Between Word and Deed:

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1. Manifesto basics

A *manifesto is a particular form of communication predicated on three beliefs: that a change has occurred or some new insight has altered understanding of a situation; that human agency can change circumstances into something more desirable; and that the timing is advantageous for both the manifesto and the change it seeks. It is a public statement rather than a private one.*

Exactly what is included under the classification manifesto is open to debate. Corporations and non-profit organisations have their mission statements, governments and foundations have their policy agendas, and political parties have their platforms — all these might be considered particular forms of manifesto. On occasion a less formal organisation creates a manifesto. What marks all these documents is a common purpose — to focus attention on a new agenda arising from a recognition of changed circumstances, to publicly announce a desired change in human behavior and institutional configuration, and to exhort interested and influential people to not only endorse the manifesto, but to bring about through their own agendas the changes the manifesto prescribes. A successful manifesto is a call to action that stimulates and coordinates agency.

Agency is defined as the capacity, condition, or state of acting or exerting power. It is about what we can individually or collectively accomplish to alter a state of affairs. Designers are increasingly understanding their role as mediators of culture. What is less certain is whether they understand their possibilities as active agents, consciously supporting substantive change in which they have a voice, or in contrast whether they understand their role more as technicians who create instruments for others who set and control the agenda. The writing and acceptance of a manifesto signals a pro-active attitude. It indicates that the participants are aware that through their agency they can effect change.

Style is often the most memorable attribute of the manifesto. By nature, it must rise above the usual din of communications. It must stir the soul — this is a strongly rhetorical form. 'Rhetoric engages in messy human communications that encompass interpretation of events, alternative actions and ethics, opposing values or dramatic re-tellings that hinge on the presenter or the source of the information rather than in truth.'[1] Where rhetorical communications originate, who or what group presents them, is of significance. The prescriptive

form their statements make is calculated. The manifesto cannot be vague in its call for change or it is too easily ignored. Its statements must be somewhat audacious and strong. Besides being interpretive and in some sense partisan, it is a difficult form to manage in the overwrought media communication age in which we live.

Another difficulty is to overcome the cynicism that attends its reception. Often associated with utopian ideals or avant-garde experiments, a manifesto more often than not is received with skepticism. But manifestos, regardless of their reception, are memorable. Some manifestos are memorable for their powerful use of language: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'[2] Some are memorable for their visual appearance. Striking the right balance of connection with the past and articulation of an attainable vision of the future is critical to the manifesto.

Some avant-garde manifesto writers like the Futurist, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, shunned the past entirely and stridently pushed a vision of the future of art. The first Futurist Manifesto was published in 1909.

As a theorist and polemicist, Marinetti is at his best in what he himself called the 'art of writing manifestos.' At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the 'manifesto' was already a favorite form, used as a witty but peaceful medium for expressing literary ideas. With Marinetti it becomes a symbolic, paradoxical, incandescent and terroristic medium (Hulten 1986:512).

A description of the romanticism and politics that inspired the Futurist Manifesto can be found in *Futurismo & Futurismi* (Hulten 1986:512-519). The Fascist connection, awareness of new scientific theories and the early penetration of technology into everyday life mark the manifesto. Marinetti followed the first manifesto with another in 1913 that he referred to as his *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature*. In this manifesto he becomes more detailed in expressing the goals and content of Futurist writing. In the section that deals with syntax (Words-in-Freedom), he becomes prescriptive about words, symbols, rhythm, and typography.

Timing, as mentioned previously, is also critical in the reception of a manifesto. If it is too early, a sufficient number of people will not know or have experience of what the manifesto claims as a necessary change. If it is too late, the news, the change to which it points, is commonplace and is ignored. History attends to the manifesto, whether it is the benchmark of 1517 with Martin Luther's protest against the sale of indulgences, marked by the posting of his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg, resulting in beginning the Reformation in Germany, or the Declaration of Independence of 1776, resulting in the American separation from Britain, or the Communist Manifesto of 1848. A recent visit to the web, in which the author performed a search for 'manifestos,' yielded 20,856.[3] The manifesto form flourishes, aided by new technology. (This is a relationship that will be explored in more detail later.)

2. Marking change: two manifestos

A look at two manifestos demonstrates the relationship between the call for a new agenda and a prescriptive change.

Fluxus

Fluxus is an interesting, extended art event with a brief series of manifestos from the mid-twentieth century. The first manifesto (Dusseldorf, 1963) plays off dictionary definitions with contemporary prescriptive comments regarding art praxis. The second manifesto (New York, 1965) in contrast takes a dialectical approach comparing 'art' with 'fluxus art-amusement.'

Art	*Fluxus Art-Amusement*
To justify artists's professional, parasitic and elite status in society, he must demonstrate artist's indispensibility and exclusiveness, he must demonstrate the dependability of audience upon him, he must demonstrate that no one but the artist can do art.	To establish artist's nonprofessional status in society, He must demonstrate artist's dispensibility and inclusiveness, He must demonstrate the self-sufficiency of the audience, He must demonstrate that anything can be art and anyone can do it.
Therefore, art must appear to be complex, pretentious, profound, serious, intellectual, inspired, skillful, significant, theatrical. It must appear to be valuable as commodity so as to provide the artist with an income. To raise its value (artist's income and patron's profit), art is made to appear rare, limited in quantity and therefore obtainable and accessible only to the social elite and institutions.	Therefore, art-amusement must be simple, amusing, unpretentious, concerned with insignificances, require no skill or countless rehearsals, have no commodity or institutional value.

[in contrast]

The value of art-amusement must be lowered by making it unlimited, massproduced, obtainable by all and eventually produced by all.

Fluxus art-amusement is the rear-guard without any pretention or urge to participate in the competition of 'one-upmanship' with the avant-garde. It strives for the monostructural and nontheatrical qualities of a simple natural event, a game or a gag. It is the fusion of Spike Jones, Vaudeville, gag, children's games and Duchamp (Hendricks 1988:26).

The next Fluxus manifesto in 1966 took a more formal approach and cited: where, what, who, why and how Fluxus was. This manifesto was under greater visual control in all capitals, spaced out with hyphens between entries. Among the artists listed were: Christo, Alison Knowles, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, Diter Rot, Ben Vautier, Emmet O Williams, and La Monte Young (Hendricks 1988:31). This is an example of a progression of manifestos working toward refining an emerging message and trying to get it right.

During the developmental period of Fluxus (1962-1963), the focus was on the collective movement of the idea as opposed to individual identities of artists. A letter from George Maciunas to Ben Vautier expresses this ideal:

... I notice with disappointment your GROWING MEGALOMANIA. Why not try Zen method — Curb & eliminate your ego entirely. (if you can) don't sign anything — don't attribute anything to yourself — depersonalize yourself! that's in true Fluxus collective spirit. De-europanize yourself! No one can succeed to do this here either. (although in Japan they can) ... (Hendricks 1988:133).

Fluxus owes a debt to Dada, an avant-garde art movement from the early part of the twentieth century. Some historians relate Dada to Fluxus as its historical precedent.[4] According to Tristan Tzara:

Dada is a state of mind. That is why it transforms itself according to races and events. Dada applies itself to everything, and yet it is nothing, it is the point where the yes and the no and all the opposites meet, not solemnly in the castles of human philosophies, but very simply at the street corners, like dogs and grasshoppers (Milman 1992:29).

Fluxus was 'overtly concerned with the need to reposition art experience within the domain of the common man and woman ...' (Milman 1992:18). Like design, Fluxus had a strong commitment to everyday experience.

A new idea, one of its proponents, George Maciunas, wanted to keep the idea of the international collectivity vital and avoid the rivalry that existed between the French and German Dadaists. He proposed a manifesto that is sometimes printed and referred to as a Fluxus Manifesto.

> But nobody was willing to sign the thing. We did not want to confine tomorrow's possibilities by what we thought today. That manifesto is, then, Maciunas' manifesto, not a manifesto of Fluxus (Foster 1992:38).

Here the problem of reception is clearly stated. Whether the reluctance to sign was a result of the still formative nature of the movement, or whether it was an artifact of ego, or whether a sufficient collective understanding and focus for the idea was not achieved, is impossible to tell.

One member of Fluxus, Ken Friedman, has written about the myths surrounding the 'movement' and its manifestos. He resists calling Fluxus an art movement because of its lack of cohesion. And the documents (manifestos) largely produced by Maciunas, may not have been intended for endorsement at all, but as provocations in a dialectical process (Friedman & Lewes 1992:155-179).

A humanist manifesto

Tied to the millenium, another manifesto, the *Humanist Manifesto 2000*, calls for a planetary humanism. It is inspired by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideals of science, reason, democracy, education, and humanist values.

The Planetary Humanism that this manifesto presents is *post*-postmodernist in its outlook. It draws on the best values of modernity, yet it seeks to transcend the negativity of postmodernism and it looks forward to the information age now dawning and all that this portends for the future of mankind (Kurtz 2000:23).

As a planetary document it crosses social, political, and economic boundaries. Regarding moral conduct, it believes that basic, moral principles are common to virtually all civilizations.

People of different sociocultural backgrounds do in fact apply similar general moral principles, though specific moral judgments may differ because of differing conditions. The challenge for societies thus is to emphasize our similarities, not our differences (Kurtz 2000:30).

The manifesto carefully concludes with a statement concerning those who endorse the document — that they accept its main principles but may not agree with every provision in it. Further, the manifesto states that it is intended to contribute to constructive dialogue and is an invitation to those of different traditions to join 'in working for a better world in the planetary society that is now emerging' (Kurtz 2000:64). Signatories from all over the world — academics, authors, philosophers, activists, Nobel laureates, astronomers, religious leaders and more, endorse the manifesto.

With these two brief examples demonstrating some of the issues inherent in the manifesto form, we turn to the ICOGRADA Design Education Manifesto.

3. The Icograda Design Education Manifesto

While many notable manifestos are the work of a single individual as a representative of some group, whether self-anointed or elected, the origin of this manifesto is quite different — it was a collaboration among an international group of designers. The participants represented Brazil, China, Germany, India, South Korea, the Netherlands, South Africa, and the United States. The collaborative nature of this undertaking was significant as the participants came with different experiences of the world — geographically, politically, economically, culturally, and socially. With particular personal experiences in design and education coloured by their access to technology, media, the nature of their clients and/or students, the traditions and associations in which design was commonly related — all of these and more marked their differences. The complexity of their representation — as world citizen, representative of some country, member of some professional group, faculty of some university, teacher of particular courses, designer with particular expertise, human-being with certain religious, humanistic, political, social affinities — created a rich and diverse discourse.

Professor Sang-Soo Ahn convened two workshops in Seoul in March and June of 2000. The first workshop established the sense of change in design context and definition and explored its impact on design education. The second workshop greatly benefited from the original workshop achievement and developed the language, structure, and tone for the document. Each workshop consisted of a mixed international team of participants fluent in English.[5] Because globalism has been and continues to be highlighted in all dimensions of social, cultural, and political life from the local through many levels to the international, issues of economic stability, cultural universalism or uniqueness, access to technology and distribution systems, as well as fundamental questions concerning what defines the aspirations and ethics of design education and

practice — the particular context in which design operates — were open to discussion.[6] Aware of differences in development and cultural orientation, the participants sought the common ground. This was a practical decision as the particularities derived from specific cultural/economic conditions, while interesting, would not lend themselves to a focused and fairly brief manifesto document.

Issues

From the start there was different understandings of the form of a manifesto. And the content was complicated by being viewed through different cultural filters. Nevertheless, the participants, in a spirit of friendship and understanding, worked collaboratively to create the document at the conclusion of this article. Frank Barral summarizes the apprehensions of the group in his statement:

> The 20th century saw a lot of manifestos. I'm wary of them. They tend to be exclusive rather than inclusive — not exactly the expression of a reflexive humbleness. Some people take so seriously the ideas of the manifesto that they don't perceive that people and times are what they are and that manifestos will be at best guidelines, not inflexible laws.[7]

Regarding both the manifesto and cultural differences, Gui Bonsiepe observed:

> What I have learned from the very instructive meeting in Seoul where we drafted the first version, is that in Asian culture it seems not to be considered polite to state publicly divergencies. I admit my lack of deeper knowledge of Asian culture and philosophy, but I got the impression that manifesto-writing is rooted in western intellectual tradition that starts from contradictions; whereas in Asian culture, people tend more to look for convergencies and to search for harmony.[8]

This difference between eastern and western cultures was fundamental to our discussions. The notion of harmony proved difficult for western participants. Reflecting on my own experience as an American who has taught many design courses with various mixtures of eastern and western students over many years, I observe that western students value individuality and freedom to an extreme,

while eastern students value community and social obligation. This difference in emphasis is I suspect at the core of the problem with harmony. The west decries its lack of community, yet often appears unwilling to compromise individual positions in order to gain a more extensive community agreement. Orientation to competition or collaboration also colour this cultural divide.

The second workshop did get into a serious discussion over this very issue. Jan van Toorn recalls:

> We had a rather long argument within our group, as you know, about the now last paragraph of the manifesto. In Frank Barral's and my view this section about 'Oullim, the great harmony' is in conflict with the wittingly dialectic character of the manifesto. Frank called the promise of harmony, as a metaphysical notion, a belief. In my opinion it is an ideological position that denies the forces and contradictions we have to struggle with as practical intellectuals. We should not give up our dreams, but we have to realize them in reality.[9]

With regard to timing — there was little disagreement. The changes the twentieth century wrought make a manifesto critical now, if only to dramatize the change. Marian Sauthoff noted:

> ... contemporary graphic design is marked by transition, fluidity, complexity and convergence ... the impact of digital information technology ... the importance of research and self-reflection ... sustainability and accountability ... the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred education.[10]

To this Jan van Toorn would add:

> Design has been entirely incorporated in the radical transformation of social, economic, and cultural life through the advertising and image-design of transnational corporations, culture industry and politics.[11]

To which Gui Bonsiepe would add that it is time to bury all claims of cultural hegemony.

With the exception of the friendly argument regarding 'harmony' both workshops had surprisingly good agreement about basic con-

cepts, and the resulting discussion revolved around emphasis and wording rather than deeper disagreement. The participants all gave up some ideas that were important to their own context of experience: Gui Bonsiepe gave up explicit mention of the audio dimension of communication that is now increasingly important to designers; he would also have liked to go deeper into the term usability; Marian Sauthoff would have liked a better name than visual communication design; I would have liked a cautionary statement regarding technology, and a deeper statement regarding human-centered as opposed to market-centered design; Dan Boyarski also wanted a strong human-centered attitude so that the emphasis was on solving problems that touched people's lives rather than on strict formal values. Our decision-making was marked by conscious and clear negotiation of issues which we proposed, and then we listened to comments in support or denial of the idea. The search was for concensus.

Focus on commonground was questioned by Kirti Trivedi, who was reluctant to submerge the rich and real differences among cultures. Admittedly, a homogeneous commonground could appear bland and eminently forgettable, yet dialogue and appreciation of difference can be respectfully initiated when shared ideas and events provide a reason for engagement. Commonground provides a kind of social and cultural glue.

The document

The final document, set out at the end of this article, has four parts. The opening states the need for a new term for graphic design and why this is needed. This is substantiated in the second section which mentions the factual change in the design environment. The third section states a new definition for the role of visual communication designer. Only the fourth and final section dealing with changes in design education is written prescriptively. That change has occurred is addressed in the first two parts, while the second two parts propose a remedy that will better address the changed circumstances.

The language and tone were carefully considered. The language is plain in recognition of its final translation into many other languages and also with respect to the international team of writers, many of whom were using English as a second language. The tone is not strident, it is perhaps even somewhat quiet for a manifesto.

Distribution and reception

The ICOGRADA manifesto was presented to the Congress in Seoul at the close of its meeting in October, 2000. Translated into **ten** languages, the worldwide distribution of this document is critical to achieving coordination and support for human agency. The ease with which we communicate via e-mail and the web makes the previously formidable problem of 'reach' easy. Translation and appropriate typography also benefit from computer applications and extend reception of the document into many previously unreachable corners of the world. While the manifesto can be put into circulation, what also is desired is comment and reaction. As the *Humanist Manifesto*, mentioned earlier, invited dialogue, the sponsors and collaborators on this manifesto desire a similar response. Rather than putting a message into a bottle and setting it adrift on the electronic sea of communications — even in an array of languages and typographies — this needs an active response. The measure of the manifesto's success will be taken over time — in discussion and argument in the short-term and through educational program change in the long-term.

Which issues the manifesto raises will find easy acceptance or difficult compromise will emerge over time. The manifesto team recognizes that the context of application will vary. The document will be interpreted according to local situations. Was the timing right after all? Is ICOGRADA a credible origin for such a document? Are the prescriptive statements too heavy handed? Is the common ground rooted in a shared reality? Can recipients of the manifesto overcome their cynicism or egos long enough to endorse a community effort? These questions remain unanswerable at this time.

This manifesto emerged from international collaboration and a search for the commonground. The idea and reality of building human community is based on shared interests and reality. Our contact internationally is easier than ever. We can maintain dialogue and share best practices though we are a world away; we can support each other's agency as we design a humane, desirable future. Occasionally there is a need to summarize a change in the state of affairs and to offer some idea of adjustment or remedy for the new circumstances — this is the nature of the manifesto presented here.

Between word and deed — the manifesto and its actionable results — from the manifesto (the noun) to making manifest (the verb), we all are party to the outcome.
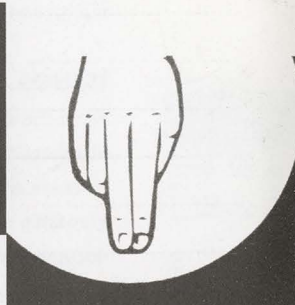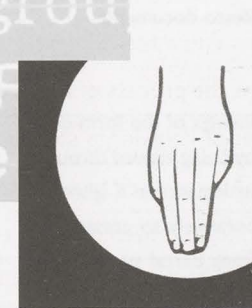
Graphic designer

The term 'graphic design' has been technologically undermined. A better term is visual communication design. Visual communication design has become more and more a profession that integrates idioms and approaches of several disciplines in a multi-layered and in-depth visual competence. Boundaries between disciplines are becoming more fluid. Nevertheless designers need to recognize professional limitations.

Many changes have occurred

Developments in media technology and the information economy have profoundly affected visual communication design practice and education. New challenges confront the designer. The variety and complexity of design issues has expanded. The resulting challenge is the need for a more advanced ecological balance between human beings and their socio-cultural and natural environment.

Designer

A visual communication designer is a professional:
- who contributes to shaping the visual landscape of culture
- who focuses on the generation of meaning for a community of users, not only interpreting their interest but offering conservative and innovative solutions as appropriate
- who collaboratively solves problems and explores possibilities through the systematic practice of criticism
- who is an expert that conceptualizes and articulates ideas into tangible experiences
- whose approach is grounded in a symbiotic conduct that respects the diversity of environmental and cultural contexts without overemphasizing difference, but by recognizing common ground
- who carries an individual responsibility for ethics to avoid harm and takes into account the consequences of design action to humanity, nature, technology, and cultural facts.
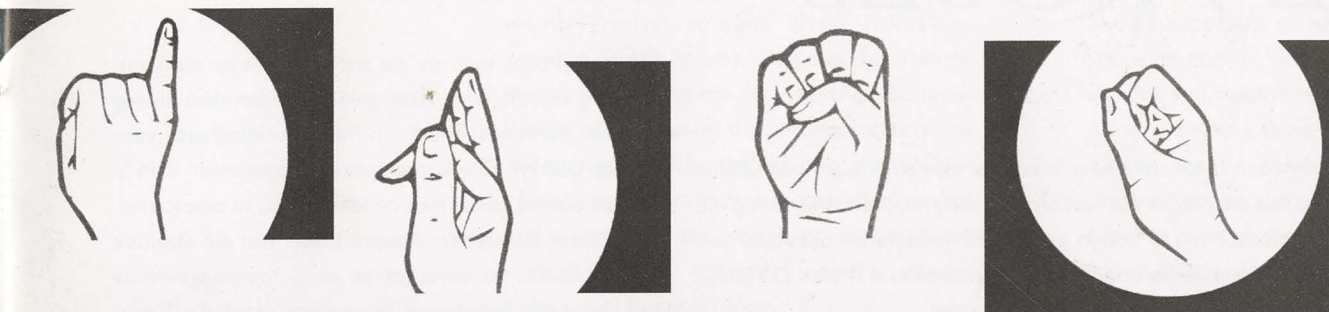
Future of design education

The new design program includes the following dimensions: image, text, movement, time, sound, and interactivity. Design education should focus on a critical mentality combined with tools to communicate. It should nurture a self-reflective attitude and ability. The new program should foster strategies and methods for communication and collaboration.

Theory and design history should be an integral part of design education. Design research should increase the production of design knowledge in order to enhance design performance through understanding cognition and emotion, physical, and social and cultural human factors. More than ever, design education must prepare students for change. To this end, it must move from being teaching-centered to a learning-centered environment which enables students to experiment and to develop their own potential in and beyond academic programs. Thus the role of a design educator shifts from that of only knowledge provider to that of a person who inspires and facilitates orientation for a more substantial practice.

The power to think the future 'near or far' should be an integral part of visual communication design. A new concept in design promises to tune nature, humanity, and technology, and to harmonize east and west, north and south, as well as past, present, and future in a dynamic equilibrium. This is the essence of *Oullim*, the great harmony.

Endnotes

1. For a more extended discussion of rhetoric and its role in communication and design, see Poggenpohl (1998:203).

2. From the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, 1776.

3. The author searched the web with Lycos on September 20, 2000 and received this result.

4. For a historical positioning of Fluxus in the context of other twentieth century art movements, see Milman (1992:17-34).

5. The first workshop consisted of Sang-Soo Ahn, Hong-Ik University (South Korea), Gui Bonsiepe, University of Applied Sciences, Cologne (Germany), Dan Boyarski, Carnegie Mellon University (United States), Esther Liu, Hong Kong Polytechnic University (China), Marian Sauthoff, University of Pretoria (South Africa), Kirti Trivedi, Industrial Design Centre, IIT, Bombay (India).
   The second workshop consisted of Sang-Soo Ahn, Hong-Ik University (South Korea), Frank Barral, former director and current faculty member of Escola de Superior de Desenho Industrial, Rio de Janeiro State University (Brazil), Sharon Poggenpohl, Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology (United States), and Jan van Toorn, former head of the Jan van Eyck Academy (The Netherlands).

6. Three of the manifesto participants, Sang-Soo Ahn, Frank Barral, and Sharon Poggenpohl, previously participated in an ICOGRADA congress in Uruguay that explored the ideas of globalization and regionalization in graphic design education. See Bush and Poggenpohl (1998).

7. Correspondence with Frank Barral, September 2, 2000.

8. Correspondence with Gui Bonsiepe, August 25, 2000.

9. Correspondence with Jan van Toorn, August 29, 2000.

10. Correspondence with Marian Sauthoff, September 15, 2000.

11. Correspondence with Jan van Toorn, August 29, 2000.

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