

# QUESTIONS TO ASK AND TO LIVE

an autoethnography about values of Higher Education in Design

Chiara Treglia

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Chiara Treglia  
Global Innovation Design  
Tutor: Sarah Pennington  
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### **Thank you**

To Dipali, Romy, Theresa, Dana, Fernanda, Esmeralda, Alison. I have no words to describe how important you are in this journey we are taking together. To all the participants of the co-creation for your meaningful contribution. To my tutor, Sarah, for opening my eyes to the unexpected. To Tino. To my dad.

### **List of Illustrations**

Figure 1. Co-creation session, 22 May 2018, Yokohama, Author's picture.

Figure 2. Landing page Free University of Design, Author's picture.

# INDEX

5	Introduction
8	Methodology
9	Autoethnography
9	Participatory design
12	Epiphany
14	My trouble
16	Investigation
16	Brief history of Design
20	Marketisation of Higher Education
20	The value of design
21	Student client
23	What are the alternatives?
27	Co-designing design education
28	The macro in micro
33	Star designer
35	Co-designer
37	Free University of Design
43	Conclusion
46	References
51	Appendix

# INTRODUCTION

**Looking at the present design discourse, one notes a surprising- and I would say alarming- absence of questioning design activities. Concepts such as branding, competitiveness, globalization, comparative advantages, lifestyle design, differentiation, strategic design, fun design, emotion design, experience design, and smart design prevail in design magazines and the all too few books about design. [...] The issue of design and democracy doesn't enjoy popularity- apart from a few laudable exception.<sup>1</sup>**

**Gui Bonsiepe**

The 'issue of design and democracy'<sup>2</sup> is a facet of design for social innovation. In this perspective, Bonsiepe's statement got me thinking about why this field of design lacks popularity.

My journey starts with an epiphany that came about through my sense that the environment in which I am studying is impacted by a market-driven force. After the first few months studying at Royal College of Art (in short RCA), while reflecting on the words from Bonsiepe, I started to question whether the unpopularity of democratic design as opposed to an abundance of market-driven and commercial design, actually starts in design schools. I saw a parallel between his concerns about the 'absence of questioning design activities'<sup>3</sup> and my trouble with conceiving design merely as problem-solving, rather than a problem-scoping tool.

This epiphany made me wonder which values dominate in the learning trajectory of design students, in the UK higher educational model and

<sup>1</sup> Gui Bonsiepe, 'Democracy & Design', *Design Issues* 22 (2) (2006): 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

in other models. Then, I looked into the RCA students' experience and I researched: how and where do these values manifest in education? What kind of impact are these future designers going to want to make in the world? These are the questions that motivated my dissertation.

In order to explore these questions about the educational context where I am situated, I have used secondary and primary research approaches. I will explain my methodological rationale in the opening chapter – describing approaches of *autoethnography* and *co-design*. The former is a useful tool to contextualise my personal experience as a determining factor in my research, and the latter is an approach that allows me to align my design-self and my political-self.

To further investigate the values that dominate design education, I will trace the historical relationship between design and the market and between education and the market and how the two come together in form of *marketised design education*. I will also juxtapose the marketised educational model to alternative models, such as the Scandinavian social-democratic model, where design students are exposed to different values, including a sense of social responsibility, in order to address a different array of social needs.

This broader secondary investigation creates the foundation of a primary investigation where I present the proceedings and findings of a co-creation around the touch points of the design student's experience. Together with a diverse group of students, we discussed how the macro influences of a broad socio-economical scheme manifest themselves in micro-moments of a student's life, such as assessments criteria. Secondly, we debated on the cultural tension, as it manifests in the life of design students, between star designers - commonly known as those who aspire to fame through the commercial success of their products- and co-designers - whose success is not determined by their individualistic achievements, but rather by the extent of empowerment and social change made possible by their interventions. I argue that the *we-centred* co-designer approach and mindset is needed to address the current and future social and environmental challenges that we are facing.

Finally, I will present a synthesis of the main learnings of this research process in the form of a prototype for a value-inclusive educational model, called Free University of Design. FUD is a space for the expression of all values, where the driving forces of the market, sustainability and social innovation reconcile. I will explain the vision of the school and how its educational policies are for learners to address the challenges of a transitioning world, redefine the way we conceive ecological and social sustainability and seed cultural change.

In the conclusion, I will summarise the main takeaways of this process and I will elaborate on further questions that this dissertation aims to open up: in fact, it is my hope that this dissertation will –even if in microscopic

capacity- fill the gap of 'questioning design activities'<sup>4</sup> that Bonsiepe worries about, by adding more criticality to the current design discourse.

<sup>4</sup> Bonsiepe, p.27.

# METHODOLOGY

In this section, I provide the reader with a rationale behind the choice of conducting research from a personal perspective and how that suits the overarching purpose of this dissertation.

Moreover, I explain the concept of participatory design, which is a political design methodology that I decided to use for my research for both its design and political scope.

## **AUTOETHNIGRAPHY**

Autoethnography is a research methodology that 'recognises the innumerable ways personal experience influences the research process'<sup>5</sup>. As this research orbits around my experience as a design student, I want to use an approach that admits and comfortably accepts that in this work there is a layer of subjectivity and emotionality, 'rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist'<sup>6</sup>, as Carolyn Ellis, social studies researcher, claims.

Three elements make this text an autoethnography. Firstly, this text begins with an epiphany, which is a particularly impactful moment that signed my experience as a designer and forced me to reflect on its nature and rationalise it.

## **'epiphanies-[...] times of existential crises that forced a person to attend to and analyse lived experience'.<sup>7</sup>**

Secondly, autoethnography consists of observations around a certain culture.<sup>8</sup> In the case of this text, the design educational culture (in different contexts) is the object of my investigation, with a particular focus on the cultural role of students and educators.

Lastly, the goal of an ethnographic analysis is to bring awareness among the insiders and outsiders of a culture about some aspects of the culture itself.<sup>9</sup> In this text, I hope not only to bring awareness to the values of design educational models, but also to propose a reconciling value-inclusive

<sup>5</sup> Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, 'Autoethnography: An Overview', *Historical Social Research Historische Sozialforschung* 36 4 (138) (2011): 274.

<sup>6</sup> Ellis et al., p.274.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Zaner, 'Ethics and the clinical encounter', 2004, as quoted in Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, *Autoethnography: An Overview*, *Historical Social Research Historische Sozialforschung* 36 4 (138) (2011): 275.

<sup>8</sup> Ellis et al., p. 274-276.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

culture where purpose-driven design and market-driven design coexist.

### **PARTICIPATORY DESIGN**

Participatory design and co-design both require the engagement of multiple stakeholders, with different and sometimes divergent perspectives. This is because stakeholders have first-hand experience with the problem, which the designer or client might not have. This makes them experts of the problem and essential to the development of an appropriate solution.

Therefore, participatory design is considered a democratic decision making approach and has a much stronger political connotation than co-design. Originated back in the 70s in the Scandinavian region, participatory design was 'intended to strengthen the voice of workers and their local trade unions in negotiations with management and in controversies around the design and introduction of new technologies at the workplace'.<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly, an incredibly dense body of work in the field of participatory design today comes from the Scandinavian region. Among the experts in participatory design, we find Binder and Brant, professor and researcher at Malmo Design:Lab. They found that in order to achieve a successful collaborative process, all the partners (researchers, users, stakeholders) need to 'have put something into the collaboration for which they are accountable'.<sup>11</sup>

Pelle Ehn, also associated with Malmo Design Lab, sees participatory design as a means towards the unachievable goal of forecasting all the possible use of designed objects before the design objects occur. He challenges designers to be controversial and focus on heterogeneous communities or not yet existing communities, conflictual and without common objectives.<sup>12</sup>

Focused as well on the concept of conflict, there is Carl di Salvo. He explores the politics of design for, with, and by communities. He is a proponent of agonistic pluralism, which is a concept developed by Chantal Mouffe.<sup>13</sup> To achieve, agonistic pluralism 'Political Design'<sup>14</sup> and 'Design for Politics'<sup>15</sup> can be deployed. The former is a critical piece that contributes to the conflict, such as a voice in a debate. The latter is an artifact that enables the conflict to occur, by calling for participation and contribution in the

10 Erling Bjögvinsson, Pelle Ehn, Per-Anders Hillgren, 'Design Things and Design Thinking: Contemporary Participatory Design Challenges', *Design Issues* 28 (3) (2012):102.

11 Thomas Binder, Eva Brandt, 'The Design:Lab as platform in participatory design research', *CoDesign* 2 (4)(2008):117.

12 Pelle Ehn, 'Participation in Design Things', in *Proceedings of the Tenth Anniversary Conference on Participatory Design 2008* (Bloomington, IN: PDC, 2008), p.98.

13 Agonistic pluralism is a model of democracy based on productive conflict or contest: colliding perspectives are at the core of democracy rather than the majority vote, as we see in traditional democratic practices. Chantal Mouffe discusses this concept in this book 'The Democratic Paradox' (see References).

14 Carl DiSalvo, 'Design, Democracy and Agonistic Pluralism', in *Design and Complexity. Proceedings of the Design Research Society Conference* (Montreal, Canada: Université of Montreal, 2010), p.4.

15 Ibid.

subject of matter.<sup>16</sup>

Lastly, Ezio Manzini, a leader in sustainable design and social innovation, envisions a society that solves problems by making everyone, every problem-owner, a co-designer - an active agent towards the solution of the problem.<sup>17</sup> It is called radical thinking and a good example of it is how we should not consider the elderly just as a target group with a problem or a need, but as part of the solution when trying to tackle the problem of an increasingly aging population.<sup>18</sup> In his research, he bridges participatory design with social innovation by expecting a much bigger social impact for local projects. Therefore, he redefines participatory design as 'a constellation of design initiatives aiming at the construction of socio-material assemblies where open and participated processes can take place'.<sup>19</sup>

The act of participatory designing or co-designing is a co-creation. In a co-creation, the designer's role is to facilitate others' creativity, enabling them to think outside the box. However, a co-creation is not necessarily a political activity.

In a corporate environment, a co-creation is part of the process where an elite of lead users, who are considered creative enough, get to contribute in an early stage of the design process.<sup>20</sup> Companies are increasingly interested in adopting this technique because it saves costs and avoids later adjustments of the final product after unsuccessful sales. Peter Hasdell, a researcher in participatory design, claims that participatory design in a corporate-driven field 'often remains focused on design as outcome rather than on process or the development of outcomes embedded in a social context or based on non-commercial value.'<sup>21</sup>

Participatory design (in its original, non-commercial form), for the purpose of this dissertation, is useful as a design method that I adopt in my primary research with a co-creation. Secondly, it is useful as a political approach, because it constitutes an ethical framework for my design practice and research: it is based upon values of inclusiveness, diversity and distributed power, which are in my opinion required to design for a more equitable and sustainable future.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ezio Manzini, *Design when everybody designs: an introduction to design for social innovation* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 2015), p.13.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ezio Manzini, Francesca Rizzo, 'Small projects/large changes: Participatory design as an open participated process', *CoDesign* 7 (3-4) (2011): 211.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders, Pieter Jan Stappers, 'Co-creation and the new landscapes of design', *CoDesign* 4 (1) (2008): 8.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Hasdell 'Participatory Design: Re-evaluation as a Socio-material Assembly', in *2016 Ethnographic Praxis In Industry Conference* (The Hong Kong University, 26 November) (Leeds: American Anthropological Association, 2016) <<https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1559-8918.2016.01092>> (accessed 17 May 2018).



# THE EPIPHANY

**‘You are welcome and your presence is normal, for we are “democrats”, but on our terms, so that nothing changes. You are welcome, as long as you do not make a fuss....’<sup>22</sup>**

**Isabelle Stenger and Vinciane Despret**

I am a student in the Global Innovation Design (in short GID) program at RCA and Imperial College of London. GID has a unique curriculum, in which we study in different partner institutions around the world. Our mission is to address current and future *global challenges*. I feel privileged to be part of a platform RCA has set up for students with social impact aspirations.

Shortly after the beginning of my GID journey, I started to wonder about what motivates my work and the work of the people around me and how the execution of these projects reflect our ethical and moral values. At some point, I had an epiphany: it became apparent to me that many purpose-driven work that is created in my course is imbued with market-driven necessities. One of the most prevailing is the emphasis on turning our ideas into star business, which I will discuss further in ‘Co-designing design education’ (p.27). I fear that students are nudged to become profit-oriented and this is disguised as being entrepreneurial.

Although design education is on a sustainability and purpose-driven trend- RCA is promoting initiatives through its Sustainlab, a research lab that works on projects and organises events around sustainability and design; it is focused on social responsibility, through Decolonise the Institution, a platform to raise awareness about colonialist culture in academia; the Helen Hamlyn Centre, a humanitarian design centre focused on inclusive design; Design Inequality, a platform to engage in discussion around inequalities in the design academia and creative industry, or Design for Social Innovation within the Service Design faculty - as a student, I still perceive a tension, if not a gap, between rhetoric and practice.

This perceived tension aligns with the thoughts of Isabelle Stenger and Vinciane Despret, Belgian philosophers of science, in their book ‘Women Who Make a Fuss’.<sup>23</sup> Although the academia reached a peak of

<sup>22</sup> Isabelle Stenger, Vinciane Despret, *Women Who Make a Fuss: The Unfaithful Daughters of Virginia Woolf* (University of Minnesota:Univocal Publishing, 2014), p.17

<sup>23</sup> Isabelle Stenger, Vinciane Despret, *Women Who Make a Fuss: The Unfaithful Daughters of Virginia Woolf* (University of Minnesota:Univocal Publishing, 2014)

'democratisation',<sup>24</sup> they claim it is enslaved by the market.<sup>25</sup> They describe how universities are accessible to a more diverse public, as long as it conforms to the system and does not try to change it.<sup>26</sup>

Inspired by their reflection, I decided to devolve this dissertation to sharing what I learned while 'making a fuss'<sup>27</sup> -this creative, critical and *we-centred* process- about similar concerns, in my experience as a design student.

24 Ibid, p.16.

25 Ibid, p.18.

26 Ibid, p. 17.

27 Ibid, p.18.

## **MY TROUBLE**

In my epiphany, I realised that I am uncomfortable when only problem-solving capabilities are attributed to design, rather than problem-scoping ones. While it is true that design is used to solve problems, I believe that using it to holistically understand all their facets is smarter and more sustainable. As we can learn from the corporate experience, there is a disproportionate difference in the time spent understanding problems compared to solving them.

**The next time you're in a meeting to address a problem, pay attention to how much time is spent discussing or understanding the problem vs. how much time is spent on solutions. If your experience is typical, perhaps 30 seconds of an hour-long meeting about the problem will be spent understanding the problem.**<sup>28</sup>

I believe that this unbalanced and unjustified amount of time spent on solutions, rather than understanding, foster the production of 'products and services' that are thrown in the market, while still lacking a real understanding of the problem.

**When developing new products, processes, or even businesses, most companies aren't sufficiently rigorous in defining the problems they're attempting to solve and articulating why those issues are important. [...] How many times have you seen a project go down one path only to realize in hindsight that it should have gone down another? [...] Many organizations need to become better at asking the right questions so that they tackle the right problems.**<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> John Borwik, 'A3 Thinking: understand problems before trying to solve them', *HEIT Management*, <<http://www.heitmanagement.com/blog/2013/08/a3-thinking-understand-problems-before-trying-to-solve-them/>> [accessed 22 June 2018].

<sup>29</sup> Dwayne Sprading, 'Are you solving the right problem?', *Harvard Business Review*, <<https://hbr.org/2012/09/are-you-solving-the-right-problem>> [accessed 22 June 2018].

I argue that even social issues are too quickly looked through a solution-driven lens, because solutions are quantifiable, marketable and could potentially generate short-term profit.<sup>30</sup> Already Victor Papanek, designer and famous researcher in design education, questioned approaches in design education that make ‘designers merely add more and more extra gadgets rather than re-analysing the basic problems and trying to evolve totally new answers’.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, if we were searching for real solutions, through thorough problem scoping, paradoxically, it would even lead to fewer solutions. I believe that if problems were appropriately scoped, it might turn out that the real solutions are not another app or another product. Using design to actually understand problems would be counterproductive for the market because a lot fewer things would be designed and sold. We would live in a less consumerist, a ‘Leastmodernism’<sup>32</sup> culture, as John Wilshire, design strategist, defined it in his talk at RCA.

**“Take the spirit of Modernism. This idea of solving big societal problems at scale. But rather than doing it with the most expensive stuff that we can do... What is the absolutely least I can do here? What is the very, very minimum? How do we do nothing at all? How do we take things away, rather than add more things?”.**<sup>33</sup>

**John Wilshire**

<sup>30</sup> This is a personal reflection by reading John Heskett’s book ‘Design and the Creation of Value’ (see References) where he analyses design in terms of its economic contribution and as a human ability to shape products and services that satisfy human material needs, while generating wealth.

<sup>31</sup> Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), p. 80.

<sup>32</sup> John Wilshire, ‘Future of manufacturing: make things people want than make people want things’, January 2018, Royal College of Art.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

# THE INVESTIGATION

In this section, I take a step back from my epiphany and I rationalise it: I explore the relationship between design and the market from a historical point of view. Then, I take into consideration higher education in the UK and its relationship with the market: I explain how design education and the design industry are strongly interlinked, and how this relationship is leading to the commodification of education. Lastly, I explain other educational models' value-systems and how the student's development is being impacted in different ways.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF DESIGN

From its informal origins, in the early 19th century with the Victorian style, design has been busy with making beautiful products that the rich and wealthy of the time could afford. One may wonder how much has changed since then.

**“One of the traditions in a product design pathway is that people would get engaged in designing luxury products. We used to say in the 1990’s that 90 % of design is done for 10% of the... 5% of the world’s population because jewelry design or bag design.. you are all focusing on luxury products with an inaccessible price tag for.. frankly for the masses.”<sup>34</sup>**

**Peter Childs**

Across the 19th century, we see the formal establishment of Art and Crafts schools and design movements. The competition to design artifacts for the rich and wealthy was increasing, and so was the designer's need to establish his role and the excellence of his work (back then it was a fully male-dominated field).

<sup>34</sup> Author's conversation with Peter Childs, Head of Imperial College Dyson School of Design Engineering, 19 March 2018

**‘Sometimes, one gets the impression that a designer aspiring to two minutes of fame feels obliged to invent a new label for setting herself or himself apart from the rest of what professional service offers.’<sup>35</sup>**

**Gui Bonsiepe**

Ever since the industrial revolution, design has developed an interdependent relationship with industry and its capitalistic aspirations. As Clive Dilnot, design philosopher, explains, in history ‘industry wishes only to have design for its use’.<sup>36</sup> Whilst this limiting origin has made design instrumental to the needs of the market, John Heskett, expert in industrial design and its values, brings this concept a step further, by attributing to design mainly profitability qualities.<sup>37</sup> He states that ‘as a business activity, design must be judged in terms of contributions to profitability. If it cannot contribute, then it cannot be regarded as of any use in business’.<sup>38</sup>

Fast forward to today, Dilnot says that, in times of hyper-capitalist economies, consumerism, finance and digital communication are intertwined and formative for our world.<sup>39</sup> An example of this is the marriage between design and marketing: specific consumer segments are targeted, in order to evoke artificial needs and to nudge people to perpetuate a consumerist behaviour.

**‘The best minds of my generation are thinking about how to make people click ads. And that sucks.’<sup>40</sup>**

**Jeffrey Hammerback**

<sup>35</sup> Bonsiepe, p. 27.

<sup>36</sup> Clive Dilnot, ‘The matter of design’, *Design Philosophy Papers* 13 (2) (2015):116.

<sup>37</sup> John Heskett, *Design and the Creation of Value*, edited by Clive Dilnot and Suzan Boztepe (London; New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), p. 55-56 (55).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Dilnot, p.116.

<sup>40</sup> Ashlee Vince, ‘This Tech Buble is different’, *Bloomerang Businessweek* (15 April 2011) <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2011-04-14/this-tech-bubble-is-different>> (accessed 22 May 2018).

Back to the second half of the 20th century, we saw the rise of design that cares for its societal impact. For instance, Universal design started with architects designing universally friendly buildings, to be accessible to people with limited physical abilities. With Participatory Design, we have a movement that democratises design by involving users in the process. Today we have different forms and evolutions of purpose-driven design, such as Social Design, Sustainability Design, Design for social innovation, Transformative design and Disruptive Design.

There is an emerging awareness that many questions remain unanswered, or rather unasked, when designing for the market. Victor Margolin, lecturer and social innovator, does not consider the social model of design as opposed to a market model, however ‘the market does not, and probably cannot, take care of all social needs, as some relate to populations who [that] do not constitute a class of consumers in the market sense’.<sup>41</sup> While market-driven design and design for social innovation do address different arrays of needs and therefore not necessarily conflicting, I claim that the former still overshadows the latter, also in the academia.<sup>42</sup>

However, in this not quite ‘post-industrial’ phase, where the “‘death” of the industry [as formative for our society] [...] means also the death of the Designer [capitalised]’<sup>43</sup>, I believe that designers for social change can find comfort and motivation in the words of Tony Fry, design philosopher and lecturer. He claims: ‘Notwithstanding its economic function, design, in total, has never been less important as a means of a formative change than it is now—at the very time it needs to be more important as an agent contributing to this change’.<sup>44</sup>

41 Victor Margolin, ‘Design and Democracy in a Troubled World’, April 2012, Carnegie Mellon University School of Design, p.1.

42 This statement is a reflection of what Tony Fry’s paper ‘Design After Design’ (see References) where he observes the design education’s shortcomings in understanding and researching the impact of design in the world.

43 Dilnot, p.118.

44 Tony Fry, ‘Design after design’, *Design Philosophy Papers* 15 [2] (2017): 99.

**This *fact* is increasingly being recognized, but unfortunately largely not by the professional design community, which continues to pander to the market of unrestrained consumerism, reify elegant unsustainable objects, give awards to products that celebrate style and design buildings to be photogenic. Meanwhile academic design research continues to roll out those tired texts of the past that keep researchers inwardly focused—talking amongst themselves and not confronting how design is present in the world, not confronting design as political. Yes, there are a few progressives moving across disciplinary boundaries to develop a post-instrumental mode of design practice, but they are scattered, small in number; they run against the institutional grain and pay the consequences.<sup>45</sup>**

**Tony Fry**

## MARKETISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education in the UK has been through a profound transformation in the last 50 years. Firstly, Margaret Thatcher, Leader of the Conservative party leader for 15 years since 1975 and Prime Minister of Great Britain for three elections until '87, reformed the educational system. Severe cuts to government funds to universities, in an attempt to privatize each public sector and put an end socialism,<sup>46</sup> was part of her reform.

This was only the beginning of a process that forced universities to rely more and more on students' fees and external grants, in order to survive as teaching institutes and to produce research. Fosket says that in the last two decades the 'British university system may be characterised as changing from a small collegium of medium-sized, research- and education-focused organisations to a knowledge-based service industry of medium and large enterprises with diverse missions, profiles and character'.<sup>47</sup>

As new enterprises, these institutions have an agenda that differs from what their original social purpose was: to prepare students and generate new knowledge through research. One of the most important agenda points for the academia is preparing students to be *industry-ready*. This is evident in the way universities are ranked on the employability of their students or the number of start-up businesses that originate within the academia.<sup>48</sup>

## THE VALUE OF DESIGN

In the case of design education in the UK, how big is its sector of interest, the Design Industry? It is one of the strongest and growing industries in England. According to one of the Design Council's latest reports, 'The design economy generated £71.7bn in gross value added (GVA), equivalent to 7.2% of total GVA'.<sup>49</sup> Design Industry is being looked at from a profit perspective because there is evidence of increased productivity (41% more) in employees with some design experience, and because a strategic use of design generates an average greater output per employer.<sup>50</sup>

With such a substantial and validated added economic value to

46 Reginald Edwards, 'Margaret Thatcher: Thatcherism and Education', *McGill Journal of Education*, 24 (2) (1989): 203-208.

47 Nick Foskett, 'Markets, government, funding and the marketisation of UK higher education', in *The marketisation of higher education and the student consumer*, edited by Mike Molesworth, Richard Scullion, and Elizabeth Nixon' (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p.50.

48 QS Top Universities [n.d.] <<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/employability-rankings/2018>> [accessed 27 June 2018].

49 Design Council, 'The Design Economy: the value of design in the UK', p.3 <<https://www.design-council.org.uk/news-opinion/design-economy-now-available-online-free>> [accessed 22 May 2018].

50 Ibid.

design, which design institution would not want to contribute to these numbers, by preparing students to be industry-ready? Especially, if it creates the opportunity to receive funds for innovation or to build reputation, it seems logical that higher education institutions would look at the industry with interest.

### **STUDENT CLIENT**

Nevertheless, I claim this mutual interest between higher design education and the industry has led education to commodify its educational programmes and not without consequences.

**Often it is the cultural, intellectual and pedagogic consequences of marketisation that represent a cause for concern. From a cultural perspective the project of marketisation represents the attempt to commodify academic education. Specifically it is oriented towards the transformation of what is an abstract, intangible, non-material and relational experience into a visible, quantifiable and instrumentally driven process.<sup>51</sup>**

**Frank Furendi**

This commodification process dramatically changes the relationship between the student and the institution. Furendi claims that 'what is new and potentially disturbing about the marketisation of education is the attempt to recast the relationship between academics and students along the model of a service provider and customer'.<sup>52</sup>

In fact, the more students, and their parents become aware of their buying power, the more competing universities need to be tailored to their clients' desires. This generates a *the student-customer is always right* culture that I worry jeopardizes the integrity of the entire educational system.

<sup>51</sup> Frank Furendi, 'Introduction to the marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer', in *The marketisation of higher education and the student consumer*, edited by Mike Molesworth, Richard Scullion and Elizabeth Nixon (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p.24.

<sup>52</sup> Furendi, p.22.

**So the question worth asking is 'ought the satisfaction of the student customer be one of the central objectives of the university?' From the perspective of the development of a stimulating and creative academic life, the answer must be a resounding NO! The moment that students begin to regard themselves as customers of academic education, their intellectual development is likely to be compromised. Degrees can be bought; an understanding of a discipline cannot.<sup>53</sup>**

**Frank Furendi**

### WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

By looking at the history of design, I learned that design has been considered a 'subaltern practice'<sup>54</sup> to the market. In the UK, this is contextualised in a broader interdependence between Higher Education and the industry. But are there any other educational models that do not revolve around the neoliberalist values of the market?

#### *The Scandinavian Higher Education System*

Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland are well-renowned for their advanced, fair and equitable education systems, the Scandinavian model. Aalto University, Malmo University and Umea University, popular design institutes, follow this model.<sup>55</sup>

As Anne-Lise Arnesen and Lisbeth Lundal, educational researchers, observe that in the Scandinavian model:

**four aspects are addressed: (1) access to education and measures to prevent social exclusion of young people, (2) comprehensiveness of education in terms of public/private, integration/segregation of e.g. minority children and children with special needs, (3) emphasis on democratic values and participation, (4) the importance of community and equality versus a focus on the individual.**<sup>56</sup>

These values seem to me essential to the development of designers, as well as citizens of the future. However, some researchers worry that a Scandinavian (or Nordic) philosophy model might lose relevance in a more globalised world, ruled by free markets, where competition between economies is a stronger determining factor.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Dilnot, p.116.

<sup>55</sup> Aalto University in Finland was born out of the merging of three institutes specialised in technology, economics and art/design. Malmo University, in Sweden, is one of its largest institutes, and it is renowned for its multi-disciplinary approach to innovation. It has 5 faculties and within the Technology and Society one, students can learn about Communication and Design. Cradle of participatory design experimentation, Malmo Living Lab is hosted by its homonym University. Lastly, Umea University, one of the oldest universities in Sweden, is a centre for innovation in a variety of subjects. The Umea Institute of Design is popular around the world for its academic standards and is ranked among the best universities in the world.

<sup>56</sup> Anne-Lise Arnesen, Lisbeth Lundahl, 'Still Social and Democratic? Inclusive Education Policies in the Nordic Welfare States', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 50 (3) (2006): 285.

<sup>57</sup> Alfred Oftedal Telhaug, Odd Asbjørn Mediås & Petter Aasen, 'The Nordic Model in Education: Education as part of the political system in the last 50 years', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 50 (3) (2006): 245.

They question whether the values of the Nordic model will resist the market pressure of 'economic unification and production of innovations'.<sup>58</sup>

In summary, 'democracy, equality, progressiveness and pragmatism'<sup>59</sup> are central values of Scandinavian universities because 'the Nordic culture and lifestyle have provided a good basis for lifelong and lifewide learning, before it became general rhetoric'.<sup>60</sup> In practice, for universities this translates into policies such as being ran by a Board that is determined by the government and being tuition-free for national and EU students.

### *University of the Underground*

The University of the Underground is a tuition-free Master of Arts program in Amsterdam (The Netherlands) in collaboration with Sandberg Instituut, started in 2017. The school calls students to action by producing critical work that questions and challenges current power structures. They support the production of 'unconventional research'<sup>61</sup> through art, music, theatre, politics and design practices.

The school is mainly funded by the government and only for a smaller part on private investments, however, their objective to turn their business model around and be mainly privately funded.<sup>62</sup> 15 students that are admitted every two years to study for free through a scholarship system.<sup>63</sup>

The University of the Underground challenges the current status quo of institutionalised education with their free education model. By making the University of the Underground accessible, if only for 15 students, they practically promote diversity. I think this explicit political stand, alongside their radical project-based curriculum, creates an environment that teaches how to convey political meaning through art and design.

### *Anti-university*

The Anti-university is an interesting and rebellious educational system. The anti-university is a collaborative education that resembles the model of the The Antiuniversity of London, a

58 Ari Antikainen, 'IN SEARCH OF THE NORDIC MODEL IN EDUCATION', Manuscript for *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 2006 50 (3) (2006): 239.

59 Antikainen, p. 240.

60 Ibid.

61 University of the Underground, (n.d.) <<http://universityoftheunderground.org/about>> [accessed 24 May 2018].

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

'shortlived and intense experiment into self organised education and communal living that took off at 49 Rivington Street in Shoreditch in February 1968.'<sup>64</sup>

At the Anti-university, everyone can teach and everyone can learn what is offered on this collaborative platform. The topics range from traditional to non-traditional, including design, psychology, politics, bird watching, swimming, djing, delivered in form of workshops and lectures.<sup>65</sup> The core political position of the Anti-university is to question and disrupt established institutionalised model. Psychologist David Cooper, who was one of the first participants in the political movement at the Antiuniversity back in '68 said:

**“In fact, what we are aiming at is opening... or the explosion of all boxes.”<sup>66</sup>**

**David Cooper**

Their core value is inclusiveness, to fight elitism. Alan Cribbs, one of the founders of this school, was critical of the fact that established education is exclusive because 95% of the population does not have access to it.<sup>67</sup> This idea in today's Anti-university translates into an intentionally unstructured, non-hierarchical, un-curated format of creating and sharing knowledge, among a very diverse group of learners, rather than students.

This model resembles the participatory design principle of fostering community feelings by collectively pursuing a common goal, which is disrupting established education.

### *Unschool*

The Unschool is an educational online and offline platform that offers students opportunities to become change makers through design. The founder of the Unschool is Leyla Acaroglu, designer, social scientist and UN Champion of the Earth. Her approach to change-making is through Disruptive Design framework, which she developed in her PhD thesis. This approach is built on three main pillars: mining, landscaping and building. Mining stands for digging into the problem with thorough research; landscaping stands for

<sup>64</sup> the radical history of hackney, 'The Anti-university, Shoreditch 1968', 5 April 2011 <<https://hackneyhistory.wordpress.com/2011/04/05/the-anti-university-shoreditch-1968/>> (accessed 23 May 2018).

<sup>65</sup> Lydia Ashman, 'Antiuniversity Now! festival: The idea is that knowledge is created and shared by people', 24 April 2016 <<https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/antiuniversity-now-festival-the-idea-is-that-knowledge-is-created-and-shared-by-people/?platform=hootsuite>> (accessed 23 May 2018).

<sup>66</sup> BBC NEWS, ANTI UNIVERSITY OPENS SHOREDITCH, 1968, online video recording, YouTube <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kbi\\_KgBA7-c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kbi_KgBA7-c)> (accessed 23 May 2018).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

system thinking, making meaningful connections and identifying problem areas for potential interventions; building, stands for taking action through prototyped interventions.<sup>68</sup>

The Unschool comes in different formats and for this reason, is relatively more accessible than the average design school. Even a one-year 'Unmaster', that aims to be as inclusive as possible, by giving the students the chance to request a scholarship to cover the 12.000 USD fee.<sup>69</sup>

I believe that Unschool is uniquely action-centred. The founder Acaroglu wants to *un-teach* conventional values around sustainability and design, by making action the pivotal element of the Unschool. As she discusses in her PhD thesis, an action based approach is meant to reconnect social theoretical frameworks to social practices.<sup>70</sup>

I find the Unschool values extremely relevant to the development of future thinkers and innovators, as this dynamic approach reaffirms design as an innovation and research practice that has sustainability at its cores and not anymore as an afterthought.

<sup>68</sup> Disrupt Design, 'What is the disrupt design method?' <<https://www.disruptdesign.co/the-disruptive-design-method/>> (accessed 23 May 2018).

<sup>69</sup> Unschool, 'Unmasters in creative change making' <<https://unschools.co/unmasters>> (accessed 25 May 2018).

<sup>70</sup> Leyla Acaroglu, *Making Change, Explorations into enacting a disruptive pro-sustainability design practice* (doctoral thesis, RMIT University: 2014), p.8.

# CO-DESIGNING DESIGN EDUCATION

After learning about different educational models and their relationship to the market or other value-systems, I used participatory design to unfold the students' experience in design education. I had two goals: firstly, I wanted to observe how the macro value-systems of a school manifest in the micro-moments of the life of a student; secondly, I wanted to understand how the expectations of becoming a 'star designer', as opposed to learning how to be co-designers, influence the students' lives.

Therefore, I organised a co-creation on these topics with a group of 7 GID students, from RCA and Pratt (who are exchange students at RCA).<sup>71</sup> They shared their experience at RCA, which is the design education environment where we are situated for two terms. The participants of the session are from 7 different countries, with a diverse educational, professional and cultural background.

In the last chapter, I will present a prototype of a value-inclusive educational model, Free University of Design (FUD), as a design synthesis of the insights from both primary and secondary research.



Figure 1

<sup>71</sup> The participants agreed to be photographed and audio recorded at the co-creation session, which occurred on 22 May 2018, in Hiyoshi (Yokohama, Japan) while the group of students was in exchange at the partner institution Keio KMD. In this dissertation, the reader will find anonymous quotes from the participants, only whether it is from a RCA or Pratt student is disclosed.

### **THE MACRO IN MICRO**

In which moments, do the political and economic agendas of a design institution impact the students' lives, and how? In this section, I will share the insights of the co-creation regarding this matter.

#### *Reputation, Network and Social Media*

While discussing the school's reputation, its network and social media presence, the participants said that before applying to GID, all participants knew RCA and its great reputation. Some chose it because they were after some sort of business/entrepreneurial component, whilst others just knew it because they were interested in its network and hoped they could benefit from it.

**“It kinda seemed a mix of a design school and a business school, in terms of what they were going to offer”.**<sup>72</sup>

**RCA participant**

**“This is when I really made my decision for GID. My favourite architect David Adjaye, he is a black guy, black British guy, one of the most famous architects on the planet, he is Zaha Hadid level architect, and he went to RCA. I envisioned if I ever am in an elevator with this guy, I can say ‘I went to RCA, I have this idea, can we collaborate?’”.**<sup>73</sup>

**Pratt participant**

After collecting these insights, I decided to look at RCA online presence in recent years. So I analysed RCA's Twitter account with an online free analytics tool called Foller.me.<sup>74</sup>

The most popular topics were 'students, work, don't, design', followed by 'trends, practice, graduating, 2018, future, identity'. Among the most popular #hashtag, we find #feminism, #futuregovernment and #policyplatform (although used only 2 to 3 times per hashtag). At the time of writing, @rcashortcourses is the trendiest mention, followed

<sup>72</sup> Author's co-creation with Participant, RCA student, 22 May 2018.

<sup>73</sup> Author's co-creation with Participant, Pratt student, 22 May 2018.

<sup>74</sup> Foller.me (n.d.), <<https://foller.me>> (accessed 18 May 2018).

by @rca itself and @rcaalumni - a Twitter account populated with the latest work and achievements of RCA's alumni. Only in ninth position, with 3 mentions in 100 posts, the @hhcdesign (Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design) mention shares society driven content, for instance, design thinking initiatives for inclusive design.

From this analysis, I assume that a viewer with no prior knowledge about RCA could only conclude that it is a place with a strong focus on art and design, by praising individual success of its current and past students.

#### *Interview at the application process*

Most participants who are from GID reported different experiences with the interview, as a milestone of the admission process. However, for all RCA participants one of the first questions was 'How are you going to pay for it?' which triggered diverse reactions. Some positively associate expensive education with high quality, others felt as if they were setting up some sort of contract from the start. A participant reported that being asked about her social impact aspirations made her feel very excited about the GID program.

**“At the admission, they literally asked me ‘What are the social issues you want to tackle and how is your body of work going to look like?’ [...] it was amazing, they were asking me for my vision. It’s the best school in the world and I get to do social stuff”.**<sup>75</sup>

#### **RCA participant**

#### *Tutors and tutorials*

RCA is proactive in making sure that the school environment is based on the values of respect and inclusion. The Equality and Diversity Committee has put in place an action plan that aims to close inequality gaps and prevent any form of discrimination among staff and students.<sup>76</sup> This shows RCA's full commitment in assuring diversity.

In fact, the participants appreciate the diverse cultural background among tutors and their different coaching styles, the majority agreed that there is room for improvement to increase the diversity of *values*.

<sup>75</sup> Author's co-creation with Participant, RCA student, 22 May 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Royal College of Art, Equality and Diversity Policy <[https://www.rca.ac.uk/documents/507/Equality\\_Diversity\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.rca.ac.uk/documents/507/Equality_Diversity_Policy.pdf)> (accessed 27 May 2018).

As values, the participants intended the political stand points or believes that the tutors directly or indirectly convey in their coaching. The participants worried that a lack of diversity in this sense might affect the development of the students, especially during formative assessments.

### *Assessment Criteria*

Assessment criteria are the topic that generated the most intense discussion during the co-creation. Before raising this topic in the session, I examined the 2017 Evaluation form for GID (Appendix 1). Under the section Intellectual Engagement the point A.2 states: 'Employ advanced analytical thinking to demonstrate the feasibility, desirability and viability of design and engineering innovations'.<sup>77</sup>

The model feasibility, desirability and viability, also called Intention-based model, is commonly used by companies to assess whether their products will meet the needs of the market. It is a useful model for market research purposes and according to this model (and criteria) a product or service, as well as the student's work should meet these requirements before being brought to the market.

Under Professionalism, it states: 'Define your professional identity through a holistic understanding of the global market and an awareness of the responsibilities and demands of leadership in professional life'.<sup>78</sup> Although the Examination Form does not explicitly explain what it is intended with 'global market',<sup>79</sup> one may assume that some knowledge in economics and entrepreneurship is needed to fulfil this requirement.

But how do the participants feel about the assessment criteria that are more specific in evaluating market-driven qualities of their work, rather than purpose-driven ones?

The participants agree that having an understanding of the market is essential, whether to fit within or to disrupt it. Thus, it is acceptable to be assessed based on criteria that focus on market-driven values. However, most participants find it surprising that the criteria are also not as explicit about environmental and social responsibility values.

<sup>77</sup> Appendix 1, p.51.

<sup>78</sup> Appendix 1, p.6 (p.56).

<sup>79</sup> Appendix 1, p.6 (p.56).

**“I am encouraged to think about systems design sustainability until I get to the nitty-gritty. When I am assessed, I am standing in front of people and commenting on my work, all of a sudden the system doesn’t matter”.<sup>80</sup>**

**RCA participant**

Secondly, it emerged that participants feel pressured to have ideas that can be turned into star businesses. According to the participants, this pressure comes from constantly being exposed to successful alumni’s stories, who started a successful business and won awards. The participants seem to agree that it is acceptable to have these kind of aspirations, however, they feel they are not being equipped with the skills and capabilities to achieve them.

**“The assessment should be more value-driven. [...] unless you are some sort of star-business. That’s a win. I didn’t realise that coming into RCA: that pressure to create a real, successful business, was there”.<sup>81</sup>**

**RCA participant**

Moreover, most participants agree that within the same cohort, the work of each individual student is so different from one another that assessment criteria become obsolete.

**“Assessment criteria should be evaluated every year. We don’t want to fall in the same narrative. [...] Maybe each cohort decides the assessment of the next cohort”.<sup>82</sup>**

**RCA participant**

<sup>80</sup> Author’s co-creation with Participant, RCA student, 22 May 2018.

<sup>81</sup>bid.

<sup>82</sup>bid.

Lastly, the participants agree that the assessment criteria can give a strong political message to the whole academic community to show what the school stands for. Therefore, they think that a strong integration of criteria that assess society-driven values of the work is necessary.<sup>83</sup>

**“Once you massage the assessment criteria, that message goes to everyone in the school”.<sup>83</sup>**

**RCA participant**

*Exhibitions and shows*

RCA has a strong sustainability stand. For example, the School of Design delivers lectures on bio-design and sustainability on a regular basis. This raises awareness in students, who will integrate these values in their work. However, in practice, the participants reported that a lot of waste and unsustainable behaviour persist in the teaching and learning daily practices. Some of the participants were particularly disappointed at the wasteful culture of shows and exhibition.

**“In terms of sustainability specifically, it was an angle I looked for that and I found that’s something integrated in all of what they [RCA] do [...] the WIP, it could be such a powerful tool to send that [sustainability] message. When I saw the WIP I thought ‘This is disgusting’[...] it was just so wasteful”.<sup>84</sup>**

**RCA participant**

<sup>83</sup> Author’s co-creation with Participant, RCA student, 22 May 2018.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

### STAR DESIGNER

In the second part of the session, I discussed with the participants the tension between being expected to become star-designers or being more co-designers, which takes precedent for me.

I claim that market-driven design shapes the mentality of the star designer. Star designers, like Sir Dyson or Jonathan Ive (who are respectively the previous and current RCA Provost) are strong design personalities that have populated the design scene and set for standards of excellence at RCA and in the design industry.<sup>85</sup> As charismatic individuals with a vision, star designers do the 'social work of gathering allies for materializing a preferred future',<sup>86</sup> so that unsurprisingly, students dream to follow their lead or to become like them.

**“I was aware of that “star thing”, because I saw it as this [RCA] is a sort of platform that a lot of artists are looking at, a lot of eyes are looking greedily at. [...] People look at it with a certain respect, regardless of what comes out of it”.**<sup>87</sup>

**RCA participant**

What fosters this star design culture is the fact that 'we are all implicated in globalisation, to various extents, we are implicated in Neoliberalism, quantifying, producing ourselves as entrepreneurial subjects',<sup>88</sup> as Lucy Kimble, Director of the UAL Innovation Insights Hub and Professor of Contemporary Design Practices claimed in her talk at RCA. This process of quantifiable selves, she continues, stresses the necessity for 'calculability of your performance, your value'<sup>89</sup> as a designer. And what better way to calculate your worth as a designer than on the external recognition that your work receives? Awards, popularity on design magazines and public endorsement is the measure of success.

**“All I want is a nice product shot to go on Dezeen. I just want to be able to show you “Hey here’s my product! Yeah!””**<sup>90</sup>

**John Wilshire**

<sup>85</sup> Royal College of Art, Convocation 2017 <<https://www.rca.ac.uk/news-and-events/events/convocation-2017/>> [accessed 25 May 2018].

<sup>86</sup> Cameron Tonkinwise, 'Design for Transitions- from and to what?', *Design Philosophy Papers* 13 (1) [2015]: 89.

<sup>87</sup> Author's co-creation with Participant, RCA student, 22 May 2018.

<sup>88</sup> Lucy Kimble, 'Is the Future of Service Design in the public or private sector and will either Save the World?', February 2018, Royal College of Art

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Wilshire, 2018.

In fact, the participants of the co-creation reflected that this necessity of becoming star designers has taken a new shape in recent years, with the click. The participants argued that, as a marketing strategy, clickability of design work seems to have more importance than content.

**“Clickable. [...] I have a bit of a suspicion for ‘Oh it will look good on my portfolio’... I fall for the same thing too, but it’s a society-wide issue now, and that’s what Dezeen is. It’s clickable. And that’s a problem. It doesn’t mean content”.<sup>91</sup>**

**RCA Participant**

Design schools, including RCA, increase their reputation as their students’ work becomes popular. Some participants expressed concern that if on one hand, pushing students to gain exposure might sound like a win-win situation in the short-term, on the other, it does not take into account the long-term consequences of creating an elitist vibe around and within the school’s community.

**“They want the students to be out there, on magazines, because they can say ‘That’s our student’”.<sup>92</sup>**

**RCA Participant**

**“The star designer is a marketing tool to keep the reputation, but for teaching they cannot use that example, they should teach us about the process, not the end result”.<sup>93</sup>**

**RCA Participant**

<sup>91</sup> Author’s co-creation with Participant, RCA student, 22 May 2018

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

## CO-DESIGNER

The participants of the co-creation were not explicit in discussing a possible transition from a star-designer to a co-designer culture in their own practice. In fact, some clearly stated that they chose RCA because it would support them in their journey towards becoming the best designers and artists of the world. Most participants are vocal about the pressure of being students in such a competitive environment, yet it is not enough to lean towards more participatory ways of being designers.

I think this transition could only happen, firstly, when more designers become confident enough of our role in society, that an award or article on Dezeen becomes irrelevant when compared to the social impact of our work Secondly, when more designers will transition from acknowledging that we need to operate at a system level, to actually do it.

**“When you’re doing shows, rewards... you shouldn’t just be focused on the single thing, on the single act of one design ‘Oh I have got a nice thing on a table’. How do we get a rid of the habit of thinking of just *the thing*, but all the things around the thing instead?”<sup>94</sup>**

**John Wilshire**

Reflecting on Margolin’s thoughts about the arrays of needs that market-driven design cannot address,<sup>95</sup> I argue that a self-centred and profit-oriented mindset of the star designer perpetuates the current relationship between design and our unsustainable living.<sup>96</sup> Instead, a collective, *we-focused* mindset is needed to face our current and future challenges. Especially when specialists did not manage to find radical solutions to the problems of our world, we need *generalist* co-designers to explore alternative routes and engage with a diversity of participants in looking at problems from different angles.

<sup>94</sup> Wilshire, 2018.

<sup>95</sup> Margolin, p.15.

<sup>96</sup> Tonkinwise, p. 86.

**“But somehow, it’s a way of engagement with the public, not just consultation [...] people exploring issues’ potential together. [...] it is not the expert speaking at people ‘Here is the solution’, but [it is] getting there together [...] We will involve these people and they will come up with ideas, because the experts have failed”.<sup>97</sup>**

**Lucy Kimble**

One might wonder who is the professional co-designer when everyone could potentially be a designer? According to Manzini, the designer becomes a ‘facilitator’,<sup>98</sup> enabling others’ creativity, is ‘trigger’,<sup>99</sup> of design initiatives and an ‘activist’,<sup>100</sup> in launching them.<sup>101</sup> The competencies of the traditional designers are not lost or useless<sup>102</sup> if they are redirected to holistically understand communities’ needs, in view of urgent social, political and environmental issues, such as the migrant crisis and climate change.

**The design of a new community hospital may be completed 8–10 years before the hospital itself is opened. What will the technology be 10 years in the future? Who will be the patients? What will the needs of patients be? Who will be the healthcare workers? How will the transition into the new facility be staged? How will the healthcare workers learn to work in the new facility? As the scope and complexity of design problems increases, we will need the special skills and abilities of designers to help in the way ahead.<sup>103</sup>**

<sup>97</sup> Kimble, 2018.

<sup>98</sup> Manzini et al., p.211.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Sanders et al., p.14-15.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p.15.

## FREE UNIVERSITY OF DESIGN

After I unfolded the experience of design students through co-creation and I learned and how the macro socio-economic scheme we live in manifests itself in their lives, I was inspired to come up with an idea for a value inclusive educational model, that I present here as the prototype of the Free University of Design.

I pitched this idea for the first time at a Business & Entrepreneurship class that the GID cohort took at Keio KMD in Tokyo. With two other students, Romy Snijders and Ian Lu, we worked on this concept. The objective of the course was learning how to pitch a startup idea to investors. When I pitched it, I was trying to be provocative: who would invest in a tuition-free design school, focused on social and environmental values through system thinking? As discussed in class, such a school has a very small potential for short-term return on investment, thus it might not be a very appealing project for *angel investors*.

Nevertheless, I was interested in designing a design school to resolve the tension between rhetoric and practice around ecological and social sustainability. As illustrated in this dissertation, sustainability and social values are trending and at the centre of global attention. Established (design) educations are focused on these topics, as much as companies, which are in need of *innovation*, to prevent their businesses to be disrupted. However, I argue that the 'hyper capitalist'<sup>104</sup> society of the western world makes *true change* hard to achieve, especially when even sustainable design solutions and innovations are being capitalised upon.

This is called 'sustaining innovation'<sup>105</sup> and it is what we do by 'making things faster, cheaper, smarter, safer or substituting for elements which have become scarce those that are more abundant'.<sup>106</sup> It is a desperate attempt to preserve current systems and keep them alive with *innovations* 'against the grain of a changing world'.<sup>107</sup> In this way, the current system can improve its efficiency and prolong its life, as Graham, Director of International Futures Forum, claims.<sup>108</sup>

104 Dilnot, p.116.

105 Graham Leicester, *Transformative Innovation: A guide to Practice and Policy* (Axminster; Aberdour: Triarchy Press:2016), p.18.

106 Ibid, p.11.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

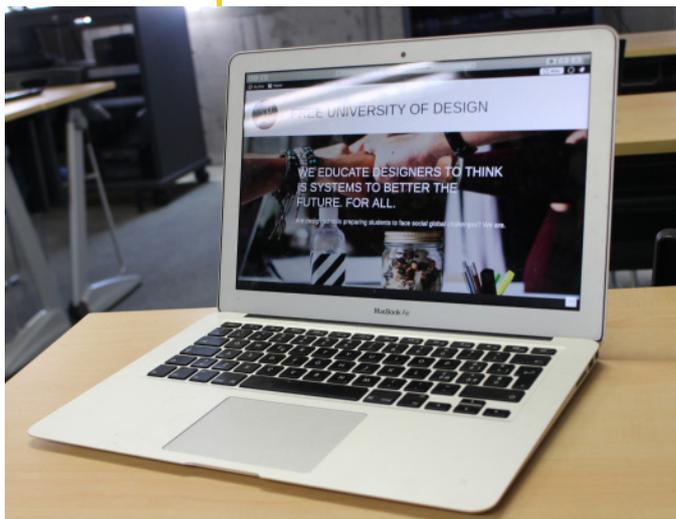


Figure 2

We need to acknowledge the fact that the existing systems that we are living in are ecologically and socially unsustainable.<sup>109</sup> However, we need to learn from them: by understanding how the ‘commercial world’<sup>110</sup> renovates in order to escape its own collapse, we will be able to replace it with new sustainable systems.<sup>111</sup>

**“We must redesign the plane even whilst doing our damndest to keep it in the air”.**<sup>112</sup>

**Graham Leicester**

With this fundamental understanding that to prevent our peril, we need growing infrastructures to enable sustainable (not sustaining) innovation,<sup>113</sup> how will Free University of Design be such an infrastructure? What follows are a few ‘principles’ that define the school’s design vision.

*Participatory design at the core*

Sanders questions whether it is better to start teaching design in the traditional way and then move to co-design or start with co-designing. She concludes that an early adoption of co-design in schools’ curricula would help the change of mindset that everyone is creative.<sup>114</sup> Based on this conclusion, Free University of Design has participatory design at the core of its practice, as a questioning and research tool, as well as a design tool. By situating themselves in the problem, working, living with it,<sup>115</sup> FUD learners will get used to being at the same time focused and holistic when unfolding the roots of the problem of the community they are situated within.

Moreover, core participatory design experience and learning would support a co-designer culture: generalist individuals, who practice design as an enabling activity to others’ creativity. It is my hope that this will create an alternative to the mainstream design schools’ philosophy that Papanek describes as ‘an equal mixture of the kind of self-expressive bohemian individualism best expressed in la vie boheme and a profit-oriented, brutal commercialism’.<sup>116</sup>

109 Tonkinwise, p.85.

110 Leicester, p.12.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid. p.12-17.

114 Sanders et al., p.16.

115 Fry, p.101.

116 Papanek, p.104.

*Free education*

As I described in 'What are the alternatives?' (p.23) accessibility is addressed in different ways in different educational systems. Our question was: how can we financially sustain a business model for a tuition-free school? When we prepared the pitch for the investors, we tried to convince them that companies would give us scholarships which we would use to cover the costs of FUD and guarantee free education to our learners. The companies would give us scholarships and in return our learners, at the end of their journey, would be ready to *solve the problems* of those companies, whose business is struggling to *become sustainable*.

This, to me, looks like another sustaining innovation business model, not actually disrupting the system, but helping the system to become stronger and survive its own collapse. Regardless my skepticism, we presented this model to the investors, who called us 'revolutionary'. To this day, I do not know what the best business model would be, else than relying on government funds. I leave this question open, while still standing for tuition-free learning in the attempt to make FUD as accessible as possible.

Free University of Design is also *free* as it aims to proactively include different people, in terms of economic and cultural background, but also age, sexual orientation, expertise, religion and political beliefs, and encourages them to be political in their work, regardless of which stands they take. This sets the basis for a life-long and horizontal learning attitude, rather than being a learning chapter of a couple of years in the lives of FUD attendees.

*Transitioning by co-existence*

As discussed, for transformative innovation to occur, learning from our current state of things is necessary. During the co-creation, a participant said:

**“You need those people [star designers], the clicks, the attention, the glossy photos, but then you need the rest of the diverse gang, each doing their own thing”.**<sup>117</sup>

**RCA participants**

This statement inspired me to envision an environment where learners with different drives would work together. A place for both

<sup>117</sup> Author's co-creation with Participant, RCA student, 22 May 2018.

star designer culture and co-designer culture to coexist.

I believe that aspiring star designers would realise that 'in face of success [they can choose] to be followed by, rather than swallowed by, the mainstreaming systems'.<sup>118</sup> Codesigners would learn how existing systems build their capacity of absorbing innovation<sup>119</sup> and work around those insights to design innovation that has the same capacity. I speculate that this coexistence of values and drives will help learners from both worlds to make better sense of the present, making FUD an infrastructure for a radical transition towards sustainable systems.<sup>120</sup>

### *From sustainable design to regenerative cultures*<sup>121</sup>

Around the mid-2000s, researchers found out that the Sustainable design's attempts of reducing impact through green consumption were not effective and that *system change* was necessary. This led to new conversations around alternative economies, such as the Circular Economy.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, Social design, with few exceptions, 'tends to be ameliorative rather than politically pursuing structural changes'.<sup>123</sup>

Researchers came to the conclusion that thinking *in parts* about sustainability and social change does not contribute towards radical change in the state of things for the long term.<sup>124</sup> In fact, talking about *sustainability in itself* is demeaning: 'design for sustainability is, ultimately, design for human and planetary health'.<sup>125</sup> There is not such a thing as *ultimate sustainability*, yet there is a need for holistic and systemic understanding of systems in order to envision ones that are constantly more sustainable.<sup>126</sup>

FUD responds to this by specifically preparing future-change makers to think holistically and establish the seeds of 'regenerative cultures'.<sup>127</sup> Learners would be encouraged to 'live the questions'<sup>128</sup> which means being comfortable with the uncertainty and risk that deep questioning entails. Within this culture, FUD learners will investigate the systemic nature of current and future challenges, understanding relationships, integrated flows and their dynamics.

118 Leicester, p.20.

119 Ibid, p.11.

120 Intended as both socially and environmentally sustainable.

121 Daniel Wahl, *Designing Regenerative Cultures* (Axminster; Aberdour: Triarchy Press: 2016), p.43.

122 Tonkinwise, p.87.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid, p.85.

125 Wahl, p.43.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid, p.23.

Once they can recognise them, they will be able to creatively work towards changing mainstream behaviours and patterns of these systems.<sup>129</sup>

*More failure, less assessment criteria*

How would FUD's learners be graded on their development? This is another question that I leave open. As assessment criteria were at the centre of an animated debate during the co-creation, I learned that GID design students are particularly sensitive about what should and should not be evaluated about their work and progress. Building rubrics is a complex process, but my main concern is: to be an attractive program, FUD needs to meet certain standards, usually regulated by law. What if a standardised evaluation process for students undermines the philosophy of the school itself?

Attitude and comfort with failure could be an assessment element at FUD. Embracing failure is often encouraged in educational environments. In my undergrad, tutors recommended design students to fail fast, fail forward. This meant that a small, manageable mistake today is more desirable than a big, potentially irreparable mistake tomorrow. However, without digging into the psychology fear of failure, is it safe to state that generally students avoid failing. Papanek talks about 'blocks',<sup>130</sup> refraining mental structures that make design students avoid risks.<sup>131</sup>

FUD tries to be an environment where experimental failure is supported, whilst the necessity of taking responsibility for one's failures is emphasised.<sup>132</sup> However, if to achieve this level of 'high tolerance'<sup>133</sup> for failure FUD needs to be assessment criteria-free, we would implement this policy.

<sup>129</sup> Wahl, p.43-47.

<sup>130</sup> Papanek, p.66.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p.68.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

# CONCLUSION

I have come to the end of this exploration on the topic of values in various higher education models and how these values influence the students' development and how it determines which kind of impact they are going to want to have in the world. In this chapter, I will summarise my learnings and I will propose further questions.

This exploration was triggered by an epiphanic moment. As I was reflecting on Bonsiepe's concern regarding a lack of 'questioning design activities',<sup>134</sup> I developed a sense that this absence may originate in design education.

With the research tools of autoethnography and participatory design, I chose RCA, which is the learning environment where I am situated, as my research's object. In this context, I described a perceived tension between rhetoric on *society-driven* values and the practice in design of these values. I examined whether the reason for *market-driven checkboxes*<sup>135</sup> that even purpose-driven projects need to tick, has to do with a mainstream conception of design as problem-solving, rather than problem-scoping. In view of this insight, the questions that I would like to open up is: how can design education transition to become a catalyst of problem scoping design? If 'Leastmodernism'<sup>136</sup> was design education's philosophy, how can we teach students to design better by designing *less*?

Firstly, in order to rationalise this epiphany, I started to look at the historical relationship between the market and design, then between the market and higher education and other educational models. I learned from Clivot and Heskett that historically the market and design have a deeply intertwined relationship, with some diversions from the second half of 20th century.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, I looked into the relationship between the market and UK higher education, to learn that their intertwined relationship has existed for decades. I learned that the commodification of education is to the marketised model as

<sup>134</sup> Bonsiepe, p.27.

<sup>135</sup> As discussed in 'Co-designing design education' in the section 'Macro in micro' (p.28), viability, feasibility, desirability are market-driven requirements adopted in the 2017 Evaluation Form (Appendix 1) at Global Innovation Design, Royal College of Art.

<sup>136</sup> Wilshire, 2018.

<sup>137</sup> These diversions refer to Scandinavian participatory design and Universal design, as discussed in chapter 'The Investigation', section 'Brief history of design' (p.16).

accessibility is to alternative models. The other models I analysed offer a *free education system*, at the price of an extremely strict selection process or not being an officially accredited system.<sup>138</sup> In this regard, how can design education make it its mission to rethink the way we address accessibility to higher education? Instead of expecting the money *to come from somewhere*,<sup>139</sup> how can we envision accessible education as an actual possibility, instead of considering it an interesting experiment, as it happened with the Antiuniversity in 1968?<sup>140</sup>

Secondly, I applied participatory design through a co-creation to research the design student's experience. The assessment criteria were the most debated instance in which the macro socio-political scheme, that we live in, manifests itself in the student's life. As discussed, a school could potentially send a strong political message, inside and outside its academic community, through assessment criteria that address purpose-driven values in the student's work. This opens further questions: how can design education transition from being *theoretically sustainable* to *practically sustainable* <sup>141</sup> with policies that actually make staff and students respond to these *necessities* in a structural and integrated way?

Moreover, we discussed the influences of a *star designer culture* on students' development. I argued that co-designers, who have different aspirations compared to star designers, are *generalists* capable of dealing with complex, ill-defined problems. This raises the following questions: in view of urgent sustainability challenges, how can design education engage in an honest and ethical conversation about setting students' aspiration on becoming star designers? Can alternative *trajectories* be proposed as desirable future?

This leads to what I learned while developing a synthesis prototype of a value-inclusive educational model, Free University of Design. This idea was inspired by researching 'safe spaces'.<sup>142</sup> I found particularly

138 As discussed in chapter 'The Investigation', section 'What are the alternatives?' (p.23), universities in the Scandinavian model, as well as the University of the Underground admit few students per year. The Antiuniversity is a free learning platform and due to its anti-establishment mission, it is not an accredited university.

139 Whether it is student fees, bursaries, scholarships or loans, the student's access to higher education is defined by a financial need that she or a third party needs to fulfil

140 the radical history of hackney.

141 Intended as socially and ecologically sustainable.

142 Molten, author of the book 'University of the Undercommon: fugitive planning and black study' (see Reference) states: "The coalition emerges out of your recognition that it's fucked up for you, in the same way that we've already recognized that it's fucked up for us. I don't need your help. I just need you to recognize that this shit is killing you, too, however much more softly, you stupid motherfucker, you know?". I could not help but drawing a parallel between his reflection on how majorities 'help' minorities, out of their own interest, and how the capitalist system supports 'innovation' out of its own interest in opposing radical change. This parallel inspired me to think of a way, a space, where opponent views (such as star designers and co-designers, market-driven design and

beautiful the thought of Hannah Catherine Jones, artist and PhD at Oxford University and invited guest at the Decolonising the Institution event, who said that higher education institutes should be 'places where you can just be and exist, and not being a minority, whatever that means. That provides a space to re-energise'.<sup>143</sup>

FUD needs to be a space for a reconciliation of values (the two I have been focused on are market-driven and society-driven, but I am sure there are a lot more) so that designers can just *be and become such*. I have learned that in order to interrupt the vicious cycle of 'sustaining innovation',<sup>144</sup> we need star designers *to be together* with co-designers. Together they can unfold the renovating capacity of current capitalist systems (where star designers thrive) and learn how to build the same growth potential in the systems for the future, where everyone, as co-designers, thrives. This opens up the question: what does it take for people with divergent drives to sit around the same table, in order to envision futures where individual success is not *in spite* of collective well-being and health, but *because of* collective, 'human and planetary health'?<sup>145</sup>

To conclude on Bonsiepe's concern, I hope that this dissertation contributes to a culture of 'questioning activities',<sup>146</sup> which in practice means 'living the questions',<sup>147</sup> allowing criticality to be and expand, trusting that a solution is not the end, but a means to a deeper understanding of a problem. With this text, I hope I have triggered some initial questions that we could begin to ask and to live.

society-driven design) can reunite by acknowledging that the way we have done things to this day is detrimental for both sides.

143 Hanna Catherine Jones, 'Decolonise the Institution #1', as cited by the chair Cecilia Lee, January 2018, Royal College of Art < <http://rcasu.org.uk/wp/decolonising-the-institution-1/> > [accessed 14 April 2018].

144 Leicester, p.11.

145 Wahl, p. 43.

146 Bonsiepe, p.27.

147 Wahl, p. 21.

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# Appendix

Appendix 1. GID Interim Exam Corrected as retrieved 28 March 2018 via email by one of the GID tutors

## ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART MA EXAMINATION FORM GLOBAL INNOVATION DESIGN MA

### EXAMINATION DATE

DAY	MONTH	YEAR
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NAME OF STUDENT

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SIGNATURE OF CHAIR OF EXAMINATION BOARD



# ASSESSMENT OF KEY ATTRIBUTES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES AT EXAMINATION OF GLOBAL INNOVATION DESIGN MA STUDENTS

- Referring to the Learning Outcomes for Global Innovation Design MA students, provide an assessment and optional comment on the student's abilities and achievements in each area listed below.
- For clarification of the terms *excellent*, *very good*, *good*, *satisfactory*, *poor* and *very poor* see LEVEL DESCRIPTORS FOR USE IN ASSESSMENT OF KEY ATTRIBUTES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES AT INTERIM AND FINAL EXAMINATION OF STUDIO-BASED MA STUDENTS (SHEET A).

## KEY ATTRIBUTES

The ability to produce work at an advanced level i.e which is at or near the forefront of the discipline and demonstrates a creative, imaginative, innovative and individual response to a challenging self-set or external brief

EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	VERY POOR
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	------	-----------

The ability to articulate clearly (by oral, written and/or graphical means) the intentions of the work produced and the approaches, knowledge, skills and reasoning employed in its production

EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	VERY POOR
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	------	-----------

## PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

### INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	VERY POOR
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	------	-----------

### TECHNICAL SKILLS

EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	VERY POOR
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	------	-----------

### PROFESSIONALISM

EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	VERY POOR
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	------	-----------

# A FOR USE IN ASSESSMENT OF KEY ATTRIBUTES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES AT INTERIM AND FINAL EXAMINATION OF STUDIO-BASED MA STUDENTS

## **EXCELLENT**

In this area, the student's attributes are exceptional – at a level that might be expected of a postgraduate artist or designer who is fully and successfully engaged in advanced practice. The student's achievements and ability in this area will certainly enhance his/her potential to succeed in professional life and make an important contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

## **VERY GOOD**

In this area, the student's attributes are impressive – at a level that might be expected of a postgraduate artist or designer who is already engaged in advanced practice. The student's achievements and ability in this area will enhance his/her potential to succeed in professional life and make a valuable contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

## **GOOD**

In this area, the student's attributes are clearly appropriate for a postgraduate artist or designer going on to professional practice at an advanced level. There is room for development but the student recognises this and clearly demonstrates both the potential and the motivation to achieve more. With some continuing development, the student's achievements and ability in this area are likely to help him/her to succeed in professional life and make a valuable contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

## **SATISFACTORY**

In this area, the student's attributes are appropriate for a postgraduate artist or designer going on to professional practice at an advanced level but there is significant room for development. The student recognises this and demonstrates the potential and/or motivation to achieve more. Providing there is continuing development, the student's achievements and ability in this area are likely to help him/her to succeed in professional life and make a valuable contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

## **POOR**

In this area, the student's attributes are at a lower level than would be expected of a postgraduate artist or designer intending to go on to professional practice at an advanced level. This is an area of weakness that clearly needs attention. So far the student has failed to recognise this adequately and/or demonstrated some lack of potential and/or motivation to develop in this area. The student's progress as a practising professional is likely to be hindered unless he/she attains a higher level of achievement in this area through continuing study and/or professional development.

## **VERY POOR**

In this area, the student's attributes are inadequate for a postgraduate artist or designer intending to go on to professional practice at an advanced level. This is a clear area of weakness in the student's profile. The student has failed to recognise this and/or demonstrated little or no potential and/or motivation to develop in this area. The student's progress as a practising professional is very likely to be hindered by this weakness.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT AT EXAMINATION OF GLOBAL INNOVATION DESIGN MA STUDENTS

- Provide an assessment of the student's abilities and achievements overall based on the profile established on the previous page.
- For clarification of the terms *excellent*, *very good*, *good*, *satisfactory*, *poor* and *very poor* see LEVEL DESCRIPTORS FOR USE IN OVERALL ASSESSMENT AT FINAL EXAMINATION OF STUDIO-BASED MA STUDENTS (SHEET B)
- It is optional to provide a comment where the recommendation is *pass* but it is good practice to do so as students generally welcome feedback.
- Where the recommendation is *referral*, it is essential to provide an explanation of why the Board has made this decision and a clear account of what the student will be expected to do, and by when, to retrieve the situation.
- Where the recommendation is *fail* it is essential to provide a full explanation.

### OVERALL ASSESSMENT

EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	VERY POOR
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	------	-----------

### RECOMMENDATION OF EXAM BOARD

PASS	REFERRAL	FAIL
------	----------	------

COMMENT

# B

## FOR USE IN OVERALL ASSESSMENT AT EXAMINATION OF STUDIO-BASED MA STUDENTS

### EXCELLENT

The student's attributes overall are exceptional – at a level that might be expected of a postgraduate artist or designer fully and successfully engaged in advance practice. He/she has an extremely impressive range of qualities and strengths and clearly recognises any minor weaknesses in his/her profile. He/she is highly motivated and certainly has the ability to continue to develop independently as a reflective practitioner after graduation. His/her overall level of ability and particular qualities suggest an exceptionally high level of potential to succeed in professional practice and to make an important, innovative contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

### VERY GOOD

The student's attributes overall are impressive – at a level that might be expected of a postgraduate artist or designer already engaged in advance practice. He/she has many areas of strength and recognises the few weaknesses in his/her profile. He/she clearly has the motivation and the ability to continue to develop independently as a reflective practitioner after graduation. His/her overall level of ability and particular qualities suggest a high level of potential to succeed in professional practice and to make a significant, innovative contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

### GOOD

The student's attributes overall are clearly appropriate for a postgraduate artist or designer going on to professional practice at an advanced level. He/she has some particular and important areas of strength but there is also room for development in some areas. He/she recognises these strengths and weaknesses and has the motivation and the ability to continue to develop independently as a reflective practitioner after graduation. With continued development, he/she is clearly capable of succeeding in professional practice and making a significant, innovative contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

### SATISFACTORY

The student's attributes overall are appropriate for a postgraduate artist or designer going on to professional practice at an advanced level. There are areas of strength but also some weaknesses. In general, he/she recognises these strengths and weaknesses and has shown the potential to develop and the motivation to do so. He/she will need to continue to develop in areas of weakness beyond graduation and may need a modest level of support and guidance in this process. With continued development, he/she should be able to make a significant and innovative contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

### POOR

The student's attributes overall are not quite at the level to be expected of a postgraduate artist or designer going on to professional practice at an advanced level. There are areas of strength but also some important weaknesses. So far, he/she has not adequately recognised weaknesses and/or been motivated enough to address them. However, with continued development, there is the potential to retrieve the situation. The student is likely to need some support and guidance (and up to 3 months full-time focused activity) to attain the overall level and range of attributes necessary. In the longer term the student will need to engage seriously with the process of continuing personal and professional development in order to make a significant and innovative contribution to his/her discipline and profession.

### VERY POOR

The student's attributes overall are inadequate for a postgraduate artist or designer intending to engage in professional practice at an advanced level. There are areas of serious weakness and what strengths the student has are inadequate to balance these weaknesses. He/she has shown little or no ability to recognise these weaknesses and/or little or no motivation to develop. He/she does not have the potential to retrieve the situation within 3 months of full-time focused activity, even with support and guidance.

# LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR MA STUDENTS (GLOBAL INNOVATION DESIGN)

## KEY ATTRIBUTES

(as evidenced in your work and in discussion/presentation of your work)

Having completed a Master of Arts programme at the RCA, you should be able to:

1. Produce work at an advanced level i.e. which is at or near the forefront of your discipline and demonstrates your ability to make a creative, imaginative, innovative and individual response to a challenging self-set or external brief.
2. Articulate clearly (by oral, written and/or visual means) the intentions of the work you produce and the approaches, knowledge, skills and reasoning you have employed in its production.

## INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

(as evidenced in discussion/presentation of your work and the work of others)

Having completed the MA Global Innovation Design programme at the RCA, you should be able to:

- A1. Employ advanced critical thinking to generate innovative solutions to complex design and engineering challenges.
- A2. Employ advanced analytical thinking to demonstrate the feasibility, desirability and viability of design and engineering innovations.
- A3. Imaginatively and effectively communicate knowledge and ideas so as to promote understanding of global design issues and solutions to expert and non-expert audiences alike.

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

(as evidenced in your work)

Having completed the MA Global Innovation Design programme at the RCA, you should be able to:

- B1. Effectively employ advanced techniques for idea generation and opportunity identification in order to create proposals for innovative projects.
- B2. Effectively employ advanced techniques for concept development to refine initial ideas into realisable propositions.
- B3. Demonstrate a mastery of prototyping, manufacturing and testing physical products, services and user experiences in order to realise design ambitions.

**EXAMINATION****PROFESSIONALISM**

(as evidenced in your approach to your studies and your participation in the life of your programme and the College)

Having completed the MA Global Innovation Design programme at the RCA, you should be able to:

- C1. Devise and implement high-level strategies that address global challenges.
- C2. Manage complex international projects that accommodate diverse working cultures.
- C3. Demonstrate entrepreneurship in the identification and realisation of design proposals.
- C4. Demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to the diverse expectations and experiences of international collaborators.
- C5. Define your professional identity through a holistic understanding of the global market and an awareness of the responsibilities and demands of leadership in professional life.
- C6. Participate as an active, thoughtful and responsible member of diverse teams.

