

Claire Bishop<sup>1</sup> indicates that there is a wide variety of practices in the expanded field of artistic creation highlighting what she has labeled the *social twist*. This consists of a utopian rethinking of the relationship between art and social issues by promoting their political potential, that is, by reviewing the different forms in which these creative practices are produced, consumed and debated. When Milton Glaser talks about personal interventions and the need to make explicit ideas that reach the bloodstream of culture, he invites us to integrate ourselves into the events of our time and to fight against the despair that paralyzes us. This can only be done by breaking out of the rules and unblocking the institutions. That is the function of artistic communication in public space: action, not contemplation. Glaser's assertive words<sup>2</sup> invite us to be aware of this situation and to act because "the world is divided between those who make things and those who control things."

According to Ivan Illich<sup>3</sup> we are determined by our relation with the others, with the environment, the instruments we use and the tools or *convivial relation*. In this sense, visual communication is an essential instrument to be able to participate in the creation of social life; and, although the majority of both public and private institutions encourage it, we should not forget that design is a cordial tool and its function cannot be to clog or anaesthetize if it really intends to develop an authentic cultural and political autonomy.

To paraphrase Marina Garcés<sup>4</sup> the survivors/shipwrecked have discovered that design and art are not "production but understanding and transformation, relation to truth as purpose and not as content". This useful knowledge "sets us, personally and collectively, in a freer and fuller relationship with the world" and its ethical function is to desaturate, contextualize and articulate connecting us with the real questions, "not with the objectives but with the questions that really matter to us".

AT EVERY  
OPPORTUNITY,  
I HAVE ATTEMPTED  
TO SPEAK TRUTH  
TO POWER [...]   
PLAYING A  
CONSCIOUS ROLE...  
AS A CULTURAL  
PROVOCATEUR.

—George Lois

ALL ARTISTS  
ARE ALIKE.  
THEY DREAM OF  
DOING SOMETHING  
THAT'S MORE SOCIAL,  
MORE CRITICAL,  
AND MORE REAL  
THAN ART.

—Dan Graham

We cannot continue to deceive ourselves; companies and institutions have been the cause of a sweet-tragic shipwreck that has left us without references and adrift. Bill Readings and David Harvey<sup>5</sup> also highlight this ruinous state of affairs. If we apply their point of view to design, we will see educational spaces as empty institutions that “sell out an abstract notion of excellence” focused on education for economic management rather than for cultural conflict. So it is our job as designers to teach how to think, to question the consumption of useful information – for corporations and governments – and to focus on the authentic austere *convivial relationship*, because “the simple, poor, transparent tool is a humble servant [and] the elaborated, complex, secret tool is an arrogant master”.<sup>6</sup>

In an interview, Ernest Hemingway, replied that “to be a great writer, you must have an innate, foolproof sense of stopping lies”. This is the greatest of our challenges, as survivors/ shipwrecked destined to recognize change, be sensitive to problems and have enough motivation and courage to sound the alarm and act. Our survival depends on what Kenneth Boulding calls *social consciousness*. To break through bureaucratic structures, it is necessary to eliminate the prejudices and customs imposed on us by authoritarian technology, “system-centred, immensely powerful, but inherently unstable” and deal with that focused on man, much weaker, but inventive and enduring. In other words, try to develop decentralized design initiatives because they are more compatible with social equality, freedom and cultural pluralism. On the other hand, for artists and designers, collaboration and engagement are not the panacea but rather the place of conflict and debate. Participatory design projects cannot represent a privileged political environment, nor a decorative-domesticated tool for the society of the spectacle, but a contribution to the

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BEEN DISCOMFORT  
AND CURIOSITY, THE  
MORE DIFFICULTIES  
I FACE, THE MORE  
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TO OVERCOME THEM.

—Félix Beltrán

YOU CAN'T CHANGE  
THE WORLD WITH  
A SONG. AND YOU  
CAN'T MAKE IT RIGHT  
WHEN IT'S WRONG.  
IT'S TALKING TO YOU,  
THE WORLD DANCES  
TO THE RHYTHM OF  
ITS OWN HEART...

—Ellie Goulding

maintenance of an uncertain and precarious democracy in itself. Social design is “not there but needs to be continuously executed and tested in each specific context”.<sup>7</sup>

José Antonio Marina<sup>8</sup> in his *Ética para náufragos* reminds us that the poetic attitude, creative impulse, desire for happiness and genesis of new rights are the product of an intelligence “that creates dignity through poetic rationality”; that ethics has no meaning without the right to a dignified life, the right to an intelligently free life and the right to seek personal happiness. “The past, historical morals, nature, serves only to learn how to create the future. Ethics studies, first of all, the invention of the future” and survivors/shipwrecked have the right and duty to work tirelessly in that uncertain future.

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- 1-7 Bishop, C. (2011). *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art And The Politics Of Spectatorship*. London and New York: Verso.
- 2 Glaser, M. (2008). *4 Short Talks (more or less on the subject of design)*. New York: Visual Arts Press.
- 3-6 Illich, I. (1978). *La convivencialidad*, México: Ocotepec, Morelos.

- 4 Garcés, M. (2015). *Más allá del acceso: el problema de cómo relacionarse con el conocimiento*, en *Un saber realmente útil*. Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.
- 5 Rosler, M. (2013). *Culture Class*. e-flux Journal. New York: (Sternberg Press / E-Flux Journal)
- 8 Marina, J. A. (1995). *Ética para náufragos*. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama.

ARTISTS TEND TO BE  
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THEIR VIEW OF  
THE WORLD HAS  
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AND AMBIGUITY AS  
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RECENT YEARS, I'VE  
COME TO BELIEVE  
THAT THE WORLD  
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WHO CONTROL  
THINGS.

—Milton Glaser