

15 manifestos

- 1909 The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism, F.T. Marinetti
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- 1991 The Social Role of the Graphic Designer, Pierre Bernard
- 2000 First Things First
- 2000 Incomplete Manifesto (Bruce Mau)
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- 2006 Free Font Manifesto, Ellen Lupton
- 2008 White Night Before A Manifesto, Metahaven
- 2009 The Awesomeness Manifesto, Umair Haque

First 100 words

Manifesto of Futurism, 1909

1. We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.
2. Courage, audacity, and revolt will be essential elements of our poetry.
3. Up to now literature has exalted a pensive immobility, ecstasy, and sleep. We intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia, the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap.
4. We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath—a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace.
5. We want to hymn the man at the wheel, who hurls the lance of his spirit across the Earth, along the circle of its orbit.
6. The poet must spend himself with ardor, splendor, and generosity, to swell the enthusiastic fervor of the primordial elements.
7. Except in struggle, there is no more beauty. No work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece. Poetry must be conceived as a violent attack on unknown forces, to reduce and prostrate them before man.
8. We stand on the last promontory of the centuries!... Why should we look back, when what we want is to break down the mysterious doors of the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute, because we have created eternal, omnipresent speed.
9. We will glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman.
10. We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice.
11. We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot; we will sing of the multicolored, polyphonic tides of revolution in the modern capitals; we will sing of the vibrant nightly fervor of arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric moons; greedy railway stations that devour

Bauhaus Manifesto, 1919 Walter Gropius

The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building! The decoration of buildings was once the noblest function of fine arts, and fine arts were indispensable to great architecture. Today they exist in complacent isolation, and can only be rescued by the conscious co-operation and collaboration of all craftsmen. Architects, painters, and sculptors must once again come to know and comprehend the composite character of a building, both as an entity and in terms of its various parts. Then their work will be filled with that true architectonic spirit which, as "salon art", it has lost.

The old art schools were unable to produce this unity; and how, indeed, should they have done so, since art cannot be taught? Schools must return to the workshop. The world of the pattern-designer and applied artist, consisting only of drawing and painting must become once again a world in which things are built. If the young person who rejoices in creative activity now begins his career as in the older days by learning a craft, then the unproductive "artist" will no longer be condemned to inadequate artistry, for his skills will be preserved for the crafts in which he can achieve great things.

Architects, painters, sculptors, we must all return to crafts! For there is no such thing as "professional art". There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman. By the grace of Heaven and in rare moments of inspiration which transcend the will, art may unconsciously blossom from the labour of his hand, but a base in handicrafts is essential to every artist. It is there that the original source of creativity lies.

Let us therefore create a new guild of craftsmen without the class-distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsmen and artists! Let us desire, conceive, and create the new building of the future together. It will combine architecture, sculpture, and painting in a single form, and will one day rise towards the heavens from the hands of a million workers as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith.

DADA, 1921 Tristan Tzara

DADA EXCITES EVERYTHING
DADA knows everything. DADA spits everything out.
BUT
HAS DADA EVER SPOKEN TO YOU:

about Italy
about accordions
about women's pants
about the fatherland
about sardines
about Fiume
about Art (you exaggerate my friend)
about gentleness
about D'Annunzio
what a horror
about heroism
about mustaches
about lewdness
about sleeping with Verlaine
about the ideal (it's nice)
about Massachusetts
about the past
about odors
about salads
about genius, about genius, about genius
about the eight-hour day
about the Parma violets

NEVER NEVER NEVER

DADA doesn't speak. DADA has no fixed idea. DADA doesn't catch flies.

THE MINISTRY IS OVERTURNED. BY WHOM?

BY DADA

The Futurist is dead. Of What? Of DADA

The New Typography, 1923 László Moholy-Nagy

Grid Systems in Graphic Design, 1961 Joseph Muller-Brockmann

The use of the grid as an ordering system is the expression of a certain mental attitude inasmuch as it shows that the designer conceives his work in terms that are constructive and oriented to the future.

This is the expression of a professional ethos: the designer's work should have the clearly intelligible, objective, functional and aesthetic quality of mathematical thinking.

His work should thus be a contribution to general culture and itself form part of it.

Constructive design which is capable of analysis and reproduction can influence and enhance the taste of a society and the way it conceives forms and colours. Design which is objective, committed to the common weal, well composed and refined constitutes the basis of democratic behaviour. Constructivist design means the conversion of design laws into practical solutions. Work done systematically and in accordance with strict formal principles makes those demands for directness, intelligibility and the integration of all factors which are also vital in sociopolitical life.

Working with the grid system means submitting to laws of universal validity.

the use of the grid system implies

the will to systematize, to clarify

the will to penetrate to the essentials, to concentrate

the will to cultivate objectivity instead of subjectivity

the will to rationalize the creative and technical production process

the will to integrate elements of colour, form and material

the will to achieve architectural dominion over surface and space

the will to adopt a positive, forward-looking attitude

the recognition of the importance of education and the effect of work

First Things First, 1964 Ken Garland

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 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.

signed:
Edward Wright
Geoffrey White
William Slack
Caroline Rawlence
Ian McLaren
Sam Lambert

Ten Rules of Good Design, 1987 Dieter Rams

Good Design is Innovative
The possibilities for innovation are not, by any means, exhausted. Technological development is always offering new opportunities for innovative design. But innovative design always develops in tandem with innovative technology, and can never be an end in itself.

Good Design Is Makes A Product Useful
A product is bought to be used. It has to satisfy certain criteria, not only functional, but also psychological and aesthetic. Good design emphasises the usefulness of a product whilst disregarding anything that could possibly detract from it.

Good Design Is Aesthetic
The aesthetic quality of a product is integral to its usefulness because products we use every day affect our person and our well-being. But only well-executed objects can be beautiful.

Good Design Makes A Product Understandable
It clarifies the product's structure. Better still, it can make the product talk. At best, it is self-explanatory.

Good Design Is Unobtrusive
Products fulfilling a purpose are like tools. They are neither decorative objects nor works of art. Their design should therefore be both neutral and restrained, to leave room for the user's self-expression.

Good Design Is Honest
It does not make a product more innovative, powerful or valuable than it really is. It does not attempt to manipulate the consumer with promises that cannot be kept.

Good Design is Long Lasting
It avoids being fashionable and therefore never appears antiquated. Unlike fashionable design, it lasts many years – even in today's throwaway society.

Good Design is Thorough, Down to the Last Detail
Nothing must be arbitrary or left to chance. Care and accuracy in the design process show respect towards the consumer.

Good design is environmentally friendly

First 100 words

The Social Role of the Graphic Designer, 1991 Pierre Bernard

Artists have for a long time been heading for ghettos, whether rich or poor. Other people have been subjected to a major mass-media aesthetic — or for the most underprivileged — to its leftovers. Our Western society is working at two different speeds. For the minority, a world of calm has come into being in which design means authentic quality. Art can be part of every life. It is a world in which a materialised and human reality can develop.

For the rest — the majority — what is offered is exactly the opposite. Art is something to be visited in reservations, and spiritual harmony is to be found in other realms, religious or chemical.

Inequality is on the increase. The humanist dream of a unification of our planet's history in the capitalist logic of multinationals has in practice become a reductive standardization. It has thus been deemed legitimate to give arts and artists the function of entertainment and decoration, while techniques and technicians take care of efficient production.

This division of labour amounts to a complete capitulation as regards the principles on which design is founded. The division between the artist as creator and the artisan as technician has been born again out of the ashes of those founding principles. It marks a return to the Stone Age.

I believe that the single identity of the artist and the technician in the person of the graphic designer forms the basis for his capacity to assert his role strongly — and to take his own specific action as an individual who is a part of civilization. I believe that the social function of the graphic designer is a subject to be approached through opinions and persuasion rather than through logic and knowledge.

“Life will always be hard enough to prevent men from losing the desire for something better,” Maxim Gorky said. The graphic designer's social responsibility is based on the wish to take part in the creation of a better world. It seems simple to declare such a principle, but given the contradictions of real life, the principle does not lead readily to practical rules of behaviour.

Incomplete Manifesto, 2000 Bruce Mau

1. Allow events to change you. You have to be willing to grow. Growth is different from something that happens to you. You produce it. You live it. The prerequisites for growth: the openness to experience events and the willingness to be changed by them.

2. Forget about good. Good is a known quantity. Good is what we all agree on. Growth is not necessarily good. Growth is an exploration of unlit recesses that may or may not yield to our research. As long as you stick to good you'll never have real growth.

3. Process is more important than outcome. When the outcome drives the process we will only ever go to where we've already been. If process drives outcome we may not know where we're going, but we will know we want to be there.

4. Love your experiments (as you would an ugly child). Joy is the engine of growth. Exploit the liberty in casting your work as beautiful experiments, iterations, attempts, trials, and errors. Take the long view and allow yourself the fun of failure every day.

5. Go deep. The deeper you go the more likely you will discover something of value.

6. Capture accidents. The wrong answer is the right answer in search of a different question. Collect wrong answers as part of the process. Ask different questions.

7. Study. A studio is a place of study. Use the necessity of production as an excuse to study. Everyone will benefit.

8. Drift. Allow yourself to wander aimlessly. Explore adjacencies. Lack judgment. Postpone criticism.

9. Begin anywhere. John Cage tells us that not knowing where to begin is a common form of

First Things First, 2000

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.

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

Designers Against Monoculture, 2001 Noah Scalin

Graphic design is the filter through which all communication is now disseminated. Therefore graphic designers are in a unique position as the gatekeepers of information. What, how, and for whom we choose to communicate are crucial decisions that have a serious impact on our civilization.

Designers Against Monoculture (DAM) is a rallying cry, calling designers (as well as art directors, marketers, and copywriters) to take responsibility for the powerful communications skills they wield and to consider carefully their effects.

Our logo is the wrench because it is a tool, a tool that is not inherently good or bad, a tool that can be used to build or dismantle (or be thrown into the gears of the machine when necessary). We have a similar choice as communicators: we can be hired guns for the trans-national corporations of the world, whose interests are purely profit and power, or we can be the agents of change, strengthening the voices of our communities. We call on designers to make a stand and join DAM in abiding by these principles:

1. We dedicate ourselves to supporting the unique culture of the communities in which we live and work.
2. We refuse to create design that furthers the creation of a global corporate monoculture.

Designers, please consider placing the DAM logo (shown below) on your website and link to this page to show your solidarity with this cause:

Free Font Manifesto, 2006 Ellen Lupton

What if a few digital type foundries on earth gave one good typeface as a gift humanity?

* What is a free font? A free font is not just a typeface that you don't have to pay for. A stolen (or illegally copied) typeface isn't free. A free font must be freely given by its maker. And to be truly free, it should be available to everyone, not just to a circle of friends or to the buyers of a particular software package or operating system. Many of the so-called free fonts that are distributed on the Internet don't meet this description. Like open source software, the freedom of the fonts shown on this page is made explicit through their licensing, which allows other people to not only use the fonts but to modify them (granted that they change the name of the typeface if they alter its design).

** Should all fonts be free? Typeface design is a profession and a business. If all fonts were free—or even if every type designer created just one free font—the business of typeface design might be destroyed. Today, the free font movement is addressing typeface needs that are not being adequately met by the typeface industry. Most typefaces created in the free font movement are designed to serve relatively small or underserved linguistic communities. They have an explicit social purpose, and they are intended to offer the world not a luxurious outpouring of typographic variation but rather the basics for maintaining literacy and communication within a society.

*** What makes a typeface “good”? Currently, most fonts created in the open source spirit are produced for small or underserved linguistic populations. Such fonts are “good” in the moral sense. In the future, designers may choose to make free fonts in the service of other social needs as well. For example, in developing countries graphic designers who seek to build a typographic culture in their home regions require more than a bare-minimum typographic vocabulary, and they often rely on pirated typefaces to do so. A richer selection of legitimate free fonts, clearly labelled and promoted as such in an educational way, might help to build respect for the larger commercial ecology of typeface design.

****Is a typeface a meaningful gift to humanity? In the scheme of things, a typeface may seem like a small gift, so maybe

White Night Before a Manifesto, 2008 Metahaven

We are designing surface. Surface multiplies, beyond any measure of necessity, beyond the laws of demand and supply, beyond reason. The multiplication of surface, formerly called information overload, is the new reality of design. Its unit of measurement is virtual.

Surface is not territory. Territory, which is actual and geographical (for that reason limited in supply), can be contested and may become the site of an actual conflict, a physical confrontation. This cannot happen on, or to, a surface. Surface is to territory what speculative capital is to gold. Surface may be multiplied without encountering the physical limitations imposed by someone else's terrain, opinion, presence or personality. If surface is a kind of place, or site, the designer is its geographer.

Surface is folded out in order to produce value, while it is folded in to secure it. The production of surface is design's equivalent to the production of space; surface in the generic sense means flat space to display. Surface is anorexic, hyper-thin architecture.

Surface, representing no particular meaning or message, is the precondition for virtual capital, projected revenue and speculative value. Advertising surface in public space initially is merely an add-on to the already existing historical structure of a city. Gradually, surface replaces the primacy of historical structure and its territoriality. The city becomes the profit base of a virtual spin: the multiplication of surface accounts for the exponential growth of value extracted from its public space. By our being in public, by simple existence, we already automatically affirm the exposure which grants the surface infrastructure its right to the city. The inhabitants of cities are, through this mechanism, directly inscribed into the means of value production.

Mute (passive) surface is classified by the informational properties of the materials it is composed of. Titanium informs differently from plastic, while seamless, uninterrupted black marble informs differently from fractured and broken pieces of stained cardboard. A plastic credit card which says ‘Gold’ or ‘Platinum’ has understood correctly that the informational properties of surface do not need correspond to its material worth. Surface is a transformation of the valueless into the valuable by means of psychological deception.

The image of a stock market crash is a bursting bubble, the moment

The Awesomeness Manifesto, 2009 Umair Haque

Innovation: it's the ultimate source of advantage, the undisputed heavyweight champion of the economic ring. Innovation is what every organization should be ruthlessly pursuing, right? Wrong.

I'd like to advance a hypothesis: awesomeness is the new innovation.

Let's face it. “Innovation” feels like a relic of the industrial era. And it just might be the case that instead of chasing innovation, we should be innovating innovation — that innovation needs innovation. Why? When we examine the economics of innovation, three reasons emerge.

Innovation relies on obsolescence. Innovation was a concept pioneered by the great Joseph Schumpeter. And to subscribe to it requires us to accept his theory of creative destruction. Gales of innovation make yesterday's goods and services obsolete. Yet, that, in turn, means that the price of innovation is recession and depression. The business cycle might never be vanquished — but it is getting more vicious with every decade. In an interdependent world, obsolescence is what's obsolete.

Innovation dries up our seedcorn. Innovation in its purest Schumpeterian sense is undertaken by entrepreneurs. And so today, we've got an economy where everything's for sale. Yet, little fundamentally new is being created. Businesses focus obsessively on the entrepreneurial aspects of commerce: we are focused still on selling the same old toxic, industrial era junk in slightly better ways. Yet, the challenge of the 21st century isn't entrepreneurial as much as it is creative: learning to create fundamentally better stuff in the first place.

Innovation often isn't. Innovation means, naively, what is commercially novel. Yet, as the financial crisis proves, what is “innovative” is often value destructive and socially harmful. Financial “innovation” turned out to be unnovative: it has destroyed trillions in value - here are some staggering estimates from the IMF.

It's time to ask: have the costs of innovation exceeded the benefits?

A better concept, one built for a radically interdependent 21st century, is awesomeness. Here are the four pillars of awesomeness:

Ethical production. Innovation turns a blind eye to ethics — or, worse,

First 100 words + action words

(not necessarily verbs)

Manifesto of Futurism, 1909

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DADA, 1921
Tristan Tzara

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NEVER NEVER NEVER
DADA doesn't **speak**. DADA has no fixed idea. DADA doesn't **catch** flies.

50 francs reward to the person who **finds** the best way to explain DADA to us.
Dada **passes** everything through a new net.
Dada is the bitterness which **opens** its laugh on all that which has been made **consecrated forgotten** in our language in our brain in our habits.
It **says** to you: There is Humanity and the lovely idiocies which have made it happy to this advanced age

DADA HAS ALWAYS **EXISTED**
THE HOLY VIRGIN WAS ALREADY A DADAIST

The New Typography, 1923
László Moholy-Nagy

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Metahaven

We are **designing** surface. Surface **multiplies**, beyond any measure of necessity, beyond the laws of **demand** and **supply**, beyond reason. The **multiplication** of surface, formerly **called** information overload, is the new reality of design. Its unit of measurement is virtual.

Surface is not territory. Territory, which is actual and geographical (for that reason **limited** in supply), can be **contested** and may **become** the site of an actual conflict, a physical confrontation. This cannot **happen** on, or to, a surface. Surface is to territory what speculative capital is to gold. Surface may be **multiplied** without **encountering** the physical limitations **imposed** by someone else's terrain, opinion, presence or personality. If surface is a kind of place, or site, the designer is its geographer.

The Awesomeness Manifesto, 2009
Umair Haque

Innovation: it's the ultimate source of advantage, the undisputed heavyweight champion of the economic ring. **Innovation** is what every organization should be ruthlessly **pursuing**, right? Wrong.

I'd like to **advance** a hypothesis: awesomeness is the new **innovation**.

Let's **face** it. "**Innovation**" **feels** like a relic of the industrial era. And it just might be the case that instead of **chasing** innovation, we should be **innovating innovation** — **that innovation needs innovation**. *Why? When we **examine** the economics of **innovation**, three reasons **emerge**.*

Innovation relies on obsolescence. **Innovation** was a concept **pioneered** by the great Joseph Schumpeter. And to **subscribe** to it **requires** us to **accept** his theory of creative destruction.