

David Report **issue 3/March 2006**

Design (in) the future

"David Report provides thought-provoking insights which give me inspiration and ideas."
Peter Bodor, Public Affairs and Communications Manager, Coca-Cola Sweden

"Reading and viewing several trend reports and newsletters daily I could simply say that David Report is the ONE to read. Other describes what's done yesterday. David Report tells what will happen tomorrow and in the long run, and does this with a design perspective and humanistic approach I just can admire, respect and agree with!

Ulrika Lövdahl, Project Manager, Communication Development, V&S ABSOLUT SPIRITS

"Finally David Carlson, the famous Swedish design-entrepreneur, takes the obvious next step by starting the David Report. He wants to change the world. He might do it."

Olle Wästberg, Director General, The Swedish Institute

Our words

Welcome to David Report, a trend report with design perspective and a humanistic approach, which concern intersections between culture, business life and the global society.

In this issue of David Report our superb correspondents got a couple of days off. Instead we decided to share our thoughts and visions with some selected top designers around the world. People who we think have a strong integrity and that we appreciate as designers (and as friends). Our idea was to make it as an interview with just one question: *Design (in) the Future?*

Welcome to our world, and see you in the future!

David Report Team

Design (in) the future

Our announcement

As a curious person looking for new challenges Mr David Carlson has decided to leave David Design end of March 2006. Mr David Carlson is leaving a company in a positive trend. At the International Furniture Fair in Stockholm David Design got the Best in show award for Brent easy chair, designed by Björn Dahlström.

-I'm now looking forward to new adventures and opportunities. I'm searching for exciting and interesting projects where I can use the knowledge, experience, and contacts I have collected during my 18 years with David design. And of course, I will continue to lecture about design, communication and future trends, says Mr David Carlson.

Do you want to talk to David? Try at david@davidcarlson.se or +46707982897

What is design?

What is design then? And what will it be in the future? Some simple questions, but so hard to answer. To give the future some help and direction, we asked some of our designer friends to give their ideas and visions.

Out of an academic angle we define design as both the way to and the goal itself. I.e. design is both a process and/or an artefact, both an idea and/or the result of an idea. You can also say that design is the conscious use of creativity through an innovation process. Where creativity means the possibility to combine ideas in a new way to solve problems and develop possibilities. And where innovation is the successful use of new ideas for new or improved products, services or processes.

But we don't want to stop here as many others do, saying that in the 80-ies it was all about rationalisation and conglomerates, in the 90-ies it was the brand/trademark that was the high-lighted buzzword. Today people seem to see design as the overall problem-solver to anything, anywhere all the time. Hello! Stop talking, discussing and dwell on the issue - get out in reality and do something instead.

We want to bring forward a deeper and more justice-making version of design. How many people don't need food, shelter or other life-necessary things? How many species are under threats of extermination? How many tons of pollution can nature handle before the car/truck industry goes another and alternative way out of oil dependency? Design is certainly a visualisation of a company's strategy, but it is also a magic tool that create possibilities to make life better, safer and more fun. Hopefully it also makes the world more equal, compassionate and beautiful for our fellow people on earth.

Let's see what Eero, Ilkka, Karim, Konstantin, Oki, Satyendra, Stephen and Tim have to say about the subject. Read, learn and act.



Eero Koivisto, Stockholm

- I believe that Design will manifest itself as an integral part of our culture, as it becomes more and more a natural part of our everyday lives.

- I think that contemporary Design from cultures other than our own, will enrich and transform the language of Design as we know it.

- I hope that communication Design will bridge differences between cultures and help people to appreciate and feel empathy for others, who ever they are.

- I suggest that the understanding of Design will be taught to children of the future, as music, art, and history is taught in schools today.

.... Because I know that Design transcends time, and bears within itself our culture, history, and hopes for ourselves and our future.



Eero Koivisto



Karim Rashid

Karim Rashid, New York

We will be designed to be part robotic and technological. The future global culture will be about living in a contemporary world where customs, kitsch traditions, old antiquated values, and collective beliefs don't exist. The empowerment will be with the individual.

I want to live in highly technological and extremely aesthetic beautifully designed world where beauty prevails and human kindness and collectiveness is commonplace - where peace, love, creativity and intellect are our only desires.

To create a super soft organic friendly world with new materials and new experiences. Design that is customizable, personal, variable, yet democratic – that everyone can alter and manipulate design to their specific needs – this is where we are heading. Your driver seat in your car will fit your body perfectly – your fingerprint will operate everything, you will spray on your clothes from a can, you will not brush your teeth but a laser will clean them perfectly clean, and the world will be smart, intelligent, efficient, high performing, ecologically sound, without diversities and fanatics, one world, one religion, one language, one utopia.

Ilkka Suppanen, Helsinki

Technology, Humanity, Diversity

When I was two years old, my family moved into a block of flats in the middle of a forest. When I was twelve and we moved away, there was a housing development of 17,000 people around us. Throughout my childhood, I witnessed new buildings being erected and my environment constantly changing.

We are living a war. Since 9/11, the collective experience of war has influenced our thoughts about the present and the future. Our cars look like tanks and our huge couches look like bunkers. The present seems to be laden with danger and catastrophe.

In our everyday lives, we resort to all things familiar and safe, perhaps as a counterforce for the seemingly arbitrary mechanisms of economy. Global economy relocates jobs, manufacture and development wherever they are the cheapest and most efficient to take. Many places are turned into vacuums after the termination of activities. With the sense of security fading away, safety becomes of particular attraction and interest. Safety and security are the megatrend of the present century. Any product that is able to create safety and security is a guaranteed hit.

Design is the future: design is all about designing the future. To design products, concepts and spaces is to outline and define the future. The very concept of design embodies the delineation of the future. I believe that what we do has an effect on what our future will be like.



Ilkka Suppanen

We are not just part of a mad world, with what we do having no effect on what might be. Instead, we are part of a world where we are integral in influencing the future. As such, we have no idea what the future will be like. Whenever we make an assumption, it is likely to be a false one. Yet I do believe in a better future, although I am aware how little I know about it.

My theses for the future are these: Technology, Humanity and Diversity.

Technology.

Technology can be understood as an activity that creates and shapes culture. Technology is the knowledge of usage and application. The history of technology is as old as the history of the human race. Science and engineers create technology, providing us with such things as more lightweight products. Lightweightness is useful for many purposes, such as easier transport, which, in turn, requires less energy. Lightweight structures also consume less material. The philosophy of lightweightness is the philosophy of ecology. Through technology, we can try to solve many difficult problems, such as decreasing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In Algeria, there is a functioning factory which returns all the carbon dioxide it produces back to the earth.

Humanity.

Humanity is the concentration of the positive ingredients of being human: its positive side. It is human to think about humanity and nature as one and seek to bring out their positive aspects. When I design a chair, I think it is a good idea for me to not just think about the person who will be sitting in it. I must understand how the chair will appear in a space, or what kind of ecological repercussions its manufacture and transport may have. It is human to consider the effects of the chair I design on all humanity and the nature, too.

Diversity.

Identity is a concept based on the idea of the uniqueness of each individual. Identity is the physical and psychological manifestation of our selves. Everyone knows and understands that he or she is different and unique. We also have different, individual needs. Understanding diversity is absolutely necessary when thinking about the future. An ecologically viable product must often be mass manufactured. Yet each user is different, with varying needs. When designing products, we have to recognise that they can be used in various ways. When I design a product, I want to think about the human being that is going to use it, instead of a target group or segment.

I believe in the future, just like I did when I was a child in the housing project that grew around me. New houses brought new friends and playmates. The woods disappeared, but new, interesting playgrounds emerged. And the construction sites as such were tremendously interesting places to play in, with their new materials and new smells. Yes, I think the future will be good.

Tim Power, Milan

The Near Future of Design

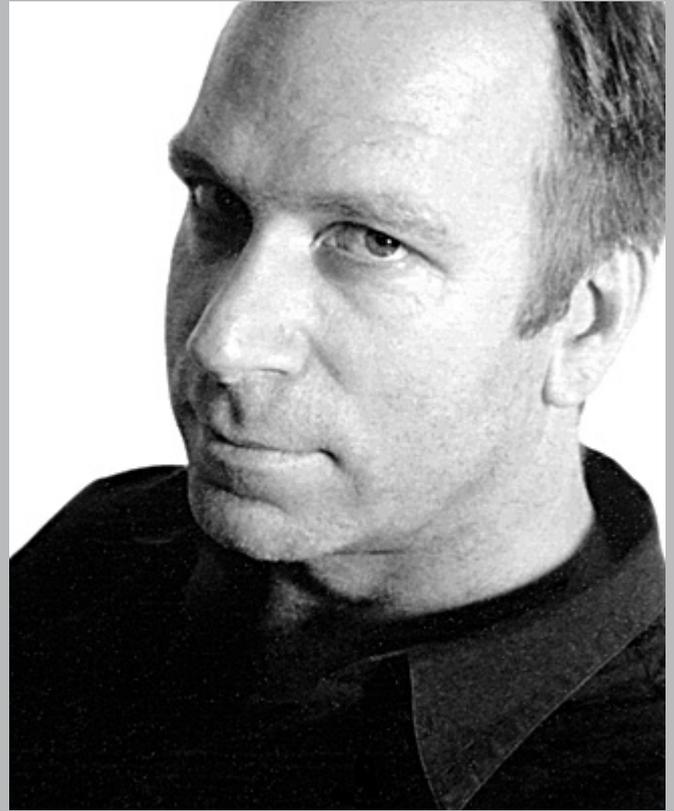
Our world is saturated with things, events, and advertising.....this artificial world continues to supplant the natural world. At the turn of the century, 'Species' were quickly being replaced by 'Brands', if not in reality, at least in our collective imagination. In this contemporary world, a young person can recognize a thousand brand logos, but can only name a few species native to his/her local ecosystem. With this growth of 'Branding', 'Designers' are as omnipresent as the brands they work for.

But design and the world's economy are in reality going beyond branding, which is a very 20th century 'micro' vision, and is in fact becoming environmental, a very 21st century 'macro' model.

This 'New Design' model can be seen as an artificial-biological instrument and is learning to propose itself in the world with a new model as bio-diverse with 'brands' for the future as it was with 'species' in the past. This 'New Design' has begun to propose a world in which the natural environment is sustained and can coexist with the artificial one.

We will soon be talking more strategically about this model, very likely without using the word 'Design' at all. As a society, we will continue to insist that the 'world of brands' be held responsible as it continues its integration into the 'world of species.'

When global markets discover that as much as 40% of the world's economy is related to the restoration of the environment and integration of bio-diverse brands into the global ecosystem, a market share many times larger than that of European luxury houses and Asian technological production combined, even larger investments will flow into these 'alternative markets'.



Tim Power



Oki Sato

Oki Sato/n e n d o, Tokyo

In the future a lot of new technology will be invented. Then, I think "fun and function" will be the keywords of Design in the future.

Designing with the new technology for appealing human's emotion will be the new mainstream in the design industry.

In other words "design + technology = emotion".



Satyendra Pakhalé

Satyendra Pakhalé, Amsterdam

It's impossible to talk about future if one doesn't take time to understand past.

The well know saying is, "One can not create future, if one doesn't understand past"

For me any discussion about future is meaningless, unless we investigate what where we come from, where we have been so far and what mistakes we did, what naïve beliefs we had about future.

At this point of time in history, perhaps it is one of the first times, people think our children (I do not have any yet), I mean the next generation, is likely to live in a over populated, under housed, polluted, environment with less natural resources. As the world gets more and more polluted and more and more crowded, the future will be perhaps not as rosy as the futurist thought of around 40 odd yrs ago.

However I am optimistic, and for me design profession is an expression of true human optimism. Seen from that optimistic perspective, a designer as contributor to world society; is in some way a society guide, opinion-leader and a friend. One who is motivated by social, technological, industrial and above all cultural parameters as much as by a pure creative vision.

We can't look at the world purely from technological perspective and have naïve belief that technology can solve every single issue. On the other hand the modernist vision of the society was very singular, far too limiting in today's multi-facetted societies around the world. What we need is plural creative vision- with wide range of expressions and possibilities of creating new bridges and links across the world. Evolve new ways to make things in a best possible way.

I believe eventually design (in) future shall help us build a new Culture of creation.

Konstantin Grcic



Konstantin Grcic, Munich

Design is the future.
Design is the future..
Design is the future...

Stephen Burks, New York

I believe that the not so distant future of design exists already today in small degrees throughout our global culture. We are slowly being exposed to the influence 'media' and 'technology' are having on everything we do. That is not to say that 'they' are the future of design, but design will be more and more defined in the space between the two of them.

For me design is the appropriate relationship of things. The traditional notions of design that propell industries like home furnishings through the repetitive cycle of improving, producing and exhibiting existing typologies like the chair, table and lamp over and over again will remain within its small niche of high-consumer societies. But the real influence of design will be felt in the everyday problem solving happening all around us in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd worlds.



Stephen Burks

Here are a few predictions:

1. Specificity

The global commodities that are unchanging all over the world will be taken as generics and the most important developments in design will come from culturally specific circumstances. In this age of globalization, people will want more and more unique objects and conditions that communicate from a specific place and suit their own specific tastes. As the so-called 3rd world begins to express itself through making things on a global scale the so-called 1st world's tastes/styling will be greatly influenced and shift from the euro-centric to the ethno-centric.

2. Connectivity

Opportunistic corporations and privileged youths throughout the US, Europe and Asia continue to define the possibilities of a connected culture. How people connect and stay connected will become the most important influencers of design. Real socialization will mix and mingle with mediated socialization. Design will become invisible.

3. Identity

I believe the notion of celebrity has already reaching a boiling point in entertainment and will reach that point in all other aspects of culture including design. The individual as icon will become less important as we witness the rise of the everyday or average celebrity. As more and more individuals communicate and design, individual icons will become less important. The notion that everyone can be famous will be translated into everyone is famous. The implications for design are both ugly to the so-called taste makers and beautiful to everyone else that enjoys the happy accidents that object and image making have and will become.

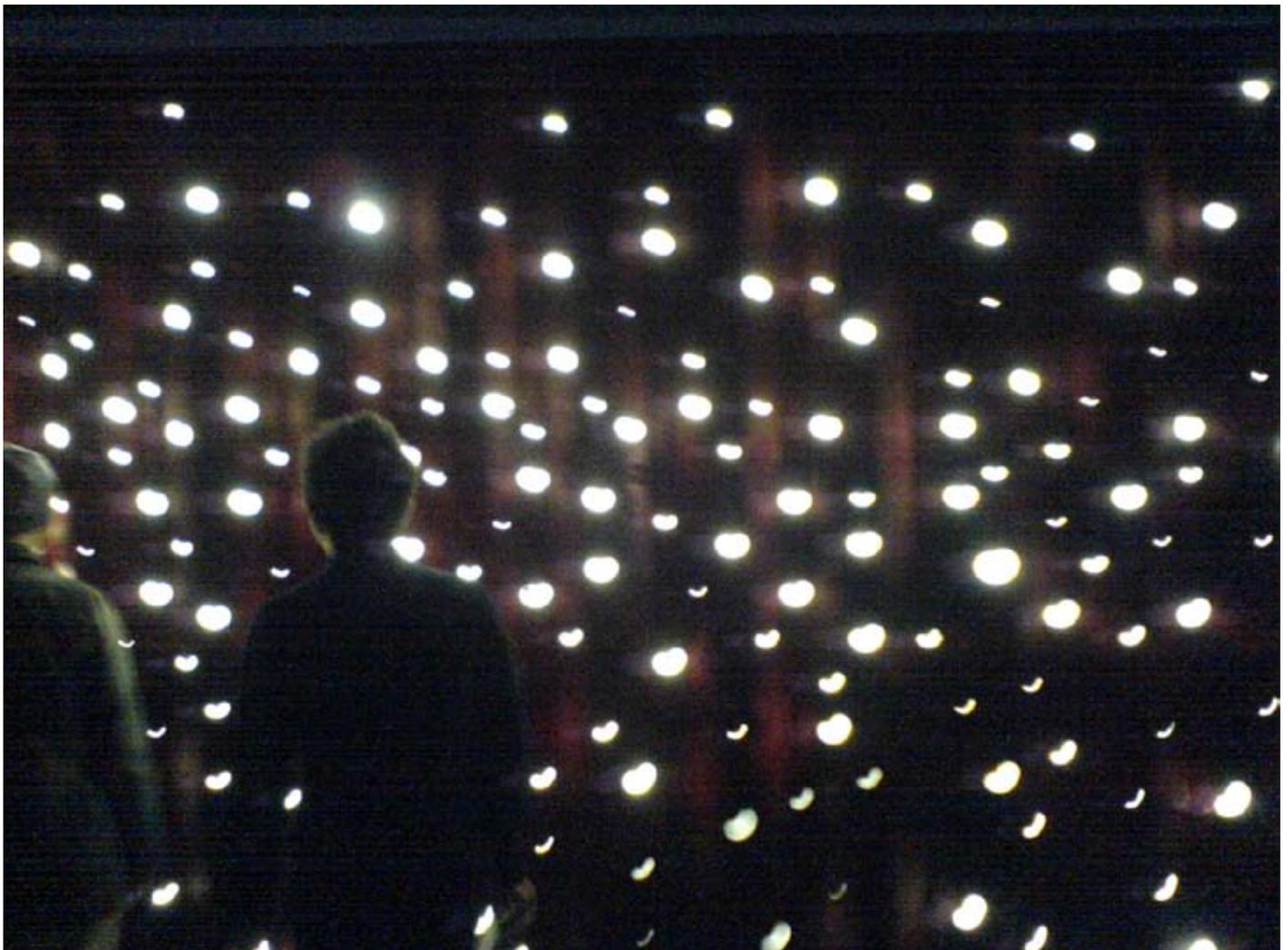
Just a few thoughts from the field.

Whatever happens, I will continue to be inspired watching everyone become a 'designer'.

Design is...design...

Ask 10 people one question and you will get 10 different answers and as you just read, design has different meanings and visions for different people inside the design community. That's the way it is, and should be, in a free and democratic world. In this issue we salute our designer friends and we let them speak straight from the heart and unedited. And we let you as a reader make your own conclusion about what they say.

Just a small note. All our designer friends have lots in common: for example they all believe in mankind and its goodness, they all want to accomplish a better world to live in for all, and they have positive visions. What community can say that? A super gold star to all involved in this issue! We can just agree and forward the message to all, n'est pas?



This issue of David Report was made by:

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Thanks to Eero Koivisto, Karim Rashid, Ilkka Suppanen,
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