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Architecture & Design versus Consumerism

how design activism confronts growth

ANN THORPE

Architecture and Design versus Consumerism

Packed with examples and illustrations, this book sets an agenda for how architecture and design can help us transition from a system that prioritizes consumerism and economic growth to a system that addresses real wellbeing. The first chapters explore how economic growth and consumerism shape and are shaped by the professions of architecture, product, and landscape design and describe four central challenges of consumerism that designers are already addressing. The book investigates metrics designers can use to measure wellbeing, instead of simply measuring economic growth. The second half of the book explores how design activism works and its connection to growth and consumerist issues. These chapters examine financing of activist practices, highlight five specific methods that designers use in calling for social change, and investigate the power of these methods. The book closes with a speculative chapter about what design's role might be in a "post-growth" society.

Ann Thorpe thinks, writes and speaks on how architects and designers can be better change agents for the common good. Her experience includes work with nonprofit groups, government agencies, corporations, and academia. Most recently she taught at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. She holds degrees from Stanford University, University of California Berkeley, and the Open University.

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN VERSUS CONSUMERISM

How Design Activism Confronts Growth

Ann Thorpe

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To my mother, Lynn

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Preface

"IKEA 'increasingly concerned' about Iran's nuclear program".

This headline gave me pause, until I realized that I had misread it. IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency is concerned, not IKEA.

Few people would disagree that we need massive political and economic changes to address challenges such as climate stability, inequality, or human health; but the incongruous IKEA headline conveys many of the real limitations of trying to solve these problems primarily in a business context. To what extent can any business, even if it were concerned, really bring about social or political change in the public interest?

Yet in terms of design, it feels as though we have been hesitant to explore the real political roots of activism and its context of social movements. Most designers are steeped in the marketplace. In addition, it's hard to link the systemic and sometimes abstract problems of consumerism and growth to daily activities. We're all so deep inside the system it's hard to see a way out. Meanwhile the rise of "social innovation" and "social enterprise" seems to offer designers the best of business and activism combined, without the hassle of politics. But there's no getting around the fact that confronting the economic system and engaging constructively in politics are central to design activism.

This book arises from a series of investigations over a number of years that started with sustainable design, progressed through design for sustainable consumption and arrived at the politics of design activism. My first book, *The Designer's Atlas of Sustainability*, includes a large section on the economic aspects of sustainable design, but it skirts overt politics. In an article for *Design Issues*, "Design's Role in Sustainable Consumption", I charted the environmental, psychological and sociological issues of consumption in terms of design.

As more of my architecture students wanted to take on the topic of sustainable consumption, I realized there was little material that dealt with the topic in terms of architecture and design. A common problem I found with the available sources was that they were either over-focused on technological solutions or promoted a simplistic transformational role for design without providing any real understanding of the systemic barriers within the economic system. The argument was for architects and designers to simply take on transformational roles because they should.

This argument is typically supported by design briefs, case studies and competition entries that all seem to say, "Come on, just do it!" Yet outside of the one studio or class that investigates "sustainability," students are often immersed in the business context for design. Students are groomed for conventional market expansion roles through standard portfolio development, final year shows and "design management" modules. Individual practitioners and researchers may meet at conferences to examine inspiring activist case studies and assemble systemic and necessary transdisciplinary approaches, only to return to institutions (private practice or universities) that reward siloed expertise, profitability and disciplinary purity.

The language of positive, easy opportunity ("10 simple ways to…") and moral exhortations ("just do it") are now sometimes concluded with the suggestion that, oh yes, architecture and design must also be "more political." But there is rarely any investigation of what this means in terms of design skills, training and practice.

Alongside this disciplinary situation, over the years I have observed the cultural and infrastructural variations in consumerism first hand. Although I hail from the US (a native of the Pacific Northwest), I have spent the past decade living in Europe (England). I am also connected to Scandinavia through blood relations (Sweden) and marriage (Denmark). I lived in India for nearly a year during graduate school.

Two examples, from urban travel and laundry, begin to suggest the complexity of the consumerism problem. In my suburban London neighborhood, most people have their washing machines under the counter in the kitchen and few people own driers. Smaller houses here are without the "utility rooms" that are found in many US homes; drying racks are moved around inside (by the radiator) or outside as the weather permits. If a household has a dryer, it is often a combined unit that both washes and dries. Moreover, here the norm is for front-loading horizontal axis washers (remember, they are under the counter), which are more efficient than the top-loading, vertical axis washers that are common in the US.

People tend to drive much smaller cars here, including "smart cars," than in the US, since fuel prices are very high and the roads and parking spaces are smaller. By contrast, my experience in the Pacific Northwest is that people try to travel more cleanly by driving a hybrid gasoline/electric car. According to hybridcars.com, the Seattle metropolitan area ranks ninth in the US for the highest hybrid sales, and on a vehicles/capita measure, neighboring Portland, Oregon ranks the highest in the nation for hybrid popularity.

In London, travel behavior is further influenced by policy "sticks and carrots." Sticks include London's "congestion charge" for driving in the central city during the week, and carrots, such as its recent "hire-bike" scheme. Yet people are wary of bike riding in London because drivers aren't used to cyclists and perhaps there isn't a culture to cultivate or pass on cycling skills and smarts.

Meanwhile in Scandinavian countries like Denmark, that arguably have much worse weather but are of similar flatness to England, bike riding is much more prolific. According to the city of Copenhagen's "Bicycle Account 2008," in Copenhagen 36 percent of commuters travel by bike compared to less than 5 percent of London commuters who cycle (the UK's Office of National Statistics, 2011). London has relatively little bicycle infrastructure, whereas Copenhagen has a great deal—parking, lanes, education, signals, and even special bicycles. Families ride together on one bike the way they might ride together on one bike in India.

If we look at these examples through the lens of architecture and design, we see clearly how the design of housing (spaces for laundry-related tasks), stations, streets, vehicles (bikes and cars), and services (hire schemes) influence patterns of consumption, and we could easily have added the design of clothing, bags and luggage (for commuter cycling) or the design of laundry machines and tools (such as drying racks).

Yet these examples also begin to suggest how politics, in the form of policy, and cultural patterns concerning everyday practices such as laundry and cycling, have an equally large influence on consumption. Transforming policies and cultural practices are political challenges, perhaps more so than technical ones. In certain ways we already have many of the technologies we need to transform our economy; we just don't have the political and social skills to apply them.

Sometime during my musings on consumerism and design, Tim Jackson and Peter Victor each published their accounts of a steady state economy. They argue that perpetual, consumerist economic growth is not the only basis for stability, and the economy doesn't have to either spiral upwards or downwards

— it could exist in a constructive steady state. Some people describe this as a post-growth economy. After undertaking a large study of design activism, I started to see how these pieces were fitting together—design, activism, and the problems of consumerism and economic growth.

For some, social movement activism may connote the past, 1960s-era protest, but over the past decade activism has been on the rise in a whole range of areas such as alter globalization, peace, poverty and climate. During the course of writing this book an amazing string of events unfolded across the world, putting a brighter spotlight on social movement activism. For example, the "Arab Spring" saw collective action bring down governments in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, with ongoing uprisings in Syria and other Middle Eastern countries.

Financial troubles prompted one of the world's wealthiest men, Warren Buffet, to start a campaign to increase the tax level on the super-rich. High unemployment, especially among young people and the few remaining workers with decent benefits (public sector employees), is causing waves of social unrest across the US and Europe as most people seem to be in a race to the bottom. Occupy Wall Street has appeared as a new kind of "movement" in the US. In London we had urban unrest in August 2011 dubbed the "because I'm worth it" riots, which many commentators tied to pervasive consumerist ideals that remain severely out of reach for an increasingly large segment of society.

Financial troubles and consumerism continue to blind us to real value, activism is alive and well, and designers are jumping into that fray. These are big topics that haven't often been discussed together before, making this book more like a draft than a polished argument. In that spirit it offers an initial draft of some tools for practice along with some possible agenda items for design activism in the context of consumerism and economic growth. I look forward to seeing how these either get polished further or redrafted, once they're out in the world.

Ann Thorpe
London, November 2011

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various research questions. These lists are PhD Design, Stanford Design Alumni, Contentious Politics (AMSOC) and, most recently, BESTS (Built Environment and STS). Flickr users generously came to my rescue with a number of diverse images from generic suburban sprawl to specific buildings or landscapes.

I also have to admit that twitter alerts have more than once put me on to useful sources (@atlasann). Writing for and getting responses to my blog, (DesignActivism.net) has also been very helpful and I thank my readers for that.

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The section entitled 'Activism framed in design terms' in Chapter 5 is taken from a forthcoming journal article entitled 'Defining Design as Activism'.

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Chapter 1

Design activism, movement society and a post-growth scenario

INTRODUCTION

Much design activist work, whether implicitly or explicitly, confronts problems that result from consumerism and economic growth. This is an underlying premise for the book, which connects social change through design activism to the broad idea that we need to move away from consumerism and growth as a central organizing principle in society. Although growth and consumerism are not, perhaps, the root of every social or environmental problem, there is arguably no problem that they don't exacerbate.

Still, a number of architects and designers may not see a way for their work to perform as activism, or to confront consumerism. They may think of their social design work in ethical rather than activist terms, or they may downplay any activist connotations. The chapters ahead attempt to show that most social or public interest design work can usefully be understood in political activist terms, whether the politics are cultural, spatial or governmental. Similarly, design activists may not see clear or "actionable" connections between their specific issues and consumerism and growth. For this reason the book aims to provide a better understanding of how design activism works, and to articulate how it is connected to consumerism and growth.

Activism, consumerism and growth are not the only framework for considering how design can contribute to solving many of society's pressing problems. However, this book argues that this framework is a very useful and underexplored way that architects and designers can confront growth. The book sets out to explore and illustrate this usefulness, particularly through the context of social movements.

The history of social movements is one of developing methods for building power to bring about change in situations where those who seek change are

The history of social movements African American civil rights marchers in 1963. Photo Warren K. Leffler, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

poorly resourced and lack conventional forms of power. Further, political scientists and sociologists have suggested that social movement activity is an accepted and even significant means of influencing political process and change; in that sense many western democracies have become "movement societies."[1]

To make the argument that the activism/consumerism/design framework is useful, this book is located at the nexus of three strands of thought. The first is design, the second is social change, and the third is consumerism and economic growth. Each of these are large areas, necessarily making the book more akin to a sketch than a tightly specified technical drawing, more akin to Handvetica than Helvetica, more prototype than finished structure. As a prototype framework for the issues, it attempts to lay out some terms for debate, put some topics and questions on the agenda, and frame design activism in post-growth terms.

A key concern in the book is to answer the question for designers: "What can I do about consumerism and growth?" For so long design has been connected to consumerism as one of its key engines. The challenge now is to link the broad, often abstract ideas about economic growth and its problems (such as climate stability) to methods of change that are relevant to architecture and

design. The book does this in eight chapters. This first chapter clarifies terms and situates the book within the areas of design, social change and economics. It explores some of the tensions inherent in design activism.

The argument of the book, its exploration and illustration of the usefulness of an activism/consumerism/design framework, then comprises several parts. Chapter 2 outlines the systemic issues of consumerism and growth, noting how these pressures both shape and are shaped by design. This chapter argues that we can understand the relatively abstract problems of consumerism and economic growth in terms of four specific challenges.

Chapter 3 uses the articulation of these challenges to link issues of consumerism and growth to project-level design activism. This chapter also reviews the problem of how we measure the results of activist work, particularly through social metrics. Currently there are no systematic ways of measuring social value, which informs the broader fact that there is as yet no blueprint for a sustainable economy. Instead, the chapter argues, activists are engaged in a number of political struggles across disciplines that converge on the four challenges we have identified.

Chapter 4 picks up on some of the broader issues of a sustainable economy, reviewing efforts to normalize the inclusion of social values through market mechanisms. The chapter argues that, alongside the market, there is probably a need for other institutions of value creation and exchange that are recognized, supported and protected. The chapter closes with a review of how design activist practices are financing their work against the odds—how they fund work that appears to "soak up" income without increasing economic growth.

Chapter 5 presents the classic activist methods for seeking change and, using a range of design examples, argues that these methods also usefully describe design activism. The methods such as organizing, advocacy and mobilization shine a useful light on design activism.

Chapter 6 investigates the power dynamics underlying activist methods. The chapter then considers the capacities that activists, typically working on low budgets, have to build power. These capacities include disruption, framing and targeting. The chapter argues that these capacities also help us describe design activism's capacities to build power for change.

Chapter 7 jumps to a future point in time and speculates on a post-growth scenario. In this scenario new organizing principles of health, infrastructure and social capital replace the old organizing principles of consumerism and economic growth. Chapter 8 offers a brief conclusion.

The book is best read sequentially, since examples and concepts explained in earlier chapters are used to illustrate points in later chapters. Next we turn to the tasks of this chapter, including defining some terms, situating the book within the topic areas and examining some tensions inherent in design activism.

WHAT IS ACTIVISM?

Activism involves taking action that calls for change on behalf of a wronged, excluded or neglected group (or issue)—it is driven by the identification of a wrongdoing or problem that needs changing.[2] Typically operating on low budgets, activism is also known for its unconventional political approaches, particularly collective action and loose coordination through social movements.

Sociologist Tim Jordan describes activism as a moral undertaking because it seeks to put forward a vision for a better society.[3] This poses a question. Since most design seeks to improve the conditions of life for people, isn't most of design, in some senses, activism? The view that most design *is* activism is sometimes bolstered by the idea that architecture, in particular, has long been influenced by arts and intellectual movements, such as modernism, that contain ideas about a better society.

Although these movements had some broad proposals for how society should be organized, they were also closely bound to commerce and aesthetics.[4] Consider the contrast between the idea of "modernism" and a particular instance of activism. Modernism's idea was that people could be made more equal and society made more fair through "truthful forms" in buildings and objects that united workers, designers and users. Contrast that with the bus boycott in 1950s America through which blacks demanded an end to segregated seating on buses.[5] The former is an abstract ideology whereas the latter is targeted activism.

Although "good" design does typically work to bring about change, in its dominant forms, good design (usable, profitable, beautiful, meaningful) doesn't usually constitute activism on behalf of excluded or neglected groups. Rather, it constitutes general improvements to daily life that are most often gained through private consumption, accessed according to the consumer's ability to pay.

WHAT SHOULD WE CHANGE?

It is useful to be more specific about the range of neglected or excluded groups and issues for which we undertake activism. Although activism can be

regressive and champion issues such as white supremacy or religious fundamentalism, the focus of this book is on progressive activism that falls broadly within the framework of sustainable development. Pressing issues in this view include harmful degradation of the natural environment, gross and rising income inequality within and among countries, and vulnerability of many diverse cultures and a range of human rights to a commercial monoculture. (These issues are summarized in Figure 1.1). Most of the problems within these broad categories are linked in some way to constant pressure for economic growth driven by consumerism.

Currently our economy must either continue spiraling upward, with growth, or crash downward if growth fails. All the social and environmental problems of growth, in this view, are a necessary cost of necessary growth; but recently economists have made a startling suggestion: we could redesign our economy for a post-growth era. The economy wouldn't have to either spiral up or down; instead we could thrive in a steady state, a state that would allow us to improve real well-being by rebalancing spending and costs.

The past two decades have indicated that architects and designers want more social and environmental relevance in bringing about change. For example, architect Hashim Sarkis comments:

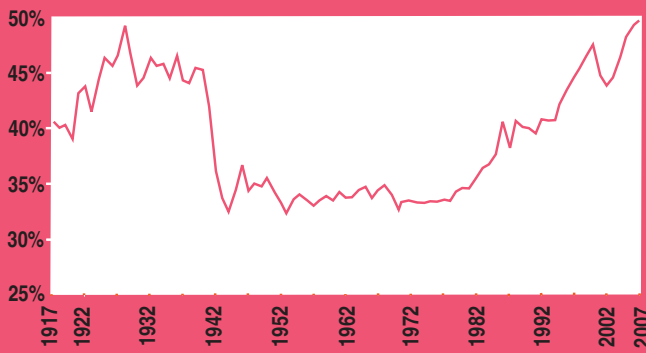
> Calls for alternative practices in architecture have multiplied in the past few years, appearing to rise in unison from publications across academia and the profession. … Additionally, experimental and integrated practices, previously relegated to a marginal position, are appearing more frequently in lecture circles, professional workshops, and competition highlights.[6]

Designers have been asking if they are contributing enough to a wide range of important issues such as climate change, poverty, humanitarian aid, education or health, to name a few. But seen in the light of society's singular objective of economic growth, these issues are all cost and no profit. They don't contribute to economic growth. Sure, they may contribute to economic growth very indirectly and over the very long term, but this contribution is all too easily brushed aside in quarterly growth reports and short-term re-election campaigns.

Money and investment continue to flood into economic growth initiatives—most driven by consumerism—while only trickling into vital social and environmental agendas. In this context designers who seek to be change agents must work under conditions of dwindling resources (especially money) to build power to bring about change. It turns out that the tools to do this have long been around in the social movement arena.

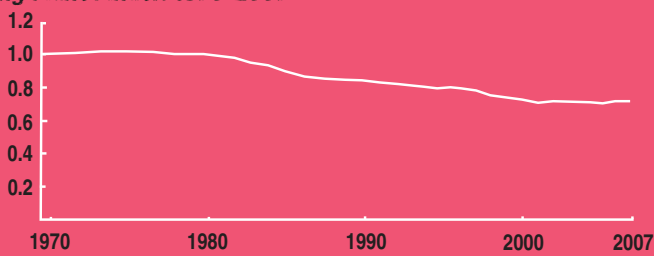
Figure 1.1 Pressing issues for activism

1a Share of total income going to Top 10%, 1917-2007



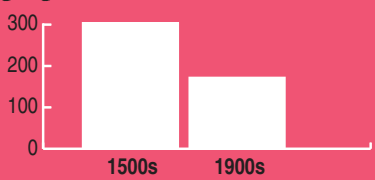
Studies of tax data in the United States show that the share of total income going to top income groups rose dramatically in recent decades.

1b Living Planet Index 1970-2007



The index shows roughly 30 percent decline based on trends in 7,953 populations of 2,544 mammal, bird, reptile, fish, and amphibian species.

1c Language Loss in North America



The pace of language loss is increasing. Estimates are that half of the world's more than 6,000 languages will be extinct by the end of this century.

Sources: 1a Anthony B. Atkinson, Thomas Piketty, and Emmanuel Saez, "Top Incomes in the Long Run of History", *Journal of Economic Literature* 2011, 49:1, 3–71. 1b Duncan Pollard (ed.) *Living Planet Report 2010* (WWF in conjunction with Zoological Society of London and Global Footprint Network; Gland, Switzerland, 2010), 20. 1c Jack Hitt, "Say No More", The New York *Times*, February 29, 2004.

SITUATING THE TOPIC

This book takes an interdisciplinary view, looking at design, economics and the politics of social change. Recognizing that each of these is a large area in itself, we begin by situating the book within each of these topics.

Design

In situating the topic of design activism within the broader field of design, it is perhaps useful to consider two views. The first is a view from within design. This interior view includes the discussions designers have about their own profession, academic systems and practice. The second view is of design from outside itself.

The first point of order is to discuss the scope of design covered in this book. Design here is anchored *primarily* to physical, material and visual aspects of the built and manufactured environment. This is not an assertion that design's manifestation is or should be primarily through the production of stuff. Clearly there are a number of interesting approaches to design that focus on service and process design.[7] But physicality and spatiality give the book a specific and useful niche, and allow for more explicit analysis of levers for change. Although the broad topics of communication and interaction design, what might formerly have been thought of as graphic design, are not entirely excluded, neither are they a focus.

The scope of the built and manufactured environment, which reasonably contains architecture, product and landscape design, may even seem too broad. But examination of many cases of design activism shows that there is fluidity across these disciplines.[8] Architects take on product design; product designers create portable structures; landscape designers develop outdoor furniture. Broad spatial and material aspects of design activism provide a good starting point and help focus arguments and discussion.

Within design

In the first view, the largest practical context for design is commerce. For this reason, one prominent strand of design activism focuses on making the business case for social and environmental design. Many readers will be familiar with the efforts of companies, such as Interface, Patagonia, and even Walmart, to pursue a triple bottom line that includes social and environmental "returns" as well as economic ones.[9] These companies have often pursued their objectives through the lens of design—through structures, products and design processes.

Alongside the business context, design activism also arises in nonprofit groups as well as public, or government, arenas. Architecture for Humanity, Design

Corps or the Living Future Institute are examples of nonprofit organizations pursuing social and environmental work through architecture and design. In the government arena, cities and states have developed a range of "demonstration buildings", such as Chicago city hall's green roof or the Lewis and Clark state offices, a LEED platinum building that houses the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

The academic context is also important for design activism. Many university design-build studios pursue social design work. Some academic work is led by faculty, such as Politecnico Milan's establishment of the DESIS network (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability), and some is led by students, such as the recent Treads project bringing shoe design to an inner Cincinnati school.[10]

As these examples suggest, the work of design activists cuts across a wide swathe of issues. The design activism timeline shown in Figure 1.2 gives an indication of the range of issues for design activism stretching back to the 1930s and 1940s, as well as the changing character of activity over the past few decades.

Lewis and Clark State Office Building designed by BNIM Architects. Photo Scott Myers, courtesy of Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Figure 1.2 Design activism timeline

1930s & 40s

housing and furniture
- Bauhaus and the social potential of design
- Buckminster Fuller dymaxion car and house
- R.M. Schindler's shelters: low cost, pre-fabricated housing

1950s

housing
- Buckminster Fuller geodesic domes
- Walter Segal self build system

accessibility
- "barrier free" movement (forerunner to universal design) for disabled veterans

1960s

counterculture

1960s design groups: Situationists International, Superstudio, etc.

1966 Drop City community founded

1968 Whole Earth Catalog, Stewart Brand

environment

1969 **Design with Nature** by Ian McHarg

1969 Sym van der Ryn establishes Ecological Design Institute

community design & appropriate tech

1961 First American Barrier Free Design standard is published

1961 Lawrence Halprin begins planning the Sea Ranch community, California

1962, Findhorn Foundation created by Eileen Caddy, Peter Caddy and Dorothy Maclean in Scotland

1965 Intermediate Technology Development Group (Appropriate Technology) founded

1968-69 Community Design Center of Minnesota founded 1969, Los Angeles Community Design Center founded 1968

1970s

design for development/humanitarian

1971 **Design for the Real World** by Victor Papanek

1972 Nathan Shapira develops exhibition on design for low income economies

1976 Habitat for Humanity founded

1977 Association for Community Design founded

1979 Ahmedabad Declaration on Industrial Design for Development issued

enviroment

1970s Co-evolution Quarterly began

1970 Cosanti Foundation initiated by Paolo Soleri began building Arcosanti, an experimental town (ongoing)

1971 New Alchemy Institute founded by John Todd, Nancy Jack Todd, and William McLarney (operational until 1991)

1973 American Institute of Architects Energy committee founded

1973 Centre for Alternative Technology founded (Wales) by Gerard Morgan-Grenville

1975 Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems established by Pliny Fisk III and Gail D. A. Vittori

1972 Earthship biotecture's Thumb House, completed by Michael Reynolds

1975 construction begins on Village Homes, with principal designer Mike Corbett

1977 **Soft Energy Paths** by Amory Lovins

1977 **A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction** by Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein

1979 **Passive Solar Energy Book** by Ed Mazria

diversity: religion

1977 Aga Khan award established for architecture recognizing good design in Islamic contexts (ongoing)

1980s

social responsibility

1981 Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility founded

1987 Homeless Vehicle Project, Krzysztof Wodiczko design collaboration with homeless people to develop a cart-like shelter/vehicle (through 1989)

environment

1981 Structural failure at a major US hotel prompts the conversion of Bob Berkibile to one of the first sustainable design champions in architecture

1982 Founding of the Rocky Mountain Institute by Amory and Hunter Lovins

feminism

1984 **Redesigning the American Dream: Gender, Housing, and Family Life**, by Dolores Hayden

1990s

humanitarian

1999 Architecture for Humanity founded by Cameron Sinclair and Kate Stohr

1999 Architects without Frontiers, founded by Esther Charlesworth, Garry Ormston and Beau Beza

affordability/accessibility & diversity

1993 Rural Studio founded by Samuel Mockbee and Dennis K. Ruth at Auburn University in Alabama, design focusing on poor local communities

1993 Congress for the New Urbanism established

1994 Sphere Magazine begins publication by World Studio (through 2003)

1995 Merrima Aboriginal Design Unit established within the Australian government's Department of Public Works, Sydney

1999 Design Corps founded by Bryan Bell, focusing on US community focus, often rural or migrant groups

1999 The Glass-House Trust begins evolving into The Glass-House Community Led Design in 2006, UK

environment

1990 A Scandinavian Design Council Manifesto issued on Nature, Ecology, and Human Needs for the Future

1990 formation of the AIA Committee on the Environment

1991 Ecodesign Foundation incorporated, Australia for re-creation for ecological and social sustainment

1992 The Hannover Principles developed by William McDonough

1993 founding of the US Green Building Council

1993 **Design for Society**, critiques of consumerist design by Nigel Whitely

1994 **Remakings: Ecology, Design, Philosophy** by Tony Fry

1996 **Ecological Design** by Sim van Der Ryn and Stewart Cowan

1997 continued formalization of eco design with publications such as John Gertsakis, Helen Lewis, and Chris Ryan **A Guide to EcoReDesign**, Han Brezet and C. van Hemel's **Ecodesign: A Promising Approach to Sustainable Production and Consumption**, and Ken Yeang's **The Skyscraper: Bioclimatically Considered**

1996-97 exhibitions of recycled material such as "Re- Materialize" and "Hello Again"

1999 **Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution** by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins

feminism

1992 Women in Design section founded, IDSA (Industrial Designers Society of America)

1999 **Design and Feminism** Joan Rothschild

1996 **Architecture and Feminism**, Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze and Carol Henderson, eds.

alternative education

1996 Ecosa Institute founded by Antony Brown

2000-2011

humanitarian (becoming social design or design for social impact)

2001 Designers without Borders founded as a US-Ugandan organization to assist with communication design

2001 Designers without Borders (Norway) founded by the Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway and the office of Peter Opsvik, to deploy design as a development tool

2002 Social Design Notes website begins
2003 Design that Matters founded by Timothy Prestero to design new products and services for the poor in developing countries
2004 Article 25 (formerly Architects for Aid) founded by Maxwell Hutchinson and Victoria Harris
2007 MASS founded by Michael Murphy and Alan Ricks, for well built environments to empower in developing economies
2008 Socialdesign "we cannot not change the world," website launched to foster discussion on social design
2008 Project H Design founded by Emily Pilloton to use design for positive transformation of communities
2008 Change Observer blog initiated following on Rockefeller Bellagio conference on design for social impact
2009 Design Impact and Fellows
2008 Rockefeller Foundation publishes Design for Social Impact by IDEO
2009 Human Centered Design Toolkit by IDEO, bringing innovation to the base of the pyramid
2009 Design Ignites Change programs on social design for high schools and colleges
2009 Design with Africa grows out of the Network of Africa Designers (founded 1999)
2009 Design for Dictators website founded offering fictional products for dictators
2010 IDEO.org, social design offshoot from IDEO
2011 The Policy Lab founded, design application to policy for peace, disarmament, conflict resolution and other international policy

accessible/public interest/diversity

2002 Public Architecture founded by John Peterson for wider positive social impact in the local community
2002 UK Design Council begins work on design-led solutions to social problems
2004 [Re]design founded by Sarah Johnson for sustainable design, making and learning, UK
2005 the 1%, Public Architecture's initiative to professionalize pro bono work
2005 University of California Berkeley, College of Environmental Design publishes Frameworks, themed on Design Activism Issue 1 Spring 2005
2005 SEED (Social Economic Environmental Design)
2007 INDIGO, the International Indigenous Design Network, forms out of projects at Monash University, Australia
2008 SEED Foundation social enterprise and design, UK
2008 **Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism** edited by Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford
2009 **Design Activism: Beautiful Strangeness for Sustainable World** by Alistair Fuad-Luke
2009 Design for America, extra-curricular student-led studios creating local and social impact through interdisciplinary design
2010 Community Oriented Design (CO Design) founded by Lucinda Hartley, Australia, nonprofit design services to disadvantaged communities
2011 International Network of Indigenous Architects founded

prizes and conferences

2000 Rose Architectural Fellowships introduced (after Frederick P. Rose), three-year partnerships between emerging architects and community-based organizations
2000 Structures for Inclusion 1 conference organized by Design Corps
2006 "ecodesign" category added to IDSA / BusinessWeek IDEA awards program
2007 The Buckminster Fuller Challenge for $100,000
2008 Curry Stone Prize, for design emphasizing social good, reaching wider segments of society, for $100,000
2008 Ulm Foundation (Germany) international competition "Designing Politics-the Politics of Design" to investigate the social responsibility of designers to promote democratic quality of design
2008 A Better World by Design Conference initiated
2008 Rockefeller Bellagio conference on design for social impact