been used both to support authoritarian regimes and as a tool for political and social activism. Erlhoff argues that the concept of normal is designed and can be changed, encouraging radical design to challenge and subvert the established norms. By intentionally misunderstanding and disrupting the normal, design can be a powerful tool for social change and activism. The essay emphasizes the need to analyze and work with the surface of design to understand and critique the existing norms and to open up possibilities for a more humane and progressive society.

In his text on the political and graphic work of Gerd Arntz, Flip Bool shares personal experiences of meeting Arntz and the artist's connections with prominent figures like Otto Neurath, El Lissitzky, Otto Dix and others. Arntz's graphic work focused on representing labor and working-class life, using a simplified,

almost mathematical style. He collaborated with Otto Neurath and Marie Neurath-Reidemeister on pictorial statistics projects in Vienna and Moscow, resulting in their famous picture language Isotype, in which they combined the idea of a democratization of knowledge with a **democratic form of design**.

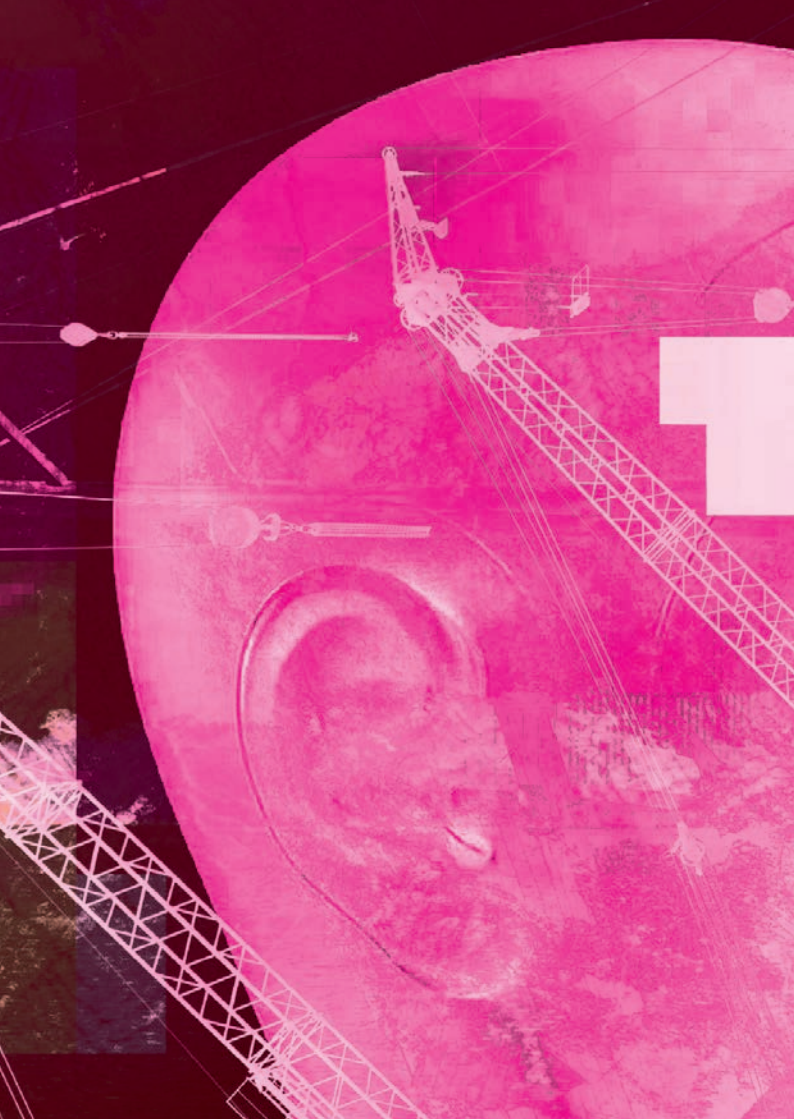
Anna Feigenbaum explores the significance of objects and banners in public protests and social movements. Her text on **moving protests** emphasizes how objects, like banners and slogans, carry historical and emotional weight, representing the complexity of social struggles. Feigenbaum illuminates how objects can connect diverse ideologies within protest spaces and challenge oversimplified narratives. One particular banner, reading *Capitalism is Crisis*, is used as an example of how objects encapsulate the sentiments and histories of various movements, from anti-capitalist activism to climate justice protests. The essay calls for embracing the messy and interconnected nature of social movements and understanding the roles objects play in shaping and reflecting protest dynamics.

In **The Yellow Protest**, Liad Shadmi delves into the usage of the yellow badge in Corona conspiracy theories and protests. During the COVID-19 pandemic, conspiracy theorists adopted the yellow badge as a symbol for their protests against restrictions. This cynical usage of the symbol, which has historical associations with the Holocaust, raises moral questions about the nature of the protests and their branding strategy.

Markus Kreutzer investigates the diverse perspectives on openness, including Open Innovation, Open Source, Open Knowledge, and Open Education. The paper discusses the underlying assumptions, values, beliefs, and motivations behind

these Visions of Openness. Kreutzer emphasizes that the degree of openness is subjective and depends on the context and the intentions of those defining something as open. By providing a more differentiated view on openness, the essay aims to support a conscious and responsible design of open systems in various fields like technology, economy, politics, and education.

Alice Lagaay explores the emerging global awareness of the Anthropocene, and highlights the new vocabulary used to describe the negative consequences of human actions, particularly regarding pollution and waste. She discusses how humans have a desire to leave a mark or legacy, but paradoxically, they seem indifferent to the destructive traces they leave on the planet. Lagaay shares a personal experience of participating in a collective experiment focused on being together without leaving any identifiable trace, emphasizing the idea of Leave No Trace as a meaningful approach to address ecological concerns.



Craig Martin

The Politics of Potential: Mundane Objects and Pre-emptive Control

The recent coronation of King Charles III in the United Kingdom created something of a media frenzy both in the UK and internationally. Less prominent in the majority of mainstream media outlets were the arrests of innocent citizens expressing their right to question the coronation of an unelected monarch. In one case, six members of Republic – a group campaigning for an elected rather than hereditary head of state – were arrested by police for potential breach of the peace and conspiracy to cause a public nuisance (Booth, 2023). Although no further action was taken by the police it was alleged that members of the group were in possession of objects deemed to be **lock-on devices**, such as pieces of string which formed part of a placard, as well as luggage straps (Grierson, 2023). In another case, on the morning of the coronation itself police arrested three people in central London who were working for the local council as voluntary **Night Stars**, there to combat predatory sexual violence against women (Monbiot, 2023). They were arrested for

being in possession of rape alarms – given out to women who may require them for their own protection. The police claimed they had been informed the alarms could potentially be used to disrupt the coronation parade by frightening horses.

These examples of excessive police actions appear almost surreal and farcical in their identification of apparently mundane, everyday objects holding the potential to disrupt this event and cause public disorder. But as this short position piece considers, the police's arrest of numerous individuals during this period speaks to a wider set of legislative mechanisms – specifically under the UK's **Public Order Act 2023** – that have been passed into law by the right-wing governing Conservative party at the UK's Westminster parliament. The Public Order Act 2023 also offers a stark warning of how protest tactics associated with civil disobedience, and the political potential of everyday artefacts such as string or luggage straps becomes recuperated (Plant, 1992). I argue that legislative mechanisms such as the Act seemingly denude the political power of **protest objects** by pre-emptively categorising a vast array of everyday artefacts as potentially criminal.

Protest Potential

The agential force of objects is now well-established, both in philosophical terms (Bennett, 2004; Brown, 2001) and in a range of empirical settings (Martin, 2016; Morton, 2023). Threaded throughout these transdisciplinary perspectives is a recognition that apparently inanimate objects are far from fixed or static,

rather they afford a vast array of cultural, social, and political power. This has long been recognised in anthropological and material culture discourses in particular (Kopytoff, 1986), strangely less so in design (although see Julier, 2015).

More recent scholarship has addressed the power of **illicit design thinking** as a means to pursue new debates on the role of design in the dynamics of political power, notably in the context of illegality (Guerrero C, 2020; Keshavarz, 2018; Martin, 2022). Central to these aspects is the seemingly hidden potential that lies within objects and the material practices of design to circumvent security forces, most notably in the context of drug trafficking (Guerrero C and Martin, 2021). The idea of potentiality that links both everyday objects and those situated within illegal contexts is how they are deployed in ingenuis and inventive ways beyond their intended purpose – from a chair employed to prop open a door, through to suitcases adapted with false bottoms to smuggle drugs.

The interplay between order and disorder, the political-material potential of objects, and the inventiveness of use also lies at the heart of what might be termed **protest objects**, or what Gavin Grindon (2019) has called **disobedient objects**. For Grindon, such artefacts are those "produced by grassroots activist social movements" (Grindon, 2019:70) that are utilised to challenge political authority, offer new alternatives, and bring about social change. Crucially, as with the artefacts associated with illicit design thinking, central to disobedient objects is how they are "appropriated and turned to a new purpose" (Grindon, 2019:75). The exhibition of the same name at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in 2014 offered a wide range of examples of disobe-

dient objects, from political zines, makeshift tear-gas masks, to blockade devices (see Flood and Grindon, 2014). Perhaps the most striking in relation to the political potential of objects in the context of protest movements, and recent events surrounding the coronation, are the use of lock-on devices. One example from the Disobedient Objects exhibition included instructions for repurposing old car seat belts by sewing them into jackets which, when worn by a protester, could then be attached to a fixed object, thus immobilising the protester and limiting the ability of the police to move them on (Flood and Grindon, 2014:66).

In recent years the inventive use of lock-on devices has been pivotal to the direct action of climate activist groups such as Extinction Rebellion, Just Stop Oil, and Insulate Britain, where activists have locked themselves onto critical infrastructure, blocking key roads in major cities in order to raise public awareness of the climate emergency and challenge the lack of urgency by governments (see Ricketts, 2019). Tactics of disruption are key to direct action (Jacout, Boardman, and Baulch, 2019:109) and the devices utilised and repurposed by the likes of Extinction Rebellion point to how important they are to "political participation and agency" (Grindon, 2019:69). Indeed, this is where a combination of creative ingenuity and the potential of everyday, mundane objects lies – in the ability to repurpose them as critical tools of civil disobedience. Perhaps the most obvious example of lock-on devices created through repurposed everyday objects are bicycle D-locks (see Melia, 2021). Similar to quotidian examples of repurposing everyday objects as a form of **non-intentional design** (see Brandes and Erlhoff, 2006), the use of bicycle locks speaks to how protesters recognise the affordances of an everyday

object that has potential beyond that which it was designed for – it is of a human scale so can easily fit around bodily limbs, but crucially, also difficult to remove by police forces.

Recuperating Potential - Public Order Act 2023

For Graham Smith, the CEO of Republic, the strange irony of being arrested for being in possession of luggage straps was that they could not actually be used as a lock-on device as the police had claimed:

> "We made it clear the purpose of the luggage straps, and as they are easily adjusted in length it is not possible to use them to lock on" (Republic, 2023).

Unlike bicycle D-locks the design of the luggage straps means they can easily be adjusted and thus useless as lock-on devices. In this case they simply could not be repurposed as lock-on devices as other mundane objects can. This fact highlights the inadequacies of the UK's Public Order Act 2023, but also raises important implications for how we might understand the creative potential of mundane artefacts and the ingenuity of protest tactics.

According to human rights organisation, Liberty, the 2023 Act criminalises "locking-on & being equipped for locking-on" (Liberty, 2023). The latter point in particular is decisive in relation to the arrests which took place around the coronation events. An unlimited fine is payable if, "A person commits an

offence if they have an object with them in a place other than a dwelling with the intention that it may be used in the course of or in connection with the commission by any person of an offence under section 1(1) (offence of locking on)" (Public Order Act 2023). This piece of legislation effectively criminalises those in possession of any objects that has the potential to be used for locking-on.

In a similar way to how Sadie Plant (1992) has described the process of recuperation of the radical writings and practices of The Situationist International in the 1950s and 60s, one reading of the Public Order Act 2023 might suggest that it attempts to pre-empt the inventiveness of use and material potential of everyday objects, and by doing so limit the potential for future acts of civil disobedience. This also resonates with Krystian Woznicki's argument that "pre-emption is therefore a power technique in which control and repression emerge from the future, as it were" (Woznicki, 2019).

In pre-emptively determining the usage of potential lock-on devices, the Act does so in an unlimited manner, rendering all artefacts potential lock-on devices, even in the case of luggage straps whose limited functionality was clearly not taken into consideration by the police. For Plant, the recuperation of Situationist ideas was such that they were inverted and "given entirely new and affirmative meaning to critical gestures" (Plant, 1992: 75-76). If the legislative mechanism of the Public Order Act deems any artefact a potential lock-on device then they too become normalised, thereby seemingly limiting their use as part of non-violent civil disobedience.

Concluding thoughts

The Public Order Act 2023 is a legislative instrument developed to impose civil order through a blanket mechanism of identifying all artefacts as potentially criminal in their usage. For groups like Liberty, but also members of parliament in the UK, this sets a dangerous precedent for the right to protest. Labour MP Sarah Jones has spoken in parliament of the changes her party would make to this legislation if elected as the next governing party:

> "We will want to change suspicionless stop and search, where anyone can be stopped for any reason just because a protest could be happening nearby, and intention to lock on, where anyone with a bicycle lock, a ball of string or luggage straps can be arrested just because a protest could be happening nearby, as happened at the coronation" (Jones, 2023).

Whilst Jones highlights the possible overturning of the Public Order Act 2023 in years to come, the histories of protest movements and their creative ingenuity perhaps point to more radical forms of counter-inversion. Just as the ingenuity of creating protest objects mirrors the illicit inventiveness of drug traffickers, the tactical counter-logistical practices of smugglers offer some valuable insights. For it is commonplace for organised criminal networks to develop new, alternative forms of drug trafficking in reaction to the seizure of narcotics by security services, often through the creation of even more elaborate

methods. In similar terms, the long history of civil disobedience demonstrates how the creative ingenuity of political activists might offer new ways of designing protest objects that defy the pre-emptive control of legislative mechanisms such as the Public Order Act 2023.

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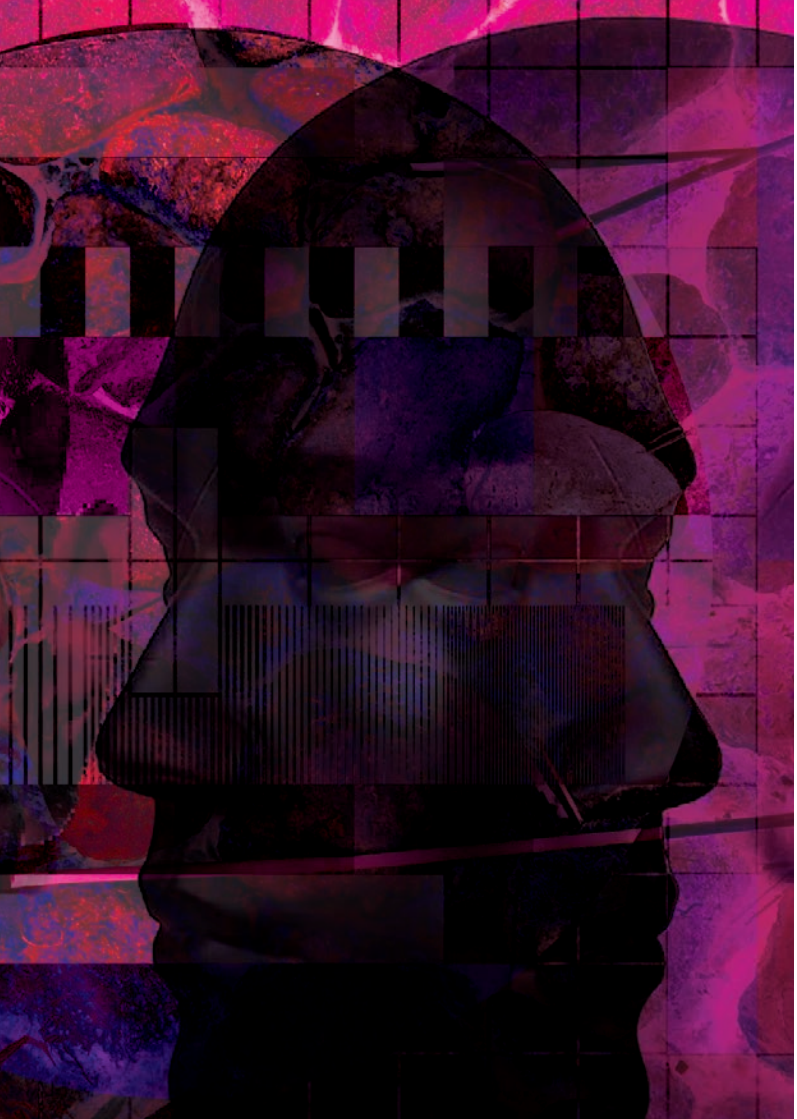


Michael Erlhoff *

Yellow Submarines – Design against Normality and Information

Two years ago today, our friend and companion, the great Michael Erlhoff, passed away. A date that reminds us once again how sorely we miss him and how happy and grateful we are at the same time to have had the opportunity to follow his thoughts, listen to his stories, enjoy his humour and be infected by his wealth of ideas. Much of this can still be found today in his numerous and inspirational writings, and can also be found in compressed form in his text "Yellow Submarines – Design Against Normality and Information", which he wrote for my book "Design (&) Activism" (2019), a copy of which I was able to hand over to him at our last personal meeting shortly before his passing. One thing is certain: Michael's words remain and keep our memories of him alive. At the same time, they continue to drive us to understand what design is and what it can do. This was always Erlhoff's main concern. And it still is. – Tom Bieling

Some preliminary remarks

Design, or what we call design today, has always been a very important part of political articulation and protest. But, design has also always been an important part of all kinds of governmental or economic power because authorities always need signs to express and to explain their power and status in hierarchical societies: Costumes, buildings, flags, interiors, crowns, even gestures and behaviour etc. And, on the other hand, there have always been the signs related to protest: the uniforms of liberation armies, pamphlets by rebelling farmers, communication devices of 19th century democratic movements, and, closer to our present concept of design, all the activities of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the political statements of Dada and Surrealism, the activism of resistance or the Situationists and 1968 activism.

That is: the role of design in social and political movements has always been ambivalent and it has been impossible to simply associate design either with the inhumane or with the humanistic and ethical side.

By the way, some artists (in those days there were no designers) of the early Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1920s obviously knew about this ambiguity and tried out some new ways of explaining protest and rebellion. For example, one night they smeared red paint on all the plants in several public parks in Moscow in order to change the landscape architecture into symbols of the revolution. But, in contrast to authoritarian gestures of building monuments, the artists had used a type of paint that would be washed away by the rain. After a few days,

the red paint in the parks was gone, but it stayed in people's minds. Or: being forced by the Leninist bureaucracy to create public sculptures of the heroes of the revolution, the artists used a material that was not waterproof: it is easy to imagine what these public sculptures, meant to be lasting monuments, would look like after some really rainy days. The government immediately set up wooden barricades to block the view onto those naturally destroyed, and now very bizarre-looking, sculptures. (Useless, because in the Russian winter, people needed wood to make fires, and so they regarded the wooden barricades as a perfect resource.)

As refreshing as this kind of subversive design might have been, we also have to be aware of the fact that there were times when design was indeed more helpful in supporting authoritarian, inhumane and racist governments, in particular the Italian Fascists and the German National Socialists. And this happened during a time when design was still young, when an awareness of design had yet to fully establish itself. The Bauhaus already existed before 1933 and had changed the political and social perception of design. Some of the Bauhaus people (in particular Mies van der Rohe, Herbert Bayer and Ernst Neuffert) actually worked for the Nazi government. Indeed, the German National Socialist politicians, or at least some of them, were highly aware of the intrinsic competences of design and used them in various ways: again, there were uniforms, banners and flags, there were weapons and city planning, but there was also language, there were gestures and the organisation and ornamentalisation of human crowds, or the system for marking the Jewish population. All of this was a result of design – of corporate design or

branding, of communication design, product design and even service design.

Design can be very cruel or can be an accessory to depress, ruin and kill people – and well-designed guns may kill better and faster.

This had to be stated as a kind of introduction to this essay in order to avoid misunderstandings and to criticise a mere heroic attitude regarding the role of design as social and as a tool of activism.

Normal normality and informed information

No doubt, design is inevitably social. Firstly, because it is only realised when it is used (probably the most significant difference between radically useless fine arts and design). And secondly, because everything we tend to call normal is designed: the pavement we walk on, the shoes made for walking, the traffic signs guiding us through the traffic, the GPS system moving us around the globe, smartphones and laptops, the trees alongside avenues, our spectacles sharpening our view, glasses for drinking wine, books, magazines and Twitter, the sounds surrounding us, the tactile structures, the smells of objects and in shopping malls. Simply everything is designed, even the layouts of parliaments and courts.

But there's even more: each governmental law and regulation is published via design, institutions or companies use design for their publications, each news item comes to us by design. And each piece of information is shaping us *in form*.

Indeed, to be informed means to be brought into a specific form (design) somebody or something wants us to be in. And we are never asked whether we like that form or whether we would prefer something else.

Normal does not simply happen: it is the result of norms, rules and regulations. But, as normal is normal, it cannot be avoided; even worse, when we take normal as normal we do not question it, do not think about it and do not criticise it. It is just normal.

Nevertheless, this normality is a result of design because institutions, governments and companies use design to change abstract instructions into visible, tangible and usable instructions so that human beings can follow them, even if we are not aware of doing so.

However, we do it constantly, day in and day out: when we use our cars or bicycles, when we dress in certain ways (belonging to a specific social status), when we drink or eat, when we walk and when we communicate. Communication, a category designers often use as a kind of neutral or even enthusiastic term, is a very good example of the restrictions designed by design. The Latin origin of the word explains what everybody should know: communication derives from com meaning together, from moenia meaning wall, and from ire meaning to walk. Hence, the term *communication* exactly explains that it relates to all those who are walking inside the same walls (of a city or other community), and the word precisely states that communication is always exclusive as only those who know the signs and follow the rules are part of the community. Guaranteed by communication design.

This also means that even in a social situation that seems to offer some kind of diversity, there is regulation and control – and the agent of control is design. It is impossible to escape, or to deny, the existence of regulations because anti-regulation also needs regulations, or is hijacked by very many rules. Within the perspective just described, design has acted as a service, and the designer has been seen as a servant of industry, capital and the authorities.

This is exactly how companies and governments saw design in the early days: only as a service. In the era of industrialisation, products were of poor quality (because there was no longer a direct connection between customers and producers as had been the case before and the market had become anonymous). Therefore, a new form of creativity was needed that would improve product quality or acceptance. This gave rise to the arts & crafts movement in the second part of the 19th century, a forerunner of design that would encourage the professional development of what we call design today. Through this movement, it became obvious that there was a need for design services, but, at the same time, there was a rather limited view of design: it was not about inventing and constructing all kinds of products, but only about making products more usable and attractive.

However, the relationship between master (traditionally the authorities and the capital) and slave (design) is more complicated, because, by working for the master, the slave quickly and somehow secretly starts to learn the masters' methods, categories and qualities. As that includes the opportunity, or indeed necessity, to emancipate oneself, the slave learns to fight against the master.

And that was exactly what happened in the context of design during the last 150 or so years: design has become one of the powerful and essential factors in the economy and also in social life. Design no longer has to follow and to formulate the rules and regulations prescribed by companies and other authorities: it can invent them itself.

Nevertheless, this still means to construct both normality and information, to give rules and regulations visible and tangible forms that enable us to follow them easily. Maybe one could say that design has invented more interesting or even more humane rules and regulations, but to invent rules still means to control behaviour, understanding, social conditions, and the ways we live our lives. Design has changed, but it has not improved within the concept of a more humane or social situation.

Even worse perhaps: as design is no longer just the master´s voice, it might now help to better conceal the existence of controlling concepts, and, by so doing, it could be even more authoritarian. At least, it is quite obvious that hardly anyone in design talks about or criticises the so-called normal.

Unnormal and Disinformation

There is no reason to be pessimistic. But, if one wants to argue about social design and about design for activism, we first of all have to understand what is political and what is social. Everything else will only end up in euphoric nonsense (at best accompanied by catharsis). Hopefully, the above reflections on the problem of normality and information might help.

Maybe it needs one more idea at least: talking about normality (and information) only moves across the surface – and this is far removed from the intellectual and academic attitude of trying to grasp what one believes to be important, which is what is regarded as depth. This kind of people (forced by academic institutions and by gestures of intellectualism) always want to know what is behind something, e.g. what is behind a painting. And they do not like the serious and only true answer: the wall. Time to recall an expression by the philosopher Ernst Bloch: "the banality of depth", and also a statement by the composer Feruccio Busoni: "Depth gains broadness and tries to reach this by heaviness". Indeed – and this is not only true for design – we have to observe, to analyse and to work with the surface. That is: with what is called normal.

Any serious political analysis has to describe the power, brutality and authoritarian dimension of the normal. Political and social activism, therefore, has to find ways of explaining the normal to people as not normal, as something that is designed. And everything that is designed is not fixed, but can be and has to be changed. Therefore, radical design offers open possibilities for social life.

It is not so difficult to demonstrate the power of the (designed) normal and, by so doing, to experience the quality of changing normality. Just take three of those red and white, or black and yellow, traffic cones, put them in the centre of a one-way street in your city, near to where another street branches off – and you will see that all cars will turn into the other street (even taxis and the police). Or, have four of five people wear one of those orange or red jackets that official traffic regulators usually

wear and you will be able to stop or disrupt both car and pedestrian traffic. Put a *closed* sign on a door and nobody will touch it. More complicated, but not too difficult either, is changing the electronic displays at tram stops – very effective, as the people standing on the platform, waiting and looking at the displays, will suddenly start talking to each other, they will laugh or will be embarrassed and will definitely have a different experience of time. Do some legal hacking like, for example, the design agency Mindshare Denmark did: they wanted to change the common image of *beautiful women* into realistic pictures of female beauty. You will notice that this can encourage people to change.

Ask somebody who has just finished talking loudly into their smartphone (as many people do): Excuse me, but who is this Peter you called lazy and stupid? Or use anagrams and palindromes (e.g. *dogma – I am god* or *Red Dot – Der Tod*) to broaden the horizon of words and, by so doing, question words and phrases and put them into new perspectives. Don't follow instructions, forget your GPS and Google maps and enjoy getting lost, just follow another person and explore new areas. Buy something in a supermarket, but give the money to a homeless person in the street and not to the supermarket. Play the sound of a river in a pedestrian zone or have the scent of beautiful flowers waft through a public toilet. Change the surface of stairs or handles. Debunk stupid racist arguments and expose the idiocy of those blaming and pursuing refugees. Demystify capitalism and the capitalist normality. And try to love confusion and blur.

All of the aforementioned is, of course, deeply related to design. Analyse the many fakes in the history of the natural

sciences and also in the humanities and observe the effects of these fakes. You could regard those activities as deriving from design and as productive design.

This kind of activism has sometimes been adopted by far-right, racist or even terrorist movements and people. In some countries trumping up has almost become a standard practice used by politicians and by people employing petty bourgeois actions. Mr Trump likes to produce fakes, in Germany the AfD (officially Alternative for Deutschland, de facto Away from Democracy) is based on similar nonsense, and too many elected governments in Europe and other parts of the world are following similar stupidities. They live from fake news, ideologies and other lies.

Of course, this could be depressing for all those trying to shake up normality with the goal of emancipation. But this image is wrong because those nationalists, racists and simple capitalists who preach authoritarian relics still believe, and try to make everybody else believe, that those rules and attitudes are normal. They attempt to convince people of this normality with the aim of secretly controlling them.

As Kurt Schwitters explained nearly 100 years ago: not the protest against normality is chaotic, normality is. Of course, when protesting against norms, normality and the normal, we have to be careful to understand the empirical situation, our critique of the normal must be very precise and we have to use design in its complexity, use its incredible competences for real, serious and joyful and analytical confrontation in order to explain the nonsense of the normal, to explain this as experiences and to open up the structures, enabling people to understand and

to criticise that which is regarded as given, but which could be and has to be changed.

There is no reason for pessimism: design offers the chance of optimism, supported by many examples of qualified protest by design. The most convincing example for this can be found when observing people interacting with *the normal* because, in many of these interactions, people change the rules and regulations, but most of the time, they are not aware of this. Just think of how often people change or extend the function of objects, signs or services when using them. In everyday life, people don't always use chairs for sitting: they use them as coatracks or ladders. Newspapers are not only read: they are used to protect people from the rain or to kill flies. The list could go on. These things do not happen intentionally and they are not some kind of official protest – but people act like this and we should tell them what they are really doing by this non-intentional design.

No doubt, there are also many brilliant examples for smart protests that use and confuse normality. Probably the most convincing one within the last few years was the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong: the activists blocked the main street in the centre of Hong Kong Island, bringing to a halt all the normal traffic and movement in the city. The activists also used normal materials in a kind of non-intentional design to build barricades or to construct stairs across the railings separating the two lanes of the street. They not only cleaned the nearby public toilets (totally opposed to the nature of normal use) but also put perfume, shampoo and lotion in the rooms so that the public toilets could be used as a kind of nice bathroom. There were study corners, the possibility to exhibit printouts from the

Internet, a stage with microphones for spontaneous talks and public discussions – and the many activists just lived there, had breakfast, lunch and dinner and listened to music. They simply changed the normal in order to be able to live there.

One more explanation of the specific qualities of intentional misunderstandings and mistakes, showing the quality of design in confusing the normal: “While you were weaving compliments, something useful could have happened.” (J. W. v. Goethe)

*This essay is republished here on the occasion of the second anniversary of Michael Erlhoffs passing. It was originally published in Tom Bieling (Ed.): Design (&) Activism – Perspectives on Design as Activism and Activism as Design (Mimesis, 2019)

Flip Bool

Democratic Graphics – The political and graphic work of Gerd Arntz 1920 – 1940 *

We became friends since we first met preparing his large solo exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag and accompanying publication, in 1976. It was a real pleasure to meet Gerd Arntz weekly in order to document his life and work. He was a very modest, polite, and well-read man with an extremely good memory. As a young art historian, I couldn't get enough of all the stories about his contacts with people such as Otto Dix, El Lissitzky, Erich Mühsam, Otto Neurath or Vladimir Tatlin, and his experiences in Cologne, Vienna, Moscow, and from 1934, in my hometown The Hague. When our only son was born in 1975, we asked Gerd to design a birth announcement card with three of the many symbols he cut in linoleum for the visual statistics of the Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum (Museum for Society and Economics) in Vienna. [Ill. 1]

Gerd Arntz was born in 1900 as the son of a well-to-do owner of an ironware factory in the city of Remscheid, located in the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Looking back at his life and work in 1988 — the year of his death — he stated:

> "As the only son of my parents, I was as it were not quite predestined to choose the side of the working man in the class struggle, although their children were my playmates." (Arntz/Broos 1988, p. 13)

After serving in the German army during the last year of the First World War he started to work in his father's factory. However, he was more interested in art and after a few minor accidents in the factory he chose for a study as a drawing-master. In the fall of 1919, he moved to Düsseldorf in order to visit the art school of Lothar von Kunowski. After the right-wing Kapp-Putsch of March 1920 he started participating in demonstrations but it would take some years before he became aware that his graphical work could play a role in the political struggle. Via the artist Jankel Adler he became acquainted with a number of artists in Cologne who formed the so-called *stupid* group: Heinrich Hoerle, Anton Räderscheidt and Franz Wilhelm Seiwert. Together with Gerd Arntz and some other artists they would later call themselves the *Gruppe progressiver Künstler Köln* (The Group of Progressive Artists Cologne). The outrageous recovery payments that were imposed on Germany by the treaty of Versailles caused extreme inflation. In order to survive, he and his later wife Agnes Thubeauville moved to Hagen for a job in a bookshop in early 1922. Two years later he returned

to Düsseldorf. From then on, his contacts with the group of artists around Seiwert intensified. Following Seiwert's example, Arntz joined the council communist *Allgemeine Arbeiter Union, Einheitsorganisation* (General Workers Union, Unit Organization) which propagated workers' councils or *soviets* instead of a centralized communist party as in the Soviet-Union.

Ill. 1: Birth announcement for Cas Bool, September 10, 1975

Ill. 2: Folder for the *Ausstellung Arntz Holzschnitte im neuen Buchladen* (Exhibition of Arntz's woodcuts in the New Bookshop), Cologne 1925

In February – March of 1925 Gerd Arntz had his first solo exhibition of woodcuts at the Neue Buchladen in Cologne. [Ill. 2] On this occasion an accompanying folder was published with a short statement by Arntz himself about the importance of woodcuts, two quotations of Karl Liebknecht, a text by Vladimir Mayakovsky, and an introduction by Seiwert, who was also responsible for the design and decoration on the façade of this left-wing bookshop. Among other things Seiwert writes about his artist-friend:

> "Gerd Arntz cuts images of labour and images of working people in his woodblocks: road workers, tug-boats, railways, back premises, fences in suburbs, working class quarters. He does so with a lack of sentimentality that is unusual in Germany. Simple, fact, that's it. Besides this the form is reduced to symbol. The form that Arntz uses, is beyond Expressionism. But also beyond a mere formal Constructivism. He uses the clear, almost mathematical form of Constructivism for the representation of a world that he reduced to a type." (Folder Ausstellung Arntz Holzschnitte im neuen Buchladen (Exhibition of Arntz's woodcuts in the New Bookshop), Cologne 1925)

Artistically and theoretically Seiwert was a key figure in the aforementioned *Group of Progressive Artists Cologne*, which published the magazine *a bis z* from 1929 – 1933. Wherever Arntz and Seiwert lived, they always stayed in close contact. Ultimately, an X-ray injury in his youth caused the death of Seiwert in 1933. As an in memoriam, Arntz and his friend Augustin Tschinkel published the booklet *f.w. seiwert. gemälde. grafik. schriften* in Prague in 1934. [Ill. 3] Arntz was responsible for the introduction, which started with biographical notes by Seiwert himself stating:

> "The inability of the "una sancta catholica" to prevent the mass murder of people among each other (During the First World War) made me a Marxist. Since then I stand on the side of the worker's revolution, to which I also hope to contribute by my artistic work. I started with all humanitarian manifestoes in an expressionist-cubist art form, which I developed via an abstract constructivism into a figurative-constructive language of form. With this I try to represent a reality that is weaned from any sentimentality and coincidence ..." (Arntz/Tschinkel 1934, p. 3)

It may be clear that Arntz went through a similar development as his six years older friend Seiwert.

In 1926, the Viennese sociologist Otto Neurath and the German art historian Franz Roh visited the *Grosse Kunstausstellung* at the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf, where Arntz showed two of his painted woodblocks: Strasse and Mitropa. [Ill. 4] For several reasons Mitropa meant a turning-point in his work. It was larger than any block he had cut before and with a very clear organization of its main subject: the class antagonism of capitalist society. In the upper half we see two railway carriages. On the

Ill. 3: Cover of *f.w. seiwert – gemälde.grafik.schriften* (paintings, prints, texts), Prague 1934

Ill. 4: *Mitropa*, woodcut 1925

left, mainly in black, the packed and cheapest 4th class; on the right, mainly in white, the more expensive 2nd class and dining car. In the lower half on the left, prevailingly in white, a luxurious shopping street and on the right, in black, a mass of working-class people. After their first acquaintance with the work of Arntz, Neurath and Roh visited him personally, resulting in the following remark of the latter in an art magazine:

> "If one is looking for people for the representation of coloured graphic symbols for the industry or for that new form of visual statistics as presented in the space devoted to the economics of Austria at the Gesolei – even though the design wasn't convincing – one should consider this young man." (Arntz/Broos 1988, p. 22)

Neurath and the Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum in Vienna, that he had founded in 1925 with the support of the social-democratic municipality, were responsible for this Austrian contribution to the largest exhibition ever held about public health. The museum aimed at informing the public about relevant current social developments by visual statistics. Contrary to the prevailing statistical practice of showing this by smaller or larger figures, Neurath came upon the idea of using symbols that stand for a fixed number of data. After all, smaller and larger symbols are difficult to compare, but by repeating a similar symbol representing a fixed number the interpretation is much clearer. This invention of Otto Neurath became known as the *Viennese Method of Visual Statistics*. A beautiful brochure by the Dutch designer N.P. De Koo about the port of Rotterdam

Ill. 5: N.P. de Koo, brochure about the port of Rotterdam, pp. 4–5, 1929

from 1929 demonstrates the problem of interpreting visual statistics in traditional ways of representation. [Ill. 5]

From 1925 onwards the work of Arntz was indeed more stylized and analytical than that of his artistic friends Heinrich Hoerle and Franz Wilhelm Seiwert. Moreover, he was much more focusing on graphic art. While he occasionally started to work for Otto Neurath by mail, in 1927 he realized a first thematic series of woodcuts with the title **Zwölf Häuser der Zeit** (Twelve Contemporary Houses). The title implied a critical note on astrology, by referring to the twelve astrological *houses*. But Arntz instead represented various earthly dwellings: a private house, factory, department store, prison, barracks, hospital, hotel, stadium, theatre, bar, brothel, and a bank. The prints share a vertical organization in three layers and the represented people are devoid of individual characteristics and indeed look like symbols or types. The tools in the hands of the workers on the print **Fabrik** (Factory) [Ill. 6]

Ill. 6: *Fabrik* (Factory), 1927, woodcut

Ill. 8: *Bürgerkrieg* (Civil war), 1928, woodcut, first state

Ill. 7: *Räte u. Betrieb Organisation en Rätemandat oder Diätenmandat*, 1927–1928 on the title pages of *Die Proletarische Revolution* (The Proletarian Revolution), 3 (January 1928) 1 en 3 (April 1928) 9

forecast a famous scene in the film Modern Times by Charlie Chaplin from 1936.

In 1928 Arntz published some of his most propagandistic woodcuts in *Die Proletarische Revolution* (The Proletarian Revolution), the magazine of the before-mentioned council communist General Workers Union, Unit Organization. [Ill. 7] That same year, Neurath invited Arntz to Vienna for a few months. One of the things he took with him was the woodblock for the large print **Bürgerkrieg** (Civil War) [Ill. 8] which he finished in Vienna. This may be considered the conclusion of his Düsseldorf period and a retrospective summary of the events in Germany between 1918 and 1923, especially in the Ruhr area. On the lower left-hand side the reactionary people are represented by elegant women, a priest blessing the battle; in the centre we see a painter who doesn't care about what is going on; above that leaders of political parties soothe the masses; on the lower right-hand side a rape by soldiers is depicted and above that the revolutionaries clearly losing the battle against the standing army that has a tank at its disposal.

This would be his last print until 1931, because in early 1929 Neurath asked him and his family to move permanently to Vienna as head of the graphic department of the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum*. The museum also had a scientific department collecting the social and economic facts, which a special team subsequently *transformed* into comparable entities representing fixed numbers, for which the graphic department designed the symbols for the realization of the ultimate charts. [Ill. 9] It was Arntz' idea to cut them in linoleum, while before his arrival in Vienna the symbols were hand-drawn or cut

out of paper. The final charts were presented in the museum or in exhibitions elsewhere and reproduced in books. [Ill. 10] The process of *transforming* the scientific data was crucial before

Ill. 9: Photos showing the process of creating a chart

Ill. 10: Presentation of the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum* in the Vienna city hall, ca. 1927

the charts could be designed. Marie Reidemeister – the later wife of Otto Neurath – played a key role in this process and retrospectively described it as follows:

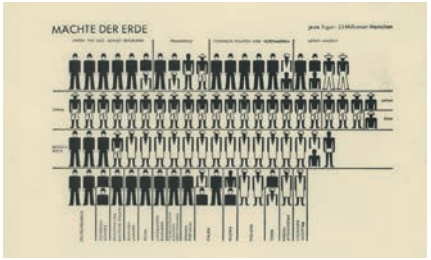
> "During the years in Vienna the team … usually consisted of the director, two transformers, two chief artists, and a number of technicians skilled in the work process. Among the scholars whom Neurath called in for their advice and research were experts in statistics, history, medicine, cartography, geography, engineering, industrial management, history of art, etc. This is how the team worked … : an idea was formed by Neurath; he discussed it with an expert to have his idea checked and to get suitable material. The transformer was present at such discussions, to get acquainted with the subject. The transformer then took over the material and developed the way to present it visually. The sketch (in pencil and colour pencils) was discussed with Neurath (and sometimes the expert) until a final rough version was agreed upon; this was … handed to the artist who took charge of design and finished artwork, in constant contact with Neurath and the transformer." (Quoted from Neurath/Kinross 2009, p. 77)

One of the earlier publications was **Die bunte Welt** (The Colourful World) from 1929, with a cover and some charts designed by Arntz. [Ill. 11] A visualization of **Powers of the World** [Ill. 12], with each figure representing 25 million people, shows that the

symbols were not yet as abstract as they would become later. An enormous commission was the loose-leaf atlas Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft with 100 colourful charts for the Bibliographical Institute in Leipzig, published in 1930. For the realization of this atlas the graphic team was extended with Peter Alma from Amsterdam and Augustin Tschinkel from Prague. Jan Tschichold was asked to provide typographic advice, resulting in the exclusive use of the new typeface Futura of Paul Renner. Chart nr. 86 visualizes the Employees in the USSR. [Ill. 13] Each figure represents 250,000 employees: red in state economy, orange in co-operatives and blue in private economy. The figures concerned the economic year 1928 – 1929. Nr. 87 is a much simpler black-and-white chart that is one of the best-known, showing unemployment in Great Britain, France, and Germany between 1913 and 1928. [Ill. 14] In 1931 he even simplified this symbol [Ill. 15] and it is interesting to note how he used different versions in a privately made woodcut as Arbeitslose (Unemployed) from 1931. [Ill. 16] The top half of this print shows how the upper class spends its leisure time.

Since the publication of the Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft atlas, the Viennese Method of Visual Statistics attracted more and more international attention. As a result, quite a number of younger collaborators started coming from abroad for short periods of time: among them Lotte Beese and Heinz Allner – students of the Bauhaus in Dessau – as well as the graphic designer Willem Sandberg, who became director of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam after the war. Among other publications, the Dutch party communist Peter Alma was responsible for a special issue of the magazine Wendingen

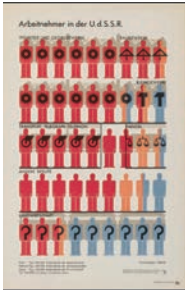
Ill. 11: Cover of *Die bunte Welt* (The Colorful World), 1929



Ill. 12: Chart *Mächte der Erde* (Powers of the World) in *Die bunte Welt* (The Colorful World), 1929

Ill. 15: Symbol 108 of an unemployed worker of the Netherlands Foundation for Statistics, coll. *Kunstmuseum Den Haag* (Art Museum The Hague)

Ill. 13: *Atlas Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft*, 1930, page 86, *Arbeitnehmer in der U.d.S.S.R.* (Workers in the USSR)



Ill. 14: *Atlas Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft*, 1930, page 87, *Arbeitslose 1913 – 1928. Grossbritanien, Frankreich, Deutsches Reich* (The unemployed 1913 – 1928. Great Britain, France, German Reich)

Ill. 16: *Arbeitslose* (Unemployed), 1931, woodcut

Ill. 17: Peter Alma, cover of *Wendingen*, 11 (1930)

Ill. 18: Symbols for IZOSTAT

about *Visual Statistics and Sociological Graphic Art* in 1930. [Ill. 17] The fame of Otto Neurath's new method of visual statistics also reached the Soviet Union.

In early 1931 Otto Neurath signed a contract for four years with the Russian government for a similar institute as the Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum, to be founded in Moscow under the name IZOSTAT. [Ill. 18] In order to fine-tune this contract Arntz first visited Moscow in November – December 1931. In his autobiographical text from 1988 he writes about this first visit:

> "As an institute we first worked in the building of the State Publishing House Kusnetzkimost, with chief Chalatow as our connection with the executive committee, that was our direct commissioner. I went to see a Mayakovsky-exhibition, being the only visitor. When I said at the institute that the exhibition impressed me, some Russian colleagues didn't want to talk about Mayakovsky, who was already banned. When there was no interpreter we mainly spoke German or French with each other, more or less cautiously. Very important for me was the renewed meeting with the Dutch engineer Wim de Wit and his wife Juscha, whom I knew since 1925 from Cologne ..." (Arntz/Broos 1988, p. 31)

As a technical engineer Wim de Wit had worked in the Soviet-Union since 1929, but was later imprisoned in concentration camp Kolyma, where he was executed in 1938. As late as 1952 Arntz made a linoleum cut commemorating his death. He became friends with this leftist Dutch couple after they had moved to Aachen, because as a conscientious objector Wim de Wit couldn't get a job in the Netherlands. Already in Aachen their house was an important meeting place for artists and politicians. This remained so in Moscow, where numerous other Dutch specialists lived and stayed for shorter or longer periods. In fact, there were so many that Arntz learned to speak Dutch during the next three periods that he lived and worked in Moscow until returning to Vienna in September 1933. His friend Peter Alma was leading the annex of IZOSTAT in Charkov and in

the summer of 1933 they made a holiday trip to the Caucasus together. At that time Arntz did not have the faintest idea that the political developments in Vienna would force him, Neurath, and his institute to leave Austria for ever in the summer of 1934 and to emigrate to the Netherlands. From his new hometown The Hague he made his last trip to Moscow, from half October until early December 1934. Arntz describes the events in this period as follows:

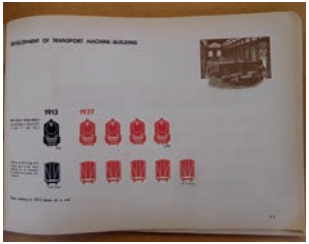
> "In the Netherlands I didn't experience difficulties with my simplified representation of human figures and things in their social context. In the meantime, that clearly turned out to be the case in Moscow ... The final ukase about art and artists associations had its effect on the IZOSTAT institute. "Why do your figures have no faces?" they asked. "Facelessness" was disapproved of by the party and also the too "western", constructivist, "decadent" design was not in line with the newly dictated "socialist realism". Some discussions followed with the management, that had tests carried out with more "Russian"-like figures. After the termination of our contract it wouldn't take long before the "Viennese Method" came to an end and the IZOSTAT institute declined into another style." (Arntz/Broos 1988, p. 37)

This last remark of Arntz may be true. But looking at the few publications of IZOSTAT in public Dutch collections, already as early as 1932 I noted the presence of socialist-realist illustrations that absolutely contradicted the ideas of Neurath and Arntz. For example, the portfolio **Oe nas I oe nig** (About Us and About Them) in the collection of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, which houses the largest collection of the free and applied graphic work by Arntz. [Ill. 19] Have these charts possibly been made while Neurath and/or Arntz were not present in Moscow?

I have no idea and am curious to find out more about this. For the friends among his collaborators at his farewell Arntz had made the woodcut **Russia 1934**, showing the *progression* of collectivization under the leadership of the Communist party. [Ill. 20] But in the end he didn't take the print with him to Moscow, fearing danger for his friends. Arntz used more or less the same organization of the picture plane for the first print he made in the Netherlands: **The Third Reich**, 1934. Later more about this crucial print. Back in the Netherlands, Arntz asked Wim and Juscha de Wit to bring him a copy of **Aviacija i Vozdukhoplavaniya** (Aviation and Ballooning) on their next trip to Holland. [Ill. 21] Since the collaboration between the Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum and Moscow had ended, pictorial statistics continued to be an important element in publications in the USSR; even as late as 1939 considering **An Album Illustrating the State of Organization and National Economy of U.S.S.R.** with visual statistics designed by El Lissitzky. [Ill. 22]

After the cruel crushing of the Viennese Schutzbund-revolt in February 1934 by the fascists, the Social-Democrats were sidetracked and the Museum für Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft had to close its doors. Arntz represented these events in his woodcut **Vienna 1934**. [Ill. 23] With a diminished staff and without any financial government support the institute, for the time being, found a safe home base in The Hague, under the names *International*

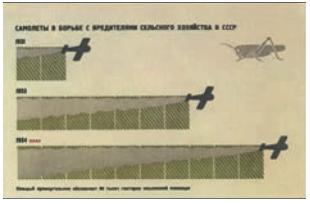
Ill. 19: Chart from *About us and about them, Izostat*, Leningrad 1932



Ill. 22: El Lissitzky, Chart of the *Development of transport machine building* in the USSR. An Album Illustrating the State Organization and National Economy, Moscow 1939, plate 11

Ill. 20: *Russland* 1934, woodcut

Ill. 23: *Wien* (Vienna) 1934, woodcut



Ill. 21: Chart 34 from *Aviation and Ballooning, Moscow* 1934

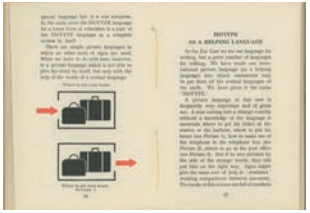
Foundation for Visual Education or Mundaneum The Hague. Being emigrants they at first had a hard time getting commissions. Because the denomination *Viennese Method of Pictorial Statistics* wasn't functional anymore, an alternative name had to be found. This resulted in ISOTYPE, an abbreviation of International System of Typographic Picture Education and in Greek meaning always the same sign. Arntz designed a new logo that was first reproduced in the pioneering booklet International Picture Language. The First Rules of Isotype by Otto Neurath, published in London in 1936. [Ill. 24] Under the slogan *Words divide, pictures connect* Otto Neurath and his team describe and show how symbols are not only useful for visual statistics, but in the form of pictograms can also help international communication. Neurath himself didn't say so, but Isotype can be considered as a visual form of Esperanto.

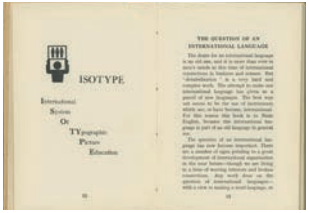
Next to his work for the new institute Arntz privately continued to make political prints. For the first time using linoleum for Habsburger Restauration in 1934, representing the threatening Habsburg restoration by the Austrian nationalist chancellor Engelbert Dolfuss, who was later murdered. [Ill. 25] In 1935–1936 Arntz published several political prints in the magazine *De Arbeidersraad* (Workers' Council), allied to the German General Workers Union, Unit Organization he had been affiliated with since the early 1920s. One of these was the aforementioned The Third Reich from 1934. [Ill. 26] Using the pseudonym Dubois, Paris Arntz showed an enlargement of this print at the Amsterdam exhibition *D.O.O.D* (Death), an abbreviation of *De Oympische Spelen Onder Dictatuur* (The Olympics under Dictatorship) as a protest against the Olympic Games of 1936

in Berlin. But the police removed this image from the exhibition as an insult against a befriended head of state.

In leftist circles the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 was a clear foreshadowing of the Second World War. This was also true for Gerd Arntz, considering his linocuts Spanien links (Spain Left) and Spanien rechts (Spain Right). [Ill. 27] Since Hitler had taken over power in 1933, the hope for revolutionary changes in society dwindled more and more. This had its effect on the international avant-garde and brought about a change in subject matter and style for many progressive artists, including Arntz. From the mid-1920s he had developed an utmost simplified figurative-constructive style to express his revolutionary political ideas. But from 1935 onwards he more and more chose for linoleum instead of wood for his prints and we gradually see a shift in his work from an uncompromising geometrical style to a much more informal language of form. In 1938 he made his last series of woodcuts under the title Lehrbilder (Learning prints). Planned as a series of twelve, he only realized eight of them. For the last time until 1950 the subject-matter of this series is class-oppositions and anti-war protest, but in his own words after eight prints 'I suddenly lost the courage'. [Ill. 28]

This gradual shift in style can also be noticed in the projects Neurath and his team would realize in the Netherlands. Two of the most important commissions were the exhibitions *Rondom Rembrandt* (Around Rembrandt) in 1938 and *Het Rollende Rad* (The Rolling Wheel) in 1939 – a promotional exhibition for the Dutch Railway Company. *Around Rembrandt* was the first exhibition in the Netherlands highlighting classical art in an educational manner. [Ill. 29] With maps the historical events and

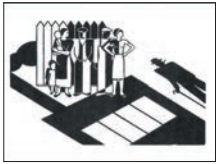




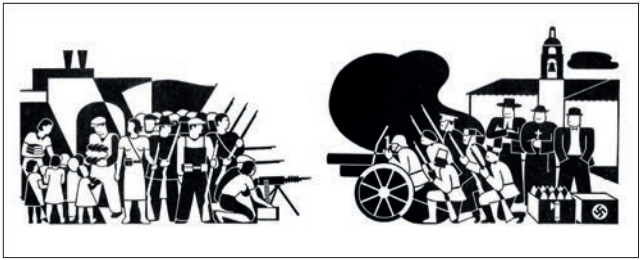
Ill. 24: Otto Neurath, *International Picture Language. The First Rules of Isotype*, London 1936, p. 12 with Isotype logo

Ill. 25: *Habsburger Restauration*, 1934, linocut

Ill. 26: *Das Dritte Reich*, 1934, woodcut

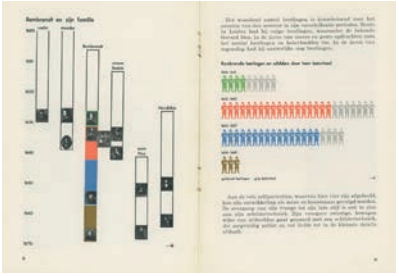


Ill. 28: *Schatten* (Shadow), 1938, woodcut



Ill. 27: *Spanien links, Spanien rechts* (Spain Left, Spain Right) 1936, woodcuts

Ill. 29: Cover of the brochure *Rondom Rembrandt* (Around Rembrandt), 1938



Ill. 30: Brochure *Rondom Rembrandt* (Around Rembrandt), 1938, pp. 8 – 9 with *Rembrandt and his family* and *Rembrandts pupils and painters influenced by him*

Ill. 32: Otto Neurath, *De Moderne Mensch Ontstaat* (Modern Man in the Making), Amsterdam 1940, pp. 84 – 85 met *Silhouets of the war economy* and *Schematic representation of the war economy*

Ill. 31: Dust jacket of Otto Neurath, *De Moderne Mensch Ontstaat (*Modern Man in the Making), Amsterdam 1940

Ill. 34: Cover of Marie Neurath, J.A. Lauwerijs, *The First Great Inventions*, London 1951

social-economic conditions of the Golden Age were illustrated. Visual statistics and photographs summarized the life and work of Rembrandt in a highly organized form. [Ill. 30]

In the meantime, new contacts were established in the Anglo-Saxon world. Contacts with Alfred Knopfs publishing house resulted in an open commission for Otto Neurath to realize a book according to his own insights. This resulted in Modern Man in the Making, from 1939 onwards successively published in the United States, England, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. [Ill. 31] It was a ground-breaking publication with 100 illustrations in seven colours showing the possibilities of ISOTYPE in optima forma. But the subtitle expressed the threatening situation in the world: A Reportage of Joy and Fear. Looking back, Arntz was particularly satisfied with charts about war economics at the eve of the Second World War. These charts on p. 84 – 85 [Ill. 32] show speculations on alliances for the next war, based on the power over raw materials since 1929 with each symbol representing 10 per cent of the world production. They show how the balance of power shifts dramatically, depending especially on which side the United States and the Soviet Union would choose.

Because of the unexpected German invasion of the Netherlands in 1940, Modern Man in the Making turned out to be the last joint project of Neurath and Arntz; the last time they together could combine a democratization of knowledge with a democratic form of design. One week after the German invasion Otto Neurath and Marie Reidemeister were able to escape to England at the very last moment, on 17 May, leaving Gerd Arntz and his family behind. Through the newly founded *Nederlandse Stichting voor Statistiek* (Netherlands Foundation for Statistics)

Arntz was able to continue his statistical work in the first years of the German occupation but ultimately he couldn't avoid being called up for military service in the German army and thus he served in a world war for the second time. Otto Neurath and Marie Reidemeister continued their work in London from 1942 as the Isotype Institute and after the death of Otto Neurath she continued his work until the early 1970s. Arntz continued his work in the field of visual statistics until his retirement in 1965. In addition to this professional work he privately continued to make linocuts. But most of his prints deal with the situation in the world in a more general sense. In an interview from 1973 he explained this as follows:

> "I always kept the sour feeling that we – the groups of council communists from the time of crisis – had our chances when the time was ripe for it; those chances are gone nowadays and I have no idea how they might come again in this system. … The true bottlenecks do no longer concern the relations between proletariat and bosses, but have become global. It's now about rich and poor countries." (Den Haag 1976, p. 71 – 72)

After a side-trip of ten years into classical history, in 1950 the Korean War nevertheless inspired Arntz to create a series of twelve prints under the title **Totentanz** (Death Dance). [Ill. 33] The idea for this series came from prints made by Hans Holbein the Younger in 1538, but Arntz placed them in a contemporary situation. By joining the twelve prints into one piece of 63×120 cm it appears that death – coming from the right and hitting all

nations and strata of society – is caused by mankind itself by means of the atomic bomb with from the top right to the lower left: Dance of the Nations, in Town, in the Village, the Scientists, the Artists, the Employees, the Rulers, the Traders, the Workers, in the Air, on the Earth and lastly in the Water.

The Russian invasion of Hungary and the Algerian War of Independence were other conflicts that inspired Arntz to make linocuts, like Death Dance without any direct reference to specific military actions. In his later years, Arntz clearly lost the hope that his prints could contribute to real changes in society. In the meantime, Marie Neurath-Reidemeister continued her work in London, publishing a great number of educational books such as, for example, **The First Great Inventions**, London 1951. [Ill. 34] She did so without the help of Gerd Arntz, but these publications are still of an incredible beauty and an interesting post-war side result of the groundbreaking *Viennese Method of Visual Statistics*.

Ill. 33: *Dodendans* (Death Dance), 1950, twelve linocuts

LITERATUR

Arntz, Gerd|Tschinkel, Augustin (1934): f.*w. seiwert. gemälde. grafik. schriften, Prague.*

Bool, Flip|Broos, Kees (red.) (1976): *Gerd Arntz. Kritische grafiek en beeldstatistiek, tent. cat.* Den Haag (Haags Gemeentemuseum)

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* The text is based on a lecture held on the closing day of the exhibition IZOSTAT at the Na Shabolovke Gallery, Moscow, 16 December 2018. It has been published at www.designhistory.nl, the Dutch online magazine / platform of the Dutch Design History Society in 2019, now slightly revised for DESIGNABILITIES. By this exhibition I learned about the existence of a separate branch of IZOSTAT in Leningrad that functioned more or less independently from the head quarter in Moscow. The graphic designer Ben Faydherbe was so kind as to help with the scans. Sincere thanks to Anouk and Thomas Arntz of the Gerd Arntz Estate for kindly waiving the copyrights.

Anna Feigenbaum

Moving Protests: The Stories Objects Can Tell

Public protests are a highly visible feature of social movements' activism across the world. They are spaces where people come together to imagine alternative worlds and articulate contentious politics, often in confrontation with the state, global companies or other interest groups. Protests consist of a broad range of (disobedient) objects and images that acquire meaning in their assemblages, or the ways in which they are arranged with other technologies, bodies and environments. As a researcher who focuses on communication, technology and social change, and especially on spaces and infrastructures of resistance, Anna Feigenbaum has been exploring the media, governance and social practices of protest camps around the world, demonstrating that protest camps are unique spaces in which activists can enact radical and often experiential forms of democratic politics, that are often represented by or communicated through objects. To build movement histories

that can challenge the structures of power, there is a need for what Yvonne Marshall calls "archaeologies of resistance", which invite us to listen to these objects, to discover their stories. In this essay Feigenbaum explores such stories objects can tell.

Capitalism is Crisis, Banner, 14 February 2013
https://solidarity.net.au/mag/back/2013/53/capitalism-isnt-working-another-world-is-possible/

Sometimes A Banner Says It All

A banner can capture the demand of a movement in one perfect sentence. A slogan that marches on sticks, a message dropped from the skies, or hung off the side of a motorway bridge. Today, a banner can be a beam of light, shone onto a corporate headquarters, housed in a city skyscraper, a projection speaking truth to power.

Or a banner can be a meme, a byte size, 140-character-or-less message that cuts to the core: re-tweeted, re-posted, instagrammed, gaining momentum as it bounces from one geo-location to the next. These slogans build a split-second connection with each glance, with every click. Symbolic transnational solidarity as Gillan and Pickerill have called it (Gillan and Pickerill 2015).

Banners and slogans tell us stories of protest pasts and protest futures. They map out activist legacies; tracing the routes that demonstrations travel. Signs can be carried from city to city, spreading the message on canvas and poster board. Even now, they might still follow us around. Resurrected, reworded, adapted and updated. They can remind us of where we come from, of what battles we have won, and of what other possible worlds are not yet built.

Social Scientist Bruno Latour claims that objects can talk. The trick is for us humans to get them talking. Our job is to understand where they came from, what other objects they connect to, and how they move. Like fossils or hair follicles, objects of protest have their own ancestries. Like families they grow and change. Some leave the country, while others stay close to home.

Object Stories

As a researcher, I like objects because they offer a way to talk about protest history without the grand narratives and big categories that dominate so much writing on social movements. After 1968. The Second Wave of Feminism. The Labour Movement. Environmentalism Today. Just as our lives do not

fit into one, single fixed tick box or another, neither do our struggles for social justice.

Objects remind us that if we look at what really happens – whether in meeting rooms, out on the streets, or around the kitchen tables that sustain protest – it becomes clear that there is no such thing as a pure Environmental Movement, or a discrete Anti-Capitalist Movement. They are always bound up together – chatting, fighting, planning, dreaming, and sometimes giving each other the silent treatment.

Sarah Ahmed (2013) writes that as objects circulate, they become sticky with affect. Our feelings, attachments and orientations toward the object become embedded, layered, entangled as it moves, taking on new meanings. As objects of protest circulate they are discussed and debated, soliciting many more perspectives.

As the women's anti-nuclear movement grew in the UK in the 1980s feminism was brought into direct confrontation with more traditional forms of anti-war activisms, often associated to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The largest women's camp began with a peace walk in September of 1981, with 35 walkers travelling from Cardiff, Wales to the first nuclear cruise missile storage base at RAF Greenham Common in England. Within two years, the population of the camp swelled, hosting a 30,000 strong demonstration and fostering a transnational network of women's anti-nuclear peace camps. With its women-only mandate, the mainstream media began to draw comparisons between Greenham and the ancient play Lysistrata. Promotional flyers declared, "Men Left Home for War. Now Women leave home for peace."

But the connections between feminism and anti-war ideologies were not so simple. In 1983 the *Feminism and Nonviolence* study group released a pamphlet titled *Piecing It Together: Feminism and Nonviolence*. In it they argued for a recognition of State violence that went beyond the physical use of direct force. They argued that "for us violence includes conditions which themselves kill. Poverty, hunger and racism degrade individuals and inflict suffering."

While many lauded the group's attempt to expand on simplistic ideas circulating in the anti-War movement of what constituted violence, their perspective also came under critique. "Your booklet has been thought through with care and concern," a woman identifying herself as Nefertiti wrote in response, "but you are ignorant, because you never suffered. How dare you assume that people in armed struggle choose violence? What makes you think they didn't try peaceful ways?"

Growing up white in Britain shields white people from the experiences of colonized people. The fact that such experiences of oppression are so often mystified by politicians and the media can mean that however well-intentioned white people might be, they can still fail to take account of the realities of non-white people's lives. These struggles in the 1980s called on people who saw themselves as anti-war to challenge where their definitions of violence and oppression came from.

Such conflicts and synergies, convergences and spillages, often play out around objects. To use the boltcutter or not to use the boltcutter? These questions are what give protests their unique cultures and practices. They are also the reason that Social Movements are often an oversimplified way to make sense of the complexity of protest dynamics. Drawn like boundaries

around our bodies, often forcing people together under singular banners, the master narratives of Social Movements can distort reality more than they help us reflect on it.

Too often such tidy narratives are used by ivory tower researchers and podium-hugging mansplainers to make sense of things for us – not alongside us. When people zoom out and peer down at the empty streets, they frequently offer only narratives of failure. From such a high distance up, they make our actions, our passions, look so small and insignificant. Donna Haraway calls this the god-trick, a desire to be an all-seeing eye that can hover over the world and map it out, attempt to manage it from on top (Haraway 1988).

But objects talk back.

Small Stories Carry Big Lessons

The 2014 film Pride tells the story of this banner. It is a story of the relationships formed between one small Gay and Lesbian solidarity group in London and one small community of miners in Wales. The London support group raises money to help keep the group of miner's out on strike. In the process, stereotypes get smashed and unlikely friendships form. The miners' strike becomes a moment in history that a diversity of people feel an intimate connection to. It gives us more than a bland Wikipedia infobyte, "The miners' strike was a major industrial action affecting the British coal industry." It offers everyday emotion in the place of a dramatic BBC quip: "The 1984 miners' strike was the most bitter industrial dispute in British history."

The story *Pride* tells challenges us to remember differently. It asks us to see a piece of British history through the multiple perspectives and experiences of different people, each with their own unique and messy life. *Pride's* story zooms in on the small events, reflecting the everydayness of solidarity, of brutality and of kindness. It highlights the importance of non-humans in protest: the banners, change buckets, cups of tea, spare sofas, disco songs, subversive t-shirts and multi-seater vans that also form and shape protest.

In reality, the movement of hundreds, or thousands, or hundreds of thousands of people is always messy. Just like people themselves are messy. They are made of up spilling over categories, wobbly commitments, self-contradictions and never enough time, or money, or love, or all of the above. Likewise, the little events that congeal and get called a social movement are their own emotional roller coasters.

Imagine you are there:

> The march starts and you join in near the front, dancing alongside the Samba band. You are there with a handful of friend, pointing and laughing at the wordplay on the homemade signs that surround you. Two hours later, your feet hurt, the march has reached its destination. You start to feel disheartened, listening to the same old speeches, watching the FIT team snap the same old pictures of who ever they have deemed a "professional protester".

As the sky turns a darker grey, the riot cops close in. A mild panic sweeps over you, stirring up some deep down memory of being trapped. You realise just how tired and hungry you are. Why didn't you bring that extra jumper? You have to wee and would love to do so in a real toilet. You wonder if you should have come out at all. You could be home with a cup of tea, watching telly, tucking in your child, wrapped under the duvet.

You feel the day's joys turn. Tears well up in the corner of your eyes as you wonder just how long the police kettle will last, this time. But then, the sound of the Samba band picks back up. A small circle of people, streaked in glitter, hot pink scarfs wrapped around them, start dancing. Twirling, dipping, bouncing like they are meant to be right there, right now, in this moment.

Minutes later, on the other side of the police's human cage, the chanting begins. There is one voice at first, and then many. The words, barely audible across the open air, something to do with someone's bum, a British classic. The silliness, the defiance. The reason you are here in the first place.

Listening to Protest

Doing Social Movement Studies through objects offers a chance to revel in all of the messiness of protest. Feeling the stickiness, listening to all the different perspectives, putting yourself – as researcher – into the other's shoes. And I mean, literally, putting yourself into a pair of protest shoes.

It might be a pair of climbing shoes, wrapped around the bark of a beech tree marked for demolition at the Newbury bypass protests. Or it could be a pair of wellies caked with mud, fleeing the fourth eviction of a rainy morning at Greenham Common. Or maybe they are a pair of party shoes, platinum silver or pink flats, worn into the Tate Britain's BP-sponsored Summer Party in 2010. They are scooping up oil from an under-the-dress spill, re-enacting the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster for high-flying party guests on the gallery floor.

Like travel diaries, these objects recount the everyday experiences of protest. They carry histories of tactics, blending practical function with the creativity of resistance. Shoes – like banners – remind us that protests are both sites of ritual and tradition, as well as places of innovation and imagination.

These objects are time capsules, storage containers of memories. Sometimes their life-span can be measured in years: by numbers of marches, like an old union banner, or a well-worn badge with a rusted pin, or a decades-long commitment to paper mache.

But just like people's stories, object stories do not always reveal themselves to us right away. Rather, they can be hidden or forgotten. They are tucked into the drawers of old

dressers, buried in boxes under the bed, left to mold in police lockers. Such stories often only unfold after years of trolling through libraries, social centres, and home attic archives. After hours weaving around oral history interviews, tracking down great-grandparents and listening in close for what lies beneath the surface of familiar scripts of being part of a protest. This art of getting objects to talk demands you engage all your senses.

> Point your ear toward the megaphone and listen for the crackle of changing tactics. Stare closely at the old paint marks on the central marque, stained by years of cross-country travel, carried from warehouses to lorries and back again. Feel the tip of the permanent pen as it brushes against your skin, reminding you who to call "in case of arrest".

Such close listening to objects can help us better hear each other's stories. It can get us to remember that every protest event – every march, sit-in, performative intervention, seemingly endless meeting, fundraising party, bail posting, or act of courtroom solidarity – is made up not only of multiple people, but of all kinds of different nonhuman things. There are animals, objects, architectures, and variable weather conditions that shape the many small events and moments that get culled together and called social movements. But for now, let's get back to the banners.

From Capitalism to Climate Justice

There is one banner in particular that has a lot to say about the contemporary history of British protest. Dated to its site of origin, for a glass cabinet display, the tag on this banner would read: August 2009, Climate Camp, Blackheath, London. Mixed materials.

This banner was strung up to commemorate a year of bankruptcies and bailouts. Of default loans, forced evictions, unplanned cuts and an unemployment rise of one million more people in a single year, bringing 2009 totals to 8%. Then there were the zero hour contracts, the precarious pay and the collapse of services to contend with. Chancellor Alistair Darling told the Guardian that things were "arguably the worst they've been in 60 years." Predicting, "It's going to be more profound and long lasting than people thought." (Watt 2008) His bleak outlook was already held by many with a close eye on what happens when profit is put before people.

Capitlism is Crisis, as the banner proclaimed.

It was a simple slogan. But it was one that stuck. It captured the sentiment of a moment in three simple words. It was both an analysis and a coalitional call. The banner crystallized decades of protest, from the anti-capitalist legacies of Class War to the J19 Carnival Against Capitalism in 1999, from May Day Monopoly in 2001, to the 2005 G8 Summit protests at Gleneagles (itself home to an eco-village HoriZone camp).

At the same time, this banner carried forward short-term legacies of camping for Climate Justice. The same pink on blue

designs featured in the 2008 No New Coal banner at Kingsnorth and the April 2009 Climate Camp in the City banner Nature Doesn't Do Bailouts. Each were attached to tripods, structures that can simultaneously function as raised barricades, treeless tree-sits, and banner poles. Usually made out of wood or scaffolding, tripods have a genealogy of resistance that travelled here from early pre-designs in India, to logging blockades in Australia, and then into the UK during Reclaim the Streets (among other adventures along the way).

While the 2009 Climate Camp banner was explicitly anti-capitalist in its message, since its inception, Climate Camp was committed to creating alternatives to capitalist life and targeting corporate proponents of climate change. Grown out of the 2005 G8 protests, climate camps have served as convergence spaces were a range of political ideologies and practices come into contact with one another.

Back at Climate Camp in 2006, a giant ostrich puppet helped to visualize how government officials had their 'heads in the sand' over climate change, ignoring the damning findings of the world's leading scientists. The following year this message was amplified at the Heathrow Climate Camp resisting plans to build a new runway – running right through local villages. There, the banner read "We Are Armed Only With Peer Review Science." Crafting a front page worthy photo, this banner was hoisted up in front of rows of faces – portraits of those suffering from climate injustice – from unnatural disasters caused by the unwieldy greed of the 1% (only, no one called them that yet). These portraits were multi-purpose, designed out of pop-up tent boxes, they served as both a protective device for fending

off police baton blows and a transport mechanism for moving tents from the base encampment to the BAA headquarters blockade. The portraits were affixed to protesters' arms with straps made of foam pieces, rope and gaffer tape, one for the hand, and one to rest just before the elbow.

These portrait-shield-tent transport devices brought together function and art. They carried forward the tactics of Greenham Common women's woven webs that ensnarled officers during evictions. They echoed of Claremont Road's sculpture installations-come-barricades. And afterwards, they went on reverberating in the book blocks of Italy that made their way into the UK student protest against tuition fees in 2010—designed through passed along box on gaffer tape techniques. In these ways creativity travels through protests just as much as ideologies or badges of belonging that stick us to specific organisations.

Such playfulness of disobedient design is often a response to state brutality, to violent modes of policing that also travel transnationally. The shield, the mask, the barricade, adorned and re-designed over the years, always develops in response to repression. They are fossils of resilience, but they are also artefacts of social control. When tricked into talking about repression, these protest objects tell another set of stories:

A tear gas canister from the company Chemring, like the ones found on the streets of Occupy Hong Kong, speaks about the rise of tear gas, a weapon modernized by the British at the UK's military laboratories in Porton Down in the 1950s. At the time, the Empire's supplies did not store while in the heat of India, where the weapon was regularly used to suppress colonial

uprisings. The scientists' new formulas were tested on animals, then on war veterans without their consent.

First used on UK soil against civilians in Northern Ireland in 1969, British CS gas seeped from the streets of Derry's Bogside into houses, community centres and medical clinics. In 1996 CS moved to aerosol form, finding a place on the hips of British police officers. Ever since, such chemicals have been sprayed in the faces of nonviolent protesters. They were recently used on UK Uncut protesters, students occupying at the University of Warwick, and demonstrators at the Reclaim Brixton march against corporate gentrification.

In the years since the 2011 Arab uprisings and urban square occupations around the world, sales in so-called crowd management equipment have tripled. Here in the UK, the summer riots and student fee protests were used to justify the purchase of water cannons for the London Metropolitan Police. As austerity cuts and climate injustice continue to fuel civil unrest all over the world, those in the business of selling riot control see their profits rise from the repression of protest.

Capitalism is Crisis, as the banner goes.

In October 2011, this banner resurfaced outside of St. Paul's Cathedral. In a semi-organized act of encampment, on 15 October 2011, the day to show international solidarity with Occupy Wall Street, an estimated 2,000 Londoners took to the streets around Paternoster Square, home of the London Stock Exchange. Greeted by double rows of metal barricades, riot police, dogs and horses, it soon became clear that camp was

not going to be set up in the planned concrete courtyard outside the Exchange.

After circling all of the entrances in hopes of a back way in, we found ourselves in the square outside St. Paul's Cathedral – the only space in the area big enough to handle such a large crowd. Within two hours the crowd had decided, by consensus, that they would camp right there in the square outside St. Paul's Cathderal. Call outs were made to start coordinating food, shelter and sanitation.

In the early weeks of Occupy LSX, the Capitalism is Crisis banner became an icon above the tents of the encampment. It was often used to frame photojournalists shots of the encampement. It hung over the area where general assemblies were often held. It greeted tourists and reminded commuters of why the camp was there.

Like any symbol, it was contested, debates arose of whether the camp was really anti-capitalist or just wanted alternatives to austerity and banking power. Such debates were not new to UK protest. Like other convergence-based campsites, people came together from all different experiences, backgrounds and attachments.

When St. Paul's Cathedral faced its decision of whether or not to evict the camp, Capitalism is Crisis came down and a new banner went up: What Would Jesus Do. The banner was a call to action and to a deeper reflection. It was an act of activist PR, hijacking the debate and the media frame with a story that mattered. It drew out other debates emerging in the encampment – around homelessness, mental health, the need for public space, the responsibilities of governments in a democracy, and the role

of religion in contemporary Britain. In other words, things got complicated. But then, things have always been complicated.

Sensing Movement

In the 1990s the Anti-Globalisation Movement was often referred to as a movement of movements, what Hardt and Negri (2004) termed the multitude A linking, a coming together, a crossing over. The sentiment of interconnectedness was there. It was built upon a foundation laid decades before, birthed from the promiscuous protests that came before; a messy family tree including slavery abolition, May 1968 uprisings, Anti-apartheid campaigns and queer anti-capitalisms (to name only a few).

But the problem is that Movements don't move. Movements are just a god-trick for looking down, separating out, categorising, taxonimising, pinning butterfly wings to the wall. It is people who move. They move under what Judith Butler has called wavering banners of identity.

Our messy selves, stick and unstick to issues and each other. People stick and unstick because of friendships, lovers, families, class backgrounds, racial identifications, jobs, childhood attachments, spoken languages – what Aimee Rowe Carlson calls our longings and belongings (Rowe 2005).

Understanding protest requires methods for analysing how struggles are bound up together. But this binding must reach below the surface of social network graphs, beyond the transcript ready interview responses on the tips of spokes people's tongues. There are truths that objects record that people alone cannot

recount. They archive the contradictions and conflicts that stick and unstick people. Those differences that bind struggles together, as well as those that repel, or frighten or discomfort. They can draw out those negative thoughts that get buried deep down or called fancy sounding things in Jacobin speak like 'ideological disagreements over Marxist ontologies'. This happens in our work because it is easier than talking about how we are scared of each other sometimes. That we just can't stand the sight of each other. That other people are hell.

God-trick formations of movements are far easier to peer review publish than woven tales of mismatched threads. It is easier to be a multitude than to pry into the fictions of *we*, into the depths of not being all in this together.

These complicated times call for complicated stories. Stories that do not shy away from the mess. Yet, our analyses also need clear targets for intervention. Distinct, yet interconnected. How can our work better contribute? What can it track and trace?

Money flows traced back to profiteers, as well as to the experts that legitimize state and corporate violence. The geologists pinpointing perfect fracking spots, and the PR firms selling the public on them are also – though not equally – responsible. Like the doctors and psychologists that helped make Guantanamo Bay, expertise and communications are key members of any climate criminal gang. In all of these networks, objects are also to be held accountable. Tracked, mapped, sabotaged as they wind around the land and under the sea, like pipelines and internet cables.

But to confront these complex networks of capitalism as crisis, other attachments of Social Movement Studies need

to keep being narrated away – attachments to the god-trick of seeing from above, to categorizing outcomes into neat little boxes, to creating new words with ever expanding -izations, to disciplinary recognition, to the myth that any of us go it alone.

The struggle is to find ways to tell complicated stories that can later be simplified. Both the research and the protests that move us come from complicated work. They arise out of wading through mess: researching, strategizing, reflecting, planning and rehearsing. Making time and space for care, building trust into relationships and sitting with discomfort, are all necessary components of research that goes on in the background, before the final act appears. It must be complicated before it is three simple words.

Capitalism is Crisis.

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Liad Shadmi

The Yellow Protest – An Analysis of the Use of the Yellow Badge in Corona Conspiracy Theories and Protests

Design and protest cultures are often interrelated because (e.g. graphic/communication) design can be used as a powerful tool for conveying messages and ideas in protest movements (cf. Diaz/Martinez 2021). Design elements such as typography, colour, imagery, and composition can help create impactful visuals that grab people's attention and communicate a message effectively. For example, protest posters, banners, and flyers are often designed to be eye-catching and memorable. They may use bold colours and typography, striking imagery, and simple, direct messaging to convey a message or call to action. These designs can be tools for expressing dissent (Glaser/Ilic 2005) and sparking social change (in a good or in a bad sense). In addition, graphic design can also be used to create branding and visual

identities for protest movements, helping to create a sense of unity and coherence among protestors. This can include logos, slogans, and other visual elements that help to create a recognizable brand for the movement. Overall, design can play a crucial role in protest cultures by helping to (sometimes over-) amplify voices, raise awareness, and inspire action among communities (Bieling 2019; cf. Markussen 2019).

Image 01: Liberty Leading the People, Eugène Delacroix, 1830, graphically edited.

5G implants, miracle cures, mass control, and Bill Gates as the mastermind behind the Corona pandemic are just a few examples of the various conspiracy theories that were created during

the COVID-19 pandemic. A reasonable number of people enthusiastically supported these beliefs and demonstrated on the streets to support these claims. Protests and demonstrations have been an interest in art and design fields for a very long time, from the surreal imagery that accompanied the Hippie demonstrations in the 60s back to the French revolution symbolism that was depicted at Liberty leading the people [image 01] by Eugéne Delacroix. Correspondingly, the Corona conspiracy theorists adopted their own set of symbols and visual identity tools. In this essay, I will analyze one particular visual aspect of the Corona conspiracy theorists' *Brand* and set it on a global comparison.

The Yellow Badge, marking Jewish people, dates back to the Umayyad Caliphate in the early 8th century to distinguish Jewish citizens from other citizens. Since then, the badge has been used throughout history in several nations. The last and most controversial use of the Yellow Badge in history was issued by the Axis Powers during WWII. Since then, the yellow symbol has been strictly associated with the Holocaust and marked the horrors that were done during the war. Recently, this symbol was documented in protests against the Corona restrictions in several lands (including the UK, USA, Israel, and Germany). Furthermore, the yellow colour was adopted as a *brand colour* that symbolizes the protest. This cynical use of the Yellow Badge obviously supports the protests to make the analogy between the strict restrictions taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to the behavior of totalitarian regimes of the early/mid-19th century.

According to Professor Sheer Ganor[01] at the *University of Minnesota*, a lot of historians claim that the juxtaposition of the Holocaust to current events is not necessarily a negative action:

> "there's a growing group of Holocaust historians who think we have a lot to benefit in understanding the Holocaust in conjunction with other events, in studying and speaking about genocide in comparative terms."(Perry 2021)

But she does say that the use of the symbol is a problematic usage that might connect more with the Holocaust denial movement, which encourages denying or minimizing the significance of its evil:

> "Covid has done something different to this discourse. The anti-lockdown and anti-vaccination protests [are] such a transnational movement, such a transnational phenomenon, taking this trivializing abuse of the Holocaust to a frightening level … work with the assumption that the Holocaust was the terrible catastrophe and a horrible crime. They want to benefit from its moral cachet." (Perry 2021).

Cynical usage of visual symbols is a common trait in protests that might lead to incitement and polarization, for example, the movement against Yitzahk Rabin in the early 90s portrayed him

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as an SS officer [Image 02]. Later this image was considered an offensive material that was a part of the large incitement movement that encouraged the murderer Igal Amir to assassinate the late prime minister.

Image 02: Yedioth Ahronoth, graphically edited version.

In the following images, we can compare three Yellow Badges that were used during anti-lockdown and anti-vaccination protests. The first image [Image 03] is from a demonstration in the USA. This sign contains the word *Unvaccinated*, a Wi-Fi chip symbol, the Microsoft logo, and an ID number containing the numbers 666 (that refer to the devil). The second image [Image 04] was taken in Israel, and the Yellow Badge contains the word *Dictatorship Opposer* (סרבן דיקטטורה). The third image [Image 05] was taken in Berlin at an anti-vaccination protest and contains the word *unvaccinated* (*ungeimpft*). When we compare the designs, we see that the symbol is the same in each protest, but the content is different.

Image 03: A protester rallies against vaccine mandates on November 20, 2021, in New York City. Getty Images, graphically edited version.

Image 04: TheMarker magazine, Ofer Vaknin, graphically edited version.

Image 05: A participant in a demonstration against Coronavirus restrictions stands with a yellow star with the inscription "not vaccinated" in Berlin, March 13, 2021. Fabian Sommer/picture alliance via Getty Images, graphically edited version.

When we dive deeper and try to decipher what the content tells us about the culture and traits of the population, we have to take into consideration that there were many Yellow Badges

during the protests with different contents. We are only using these three as a case study. The Yellow Badge from the USA implies that the pandemic/vaccination is part of a Bill Gates/5G scheme. The American badge shows more radical and conspiracy beliefs that the protesters tried to portray. The sign from Israel is connected to a whole different protest against the Israeli government and Benjamin Netanyahu that took place during 2020. It was aimed personally against Netanyahu, accusing him of dictatorship. The Israeli Yellow Badge is an example of the common phenomena that take place in modern demonstrations – the combination of several protests into one protest or the uncertainty of what the demonstration is about. On the other hand, the German sign is the most modest and simple of the three. The modest German badge might convey a certain attitude of straightforwardness or rather a more *careful* usage of this symbol, considering German history.

Although the contents written on the badge are different from country to country, we still see a strong resemblance in how this conspiracy theory is being *branded* or designed. They all use the same form and the same colour – they all try to use the Yellow Badge in a cynical way, comparing the restrictions taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic to the crimes of WWII. The usage of radical/cynical symbols is not an innovative invention – same as the Yellow Badge that was put into use during the Axis powers and originated in an earlier epoch. From a brand perspective, one can argue if this brand strategy is effective or not, but this dubious strategy does raise moral questions about its nature.

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Markus Kreutzer

Visions of Openness – The Diverse Perspectives on Openness for Designing Open Systems

Open Innovation, Open Source, Open Knowledge, Open Education. Since the internet enabled the emergence of more open systems, the advantages of openness found their way into areas like economy, politics, society, and technology. From software to knowledge platforms, app stores, ecosystems, communities, or political strategies. Numerous organizations and initiatives have occurred with a strong belief in open sharing, collaboration, and production. But what is actually meant when we define something as open? It turns out there exist a variety of different visions of openness. This investigation elaborates these differences and uncovers their underlying assumptions, values, beliefs, and motivations. In particular it sheds light on the various nuances of openness, and shows

why the degree of openness is often a question of perspective, intention, and who defines somethings as open. The paper aims to enable a more differentiated view on openness and support a more conscious design of open systems.

Background

The emergence of the internet brought many changes. One of these changes is the replacement of closed with more open systems. Many architects of the digital age promote openness as their foundational value what led to concepts like Open Innovation, Open Source, Open Knowledge, or Open Education (Russel 2014:1). From software to knowledge platforms, app stores, ecosystems, communities, or political strategies, numerous organizations and initiatives have occurred with a strong belief in open sharing, collaboration, and production (Chesbrough 2017, Curley & Salmelin 2018, Greant 2009, Jhangiani & Biswas-Diener 2017). But what is actually meant when something is described as open? The answer to this question often depends on *who* describes something as open. Technologists speak about the open development of software, economists about open platforms as a corporate strategy, and educators about the open sharing of knowledge. They all speak about openness as a core design principle, but often mean something fundamentally different. This investigation elaborates these differences and uncovers their visions of openness. Because these visions shape how and why people apply the idea of openness. Hence, the investigation aims

to form a basis that supports the purposeful application of openness in the design of open systems for technological, economic, political, or educational activities.

Visions

Visions are normative imaginations of the future that represent assumptions, values, beliefs, and motivations (Neuhaus 2009:177). Visions live in the minds of people and spread through communication. They are mental constructions that are formed by past experiences that people have made in their social reality. They often represent a desirable economic, political, technological, or societal state of something at a vague point in the future. Visions like other imaginations of the future represent the future in the present. These representations are the realities in which organizations and individuals take action, make decisions, create strategies, and design products or services (:177). They significantly shape processes in the present and are helpful in multiple ways. Visions help us orientate, make decisions, and identify options for change. They are also a communication medium between people to discuss possible directions and guide us towards a more desirable state (Lösch, Heil & Schneider 2017:142). On the other side, unreflected visions can guide us towards undesirable futures. In order to make sense of their full potential they have to be reflected and underlying assumptions have to get uncovered and critically analyzed. Visions that are shared as narratives can be a very powerful tool to organize large groups of people, since they

can activate actions and behavioral changes (:142). So in order to consciously and responsibly apply the power of visions, a critical examination is inevitable.

Openness

To properly understand a concept like Open Innovation or Open Source, the term openness needs to be clarified. What do we actually mean when we describe a door, a society, or a person as open? One definition suggests that something is open when there is no enclosing or confining barrier, and when there is accessibility on all or nearly all sides without restriction to a particular group of people (Merriam-Webster 2021). But how precise is this definition of openness? Is a door open when there is a gap between the door frame and the door? Or is it open when it isn‘t locked and therefore accessible without a key? What if someone isn‘t physically able to open the door even though it isn‘t locked? Is it then closed for that person? When trying to define a society, a person, or a system as open the range of possible meanings of openness doesn’t get smaller. As mentioned above, the meaning of openness often depends on the context and a person‘s understanding of openness. Thus, defining something as open or closed is mostly a question of perspective and a question of *how open* something is (Maxwell 2006:122). In order to imagine possible degrees of openness, it is important to highlight a key driver for the mentioned concepts: On the internet anyone can publish or invent something without asking anyone for permission (Mozilla 2017). The internet was

designed as an open system with a high degree of openness, what created the foundation for the development of concepts like Open Innovation or Open Source. If the internet had been designed with a lower degree of openness, the development of some of these concepts would probably not have been possible. It represents a kind of framework that defines the maximum degree of openness for everything that is built on top of it. How an internet with a lower degree of openness would look like is visible in the design of many popular online service platforms that are centrally managed. The app stores of large internet companies for instance can been seen as an internet within the internet. Though, their entry barriers are significantly higher. On most of these platforms not anyone can publish or invent something. So, in comparison to *the* internet, the degree of openness on many service platforms is often very low. Though, both systems are considered as open.

Vision of Openness for Economic Power

The vision of designed openness as a driver for economic power is mostly visible in the concept of Open Innovation. The idea of Open Innovation emerged in the beginning of the 21st century with a primer focus on individual companies and their collaboration with partners in more open ways (Chesbrough 2017:35). It can be seen as the opposite of a closed innovation model where internal research and development activities lead to internally produced products and their distribution (:35). In the concept of Open Innovation, innovation emerges by accessing,

harnessing, and absorbing information flows outside of a company (:35). Until today Open Innovation has been developed further and moved from product innovation to business model and service innovation (:37). It now implies the open collaboration with communities and entire ecosystems. In numerous publications Henry Chesbrough who coined the term Open Innovation, defines two ways how information flow: outside-in and inside-out (:35 – 36). In the outside-in flow the innovation process is opened up for external information inflows. In the inside-out flow unused and underutilized information is let out of a company, so that others can use it for their business. This allows companies to actively sell and trade intellectual property. In comparison to concepts like Open Source, the Open Innovation approach doesn't ignore the business model of the company, instead it puts it at the center of it (:36). Thus, the degree of openness, and the inflow and outflow of information, is designed and managed to achieve the desired business goals. One of the more recent ideas in Open Innovation are service platforms. These are very tangible to understand the vision of openness for economic power. A service platform is designed to invite, inspire, and motivate customers, developers, and others to create something on top of it or join it (:37). Well known examples are the already mentioned app stores. These systems are the foundation for smartphones and all the applications and services used on them. The outside-in and inside-out flow of digital information is strategically managed and controlled by the app store provider. Which apps are available? Who can publish an app? Under which conditions can an app be published? Which user sees and therefore uses which app? It's all

based on the economic needs of the app store provider. When a service platform is designed in an open way, the activities of the contributors ideally increase the value of the business (:37), which makes the idea of open platforms very representative for the vision of openness for economic power.

Vision of Openness for Political Governance

The vision of designed openness for political governance is mostly driven by the concept of Open Innovation 2.0. In contrast to Open Innovation it takes on a more systemic and overarching perspective that is rather focused on organizing political innovations instead of private companies and their product and service innovations. Open Innovation 2.0 blurs the boundaries between universities, industries, governments, and societal actors as innovators (Curley & Salmelin 2018:3). The inventors of Open Innovation 2.0 claim that by rapidly exchanging information within digital platforms and ecosystems, solutions are scalable system-wide and due to a network effect these solutions can get adopted rapidly (:50 – 51). Open Innovation 2.0 is based on the principles and values of collaboration and co-creation, and the believe that innovation is more successful when its practiced by many (:1). To enable this kind of innovation the platforms and ecosystems that connect people have to be open. The design and management of these innovation communities are the main tasks of governments that are interested in following the vision of openness for political governance. But just having open ecosystems and platforms might

not be enough. Openness in political governance also means that every citizen develops the courage to be open for innovation (:129). To uncover the new and adapt to the new quickly. The formation of such kind of society is a complex task as it requires collective beliefs and assumptions, a culture, that is open for change (:129). Thus, the vision of openness for political governance consists of two future states: The development of open platforms and ecosystems for rapid collaboration, and the design of cultural openness.

Vision of Openness for Technological Progress

The vision of designed openness for technological progress can be identified in the concept and culture of Open Source. Most often the concept of Open Source relates to the development of software. In software development openness means that everyone can freely run, study, modify, and share a program, and use it in commercial and non-commercial ways (Greant 2009:70). This definition of openness guarantees that everyone can look at the source code to figure out how something works, improve individual development skills, and ensure that a program does what it pretends to do (:70). By having the possibility to modify and the right to share, a program can be made more useful for oneself and others (:70). Often there is a lack of clarity or even a conflict when it comes to the idea of Free Software and Open Source Software. There are a lot of overlays, but the main difference is that Free Software is an ethical movement that puts the values of software freedom over technological progress

(:71 – 72). Open Source in comparison is about sharing human innovation for various reasons, but mostly for the development of more progressive technologies, educational purposes, and the self-determination of developers (:72). Though, many projects that share the values of free software operate under the title Open Source, or Free and Open Source. Most contributors work on Open Source projects for their personal benefit and the benefit of the community at large (Booth 2010:9). Many of them share the opinion that Open Source software development is the best way to develop software (:21). Many developers get satisfied by sharing their work openly or solving a problem, just as other creators get excited by producing a drawing, a writing, a poem, or a piece of music (:139). Many of these creators never offer their work for sale and instead publish it for others to enjoy, reflect, and discuss (:139). No matter if it is a piece of software, a painting, or a poem, the open sharing of work aims to contribute to the human advancement towards more desired futures, what represents the essence of the vision of openness for technological progress.

Vision of Openness for Social Equality

The vision of designed openness for social equality is mostly observable in the concept of Open Knowledge and Open Education. The production and distribution of knowledge has always defined the possibilities of humans (Jhangiani & Biswas-Diener 2017:3). Among other things, education is probably one of the most powerful human inventions as it ensures that knowledge

passes from one person to another (:3). This often happens behind closed doors what lead to wide-spread exclusion and power inequalities (:4 – 5). Open Knowledge and Education approaches aim to fix this. Advocates argue that in order to fight education inequality, knowledge has to be open and accessible, so that everyone has the possibility to participate in education. With the internet as an open system such widespread distribution of digitized knowledge is theoretical possible (Maxwell 2006:123). Openness of knowledge means that everyone can freely access knowledge regardless of aspects like the ability to pay or location (Jhangiani & Biswas-Diener 2017:148). This kind of openness aims to enable the independence of individuals from threats of arbitrary power and centralized control (Russel 2014:2). If knowledge is power, then Open Knowledge and Education is the distribution of power to individuals. Openness is therefore a vision that drives developments towards this belief.

Conclusion

All these concepts contain the word open and, on the basis of the prior defined term openness, are open to a higher or lower degree. The visions of these concepts represent the interests of the people that developed them. That means that the degree of openness is designed in regard to these interests and goals. The vision of openness for economic power contains the acceleration logic of a capitalist economic system and is open for everyone who could be beneficial for business activities. The vision of openness for political governance expands this

idea and envisions a political system that innovates through open societal structures. It represents an idea of governance that is open when it generates political innovations that could help political leaders to deal with complex challenges. In comparison to these ideas the vision of openness for technological progress isn‘t about the centralized design and management of openness, instead openness serves the needs of technologists and enables accessibility for everyone with skills in software development.

Though, the only one of the visions discussed that has a relatively high degree of openness is the vision of openness for social equality. In contrast to the other visions, this one is based on the assumption that a more equitable society is only possible, if openness means that something is open for everyone without barriers, specific conditions, skills, or any form of centralized control.

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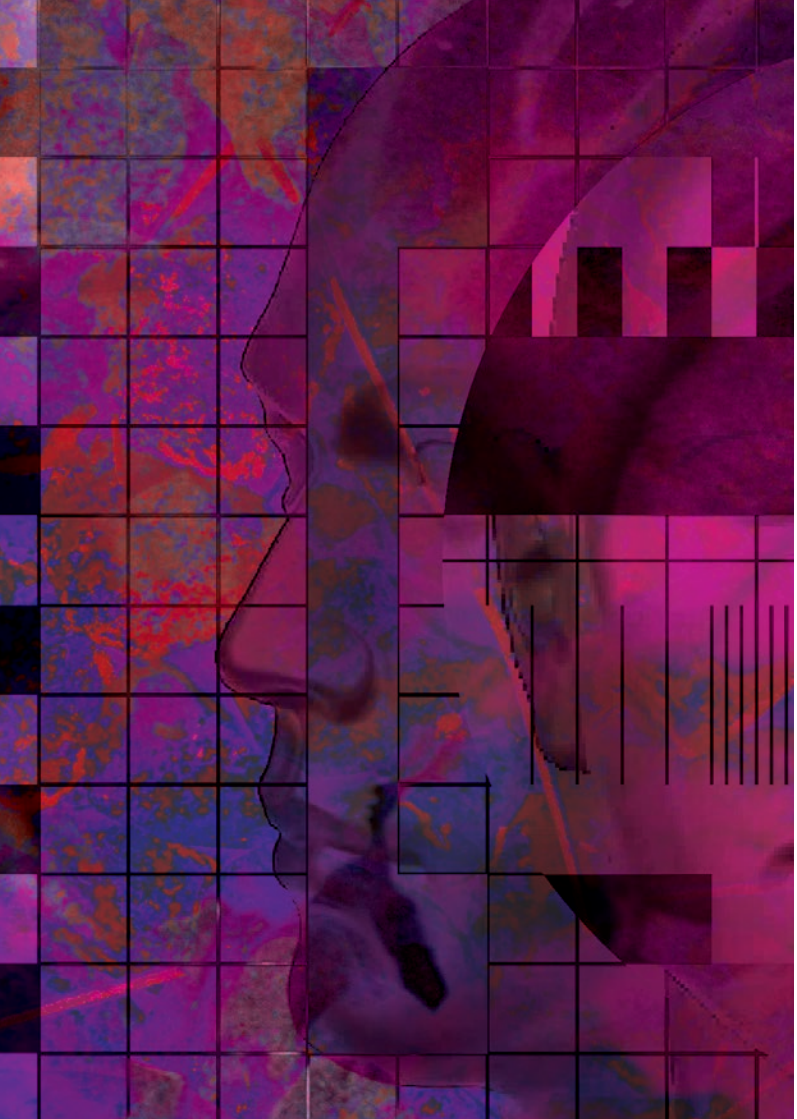

Alice Lagaay

Vestigia Nulla Retorsum – "Leave No Trace"

As those who are alive today steadily awaken to the emerging global awareness of the Anthropocene – a geological time interval defined by the impact of humans on the planet and its ecosphere – they must familiarize themselves with an increasing flurry of new vocabulary: **Trash vortices**, **Anthroposore**, **glasstic load**… a host of new terms are rapidly entering the **desecration phrasebook**, introducing words and concepts that can be drawn upon to aptly describe, and thus help one to better grasp, the multiple ominous realities of the planet in the age of humans. The main novelty of these terms is that they describe phenomena of the *natural* landscape that are in fact not at all given by nature but the result of human collective action: **plastic soup** – those giant islands of rubbish that swirl in ocean gyres – is the direct result, accumulated over time, of our modern mode of living, the visible mark left over by a consumer society that functions by conscious suppression (active disregard or feigned oblivion) of the direct and indirect consequences of its peoples' urge to satisfy purchasable desires: Somehow one's perceived *need* for whatever the fleeting object is that is sealed in plastic wrapping

(from child's toy to cheese) still mostly trumps any concern for the durable waste that it produces. In this regard we manifestly could not care less for the traces we leave.

This carelessness seems all the more bewildering insofar as concern for one's *individual* legacy, interest in the mark that one might leave beyond the short period of one's existence, indeed the desire to leave a mark at all, would seem to be a motivating factor in many areas of human activity: why else, in the end, do people seek to procreate? Why are pyramids and monuments erected, or memoirs written, and secret journals kept? Why do lovers etch hearts with their initials into the bark of forest trees? Why are messages in bottles found decades after being thrown into the water – if it weren't all for a human fascination with the idea that something of one's individual self might persist beyond the limits of one's own time on earth? That a trace of one's existence might be left… and one day found. The drive to record one's *having been here,* be it deliberately through the ubiquitous tagging of (paradoxically anonymous) initials in public loos (*I woz here*), the taking of a selfie in front of a cultural site, or the writing of an ambitious novel, arguably boils down to the simple need to extend the impact of one's life beyond the realm of one's own limited sense of time and awareness, the desire to project a readable trace into the future.

Seen in this light, what individual humans likely find most disturbing in the face of the Anthropocene is not so much the fact that our collective noxious waste really has left what is probably now an indelible mark on the landscape of the planet (although that *should* be what we find distressing). Rather, it is

the fact that our individuality – each person's unique signature, the trace of our distinct identities, the singular narrative or our particular lives – is not only rendered invisible; it is completely obliterated in the ugly mire of *fatberg* (the congealed mass formed by the combination of flushed non-biodegradable solid matter, congealed grease or cooking fat that has been found to block ageing sewer systems in Western cities). Could this be why we find planetary scale pollution so hard to deal with? Because it rubs our noses in precisely what we do not want to have to admit, which is that our human individual lives, when scaled to the global, are actually quite unremarkable, quite ordinary and banal, and in terms of the combined material debris that they produce, far worse than indifferent: we are toxic.

Gradual realization of the gross destructive power of human life in industrialised consumer based societies has given rise not just to a new vocabulary to describe the impact of this negative force on the ecosystems and climate of the planet but also to a bustle of movements, strains of activism and new modes of thinking and of life aimed at curtailing our combined destructive influence by reducing our waste, Co^2 emissions as well as the suffering inflicted on sentient beings most obviously by intensive farming. These movements range from the mild and reasonable to the more radical, far-fetched and counter-intuitive. Becoming a vegetarian or a vegan, for example (if one wasn't yet one to begin with), requires quite straight forward and relatively easy to apply changes in one's daily habits which, when scaled up, would considerably reduce both the amount of Co^2 emissions produced and the heinous suffering of animals brought about by industrial farming. Far more radical – and a bit

niche – is the thinking of an online community of anti-natalists who in their most extreme guise go by the name of **efilists**. Efilism is based on the word **life** spelt backwards, the idea being that one might collectively un-wind, un-do or de-create the devastating effects of humanity – by self-sacrifice. Those who identify as efilists believe that life itself is inherently destructive and negative, the cause of far more suffering than good, and that it should by no means be reproduced. On the contrary, the best thing anyone can do, so says the efilist, is to voluntarily end one's life in order to save the world and alleviate pain. This may well amount to muddled thinking, after all, when translated into German, the retrograde of *Leben* (life) spells *Nebel* – fog. Moreover, the idea that one should seek *not* just not to add to destruction and misery, but that through self-sacrifice one might *undo* the suffering of others is neither new – it echoes practices of atonement, indulgence and martyrdom in many religions – nor does it address the underlying blind individualism that is at the core of the pollution problem. In fact it underscores and inflates the importance of the individual, when what is really needed is imagination of an alternative to thinking in terms of reproducible singulars.

A few years ago I was invited by an artist collective to participate in a series of meetings under the heading **Lying Fallow**. The experiment involved 30 people spending a day together on three separate occasions (in spring, summer and autumn) to collectively and deliberately *do nothing*, to lie fallow. The challenge involved receding the habits usually associated with encountering others in such contexts: we did not introduce ourselves by name, say who we were, where we came

from or what our job titles were; our being together did not rely on communicating labelable identities; it was borne, instead, of an attentiveness to the sheer fact of our assembly and its deliberate absence of purpose. It required careful attendance to a form of silence – or the absence of trace – giving way to a perception that the leaving of a trace does not necessarily imply an experience fully had or a life well lived. Those who partook in the collective experience are connected by a rare form of kinship: we have witnessed the reverberations in our respective lives of the power of a collective silence. The quality of this silence does not amount to a refusal to participate nor is it simply "keep calm and carry on". Its political – perhaps even ecological – potency resides in an ethos whereby it is possible to experience a form of being that does not need to be validated by means of a retrospectively readable sign. Imagine a collective that does not acquiesce, but also holds up no banner and has nothing to sell. There is a place of being without purpose or characteristic where the absent evokes the possible. Or as the motto of another secret society would have it, Vestigia Nulla Retorsum: Never a Step Backward, Leave No Trace.

KURZBIOGRAFIEN

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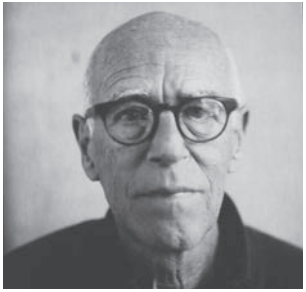
Foto: Kai Hattermann



FLIP BOOL (Warnsveld 1947) is an art- and photohistorian. Formerly chief curator modern art at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, director of the Netherlands Photo Archives, lecturer modern art at Leiden University and professor of photography at the Academy of Applied Sciences in Breda. Realized a great number of publications and exhibitions in the field of the visual arts, graphic design and photography.

Foto: Artur Kowallick made with a Camera Minutera, Berlin 21 October 2018

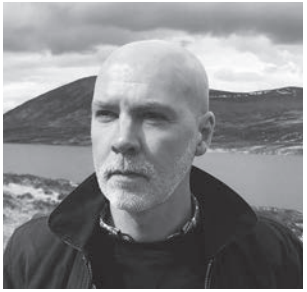
Prof. em. Dr. Michael Erlhoff was the founding dean of the school of design (today: KISD), and Dean of the CUAS department of cultural studies (2002 – 2006). Together with Uta Brandes he published the magazine zweitschrift, he was editor-in-chief of the art magazine *K;* he published an annual *Kurt Schwitters Almanach* and he was a member of the advisory committee for documenta 8 (1985 – 1987). From 1986 to 1990, he was director of the German Design Council in Frankfurt am Main. In 1991 he was appointed founding dean of the KISD Köln International School of Design in Cologne (KISD) where, until 2012, he was professor of design history and design theory. He was a member of the German Association for Design Theory and Research (DGTF). He was author or editor of about fourty books and of many other texts, and co-founded the BIRD Board of International Research in Design, which has published around 30 books on design research so far.

Anna Feigenbaum is a Professor in Digital Storytelling at Bournemouth University where she co-directs the Centre for Science, Health and Data Communication Research. She is co-author of *The Data Storytelling Workbook* (Routledge 2020), *Protest Camps* (Zed 2013) and author of *Tear Gas* (Verso 2017). From digging into dusty archives to data visualising absent deaths, as a scholar she is drawn to difficult, messy and ethically challenging questions that exist around how we tell evidence-based stories. As a consultant and trainer, Professor Feigenbaum collaborates with charities, NGOs, health organisations, journalists and other researchers to explore ways to tell humanising data stories. In addition to peer review journal articles and book chapters, Professor Feigenbaum is a dedicated science communicator, contributing to newspapers, podcasts, television and radio programmes around the world.

Markus Kreutzer is a Strategic Designer based in Berlin. He designs strategic options that support organizations to navigate a complex and rapidly changing world. Thereby, his work focuses mostly on navigating uncertainty, discovering opportunities, and enabling transformation processes. Markus has a master's degree in Futures Studies and has worked with organizations such as the Stockholm Resilience Centre, moovel lab, Domestic Data Streamers, HfG Schwäbisch Gmünd or the Emerging City Lab Addis Ababa.

Alice Lagaay is professor for theory (Performative Studies and Media Theory) in the Design Department at the University of Applied Sciences Hamburg (HAW Hamburg). She is as founding member and active in several networks that seek to foster new formats for the generation and communication of philosophical content, e.g. performancephilosophy.org and Expedition Philosophie e.V. Alice Lagaay is co-editor of the performance philosophy book series at Rowman and Littlefield International and writes occasionally for the *German Philosophie Magazin*. Most recently she collaborated in the research project Spec Space at the HAW Centre for Design Research, the results of which are to be published in *Specology. Zu einer ästhetischen Forschung* (Hamburg Adocs, 2023).

Foto: Moritz Wehrmann



Craig Martin is Professor of Interdisicplinary Design Studies in the School of Design, Edinburgh College of Art, The University of Edinburgh. As an interdisciplinary researcher his interests span design studies, social and cultural geography, and anthropology. Key theoretical concerns include the intersection of mundane design and social complexity. Of particular importance to his research is investigating the hidden power of everyday design, specifically the malevolent aspects of design and spatial politics, played out in a range of empirical settings such as drug smuggling practices. His books include *Shipping Container* (Bloomsbury, 2016) and *Deviant Design: The Ad Hoc, the Illicit, the Controversial* (Bloomsbury, 2022).

Liad Shadmi is a freelance Graphic Designer and Art Director based in Hamburg. He graduated with honors from *Shenkar College of Engineering & Design*, one of the leading design schools in Israel. Liad specializes in Graphic Design, Brand Identity, Art Direction, Type Design, Print & Layout and Web Design with a strong emphasis on Typography in his work. He is passionate about researching design, particularly Vernacular design and believes that design should be rooted in deep and meaningful research. Liad strives to combine heritage and classic attributes with contemporary virtues in his work.

IMPRESSUM

DESIGNABILITIES is the name under which we publish special issues or curated compilations of texts from designforschung.org as open access PDF files or printed publications. As an internationally peer assessed journal we invite papers that enrich the discourse on design (research, theory, practice) and welcome submissions from designers, researchers, artists, non-/academics, curators and critics which seek to engage with all areas of research for, about or through design. The journal is concerned with the epistemic potentials of design research, as well as with the question of which ways and practices of knowledge production we can develop and apply in and beyond the design disciplines. This also involves a critical examination concerning the role of design(ers) in relation to societal conditions and hegemonies, and the search for ways to make these visible and transformable. The journal is international in nature but is mindful of cultural differences and encourages diverse local practices. Use of language besides English or German and form of discourse besides academic are welcome.

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