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# Ethics

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# Learning outcomes

- ▶ Understand some of the key ethical debates within the discipline
- ▶ Define an ethical approach to graphic arts practice
- ▶ Analyse advertising communication from an ethical perspective

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# What is ethics?

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rules and laws

philosophy

morals

religious beliefs

right and wrong

social norms

standards

good and evil

system or framework

codes of practice



# Definitions

**Moral [adjective]**

*Concerned with goodness or badness of human character or behavior or with the distinction between right and wrong.*

**Ethics [noun]**

*moral philosophy, moral principles*

**Ethical [adjective]**

*relating to morals, morally correct*

# Definitions

**Moral [adjective] PERSONAL**

Concerned with goodness or badness of human character or behavior or with the distinction between right and wrong.

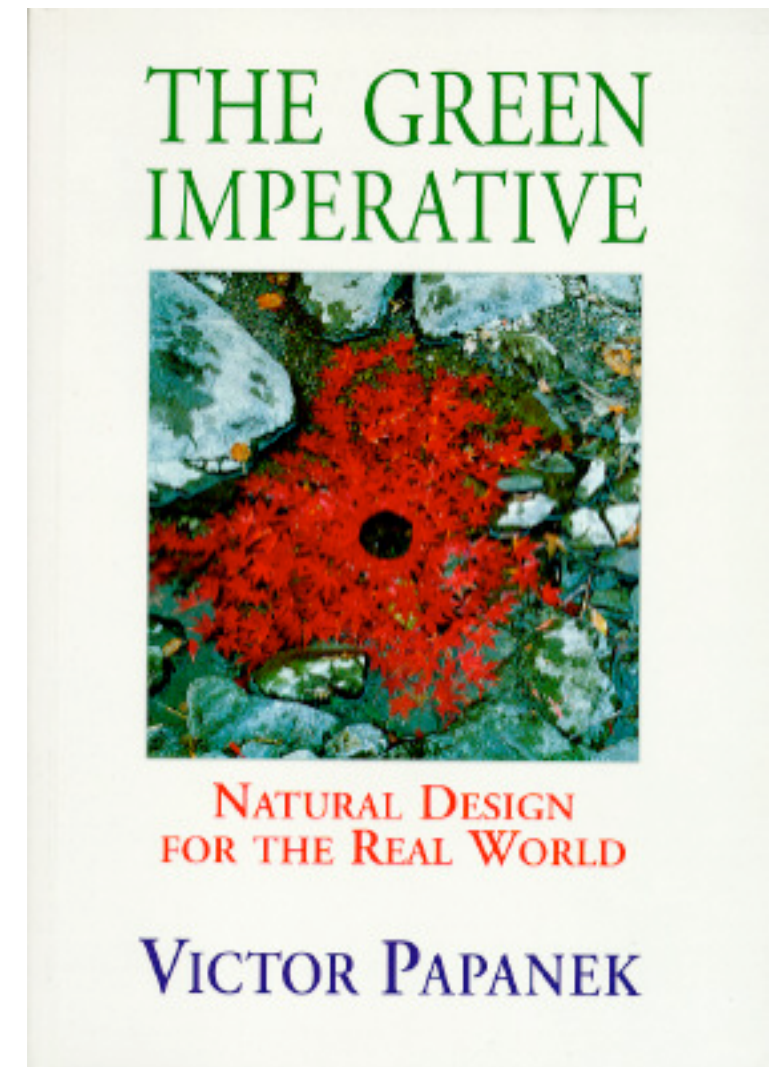
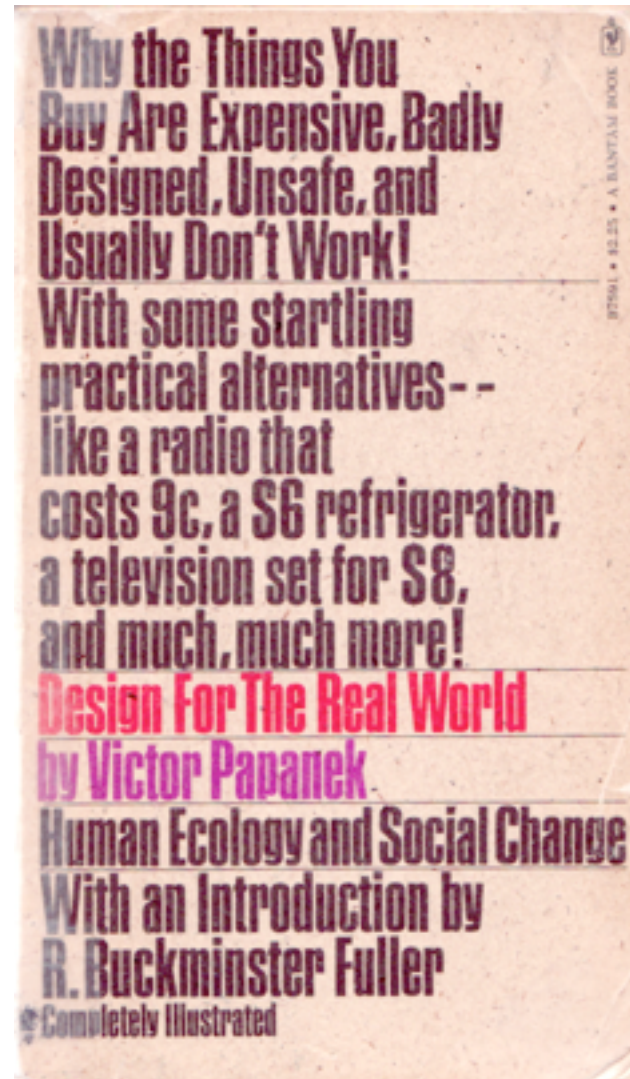
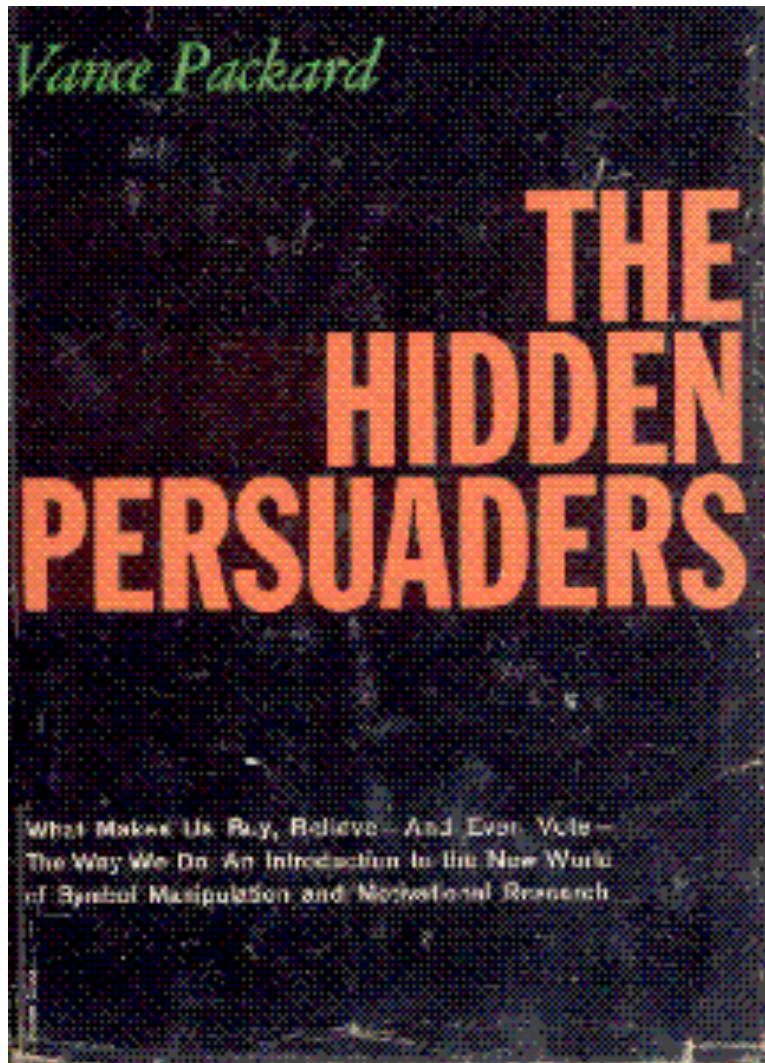
**Ethics [noun] SOCIAL**

Moral philosophy, moral principles

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# Ethics and graphic arts

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The Hidden Persuaders, Vance Packard 1957

Design for the real world : human ecology and social change, Victor Papanek 1971

The Green imperative : ecology and ethics in design and architecture, Victor Papanek 1995



**Design for the Real  
World**  
**Royal College of Art**

Exhibition of inclusive, hu  
the Royal College of Art



Print this page



The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design's annual exhibition of work by its research associates has been devised for the 2012 London Design Festival as a joint show with SustainRCA to mark the 40th anniversary of the publication of Victor Papanek's seminal text, *Design for the Real World*. In 1972, at a time of rampant consumerism, Papanek made a powerful case for the importance of inclusive and sustainable design in meeting the real needs of people. Both aspects of Papanek's legacy are explored in this exhibition.

The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design will present a range of inclusive and human-centred design projects by their Research Associates. Themes focus on ageing, diversity, health, working life and the city. Sustain RCA, the cross-College centre for sustainability led by Clare Brass, will also present the best sustainable design concepts by graduating RCA students.

SHARE



**“There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a few.”**

**Design for the real world : human ecology and social change, Victor Papanek 1971**



1960's saw the advent  
of the socially  
conscious designer

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Ken Garland 1962-66





Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Ken Garland 1962-66

Interview: <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/interview-with-ken-garland>



# first

# things

# first

## A manifesto

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as:

cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before-shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons.

By far the greatest time and effort of those working in the advertising industry are wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films, television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our

society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes. With this in mind, we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students and others who may be interested.

Edward Wright  
Geoffrey White  
William Slack  
Caroline Rawlence  
Ian McLaren  
Sam Lambert  
Ivor Kamlisch  
Gerald Jones  
Bernard Higon  
Brian Grimby  
John Garner  
Ken Garland  
Anthony Froshaug  
Robin Fior  
Germano Facetti  
Ivan Dodd  
Harriet Crowder  
Anthony Clift  
Gerry Cinamon  
Robert Chapman  
Ray Carpenter  
Ken Briggs

Published by Ken Garland, 13 Oakley Sq NW1  
Printed by Goodwin Press Ltd, London N4

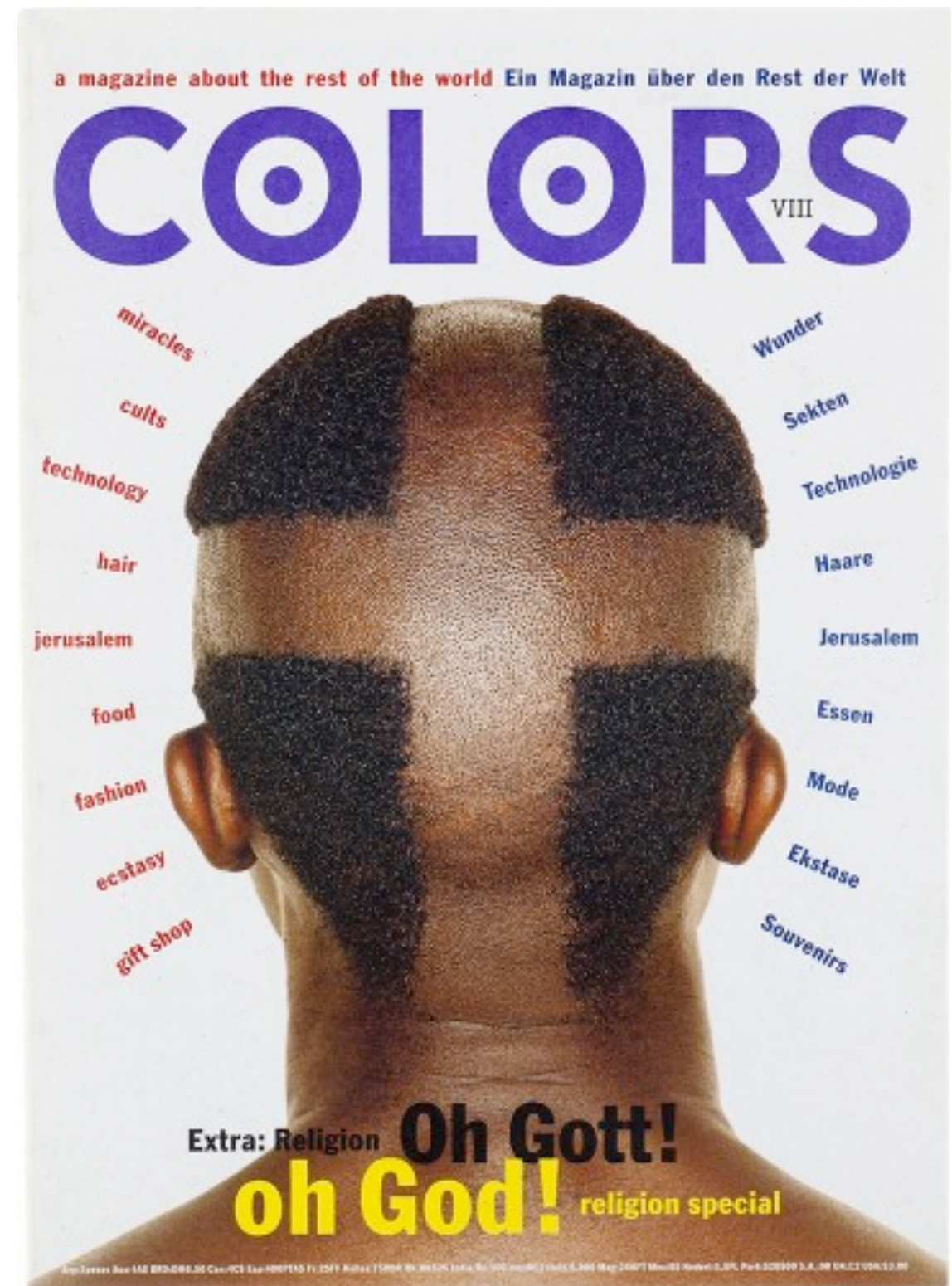
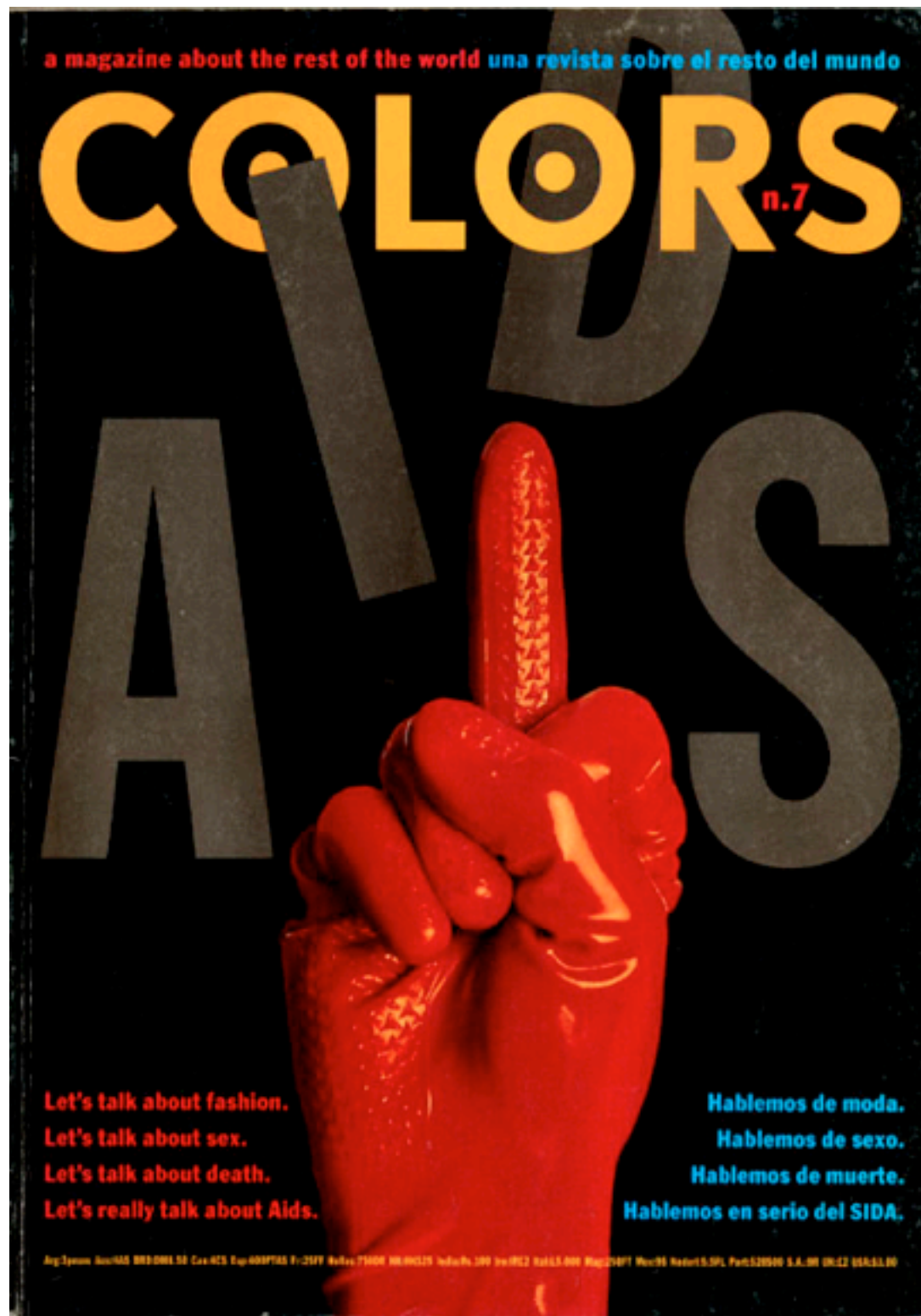
Written and proclaimed at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on an evening in December 1963, the first manifesto was published in January 1964.  
Source: <http://www.kengarland.co.uk>





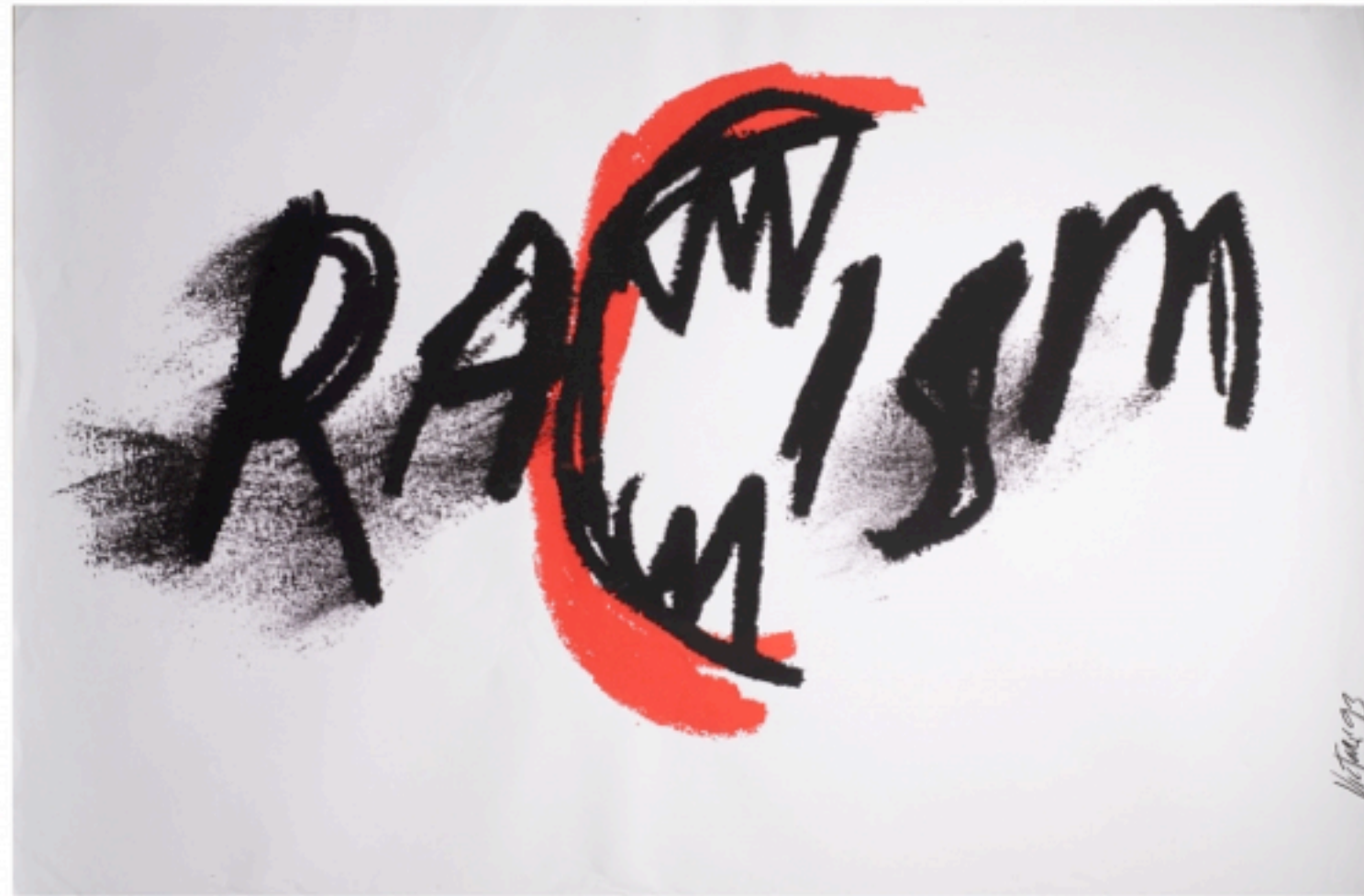
Colors Magazine, Tibor Kalman 1991





Colors Magazine, Tibor Kalman 1991





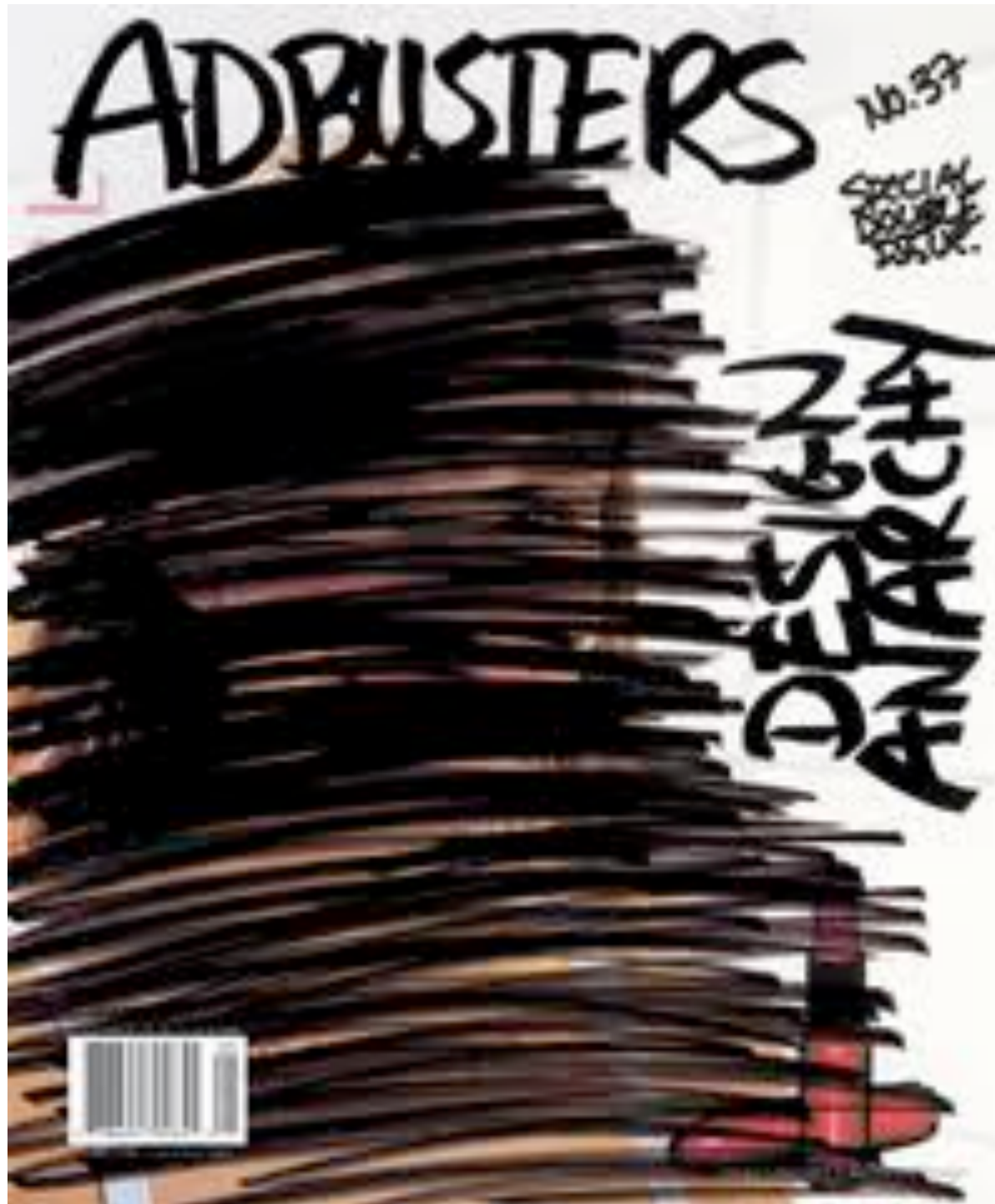
James Victoire Present





Billboard designed by Jonathan Barnbrook for 1999 AIGA LA conference. Original quote by Tibor Kalman





Jonathan Barnbrook

I'LL BE **LONG** BEFORE SOME  
**GO** SMART PERSON  
**EVER** FIGURES OUT  
**WHAT** HAPPENED  
 INSIDE **THIS**  
**OFFICE**

EXTRACT FROM **WITH** GEORGE W BUSH  
 ON INTERVIEW

WISHING YOU A POSITIVE NEW YEAR  
**BARNBROOK DESIGN 2004**

QUOTE SOURCE: THE JERUSALEM POST WWW.JPOST.COM MAY 12, 2004

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, art directors and visual communicators who have been raised in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable use of our talents. Many design teachers and mentors promote this belief; the market rewards it; a tide of books and publications reinforces it.

Encouraged in this direction, designers then apply their skill and imagination to sell dog biscuits, designer coffee, diamonds, detergents, hair gel, cigarettes, credit cards, sneakers, butt toners, light beer and heavy-duty

recreational vehicles. Commercial work has always paid the bills, but many graphic designers have now let it become, in large measure, what graphic designers do. This, in turn, is how the world perceives design. The profession's time and energy is used up manufacturing demand for things that are inessential at best.

Many of us have grown increasingly uncomfortable with this view of design. Designers who devote their efforts primarily to advertising, marketing and brand development are supporting, and implicitly endorsing, a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages

that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact. To some extent we are all helping draft a reductive and immeasurably harmful code of public discourse.

There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. Many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programmes, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help.

Reprinted by Adbusters in 2000 and signed by a new generation of designers.  
Source: <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature.php?id=18&fid=99>

We propose a reversal of priorities in favour of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication – a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.

In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has

only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.

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Irma Boom  
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Max Bruinsma  
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# First Things First Manifesto 2000

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*10 Footnotes to a Manifesto*  
by Michael Bierut 2000

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“The High Noon moment when we are asked to misrepresent the truth comes only rarely for most graphic artists”  
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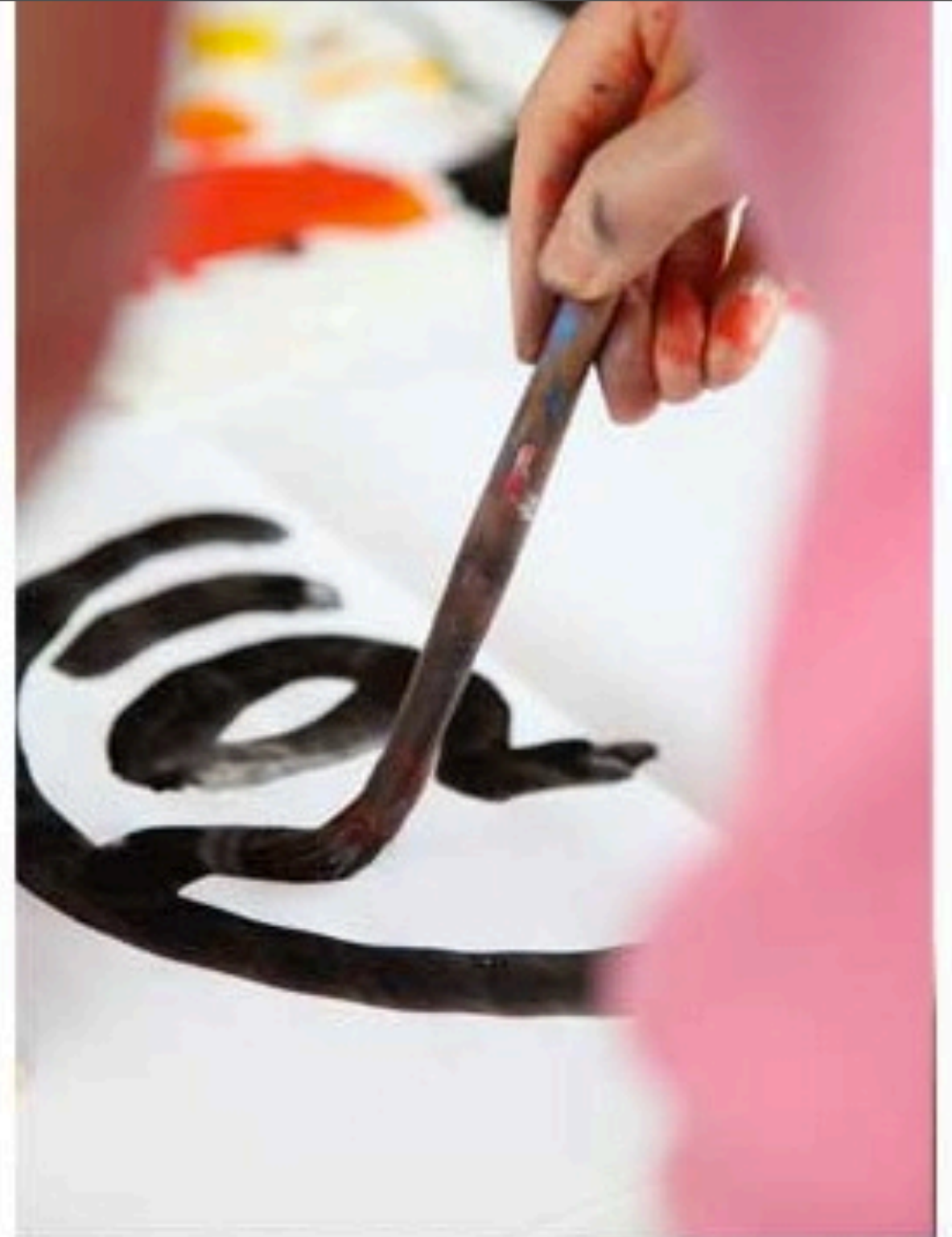
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# What is an ethical approach?

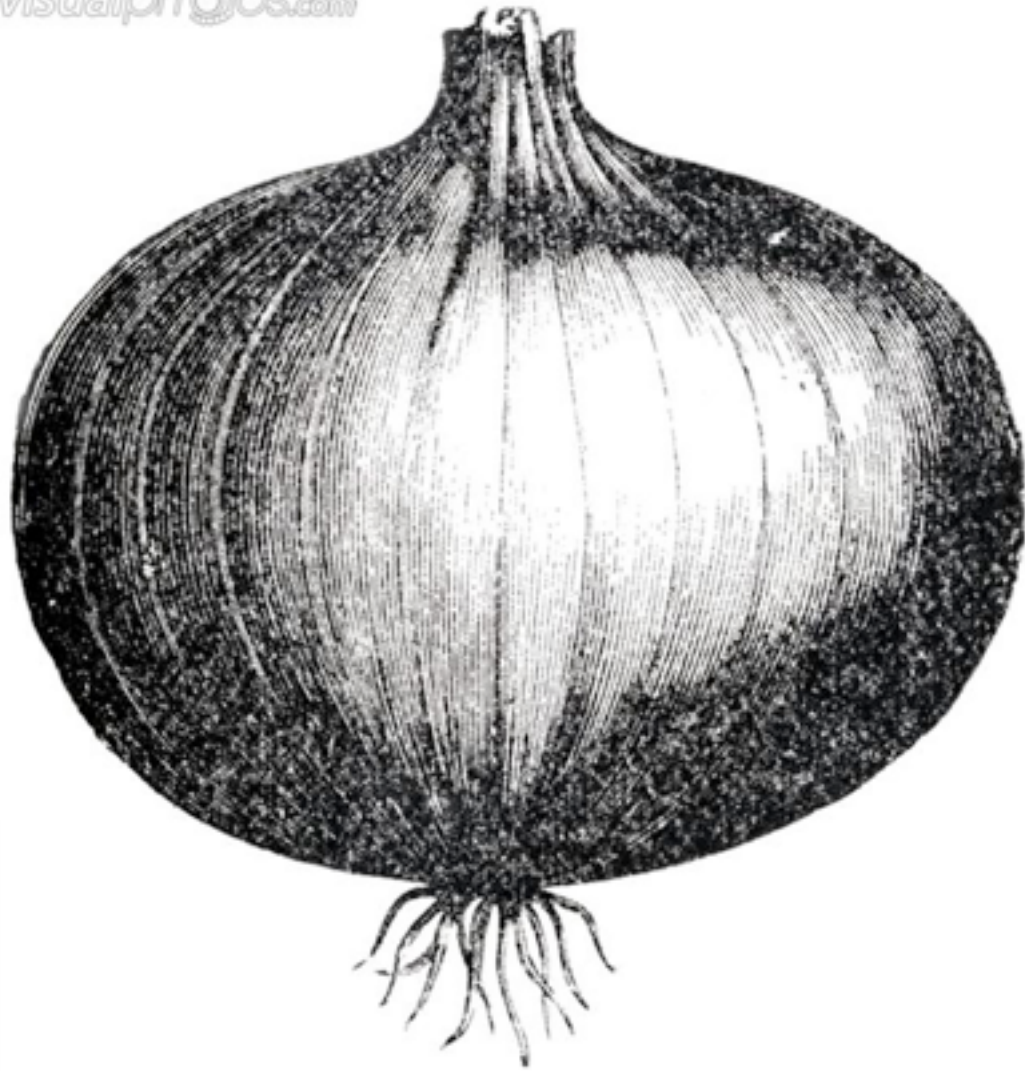
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**What might be some of the common ethical issues that you might encounter as a Graphic Artist?**

visualphotos.com

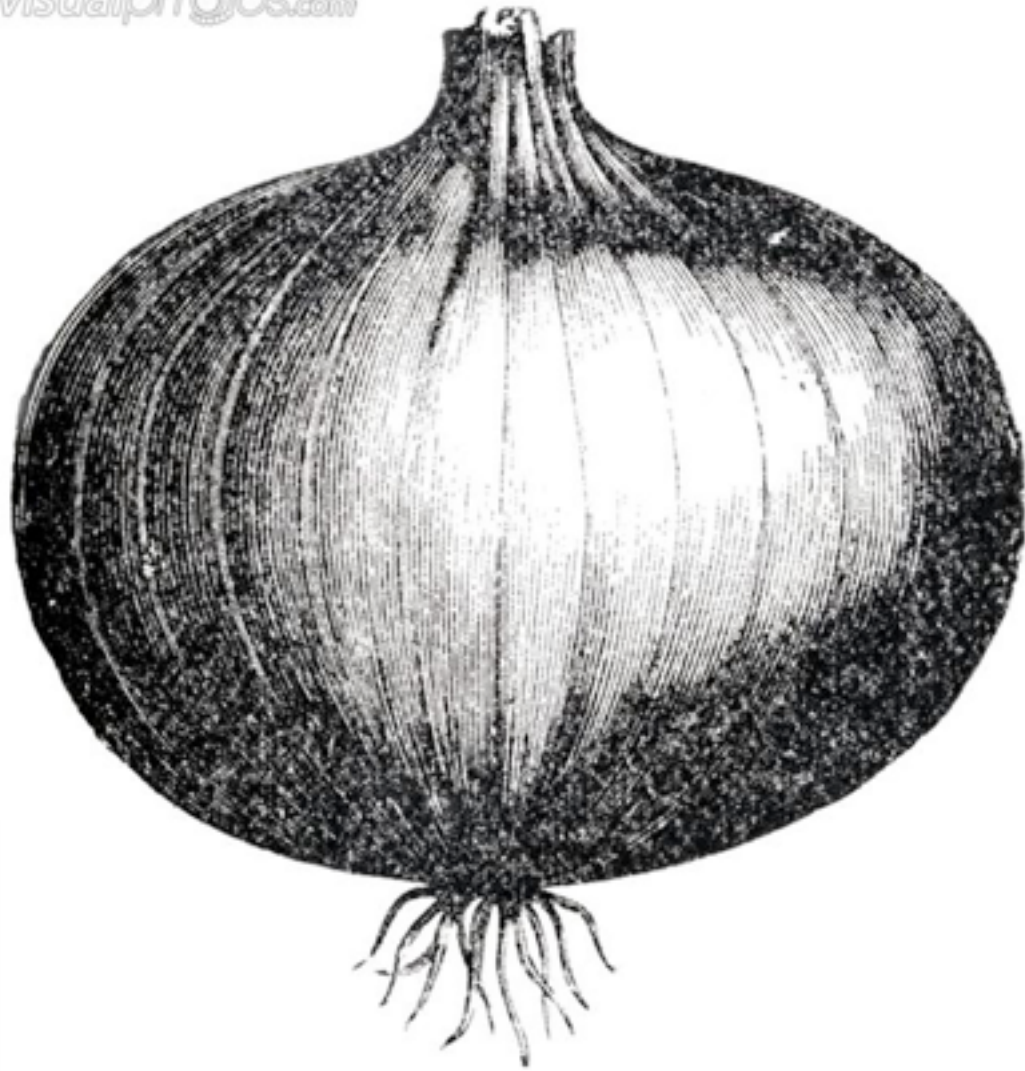


3. Social/Political
2. Professional
1. Personal

923795 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com



visualphotos.com



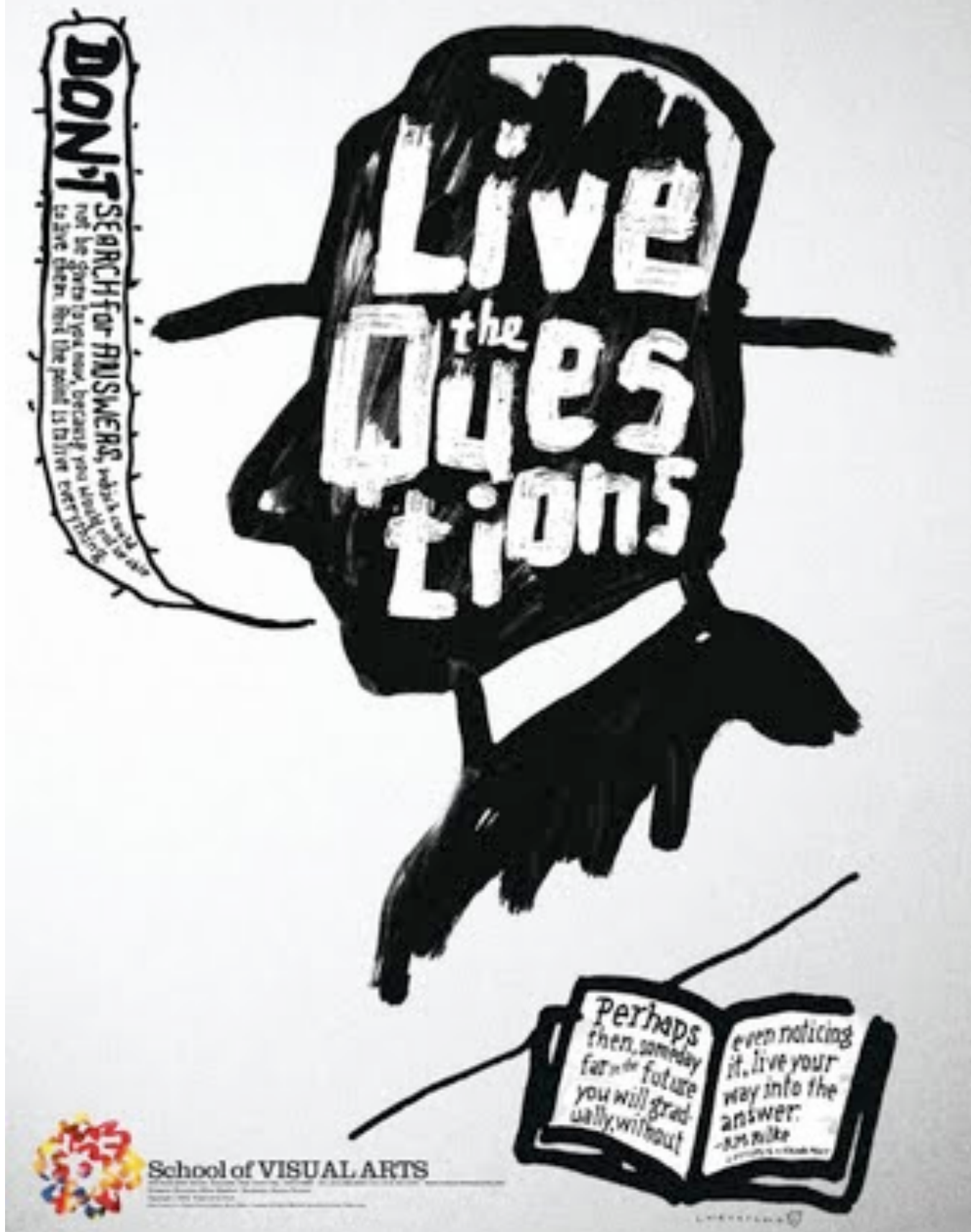
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923795 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com



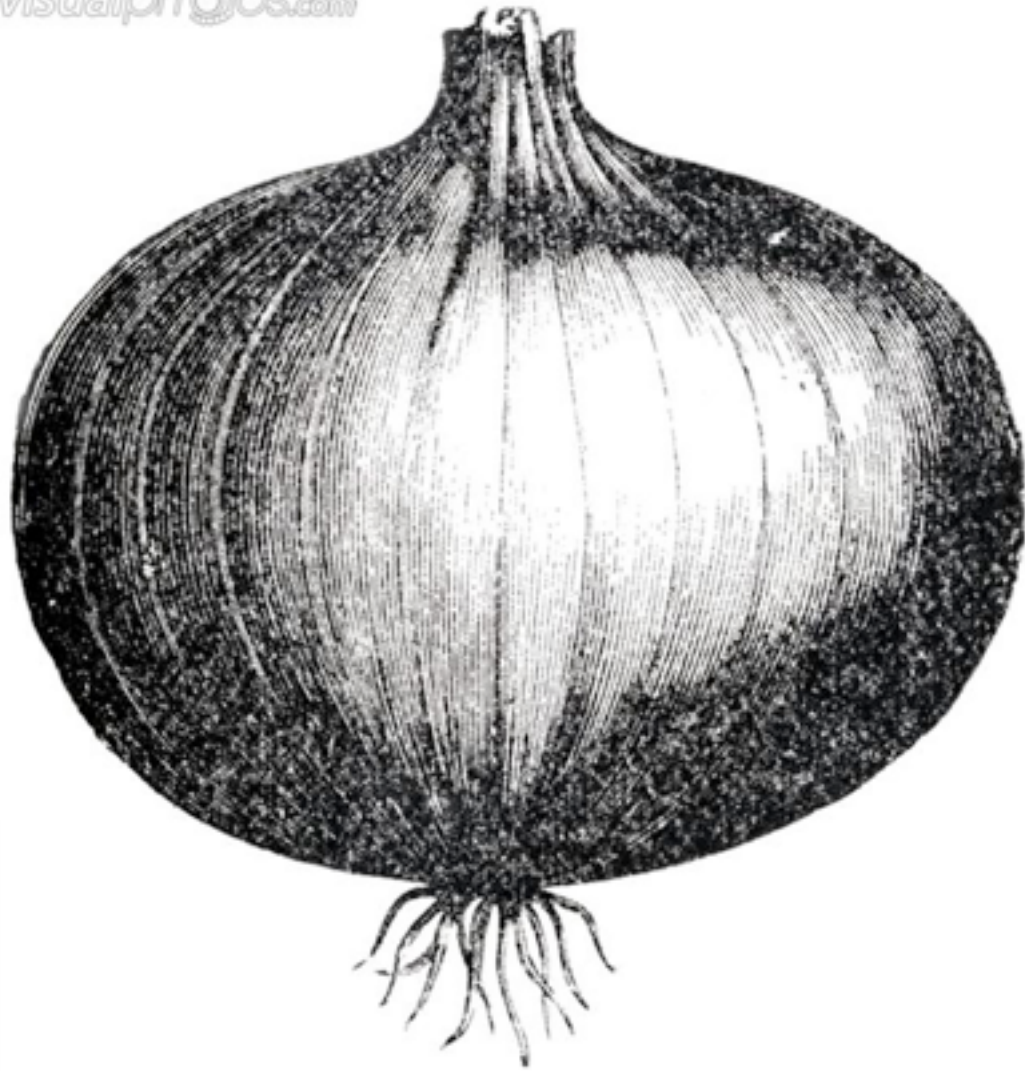
Victore

# 1. Personal



Poster designed for School of Visual Arts James Victore quoting Rainer Maria Rilke

visualphotos.com



3. Social/Political
2. Professional
1. Personal

923795 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com



## 2. Professional



Source: pbs.org

- Respect other designers in fair / open competition
- Be honest in describing your professional experience and competencies
- Avoiding any type of conflict of interest
- Acquainting yourself with each client's business and providing honest and impartial advice
- Maintaining the confidentiality client info
- Eliminating hidden compensation or kickback
- Maintaining commitment to the development of innovative work of the highest quality
- Rejecting all forms of plagiarism
- Making proper acknowledgment of authorship when others have collaborated with you in creating a design

# Professional Associations

American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)

AIGA (UK)

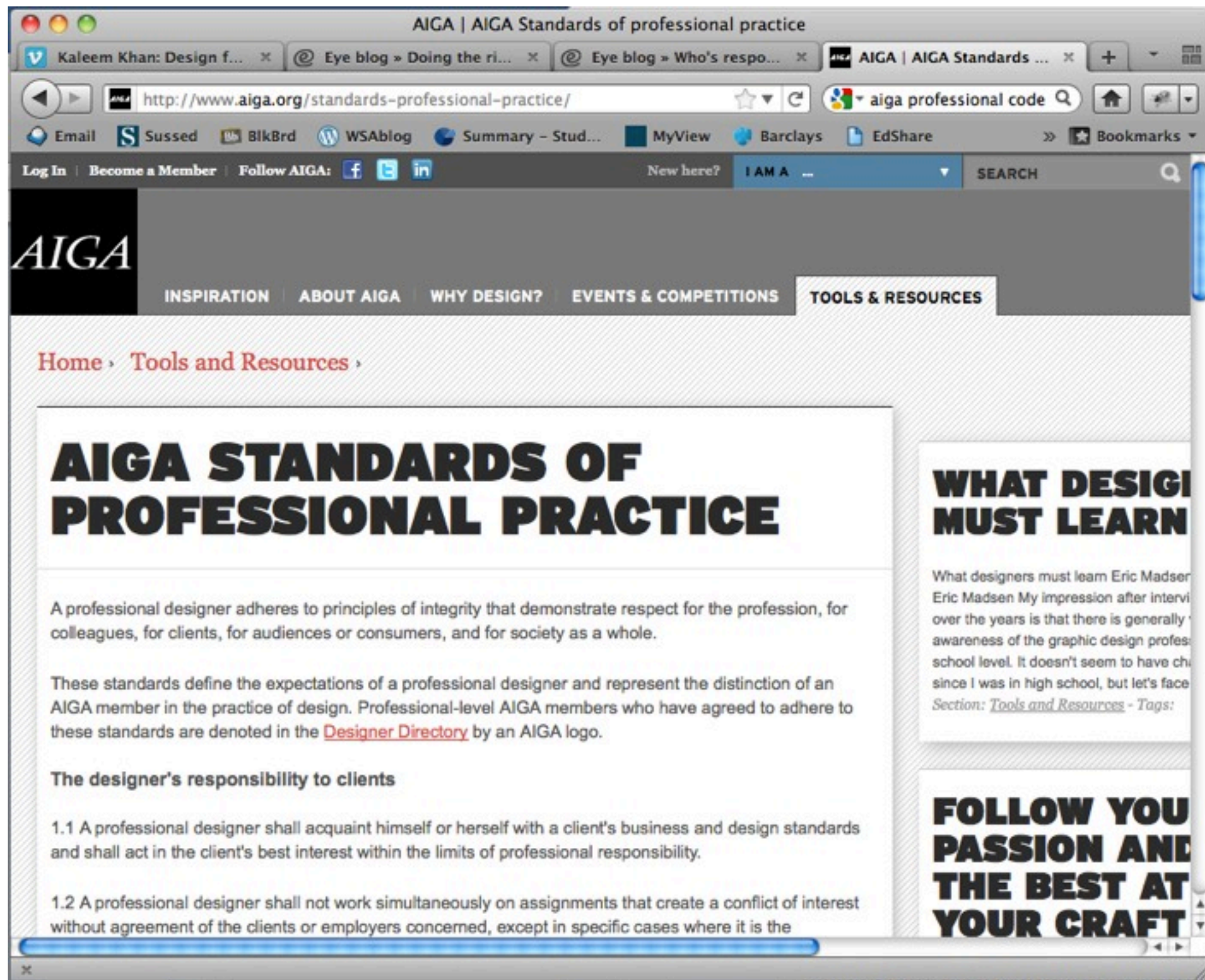
Graphic Artists Guild

Industrial Designers Society of America

Society of Graphic Designers of Canada

Australian Graphic Design Association





<http://www.aiga.org/standards-professional-practice/>

# AIGA Code of practice

## 6.1

A professional designer shall avoid projects that will result in harm to the public.

## 6.2

A professional designer shall communicate the truth in all situations and at all times; his or her work shall not make false claims nor knowingly misinform. A professional designer shall represent messages in a clear manner in all forms of communication design and avoid false, misleading and deceptive promotion.

## 6.3

A professional designer shall respect the dignity of all audiences and shall value individual differences even as they avoid depicting or stereotyping people or groups of people in a negative or dehumanizing way. A professional designer shall strive to be sensitive to cultural values and beliefs and engages in fair and balanced communication design that fosters and encourages mutual understanding.

# AIGA Code of practice

**7.2** A professional designer is encouraged to contribute five percent of his or her time to projects in the public good-projects that serve society and improve the human experience.

**7.3** A professional designer shall consider environmental, economic, social and cultural implications of his or her work and minimize the adverse impacts.

**7.4** A professional designer shall not knowingly accept instructions from a client or employer that involve infringement of another person's or group's human rights or property rights without permission of such other person or group, or consciously act in any manner involving any such infringement.

**7.5** A professional designer shall not knowingly make use of goods or services offered by manufacturers, suppliers or contractors that are accompanied by an obligation that is substantively detrimental to the best interests of his or her client, society or the environment.

**7.6** A professional designer shall refuse to engage in or countenance discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Introduction to Web Accessibility". The address bar contains the URL "http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility.php". The browser's toolbar includes navigation buttons, a search bar with the text "accessibility on the web", and a bookmarks bar with various sites like "Sussed", "BlkBrd", "WSAblog", "Summary - Stud...", "MyView", "Barclays", and "EdShare".

The main content of the page is the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) introduction. It features a navigation menu on the left with categories such as "Getting Started", "Designing for Inclusion", "Guidelines & Techniques", "Planning & Implementing", "Evaluating Accessibility", "Presentations & Tutorials", and "Getting Involved with WAI". The "Introduction to Accessibility" link is highlighted.

The main content area is titled "Introduction to Web Accessibility" and includes the following text:

**See also:** [Accessibility - W3C](#)

**What is Web Accessibility**

Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can use the Web. More specifically, Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web, and that they can contribute to the Web. Web accessibility also benefits others, including [older people](#) with changing abilities due to aging.

Web accessibility encompasses all disabilities that affect access to the Web, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological disabilities. The document "[How People with Disabilities Use the Web](#)" describes how [different disabilities affect Web use](#) and includes [scenarios of people with disabilities using the Web](#).

Millions of people have disabilities that affect their use of the Web. Currently most Web sites and [Web software](#) have [accessibility barriers](#) that make it difficult or impossible for many people with disabilities to use the Web. As more accessible Web sites and software become available, people with disabilities are able to use and contribute to the Web more effectively.

Web accessibility also [benefits people without disabilities](#). For example, a key principle of Web accessibility is designing Web sites and software that are flexible to meet different user needs, preferences, and situations. This [flexibility](#) also benefits people [without disabilities](#) in certain situations, such as people using a slow Internet connection, people with "temporary disabilities" such as a broken arm, and people with changing abilities due to aging. The document "[Developing a Web Accessibility Business Case for Your Organization](#)" describes many different benefits of Web accessibility, including [benefits for organizations](#).

A "Page Contents" sidebar on the right lists the following sections:

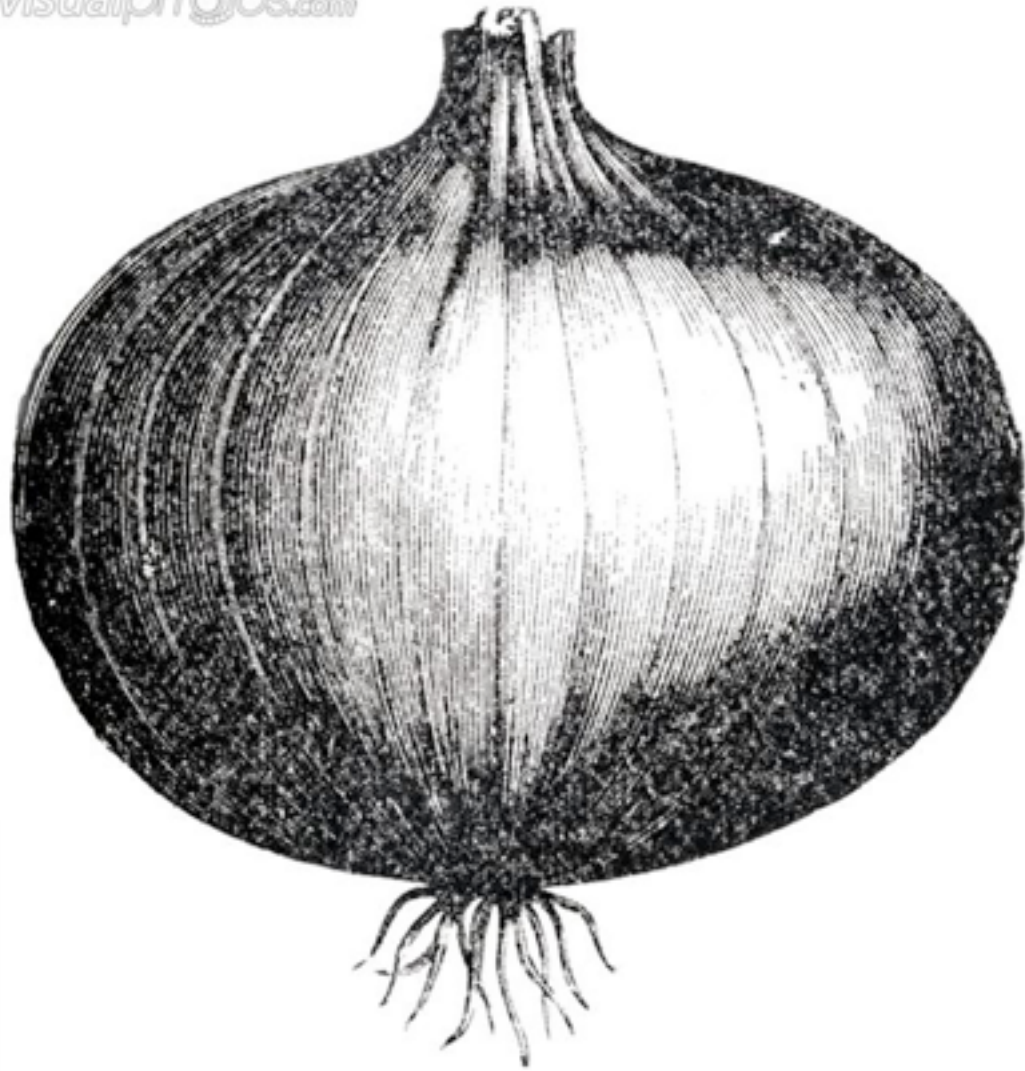
- [What is Web Accessibility](#)
- [Why Web Accessibility is Important](#)
- [Making the Web Accessible](#)
- [For More Information](#)
- [Terminology](#)

At the bottom of the page, there is a yellow box with the text: "Discover new resources for people with disabilities, policy".

**Encompasses professional expertise in such areas as accessibility, usability, consumer safety and environmental practices.**



visualphotos.com



3. Social/Political
2. Professional
1. Personal

923795 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com

Citizen Designer: Perspectives on Design Responsibility

Forty essays about the role of designers in social and political change; edited by Steven Heller and Veronique Vienne; published in 2003 by Watson-Guptill.



Coca-Cola



bp



TATE



grey

grey

grey

grey



- 1 Designing a package to look bigger on the shelf.
- 2 Designing an ad for a slow, boring film to make it seem like a lighthearted comedy.
- 3 Designing a crest for a new vineyard to suggest that it has been in business for a long time.
- 4 Designing a jacket for a book whose sexual content you find personally repellent.
- 5 Designing a medal using steel from the World Trade Center to be sold as a profit-making souvenir of September 11.
- 6 Designing an advertising campaign for a company with a history of known discrimination in minority hiring.
- 7 Designing a package aimed at children for a cereal whose contents you know are low in nutritional value and high in sugar.
- 8 Designing a line of T-shirts for a manufacturer that employs child labor.
- 9 Designing a promotion for a diet product that you know doesn't work.
- 10 Designing an ad for a political candidate whose policies you believe would be harmful to the general public.
- 11 Designing a brochure for an SUV that flips over frequently in emergency conditions and is known to have killed 150 people.
- 12 Designing an ad for a product whose frequent use could result in the user's death.







“The High Noon moment when we are asked to misrepresent the truth comes only rarely for most graphic artists”

Source:  
*10 Footnotes to a Manifesto*  
by Michael Bierut 2000



Ray and Charles Eames posing with a sculpture made from a moulded plywood splint for their 1944 Christmas card.  
Power of Ten film: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38ti9BJiyvs>

## 1. You

Question: What are your ethical beliefs?

What matters to you?

## 2. Your client

Question: What sort of businesses do you want

to be involved with?

## 3. Your specifications

Question: What's the impact of you work on the environment/society? What's your responsibility?

## 4. Your creation

What's the purpose of your work / What is it promoting or communicating?



---

# Exercise

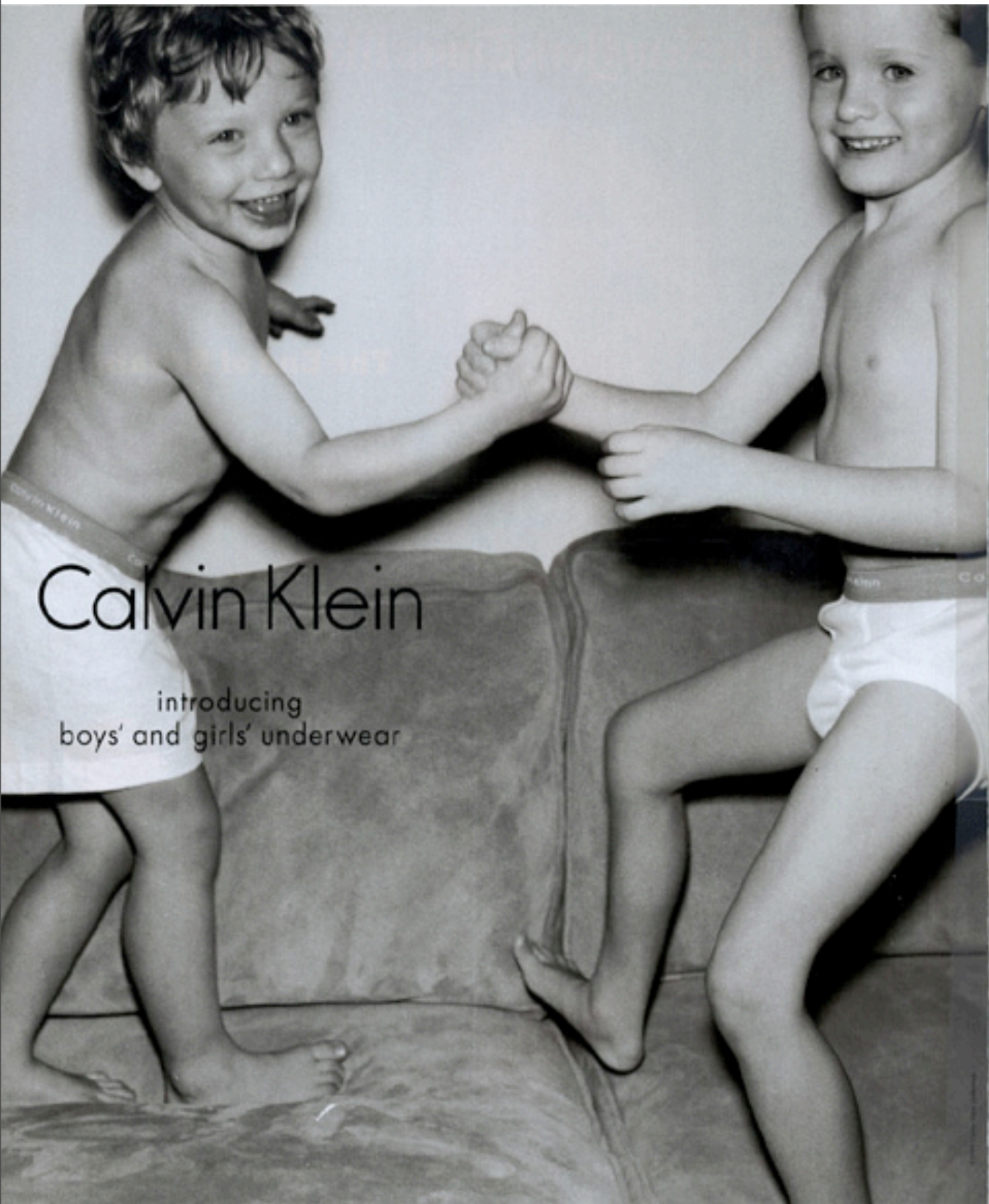
---

# Questions

1. What potential ethical issues might the following advertising images raise?
2. What info. do you need to make an informed criticism?







Calvin Klein

introducing  
boys' and girls' underwear







HANDBAG € 32.-  
Food for a week € 4.-

Text 'aid' to 2255 and donate € 1.50





---

# Week 8 task

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## 500 Word blog post

Choose one of the three images posted on blackboard and discuss it from an ethical perspective.

Ask yourself why this image/object is potentially problematic and discuss this in 500 words. Think about the subjects discussed in the seminar but do not limit your discussion to these only. The discussion needs to be substantiated by at least 2 academic sources from which you should use relevant quotes to support what you are saying.



Cheers Bierut – Johnnie Walker

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# Sources – WEBCAT

The screenshot displays the 'WebCat: library catalogue of the University of Southampton' interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with links like 'My Account', 'Search/Home', and 'Other Catalogues'. Below this, a 'Quick Search' section includes a search input field, a 'Search Catalogue' button, and filters for 'library' (set to ALL), 'medium' (set to ANY), and 'material type' (set to ANY). On the right side, a 'Library Information' sidebar contains several links: 'Library Website', 'WebCat Help', 'E-journals (TDNet)', 'Opening Hours', 'Access Off Campus', and 'More information'. The 'E-journals (TDNet)' link is highlighted with a red circle. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the SirsiDynix logo, copyright information (© 2000 - 2011), and a 'Top' link. A JavaScript snippet is visible at the very bottom: `javascript:open_win('http://www.tdnet.com/soton')`.

<https://www-lib.soton.ac.uk>

# Sources – World Advertising Research Centre

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the search results for 'gender stereotypes fashion advertising' on the WARC website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.warc.com/Pages/Search/WordSearch.aspx?q=gender stereotypes fashion advertising&Filter=ALL OF WARC>. The WARC logo is visible in the top left corner. The search bar contains the text 'gender stereotypes f' and the filter is set to 'ALL OF WARC'. The search results are displayed in a list format, with the first result being a research paper titled 'Gays: Feelings about Advertising and Media Used' by John Bunnett, published in the *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 40, No. 1/2, January/April 2000. The abstract of the paper is visible, stating: 'Despite the increased interest in the gay and lesbian market, relatively little is known about how gay and lesbian consumers utilise media, as well as their views and attitudes toward advertising. [View Summary](#)'. A sidebar on the left shows 'YOUR CURRENT REFINEMENTS:' with an empty box. A promotional box on the right asks 'Why not try?' and promotes 'Apparel & Accessories Topic Page'. The bottom of the page shows '1-1 of 1 for gender stereotypes fashion adv...'. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various icons and the system clock.

<http://www.warc.com/security/login/autologin.aspx>



