certifyD: establishing values through professional certification
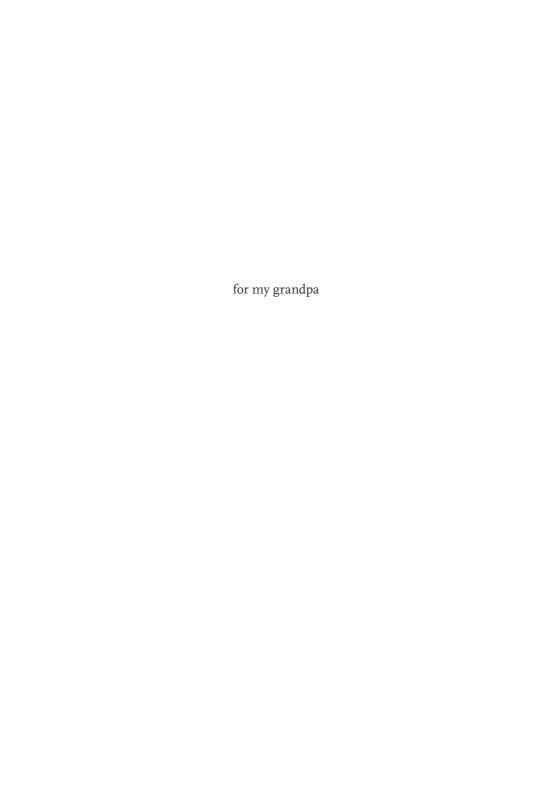
certifyD : establishing values through professional certification

a graduate thesis by : Esteban Pérez-Hemminger

Received and Approved

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Graham Hanson, *Thesis Advisor*   Date

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Jeff Bellantoni, *Chairperson*   Date

for my grandpa

: CONTENTS

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"At a certain level of awareness all creative workers gain in humility as their knowledge develops, and will wish frequently to return to their origins for refreshment of the spirit; to ask yet again who they are, what they could or should be doing, and why."

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Norman Potter
WHAT IS A DESIGNER: THINGS, PLACES, MESSAGES (1969)

Accreditation or certification is a journey and not a destination. It is about the continuous nurturing and raising of our professional design quality, the establishment and enforcement of ethical and responsible professional design practice, and the ongoing redefining of a designer's relationship with the larger community by holding our design profession, individually and collectively, accountable and ensuring the short and long-term wellbeing of our society, locally, nationally and globally.

For professional certification to be effective, it must include a process that results in a designation that is recognized by the public, especially the appropriate government bodies. A workable and effective certification process and format must have a clear vision as its guiding light, and needs to work with the existing culture in design and design education, the requirements of government, and the available legal, educational, business and social infrastructures.

Design certification is neither the goal nor the answer, and no model will be perfect. It is only a part of our collective creative adventure in the exploration of how we can become better designers. Certification is a *direction* for our next generation.

ALBERT NG, O. ONT.
Design Professor
Past Vice-President,
International Council of Graphic Design Associations : ICOGRADA
Founding President,
The Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario : RGD

8   The introduction of the desktop computer in the 1980s, and the resulting availability of design software and template-based platforms have enabled any computer-savvy individual to call him or herself a designer. In the 1990s, the popularity of the DIY culture further debilitated the notion of the professional designer as an educated and experienced individual. Today, the title *graphic designer*, rather than being understood and respected, has become devalued and insignificant; the tools we use, not the knowledge or expertise we possess, have unfavorably defined our profession. Design's focus on problem-solving, creative-thinking and its obligation to society has been displaced as a needless expendability by the prevalent notion that "anyone can do it."

As a discipline, graphic design lacks a system of standards to objectively measure the educational formation, business competency and ethical standards followed by all practitioners. The absence of a cohesive structure that informs and guides our work has created a disproportionate gap between knowledge, skill and commitment. It is paramount that we redefine the purpose of our field, delineating the basic qualifications needed for professional practice and reinforcing our relationship with society. Requiring certification for designers would create a standardized structure, a system of guidelines for young designers to follow, a measure of accountability among practitioners and a tool for clients to identify designers of parallel beliefs and vision. Graphic design, not as a narrow computer-centered discipline, but as a responsible Communications Design profession would then become a viable instrument for solving the social, economic and environmental problems we face today.

: INTRODUCTION

"The design profession, emerging from a long period of adolescence, seems now to be wavering...the designer – just as much as the scientist, the engineer, the doctor, or the teacher – has an important part to play. After all, nobody knows better than they do what as a profession they have to offer."

Herbert Spencer

For the sake of simplification, I will refer to the fields of Visual Communications and Communications Design, with the more familiar term: Graphic Design. Unless specified otherwise, men and women are equally included in any reference of "him," "he" or "the designer."

A thesis, regardless of the field, can be an intimidating endeavour. It can define our personal and professional path with it's lingering feeling of inevitable success or failure. After years of research and struggle, it is difficult to identify the precise moment this thesis came into existence, that evasive "a-ha" moment we all talk about. Although the past looks a bit blurred, I have identified certain experiences that ignited my pursuit to find valid solutions to the questions nobody ever answered. Those situations led me to scrutinize my place within design, questioning the future role of education and its relationship with the practice.

After receiving degrees in Communications and in Graphic Design, I recognized there was still an infinite amount of knowledge to acquire in order to become the designer I aspired to be. In 2010, with a fresh hunger for personal and professional growth, I began graduate studies at Pratt Institute's Communications Design program. Here I studied design principles, typography, history and visual perception, experiencing processes different from the ones of my undergraduate years. I quickly realized that software training had not prepared me for the critical analysis that design thinking required; that trying to stay technically up-to-date and having an attractive portfolio were not the way to remain relevant or ensure professional success. For me it was now evident that the backbone

12 and essence of graphic design is not in computer skills, but in design knowledge.

In graduate school I have learned to define problems, think systematically and understand that the audience is the essence to everything we do. Reading about the history of design and it's influence on the social, economic and political realities of its time, made me open to the power achievable through conscious design thinking; power that can be used for the well-being or the detriment of society. This newfound understanding of design's potential intensified both my quest to define the term "designer" and my commitment to legitimizing the profession through a system of accountability and guidelines.

This graduate thesis – a culmination of two years of study – intends to confront and discuss the superfluous perception of graphic design, and question why our field lacks the credibility and validity that other professions, creatively-oriented or not, have already achieved. Although it is impossible to produce a universally agreed-upon definition of what design does and does not mean, it is clear that our primary concern surpasses aesthetics and software proficiency. The pervasive notion that "good design" is about "cool" looks, market-profit and done by anyone with access to a computer, diminishes the value of a designer's work and diverts our attention from design's reason for being: responsible thinking.

In 1946, Walter P. Paepcke suggested that the designer "has within him the undying desire to create, to contribute something to the

world, to leave his mark upon society; [and] has the necessity to earn and provide a living for himself and his family."[1] Designers should not have to choose between responsible action and economic sufficiency. Responsible design offers limitless possibilities to impact our connected world. The essence of the 21st century graphic designer should shift to principles, reason and purpose, capacities that no computer can match. Simultaneously, design should focus on the needs of our troubled world: ethics, social commitment, professional accountability and environmental responsibility. Ultimately striving away from commercial exploitation, obsolescence and the pointless argument of good vs. bad design.

After speaking with many professionals, writers, professors and students – from both design and non-design fields – the discrepancy between professional involvement, academic preparation and public perception of our industry became evident. Consequently, I present a singular notion. Instead of resting on our laurels – complaining about the lack of public appreciation and the pursuit of individual recognition – we need to establish a road map defining the requirements one needs to fulfill in order to become a designer with a capital D[2], not just a technician, but a rounded, committed and responsible thinker. Opposing views abound among the many conversations I have had in past years. Some educators welcome the notion of building certification requirements into their educational systems, better preparing their students for immediate professional practice, while others are not in favor of it. Marketing and recruiting professionals have varied opinions on the relevance of certification. Rita Sue Siegel, a New-York based professional recruiter,

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clarifies that "No client or candidate has ever asked me if I have a license to do my work...My overall opinion of certification for graphic designers is: who is it protecting and from what?" On the other side, Alison Hau, Public Relations Manager at The Creative Group expresses the validity of including the recruiting and placement industry in any certification discussion.

Designers' perspectives are as varied as can be. Many established designers are apprehensive of the consequences new parameters can have on the success of their business – they seem reluctant to change the status-quo, especially during the current economic climate. One exception comes from Arem Duplessis, Design Director at The New York Times Magazine. He admitted that "the only way to differentiate between professionals and novices is to accredit graphic design. A lot of people are naive in terms of what we do and having a certification, something that you have to earn, would help. I would support mandatory certification." Younger designers and students are more inclined to ask questions and welcome an open discussion of the benefits and consequences that certification could bring. This latter group welcomes change in favor of preserving our profession, building upon its history and transforming it into something substantial and meaningful.

I am confident that ethics and accountability should be the basis of the graphic design profession of tomorrow, as they are the two principles common to every professional field. Designer and writer Mischa Black said it best when she described professionalism as "...the offering to the public of a special skill...in which both the

experience and established knowledge are of equal weight, while the person possessing the skill is bound both by an ethical code and may be accountable by law for a proper degree of skill in exercising this judgement."[3] These are two inseparable aspects that can lay the foundation for the future of graphic design.

Graphic design's foundation can be described as the merger of content and form, communicating messages through a visual vocabulary; converting constraint into opportunity. Yet, we often forget about the power we have to influence and manipulate the behavior and perception of our audience, which can range from a single person to millions of people across the globe. Herbert Spencer contributed that design "shapes the conscious – and the unconscious mind of the members of society...It enjoys more power – and has therefore much more responsibility – than is generally known."[4] Nonetheless, this level of responsibility is not currently acknowledged or fostered in our field, leaving us with a discrepancy between the knowledge needed to practice professionally and the knowledge required to practice our profession to its fullest potential. The question becomes clear: is graphic design a skill, a discipline, a craft or a valued profession?

My thesis proposes the establishment of a voluntary certification program in the USA. The program will be directed to graphic designers who wish to become involved to the fullest extent, establishing the highest level of accountability needed for the evolution of our profession. Certification can bridge the gap between design education's experimental focus, the needs of professional practice and

16   our growing social role. It can provide continuing programs that address the vital topics not taught in school or on the job. Being connected to the ongoing digital innovations will continue to be an important part of our work, yet it must not come to define who we are or what our role is. Remaining engaged with changing production techniques, renewable energy, environmentally-friendly resources, ethical standards and business practices, will enable us to develop and evolve alongside our profession.

The prevailing misconception that anyone can be entrusted with constructing messages of global reach and massive impact needs to be corrected. As Hungarian designer György Kepes offered: "to give functional design living meaning, we must concentrate on establishing a scale of values. And in the hierarchy of values, the human values should again regain priority."[5] Certification will be a catalyst that attests to the potential of design as a vehicle that benefits the whole, and is not simply a medium for obsolescence or for the desire for personal recognition. It can replace the notion that "pretty" portfolios are the only measure of a quality, experienced and devoted designer.

The design community thrives on the diverse perspectives, passionate beliefs and strongly-held opinions of its members, specially when dealing with the future of our field. Notwithstanding, this thesis is not intended as an infallible and fully objective dogma. It is the documented process of my inquiry into finding an appropriate solution to the inequalities permeating our field. Graphic design certification will not solve every problem or guarantee professional

perfection. However, it is an alternative path worthy of detailed inspection and unbiased perspectives. A voluntary certification program in the USA, like the ones in place in other parts of the world, can help to establish our profession by its very definition, as something done by "professionals." It can unify the worlds of education and business by fostering higher standards, informing clients and the public, while demanding from our audience the same respect and seriousness with which we approach our work. Canadian designer, author and ICOGRADA sustainability chair David Berman said it best: "certification is a force of good that is not exclusionary. It doesn't stop anyone from designing. It doesn't limit creativity. But it does recognize the fundamental role that designers now hold within society."[6] This thesis presents the notion of certification – not as a judge of aesthetics or style – but as a platform for cultivating and enduring professional evolution.

My aim is to reinvigorate this dialogue, to question previous stances and existing inclinations, and present a fresh notion of what is possible. After much introspection, becoming involved in an open discussion will further quench my thirst for answers and justification of my role within the present condition of our profession. In order to seriously consider this reality, we need to look at what has been done before and learn from the accomplishments and missteps of the past as we establish ways to substantiate and validate our field, as it rightfully deserves. This thesis is a journey with no clear end in sight, but with much to offer. I eagerly enter this contentious arena, filled with uncertainty and doubt and hope you come with an open mind and join the conversation.

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"Vigilance is needed not only in the spheres where we are vaguely aware of the intentional misuse and manipulation of words and ideas, as in political propaganda and the cheaper aspects of advertising. It is needed also in fields where we assume that we know what we are talking about, in our own profession."

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György Kepes
FUNCTION ON MODERN DESIGN (1949)

: HISTORICAL ASPECTS

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (19TH CENTURY)

Our profession has a profound history, yet compared to fields like painting, sculpture and architecture, it is still in an infant stage. What we now call graphic design, only became detached from Fine Arts during the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century; when advances in technology, transportation, agriculture and manufacturing transformed the world's population, commerce and social structure. The "revolution" was characterized by how the flourishing of industrial machinery coupled with an increased workforce enabled manufacturers to produce goods at higher volumes, with less time and effort than ever before. This changing panorama aided in the expansion and upbringing of the social middle class, as employment rose and disposable income became a reality. As a breadth of identical products became available in shops, from street vendors and at town fairs, differentiation became the key to ensure commercial success. Companies needed to set themselves, their products and services apart from those of their competitors and earn the trust of the new, eager-to-buy public. Thus, the efficiency of industrial production and the ample distribution of goods created the growing need to ramp up consumer demand. Through clever tactics and even unfounded claims, the impulse to buy was further stimulated via the most powerful human-made machine ever created: advertising.

Out of that need came the *applied artists*, skilled artisans and craftsmen (and women) responsible for the creation and production of visual means of promotion, sales, news and propaganda. Unlike traditional artists, they transformed products into trustworthy

22   brands, by establishing an emotional connection between company and consumer. In order to distinguish Fine Arts from Applied Arts, let us look at their specific objectives and audiences. The celebrated fine artist creates his work – through a journey of self-study, inspiration, creativity and experimentation – with the intention of expressing his deepest and most personal views, thoughts, beliefs and aspirations. The work is done by him, for him. The audience serves as spectator, witnessing the aftermath of ethereal creation. On the opposite side stands the applied artist, developing meaning through iconography, shapes, lettering and color. His purpose is to communicate a client's product, service or message to the specified audience, originating a conversation between corporations and the public. Publicity is his weapon of choice. Through the years, applied artists continued to use graphic elements and clever language to get the message across, becoming essential to the commercial process of the time. Gradually, a clear differentiation blossomed between the subjectivity of Fine Art and the practicality of *Applied*, *Deep*[7] or *Graphic Arts.*[8]

DESIGN AS INFLUENCE (20TH CENTURY)

In order to understand the psychological impact that we accept as fact in graphic design today, we must refer to the transcendental world events of the early 20th century. During times of political unrest and social revolt, numerous European artists started to notice the power of persuasion achievable through graphic communications. Through experimentation, artists embraced visual language as their medium for *constructing* a new world. The *avant-garde* movement that sprouted, harnessed radical ideals and non-conventional

aesthetic forms in favor of provoking controversy and thus, social change. Graphic art became a force capable of restructuring the political, economic and social conditions of the 1910–1920s. These techniques and visual structures later gave birth to the graphic design profession in the present form, even though the defining characteristics and social ideals were lost along the way. Every element in our modern toolkit – geometric forms, asymmetry, sans-serif typography, tension, collage, dynamic compositions and color theories – can be traced directly to the influence of these European *constructivists* and *modernists*. Nevertheless, their desire to establish a universal visual language, and thus a revitalized civilization, came to a halt with the onset of World War I.

In the outburst of ww1 both sides of the battle quickly learned to implement images and type as part of their arsenal. Graphic propaganda became paramount for strengthening public morale and rallying for government support. The visual campaigns that sprung up became imperative for spreading the political agenda of each country and gaining the public's favor.

As the war progressed, soldiers, weapons and machinery were appropriated by artists and morphed into visual symbols of strength, valor and commitment to the future of the motherland. Many artists became well-known through the escalating political graphic opportunities that emerged. Nevertheless, stereotypes, racism and misinformation remained part of the daily propaganda, in a time when issues of exploitation, women's rights, sickness and poverty were already rampant.

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In Russia, revolutionary artists like Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Mayakowsky and Lazar Markovich Lissitzky (*El Lissitzky*) employed non-traditional visual forms as they re-imagined a new world. In their hands, graphics were reinvented with the belief that art should benefit all, not a select few. Lucian Bernhard and Hans Rudi Erdt were two German artists who engaged in propaganda to promote national pride. Likewise, American artists learned to implement conventional images in new ways to round up support for the war and unite a nation. The infamous Uncle Sam *I Want You* poster by James Montgomery serves as a primary example. On both sides of the Atlantic, artists became skilled in their use and manipulation of graphics, as the separation of art and design finally became clear. Design as the "engineering of thought," not as self-expression, prompted a new phase of persuasion and global influence. Although this active role was later appropriated by the totalitarian regimes that unfolded in the Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany, its significance to design and world history is invaluable. The basic contribution of the avant-garde artists, Russian constructivists and the Bauhaus modernists, was not in identifying the fundamental power attainable through the tailored use of images and words, but in discovering the inherent possibilities of using them responsibly.

In the aftermath of "The War to End All Wars" (as labeled by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson), it was evident that graphic communications could not only shape and influence opinion, but could be used as a device for psychological manipulation. The marriage of symbology, semiotics and graphics became the prevalent one-two punch. In the decades that followed, the possibility of quantifying

public opinion and behaviors matured into the fields of sociology and marketing. Graphic design as a discipline was developed and recognized at a time when psychoanalysis and public relations were born – a fact that should not be seen as coincidental. Thus, the visionary design ideals of the pre-war era were appropriated and integrated as the bedrock for the commercialism and advertising explosion that prevailed after the war.

Having proven its worth during wartime, graphic design became a recognized profession in the 1920s–1930s. As numerous European designers – notably Josef Albers, A.M. Cassandre, Alexey Brodovitch, László-Moholy Nagy, Herbert Bayer, Armin Hofmann and György Kepes – emigrated to the United States, they brought with them an influential baggage of design knowledge, communication experience and technical expertise. The universal beliefs that many of them helped develop in Europe, specially at the Bauhaus in Dessau, Weimar and Berlin, were transfigured into the commercial design world of the west. In the end, Modernism lost its principles but kept its looks.

As modern industrialization and standardization widened the availability of goods, advertising burgeoned as the way to boost demand and foment the economy. In pursuit of financial gain, corporations and manufacturers promoted products and services as the pathway a life of *glamour* and prestige. Graphic designers learned to fabricate dreams by selling unattainable fantasies to naive and eager consumers. Products became symbols of the lifestyle every human being longed for. Hence, buying a specific brand of clothing, soap,

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perfume or liquor spoke about who you were, what you stood for and where you were going in life. Greed and ambition blossomed along with debt and social divide, paving the way for the economic depression that followed in the 1930s. Ironically, the idealist design principles born at the start of the century in Europe became unrecognizable in America as the country developed into the world's new economic power. Capitalism, not only an economic system, but now a way of valuing one's life through possessions, became the norm. Ever since, the graphic design profession has been accustomed to crafting attractive campaigns that help our clients increase their bottom-line. We have forgotten that with our vast reach and ability to impact the social psyche, lie intrinsic responsibilities. Society, not only the companies we work for, is our ultimate client and in whom our work has the most profound effect.

For the next several decades, graphic designers were engaged in creating messages and constructing visual campaigns with a sale-oriented focus. Their skills and creative abilities were directed at generating visuals that captured the viewer's attention and made him act accordingly (e.g. buy). A new rational, stark and minimal design approach coined the *International* or *Swiss Style* came to prevail, paving the way for the blossoming corporate identity programs of the mid-century. This "transition from an economy of scarcity to an economy of abundance"[9] placed advertising at the center of social influence and economic control. Although design ideas were still devised through a thinking process, it was through production methods that a person's technical competency was tested. The high skill set required for design work ensured that only the most apt

could do the job; distinguishing the tried-and-true professionals
from the amateurs. This separation of labor and craft became
instantly decimated with the arrival of the personal computer in
the 1980s.

TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION (21ST CENTURY)
The introduction of desktop publishing and the release of the Macin-
tosh computer in 1984, served to lighten the workload, speed the
production process and democratize the sharing of information,
within design and non-design worlds alike. The availability of the
Mac and other desktop computers leveled the playing field by giv-
ing everyone access to professional tools. Today, the devices and
applications vital to our profession can be instantly downloaded,
copied and learned, enabling any person with access to them to
claim to be a "graphic designer." Our profession has become com-
mensurate with a software knowledge checklist, as the distinction
between expert and novice has become permanently blurred. In
Norman Potter's 1969 statement "it is also a fallacy to suppose that
skills and knowledge can be picked up 'in vacuo' or in neat pack-
ages as in a supermarket,"[10] we realize that this issue has been one
of designs' long-standing preoccupations. Consequently, clients,
governments and society as a whole have no way of identifying who
is qualified, experienced and capable of tackling the complex prob-
lems we currently face. The misinformation and lack of understand-
ing towards design still permeates our society. This leaves us in a
precarious situation, working in an open-ended field with no for-
mal system of requirements or established guidelines for practitio-
ners to follow.

28 Technology's ability to make everything effortlessly accessible has made us less appreciative and receptive – as the *invisibility* of digital information prevents the appreciation of that which we cannot see. But how does this relate to the present state of the graphic design industry? Despite the benefits brought on by these technical advancements, I am concerned that we now equate computer knowledge with design knowledge. Not everyone with a computer and the latest software can be called a designer, in the same way that someone who owns a thermometer or a syringe is not a doctor. The graphic design profession is unique in that the tools we use appear to define a person's capabilities. I know I am not an accountant or an architect just because I use Microsoft Excel and a calculator or AutoCAD and a compass; nor would I ever claim to be able to provide their services. To cite professor John Bielenberg: "discussion about design often addresses the tools and craft rather than the appropriateness of the solution...."[11] It is undeniable that tools do not define a role, skill or proficiency. So, why is it different in the graphic design industry?

Unlike the fields of medicine, law and engineering, our industry is commonly viewed as a luxury, not a necessity for the well being of society. Many, if not all other design fields, are met with better understanding and regard. Industrial, interior and architectural design are a stronghold of our society. Each field has become differentiated, appreciated, valuable and they have all successfully established systems to ensure that its practicing members are screened, qualified and proficient. Doesn't our profession require a similar combination of technical skills and creative thinking?

Are graphic designers not asked to solve problems while being able to produce tangible solutions? Some may argue that graphic design is different from all other design fields because we do not build the objects and structures necessary for modern living, that our work doesn't endanger any lives, that certification makes more sense "in fields concerning life and death...than it does in a field that has to do with communication, taste, aesthetics, and fashion."[12] But, do we value objects more than ideas? Is communications not integral to our human development? Are the processes inherent in graphic design not as meaningful and significant as those in accounting, architecture or law? These are only some of the fundamental questions that need to be addressed if we expect to address this issue and provide plausible solutions.

In 1992, designer and Cooper Union professor Natalia Ilyin wrote that "graphic designers have the opportunity to influence the way average people are informed. This influence affects people, and it involves real responsibility."[13] Through our work, designers are responsible for the portrayal of people, the fabrication of messages and the communication of ideas. Although the wrongful use of our capabilities may not have the power to crumble buildings or endanger lives, our role is more vital than many people realize.[14] Irresponsible design approaches can misinform, encourage overconsumption, increase personal insecurities and create social divide. It can harm the environment, promote racial misrepresentations and exploit sexist and ethnic stereotypes. Design writer Rob Dewey argues that "graphic design's survival as a profession may rest on its ability to redefine itself in the eyes of its publics."[15] If we learn to accept our

30   role as more than visual stylists and assume the responsibility our job entails, we may begin to shift the fallacy that graphic designers are mere software technicians. Only then can we begin to cultivate from within, the deserved seriousness, professionalism and accountability that is long overdue.

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"The damage caused by knowledge used without understanding is merely difficult to measure: it is not less real for that."

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Norman Potter
WHAT IS A DESIGNER: THINGS, PLACES, MESSAGES (1969)

: BENCHMARKS

This chapter will discuss and investigate the differences and similarities between certification, accreditation and licensing, scrutinizing how they function within many industries and professions; both design-related and not. If you wish, you can forgo this section and move directly to the graphic design certification part of the document. Nonetheless, it is important to study precedents and learn from past examples so we have a basis for arguing, comparing and establishing our own point of view.

CERTIFICATION ≠ ACCREDITATION ≠ LICENSING
Professional qualifications are a topic with a long history of heated discussions in the United States. As graphic communications became integrated into the business world, with the corporate identity boom in the 1940s–1950s, designers continuously questioned the role, function and public perception of the field. Few of these discussions were of the polite, restrained and shy nature. The polarizing views within the design community have produced a ballast of shouting matches, offensive back-and-forths and the unending battle between who is right and who is wrong.

During the past 50 years, many established designers, educators, businessmen and critics have written and talked certification in design journals, during lectures, events and keynote addresses. The result has remained unchanged: no majority agreement has been reached. It is vital that we clarify some of the misconceptions that have contributed to this lack of compromise and understanding.

First, *certification* is not *accreditation* nor *licensing*. Although these terms have continuously been interchanged, they are as different as apples, burgers and pizza. The lack of differentiation between these closely-related yet very specific terms, is one cause of the fruitless discussions of the past. By delineating the meaning of each term we can move forward and get into the essence of the conversation, looking at it with a fresh set of eyes and an open mind. In its basic form, certification is for individuals, accreditation is for institutions and a license is a permit to work. In most modern dictionaries these words are synonymous and it is easy to see how they can overlap and become confusing. For the sake of clarity, let's break them down.

LICENSING

The most compromising and rigorous of the three, licensing is established by government and ruled by law. Licensing provides individuals – who have met their industry's established guidelines, examination and level of scrutiny – with the right to practice a profession. By its very definition, it is the "permission to do or not to do something."[16] In essence it either prohibits or authorizes. Medicine and architecture are two fields where the level of risk to human life from ignorance, malpractice or irresponsibility requires the highest level of formalized evaluation systems. Thus, doctors and architects acquire the right to practice only when they have successfully met the educational, professional and testing parameters established by industry associations. In laymen terms: no license, no practice. Furthermore, the act of self-attributing the term *doctor*, *architect* or *interior designer* for this matter, is punishable by law.

Without a valid license, you are not an architect, but an architectural designer, nor an interior designer, but a decorator.

Licensing safeguards and protects the health, wellbeing and interests of the public, administering strict evaluation processes in order to identify who is aptly qualified and who is not, discerning the professional from the novice. It provides people, as much as is possible, with the assurance that our lives are in highly-trained hands. The existence of the American Medical Association (AMA)[17] and the American Institute of Architects (AIA),[18] to continue the previous examples, is paramount for unifying the needs of the client, the value of professional members and the wellbeing of society. Hence, the terms MD and *architect*, which we rarely give a second thought, carry great value for practitioners and for the rest of us. These acronyms are more than a series of letters, they become symbols of the proficiency and professionalism of individuals in whom we willingly trust.

ACCREDITATION

Second on our list, and perhaps the closest and most commonly confused with certification, is accreditation. Universities, hospitals and financial organizations can be accredited. It serves as a *seal of approval* given to entities who fulfill the criteria set forth by a recognized board or council. For example, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)[19] is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), as a non-for-profit entity capable of evaluating and assessing the qualifications, or lack there of, within post-secondary institutions in the USA middle states. Its mission is

to use accreditation as a means "...to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of higher education, making it worthy of public confidence."[20]

The MSCHE is one of the few government-approved associations acknowledged as capable of measuring the educational criteria of post-secondary schools. Accredited institutions can participate in federal financial aid programs and are able to provide transferable credits between other accredited programs across the nation. In this way accreditation provides a set of guidelines for institutions to follow and a viable tool for students to better identify the aptitude and quality of a prospective college or university. For example, the MSCHE accredited both my graduate program at Pratt Institute in Manhattan and my undergraduate degree at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón in Puerto Rico. Organizations commensurate with MSCHE exist in other regions within the USA and are charged with the same tasks and responsibilities. While few students pay attention to the accreditation level of the schools they evaluate and enroll in, the system provides a balanced level of quality within institutions located hundreds, even thousands of miles apart. For example, you can only become a licensed architect or doctor if you obtain a degree from an accredited university or institution.

Accreditation is a voluntary procedure. Even though the ED recognizes the serious endeavor of the MSCHE and its corresponding associations, it does not rule or legislate for or against them. Through well-established parameters, these independent bodies have earned the public's trust and have been given the vital task of securing the

education of a country. The implemented peer-review system used by MSCHE, although not perfect, enables the education system to be rigorously self-regulated. Accountability, transparency and commitment within the academic community becomes an essential tool for the success and continued validity of these evaluating organizations. Having discussed the basic relationship and marked differences between licensing and accreditation, let us move to the topic at hand: professional certification.

CERTIFICATION

As a Spanish-speaking person, it is very curious that the term *certificado,* which means "proof" or the "successful completion of something," has become taboo; through my research I have discovered that mentioning certification and design within the same sentence often guarantees a heated conversation, one I always welcome. In order to continue this journey, it is paramount that we put aside any uneasiness and preconceived notions and establish a brand new dialogue.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary states that to certify is *to attest as being true or as meeting a standard* and to *recognize as having met special qualifications within a field.* Certification is thus a vehicle for identifying and specifying the required knowledge, skills and expertise within professions. It is a guideline that represents a person's professional capabilities and the meeting of previously set criteria; this is how it can be easily confused with licensing. Nonetheless, certification, like accreditation is, in its essence a voluntary system. Financial analysts, planners and accountants can become certified.

38   Aviation pilots, project managers and plumbers can also achieve a
level of certification specific to their industries. Different in disci-
pline, yet consistent in objective, these certification systems aim to
raise professional standards, provide responsible services and estab-
lish strict ethical guidelines for all practitioners. Even though all
fields require ample technical dexterity, computer proficiency and
up-to-date training, knowledge and education are the vital core.

In many of these professions, members can practice for their entire
lives without the need or mandate to become certified. For exam-
ple: a recent graduate from a university's accounting program can
surely find a job within his field and could keep it for life. Yet, many
accounting graduates opt to pursue becoming a Certified Public
Accountant (CPA) through the American Institute of Public Accoun-
tants (AICPA).[21] Even though the CPA system is a form of licensing – a
permit to work as a public accountant or auditor – it is voluntary
and relates to the certification we are speaking about. Non-certified
accountants can openly practice without any inconvenience or pun-
ishment, although in limited areas.

You may already be asking, what does accounting have to do with
the creative design field? It is not the intricacies of the field that
interest us, but the application of their professional values. The
AICPA states their mission is "to provide members with the resources,
information and leadership that enable them to provide valuable
services in the highest professional manner to benefit the public,
employers and clients."[22] It is in the integrity of these ideals that
the essence of every meaningful profession lies, including our own.

Examining the workings of non design-related fields enables us to identity the common structures that make them function. Such professions have been with us for centuries and it is no coincidence they have flourished into the stronghold of our current economic and social landscapes. The following examples can help us understand what certification has achieved in other fields and what it can offer to us today.

....

"Academia is holding up its end of the bargain with the *real world* by providing a protective environment where critical thought is expected and where ethical behavior is the standard. Unfortunately, we are growing increasingly less confident about the *real world's* ability to hold up its end of the bargain."

....

Susan Agre-Kippenhan and Mike Kippenhanr [23]
WHAT'S RIGHT WITH DESIGN EDUCATION AND
WRONG WITH THE "REAL WORLD"? (2005)

Are titles meaningful or meaningless?

: CASE STUDIES

The proceeding is a brief outline of certification systems that exist to-
day; design-related and not. Notable differences are inevitable between
such diverse industries and disciplines, yet their common framework,
strict standards and social commitment binds them all together.

NON-DESIGN FIELDS

MEDICINE

Probably the highest regarded profession in the world, medical pro-
fessions can also be certified. Apart from requiring a license to
practice, doctors can voluntarily choose to become specialized
within their field. Established in 1933, the American Board of Medi-
cal Specialties (ABMS) is the leading certification entity for the medi-
cal industry in the USA, with more than 750,000 certified physicians.[24]
The ABMS is also the nation's largest voluntary certification system,
where highly-trained professionals undergo additional training,
testing and evaluation in order to achieve the highest level of pro-
ficiency and knowledge available to them. Board certification sym-
bolizes a physician's continued commitment and aim for excellence.
Thus, in medicine, the mandatory (licensing) and the voluntary
(certification) coexist harmoniously.

FINANCE

Financial planners in the USA can opt to become certified through
the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards (CFP).[25] As high-
lighted in the board's mission: "while many may choose to call
themselves *financial planners* with little preparation or ability, you
will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have proven yourself
among the most knowledgeable and capable financial planners in

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the world…you become part of an international financial planning community committed to putting clients' interests first and meeting the profession's highest standards." As of 2012 more than 55,000 individuals have achieved CFP status. Through this system, financial planners have self-imposed a level of standards within the reach of practitioners who voluntarily wish to pursue it.

COMMUNICATION

Here, we encounter a system in an industry closely tied to graphic design. Since its establishment in 1970, the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) has grown to 80 countries and represents more than 15,000 members worldwide.[26] The association unifies professionals from a diversity of communication-related disciplines, fields ranging from media, public and investor relations to marketing, human resources and even graphic design.

The IABC criteria focuses not on visual communications but on strategic management and corporate solutions. The certification process combines requirements in education, work experience, portfolio presentation as well as written and oral tests, giving successful applicants the right to use the Accredited Business Communicator (ABC) designation. As stated in their official documentation: "this peer-reviewed program challenges candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of strategic communication planning, implementation, measurement and ethics."[27] Hence, ABC certification serves as the link between personal achievement, global expectations and professional recognition.

In the previous examples, we clearly see how self-regulation and accountability merge objective and measurable benefits with personal satisfaction. Meryl David, ABC, shares that: "accreditation has given communicators a level of excellence to aspire to and continues to raise the benchmark for excellence in practice, which is helping advance the profession around the world."[28] Although these professionals depend on numerical statistics and tangible profit margins in order to prove their worth and proficiency, they have embraced their role as communicators who are crucial to the prosperity and success of today's globalized market. ABC certification is a three-step program that includes an application, a portfolio process and exams. Admitting it can seem difficult to envision how a formal test intends to assess the breadth of skills used in graphic design, the IABC explains that: "the exams cover the candidate's knowledge of communication philosophy, concepts, tools and technology. They demonstrate the candidate's ability to write or perform professional communication activities by creating a full-range communications program in a limited time."[29] The IABC model is worthy of thorough analysis, as it caters to many professionals with whom designers constantly interact.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

In the 1930s many European designers, escaping from political persecution and social decay, emigrated to the USA. They brought customs, traditions and languages from their homeland – and also brought Modernism. Since then, design and business have remained in a tightly unified but imperfect relationship. It is vital that we realize the value that business professionals place on experience,

46 qualifications and skills. Within the breadth of certification programs available for business managers, advisors, planners and consultants, I want to highlight The Association of Professionals in Business Management (APBM). The APBM is a non-profit organization that aims to "validate the mastery of business management knowledge, skills, and abilities and is developed by business practitioners to meet the needs of practicing business managers."[30] The association certifies individuals with specific college degrees, years of proven experience and who pass a four-part test. Furthermore, in order to become a Certified Business Manager (CBM), individuals need to complete a number of hours within their Continuing Professional Education program. In this way, the APBM provides a platform for industry partners to identify the men and women with the highest level of qualifications, professional acumen and business comprehension.

DESIGN FIELDS

ARCHITECTURE (AIA)

Architecture is the origin of all design fields or as Frank Lloyd Wright described: "the mother art is architecture. Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization." From caves and pyramids to Italian cathedrals and modern skyscrapers, architecture has been responsible for the development of society and our shift from nomads to sedentary beings. Architecture is universally valued as integral to human living and social development. We interact with it anytime a roof covers our heads and in the very configuration of our streets, parks and urban landscape.

Appropriately, architecture was formalized in 1857 with the establishment of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), originally the New York Society of Architects. Before its existence, anyone in the USA could claim to be an architect and practice without further scrutiny. As public safety concerns rose, it became critical that a set of guidelines be instituted in the field. Ever since, architecture has become highly protected and scrutinized. Today, an *architectural designer* – the correct term for a non-licensed individual – is required to graduate from an accredited architecture program, complete specific hours of internship experience and pass one of the most rigorous examination programs in the nation.

Instituted in 1919, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) is the independent entity responsible for administering the exam and determining internship procedures, through the Architect Registration Examination (ARE) and Intern Development Program (IDP) respectively.[31] The NCARB's rigorous system of regulations and parameters administers licenses to all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. But, isn't architecture a licensed discipline? Then, why are we talking about it? The architectural licensing process is vital to our understanding of how a major design field has managed the, seemingly insurmountable, logistical task of administering its procedures to more than 80,000 architects across the USA. Yet, this has not been achieved without some pitfalls. The strictness and expense of the AIA/NCARB program, combined with the current economic climate, has made many young designers forgo this formal process, instead partnering with already licensed architects when they need building plans and

48   paperwork. Aside from having to complete formal studies, hours
of work – divided in such areas as design, planning, project man-
agement and construction drawings – and passing the ARE, appli-
cants are required to commit to an average of 36 continuing education
hours every 3 years, through formal classes, lectures and other
activities. It seems that architectural "education" never stops, and
neither do expenses.

In architecture, each U.S. state carries distinct requirements, so
practitioners are impeded from easily transferring their practice
from one state to another. However, the recently-introduced NCARB
Certificate aims to fix this obstacle by providing a more fluid reci-
procity between state lines. As the NCARB explains: "architects who
have an NCARB Certificate have paved their way for faster reciproc-
ity and greater mobility. No longer confined to their own jurisdic-
tions, they can quickly obtain licenses in other states to strategically
market their services and pursue opportunities on a national level."[32]
As the global market now facilitates projects not confined to geo-
graphical limits – the NCARB certification enables architects to prac-
tice in 54 jurisdictions as well as Canada – professionals are finding
that becoming certified enhances their relevance and brings busi-
ness opportunities their way.[33]

Even though becoming an architect is an exhaustive, bureaucratic
and expensive process,[34] the system intends to guarantee, not that
all buildings will be "beautiful," but that the architect has knowl-
edge in design thinking, schematics, structural systems, site plan-
ning and construction methods that enable him to create a safe,

functional and efficient working structure.[35] Architecture serves as a rigid case study; while it may not be an appropriate model for graphic design to follow, it presents us with a gamma of alternatives at our disposal. Within this seemingly elusive licensing and certification procedure, there is an additional program that interests us. One that, since its inception in 2000, has acquired as much notoriety and approval as conflict and criticism: LEED certification.

ARCHITECTURE : ENGINEERING : MANUFACTURING

In the 19th century, smoke stacks, mounds of charcoal and oil deposits were a symbol of social advancement and economic progress. Green, sustainable and eco-friendly, terms that seem impossible to get away from today, were not part of the vernacular until the 1990s. But, at the turn of the millennia, scientists, academics and researchers became alarmed by the rapid rate of our planet's deterioration. Our incessant toll on the earth had finally caught up with us, as if overnight.

In 1993 the Unites States Green Building Council (USGBC) was established in order to address many of these concerns. As a non-profit organization, its intention was to establish and promote guidelines for the sustainable design and construction of buildings. By implementing specific materials, processes and techniques – from the conceptual phase to construction – architects and engineers could develop higher quality structures with less impact on the site. In 2000, the USGBC established a ground-breaking system termed Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED. Through the years, LEED has become an established seal of excellence recognized

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worldwide. Constructed on a 100-point scale system, LEED evaluates and measures a project's use of materials, energy usage, water efficiency, indoor air quality and site impact to name a few. LEED certification varies for *Accredited Professionals* (LEED-AP), *Fellows* and *Associates*, each having their own test and study materials. Certified professionals include architects, engineers, construction managers, interior designers and landscape architects who desire to integrate sustainability into their daily practice. These professionals are then able to implement the LEED guidelines as a road map for designing projects that meet one of four established LEED ratings: platinum, gold, silver or certificate.[36] Through a combination of AIA, NCARB and LEED programs, the architecture design field has stood ahead of the curve for decades – with successes and pitfalls – working to make sustainability the norm.

Recognizing the need for global action, the United Nation's (UN) *Millennium Summit* united over 150 world leaders in September 2000. The event's purpose was to discuss and implement universally-agreed upon social, economic and environmental policies. Five years later, at the UN *World Summit,* more than 190 delegates agreed to establish the *three pillars* of sustainable practices as "the reconciliation of environmental, social equity and economic demands..." and as a vital element "...of the over arching framework of United Nations activities."[37] With the international community already aware of the issues facing our planet, the general public became involved in the conversation thanks to mass media and the release of a 2006 documentary: Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. The film's popularity awakened the public's concern regarding the preservation of

resources and the modification of human behavior towards our planet and each other. Al Gore advocated that: "future generations may well have occasion to ask themselves, 'What were our parents thinking? Why didn't they wake up when they had a chance?' We have to hear that question from them, now."[38] Ever since, it seems everyone has become aware of the plethora of existing environmentally-conscious materials, objects and products. Although parts of the *green* industry have become a fad – and many corporations have participated in unscrupulous *greenwashing*[39] practices – people are more educated and aware of the power and consequences that stem from our everyday purchasing decisions. Thus, LEED certification – independent of government policy or international agreements – exemplifies a design organization's potential to establish guidelines that transform an industry's way of working and responds to the needs of society.

This extensive look into the world of sustainability and architectural design certification may seem out of place to graphic designers; since a "badly designed logo" doesn't endanger lives or building structures, we often take a leisurely approach to the role we are called to assume. It is my intention to show, and to learn for myself, how branches within the umbrella of professional design have behaved in the past and how their developments can be applied to our field.

INTERIOR DESIGN

I will be the first to admit that my view of interior design was crude and naive before beginning my research. The prevalent thought of

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the interior designer as decorator permeates our society, and I was no exception. The popularity of the DIY movement discussed earlier is partly responsible for the notion that anybody and everybody can design and remodel. Discovering the extensive history of Interior Design as a profession, was one of the breakthrough moments of my research. If a profession – as misunderstood by clients, government and the general public as is graphic design – can administer one of the toughest qualification systems in the world, then maybe our field still has hope. Certainly, repainting a house or remodeling a kitchen puts no lives at risk. Right? Wrong; once again, proof of my initial ignorance.

Established in 1972, the National Council for Interior Design Qualifications (NCIDQ) is the autonomous organization responsible for administering tests and issuing credentials to successful candidates. The Council has served since the American Institute of Interior Designers (AID) and the National Society of Interior Designers (NSID) merged into the existing American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). To apply for the NCIDQ Certificate, designers are required to possess a combined 6 years of school and professional experience. Furthermore, they then undergo a multi-stage examination process composed of multiple-choice, written questions and a crucial practicum scenario. In the latter, designers are asked to interpret specific given information as part of an "imaginary project" and layout (i.e. hand-draw) a floor plan that meets the structural, functional and schematic requisites. The section does not focus on the creativity, aesthetics or personal style but as "proof that you can respond to a program and integrate design principles and lighting

into three-dimensional volume."[40] We see, once more, how professional design evaluations are not centered on judging style, looks or visual impact, but on recognizing the importance of knowledge coupled with public safety and common practices.

Having examined the certification procedures of other professional industries, I now turn to my discussion of certification for graphic designers, looking first at the places where it has been established and how the procedures were born. Understanding how they function and what they offer, will be paramount as we continue to question, examine and imagine what a certified graphic design profession may look like.

"How can a design student function without verbal expertise, let alone the ability to read and research? This must also be taught in an efficient manner that takes time. And then there is basic business acumen; [...] which are virtually ignored in the ultimate pursuit of the marketable portfolio."

Steven Heller
AUTHOR, WRITER AND EDUCATOR[41]

design

=

knowledge

+

responsibility

: GRAPHIC DESIGN CERTIFICATION

GRAPHIC DESIGN CERTIFICATION

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WORLDWIDE MODELS

If you've arrived here after reading the previous case studies, I commend both your patience and dedication. If you jumped directly to this section, I admire your eagerness. Since we are discussing the viability of certification within the graphic design profession, we must study the existing programs worldwide. So you may ask, graphic design certification exists? Yes, it certainly does. While conversations and considerations in the USA have come and gone, various systems have flourished around the world. In different adaptations, certification is well established in Switzerland, Canada, U.K., Australia, Denmark and Norway. I recently discovered similar systems in Hong Kong and Japan, through the Hong Kong Designers Association (HDKA)[42] and the Japan Graphic Designers Association (JAGDA),[43] and other countries are following suit.

Furthermore, conferences and alliances supporting and researching certification have been formed in parts of South America and Europe.[44] As in the industries we've already discussed, education, work experience, codes of ethics and continuing education programs are the core of these design certification models. While each program's process varies, their aim remains the same: to raise the standards of expectations for all practitioners and to integrate accountability and responsibility as fundamental to professional design. Certification can help to involve our clients, the public and designers in a transparent collaborative process where each side of the supply/demand chain has input and can be accounted for.

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Is it unreasonable to demand more involvement from our clients? Is it necessary for us to build an honest relationship with them? Anne Bush reminds us that "...visual communications is a collaborative process. [...] meaning is always the result of a range of cultural and social negotiations and the designer is not the sole determinant, but rather a participant, in these dialogues."[45] Certification can have a profound effect on this process. At a personal level, certified designers feel more capable, respected and confident. While many would argue this is not a quantifiable fact, I contend that it is vital for a designer's fulfillment and his quest for excellence. We often forget that designers are people too, and a happy worker is regularly a better one. Before we take a look at the global certification models, we need to frame our industry as it exists today and revisit some of the reasons why certification is an idea worth considering.

280,000. Two-hundred and eighty thousand. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, this is the total number of graphic designers employed in 2010.[46] Want a bigger number? There are 2.1 million artists living in the USA according to a National Endowment for the Arts report[47] and 39% of them, about 829,000, are designers. The AIGA estimates about 350,000 of them to be communication designers.[48] Imagine the number if we could tally every person who is not a designer by profession, but offers and sells our services. Do you think this is an alarming statistic or – depending on how you look at it – an opportunity waiting to be cultivated? For reference, there are 40,000 designers in Canada and 30,000 in all of Australia; not communication designers but total designers. The reason why there are so many graphic designers in the USA could be the topic of a

completely separate thesis. However, the tendency to use design programs as *cash-cows*[49] within many academic institutions is a major culprit. Regardless of your posture, there is an unprecedented opportunity to use the USA's design manpower for the greater good, not as a utopian lets-save-the-world approach, but as a regulated profession that can establish the highest levels of peer accountability, ethical practice and responsibility. Is regulating the disparity between those 280 or 350 thousand designers possible? Doesn't it seem like a logistical nightmare? Having you here, reading this book, serves as proof that although certification would not be easy to implement, the need and interest among designers, business and the public has never been higher.

Film and Media Studies professor Stuart Ewen challenges us stating that: "...the design profession stands at a fateful juncture. Designers must come to reflect upon the functions they serve, and on the potentially hazardous implications of those functions."[50] Talk to designers, students, go online and ask around in design forums and you'll see that while the opinions are diverse, the passion both for and against certification is plentiful. Nothing worthwhile comes easily and here is where the opportunity for an open dialogue exists.

I am not a designer with 20+ years of industry experience; yet I am tired of hearing designers complain about "annoying" client requests, the public's lack of design understanding and the uncertainty of having to answer that ominous elevator question: so, what do you do? We need not look further than the escalation of *crowd-sourcing*, *spec-work*[51] and $30 logos for proof of the current shift from people

60 seeking professional design to purchasing cheap DIY design. It seems certain that many, not all, clients think of design at the end of the production cycle, a possible luxury if the budget allows. Most design associations have already stood up against these unethical practices, but they will continue to prevail until designers stand up and say enough is enough. For a designer, saying "no" goes against our will to please and can seem counterproductive, but taking a stand against topics, behaviors and practices that hurt our profession can induce a positive outcome. In the end, whether helping or hindering the profession, what one designer does affects us all.

For serious designers, graphic design is more than a nine-to-five struggle. Our unending quest should be to provide streamlined, ordered and transparent communication between people. I doubt that many professional designers went into the business thinking it was the easy road to becoming wealthy – although exceptions always exist. The Designer, with a capital D, is one who sees morality, ethics and responsibility at par with aesthetics and economics. Historically, ethics within design has been an additional, not mandatory, consideration. Although many designers have implemented responsible practices at the heart of their business, it has not become a permanent part of the profession's broader behavior. This creates a distinction between design and responsible design that should not exist within the profession. This separation of ethics from practice must be erased. Letting personal morals dictate your work does not mean refusing all clients, quitting your job, working for free or designing only "happy" projects; it does mean recognizing the power that society has entrusted in us and putting it to good use.

In his book *Do Good Design*, David Berman presents us with three key areas where design has the biggest influence: the intention / crafting of messages, the portrayal of people and the use of materials. It is in our ability to combine messages (type) with images (graphics), and our capacity to distort reality or present it clearly, where the nature of communications dwells. The skills we have at our disposal, depending on how we choose to use them, can become either harmful weapons or a repository of blessings. Armin Hofmann shared the belief that: "the instruments and aids that are placed in our hands nowadays are far too tricky for us to use them unquestioningly. The more cunningly devised they are, the greater the knowledge that is required before they can be put to wise and responsible use."[52]

When photography replaced illustration as the main representational medium of our world, it acquired an influential psychological effect; especially in Constructivism's view of photography as "intrinsic to realizing the aim of objectivity."[53] People saw photography as a mirror-image of the real world. It was the most faithful rendering of mankind's existence. Yet today, in an era of photographic manipulation, art directed photo shoots and hyped marketing campaigns, people should know how to separate truth from fantasy. Right? Not really. Psychologist Howard Gardner explains: "the basic unit of human thought is the symbol...And we are naturally inclined to trust all images, because until very recently, in the long history of animals, the only untrustable images where in puddles and mirages."[54] Designers need to start talking a bit less about design aesthetics and a lot more about honesty, morals and ethics.

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This trio of principles seems to have shied away and disappeared from everyday design practice.

The birth of our profession was laid on a bed of social and environmental concerns that have since been forgotten. As Stuart Ewen explains: "there is a near universal amnesia regarding the issues that first propelled the field of design into being...the early history of design is regarded as nothing more than an aesthetic warehouse...."[55] William Morris' *Arts and Crafts* and Gropius' Bauhaus viewed design as an agent of change. Initially, they were not guided by aesthetic principles, although their beliefs did give way to the visual language that still characterizes them. These men could not have been more different, but their philosophies were both anchored in respect, honesty and the evolution of society. Whether for limited run or mass production, Morris and Gropius wanted their principles, not only their aesthetics, to transcended time. Today, as information spreads and knowledge continues to be a "click" away, differentiating between tech savvy individuals and committed designers will gain importance. Here is where certification can bring a novel approach to the table.

Certified graphic designers would welcome the responsibilities and professional demands that come with broader clients, shifting from a commercially-centered approach to one with society at its core. For a designer, pursuing certification requirements would be the initial step for acquiring knowledge, processes and strategies that can be instantly implemented in our own practice. The days of a 4-year degree being the culmination of our educational involvement

are over. With the proliferation of master design degrees, graduate
studies will eventually become the minimum requirement in the
professional environment.[56] Designers who want to attain the high-
est level of personal accomplishment and professional recognition
need further vehicles. Likewise, designers who aptly engage in an
attitude of continuous development will carry a noticeable edge – one
that initiates a long-standing bond between designers, industry
and the public. As technology continually develops, creative think-
ing will remain the primary human resource. Marching onwards,
ideas will reclaim their prescient role. Designers who meet the
challenge will embark on a route to personal and professional trans-
formation like none before.

Preceding our look into the requirements of existing certification
programs, I need to acknowledge that each organization also pro-
vides a breadth of benefits and resources to their membership body
in the form of seminars, lectures, special events, documentation,
salary surveys, partner discounts, interactive tools and industry
resources. Thus, certification in these countries serves as a mean,
not an end. Each system is organized and complex, yet flexible and
tailored to their unique professional and social needs. Examining
these models brings us closer to building a personal opinion towards
certification. Only then can we decide if certification is a viable,
possible or worthy enterprise. I will let you decide.

SWITZERLAND
Swiss design. I might have to wait a bit until you stop envisioning
the work of Armin Hofmann, Max Bill, Josef Müller-Brockman, Jan

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Tschichold or Karl Gerstner. As the geometric shapes, bold sans serif typography and asymmetric compositions flow through your mind, a quasi-transitive state is certain; for me it certainly is. Nonetheless, the disciplined forms, grid structures and syntactic–semantic relationships that epitomise the *Swiss* or *International Style*[57] do not concern us at this moment. In the 1920s, as movements stemming from Russia, Germany and the Netherlands landed on neutral Switzerland, graphic design was transfigured throughout the world. The character, values, political safety and cultural strengths of the Swiss nation gave way, decades later, to what became the first ever graphic design certification system.

Switzerland is situated in a perfect geographic location that facilitates the exchange of ideas, cultures and beliefs. Designer and writer Richard Hollis explains three key factors that made Swiss graphic design flourish during the early 20th century, and the reason why it is still universally copied: geography, language (mainly German and French) and culture.[58] Historically, Swiss society has been founded on a tradition of craftsmanship, training and education. Their care for detail, quality, manufacture and lettering stems from flags, emblems and symbols that go back to the Middle Ages. Furthermore, their engineering and pharmaceutical quality in the modern age further invigorated their economy and the value and dedication for industrial work. Design in Switzerland is recognized in the public's perspective and that of the government. Signage, street signs, stamps, passports and other public commissions have been professionally designed in Switzerland for more than a century, most of them through government-sponsored competitions. Switzerland's long-standing cultural

appreciation and understanding of design ultimately became the precedent for graphic design's hallmark certification system. It seems inevitable that Switzerland, the design "utopia," would be first in the certification ladder. Yet in reality it did not happen overnight.

The apprentice systems that had been cultivated for centuries were the crucial basis for Swiss certification. Swiss graphic designer René Schoepflin shares an eye-opening statement: "in Switzerland, a graphic designer is a recognized professional, like a doctor."[59] While I do not suggest design be equated with life-saving fields like medicine, this affirmation opens our eyes to the Swiss' respected for design. Schoepflin continues: "in Switzerland nobody demands 'I need it tomorrow,' instead the client asks, 'when will it be ready and how much will I have to pay?'" I do not understand why most designers and clients do not have such a respectful exchange in the Western world. To quote Schoepflin one last time: "the Swiss generally do not hire people other than accredited designers." Should we rest our case now and stop while we're ahead?

Swiss certification started in 1972, when the *Verbandes Schweizer Grafiker* (VSG) and the *Bundes Grafischer Gestalter* (BGG) merged into one body, known as *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Schweizer Grafiker* (ASG). In 1993, the ASG changed its name to their current English language denomination: Swiss Graphic Designer (SGD). As stated on the official documentation, the SGD stands for "the protection and promotion of the economic and professional interests of its members...."[60] This is the official association that grants membership to individuals who meet their strict requirements. Switzerland's unique system

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is unlike any other. This is how it works: potential designers undertake a preliminary year of studies, followed by a three-year apprenticeship program at a qualified studio. This program is divided into school (theoretical) and studio (practical). In the former you create a concept project to be developed at the latter. After the project is concluded, the student presents the final outcome to a jury or examination board, who decides if the student has met the expected standards. If so, the student receives a Graphic Designer Certificate (EFZ) – recognized at local and federal levels. They can now officially begin professional work. Once certified, designers can opt to pursue graduate or specialized studies.

After acquiring a certificate, the SGD requirements come into play. In order to apply for an SGD *Expert* membership – the highest level for a designer in Switzerland – an individual must possess either the aforementioned certificate or an equivalent combination of education and work experience. With an equivalent university degree, plus a minimum of two years of work experience, a person can complete the application, agree to the official SGD Statutes and become a qualified Swiss Graphic Designer, being able to incorporate the SGD initials along his or her name. People without a formal degree or *autodidacts,* as the SGD refers to them, need five years of professional experience before applying for *Expert* membership. In this way, the SGD accounts for the diverse training that exists within the industry, maintaining strict measures yet accommodating to various backgrounds.

The SGD provides six different membership levels: *Expert, Business, Special, Junior, Foreign* and *Senior.*[61] Having looked at how *Expert*

membership works, let's discuss two more. An SGD *Junior* member is a student undergoing EFZ training or enrolled in a design degree program. They can profit from the resources, networking opportunities and member benefits at reduced fees, but are not allowed to use the SGD designation. SGD's *Senior* membership addresses a concern among experienced designers worried about being excluded, because they came from a non-design background or are self-taught designers. This membership is for people with proven 10+ years of professional design experience, regardless of formal education. They are permitted to use the SGD Senior designation and can enjoy all of the association's benefits.

Switzerland has pioneered an exemplary system of standards for our profession. Their history and apprentice culture have facilitated a level of regulation that may be difficult to match. Even though many people see the strictness of the system as stifling and hard to achieve – as proven by the low number of under 400 certified designers – the SGD stands strong as: "an association with many impulses, thoughts and intentions for experts, who face the challenges of the future."[62] Before we leave the Land of the Alps, I must share the perspectives of some Swiss-trained designers. Fritz Gottshalk, principal of G+A in Zurich, contributes: "...the computer has given...uneducated designers the possibility to start creating their own world of visual razzmatazz,... which has nothing to do with communication design...in general, everybody (in Switzerland) has a professional education, certificate, and track record – which are demanded and appreciated by future employers and clients."[63] Janicke Kernland, a Swiss designer living in the USA, adds: "the Swiss system is very strict in controlling the

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amount of people coming out into the profession...The benefit of certification [hypothetically in the USA] is that it is voluntary! You do it...of your own free will. If you don't need it, you don't have to do it."[64]

CANADA

The second graphic design certification system in the world to be recognized by federal law, did not come from innovative Germany, the unique-thinking Nordic countries, or a fast-paced powerhouse in Asia, it came from our neighbors to the north: Canada. Innovation in Canada? Without a doubt, the Canadian model is the most comprehensive certification system in place anywhere in the world. It was established by an ample collaboration between industry, government and public, with the impetus of individuals like: Albert Ng, Robert L. Peters and René Schoepflin, among others. The road map they helped build still serves as a precedent for professional responsibility and ethical practice. Different certification models exist in Canada today at both the national and provincial level.

The path to certification, goes back to the establishment of the Society of Typographic Designers of Canada (TDC) in 1956. Responding to the emergence of visual communications within the field, the association changed its name to the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada (GDC) in 1974. The Society became formalized in 1976 with the granting of a *Federal Charter* by the Secretary of State of Government. This document enabled the GDC to become a corporate entity, and gave them the right to establish their parameters and bestow its membership to designers across Canada.

After decades serving as the unified voice for designers in Canada, select members of the GDC became alarmed by the 1991 Canadian census that showed a national lack of understanding, standards and quality of education within graphic design. Consequently, five GDC chapters applied for special legislation that would enable them to break way from the GDC and incorporate as a new unified body: the Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario (RGD). A breakthrough came in 1996, when The Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario passed Bill PR56; through this *title act*,[65] the Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario were permitted by law to develop and administer a qualification system for graphic designers, giving them the right to grant the RGD designation to those who fulfill their requirements. This bill made the RGD the country's first design-related denomination recognized at the government level and legally protected "just like *registered nurse, medical doctor* or *lawyer.*"[66] From that moment on, the RGD has been charge of establishing certification, or *accreditation* as it is formally called within the association, at a local level in the province of Ontario. While the RGD remains an independent provincial organization, it has partnered with the GDC and the Society of Graphic Designers of Québec (SDGQ). Together, they share the task of building parameters and ethical guidelines that provide a solid ground for the evolution of the graphic design profession inside the country.

Although the GDC began to introduce membership-based national "certification"[67] throughout Canada in 2012, I will concentrate on the provincial RGD Ontario model. The latter is the only system approved by a legislative act, it certifies graphic designers in Canada's highest

70 populated province, and it has grown to over 3,000 members. In Canada, design bodies are entwined in a collaborative effort to heighten the standards, quality and recognition of design within their borders, while remaining allied nationally with the GDC and abroad with the International Council for Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA).

Bill PR56 was not the end for the establishment of professional graphic design in Canada. With the signing of *By-Law #3: Rules of Professional Conduct* in 1998, the RGD consummated the implementation of the ethical practices and responsibility standards expected from all members. Different from the loose tone of ethical codes in many design associations around the world, an RGD member can loose their designation and membership if it is proven they are involved in irresponsible or harmful conduct. Since any person can file a formal complaint through the RGD grievance process, designers are held accountable for their actions and the subsequent consequences they create. Isn't this professional responsibility in all its glory? Is something like this within reach?

The *By-Law* specifies the designer's responsibilities towards the association, the profession, other members, clients and society. The laws "...are written to guide Members in their professional practice to ensure a fair balance between the needs of Members, clients, the profession and the government. The rules not only recognize a Members' professional responsibility but also the commitment to take a role in those areas of society where graphic designers hold influence."[68] It also provides guidance over authorship and censorship law as well as standards of billing, with a specific note condemning speculative

and non-compensated work. Furthermore, the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada (GDC) established a renewed Code of Ethics in 2000.[69] This document has served as the framework for codes across the world. In 2005, the AIGA's code was updated based on the new GDC version. Additionally, ICOGRADA provides the GDC code to any country interested in building their own regulations. The GDC model gained further attention in 2008, when the main graphic design associations in Norway and China used it as their template.[70] So, after this long history lesson, what does it mean to be a Registered Graphic Designer and how does one become certified?

The RGD designation signifies a designer's level of "...education, training and experience...and their ability to practice in the profession and perform to the standard of competence specified...."[71] The success of the RGD evaluation process stands on its unique format and rounded approach. Certification is divided into a three step process: application, written test and portfolio. An applicant moves through them only when completing the previous step. Furthermore, the program is tailored for design *Practitioners*, *Educators* and *Managers*. The evaluation process is comprised of distinct yet flexible criteria and administered by an examination board independent from the RGD. This separation ensures an unbiased and confidential examination process.

For a *Regular* application, a designer needs to possess 7 years of combined education and practical experience, hence, 3–4 years of post-secondary graphic design education plus the same amount of professional work. For more experienced designers, the *Seniority*

clause requires 7 years of relevant education and/or professional practice prior to the year 2000. Seniors are also exempt from all sections of the RGD written test, except the Rules of Professional Conduct. One last option is the *Atypical* applicant, built for individuals with little or no design education or who are self-taught. It requires 10 years of education and/or proven practice. For any of these designations, the designer must provide proof of employment, university transcripts and payment of the application fees.[72] The application also requires the submission of six client-based portfolio pieces, each with thumbnail references and accompanied by a *written rationale* that discusses the project's objective, audience, concept, design brief, process, outcome, time frame and costs. Thus, each applicant is obliged to present and defend a clear purpose for his submitted entries. The process abates any work that is aesthetically-pleasing and appealing but lacking a fundamental basis, purpose and reason.[73]

The second, and perhaps most controversial step, is the four-part written test. A test? How can you test design? Who writes the questions and grades the answers? Implemented after years of research and collaboration among consulting educators, testing organizations and designers, the RGD exam focuses on theory and practical knowledge, not on looks or style. This multiple-choice test is divided in four parts: *Design History and Research*, *Business and Design Principles*, *Technology* and *Rules of Professional Conduct*.[74] The RGD provides a list of suggested study materials for every category. All but the first part are given as closed-book sections. With a 7% failure rate, the test is not fabricated to be an insurmountable task. Heidi Mulzer, RGD Director of Membership, explains: "the application process weeds out the

unqualified people." After reviewing some sample questions from their test, it becomes clear that the intent is not to judge styles, but to tackle the historic, theoretical and business principles that every designer should know and care about.[75]

The *Technology* section is unique because of its dual components. Aside from a general section, test takers must select and complete one of five subsections: *Print, Electronic Media, Environmental Graphics, Packaging* or *Studio Management*. The exam is flexible enough that designers from many specialties can undergo the same testing procedures. The diversity of parameters, terminology and processes inherent to these sub-fields of graphic design is acknowledged and built into the exam. The final *Rules of Professional Conduct* section is based on the previously discussed *By-Law#3*. Studying for the test serves as a refresher for many designers and as a learning experience for others. The test has recently been streamlined to be completed within 2 hours and is given in multiple Ontario locations throughout the year. It is integral to the mission and values of the RGD and unique amid all worldwide certification models. Although this exam has been mocked by many popular designers in the USA, RGD founder Albert Ng remains firm: "opposition is often born out of ignorance...It seems to me that some U.S. designers believe there is no need for accreditation[76] or certification because they managed to become well known without it. They fail to make the connection between accreditation, quality education, and setting standards of professional competence."[77]

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The third and final step to become a Registered Graphic Designer in Canada is the portfolio review. With the aid of technology, the jury review is available every month and conducted either face-to-face, by phone or even by Skype video conversation. A three-person panel composed of RGD professionals will listen as applicants present each of their 6 portfolio pieces, submitted in the application process. Despite the unique evaluation criteria, depending on the applicant's chosen area of expertise – *Design Practice*, *Design Education* or *Design Management* – they all need to prove their involvement, approach and role in the development and success of each case study. This 25-minute review demands that designers explain and expand on the written rationales already submitted in the application. The jury serves to witness and assess the qualifications of each applicant, and do not go into further questioning unless they see fit. If awarded a passing grade, a designer can use the RGD designation and benefit from the employment listings, networking, health benefits, lectures, discounts, training and additional opportunities available to every one of the currently estimated 3,000 members.

Although RGD certification only regulates the province of Ontario, they accept members from all around the country. In this way, other provinces are left to decide wether or not they wish to follow suit and establish similar systems. The province of Québec, through the SDGQ, recently agreed to study the implementation of certification with the aid of the RGD model and Manitoba is in line to do so as well. So, if Canadian certification does not result in a license, but is a voluntary process, what is the benefit of becoming an RGD?

During my research it has become clear that design certification in every country has been approached for its potential benefits and not as an ultimate destination. Certification, with its logistical hurdles and economic limits, is a first step towards merging thinking, practice and responsible action into our evolving profession. Looking to the future, former RGD president Jean-Pierre Lacroix declared: "we have laid a good foundation on which to build. We have to gear up… to promote the idea that good design is good business and explain why RGD's do it better. The legislation that enabled accreditation…in Ontario is a mere punctuation mark in the entire story that is about to be written."[78]

As in other case studies, certification in Canada anchors the profession's ongoing engagement with the government, business sectors and educational institutions. RGD as both an entity and a group of certified professionals is focused on strengthening their country's education system – specially their negligible graduate programs – and being the unified voice and regulatory liaison for all of its members. For a program that began in the 1990s, research was the key to addressing the design industry's need. Regardless of what the future holds for certification across all of Canada, I must recall Albert Ng's optimism once more: "accreditation/certification is a journey, not a destination. Whatever we choose to call it, it is not a benefit to our generation. It is a direction for our next generation."[79]

Canadians remain in the forefront of the certification issue as proven by current RGD president Lionel Gadoury's keynote presentation at the 2012 AIGA Pivot national conference, where he shared the success

of their certification process. While the USA continues to tinker and evaluate its viability, numerous Canadian provinces remain unified nationally, while pushing for their own local certification following the RGD model.

U.K.

Certification in the U.K. has existed since the 1970s. Nonetheless, I decided to present the Swiss and Canadian systems first because they are the only certification models formally recognized by government laws. Does this mean that other examples are not as valuable? Not at all. With its roots going back to the Society of Industrial Artists in 1930, the U.K. has a long tradition of professional training and high standards. With the granting of a *Royal Charter* in 1976, the entity was renamed the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD),[80] as it is known today. Run as a *learned society*,[81] not an association, the CSD peer-review process takes into account an applicants qualifications, business knowledge and professional commitment to establish their membership criteria. The Society has since established a unique certification system with *Fellow, Member, Associate* and *Student* memberships. Although specific details of their evaluation are omitted on the Society's official website, aspiring members are gauged against the parameters of the CSD *Genetic Matrix*™: Creativity, Professionalism, Skills and Knowledge.

Individuals enrolled in a recognized post-secondary design program can become *Student* members. This enables them to network and initiate a relationship with the CSD early on, with the aim of becoming a full member in the near future. *Associate* serves as a midpoint

for recent graduates or inexperienced designers before achieving full *Member* (MCSD) status, while *Fellow* (FCSD) exists as the highest designation. As stated on their official website: "membership of CSD is proof that a designer operates to the highest professional standards having satisfied the Society of their competence to practice. The affix MCSD and FCSD is therefore highly valued amongst designers and can be relied upon by members of the business community and public to identify those who practice professionally and operate to a strict Code of Conduct."

The CSD has not remained static in its mission to serve, protect and promote design across the country, establishing a triad of additional programs. First, in 2005 the CSD implemented a novel system that accredits design businesses. Via the Design Association Accreditation Programme (DA), institutions that meet the Genetic Matrix criteria obtain this new designation. Second, in 2010 the CSD Course Endorsement Programme became a reality, bringing to the academic realm what the DA gave businesses and corporations. Arranged in three parts – *Accredited*, *Recognized* or *Validated* – this system identifies and awards classes that follow the Matrix's criteria, thus providing benefits for students, educational entities and industry.[82] With a mission to: "recognise professional status by mapping course content…that is not a burden for education and is supported by industry," the Endorsement Programme recognizes the fact that formal studies enable designers to further their knowledge and expertise. Finally, the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was created to harmonize the demands of the profession inside and outside the classroom. The CPD intends to foment the necessary design and business

78 skills in our constantly evolving profession. Through a series of point-based training modules – that include seminars, classes, distance learning, mentoring and public speaking – designers become professionally engaged to the fullest extent. Each module can be taken individually or as an extended course. After the completion of all twelve available modules a *Diploma in Design Business Management* is conferred to members wishing to continue their education.[83]

Via three distinct systems, the U.K. has implemented and managed design's highest benchmark for individuals, entities and continuing education. Becoming a trustworthy entity has entitled the CSD with the credibility and regard that transforms MCSD, DA and CPR from postnominal acronyms to symbols of competence, quality and seriousness. Design education has been at the core of every certification discussion in the USA. Many people argue there are too many degree-granting design institutions, an excessive number of unprepared graduates and a lack of control over the capabilities, or lack thereof, of these educational programs. The CSD has faced this issue straight on. Their comprehensive approach has unified the classroom with the workplace and provided designers with a solid platform for the continuous accumulation of theoretic and practical knowledge.

In 1994, British designer and former AIGA president Anthony Russell opposed certification in the USA and presented the notion that: "the answer is not to certify...[but] to look at the source of the problem, which is education."[84] Twelve years later, his native U.K. seems to have struck a balance, consolidating a system of individual accountability and educational excellence. When I interviewed Mr. Russell

earlier this year, we discussed certification and accreditation in the general sense, his perspective on the matter while at the helm of the AIGA from 2001–2003, as well as his current posture. While discussing the CSD Course Endorsement Programme, Russell shared: "I thought that was brilliant and something that should happen here (in the USA). That is the worthwhile and appropriate merging of professional life and student life in a very practical and meaningful way." With a membership of 3,000 designers from various fields, the CSD has since cemented its place as the premier benchmark for design in the U.K.

AUSTRALIA

Following the path carved by The Society of Designers for Industry (1947) and the Industrial Design Institute of Australia (1958), the Design Institute of Australia (DIA) has been the nation's main body for design representation since its inauguration in 1982. The Institute consolidates more than a dozen design disciplines including: textile, industrial, exhibition, multimedia, interior, furniture, graphic, jewelry, interior architecture, decoration, management and education. Recognizing the diversity within Australian design, the DIA functions as the single representative for all their needs and interests within the industry. Via a combination of education, practice and ethics, the Institute provides a steady ground for future development. Its mission is to trigger a conversation between designers, businesses, communities and the government, exchanging ideas that bring Australian design innovation into the forefront of the international spectrum. How does the DIA membership relate to certification? How does it benefit the bigger picture?

80   Professional associations serve many functions. As presented by Russell Bevers, FDIA and program Co-coordinator at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), one of the main purposes should be to "provide quality benchmarks...industry requirements, expectations and feedback to educators and suppliers to the design process. They [associations] can do a tremendous amount to inform and educate the marketplace about the value of design to business."[85] Among its other functions, the DIA delivers networking opportunities, assistance, guidance, industry surveys, lectures, conferences and makes recommendations on suppliers, educational programs and other resources. It also serves as Australia's international design voice via partnerships with ICOGRADA, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and the International Federation of Interior Architects and Interior Designers (IFI).

Membership in the DIA is divided into three categories: *Professional*, *Business* and *International*. The *Business* level is directed at corporations, design institutions, non-designers and partners who wish to develop a stronger relationship with the DIA and its community. The *International* level provides a connection between practitioners from other countries and the Asian-Pacific region, mirroring the *Professional* stream through a long distance approach. All DIA membership categories are guided by education, experience, ethical parameters and an optional portfolio review. Let's concentrate on the Professional stream and its Accredited Designer™ denomination.

The *Professional* category is awarded at four distinct levels: *Member*, *Associate*, *Graduate* and *Student*. It also provides *Fellow* (FDIA), *Life*

Fellow (LFDIA) and *Honorary* (FDIA Hon.) ranks to individuals with years of dedication who have made remarkable contributions to the field. The uniqueness of this Australian model stems from the DIA *Entry Point System*.[86] Recognizing the diversity of schooling backgrounds and experience between designers of all fields, the DIA fashioned a systematic model to handle such complexity. The system acknowledges design education from lower level Technical and Further Education (TAFE) certificates and diplomas to university degrees. By assigning a specific number of points for every year of education, work and other criteria, the system tailors to the nature and reality of a diverse design industry. This approach caters to the 2006 DIA *Industry Projection* estimate of around 50,000 total designers in Australia with 30,000 of them being graphic designers. *Student* and *Graduate* memberships enable individuals to become involved with the DIA and enjoy limited benefits whether still in school or as recent graduates. *Associate* level is reached with a combined three years of education and/or work experience as well as abiding to the DIA Guide to Professional Conduct.[87] How does this point system work?

Achieving full Member status and being able to use the MDIA designation requires an individual to reach 21 points in the DIA system – by the aggregate of education, experience and ethical code agreement. To explain briefly, each year of education carries 3 points. So, a 1-year certificate, a two-year diploma, a 3-year degree and a 4-year degree equal 3, 6, 9 and 12 points respectively. Work experience is awarded a value of 2 points per year; from a minimum of 3 years (6 points) to a maximum of 7 years (14 points). Because this point system may be difficult to grasp, the DIA provides a visual reference to aid in

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understanding its structure.[88] Additionally, each member must agree to the DIA Guide of Professional Conduct, where points range from 3 for Student members to 6 points for both Associates and Full Members, demonstrating the different emphasis on responsibility expected at each category.

Via this point system the DIA has established a benchmark for practitioners to follow and for design providers, clients and businesses to utilize and recognize. According to Russel Bevers, this mixture of theory and practice is what differentiates a rounded designer from a technician, he mentions that: "all of the things we designers use… are just tools and are useless if we don't know when or why to use them. What we need to remember as designers is to start with a good idea and to decide why a design should do something, before we decide what it should look like."[89] The DIA believes that a designer can never stop learning but must keep up as new tools become available. Innovation becomes key for the growth of the profession and "requires an ongoing commitment to education. As a professional you are required to be able to advise clients on the range of options available to them and their relative benefits."[90]

Technology has undoubtedly changed the way design work is developed today. Easy access to the computer tools that designers depend on, has created a perspective that values quantitative data-driven fields over creative intangible ones. The DIA discusses the fact that design has "little or no barriers to people entering industry via self-training. Designers find themselves competing with people of widely differing training and skill levels."[91] Generally for employers

and clients, design education, knowledge and expertise do not carry the weight of an attractive portfolio. Recognizing this tendency, the DIA clarifies that: "the value of design education however is that an employer can be more confident that you have some understanding of historical precedents...of techniques and tools...and the values by which the industry operates...the DIA recommends four years of tertiary design training to degree level."[92] Educator, DIA and CSD fellow Cal Swann opposes the notion that learning ends at graduation, stating that: "new graduates will need to be independent learners... in how to search for information and to use it intelligently, not just to be computer literate in design software programs."[93] Furthermore, Swann proposes a structured continuing education program that follows the previously discussed CSD model in the U.K. This program would need to be embraced by employers, enabling designers to expand their skills and broaden their expertise while remaining at work. The investment would immediately be returned through a more efficient and knowledgeable workforce. Consequently, the DIA has introduced its highest level of recognition, credibility and commitment: the Accredited Designer™ designation and Continuing Development Program (CDP) tandem.

In the same way the DIA membership requirements have raised the bar for what is expected of designers, the *Accredited Designer* looks to break new boundaries. An MDIA or FDIA can willingly apply for accredited status by agreeing to and completing the annual requirements set forth in the CPD program. The program's goal is to provide a framework for gradual and consistent learning as the basis for professional practice. Furthermore, the DIA states: "the underlying

84 principle is that clients, businesses and the community have a right to quality services provided by competent designers with current skills. Your ethical commitment as a designer must be to continuously improve practice by regular professional education and personal development."[94] The CPD establishes a set number of points/hours that every designer must fulfill in order to acquire and maintain accredited status. These hours focus on tasks that develop skills, expand knowledge and give back to the profession, and each member is responsible for planning their path from a variety of CPD-aproved activities. Through its latest modification in 2004, the CPD established 40 points as the compulsory criteria. Activities include, but are not limited to: taking formal courses, writing papers, lecturing, conducting workshops, reviewing articles, curating exhibitions, mentoring and judging competitions. In accordance with the CPD Points schematic, each task carries different points and maximum limits.[95] Every member is also responsible for documenting and archiving proof of every task's completion in case a CDP audit is necessary. Ultimately, the CPD empowers designers to custom-build their future education, to amplify their strengths and to address any weaknesses. With education as the essence of personal and professional growth, the DIA has seized the occasion by granting individual designers a flexible road map from which to build their career.

As designers confront new boundaries, Australia stands united. By addressing design from all angles – education, business, ethics and society – the DIA is prepared to continue its mission of providing members with the guidance and leadership they need and expect. As presented in the 1995 *National Design Review Report Steering*

Committee: Competing by Design, Australia's future rests on the capacity to meet upcoming challenges. This committee presented five basic courses of action to guarantee that Australian design continues on a path of growth and evolution. First, to raise the profile, awareness and value of design in the public and private industry through education programs, promotional campaigns and competitions. Second, to establish resources and activities that highlight design's potential at both local and international levels. Third, to integrate design into the business management process and business into the design curriculum. Fourth, to dismiss the notion that design is simply styling by limiting the number of design programs and graduates to fit the demands of the market and by requiring a 4-year bachelor's degree, maintaining the highest standards possible. Fifth, to displace the inclination toward specialized design and move towards an interdisciplinary approach that help forge propitious relationships with professionals in other fields.

Three decades after its establishment, the DIA has welcomed every challenge, adapting to the commonalities and differences between designers of all fields. Every report, conference, statement and survey I have come across proves that Australia's design community is well equipped to affront the design hurdles of the future. For Australia, design is the seed that fosters the fertile ground necessary for adding long-lasting value, not only to tangible objects, but to the nation's commercial, political and educational standing. A statement by Helen O'Neill, Executive Director of the Council for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, at the Australian Design Alliance's (ADA) 2010 *Launch Event Report* resonates the forward-looking attitude of

86　　the Aussie design community: "economists and businesses have a
new focus on innovation and creativity as the pathway to prosperity
and profits. At last, it seems, the values and capacities of artists, archi-
tects and designers are recognized – not as some luxury add-on, as
nice-to-haves-if-affordable – but as the very drivers of growth and
sustainability." Thus, Australian design associations present us with
a model worthy of consideration and imitation. In the words of Gary
Bortz, FDIA Accredited Designer: "the DIA provides a valuable point
of contact with designers in all professions. It promotes and endorses
members that meet its CPD requirements – a valuable way of differ-
entiating oneself in a hotly contested design market. The more mem-
bers we have, the more visible we are, and the more seriously everyone
is taken."[96]

NORWAY

As the main visual communications organization in Norway, *Grafill*
seeks to protect every "member's professional, economic, legal and
social interests, working to raise professional quality, ethical level
and improve education."[97] Grafill emerged in 1991, from the union
of two professional bodies: the Norwegian Graphic Designers and
the Norwegian Illustrators Association. With a growing membership
of 1,400, Norway's design community has welcomed commitment
and professional advancement as an agent to cultivate the industry's
future. With a long history of design and architectural excellence,
Norwegians are accustomed to quality materials and detailed crafts-
manship. As a bastion of political solidity and quality of life, Norway
remains one of the strongest world economies, standing third
in the 2005 *Quality-of-life-index*[98] study. The country's miniscule

unemployment rate of 0.34% combined with one of the top-perform-
ing education systems in the world, makes fertile ground for design-
ers to develop and thrive in.[99]

I first encountered Norwegian design while reading Christian Leb-
org's book, *Visual Grammar*. I immediately fell in love with its sim-
ple graphic journey through the basic design principles. Coincidentally,
Leborg is an accomplished member of Grafill's expanding commu-
nity. Grafill unites creative people from fields like illustration, ani-
mation, comic book design, interactive media and graphic design.[100]
Based in Oslo, the organization works to promote the vitality of design
within local communities and in the larger social picture. In order
to become a *Full* member individuals must possess a bachelor's
degree in design or three years of working experience, and only they
can hold board positions at Grafill. A *Student* membership is also
available, and this status can be maintained for two years after grad-
uation. Any non-practitioner, supplier or partner can apply for *Asso-
ciate* membership and become part of the nation's design dialogue.
Through this three-tier system, Norway has created a community
that promotes the exchange of knowledge and encourages the high-
est standards from the university campus to the design studio.

Grafill's practicing guidelines consist of a pair of documents: the
Nordic Visual Communication (NVK) ethical and collegial rules and
the *Grafill Code of Conduct*.[101] Provided as professional protocols for
design practice, these statutes embrace the scope of design's influ-
ence and our role as designers in society. The *Grafill Institute*, an
additional subsection, organizes social and professional events and

88 provides orientation in the tools and technology of the field. Through its online presence Grafill also provides direction on contracts, briefs, supplier fees, intellectual property, pricing work and a list of recommended universities and vocational enterprises. Industry reports, statutes and salary surveys are some of the resources provided annually to the membership body. Thus, the professional integrity and development of Nordic designers is safeguarded and nurtured as they face the technological changes and industry demands of our evolving profession. Furthermore, acknowledging the importance of looking outwards, Grafill has forged a strong design network throughout Scandinavian and Nordic countries as well as with the rest of Europe.

With its AMG certification, Grafill goes one step further addressing the reality that: "in a market that it is open for anyone...there is a need to demonstrate that there is a difference between the service that an experienced practitioner can offer and what an amateur has to offer...The consequence is that it becomes increasingly difficult for clients to navigate, not to mention be able to make safe choices."[102] *Authorized Member Grafill* (AMG) is a denomination given to Full members who pass a two-day course. The combined requirements for becoming a Full member and an AMG are the core of Grafill's certification process. Given several times a year, the AMG course discusses relevant topics such as: project management, contracts, legislation, ethics and customer relations. In this way the business side of our industry is highlighted and alliances are fortified. As design evolves, younger designers have welcomed Grafill membership and AMG as an indispensable part of cementing their place within the industry.

Øystein Berge, AMG graphic designer, offers: "in the face of customers, it [AMG] provides an additional safety that we have the experience and knowledge of design processes before we enter into agreements. The title also provides a better framework for remuneration."

Grafill declares AMG to be a mark of quality that "will give an increased confidence in those who are buyers of visual services when they know that there are common methods, principles and ethical guidelines that form the basis of the one who has this authorization. AMG is a tangible way to 'prove' quality." With this reliable and respected foundation, Norway's design future looks as promising as ever. In the words of Christian Leborg's *Visual Grammar*: "Easy access to computer graphic tools has turned many of us into either amateur or professional image producers. But without a basic understanding of visual language a productive dialogue between producers and consumers of visual communication is impossible."

DENMARK

With formal initiatives ranging back to the 1940s, design in Denmark reached a milestone in 1995. The merger of two main bodies – the Furniture Designers and Interior Architects of Denmark (MMI) and Industrial Designers of Denmark (IDD) – gave birth to the newly formed Danske Designere or Danish Designers (DD). This new body represents designers from the industrial, furniture, textile and visual communications fields, and joins forces with the established Danish Design Center (DDC).[103] Born in 1978, this Center focuses on educating the public and private sectors by furthering policies that instill the value of design as a vehicle for boosting Denmark's global

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competitiveness. The DDC is compelled to present Denmark as a design power to the international community, in the political, economic and social realms. Additionally, a series of workshops, lectures and educational activities form part of the Center's daily work.

While the DDC fosters design outside of Denmark, Danish Designers supports individuals in all areas of design inside the country.[104] Speaking on behalf of all designers, DD aims to perpetuate the role of design with both a commercial an non-profit focus, and "to be the professional forum for people representing design competence, either as designers, educators, researchers, industrialists or promoters of design as a cultural factor, a competitive tool or a tool for change."[105] Danish Designers' certification offers *Professional* and *Student* memberships. Obtaining a *Professional* status requires the applicant to meet the minimum standards in two out of three criteria: three years of post-secondary design education, three years of working experience and/or three letters of recommendation from active members. When all criteria is met, a designer becomes a full member and can use the MDD designation. As former DD Managing Director Steinar Amland explains: "MDD plays an increasingly important role as 'screening parameter' for professional design buyers…communicating the difference between design based on competency…and as something anyone with a Mac [computer] can do. We like to characterize design as a problem-solving method, a process and a tool for change – rather than 'styling.'"

Student membership is achieved with proof of enrollment from an approved design institution. To attain any level of membership an

individual also needs to comply with the Danish Designers' *State-ment of Purpose* and *Ethical/Collegial Rules*. Membership benefits include special events, insurance policies, internal publications, lectures and industry reports, plus being supported by the conviction that: "common for all those who use the title Designer MDD, is that they work professionally with development processes where design thinking and methodology [and] the ability to facilitate complex processes are key success factors."[106]

It seems evident that certification in Denmark follows a similar structure to every case study we have looked at. Yet, in 2010 Danish Designers took it one step further with the release the 3rd edition of their annual manifesto titled: *The Role of Design in the 21st Century*.[107] A substantial and sincere document, this manifesto presents the fundamental principles of Danish design and the mission and beliefs that guide the DD. By taking a profound look into the current condition of the design profession and its relationship with higher education, industry and global society, the manifesto's goal comes forth: "to promote the most intelligent use – as well as the understanding of the true value – of design and of the thinking, skills and capacities of Danish designers."[108] To appreciate the relevance of Danish certification we must examine their *Design Policy*, as a paragon of how to confront the ever-changing realities of our profession.

Design organizations throughout the world – whether they offer certification or not – need to integrate their member's needs and encourage the government and corporations to join the conversation. To become trustworthy, it is imperative that they study, understand and

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meet the designer's fluctuating roles and responsibilities. At the turn of the 21st century, Danish Designers adopted a new bottom line as their north star: People, Profit, Planet. Paving their leadership role, DD transformed into a body that assumes a bigger role for all designers, one that changes from producing artefacts and objects to a broader philosophical affair. Accepting that design has changed forever, DD built their professional body with the notion that: "the role of the designer has increasingly become that of facilitating qualified choices... between real and more sustainable alternatives than current ones – rather that creating more of what's already there."[109] Here we see how responding to responsibilities, not only to commercial demands, has come to the forefront of their scale of values. Nonetheless, DD considers design as a tool for the betterment of both economic and social factors – attracting new clients, public and private corporations and international investors – while harnessing its power to add value, not only to material things, but to our intangible relations with the public, clients and businesses.

The DD Design Policy states the need for designers to develop a "more responsible and balanced global order," advocating for "cautious guardianship of design's original meaning and its meaningfulness to the individual." The DD invites designers to focus on work that fulfills commercial, aesthetic and practical demands in a smarter way, so they can overcome a project's limitations and at the same time conserve capital, limit waste and protect human resources. The seriousness of design in Denmark has been awakened by this new approach, displacing superficiality with accountability. As declared in their manifesto, the era of designers as technicians has long passed.

Designers today have and inescapable responsibility to society, the environment and future generations. Yielding to the fact that "more than three of four decisions influencing the final choice of materials and manufacturing processes are made in the design phase," DD exhorts designers to make smarter choices and measure the consequences of every decision.

The DD Design Policy research concludes by presenting a series of recommendations. One, the need to incorporate business, communication and management skills into degree-level design education, and the urgency for educational institutions to adapt to shifting demands and tendencies. Two, develop avenues where Denmark is highlighted as a design nation, where innovation and responsibility go hand in hand. Three, undergo a "mapping" of the design industry and all design education programs at the national level, identifying the current conditions and thus being prepared to modify and build for the future. Four, establish a dialogue between designers and clients, cultivating the trust and understanding essential to the success of this relationship. Five, stimulate the enactment of a government-sanctioned design policy that fuses the design community into every public oriented project and social endeavor.

Through this thesis research, the Danish model didn't grab my initial attention. As information was difficult to identify, translate and gather, I focused only on the requirements for the MDD certification. But, as I began to discover the social and ethical concerns of the organization, my eyes were opened wide. The level of self-accountability and preoccupation with design and Denmark's place in the global

picture is commendable. I remain humbled by the current challenges facing designers and how these demands will become incremental in the coming years. Hence, we can only move forward by facing up and recognizing the responsibilities linked to our knowledge and skills. The *Design for Planet* section of the DD manifesto summed it best: "not all designers can or should address such major, global issues. But no designer can excuse themselves from taking responsibility. All designers have an influence on the future of the earth through their work, and they can all work towards more sustainable solutions...." I could not have said it any better.

OTHER COUNTRIES

As we can see, certification is very much alive in the worldwide design community. The aforementioned countries have instituted parameters and systems adapted to their particular idiosyncrasies and established goals – creating distinction, not division. Certification also exists in other parts of the world, some systems have existed for decades, while others are substantially younger. Membership in the major design associations in Hong Kong, Japan, Italy and Serbia require formal design education and/or experience to varying degrees. These four countries, miles away from each other, have implemented certification for the benefit of their design community and the general public. I do not intend to minimize their importance when compared to the previous examples rather, I present them as proof of the growing international movement towards professionalizing the graphic design industry.

Since 1972, the Hong Kong Designers Association (HKDA) has served "to advocate public interest in design and higher professional status for practising designers in government, cultural, entertainment, commercial and industrial sectors."[110] The HDKA has pinpointed the potential impact that innovation and creativity can bring to the world's stage with a triad of directions: to expand the creative industry, nurture the upcoming generation of designers through quality education and foster a unified organization by enhancing standards of excellence.[111] The HKDA provides a tiered system ranging from *Fellow* to *Student* membership. Fellow membership is obtained by completing a university degree along with three years of real-world experience. Student membership is self-explanatory. The association embraces a variety of specializations by welcoming practitioners from the fields of fashion, exhibition, multimedia and product design, among others, and by implementing a Professional Code of Conduct common to all. Thus, the HKDA looks to integrate design within every facet of business and industry at the service of Hong Kong society.

The Japan Graphic Designers Association (JAGDA) was born in 1978. Established by Yusaku Kamekura[112] – one of the designers responsible for the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympic design[113] – the association's body currently totals about 3,000 members. JAGDA is committed to the development of Japanese graphic design and "to support the dynamic work of genre- and border-crossing designers with further broadened horizons … in times in which the power of design has become an elemental force."[114] To become a Professional Member, a designer must have at least two years of both education and working experience. The association's vision reflects the unique qualities and

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long-standing relationship between Japanese culture and design. In it, terms like cooperation, culture and pride are viewed as the way to merge traditional values while encouraging the next generation of designers "to expand consciousness and scope of [their] work."[115]

Professional requirements for designers have a long history in Italy, beginning in 1945 with the inception of the Association of Technicians, Artists and Advertisers (ATAP). In 1955 a name change to the Italian Association of Artists and Advertisers (AIAP) was implemented. With the signing of the 1993 *Charter of Graphic Design*, the association became the Italian Association of Visual Communication Design. That same year, membership structures and a *Code of Deontological Ethics and Professional Conduct* were integrated.[116]

The code is based on ICOGRADA's international ethics model and presents the responsibilities of the designer towards: the community, our clients and each other. Additionally, this code clarifies AIAP's position with regard to remuneration, truth in advertising and participation in competitions. The association works to define and recognize the "professional status of the designer" and their contribution to the public and private sector by respecting *end-users* and natural resources. *Professional* AIAP members must possess a bachelor's degree in design, or equivalent study, and five years of proven business; *Junior* level has the same education requirements, but asks for only two years of experience. Through varied membership categories the AIAP becomes a bridge for designers of different backgrounds, consolidating the force of Italian design at the local and international levels.

We end this certification journey in Serbia, with The Association of Applied Arts Artists and Designers of Vojvodina (UPIDIV), consisting of professionals from eighteen different fields, including visual communications, architecture, restoration, interior and industrial design. According to UPIDIV 2012 *Regulations*, a designer must prove the "completion of professional education and a comprehensive curriculum vitae, showing substantial work experience" in order to become a member.[117] The association also "provides a reasoned assessment of the fulfillment of prescribed standards and criteria for entry into the field of applied art and design [and] informing members of continuous professional development and collaboration."[118]

According to Aleksandar Topolac, Creative Director at Arteria and a UPIDIV member, there is also "a professional jury that judge your portfolio and decides whether one becomes a member or not. But unless that certification is somehow enforced or backed by the law, there is no point. We at UPIDIV have tried to enforce certification for decades with no visible results whatsoever."[119] Topolac presents a harsh reality: that certification without public understanding can only be effective to a certain extent. He adds: "I don't think certification is pointless, but without 'outside' world recognition, it really doesn't mean much." In Topolac's opinion, the existing Serbian certification model is missing a link to the international community in order to strengthen their internal network and acquire relevance in the global picture.

Thus, I conclude my examination of the plethora of certification programs I have identified around the globe. While many differences abound, every country has intended to create a foundation from where

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their industry can flourish. The specific details of each one have been implemented to address the problems unique to each country's design industry and how these problems, and solutions, affect society and politics. These systems serve as guides, as plausible models. We can take the best ideas from these case studies and modify them to suit the design practice in the USA. Certification is not a one-size-fits-all model. By recognizing that simple fact, we can begin to engage in the arduous effort of transforming certified graphic design from myth to reality.

"I think that you're obligated to everyone – to yourself, your client, the user, and society – and particularly to society. The problem comes up when there's a conflict between these groups."

Stanley Tigerman
ARCHITECT[120]

: (UN) PROFESSIONAL

DIVERGENT PERSPECTIVES

WHAT HAS BEEN SAID

The issues and views I am presenting about certification are not new. This debate has been raging since fine artists became graphic and commercial artists. The reality is that graphic design is still a young and unstable field, evolving and growing every day. Terms, techniques and methods used today, become irrelevant in a heartbeat. However, today's designers are required to keep up with any novelty and cutting edge breakthroughs. Thus, the question of professionalism ensues. Is graphic design a profession or a technical trade? Are designers skilled craftsmen, visual communicators or information architects?[121] While opinions abound, each valid in its own way, there is an influential discourse that must be highlighted. These conversations are proof that the relationship between education, ethics and practice are the core of the certification argument.

EDUCATION

In his book "The Education of a graphic Designer," Steven Heller points out that design education "...is as complex as any technical profession – if not more confusing. For unlike degree programs aimed at those professions governed by established standards, graphic design, which does not demand certification, has few regulations and hardly any blanket requirements (other than 'knowing' the computer)."[122] This 1998 comment was appropriate for its time, but is it still applicable? Regulations, norms and standards have always been approached with apprehension. The very thought of defining what is "normal" among more than 280,000

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practicing designers and over 2,000 design institutions seems a daunting task. Nonetheless, the diverse education system began to take a proactive stance against NASAD (the National Association of Schools of Art and Design) accreditation in the 1990s.

Designer and professor Meredith Davis explains that during that time "many of the best programs in the country forego NASAD accreditation in the belief that its standards bear little resemblance to the professional practice of graphic design and out of the frustration that accreditation teams rarely include designers."[123] As a result, a joint effort was initiated between the AIGA and NASAD and focused on establishing national standards for design education that enable room for change, but remain stringent in setting benchmarks for all schools. Afterwards, Davis became an official member of NASAD's accreditation commission working to develop a consistent pedagogic system that unites theory with practice – reducing the tendency of only placing value to design portfolios. She adds that "...more comprehensive definitions of standards and review processes for professional design curricula will improve the overall quality of academic offerings." These educational parameters have enabled the proliferation of the most committed institutions and permitting relevant programs to continue evolving – letting the essence of their particular teaching philosophies to shine through.

Until recently, the US Department of Labor (DOL)[124] did not recognize graphic design as a profession in itself. For many decades, it was perceived as a subset of advertising or as a technical skill.

Although graphic design now has its own category on the DOL site, the description still includes the terms "artistic" and "decorative effects." It is no wonder graphic design remains tied to self-expression, consumerism and advertising. The very definition of our profession is still undefined and up for grabs. Even designers have a tough time explaining to others what we actually do; I still don't think my mom understands what I do. Regardless of a lack of understanding, design education has been booming in recent years. As the economy continues to spiral downward, design programs are thriving; new courses, lectures, seminars are advertised every day. The extensive options for design study – combined with a wealth of information available through the internet – has created a plethora of online libraries that focus on showcasing impressive technical work and software proficiency, and some excellent design work as well.

As designer, professor and writer Katherine McCoy explains: "many students now leave undergraduate school with impressive portfolios....The downside of this success is a tendency for these graduates to regard education as a passive process [...] rather than a life-long self-initiated learning."[125] This open availability to design education, has created a field of unfathomable scale. Look around during your subway ride, the traffic jam or at the pedestrians walking next to you. A quarter of them probably own the same design software we use in our work, many would even call themselves graphic designers. Glorifying software skills has created a perception of formal design studies are unnecessary, a waste of time and money. CalArts professor Jeffery Keedy contends that

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"...there are so many educated designers who view design education as a necessary evil instead of a lifelong commitment. [...] They fail to understand that design education today is much more than vocational training, it is a process of discovery and renewal."[126] Keedy is an active voice fostering the relevance of education, not only as a link between theory and practice, but as the place where values and paradigms are redefined, challenged and cultivated.

According to the AIGA, Graphic Artists Guild and other professional bodies, the design population in the USA consists of around 350,000 designers, a consequence of an unregulated profession. Many questions arise. When does one become a Designer? Is it a meaningless term or a meaningful title that must be earned? Design education is paramount for cultivating well-rounded designers. It brings theory, skill, history and technique together, preparing us to address the social concerns of the next generation. However, the ease of getting a design degree – at the certificate, associate and bachelor level – presents a persistent doubt: if everyone has one, then what makes us stand out?

PRACTICE

I do not intend to mystify our profession or go back to the days of the glorified designer who worked behind closed curtain and presented marvelous advertising campaigns like an act of magic. Yet, there is a lack of regard within our own industry and a tendency to oversimplify the design process by uttering the phrase: "well, it's not brain surgery." Andrew Blauvelt, designer and curator at the Walker Art Center, responds: "perhaps graphic design isn't a

physically invasive procedure, but certainly there's the same potential danger of mind-numbing results."[127] With this comment, Blauvelt acknowledges the psychological power we can exert over our audiences. In design, successful individuals come from diverse experiences, some were formally educated, others self-taught. Some changed careers and became accomplished, others are just marvels of creativity. Because design carries no particular path or a structured instruction manual, the usa's admiration for the "self-made trailblazer" has permeated our field. This historic admiration for achieving success through hard work and luck, regardless of aptitude, is at the core of the free-market belief in the United States. Jeffery Keedy laments that "uncritically celebrating the success of the self-taught designer, without qualifying success, only serves to undermine our own credibility and history."[128] He continues by adding that "...in contrast to the precocious vocabulary-abusing graduate student, the plain-talking self-taught designer represents a reassuring alternative to constant change and increasing complexity. Perhaps this is why some of the harshest criticism in design today is no longer directed at the under educated, but at the supposedly overeducated."

The fact that many individuals have succeeded with no formal training does not trouble or bother me. What becomes cumbersome is when we begin to idolize ignorance rather than commitment and labored study. A more educated designer does not ensure "better" work, but those who have endured the pains of design education, or any other for that matter, understand the intangible value that education adds at a personal level and how it effects

work and product quality. Those same design graduates are subsequently responsible for engaging a dialogue between the classroom and real-world environments. Individual accomplishments and admirable work should be applauded and respected. However, with certification I am looking at a broader goal: the consummation of the profession as a whole.

In 1994, as an avid voice against professional standards, designer Michael Rock wrote an essay titled *In Defense of Unprofessionalism.* The essay openly shares his resistance to design certification in any form. Rock states that "the predominant feature that seems to run through any gathering of designers is a deep-seated insecurity. Designer anxiety is rooted in a fear that what we do is not respected, worthwhile, important. [...] In that desperation, designers turn to professionalism as their savior.[129] A harsh but valid point. If certification is based on selfishness and insecurity, then it's not really being pursued for the right reasons. Arguing that imposing any parameters for practitioners to follow would be of detriment to the field, he concludes by stating that "if we released ourselves from the realm of imposed standards, we could see design as a true meritocracy, where the cream rises to the top." Here we can see that Rock, a widely successful designer in his own right, believes that achievements come only to those who deserve them; those who are "better" than the rest. Rock does not stand alone in his opposition to certification. At a 1995 event held by the AIGA and the Art Directors Club, Ellen Shapiro and Phillip Meggs[130] began discussing their proactive certification perspective against the objections of designers Michael Beirut

and Joseph Michael Essex. The latter, opposed to certification, encouraged designers to "quit longing for respectability and start doing great work."[131] This statement reflects the pervasive notion that proponents of certification are looking for a way to survive the "threat" of new talent, new technology or professional competition. It promotes the belief of self-training as the road to fulfilling the American dream with the least amount of effort or commitment. Ironically, the same validation that Rock, Beirut and Essex claim certification supporters are longing for, is celebrated annually at design galas, and through awards and medals this trio has received numerous times themselves.

Additionally, Jeffery Keedy shares that "to be professional is to be impartial and objective, guided by established precedence in your field. Although the word 'professional' is used freely in design practice, graphic design is not a profession. Designers have no obligatory regulating body that oversees and safeguards standards of practice. Today, anyone can be a member in most...design organizations for the price of admission, and can print 'graphic designer' on their business cards. The true professionals in graphic design are in design education." Keedy continues by elaborating on the irony that design educators, who work within accredited and tested institutions, are constantly criticized by practitioners for not producing more "professional" ready-for-work graduates.

If one curiosity stands out from my research, it is that many of the celebrated and idolized designers today are vehemently opposed to norms or requirements in our discipline; wether mandatory of

108 voluntary. Many of them see change as being adverse to their current workload, recognition and business status. On the other hand, most certification advocates I have encountered come from the education world, presenting certification as a holistic way of fusing design study with practice. Whether this tendency is coincidental or not remains to be seen. Conversations and disputes of the past should not re-emerge, rather, we must share them, learn from them and be able to move on. I believe that pursuing certification can benefit the profession considerably, more than awards and accolades will ever do. Although difficult to envision, a certification system that upholds our past and is constructed with flexibility and modularity in mind can foster deeper relationships between learning and doing. It all remains in our hands. We could dispute the differing statements and views of yore, and still get nowhere, it is time to start anew and establish a conversation founded in mutual respect, accountability and collective wellbeing.

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"Education and experience are the foundation to our future. If they remain at odds with each other, we will be building on shaky ground, and whatever we make will not stand for long."

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Jeffery Keedy
EDUCATION VERSUS EXPERIENCE (2005)

: LESSONS LEARNED

LESSONS LEARNED

WHAT WE TAKE AWAY

This journey across six countries and two hemispheres has opened my eyes and mind to the possibilities within our grasp, as well as the immensity of our challenge. Graphic design, communications design or visual communications, however we may call it, is subject to a growing level of complexity unlike other fields. The technological innovations arriving at this instant, coupled with the ones awaiting us, make one thing certain: our field will never be the same as it is right now. I believe designers genuinely care about the influence we have over improving or harming our social and environmental spheres. Future designers will surely face more complex situations and bigger obstacles than we do today. Yet, the range of backgrounds, ethnicity and outlooks makes the current *design generation* distinct and capable of achieving Massive Change.[132]

Being confronted with notions of despair, social divide and global deterioration has made us aware of a much needed revival within our industry. The flourishing of socially driven initiatives, sustainable products and renewable energy sources serve as clear proof that designers are aware, capable and up to the task; as the public stands eagerly awaiting for the solutions to escalating social problems. Consumers now demand an honest and clear message and they can easily check the facts and share their purchasing feedback with their inner social circles. Communication stands at the center of this reality.

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Designers themselves cannot stand aside and remain indifferent spectators. We want and need to become more demanding and involved. Yet, the seed of our unity and our common voice is in peril. Many design associations struggle to maintain a consistent membership and have become venues for showcasing "pretty" work and for cultivating peer recognition. Memberships have lost their seriousness and validity, ultimately becoming pay-to-participate social clubs. As we have seen, other countries have embraced organized bodies, recognizing the potential they have for nurturing the collaboration, recognition, development and education of their constituents. What is stopping us from doing the same?

Every graphic design certification model is unique. The strictness of the Swiss program stems from their prolonged history of producing quality craft and materials, where artists and designers play a vital part of the social realm. Canadians have shown us how design and government can work together to establish benchmarks that serve the common good at the national and local level. In Canada, the profession is invigorated as Ontario leads the way for others to follow. Following the requirements and examination model of the RGD Ontario, the Society of Graphic Designers of Québec (SDGQ) aims to bolster the professional qualifications of its members by establishing a formal system within the next five years; this serves as another example of Canadian design's accountability and the determination to bring certification nationally through the GDC. Lionel Gadoury, RGD Ontario president pronounces with excitement: "This agreement is a significant step forward, expanding on our commitment to work cooperatively and to implement best practices

for accreditation on par with other leading professional bodies, be they in finance, business management, health care, engineering or those of our sister design professions, architecture and interior design."[133]

The United Kingdom has addressed the lack of standards with an educational approach. The combination of the Design Association Accreditation Programme, Continuous Professional Development and Course Endorsement Programme simultaneously brings education to the workplace and business management into design. By evaluating and conferring different ranks to the overwhelming academic offerings available, designers and employers can make smarter decisions based on their specific needs. Through this method, the U.K. has made design education a lifelong venture. Across the globe, Australia's DIA brought a non-stop academic focus to the forefront of their program. By fusing more than 21 design disciplines and specialized fields, the DIA remains as the guiding light for the Aussie design community. The flexibility built into the DIA point system tailors to the unending variations of education and practice of its members. With the ability to become a Full member or work towards Accredited Designer status, the DIA platform is built for innovation and renovation, remaining flexible enough to adapt to future changes within the industry.

In Scandinavia, we learn how design policy is essential to quality of life. Norway's Grafill leads by example with a thorough Code of Conduct. The Design Institute's activities, business resources and technological training become another valuable asset for designers.

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Likewise, AMG certification serves as the highest achievement and level of expertise among Norwegian designers, merging business practice with design principles. Though Grafill members possess different skills and practice, within diverse specialties, responsibility and professionalism bring them all under one roof. Grafill provides them with a space for growth, stability and development. Not too far away, Denmark is a paragon for adding value to every aspect of a nation's identity through its design industry. Their brave manifesto and detailed Ethical/Collegial Rules encompass all the principles and beliefs on which Danish Designers was based. Instituting *People, Profit, Planet* as the new bottom line, Denmark acknowledged their implicit responsibilities and prepared a suitable plan for action, with design at the forefront.

Whatever our posture, it is evident that design associations in the USA have left many stones unturned. The polarizing discussion about a system of regulations, norms or benchmarks, has kept professional design at a standstill, open to anyone who wishes to enter. There is a vast openness in our profession, one that is not always beneficial. The lack of a system of standards and accountability within all practitioners has created a divide between the wants and needs of designers, our clients and society. Furthermore, the growing American population combined with a graphic design profession estimated at over 280,000, presents certification as both an unprecedented opportunity and a logistical challenge. Certification will not become an exclusionary system, but a welcoming and inclusive one. It can provide benchmarks that will acknowledge the fact that a quality degree, combined with substantial working experience, ethical standards

and the devotion to continue educational development is the only way to prepare a Designer who is capable of addressing the critical problems of the 21st century.

Regardless of any insecurity or inconvenience, designers need to sit down and talk about this issue. Certification, in any shape or form, should never be approached as the ultimate end. It can however become the spark that ignites a renewed relationship between designers and everything that surrounds us. The AIGA, Graphic Artists Guild, American Design Center and other design entities have done a commendable job celebrating the achievements of individual designers and highlighting outstanding design work. The resources, events and social activities they provide are invaluable tools for industry and designers alike. But, a cohesive system of professional competence and clear accountability continues to be omitted. Katherine McCoy suggests that: "the educational level of our schools is improving.

On the other hand, the refusal to consider accreditation and educational standards is a big threat in the USA. Every other design field has these, but not graphic design. I hope that will change as the older generation, which feels it would stifle creativity, moves out of the picture."[134] McCoy continues: "...another problem is that graphic design is a cash-cow[135] for universities. There are over 1,000 schools in the U.S., maybe 2,000, that say they teach graphic design. Of all these, there are maybe 30 good schools." On a positive note, during the past decade, with the popularity of Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Kickstarter, Fab and many other social platforms, there has been an immense presence of design in the news

and mass media. If practice, as we know it today, continues to improve it may reach the point where design is an essential strategic process within industry and society – operating on a higher level in the hierarchy of business. However, McCoy's comment implies that while progress is being made, there is more to be done. This fact remains hard to disagree with.

As of 2002, the AIGA *Code of Ethics* cemented the fact that designers had to be responsible to their clients and fellow designers. Yet, not much was said about the effect design has on the public and our surroundings. The main topic remained how to properly estimate, bill and write contracts for projects. Nonetheless, as Paul Nini, Visual Communications Professor at The Ohio State University, urged: "there is certainly nothing wrong with protecting our professional interests and the interests of our clients...However, I would argue that our single, most significant contribution to society would be to make sure that the communications we create are actually useful to those for whom they're intended...."[136]

This missing element was amended in the AIGA *Design Business + Ethics* code of 2009. In it, we find our responsibilities expanding beyond clients and designers, to include the public, society and the environment. The code also includes reprobation against speculative work and a decree for communication clarity, open competition and transparent client relationships. This document goes further, adding detailed parameters for dealing with intellectual property and usage of fonts, images, photography and billing practices, valuable information for any professional designer. The last line of the code's

Ethical Standards section reads: "clients can expect AIGA members to live up to these business and ethical standards for professional designers." Is "expect" the best security we can offer?

I am in no way belittling the long-standing commitment and the accomplishments of the AIGA and Graphic Artists Guild, or any other design organization for that matter. The activities they help promote are bringing design closer to the forefront of social participation. Weekly events, talks and annual conferences mesh designers together and provide a platform for discussion, shared opinions and inspiration. Designers need that space to reflect, be outspoken and grow intellectually and personally. Leading the way since 1914, the AIGA has grown to 66 chapters and more than 20,000 members nationally, no small task.[137] Since 1967, the Graphic Artists Guild has also been a vital entity for protecting and supporting the rights and practices of its members, even by providing legal counsel.[138] The *Graphic Artists Guild Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines* has become a remarkable asset for designers from all fields. From outlining employment trends, pricing guidelines and rules of conduct to settling disputes through the Guild's Grievance Committee, the book should be part of every designer's bookshelf. Both organizations have invested infinite resources and time to raising the standards and recognition of designers. Yet, professional apprehension has left many things to chance and personal interpretation.

Today, the majority of designers complain about how their work is meagerly perceived by businesses, the public and the government. Although big strides have been made, and design is slowly acquiring

118   a deeper appreciation in the eyes of non-designers, there is still a lack of understanding about the value of design work, our process and the cost of professional design. It is still common to hear stories about design proposals from reputable studios being refused, only to be given to the client's nephew because he "knew how to use Photoshop."[139] It will take time to build design understanding, in order to gain the same validity as the marketing, finance, and public relations industries, but I ask, is our profession worth it or are we indifferent to the challenge? Are we, as designers, willing to support a system of high standards that makes individuals work harder and invest more time for the benefit of the whole profession?

Trends, recognition and the insatiable thirst for fame have hindered the profession for too long. Many designers spend their lives striving to become the next Beirut, Glaser, Scher, Rock or Sagmeister, and there is nothing wrong with that, however, much of our industry lies amid the $30 logo designer and a Paul Rand. In between unscrupulous practices and visual brilliance, the graphic design profession struggles. There is timidity in our community, a fear to look ourselves in the mirror and question why there is an absence of self-evaluation and strictness in our work.

Switzerland, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Norway, Denmark, Japan, Hong Kong, Italy and Serbia have already shown us what is attainable, among a myriad of possibilities. Yet, no model will fall perfectly into place in another country, there is no cookie-cutter option. However, with research and dialogue a new process can begin. The same creativity, cleverness and conceptual-thinking

we implement into our client work, can begin to originate one of the greatest problem-solving undertakings in the history of Design: that of establishing the fundamental values of true graphic design, hence reshaping the core of the profession.

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"Paradoxically, at a time when graphic designers are being offered ever more enticing technological aids, these are also falling into the eager hands of nondesigners: Our hard-won skills are already being overtaken by do-it-yourself design packages."

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Ken Garland
ANXIOUS ABOUT THE FUTURE? (2005)

....

"Design is not the product of intelligentsia.
It is everybody's business, and whenever
design loses contact with the public, it is on
the losing end. [...] When I say that design
is everybody's business, I don't mean that
design is a do-it-youself job."

....

Paul Jacques Grillo
WHAT IS DESIGN? (1960)

: THE PROPOSAL

BUILDING CERTIFICATION

A NEW PROFESSIONAL BODY

After an extensive look at past and present certification discussions, its existing models and the diversity of existing opinions, it is time to present a concrete proposal. Certification in the USA, or in any other country for that matter, must arise as a partnership that honors the diversity of knowledge, backgrounds and fields that form our professional network. Thus, it is essential that we institute a new professional design entity, one that assumes a leadership role and embraces, through certification, the responsibilities and duties of all designers. The organization in charge of certification will be called Certifying Responsible Design (CRED). The following guidelines presents CRED as the organism responsible for establishing a comprehensive certification system and providing opportunities for the growth and advancement to its membership body.

The association must be
: an independent non-profit organization.
: partnered with major local and international design bodies.
: governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of working designers, educators, businesses and social science professionals, as well as representatives from the public sector.
: invested in fostering activities that unite the design community with the general public.
: organized with no required payment or membership fees that could hinder its transparency and objective mission.

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PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

CRED *will establish a set of benchmarks and expected standards applicable to all practicing members. Such criteria will serve to:*

: empower designers, fortify their professional standing
  and stimulate the recognition and value of Design in
  all areas of the social realm.

: cultivate the highest level of education, experience
  and ethics as the very definition of a competent and
  responsible Communications Designer.

: provide an effective tool to help clients, employers,
  partners and suppliers identify individuals of the
  highest standing, proficiency and expertise in the field.

: distinguish, not divide, between the level of
  commitment among practicing designers.

: MANIFESTO

As a unified association, CRED*'s certification system will:*

1 build on the history of design and foment experimentation, development and innovation from education to the highest level of professional practice.

2 establish standards of excellence and commonly shared expectations for all practitioners to follow, creating a benchmark that reinforces, unites and ensures the ongoing evolution of the design profession.

3 be assembled on a flexible platform that recognizes the changing dynamics of our industry, capable of adjusting and expanding to future developments.

4 replace the limiting term "graphic designer" with the more encompassing, appropriate and strategy-centered term "Communications Designer."

5 define the professional Communications Designer as a knowledgeable, experienced and ethical individual, capable of providing visual solutions that add value and go beyond superficial trends, looks or ephemeral styles.

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6 embrace the inherent responsibility and power of Design
   in the 21st century, integrating accountability into the fabric
   of our discipline.

7 advance the fundamental notion that Design plays a vital
   role in the preservation of our quality of life, the use of natural
   resources, our human interactions and the enrichment of our
   local and global society, introducing People, Planet, Profit as
   the foundation of our field.

8 identify that a formal design education, combined with a
   commitment to long-term development, are the core for
   growing our profession.

9 institute a platform of inclusion within the association,
   allowing designers from different levels of education,
   experience and backgrounds to achieve their personal
   and professional goals.

10 confront the fact that our industry enables individuals to
    practice via self-training, without any form of established
    accountability, ethical guidelines or theoretical knowledge,
    underscoring the value design education has on the
    development of the industry.

11 recognize that honesty and transparency are essential
    elements to forge long-lasting relationships with clients,
    peers, business and society.

12 require its members to follow strict codes of Ethics &
   Rules of Professional Conduct, holding them accountable
   for complying with such standards.

13 defend the value of designers inside industry, government,
   business and science, promoting the benefit that a multi-
   disciplinary exchange of knowledge has on innovation,
   problem-solving and the betterment of the global community.

14 denounce a designer's participation in deceitful, fraudulent
   and exploitative practices such as spec-work, crowd-sourcing
   and other activities, without adequate remuneration following
   local and federal copyright laws.

15 understand that certification is not a superficial, prestigious
   title, but a symbol representing an individual's level of busi-
   ness expertise, ethical standards and professional commit-
   ment to the practice, our industry and the general public.

16 acknowledge that portfolios serve to showcase design
   applications, practical experience, procedures and skills, but
   should never be the sole and primary element for assessing
   the competence, capability and commitment of a designer.

17 foster activities that facilitate exchange and unify all
   fields of design, nurturing respect and collaboration.

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18 protect the interests of the profession and its practitioners, continuing to fight for greater recognition, respect, inclusion, validation and participation of Design in the daily activities of our political, economic and social structures.

19 engage with academic institutions to ensure that design education provides the highest quality environment, teaching and skills, all grounded on ethics and social responsibility.

20 nurture the building of relationships between designers and nonprofit organizations, offering Design as an integral communication asset at the service of socially-driven enterprises.

: MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

The CRED *Point System* (CPS) *guarantees a culture of inclusion and opportunity amid the varied design community. There are five categories of membership, each one based on specific requirements. The* CPS *structure is accessible to designers from different backgrounds, education and experience levels; in order to encourage learning, professional development and continuous involvement.*

FELLOW

A designer with 10+ years of working experience, an exceptional portfolio and who has made a substantial contribution to the betterment of the profession and the wellbeing of society.

SENIOR

A practicing designer meeting the established minimum requirements at the Senior level.

JUNIOR

A practicing designer meeting the established minimum requirements at the Junior level.

GRADUATE

A recent graduate meeting the specified minimum requirements.

STUDENT

An individual enrolled in an accredited design degree program.

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: REQUIRE-MENTS

CRED *certification is built into five tiers. Each membership level carries specific requirements based on the following categories.*

CATEGORY	PTS	EDU	WORK	ETHICS	CONFERENCE	PORTFOLIO	PDC
FELLOW			●	●	●	●	●
SENIOR	40	●	●	●	●	●	●
JUNIOR	25	●	●	●		●	●
GRADUATE	10	●		●			
STUDENT							

[● = REQUIRED]

: POINT SYSTEM

A member must provide proof of and fulfill all CPS requirements based on the desired membership level. The value of non-design related education is also recognized and built into the system. Failure to comply with these obligations can result in the cancellation of membership.

❶ EDUCATION

Underscoring the importance of a formal post-secondary degree, educational programs carry different value points based on the following scale. Only degrees from fully accredited and approved institutions will be accepted.

DESIGN

ASSOCIATE DEGREE = 6PTS

BACHELOR'S DEGREE = 12PTS

MASTER'S DEGREE = 8PTS

NON-DESIGN

BACHELOR'S DEGREE = 6PTS

MASTER'S DEGREE = 4PTS

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2 EXPERIENCE

CRED retains the right to contact employers, clients and others to guarantee the veracity of claimed experience level. Years of experience carry value points based on the following scale.

WORK : 1 YEAR = 2PTS

Following the scale, the system provides for:
WORK (YEARS/POINTS)
3 = 6PTS (MINIMUM OF 3 YEARS)
4 = 8PTS
5 = 10PTS
6 = 12PTS
7 = 14PTS (MAXIMUM OF 7 YEARS CONSIDERED)

3 ETHICS + PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT CODE (EPC)

EPC points are provided in two tiers to reflect the level of ethical behavior expected of each membership category. The code enforces ethical guidelines as related to business practices, legal practices, contracts, marketing, human resources, client relationships, environmental resources and social responsibility among others.

GRADUATE & JUNIOR : 3PTS
FELLOW & SENIOR : 6PTS

4 **2-DAY CONFERENCE**

There is a need to demonstrate the different level of service
that an experienced designer can offer. The rising number of
educational programs, of varying quality, has made it increas-
ingly difficult for clients to navigate the industry, hire talent
and be able to make safe business choices. While establishing
a formal written test could be an alternative, such an endeav-
our result in immense logistical and economic difficulties.

The CRED conference is a bridge between school and the
professional world, providing the vital knowledge and up-
to-date information needed for a long-lasting and successful
design practice. Conferences occur twice a year in different
parts of the country. Unlike a written test, subject matter
can be frequently revised and updated to reflect the latest
innovations, technological developments as well as economic
and social concerns. This 2-day forum – required for all
SENIOR and FELLOW members – includes courses, lectures
and workshops addressing topics such as:

: LEGISLATION AND CONTRACTS

: RIGHTS-MANAGEMENT AND COPYRIGHT LAW

: PROJECT PRESENTATION SKILLS

: ACCESSIBILITY REGULATIONS

: THE END-USER AS ULTIMATE CLIENT

: DESIGN RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND THEORY

: MANAGEMENT, WORKFLOW AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

: RESPONDING TO AND CHALLENGING THE BRIEF

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: COMMUNICATIONS DESIGN FOR NON-PROFITS

: WORKING PRO-BONO

: SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

: ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND CODES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

: RESPONSIVE WEB AND INTERACTIVE DESIGN

: PRODUCTION & MANUFACTURING INNOVATIONS

: DESIGN FOR PUBLIC SPACES

CRED CONFERENCE : 6PTS

⑤ PORTFOLIO

The portfolio is integrated as additional proof of a designer's skills and visual capabilities. However, it must remain centered in communications, strategy and responsible practice. Applicants must submit 6 case-study work samples, with visual references, accompanied by a written rationale. A maximum of 2 case studies can come from student work. An applicant must then elaborate and defend their work in front of a jury. Portfolios will be judged and graded based on the following criteria:

: APPLICATION OF THE CLIENT'S BRIEF

: CONCEPT, STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

: PRODUCTION, DELIVERY AND EFFECTIVENESS

PORTFOLIO & WRITTEN RATIONALES : 1—3PTS

6 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS (PDC)

PDC *emphasizes the importance of a designer's personal and long-term commitment to education, development and growth. All* FELLOW, SENIOR *and* JUNIOR *certified members are responsible for completing the corresponding number of annual credits indicated for their membership level. Failure to comply can result in the cancellation of membership.* PDC *works in the following way:*

1 HOUR (REGULAR ACTIVITY) = 1 CREDIT
1 HOUR (CRED-SPONSORED ACTIVITY) = 2 CREDITS

JUNIOR : 20 CREDITS/YEAR
FELLOW & SENIOR : 30 CREDITS/YEAR

Credit approved activities include but are not limited to:
: FORMAL ACADEMIC STUDY
: RESEARCH PROJECT
: TEACHING OR MENTORING
: PARTICIPATING IN SEMINAR, WORKSHOP OR CONFERENCE
: PUBLISHING AN ARTICLE, ESSAY, BOOK OR OTHER
: ENGAGING IN PRO-BONO WORK
: LECTURING
: CURATING AN EXHIBITION

The CPS flexibility cultivates a bond between practitioners, and positions Communications Design as an indispensable activity at the service of industry, government, society and planet.

....

"The designer's training equips him to act
for the community, as the trained eyes
and hands and consciousness of that
community—not in some superior capacity,
but in virtue of the perceptions which he
inherits from the past, embodies in the
present, and carries into the future."

....

Norman Potter
WHAT IS A DESIGNER: THINGS, PLACES, MESSAGES (1969)

: CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

CURRENT PERSPECTIVE

Maybe I am already tainted by all the hours spent devouring information; learning how design associations function worldwide and discovering what was achieved by creating standards, qualifications and benchmarks and how these criteria were put in place. Although licensing can be seen as the epitome of protection and responsibility, the fact that existing graphic design certification models remain voluntary is key to their success. A communications design certification system that is self-administered, agreed upon and malleable can break through the wall of limitations and forge opportunities like never before. Nevertheless, it is critical that any support for certification be made with the right intentions. An attitude towards certification, as a vehicle, road map and path, not as the final objective is fundamental to its reality.

Amid any certification dialogue, it is paramount that we make one thing perfectly clear: implementing a system of distinction and differentiation between designers does not mean creating a professional divide. Rules and norms are needed and we must not be afraid to speak up. In a 2012 lecture at Pratt Institute, Rob Giampetro, designer, professor and Principal at Project Projects, spoke about norms as useful tools. He shared the idea that: "canons and regulations are fountains of opportunity, as long as we accept that by their nature rules highlight some things while excluding others." I am confident that limits do not need to become limiting and that rules are only restrictive when made inflexible. It is in the application, not in the idea , of establishing benchmarks

140   common to all practitioners where the consummation or failure of design certification lies.

We must accept one reality, that our profession's undefined nature is not a blessing in disguise or a celebration of the U.S. open market. The work being created in graphic design's name varies from the inspiring and innovative to the offensive and destructive. As the perception of our younger generations continues to crumble – as proven by the escalation in teen suicides, eating disorders and school bullies – communicators are much to blame. The depletion of our natural resources and the exponential tendency toward obsolescence, come back to decisions made during the design phase of the objects, products and processes we help make, build, promote and sell. Likewise, design's absence in the business world does not excuse us from the damage done by unscrupulous corporations. Who designs their brands and communication campaigns? We do. Who comes up with the clever headlines and captivating visuals that make up the much anticipated Super Bowl commercials? We do. Who has the power to recommend and select the printing processes, materials, inks and energy sources used for every book, package, signage and website that sees the light of day? You do. Then, should it all be seriousness and no play?

We admit that communicating through type, images, graphics and visuals is nourishing, enlivening and fun. The creative environments in which we work bring about a thinking process that does not exist in many fields. Designers and the "playful" and "fun" aspects of our practice are the envy of many non-creative

industry professionals. But, this pleasant quality of our work cannot continue to be left open and unprotected. A designer's ability to craft messages and create harmonious visual systems can be used for misleading manipulation or honest communication, and therein lies the problem. I am not asking you to quit your job and become a missionary, because I would not. I am not advocating a division between who is a "good" designer and who is not. I do not wish to divorce design from the commercialism, the need to pay the bills or the right to economic success. Nor am I endorsing the notion that becoming a certified designer is the ultimate achievement for any practicing or aspiring designer. What I am presenting is that there is more to being a Professional Designer, in capital letters, than someone with the ability to manage tools and manipulate a computer, more than going to school, getting a job and forgetting the rest, and much more than receiving an award or being featured in a design annual. Professionalism in any field begins when knowledge, practice and ethics come together. It shouldn't be any different in graphic design.

Standards and qualifications need to stop being taboo. Differentiation does not make a person better while making another worse, but it can define the distinct capabilities of each. Albeit difficult to imagine, there is one way for the design community to unanimously agree on what the minimum criteria for a professional designer should be today: to discuss it together. Technicalities become secondary to the notion of building a design voice in unison. Education stands at the center of this concern. As of 2012, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) has

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accredited and accounted for more than 300 institutions across the nation, both degree and non degree-granting. Certification can do for professional standards what NASAD did for design schools, when they considered the differences between these institutions and used that knowledge to develop a system of increased standards and public understanding.

Most of the academic institutions we respect, value and consider for our education, and that of our loved ones, follow the strict guidelines established by organizations like NASAD, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the U.S. Department of Education. Are these entities without fault? Far from it. Yet, the norms they have cultivated now give us the ability to critique, speak up and push for change or reform. They have established a starting point from where we can now grow. Just like in architecture, systems and modules help build structures one piece at a time. Nothing of substantial value happens overnight and certification will be no exception. Whether the number of graphic designers in the USA is 280,000 or 350,000, decisions and discussions related to design certification should start and continue to happen. The quarrels and differences of previous conversations should be left in the past as we gain a new perspective on what certification means and what it can do for us.

In her essay *What Is "Professional" about Professional Education?,* Meredith Davis, challenges us by stating: "I'm not talking about some highly general, warm-and-fuzzy ambition to make a better world (although that would be nice, too), but about consciously

anticipating change in the profession of design and taking responsibility for the content and methods of that transformation. To gain some control over a future agenda, we must reconsider what it means to be a *professional*...."[140] It is clear that standards and accountability are key for the advancement of graphic design, enabling it to transcend the superfluousness of technical skill and become revitalized into a fully defined professional field.

As stated before: "my aim is to reinvigorate this dialogue, to question previous stances and existing inclinations and present a fresh notion of what is possible [...] This thesis is a journey with no clear end in sight, but with much to offer." The possibilities from certifying graphic design far outweigh the logistical difficulties that could ensue. Defining our profession, our role in the economic and political spheres and our responsibility to humanity carries more benefits than consequences. Certification would be a momentous first step for professional Design in the USA. It would be a stepping-stone from which to navigate and a pillar on which to support the profession's needs. Not only can we trace a direction for future generations to follow, we can begin to influence the outcome of the work we produce today and the effects we have on other living things. Graphic design certification in the USA is within our grasp. I stand firm and undeterred, openly awaiting to continue this conversation with you.

....

"Our job is to define and promote the values of good design to those who are disposed to listen, willing to pay, or otherwise eager to participate in the processes that make it possible. These are values that endure through changes of season and fashion, values that include new people and welcome new work, and values that encourage us all to continue learning."

....

Geoffry Fried & Douglas Scott[141]
THE COMMON CORE (1998)

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<http://www.ethicsingraphicdesign.org/?p=2182>.

: NOTES

1. From his article *Art in Industry*, originally published as part of *Modern Art in Advertising: Designs for Container Corporation of America*. As president of Chicago-based Container Corporation of America, Paepcke became an influential leader and the epitome of corporate-comissioned design during the mid 20th century.

2. A term used in Alvin Lustig's 1954 *What is a Designer?* address to the Advertising Typographers Association of America.

3. Russian-born Mischa Black was co-founder of the first industrial design firm in England in 1931. He has written extensively on the hardships of the designer–client relationship.

4. Herbert Spencer. *The Responsibilities of the Design Profession.* The Penrose Annual 57 (1964)

5. György Kepes. *Function in Modern Design.* (1949)

6. David Berman. *Do Good Design.* (2009)

7. Modern advertising pioneer Alexey Brodovitch talked about "Deep-Art" in contrast to the term "Fine-Art" in his 1930 essay *What pleases a modern man?* published in Commercial Art magazine. An advocate for modern mechanization and standardization, Brodovitch became a vastly influential figure to future generations of photographers, art directors and designers alike.

8. The term *graphic designer* was coined later in 1922 by type designer W.A. Dwiggins, however it did not become widespread in its use until after WWII.

9. Gui Bonsiepe. *Education for Visual Design.* Ulm no. 13/14 (1965). Bonsiepe argues that commercialism is only one of the facets where visual designers dwell in. He was a design theorist at the HOCHSCHULE FÜR GESTALTUNG in Ulm, Germany.

10. Norman Potter. *What is a Designer: things, places, messages,* Hyphen Press, London. (1969)

11. John Bielenberg. *Thinking about communication*, originally published in Communication Arts, March/April, 1995.

12. Michael Rock. *In Defense of Unprofessionalism*, I.D. January/February, 1994.

13. Natalia Ilyin. *Fabulous Us: Speaking the language of exclusion*, originally published in the AIGA Journal of Graphic Design, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1994)

14. In 1997, 16 people perished in a fire that ensued at the Düsseldorf airport in Germany. As the fire broke out, the cloud of smoke kept people from finding the emergency exit signs. It was later discovered that these signs we not placed in the appropriate locations and were badly lit. Thus, out of the lack of well developed design, many lives were lost. Erik Spiekermann narrates this story in his foreword to David Berman's *Do Good Design*. Spiekermann's METADESIGN studio was eventually hired to re-design the airport's signage and direct the implementation and application of the emergency signs. He adds: "The architects wanted the signs 'out of the way of the beautiful architecture,' as they put it, which would have repeated the previous mistakes. We had to insist that we were not hired to simply make the place pretty, but actually to make the airport function properly. Behaving responsibly is not asked for in Requests for Proposals, but without asking questions that haven't even been asked, we would just be window dressers."

15. Rob Dewey. *Facing up to the reality of change*, Eye magazine, No. 14 (1994)

16. Dictionary.com: *http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/licensing*

17. The American Medical Association was established in 1847 by a group composed of 250 delegates during a meeting in the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, PA: *http://www.ama-assn.org*

18. Established by a group of 13 individuals in New York City in 1837. Initially called New York Society of Architects, it soon changed to the present nomenclature of American Institute of Architects: *http://www.aia.org*

19. MSCHE is a branch of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools responsible for accrediting degree-granting institutions in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.

20. MSCHE's mission: *http://www.msche.org*

21. The AICPA's ancestry goes back to 1887 and the foundation of the American Association of Public Accountants (AAPA). It currently serves about 377,000 members in more than 128 countries. *http://www.aicpa.org*

22. AICPA mission: *http://www.aicpa.org*

23. From their essay published in *The education of a graphic designer.* 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005). Mike and Susan teach at Portland State University. They both graduated with an MFA in Visual Communication from the Art Institute of Chicago. Their personal and professional life converge at their design studio: Compound Motion.

24. The ABMS certifies physicians in more than 145 specialized areas called Member Boards, e.g. American Board of Pediatrics and American Board of Internal Medicine. *http://www.abms.org*

25. Established in 1972 as the International Board of Standards and Practices for Certified Financial Planners (IBCFP), it changed to the current name Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards in 1985. *http://www.cfp.net/become*

26. The IABC was founded in 1970. *http://www.iabc.com/about*

27. IABC official site. *http://www.iabc.com/abc*

28. IABC: *Accredited Business Communicator* brochure. *http://www.iabc.com/abc/pdf/accredbrochure.pdf* Meryl David, ABC, is a certified member living in Zurich, Switzerland.

29. IABC *Accredited Business Communicator* brochure. *http://www.iabc.com/abc/pdf/accredbrochure.pdf*

30. From the APBM official site: *http://apbm.org*

31. NCARB official site. *http://www.ncarb.org/Becoming-an-Architect.aspx*

32. NCARB *Direct Connection.* Volume 14, Issue 01 (2011)

33. NCARB Certification Overview. *http://www.ncarb.org/Certification-and-Reciprocity*

34. NCARB's ARE examination consists of seven parts with each costing an average of $210, not including study materials and classes. Licensed architects then need to pay AIA and

NCARB fees and continuing education expenses. The NCARB Certificate fees total $1500.

35. Taking the ARE 4.0 divisions. *http://www.ncarb.org/ARE/Taking-the-ARE*

36. The Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) is in charge of the
    LEED certification process. *http://www.gbci.org*

37. UN General Assembly 2005. World Summit Outcome, Resolution A/60/1.

38. *An Inconvenient Truth*. (2006)

39. Term describing the practice of claiming to be environmentally responsible, through
    advertising and promotion, rather than implementing actual sustainable practices.
    http://www.greenwashingindex.com/about-greenwashing

40. From the *Interior Design reference Manual*. (1992)

41. From *What This Country Needs Is a Good Five-Year Design Program, The education of
    a graphic designer*. 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005). Heller is a design critic,
    writer, editor and art director based in NYC. He has written, co-edited, contributed and
    published over 100 design-related publications and is co-founder and co-chair of the
    School of Visual Arts' *Designer as Author* MFA program.

42. Hong Kong Designers Association. *http://www.hongkongda.com/zh-hk/apply.aspx*

43. Japan Graphic Designers Association. *http://www.jagda.org/en/about/join*

44. According to Robert L. Peters, president of ICOGRADA from 2001–2003,
    13 Latin American countries expressed interest in establishing certification
    programs during ICOGRADA's 2002 regional meeting in Havana, Cuba. Albert Ng,
    "*Father of Canadian Certification*" and former vice-president of ICOGRADA, has mentioned
    that Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, México, Argentina, New Zealand and Germany are also
    considering similar systems.

45. Anne Bush. *Beyond Pro Bono: Graphic Design's Social Work*. Citizen Designer.
    Allworth Press NY. (2003)

46. U.S. Department of Labor: *http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Arts-and-Design/Graphic-designers.htm*

47. NEA Research Note #105. October. (2011)

48. Grefe's article: *What the U.S. Census says about the design workforce*. November 3, 2011.

49. A term that describes a product or business where the profit far exceeds
    the amount necessary to maintain it. That excess capital is then used by
    the business for other purposes.

50. Stuart Ewen. *Note for the new millennium: is the role of design to glorify corporate power?*
    I.D.: International Design, March/April, 1990.

51. Term that describes kind of creative and/or design work developed and presented to
    a prospective client without any guaranteed remuneration or contractual agreement.
    This unscrupulous practice is normally hidden under the guise of a competition or
    contest between many participants. *http://www.no-spec.com/faq*

52. Armin Hofmann. *Graphic Design Manual: Principles and Practice.*
    Van Nostrand Reinhold Company. New York, NY (1965)

53. Richard Hollis. *Swiss Graphic Design.* Yale University Press. (2006)

54. Gardner is *Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education* at the Harvard Graduate
    School of Education and *Adjunct Professor of Psychology* at Harvard University.
    He has written extensively on artistic creativity, pedagogy and work ethics.

55. Stuart Ewen. *Note for the new millennium: is the role of design to glorify corporate power?*
    I.D.: International Design, March/April, 1990.

56. NASAD, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design has 309 accredited
    institutional members as of 2012. There are currently about 2,000 total design
    programs around the USA. *http://nasad.arts-accredit.org*

57. The term *Swiss Design*, as design created in Switzerland, has been continuously
    interchanged with the *International Style* that rose in the 1940–1950 in the USA,
    when European immigrants brought the disciplined, stark and organized visual
    language that thrived in Switzerland into the corporate world.

58. Richard Hollis. *Swiss Graphic Design.* Yale University Press. (2006)

59. Ellen Shapiro. *Professional Accreditation: The International Perspective.*
    Communications Arts #310. Jan/Feb, 2002.

60. SGD Statutes. *http://www.sgd.ch/uploads/dobj/docs/Statuten_2008.pdf*

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61. SGD Becoming a member: *http://www.sgd.ch*

62. About SGD: *http://www.sgd.ch*

63. Ellen Shapiro. *Professional Accreditation: The International Perspective.*
    Communications Arts #310. Jan/Feb, 2002.

64. Kernland's quote from *Certification: Yes, No or Maybe?*
    A 1994 forum between the AIGA and Graphic Artists Guild.

65. A government-established *title act* provides an association or formal entity to grant a
    designation or a *title* to certain individuals. It is different from the permit to work that
    a *license act* provides. Thus, the RGD title is not a prohibitive license since it still enables
    people to practice graphic design with impunity.

66. David Berman. *Do Good Design.* (2009)

67. For details on the GDC national certification model, visit their official site:
    http://www.gdc.net/join

68. The Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario.
    By-Law #3: Rules of Professional Conduct. (2008)

69. GDC Code of Ethics, revised in 2005:
    http://www.gdc.net/database/rte/file/1_3%20Ethics%202006.pdf

70. David Berman. *Do Good Design.* (2009)

71. What is an RGD: *http://www.rgdontario.com/pdf/what_is_an_RGD_clr.pdf*

72. Current fee for the application and written rationales is $150. Portfolio review costs $75.

73. RGD application: *http://rgdexamboard.com/how-to-apply*

74. RGD test components: *http://rgdexamboard.com/the-test*

75. Here are some sample questions from the 2010 RGD exam:
    Which designer edited and designed the book The Isms of Art 1914–1924?
    a. Theo Van Doesburg, b. Kasimir Malevich, c. El Lissitzky, d. László Moholy-Nagy.
    This form of research is built around numbers, logic and objective data:
    a. formative, b. exploratory, c. quantitative, d. qualitative
    To register a trademark, you must file an application with the Canadian Trade Marks office in:

a. Ottawa, b. the capital city of the province of original registration,

c. all provinces other than Québec, d. Gatineau, Québec

In Gestalt theory, sharpening is defined as:

a. a heightening of grouping tendencies, b. an increase or exaggeration,

c. greater alignment of elements, d. improvement of the edge definition of shapes

76. In Canada, *accreditation* and *certification* are interchangeable terms.
Although I have consistently stuck with *certification* for this paper,
Ng's quote remains in its original form, unedited.

77. Ellen Shapiro. *A Report on Graphic Design Accreditation in Canada*. Communications
Arts #308. November, 2001.

78. Albert Ng. *Graphic Design Professional Accreditation in Ontario, Canada:
Before and After*. (2000)

79. Albert Ng. *Accreditation*. March, 2012.

80. Within monarchy systems, a *Royal Charter* enables the legal formation of
organizations, professional bodies or entities.

81. A *learned society* is an organized body, normally non-profit based, that regulates
qualifications, promotes professional growth and holds formal meetings and
discussion between members.

82. *Accredited* level is given for Bachelor's, Graduate, Post-Graduate or Doctorate degrees
(Level 6+). Certificates and diplomas (Level 3–5) can achieve *Recognized* level.
Validated designation awards classes addressing specialized techniques or skills.

83. For all modules, visit the *training* section on the CSD website: *http://www.csd.org.uk*

84. Transcript from *Certification: Yes, No or Maybe*, a joint forum
between the AIGA and *Graphic Artists Guild* at SVA in 1994.

85. *The role of professional associations in design education*.
DIA National Conference on Design Education Proceedings. (1996)

86. DIA Membership Point System Quick Guide:
http://www.design.org.au/media/pointssystemquickguide.pdf

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87. DIA Guide to Professional Conduct: *http://www.design.org.au/index.cfm?id=35*

88. Membership Entry Points System Explained:

    http://www.design.org.au/media/pointssystem.pdf

89. The *role of professional associations in design education.*

    DIA National Conference on Design Education Proceedings. (1996)

90. Institute of Australia: A Career as a Professional Designer.

    http://www.dia.org.au/media/becomingadesigner.pdf

91. Design Institute of Australia: A Career as a Professional Designer

92. Design Institute of Australia: A Career as a Professional Designer

93. *Life after graduation, do Australian designers continue to develop?*

    DIA National Conference on Design Education Proceedings. (1996)

94. What is CPD?: *http://www.design.org.au/index.cfm?id=149*

95. CPD points: *http://www.design.org.au/index.cfm?id=152*

96. Why I'm in the DIA: *http://www.design.org.au/index.cfm?id=304*

97. Grafill: *http://www.grafill.no*

98. An index developed by the publication *The Economist.* It is based on nine factors

    including: GDP, security, health, family, community, climate, jobs, political freedom and

    gender equality. *http://www.economist.com/media/pdf/QUALITY_OF_LIFE.pdf*

99. Based the latest data report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

    Development (OECD). h*ttp://oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/norway*

100. Grafill's About Us: *http://www.grafill.no/om*

101. Grafill's wiki section: *http://www.grafill.no/wiki*

102. Grafill AMG: *http://www.grafill.no/om/amg*

103. Danish Design Center. *http://en.ddc.dk/about_ddc*

104. DD partners with global entities like: ICOGRADA, the International Council of Societies

    of Industrial Design (ICSID) and the Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA).

105. Short about Danish Designers: *http://www.danishdesigners.com*

106. Danish Designers and MDD: *http://www.danishdesigners.com*

107. Full manifesto can be found in the *About Danish Designers > Design Policy*

    section of their official website.

108. *The Role of Design in the 21st Century, Danish Designer's manifesto:*

    A Vision for the Future of Danish Design. January, 2010.

109. *The Role of Design in the 21st Century, Danish Designer's manifesto:*

    A Vision for the Future of Danish Design. January, 2010.

110. From the HKDA site: http://www.hongkongda.com

111. From HKDA Chairman Francis Lee's official statement.

112. Yusaku Kamemura information from *Olympic Design and National History:*

    The Cases of Tokyo 1964 and Beijing 2008, a 2009 report written by Jilly Traganou

    at the Hitotsubashi University's Journal of Arts and Sciences.

113. For more of Kamemura's Tokyo 1964 Olympics work, *visit:*

    http://www.olympic-museum.de/poster/poster1964.htm

114. From the official JAGDA site: *http://www.jagda.org/en/about*

115. From the JAGDA Vision: *http://www.jagda.org/en/about/vision*

116. From the official AIAP site: *http://www.aiap.it*

117. From the official UPIDIV site: *http://www.upidiv.org.rs*

118. From the UPIDIV Statute: *http://www.upidiv.org.rs/statut*

119. From my online conversation with Topolac inside the *Graphic Design Certification*

    LinkedIn discussion forum.

120. Principal at Tigerman McCurry Architects. Stanley runs ARCHEWORKS, a one-year

    post-professional course for designers of all fields. In it, groups work on what

    Tigerman refers to as "actual, useful products rather than academic ones." Quoted

    from *Designers and Architects: Cherryl Towler Weese interviews Stanley Tigermann.*

    Citizen Designer. Allworth Press NY. (2003)

121. A term made popular by Richard Saul Wurman, a recognized architect,

    designer, writer and creator of the TED Conference.

122. Heller, Steven. *The education of a graphic designer.* 2nd ed.

158   New York: Allworth Press. (2005)

123. From her essay: *How high do we set the bar for design education. The education of a graphic designer.* 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005). Davis is Professor at North Carolina State University, has been involved with the National Endowment for the Arts, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and was board member of the Graphic Design Education Association, the American Center for Design and the AIGA national.

124. Visit *www.bls.gov* today and you can find the following category: "27-1024 Graphic Designers. Design or create graphics to meet specific commercial or promotional needs, such as packaging, displays, or logos. May use a variety of mediums to achieve artistic or decorative effects."

125. From her essay: *Education in an adolescent profession. The education of a graphic designer.* 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005). McCoy, along with husband Michael, were co-chair of the graduate Design program and led the pedagogic revolution at Cranbrook Academy of Art during the 1970s. The McCoys, as they became known, were responsible for notable graduates including: Lorraine Wild, Edward Fella, Andrew Blauvelt, Lucille Tenazas and Meredith Davis. In 1995 Katherine left Cranbrook and taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design and the Royal College of Art in London. The McCoys now continue their teaching through "High Ground," a series of workshops open to professional designers. For more info visit: *http://www.aiga.org/medalist-katherinemccoy*

126. Jeffery Keedy. *Experience versus education. The education of a graphic designer.* 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005).

127. Andrew Blauvelt. *Remaking history, rethinking practice. The education of a graphic designer.* 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005)

128. Jeffery Keedy. *Experience versus education. The education of a graphic designer.* 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005).

129. Michael Rock. *In Defense of Unprofessionalism*, I.D. January/February, 1994.

130. Meggs was a designer, professor and author of the encompassing volume
     A History of Graphic Design. The book became a standard for teaching design history.

131. As written and told by Ellen Shapiro on a *SpeakUp* document she provided.

132. A term made popular by a movement initiated by Canadian designer Bruce Mau.
     It's mission states: "Design has emerged as one of the world's most powerful forces....
     Massive Change is a celebration of our global capacities but also a cautious look at our
     limitations. It encompasses the utopian and dystopian possibilities of this emerging
     world, in which even nature is no longer outside the reach of our manipulation."
     From the official site: *http://www.massivechange.com*

133. RGD Ontario press release: *RGD and SDGQ are pleased to announce a bipartite agreement
     that will result in the alignment of examination procedures for the accreditation of
     professional graphic designers in Ontario and Québec.* February 22, 2012.

134. There are around 2,000 post-secondary design programs in the USA. Many are
     considered to be *cash-cows* programs, as they were established with a negligible faculty
     and minimal resources, to exploit the economic opportunity brought on by design's
     popularity in the 1990s.

135. From Rick Poynor's interview of Katherine McCoy titled: *After Cranbrook: Katherine
     McCoy on the way ahead*. First published in Eye no. 16 vol. 4, 1995

136. Paul Nini. *In Search of Ethics in Graphic Design*. August 16, 2004.

137. AIGA: *http://www.aiga.org/About*

138. Graphic Artists Guild *https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/theguild/our-mission*

139. For more "horror" stories, visit: *http://clientsfromhell.net*

140. From *What Is "Professional" about Professional Education?,*
     The education of a graphic designer. 2nd ed. New York: Allworth Press. (2005).

141. From *The Common Core. The education of a graphic designer*. 2nd ed. New York:
     Allworth Press. (2005). Fried is Professor at The Art Institute of Boston, and has
     taught at RISD and Boston University. Scott is Creative Director at the WGBH Educational
     Foundation and teaches at RISD and Yale University School of Art.

THANK YOU

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