The National College of Art & Design,

Faculty Of Design,

Department of Visual Communication.

Commercial
+ Socially Conscious
Graphic Design:

The diverse perspectives of Inízio (Holland)

& The Public Communications Centre (Ireland).

By Loretto Martin.

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Contents

Acknowledgements

List Of Plates

Introduction

The aim of this study is to consider two divergent traditions within graphic design: commercial and socially conscious driven design. At the outset I propose to define each area in a way that is coherent and consistent with the tradition from which both evolve. The thesis is ambitious in its aim to provide a presentation of the contexts in which these have developed from the early twentieth century to the present. This context raises a whole range of fundamental questions that challenge graphic designers to articulate their position in society.

Solutions to these questions are faced by a range of professional graphic designers, past and present, who are concerned about the future direction of graphic design. They ask questions like; "should designers be willing agents of a manufacturing process that makes products obsolescent before their time?" (Eliahoo, 1984, p44).

Other important questions have been raised which were the context for much debate in our studio discussions during 1996. If design is a person, is it a "mature adult taking responsibility for its actions or a whining adolescent, insecure and struggling to come to terms with the outside world?" (Booth & Stockley, 1990, p 34). Is commercial design a lower quality medium? Does socially responsible design operate in the real world? Are commercial and socially conscious design both of equal importance? "Should a designer be conformist or act as an agent of change? Is design socially realist art?" (Potter, 1980, p. 17). Should design have an anything goes policy as long as the liberties taken by the designer enhance the end product?

It would be unrealistic for this study to attempt to offer solutions to all the questions raised. However, the study will attempt to deal with some of the questions in an effective and efficient manner with the help of the following structure:

(a) defining key terms and outlining the history of commercial and
   socially conscious design.
(b) using case studies of a major design company from each
   tradition; analysing the relationship in a comparative manner.

The thesis concludes with a discussion of the major themes arising from each tradition including: divergent approach and attitudes of designers in each tradition; ethical considerations and educational value for the target audience; visual language and aesthetic quality; and finally, the relevance of each to the twenty first century.

At the outset it is important to reach clarity on key definitions used throughout the study. Joe Frascara defines graphic design as "an activity that organises visual communication efficiently." (Frascara, 1996, p 1). The main reason for the existence of graphic design is that someone has to communicate with another person.

The first tradition that concerns this study is commercial design. Commercial design works out of an understanding that "good design is that which is commercially successful." (Whiteley, 1993, p 161). Commercial design is expected to make people buy products or services. It is concerned with the performance of the design in communicating to their target markets and realising this aim through increased sales of the products or services. It is viewed by its creators as a major factor in contributing to the success of commercial business. In summary, it is mass communication with end-result being financial gain.

The second tradition of relevance to this study is socially conscious design. Socially conscious design is expected "to effect people's beliefs and actions" (Frascara, 1997, p 5). Socially conscious design is acutely concerned with the impact it will have on the community and its surroundings: influencing action on a position and educating its target audience on issues of social importance. In summary, it is viewed by its creators as an integral part of a cultural process of communication to create awareness and empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis is constructed around the framework of a discussion with two international graphic design groups (i.e. Inízio and Public Communications Centre) supported by evidence gathered from a historical presentation of the context in which both operate. The two were chosen because of their definition of themselves, purely one or the other, commercial designers or socially conscious designers, and because they are typical of each tradition in terms of company structure, clients and work load. The following tools were used to gather information and present a review of existing trends with a view to their future orientation.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

Extensive library research resulted in articles and books relevant to the study, also with past projects of my own as basic research.

CASE STUDIES.

An exploration of a two leading graphic design companies was undertaken through structured interviews with key personnel in both. This gave the opportunity to root the research work in industrial practice. The information gathered from these taped interviews and related materials enabled an identification of the key issues arising from the practice as well as an indication of future trends.

These gave the opportunity to provide a more in-depth perspective regarding the relevant issues in relation to the study.

Commercial Design

The following section provides an historical overview of the tradition of commercial design so as to set the context.

Commercial design is described by some as a 'consumer-led' design with its emphasis on consumer needs and wants. Others think it is best described as a 'market led' design with the greater emphasis on the development of new products through marketing rather than the needs and wants of the customer. For example, 'Inízio' uses a simple formula: form+colour = money (Hard Werken, 1995, p 34) as the principle of success for strongly market-led companies.

The challenge for commercial design is primarily centred on competitive positioning in a constantly changing marketplace. In short this means discovering anew 'a formula that would turn the whole into more than the sum of its parts.' This means a company needs the most talented people to meet the aim of offering clients the best possible advice in as many fields as possible.

Companies operating in this arena usually offer a range of services including new media, sales promotion, business to business advertising, scriptwriting, product development. The latter is the key element because it includes research ensuring that production fits into market target groups. Market research and motivational research are almost always used by commercial companies to test new products and capture new target groups.

The Influence of Marketing.

"Marketing takes place when the company gives thought to the objectives and means of achieving desired responses for potential clients. Such management concerns the analysis, planning, implementation and control of

initiatives designed to create, build, and maintain beneficial exchanges and relationships with the potential clients for the purpose of achieving the company's objectives" (Cotler, 1984, p 11).

The marketing mix is a vital tool used by designers in their arrival at the correct solution for their clients. Traditionally, the marketing mix includes what is known in the industry as the "four 'p's i.e. product, price, place and promotion" (Cotler, 1984, p 30).

Understood in marketing terms, the first element in the marketing mix - product - is the service or good that the company are offering to its customers. The company often spend a considerable amount on research, development and design to ensure that the product fits the desired usage, particularly the use the customer will make of it.

The second element is the price and relates to the benchmark that the company will put on the goods or service. This is not simply about producing something cheaply because much of the understanding of the product image relating to this element is about issues like quality and standards.

In the third element, the emphasis is on the place where the product or service will be offered. Location concerns the visual language for the type of users/buyers the company wishes to attract e.g. local people, young people, children, minority groups, etc. It also examines the relationship between the company and other services/producers that act either to compete or complement.

The final element in the marketing mix is promotion or public relations. This element has traditionally related to the work of the designer because it concentrates on the relationship between the company and the target group by identifying what is offered, identifying potential customers, finding an appropriate way of reaching those customers and ensuring satisfaction. However, while the promotion element is perceived as the only important area for the designer in

reality the four areas are inter-related. Finding the right mix of these elements, creation, production and consumption, is a delicate process known as the product cycle.

This cycle begins with research and design, or what is called the "question marks" in the development of a commercial project. Every commercial design or service has a lifespan and at the stage of birth it is often r eferred to as a "star" when released from the laboratory of research and design. A commercial design, at the "star" stage must be supported by heavy promotion and visual communication. (Cotler, 1984, p. 32) One example of this is the 'Virgin Cola' and 'Dunnes Cola' products that were both released in 1995. Richard Branson offered samples of his new product in all the main train stations in London during peak periods and Dunnes Stores provided samples at all major toll bridges in Dublin. These big promotional campaigns allow the "star" to break into the marketplace by bombarding the customer in a variety of innovative ways.

Once a product has acquired a competitive position within the marketplace it moves to being a 'cash cow' which means that it has established itself within its niche as a strong market player (Cotler, 1984, p. 32). For some products the length of the product cycle is longer than others. For example, motor cars have short cycles whereas chocolate brands like 'Kit Kat' has a much longer cycle. Coca-Cola is an example of a 'cash cow' as it is established and recognised the world over as having a major market hold. However, the strength of the image of the pr oduct varies from place to place and is measured by the level of consumption. Coca-cola pride themselves on mass recognition and even on its ability to influence the level of consumption.

As products reach their peak performance and head into declining pr ofitability, they reach the final stage of the product cycle known as the "old dog". This may be redressed by the company in terms of a refinement and re-launch, or the product may be phased out. This is in essence the product cycle from conception and birth to maturity and old age and is inherent in all commercial products and services.

This tool or gauge identifies the product's place and the measures required for its visual communication allowing the marketing information to be relayed in a coherent way to the company and eventually to the target group.

The designer makes the information visually accessible and relevant. So the most important tool used to assess an appropriate response to the findings is the designer. Designers are the all important cog in the machinery in creating and continuing to create the want and to some extent the need.

Influences - Historical Background of Commercial Design

The notion of choice and variety in design and styling of products underlies the history of commercial design. The spirit of progressivism (i.e. the human race is always moving ahead, positively, in time) called for egalitarian collectivism (we're all equal and we're in it together once we have the money to pay for it!), and it called for each product to be available to all.

In 1924 Anni Albers, influenced by the Bauhaus modernists, wrote that, "we all have the same telephone without the longing for an individual design. We wear similar clothes and are satisfied with a small degree of difference within this restriction" (Whitford, 1984, p 201).

Choice and variety were unnecessary because modernists would be inventing the type form, the perfect, or at least optimum, solution to a functional problem for every product. Walter Gropius, the director of the Bauhaus, organised designers to work towards "the creation of type forms for all practical commodities of everyday use." Creating a search for the type form became the main task of the modern designer (Gropius, 1970, p 95).

Marcel Breuer, the Bauhaus designer of modernist 'classics' like the B33 Chair asked for "clear and logical forms based on rational principles". 'Logic' would be

dependent on what was the object's primary function and ergonomic requirements, i.e. a teapot should hold tea and its ergonomic considerations are the spout which pours well and a handle that's comfortable. For modernists like Breuer the idea that objects should be "standard, style-less and impersonal" did not stop there. Modernists felt the whole environment that the object existed in should embody the above values. Therefore, according to Breuer, a "living space...should not be a self-portrait" or "convey the individual personality of its occupant" (Whiteley, 1993, p109).

The modernist approach to design in the '20s and '30s is uncompromising and has no interest in the consumer's likes/dislikes and desires. They rejected market-led design as a lowering of their own standards.

An approach which changed the relationship with the consumer was developing at the same time in America. There, during 1920s and the Depression years of the early 1930s, commercial companies realised a designer could give a product added value or extra appeal, which increased its chances of being bought. Consumers were able to buy products which appealed more to them and addressed or catered for their tastes. The companies were the ones determining what they wanted to produce and the designers were employed to make the products more attractive.

The importance in America, for this period of design between the two World Wars, was that it developed the ideology of the market economy and this forms the basic foundation from which contemporary methods in commercial design emerge. Commercial design was about increasing sales and therefore profit. The short life span of products, until new ones replaced them or the existing products were given a new image or re-marketed, increased and was understood to have a "positive value" in that "it opened up as many fields as it closed". The reality is that for every old commercial product there is a new one which is eagerly accepted (Whiteley, 1993, p 21).

Post-War America reached a 'high-mass consumption stage' with an abundance of

goods for average income consumers (Whiteley, 1993, p19). America's economic system existed on a basis of 'abundance' and desire, where previously it was based on 'scarcity' and need (Lippincott, 1947, p12). The 1950s "taught its owners to consume and its makers to produce" (Larrabee, 1955, p 98).

American companies became a model for other commercial companies around the world. The U.S. possessed the most developed commercial society and used methods since the 1950s "to try to create value satisfying goods and services that consumers will want to buy" (Levitt, 1960, p 50).
Commercial design is a huge part of a company's strategic business plan making it a vital ingredient "to allow them to survive gallantly, to feel the surging impulse of commercial mastery, not just to experience the sweet smell of success but to have the visceral feel of entrepreneurial greatness" (Levitt, 1960, p. 56).

Commercial design is taken for granted now as a language that expresses the lifestyle of the consumer as well as the promise of a lifestyle through buying the products advertised. It tries to take daydreams and make them real. Desire and craving in the life of the modern consumer, which commercial design helps to create, is built on "a belief that its acquisition (of the product or service), and use can supply experience which the person has so far not encountered in reality. (Campbell, 1987, p 89)

In the 1990s the sophistication of visual language increased to a new level when people are teased as to the identity of a product in advertisement campaigns. The product is sold in the commercial without it being seen. Designers realise the commercial material must have a higher psychological level of impact, so now product shots sometimes are not enough. The lifestyle of the potential customer and their priorities are used as the key element in an advertisement.

One fine example of this is the CELLNET mobile phone advertisement (1996). It is evening time. A policeman is strolling along, pushing his bike recounting a story about an incident he had cause to attend in the line of duty. The conversation, in

the first instance, seems to be held with himself and we are eavesdropping. It takes an interesting turn when he speaks of a monster unlawfully eating a carpet. When the short story is completed there is then a momentary visual of his son in bed saying goodnight. And the policeman continues along the path on his duty. The advertisement does not once show the product - the mobile phone - but carries its message of "connecting people." In a world where time or positions may vary, disallowing the customer to spend more time on their lifestyle, the product allows it to happen anyway. The commercial advertisement concentrates its energy on giving the message: have convenience and comfort of control through a mobile phone.

In conclusion, commercial design has a seductive attraction and although the level of technology as well as both style and method of visual communication are very different today, a quote from the '50s still holds its own: "Today as never before the consumer is design-conscious and a designer is challenged to fill the consumer with the desire of ownership" (Lippincot, 1947, p 21).

Socially Conscious Design

Socially conscious design has at the very heart of its description the fact that it places ethical considerations on the use of graphic design. It prides itself in saying what is right and wrong and is 'proactive not responsive' to creating change in the world in which we live.

Dealing with minorities and educating society on issue-based topics is a prime example of the kind of work socially conscious design undertakes. The challenge of empowering the powerless is an integral part of it - giving a bigger v oice to groups who usually don't have the opportunity to target a mass audience.

Influences - Historical Background of Socially Conscious Design

A striking illustration of the extreme position of social conscious design arises in the Manifesto of 1964 - 'FIRST THINGS FIRST' (**See Appendix One**). The graphic designer Ken Garland and a group of 21 colleagues issued this manifesto, by graphic designers, for graphic designers. It asked why more socially purposeful graphic design was not being produced?

The logic of the manifesto implied that social and cultural needs ar e constantly avoided, if not distorted, by the power of an industry whose first purpose is to create demand, regardless of usefulness. The effect might be that future young designers may create less meaningful work. The designers who put their name to the manifesto believed that purpose and social function in design should not be confused with 'politically correct' subjects.

Later in the 1960s, consumer awareness increased and gave rise to a sense of 'responsibility' and 'social usefulness', thus creating a time of questioning and

review for some designers. An understanding was emerging that the designer needed to sit back and think more about the relationship of design to society, "its role and purpose?, what is at stake is nothing less than the quality of life itself, not in a century's time....but now" (Midleton, 1970, p 1).

Designers were challenged to think of the "wider issues" at stake which resulted in a new concentration among designers on issues like the environment and pollution; problems which, according to the French Group (a designers' collective), were nothing to do with the original problem but were a result of other problems. In 1970 they spoke out against designers who ignore implications of design, saying "the therapeutic mythology which tries to convince us that if things are going wrong it is due to the microbes, to viruses, or to some biological dysfunctions. This therapeutic mythology hides the political fact, the historical fact that it is a question of social structures and social contradictions, not a question of illness or deficient metabolism which could be easily cured...It is the entire theory of design and environment itself, which constitutes a generalised utopia, produced by a capitalist system that assumes the appearance of a second nature in order to survive, and perpetuate itself under the pretext of nature" (The French Group, 1974, p 21).

They felt design problems were "ideological problems" and went a little further than Ken Garland and his associates and called for the end of design for profit altogether.

Buckminister Fuller, a 1960s designer felt the world problems could be solved if real issues and concerns were dealt with and his ideas were a unique influence in America and Europe.

Another important influence for the development of socially conscious design came in Victor Papanek's, *Design for the Real World*, first published in 1971 and then revised in 1984. His book, held in high regard by many socially conscious designers, proposed a list of six priorities: 'design for the third world'; 'the design of teaching and training aids for disabled or retarded people'; 'design for medicine,

surgery and hospitals'; 'design for experimental research'; 'systems designed for sustaining human life under marginal conditions' (where humans could not survive without help such as inhabitable areas like space, underwater); finally 'design for breakthrough concepts', new products, which are not merely reshaped old products, but are totally new 'concepts'.

In order to illustrate Papanek's influence it is worth examining in more detail one of his priorities, 'design of teaching aids for disabled people'. In the 1970s disability charities changed to become pressure groups. Publications for the disabled promoted independence creating new interest in providing wheelchair accessibility to public buildings, transport and a variety of usually inaccessible venues. The public's image of disabled people began to change and society was, to some extent, seen to be "more than a white, male, middle class, able bodied group" (McQuistan, 1993, p 177).

Papanek also suggested designers "giving one tenth of their time or income to social conscience projects if they want to contribute, while continuing with their regular commercial design employment." He is joined on this point by Kurt Wirth, another prominent designer who felt designers "should execute as much of their own free work as possible and the experience....would enrich the work they do for fixed commissions" (Wirth, 1972, p 19).

For example, Media Natura, a not-for-profit graphic design agency situated in France, is a middle-man for this kind of activity within graphic design. D esign during the 1980s created work that had a huge impact on visual language in socially conscious design. Because of a new sensitivity to social awareness, people were made conscious of environmental problems.

The Green Movement was at the forefront and there was an outpouring of earth friendly products and campaigns. Alternative trading situations were put in position with companies like TradEireann (Athlone/Dublin), who were trading for a better world by paying fair prices for Third World produce. (Marketing Project ARTC, 1992)

Other examples included beauty products (Body Shop) whose packaging and contents were biodegradable, reusable and not tested on animals. Some pressurised canister products like hair spray changed to ozone-friendly containers which are recyclable.

Environmental action groups such as Greenpeace increased their international reputation and authority with graphic campaigns and actions which were both confrontational and direct. An example is LYNX anti-fur group, who are part of Greenpeace, producing "a billboard poster showing a fashion model dragging a bloody fur coat behind her" entitled "Forty Dumb Animals." The concept was that it took forty animals to make it but only one to wear it (Mc Quistan, 1993, p 220). Other awareness activities using design included Live Aid in July 1985, Although specific in its fund-raising for famine relief in Africa, it spread social consciousness and awareness by making people see themselves as part of a world that can effect positive change.

The visual language in many areas of socially conscious design stopped 'beating around the bush', and adopted a controversial approach using harsher images and, in the instance of some environmental campaigns, showed "the destruction and stupidity taking place", rather than the beautiful possibilities that could be (McQuistan, 1993, p 211).

There have been interesting guerrilla activities in design from anonymous individuals and design collectives. The group 'Guerrilla Girls' is an anonymous group of gorilla suit clad women artists and designers from the States, anonymity guaranteeing them complete focus on any issues they undertake. They have been "exposing sexual and racial discrimination in the art world" and particularly in the music industry since 1985. Employing facts and figures, names and cutting sarcasm, their design work is posted up on the streets illegally, and also on a variety of established formats such as billboards, etc.

Developments in the 1990s leaned towards a personal type of politics, and a society which cared about its all its members. Society was shaken by social crises,

like the effect of the global threat of AIDS which became a haunting shadow. Social design furthered the use of direct messages and action.

An example of work of the period is Death cigarettes. While obviously the main priority was to sell cigarettes, it contained a large degree of honesty in its promotional material. Released in Britain in 1991, the manufacturers gave a percentage to cancer research calling it a 'pay as your burn' policy. The graphics, skull and crossbones and coffin-shaped posters promote and get the message across.

Another example and one of the greatest information challenges to date, AIDS and the promotion of safe sex, calls for imagination and modern visual communication techniques to change attitudes and behaviour, basically lifestyles.

One of the most important people to create a socially conscious design are AIDS activists particularly Gran Fury. They are a ten member 'Guerrilla Graphics' collective exploiting the power of design to address the AIDS crisis. The '90s socially conscious design questions attitudes and promotes alternative views and lifestyles for a safer life.

In summary, the history of socially conscious graphic design challenges designers to make the world a better place for all. The British Society of Industrial Artists and Designers changed its name to 'The Chartered Society of Designers' "to reflect its enhanced status and more positive and modern identity". (Press Release May 1989) It realised this through creating a code of conduct and responsibilities to society. The Industrial Designers Society of America formulated their code of ethics also.

A most interesting summing up of the position and importance of socially conscious design is to use a metaphor from the world of medicine. Imagine if all "medical doctors were to forsake general practice and surgery and concentrate exclusively on plastic surgery" (Papanek, 1984, p 247). In the same way, imagine a world where all graphic designers were only interested in creating an image of material luxury.

Case study one: Inízio

Inízio Group are a commercial design agency operating in the Netherlands. They handle graphic-packaging-interior-industrial design advertising and multi-media. Their current organisational structure is a result of the 1984 merging of the Hard Werken Group of designers and Ten Cate Bergman package design firm.

The Background of Hard Werken

Young Dutch graphic designers in the '60s were rejecting institutions and considered the work in the Hague and Amsterdam "as uninspired functionality, unbelievable dullness and rigid design principles", preferring to have complete freedom in their own work.

Technology was also offering new avenues and options. In Rotterdam of the 1970s an atmosphere for change, was partially created by an art gallery which held contemporary art in T. Venster where theatre, video, film and performance art took place. There was also a 'Graphic Workshop' where cultural and social purpose graphic material was printed. In these surroundings and under these influences, Hard Werken first evolved as a magazine and then as a group of designers who worked in association.

William Kars, a designer, took the initiative to found the *Hard Werken* magazine. Eleven editions were made from 1978 to 1982. It was a cultural magazine, where not so much the content as the design was central. They were inspired by American magazines such as *File,* as well as Andy Warhol's *Interview*, for example, although Hard Werken's design looked different.

The magazine covered the cultural, artistic and social world of Rotterdam and its surroundings. It gained international recognition through the creative use of

graphic design. This was achieved by *Hard Werken*'s use of type as image and image as type and the "quite classical letter types....as well as very expressive use of typography with hard, geometric forms" (Metz, 1991, p 70).

Hard Werken preferred to refer to their work as a 'method' rather than a style, for their varying clientele (Metz, 1991, p 20). Two good examples, of their 'method' are their covers form July 1979 (illus 1) and January 1980. (illus 2.) The masthead remains in the same format throughout the issues of the magazine; top left hand corner, all capitals with the word 'HARD' in a bold condensed font placed directly above 'WERKEN' which is in a smaller size face and light font. It differs in its treatment and size at times, but keeps to its recognisable identity. First, looking at the 1979 issue, there is a bold use of large and small blocks of colour in the image creating opacity and transparency in different areas. It is even possible to see in the partly transparent areas, brush strokes. There is a ripped paper effect like a collage, creating a hands on, experimental look. Higher and lowercase type is never mixed and in some lines the type is worn or scratched.

The January 1980 cover is also fresh and adventurous, using a 'fanzine look', almost like an irreverent scrapbook. Layers of image and blocks of type look like they have been cut out individually quite fast, and stuck down at random. The printing of the masthead is offline and creates a shadow behind the black in red. The cover is experimental, informal and has a 'spirit of the moment' feel to it. This is typical of the work in the early part of the magazine's existence .

Five of the first editorial members of the magazine, Henke Elenger, Gerard Hadders, Tom Van den Haspel, Williem Kars and Rick Vermeulen - although independent designers now (as they were then), were part of Hard Werken, and are now part of Inízio. The designers always worked independently within the group, for clients they found themselves. These five, coming from different backgrounds and having varying aspirations, came together at a certain point through working in graphic workshops or with people who had worked there.

illus 1

illus 2

Each designer had his own way of working . There were no rules or regulations, no requirements of functionality or legibility but there were professional skills in evidence which resulted in a "well-planned absurdity" (Kars, 1996, Interview). Typography shot off in all directions; they had no rigid principles in that regard, using type books sometimes to source their lettering. Left to their own devices experimentation was the order of the day. Through their education, each had an underlying feeling for publicity and communicating to the wider public.

The Hard Werken designers' group appointed Williem Kars as their co-ordinator in 1986. From the beginning Hard Werken's approach to the business world was simple and maybe naive: "form + colour = money." They assumed that creative talent is a sufficient basis for a commercially successful business" (Kars, 1996, Interview). Various special theatre companies used the group, for example, 'Welfare State' from Britain, a moving theatre company whose performances often required posters and other material at the last minute. The designers were used to last minute commissions and provided them.

> "We started off as a co-operative as this was the atmosphere by then in Holland, basically it was a bunch of artists who hated bosses. There was no political reason whatsoever. Concentrating on the commercial aspects is something we should have done from the beginning, because there is no parallel non commercial world" (Kars, 1996, Interview)

While clients were initially from the cultural sector, like the the Rotterdam Arts Council, Hard Werken had build up a reputation for creativity that appealed also to the business community like the Dutch Post Office (PTT), a very unusual company with its longstanding emphasis on design.
Hard Werken soon realised that all of their new clients and businesses required some internal organisation and planning. Young designers were also imitating their style. "We changed because the real world changes. We do not care if our approach is imitated, you have to stay ahead anyway" (Kars, 1996, Interview), These developments led to the need for a manager and a different internal

organisational structure. Restrictions were imposed on experimentation and a more business-like approach was adopted.

"We had to chose to consolidate or explode." It took a major change to convert the unconventional to the conventional (Metz, 1991, p.70). The designers were challenged to design specifically for the market-oriented business world and this, of course, brought financial rewards.

Bert Jan Jansen (an architect), an outsider of the group was appointed as general manager, putting in place the structure and planning format that was needed. Williem Kars sought information on how the business world operated, visiting various agencies to see their work methods. He sent Henke Elenger to set up an outpost, Hard Werken Los Angeles (H.W.L.A.).

With proper costing and planning, the sudden and surprising amount of money to be earned smoothed the effect of the restrictions placed on some of the designers. However, others felt they would have preferred to continue designing under their own control and left. "Artists want to work according to their own rules. Designers can only work when they have clients, so some left, others did not. Besides: when you consider yourself 'cutting edge' it is hard and impossible to design for dairy products." (Kars, 1996, Interview)

A lot of commercial agencies visited by Williem Kars, while gathering information on business plans, were merged with other groups. Assuming that merging with another company would guarantee commercial success, W. Kars examined a few design companies, but dropped the propositions he received, as he felt that Hard Werken's identity would be lost by merging with any of the companies that he had offers from at that point. The idea was put aside for a few years.

Ten Cate Bergman was a well established package design company with "dedication to the requirements of commercial clients" (Hard Werken, 1995, p 19). The firm was small, close-knit and had a strong creative reputation. (The two firms liked each other also!) Ten Cate Bergman felt it would give a new challenge to their company

and Hard Werken felt it would bring essential experience and knowledge of the world of commercial clients it still lacked.

Hard Werken & Ten Cate Bergman's Design proposed when merged to do more than just move into the same building with 'business as usual'. They proposed to create a uniquely structured company.

The new design agency was essentially taking the shape of a company active in all aspects of communications. Design, of course, was a core activity as all services must be graphically communicated. Services included graphic design, packaging, interior, industrial design, with advertising and multimedia.

The firm's mission statement, was 'we don't do it for form's sake' creating a clear break with the original ideas and design principles of Hard Werken, "form+colour=money". In 1994, the new firm presented itself by the name 'Inízio' serving "both market-oriented and cultural clients using the latest technology" (Hard Werken, 1995, p 26).

The company has partners and different individual designers giving it a unique structure. One of their most important and successful areas, is packaging design. Kars illustrates this by using an example where there was "a 600 per cent rise in the sales of Mona drinks that Inízio packaged" (Evamy, 1996, p 27).

Mona Yoki (illus 3) and Mona Biograde (illus 4) are two examples of this type of packaging. Enveloped in a Tetra Pak, the products packaging is the same shape as many of today's product packages. Because of this, use of graphic design on packaging has become extremely important, in the sense that it attracts and appeals to its target market.

Mona Yoki uses a fun image of the fruit falling through a background relating to the flavour and colouring of the drink. For example, one package in illus 3 uses the image of raspberries on a pastel pink and a white background; small white dashes

illus 3

illus 4

cut through diagonally. The typeface is created for the product name and is angular and star-like, except the 'O' which is obviously not angular.

Although it is fun and appealing, it may be too busy. There seems to be a forcing of co-existence of the quirky type and the more traditional block of type - white out of navy - describing the drink and its flavour which features prominently and almost obtrusively on the front. Overall, the package is playful and energetic and the target market is clearly children and it is bought by "parents who like their kids" (Kars, 1996, Interview).

In contrast, the Mona Biogarde drink, illus 4, is targeted at an older market. The design uses space well and has an overall relaxed visual appeal. Imagery is partially full colour and then duotone - blue and white. The white type is a mixture of plain, bold and italic light in Biogarde, which works effectively over 'drink' which has added tracking (i.e. the space between the lettering). The attention to detail on the package adds to the design. The small typographic detail 'to open', has the same tracking as the word 'DRINK'.

A slickness and sophistication has entered the work of the designers in comparison with earlier work. There is a refinement and corporate look about their work, well suited to their clients' needs, while their handling of type still retains an element of experimentalism. Inízio are also involved with new communications technology (i.e. internet), and are looking at new possibilities and marketing strategies to keep them ahead in the field of design communications.

Within Inízio everyone works independently and on set evenings the work is discussed. Everyone has their own project to work on. In the case of big campaigns, project groups are formed with various members , splitting apart the group when the project is complete. Some of the former Hard Werken designers are still affiliated as partners and work on various projects, feeling there are still "possibilities for relative freedom and challenges within Inízio"
(Hard Werken, 1995, p 29).

From the company's beginnings to its present format it is a "particularly dramatic transition, but it follows the common pattern of consultancy development, from short term, experimentalism to long-term profitability". Inízio may themselves feel the commercial market now has a better chance to get "some good design products" through them (Rich, 1996, p. 7). Hard Werken had to handle a "mixture of disbelief and aggression" levelled at them after they merged. Gerard Hadders explains this as an "elitist attitude" in Holland where commercial and socio-cultural designers have little time for each other (Rich, 1996, p 25).

According to William Kars, the turnover from their cultural clients was never more than ten percent and "everything is commercial unless you do it for free" (Rich, 1996, p 27). They were always a commercial company and it was just that there was more noise about the cultural client's work than their commercial work.

In summary, the position of Inízio is that regardless of clientele "we wanted to make money. You have to eat!" (Kars, 1996, Interview). And logically, the commercial design world is certainly more lucrative in this aspect.

Case study two: Public Communications Centre

The **Public Communications Centre,** based in Dublin, Ireland, is unique in Europe because they are the only organisation of their kind who work exclusively for the non-for-profit sector. "We wanted to try and do what we could to change the world we are living in , to be grandiose about it" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview). Established by two Italians and two Irish as a non-profit company almost eight years ago, it catered mainly in design for the arts, culture and entertainment sectors (e.g. theatre, craft fairs, etc.).

PCC first came together as Graphiconies, this initial name of the studio merging the idea of graphics with that of an Italian circus family. Graphiconies' chief characteristic was that they were able to answer the needs of large scale and small scale, one/two person operations. It was when they started doing the more issue-based work, Public Communications Centre was set up. The two companies were basically running in parallel, but then Graphiconies shut down becoming the graphic design department in PCC.

A big influence on them was the Public Media Centre in San Francisco, going since the Vietnam War. This group would have been the first media voice against the war who were very successful in their advocacy work. This involved advocating a position in the same way as commercial advertising, but they have invented a whole other series of approaches for this kind of sector around Latin American rain forests, environmental issues, women's and reproductive rights, dolphins, etc.

Charlie O'Neill, one of the founders of Graphiconies, worked for a year in San Francisco with the Public Media Centre, then came back and started to try and move Graphiconies towards that kind of work. There were two reasons for this one being that "people were actually asking us to do this kind of work,"and another being that "we were all politicised in some way" Each person had specific skills but

were unskilled at organising. "We couldn't organise ourselves out of a brown paper bag and also we are too busy so we needed somebody to manage us" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

So a managing director was brought in to organise a working structure. John Sutton was drafted in to pull it all together. He had a background in community, politics and he ran the SFX Centre, Rock gigs, community gigs, etc. He has responsibility of ensuring that PCC deliver. He also has a vision of the bigger picture.

The hierarchy of PCC is a bit of a mixture, comprising of a board legally responsible for control of the company as well as strategic planning and policy development. The Managing Director controls the day to day affairs of the company. A Personnel manager is nominated by the staff to talk out and solve any problems within the company. Then, there are Project Managers and Administration.

The Public Communications Centre work for the following sectors:
Culture and heritage (e.g. Rough Magic, theatre companies.)
Education (e.g. Union of Students in Ireland.)
World Development (e.g. Trocaire)
Rural Development (e.g. Tourism Mayo)
Community Development
Women (e.g. Women's Aid, Cherish.)
Minority/Human Rights (e.g. Amnesty International)
Health
Disability
Environment/Housing
Work and Unemployment
Peace and Reconciliation
Poverty

"Looking at that list might make one think that we are saving the world...And we are saving it overnight" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

The agency offers Research, Strategic campaigning, media planning and placement (TV, newspaper, indoor or outdoor), fundraising, graphic design and copywriting and print management.

Today, if someone comes asking for a leaflet, the first question is, "why do they want it; who do they want to talk to; and where does it fit into their communications strategy? This is a huge change." Previously PCC produced one-off pieces for companies, now they are more strategic about work. Generally as a rule of thumb PCC don't accept work unless they've got a comprehensive range of work from a client because they can't do proper design work for companies if they don't understand what their agenda is or what is right for them. Also "it is important to realise that we have our own agenda as well. We want to do good work and we aren't able to do that unless we've got a range of stuff; unless we are helping that organisation to move and progress" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

In terms of a house style, PCC agree that they might have one, but only if it relates directly to the client, for example, a certain style may be used throughout Amnesty International press ads and leaflets. They were famous for their posters, as Graphiconies, doing almost every poster in town for a few years. "People would say, ' I know your style.' But really, we were the only ones doing it and we tended to use a lot of colour. We would firmly believe we did not have a house style" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview). In terms of other companies doing the same work there is no one in Ireland providing the same range of services as PCC.

The company has work reviews, usually once a week, to discuss work. This gives a quality control mechanism as well as "building on the co-operative culture of the company. These reviews are valuable because its for the good of the company and the client" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview). Staff Meetings are also held once a week where any issues like schedules, work overloads and personnel issues are brought to the attention of the company.

PCC work in a number of different ways, there are three methods:
a normal client/studio relationship: own projects: technical aid.

They have a normal client/studio relationship and a stationary client base.

Then there are their own projects because "we have our own political vision about the world" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview). One project is a shanty town movement in San Paulo in Brazil. PCC worked with them last year to prepare for a major international United Nations Conference on Housing in Istanbul, Turkey. Basically, there are millions of people in Brazil who are living in shacks but they have their own community and support system. The government wants to build high rise, high profile kind of Ballymun apartments (high rise flats in Dublin) as a solution to the housing problem. The community wants to stay where they are through an up-grading programme. The conference in Istanbul will be a confrontation of these two opinions. PCC's work will help build the capacity of the community group to argue, advocate and lobby effectively through the production of various materials and strategies.

There is also something called technical aid. Some groups out there literally have no money and no resources, so PCC basically work for nothing for them: If they can find the hard costs, cost of film, print and so on.

They charge clients like anyone else would. Most groups that come to PCC have budgets for communications. In the beginning PCC decided they would invest in a good building, top technology and fair wages. "We work around the clock anyway, so we should get some financial benefit." When a client gets work from them they pay for project management/administration, the copywriter and graphic designers, the usual cost of design in any area. PCC are cheaper than the commercial agencies but dearer than the community sector and freelancers, "but really that's overhead costs, and at the same time no one here is on £40,000 a year or driving a company car so there are balances" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

There are six principles that PCC employ.

"If you don't set your own agenda you'll react to someone else's."
Basically, instead of reacting constantly to stimuli around, which is placed there by others sources, try not to give a reaction, but get a reaction.

"Audience is everything but not everyone."

Experience has proven that many activist communicators fail for one of two reasons. Firstly, they either talk only to the converted or, secondly, they try to talk to everyone. There has not been enough concentration on what is called the 'critical mass'. "The right people in other words, if you get the opinion makers." This could be the milkman, barperson, teacher, politician - "these are the people who will influence other people and create this movement for change" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

"Communication is not just an option - it's a duty."

Through years of hard work most campaigning and service-centred groups assemble a vision of society which they then pursue. Effective groups share that vision to effect change and gain support.

"How to win enemies and influence people.'-

In issue-based design work, the piece is almost always going to say who's to blame and why. Opposition is one of the important yardsticks of success.

"Empower through information, invite action."

Headlines and pictures won't change hearts and minds. Information and action will. Selling issues means selling substance. The reason commercial advertising is all about style is because it's all about illusion. Agenda setting is about reality. It's about distilling complex messages, making them understandable, and making effective action possible. A supporter who is engaged is worth ten who only sympathise.

"If you're communicating, you're campaigning."

To set an agenda with clarity and confidence, if you're working for a better world, you should be telling people about it, consolidating support, gaining membership and educating.

The whole range of principles that PCC embody are not suitable in terms of the commercial world.

The commercial world would not take these into account. For example, PCC have been working with Trocaire for years doing their graphic design. Only recently PCC began handling their complete communications since "they had a commercial agency doing that and they did not understand the issues in the first place and didn't know where the people were at in terms of those issues" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

For instance, if an environmental action group teamed up with an ad agency who are working "for burger king, the Heinz and the Shells of this world. It would be impossible to be in a partnership because they are basically on different sides of the fence. There is very little I think in the commercial world which is ethical and there for the right reasons" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

Selling issues is not like selling soap. You can say washing powder washes whiter. Opposition says that their product does also. So you say blue white; they say blue white biologically. That's where creativity comes in; just visible points of difference. And it is purely cosmetic whereas "with issues its all about substance".

For instance, if you look at a Trocaire (illus 5) or a Cherish (illus 6) advertisement, they take the format of an actual newspaper page using columns of text and photography images. This is real life and the designer has addressed this by taking this format. The reader, views it as serious information, whereas I do not think it would be as successful if, for example, there were illustrations used instead of realistic imagery. Therefore, the format using newspaper fonts, headlines and photographs informs as it invites a donation or action by its viewer. They are full of information but the commercial world might say those ads don't work, maybe because they are too like the newspaper page and do not stand apart. However, as they fulfill all the criteria the particular message needs, which is to create an action, then they do work. It's not the mass market: only 10% of people who read newspapers read advertisements. These are the people referred to earlier as the "critical mass".

"The longer the delay, the more inhuman the damage." Cardinal Frederic Etsou-Nzabi-Bamungwabi, Zaire.

WHEN 800,000 RWANDANS WERE MURDERED, WE SAID NEVER AGAIN. NOW IT'S TIME TO ACT.

The unfolding conflict in Central Africa is turning into a nightmare before the world's eyes. Over the weekend, Trócaire and a select group of agencies met with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Rwandan Government in an effort to break the deadlock and allow aid to flow to hundreds of thousands of refugees. We are working flat out and by the time you read this, our teams will be in eastern Zaire assessing the humanitarian needs and delivering aid and medical supplies. We have joined forces with our international sister organisations - CAFOD (UK), CRS (USA) and CARITAS International - to ensure the best possible results.

What we're seeing now is the final stages of a pattern which has been emerging over the past two years. That pattern has seen a genocide in Rwanda, the exodus from Rwanda of over a million Hutus - many of them accused of participating in the genocide - and anti-government violence in Zaire. It has also seen mass movement of refugees fleeing from the conflict, full-scale war developing in the area and, only now, a small prospect of peace negotiations.

Meanwhile a massive humanitarian refugee crisis breeds hunger, sickness and death. In the worst scenario this crisis could lead to the breakup of Zaire which would have disastrous consequences for the region. But it's never too late. Positive steps can and must be taken.

TRÓCAIRE'S 3-PRONGED STRATEGY.

and ready to provide food, clean water and sanitation, medical supplies and shelter - vital immediate needs. But we are also involved in health, education and training, agriculture and community development - programmes which deliver longterm benefits. None of this will ensure security in the region until a locally acceptable agreement is reached so Trócaire is also working at a political level lobbying and informing governments, the EU, the UN and the media.

HOW THE CONFLICT DEVELOPED.

The origins of the conflict are political and go back to when European colonial powers divided up the map of Africa causing the Tutsi Banyamulenge people to be isolated in what is now Zaire. Denied citizenship and oppressed by the government in Zaire, they rose to assert their rights. They are supported by the governments in Rwanda and Burundi which makes the conflict more than just a local struggle. As the Banyamulenge rebels moved northwards gaining more ground in Zaire, massive numbers of refugees fled to already overcrowded camps to the west of Goma. Zairean refugees have also fled to Rwanda and other countries. Mugunga camp, already the largest refugee camp in the world, has 500,000 people.

The existence of these refugee camps has destabilised Zaire and Rwanda as about 50,000 of the refugees are armed soldiers or militia. Rwandan Hutu refugees are afraid to return home for fear of reprisals even though the Rwandan Government has promised security and justice.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!

While the war rages, humanitarian aid becomes essential, but difficult and dangerous to deliver. Now, as the crisis worsens, our people and resources are stretched. Much can be done to prevent the worst nightmare predictions coming true. We must respond to people's urgent needs now. To do this, we desperately need your help. Last time when Rwanda erupted, the world stood by and watched 800,000 die in a brutal genocide. We all said never again. Now is the time to act on that promise.

ACTION MUST BE TAKEN.

• A ceasefire needs to be negotiated through intensive diplomatic efforts by the EU and the suffering of over a million people.

• Negotiations should be set in motion leading to a political solution involving all countries in the region.

• The Rwandan refugees should be encouraged to return home with guarantees for their safety.

• Greater international efforts need to be made to bring to justice those who organised and participated in the genocide.

• The supply of arms to militias and private armies in the region should be controlled.

WHAT YOU CAN DO.

• Write to Dick Spring at Iveagh House, 80 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, and ask him to use his influence with the EU, the UN and the governments of Zaire and Rwanda to ensure that humanitarian aid can be delivered urgently.

• Please fill in the coupon below and send a donation to support Trócaire's vital work.

PLEDGE YOUR DONATION INSTANTLY CREDIT CARD CALLSAVE 1850 408 408 OR FAX YOUR COUPON TO (01) 288 3577

TRÓCAIRE ACTION FOR ZAIRE/RWANDA

TRÓCAIRE'S VITAL WORK IN RWANDA/ZAIRE/BURUNDI
Today, we are implementing a wide range of programmes, in co-operation with local partners.

• Healthcare
• Water and sanitation
• Education
• Community and Women's development
• Seed Distribution/ Agriculture
• Resettlement/Housing
• Projects for Street Children
• Skills Training
• Sports and Culture
• Training trauma counsellors
• Unaccompanied Children/ Orphans
• Support to refugees

This information advertisement has been placed as part of Trócaire's public education programme.

illus 5

What's the difference?

Mary.
Young, single,
professional.

Mary.
Young,
single parent.

Prejudice.

Mary had everything going for her. A good job. Friends she could depend on. A nice little place of her own. When she became one of the estimated 100,000 single parents in Ireland today, all that changed.

Even during the pregnancy, she noticed a difference. While married friends' pregnancies were greeted with celebration, her's was dealt with differently. More low-key - as if it was something to be ashamed of.

Mind you some people were great. They supported her choice and shared the joy she felt. But others avoided the subject while some seemed to actively disapprove.

Today, her son Jimmy is the light of her life. But her life is tougher than she ever imagined. After Jimmy was born, she desperately needed a solid income but she found it impossible to go back to work because of childcare costs.

On top of all that, she had to deal with people's attitude to her being a single mother. The hurtful comments. The bitter sneers. Unfortunately for Mary and an estimated 45,000 other single mothers, prejudice is still a problem in Irish society. Irish family values it seems, don't stretch to single parent families. It's time for change.

Helping single parents to help themselves and their families.

Last year, nearly 3,000 people like Mary contacted Cherish for help. We are a national, non-denominational, voluntary organisation. Founded in 1972 by single mothers, we nurture and encourage self-reliance through mutual understanding. Time and time again, friendship and empowerment have been the catalysts to help people bring about change in their lives.

With Cherish's support, people in crisis have transformed what can be a difficult and lonely situation into a really positive experience.

For 25 years, our door has always been open to provide free and confidential advice to single women during and after pregnancy. For most women, pregnancy is an enriching and rewarding experience. But for many others – who find themselves in a planned or unplanned pregnancy – it can be a confusing, frustrating and troubled event. Most times, they just need support and advice in a non-judgmental atmosphere.

Because Cherish was founded by women who were in similar circumstances – either as a single parent or single and pregnant – we understand those fears and pressures.

Cherish 25 1972-1997

25 years of counselling, practical support and information.

When people are in a crisis, it can be difficult to make the best decisions. Unplanned pregnancy, adoption, difficulties in parenting or relationships can be crisis points in anyone's life. The world is closing in and it's hard to know what's right.

Through counselling, Cherish helps you - in a non-directive, non-judgmental way - to examine your crisis and look at the range of options which are open to you. The problem of telling children about an absent father is something that often comes up. We have developed a set of guidelines and workshops on how to deal with this issue in a sensitive yet truthful way.

In addition, we provide comprehensive information, practical advice and workshops on all aspects of single parenting including social welfare entitlements, housing, health issues, employment, training, taxation and child care.

We have developed a workshop for schools/youth groups which helps young people explore, analyse and make sound choices about their relationships, feelings and needs. We also lobby government to help bring about positive change in the circumstances of single parents and their families.

Single parents – the popular myth and the harsh reality.

It seems likely that poverty will continue to be the single biggest problem single mothers will face. Underneath the prejudiced myth that single mothers are a drain on society is the harsh reality that nearly three quarters of all lone parents are living in poverty.

Social welfare payments are inadequate, child care costs are prohibitive and access to employment is difficult. Cherish believes that if we truly are a caring society, we must make a practical commitment to single parents and single pregnant women.

Cherish

A FIVE POINT COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY FOR SINGLE PARENTS.

1. CHILDCARE

The provision of state sponsored childcare services would help alleviate some of the employment poverty traps facing lone parents. The cost of childcare has to be deducted from any wage a single parent will receive, thus acting as a severe disincentive to work. Aside from work, single parents need childcare services in order to return to education, or even simply to enjoy any form of social life.

2. EMPLOYMENT

The barriers to employment for single parents need to be removed. The provision of child care and flexible work practices would go a long way towards doing this. The attitudinal barriers to single parents working outside the home also need to be broken down.

3. EDUCATION

Clearly, many women first become single unmarried mothers before the age of 21. The Department of Social Welfare figures for new claimants indicate that up to 40% of single unmarried mothers have their first child before then. As pregnancy is likely to impact on study, many single unmarried mothers will not have as full an education as they would have liked. Given the higher than average incidence of unemployment in their family backgrounds, it is probable that a very significant proportion of single unmarried mothers have no third level education at all. The ability to return to education would be self-fulfilling and also increase their chances of employment.

4. ACCOMMODATION

Lack of adequate accommodation is one of the most difficult issue which face unmarried parents in Ireland today. Heavy reliance on private rented accommodation poses serious problems for many single parents, who find that children are all too frequently unwelcome in the private rented sector. There is an urgent need for affordable and accessible housing.

5. DEFINITION OF FAMILY

The current definition of the family in the Constitution should be broadened to reflect the diversity of families which exists in Ireland today.

Produced by Public Communications Centre

As an example of the criteria these ads must fill: a lot of groups because they are not funded, need to raise money from the public, Amnesty International would be a typical story. "They have 8,000 people on a membership and when they need to run a campaign they mail these people and get a percentage response which could be £30,000 which would allow them to successfully fund the campaign." This basically makes them self-sufficient. Also amnesty know 50% of there members will answer letter campaigns, which adds to the list of criteria as to passing on information, so in terms of action the ads are highly successful.

If a commercial agency were doing this work, they would have to familiarise themselves with the issues firstly and perhaps wouldn't know where the people were at in terms of those issues. PCC feel they could connect with any audience using the right messages and the right mediums. If you took violence against women, if you took third world issues , environmental issues or any other issues, PCC feel it is important to really have substantial communications. "But it is always in the environment where there is very little money to do it. This means you have to be even more creative and targeted" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

Common and Diverse Perspectives

An aim of this study since the beginning was to examine the traditions of commercial and socially conscious design in terms of convergence and diversity. The main principle of graphic design is to communicate with another person. The following evaluation of both traditions is taken from three common points of reference that brings together the main discourse of this study: The Designer, Quality of Design & the Audience.

Designer

A designer from either tradition will measure success by the objectives that s/he sets. An analysis of these objectives can put in relief common and divergent approaches and attitudes.

Both traditions have different tasks to perform. The main purpose of the commercial designer is to create work that influences the desire of the consumer in order to ensure a purchase is made of the product or service. In other words the commercial designer is under pressure to succeed in achieving the desired responses from their commercial clients' potential customers. This is no different from the socially conscious designer who, in the same way, would be under pressure from their client for the design to perform the correct job, and that would be either to educate or effect positive action. Therefore, while the pressure is equal, the motivation of each designer is different.

The primary objective, for the commercial designer, is to create an environment of success, measured in terms of economic success. This concentration on the economic aspects of design that is detailed in this study is the central tenant on which companies like Inízio build their objectives.

Seeing objectives in this way obviously puts pressure on the designer to get rid of idealistic notions of "beautiful aesthetic and esoteric ideas about design" (Kars, 1996, Interview). It is useful to question what attitude lies behind this outlook and what does the future hold for the designer in the commercial world? With Inízio's position there is a refusal to see beyond the predominance of the economic world summed up in the phrase, "the competitive edge." An accusation that may be laid at Inízio's door is that they have simply adopted the classic 'sell out' position. It is a sentiment backed up by themselves, as expressed in the words of one of Inízio's founders, Williem Kars, "It's getting harder and harder. The future of design and this company, I see quite clearly, but I can't say it's rosy, with lots of interesting clients or lots of money. I think it's always a struggle. I spend my days better than I used to, but it's much less fun!" (Kars, 1996, Interview).

It could be suggested that the commercial designer lives and breathes in a world with a limited horizon fixed by the demands of economic considerations and characterised by the phrase that rings out like a mantra - 'competitive design'. Competitive design must always ensure that it pleases but never challenges the economic perspective of the client. At its heart it can become a recipe for a conservative, middle of the road design that always fears alienating the client or their customers. The designer plays the cards that are dealt by the client who is ultimately in charge.

In contrast, the socially conscious designer experiences the world in a broader horizon. This means that selling products and making money are not the primary objective and do not occupy the driving seat. This is not to suggest that 'eating and paying the rent' are not important. These considerations are important but remain secondary to the primary objective. Rather, emphasis is placed on giving a voice and effecting change in the social position of communities that are disempowered and the issues that relate to them.

The role of the socially conscious designer is to try and effect peoples' beliefs and actions and it does it through influencing, educating and opening up new horizons

in the minds of their target audiences. The socially conscious designer is unafraid to build allies and create enemies, while saying what is right or wrong. This means that they are guided by an ethical reasoning, where there is more of a distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, beautiful and grotesque. Although nothing is completely black and white, the world of the socially conscious designer forces people 'off' the fence by presenting the facts of a particular issue. This can often create conflict between those who hold opposite positions and in some cases "opposition becomes the yardstick of success" (O'Neill, 1996, Interview).

The starkest characteristic of the PCC designer is their sense of political conviction and mission. The position of the socially conscious designer is described well in the words of Charlie O Neill: "We are trying to change the world we live in - to be grandiose about it!"

Aesthetics and Content

Aesthetics and content are key determinants of quality in graphic design. These do not exist in isolation but are closely related to the audience and the perspective of the graphic designer. It is the graphic designer who keeps the tension between each so as to ensure harmony between the audience and the demands of aesthetic quality.

The commercial designer is attentive to aesthetics and quality but is concerned primarily with the performance of the design, namely sales. The socially conscious designer while often advocating a position in the same way as their commercial counterpart, simply replaces the products with issues (e.g. Latin American rainforests, women's rights, reproductive rights and dolphins). Aesthetic quality needs "skills to listen and interpret needs and concepts of people in other fields and enough flexibility of mind and visual resources to produce efficient communications" (Potter, 1980, p. 21). Designers use their ability to sort, order and relate information joined by a quality of judgement and discrimination and a lively imagination. The aesthetic quality of the work is judged on the construction of a

pattern organising the communication link between the piece of design and the viewer.

Here it is important to create a distinction between aesthetic quality and the quality of content in the design. Quality of the content in the design can be judged b y a whole range of specialists who "interpret public responses, evaluate design performance and advise regarding appropriate modification of the communication of the communications strategies when better results are desired" (Frascara, 1996, p 3). For example, in a campaign on road safety, the quality of the design may be in its contribution to the reduction of accidents.

There are many cases in which a good design will be discar ded for reasons which seem arbitrary, perhaps to be replaced by another product with a better sales potential. Again, "a perfectly adequate design solution, the result of much care and imagination in its development may never reach the public at all" (Potter, 1980, p 21).

While both traditions are interested in aesthetics and content it could be said that the prioritising of these are different for both. In relation to commercial design, aesthetics are more of a concern, while, most importantly, passing on the information it makes the product or service, client and designers look good at all costs. This is done through beautiful and emotive imagery well positioned for its target market. In short, the message is important, but not as central as the image.

In contrast, socially conscious design would give greater credence to the content, placing and understanding. Content and placing relates to being seen and the strategical placing of information and ease of understanding, thus helping the reader to recognise the message as an urgent matter by using facts. The most central item being the message rather than the image. To summarise this position, it can be said that, "with issues it's all about substance" (O Neill, 1996, Interview). It is also worth mentioning that there is a complexity of language and information used in both commercial and socially conscious design, which each tradition has and will continue to poach from the other.

Audiences

Both commercial and socially conscious design can have extreme expressions. For instance, commercial design can be used to seduce and manipulate while socially conscious design can be as an instrument of propaganda and indoctrination. This calls for an ethical sensitivity to lie at the heart of both. There must be fundamental respect for the intelligence of the audience. All designers constantly strive to keep the line of communication that is consistent with respecting the intelligence of the audience.

The ethical dimension of graphic design is expressed in a diverse way by each tradition. Socially conscious design would tend to direct itself at the intellect while commercial design would probably be predominantly directed at the affective and emotional level of the audience. This is not to say that both do not retain an interest in all of these aspects. Sometimes, as mentioned, socially conscious design appropriates commercial design methods to talk in the same visual language as would be comprehensible to the wider audience (e.g. PCC's use of corporate image formats developed by San Francisco's Media Centre.) The opposite would also apply to commercial design as some products which would prefer a natural non-corporate look.

> "The difference between many of the purposeful, professionally designed pieces and their amateurishly designed counterparts is that they, the former, will usually have more authority if not visual appeal, then the casually produced one." (McQuistan, 1993, p 60).

Commercial design is clearly briefed by its client on the make-up of the target audience and the success of the commercial design will be judged on influencing the needs, wants and desires of the audience so that they buy the product. Socially conscious design is also briefed by it's client about the target audience and the function the design material is required to perform. The purpose of socially conscious design is to engage and communicate with a critical mass who can

influence debate and discourse. In socially conscious design the critical mass may see the material and agree or disagree with it - creating conversation around the topic which, in itself, passes along the information.

In conclusion, one point arising in the relationship with the audience is a concern for professional and social responsibility that includes ethics. No matter what perspective or tradition the designer subscribes to, an ethical sensitivity remains a key ingredient of good design. Socially conscious designers like PCC still argue that "there is very little in the commercial world which is ethical and there for the right reasons".

Conclusion

This study has examined two divergent traditions within graphic design: commercial and socially conscious design. The study provided a presentation of the contexts in which these have developed and raised a whole range of fundamental questions that challenge graphic designers to articulate their position in the world of culture and society.

In its examination of both traditions this study implicitly does not suggest that there is a comparison of like with like. Obviously, commercial design is a huge multi-million pound industry in comparison to social conscious design.

However, the study makes a case for a convergence between both.

In terms of whether each tradition can converge, it is argued that both are challenged by ethical responsibility and sensitivity.

At this moment, moving towards the end of the century and with the possibility of a new surge of creativity that the new millennium offers a decisive approach to finding a balance will give birth of a new culture to which we as graphic designers contribute. Graphic design has a part to play in creating a visual culture that empowers and enlightens.

THE MANIFESTO

'First Things First' January, 1964

"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, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodourants, 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 purposes which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached saturation point at which the high pitched scream of the consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skills 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 can 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. 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 students and others who may be interested."_____

Edward Wright,
Geoffery White,
William Slack,
Caroline Rawlence,
Ian McLaren,
Sam Lambert,
Ivor Kamlish,
Gerald Jones,
Bernard Higton,
Brian Grimbly,
John Garner,
Ken Garland,
Anthony Frosburg,
Robin Fior,
Germano Facetti,
Ivan Dodd,
Harriet Crowther,
Anthony Clift,
Gerry Cinamon,
Robert Chapman,
Ray Carpenter,
Ken Briggs.

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