

SÓLEY STEFÁNSDÓTTIR

HALLDÓR GÍSLASON

# DIG

DESIGN INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

# Equality

ICELAND ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

NORSK FORM - FOUNDATION FOR DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE IN NORWAY

THE CENTRE FOR GENDER RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

OSLO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

PROJECT OVERVIEW

[WWW.DIGEQUALITY.COM](http://WWW.DIGEQUALITY.COM)



**DIG** DESIGN INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY Equality

**Design Innovation for Gender Equality**

© Soley Stefansdottir and Halldor Gislason

[soleystefans.com](http://soleystefans.com) / [dorigislason.com](http://dorigislason.com)

Reykjavik - 2012

First edition: Oslo - 2008

Design: Soley Stefansdottir

Main typeface: Odile, by Sibylle Hagmann

Print: Colormaster

Many thanks to all those who have helped developing this project and especially to Katrin Anna Gudmundsdottir, Irma Erlingsdottir, Stella Blondal and Kate Andrews for good advice.

# CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRO</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. PROJECT OVERVIEW DIAGRAM</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. PROJECT SUMMARY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4. BACKGROUND</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1. DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUALITY	10
4.2. SOME KEY CHALLENGES	13
4.3. SHORT HISTORY OF THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY	15
4.4. DESIGN	15
4.5. RELEVANCE OF DESIGN TO GENDER EQUALITY	18
<b>5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS	21
5.2. ACTIVITY & PROJECTS	28
5.3. COMMUNICATION	30
<b>6. PARTNERS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>7. NOTES</b>	<b>32</b>



The innovative Vespa design moved the mobility for women from being pillion passengers to independent city commuters.

# INTRO

In recent years, designers have been moving into activities that are understood to be outside the typical commercial and artistic realms of design. Various design projects that deal with social and environmental issues have manifested how design is fundamental in dealing with changes in everyday life and situations. On reflection, we have discovered how designers and the creative industries can play an important part in influencing, tackling and improving social issues, and we have been inspired by design projects that are strategically tackling issues such as crime, sustainable everyday life, development aid and health.

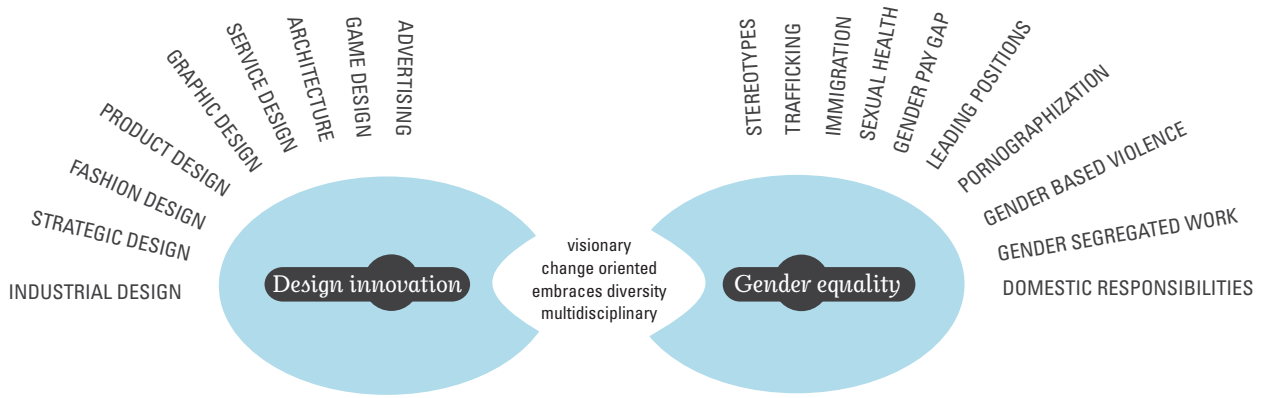
Gender equality is a vast subject matter and a keystone in creating real prosperity within society. Our belief and vision is therefore that gender equality should be addressed on a strategic design level. We believe that both the fields of gender research and design make a combined force to influence positive results.

“Design Innovation for Gender Equality” (DIG-Equality) is divided into two focus areas; research and analysis and activity and projects. The main aim of the research is to explore the touchpoints of design and equality and look for examples where design solutions have resulted in positive steps towards equality. Other design projects that address social issues will be investigated, and a theory from the combined perspective of design and gender research developed. The research will make the basis for the activities and projects where actual design projects will be executed addressing various equality issues. As well this project intends to promote awareness of the gender imbalance within the field of design.

In the beginning of the project description (on the left) there is a diagram that connects all the main elements that have been highlighted as important. This diagram is used in the disposition of the project in text to keep the visual connection of the diagram to further explanations.

After clarification of objectives and goals a background description will be put forward. A separate overview covering the gender equality subject matter; ideas, history and key challenges and the field of design; its role in society, history and relevance to gender equality. It is important to present both fields so that experts can obtain a clear understanding of the other, which is a very important basis for collaboration. Each part of the eight goals will then be presented and a timeframe put forward.

Our intentions are to create results that go beyond being merely a two dimensional report. The project is action based and will result in products, activities, visual material and dissemination. The outcome will be a foundation for the inclusion of gender awareness within design practices and education in the future.



## Design skills & thinking

Design thinking is a process for practical, creative resolution of problems or issues that looks for an improved future result. It is a creative process based around the "building up" of ideas. There are no judgments in design thinking. This eliminates the fear of failure and encourages maximum input and participation. Outside the box thinking is encouraged in this process since it can often lead to creative solutions. Design practice typically begins when it is time to make ideas tangible. This could be a concept drawing, or a rough prototype of an idea.

# DIG Equality

DESIGN INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

## Thesis

Design innovation can be an important catalyst for gender equality and diversity and should be used strategically for that purpose.

## Rationale

Our everyday life is man-made, constructed, designed, according to our ideology and culture, which is gendered. The objects around us, the technology, our clothes, the images we face everyday are impregnated by ideologies.

## Gender research

Gender studies is a field of interdisciplinary study which analyses the phenomenon of gender. The term "gender" is used to refer to the social and cultural constructions of masculinities and femininities. It does not refer to biological difference, but rather cultural difference. As gender is part of every aspect of human life, gender studies cover diverse viewpoints from distinct fields of research.

## Goals

### Research & Analysis

To document and analyze the touchpoints of design and gender equality in society and the possibility of using design innovation as a catalyst towards equality and diversity

#### Objectives:

### Communication

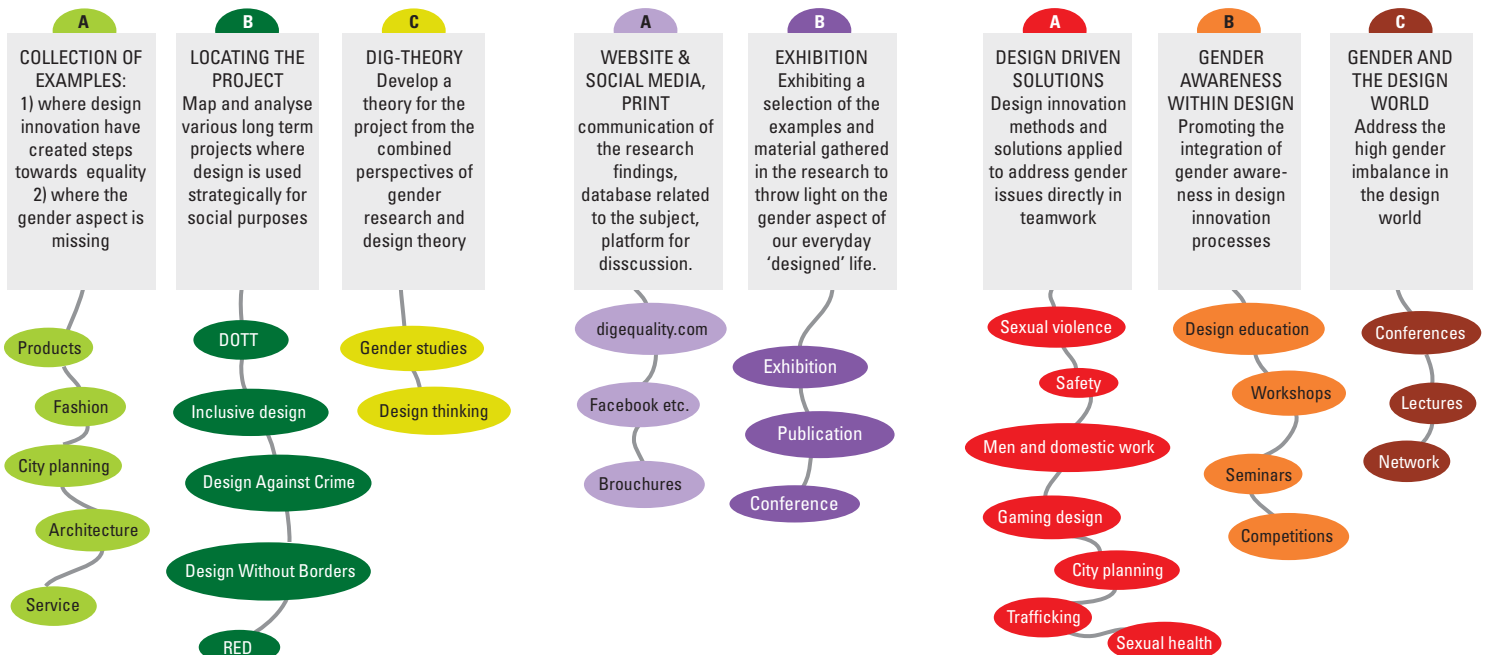
To create an awareness of the touchpoints of design and gender equality in society and of design innovation as a catalyst for equality and diversity

#### Objectives:

### Activity & Projects

To create a platform to run projects where gender issues are strategically addressed through design and where gender awareness in all design processes is promoted.

#### Objectives:





# PROJECT SUMMARY

The diagram 'BUG' here on the left is an overview of the whole project, explaining the thesis, rationale, goals and objectives in a one page graphic image. Here below is a text based summary.

The thesis of the project is the believe that design innovation can be an important catalyst for gender equality and diversity and should be strategically used for that purpose. The rationale behind it is that our world is man-made, it is constructed, designed; the things and objects around us, the technology we use, the clothes we wear and the images we face everyday. Our ideology and culture form the basis for how things are designed, all our man-made environments and things are impregnated by ideologies. Gender is a core element in our culture and therefore ingrained in our designed world.

The project goals are divided into three areas, Research & Analysis, Communication and Activity & Projects.

## Research & Analysis

The goal is to document and analyze the touchpoints of design and gender equality in society and the role of design innovation as a catalyst towards equality and diversity. The research objectives are divided into three: A) Historical mapping and collection of examples that can throw a light on the touchpoints of design and gender equality, focusing on examples where design has in some way created steps towards gender equality. B) Map and analyse similar projects, where design is used strategically for social purposes and locate the project. C) Develop a theory and vision for the project built on the outcomes of the first two objectives and from the combined perspectives of gender research and design theory.

## Activity & Projects

The goal is to create a platform to facilitate projects where gender issues are strategically addressed through design and where gender awareness in all design processes is promoted. The objectives here are divided into F) running projects where gender related problems are addressed through design innovation, G) developing information and stimulate the integration of gender awareness in design processes and H) addressing the high gender imbalance in the design world.

## Communication

The goal of the communication is to create an awareness of the touchpoints of design and gender equality in society and of design innovation as a catalyst for equality and diversity. The communication part is both linked to the research & analysis and the activity & projects, as its task is to communicate from both feeds. The research will make the foundational part in the beginning as it is intended to establish an understanding about the topic. The objectives here are divided into two: D) An exhibition of the examples gathered in the research, along with publication about the topic and a conference to create a dialogue. E) Communicating the project through a strong website and social media as well as printed material as needed.

# BACKGROUND

## 1. DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUALITY

Embracing diversity and equality has become a common agenda today. Diversity and equality form the basis of both social and economical prosperity and is considered a hallmark of the Nordic countries and the key to their success and well being.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in the creative knowledge based society of today it is considered important to build up a diverse and equal society in order to stimulate multiform innovation and activities. Diversity is one of the key words in the innovation dialogue.

Promoting equality for all is a vast subject matter and concerns various issues such as race, ethnicity, nationality, class, disability, age, sexuality and gender. Often these issues cross lines and create complex intersections of discrimination.

There is now however, an increasing focus from gender equality to a broader notion and awareness of human diversity and equality. For example, The European Union made 2007 the “European Year of Equal Opportunities for All”.<sup>3</sup>

In this process the gender aspect has become somewhat ‘unfashionable’ and tension has arisen that has been labeled “political competition between inequalities”.<sup>4</sup> Questions are raised such as; “Why gender? “Why not disabled, coloured or other minority groups?” It is important therefore to remember that the gender aspect embodies all other minority groups and issues. Gender and the gendered culture prevails in every aspect of human life and gender discrimination is still a vast concern along with the challenges that both men and women face in a society of changed gender roles.

It is appropriate to locate a project of this kind in the Nordic countries. The region is known for being in the lead in the development of democracy and gender equality and that is considered to be one of the strong reasons for their prosperity. Scandinavia is also known for being a powerful actor in design and that tradition is known for its social and democratic focus. These strong fields of knowledge within the Nordic countries have the resources and possibilities to create innovative solutions to enhance equality, both in local settings and internationally.

While gender equality is developed in the Nordic countries, seen in a global perspective, there is still a debate about how far it has actually managed to come. The official rights for women have been secured, but the discrimination



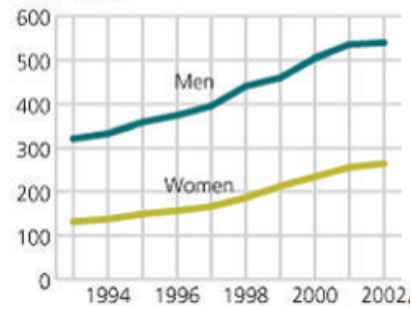
World leaders at United Nations Millennium Summit 2005

can still be hidden. Women have, for example gained the same legal rights as men, but it is easy to recognise how violence against women is still highly undervalued in courts of law.

The findings of the Norwegian research project 'Quality of Life and Equality 2007' concludes that 64% of men and 41% of women think that now there is 'enough' equality.<sup>5</sup> That means 31% men and 59% women in Norway still believe there is not 'enough' equality.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it concludes that a resistance against gender equality decreases when the questions shifts from the general to the particular. For example, 69% of the men who said there is 'enough' equality, thought that paternity leave ought to be lengthened.<sup>7</sup>

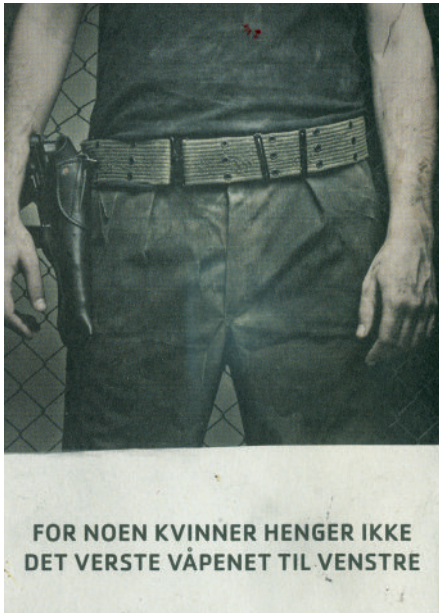
The changes that are needed in society to further gender equality consist of strong national policies, but the particular happens in the everyday life; family life, work and local settings. That is where design is at work, and plays a fundamental role. Images, stereotypes, strategies, products and surroundings. By including the creative skills of designers in addressing gender and diversity issues it is possible to innovate interesting solutions to enhance equality.

# Gross wealth of women and men. NOK 1 000



2006 © Statistics Norway

© Original Artist  
Reproduction rights obtainable from  
www.CartoonStock.com



## LOOK BENEATH THE SURFACE

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS MODERN-DAY SLAVERY**

A victim of trafficking may look like many of the people you help everyday.

Ask the right questions and look for clues. You are vital because you may be the only outsider with the opportunity to speak with a victim.

There are safe housing, health, immigration, food, income, employment, legal and interpretation services available to victims, but first they must be found.

If you think someone is a victim of trafficking, call 1.888.3737.888  
For more information about human trafficking visit [www.act.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.act.hhs.gov/trafficking)



"Let's face it - moms have it tough. Juggling kids, work, housework, and an fat idiot for a husband means getting a little frazzled is inevitable. So what better way to honor these modern day heros than with their own action figure? Comes complete with interchangeable calm and frazzled heads, mood swing babies, cell phone, to-do list, groceries, work and sneaker shoes, and a purse."<sup>8</sup>





## 2. SOME KEY CHALLENGES

**The adjusted gender pay gap and gender difference in economic power** is a prevailing issue throughout the world. Even though the Nordic countries have maybe come furthest in terms of equality there remains a considerable gap. For example, in Norway, women's income is about 60% of men's<sup>9</sup> and in 2002 women were registered as owners of 34 per cent of the gross wealth.<sup>10</sup>

**Leading positions are still dominated by men in every realm of society.** In Norway, seven out of ten managers are male.<sup>11</sup> Women are only 36% of board members in public limited companies<sup>12</sup> and it will be interesting to see the results of the new law that came into full realization in 2008 which demands a 40/60 % gender quota in board members of all companies. Gender quotas have generally not received a broad political support. In this case the focus was on the usefulness of diversity within the boardroom.<sup>13</sup>

**Violence against women is still a large social problem everywhere.** One in three women will suffer some form of violence in their lifetime.<sup>14</sup> Gender based violence has become recognized as a serious societal problem and a hindrance in achieving gender equality in Norway.<sup>15</sup>

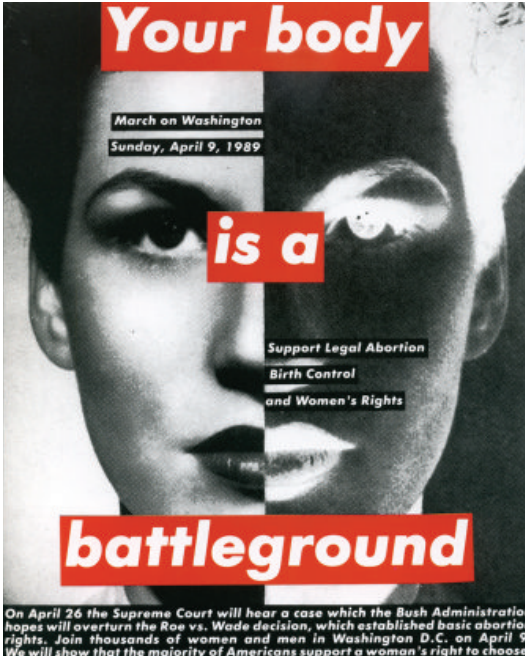
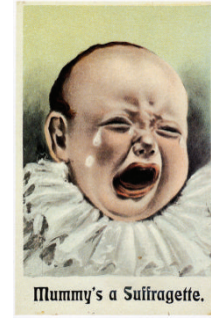
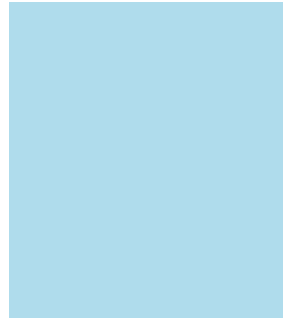
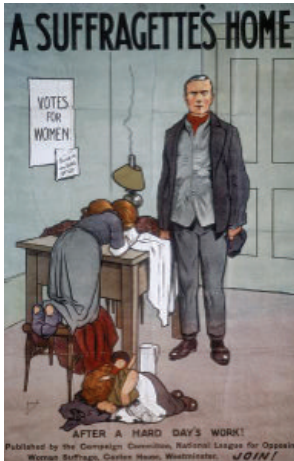
**Trafficking in human beings is the third most profitable illicit trade in the world.**<sup>16</sup> According to UNFPA there are between 600 - 800. 000 persons trafficked across international borders each year and of these the majority are girls and women.<sup>17</sup>

**Pornographization of society** is a reality that young people today grow up with and is a matter of growing concern.

**Education and the choice of career is still very gender segregated.** It is highly likely that stereotyping plays a major role in influencing young peoples' choices and is thus a hindrance. History has proved that professions that were dominantly male, such as law, were not so because of gender differences.

**Domestic responsibility** is still predominantly in the hands of women, limiting the potential of both genders. Women because they are not given the time or freedom to focus on their career to the same extent as men, and men in losing the opportunity of participating to their fulfillment in the family life.

**Immigration has become an important part of modern society.** In Oslo 25% of the inhabitants are immigrants. Immigrants who move from different cultures become minority groups and therefore become vulnerable to marginalization. "The flow of immigration into Norway is gendered. There are gender differences in the reasons for migration, types of migration, as well as conditions in which women and men migrants live. Men primarily have migrated as refugees and to work and women for re-uniting with partners, husbands or family. This is often due to gendered norms and structures both in the countries that the men and women migrate from and those in Norway."<sup>18</sup>



### 3. SHORT HISTORY OF THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

During the early modern struggle for women's rights, at the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th, the focus was on legal rights and the right to vote. Women should become full citizens by law and have the same rights as men. However legal rights did not bring about equality. The second wave of feminism, highly influenced by Simone de Beauvoir's book 'The Second Sex' focused on the roots of inequality. She maintained that the roots were to find in the patriarchal society, which kept the woman in her place through traditional and stereotypical ideas, even if women had legal rights.

The women's movement was highly influential in the development of post-modern society when the belief in objective truth broke down. History written by white middle class males was no longer 'the only true history' but a history seen from their viewpoint. 'His story' became a term to pinpoint how the written history neglected the work and lives of women.

Even though the feminists of the seventies are still criticized for their radical position and activities, they brought about an awareness that moved feminism and the fight for equality into the institutions of society. The feminism that now prevails, is active within the social institutions and academia. A methodology that has been developed over the last decade is called 'gender mainstreaming'. This term has been defined by the United Nations as:

The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.<sup>19</sup>

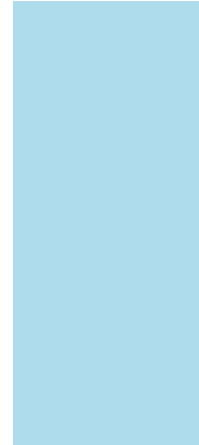
Because gender stereotypes are still so strong in society and often not so apparent, the idea with 'mainstreaming' is to integrate gender awareness into every level and aspect of decision making.

Feminism and gender studies has become a strong field within research and knowledge in the humanities. The field has been in development for decades and has significantly added to knowledge about gender and diversity in society. The focus has broadened from the fight against discrimination against women to the gender structures in society and the importance of looking at both men and women, their status and gender-roles for equality to succeed.

### 4. DESIGN

Design by its broadest definition is everything we do, "Design is basic to all human activities" said Victor Papanek, "the placing and patterning of any act towards a desired goal constitutes a design process"<sup>20</sup> To manifest the broadness of design, there have been counted over 2000 variations of the term in the English language.<sup>21</sup>





live|work

accessing a Streetcar - London 2005

**we are what we do...  
not what we own**

**Recruiting**  
→ We are looking for a junior interaction/interface/Web designer to work on a variety of projects in our central London studio.  
→ [Click here for details](#)

**Service Innovation & Design**  
→ In the United Kingdom the service industries contribute 72% to the economy, yet receive just 14% of research and development investment. It is clear that there are opportunities for the innovation of new services, to improve existing services and explore new markets.

The design hero Philippe Starck, apologized in a recent TED presentation for the way he had worked as a designer without much regard for environmental and social issues. He called for new kind of designer for the future: the socially responsible designer.<sup>22</sup>



- People infected by HIV
- People infected by Malaria
- People with access to medical care

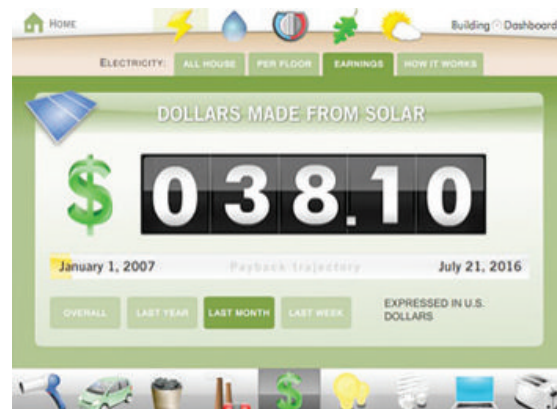
Meet the world

Grande Reportagem

- Oil consumption
- Oil production

Meet the world

Grande Reportagem



Examples of design with the agenda of improving social conditions: a) public transport, b) services, c) statistical presentation, and d) energy consumption.



The field of design has its roots in the crafts. After the Industrial Revolution and the development of mass production, design practice moved from working with the material itself to working with ideas and implementation for production. Architecture, industrial design, furniture design, fashion design and graphic design are the traditional design fields. In the information and experience based society of today the field has expanded and new ways of applying design skills have appeared. The computer technology called for web and interaction design to work with the interface between people and machines. Service design has been developed rapidly over the last years, addressing the big challenge of making service experiences positive. Design thinking has become a common term and method to apply in diverse projects.

The fast development of technology has called for increased design innovation and product development. Today, design is often described as the humanization of technology. The focus within the field has shifted from the 'star' designer of the Eighties to the collaborative designer. Designers invariably work in teams of different specialisms to develop usable products and services. The designer's role is to develop socially and technically beneficial and marketable products within the context that he/she works. The environmental impact should also be an integral part of design but that aspect has been limited in the industrial world. Now there is a growing awareness within the field for a 'cradle to grave' or better, a 'cradle to cradle'<sup>23</sup> way of thinking.

Awareness of the social and economic value of design and the creative industries has been growing. Numerous research studies and surveys indicate that design can have a fundamental effect on the performance of companies. A recent research in Britain on the economic effects of design concluded that companies that include design in their product development show a 200% better performance on the stockmarket than those that do not utilise design.<sup>24</sup>

Design can be employed in many ways. The perception of design is frequently reduced solely to aesthetics, leaving behind a holistic approach to combine aesthetic, functional, economical, social and environmental contexts. It is common for companies to call in a designer in the final stages of product development to deal with the appearance. However, surveys have shown that the integration of design in company strategy and product development result in better performance.<sup>25</sup> Many nations have understood the value of design for prosperity and developed a national design policy, knowing that creativity and innovation are vital for economic and cultural growth.<sup>26</sup>

Traditionally, design has been linked to the commercial realm. Designers operate predominantly with business and industry, where its potential is valued the most. The emphasis on design as a useful activity to address social and environmental challenges has though been growing rapidly. A number of designers commit themselves to be socially responsive and environmentally responsible, whether working commercially or not. The design activity is basically creative work towards a specific goal, commercial or not; that goal can be to develop society, bring about change in social behavior and participate in developing an equal and fair society.

## 5. RELEVANCE OF DESIGN TO GENDER EQUALITY

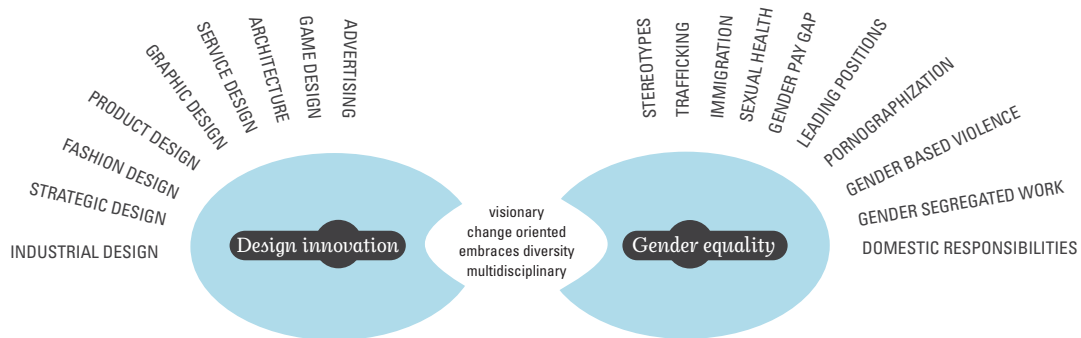
When looking at the relevance of design to gender equality two perspectives are of main importance:

- Firstly; Our world is man-made, constructed, designed: The built environment, the things around us, the technology we use, the clothes we wear and the images we face everyday. The basis for how things are designed is our culture and ideas, our man-made environments and things are impregnated by ideologies. Patriarchy forms the basis for our ideology and the idea of gender equality is still quite young and certainly not a world accepted view. There are vast changes in gender roles in modern society and many aspects of life that are still designed in a gender stereotypical manner. It is therefore important to work within the design field with gender awareness and innovative thinking in order to create the changes needed today.
- Secondly; Design is a powerful creative catalyst in society. Design plays an important role in a successful company, be it in product development, design of services, strategies and image and brand experiences. The innovative power of design and the creative methodology of designers should to a much higher degree find place in the social realm, in addressing social issues such as gender equality.

The philosopher Slavoj Žižek writes in his book “The plague of fantasies”<sup>27</sup> about how ideology is woven into everything in our materialised surroundings. One of his interesting dispositions is about the design of toilets; German, American (Anglo-Saxon) and French toilets. The differences in the toilet designs reflect the difference in national ideologies.<sup>28</sup> In the German one you can look at your stool and check if it is okay, in American toilets it goes straight down in the water but you have to flush for it to disappear and in the French one the neck is narrow so it will disappear immediately! The fact that the ideology is ingrained in all our things and surroundings means that the gendered attitudes are also there.

Design is fundamental in shaping our daily lives. All the things around us are designed, some solutions are very good and some less so. Design works both within the spirit of the times and takes part in developing that spirit, social trends and ideology. Design can follow and design can lead. In the DIG-Equality project, design is expected to lead. Opening up possibilities for change and rethinking. “The best way to predict the future is to invent it” said the computer scientist Alan Kay<sup>29</sup>. Design plays a powerful role in predicting the future by defining problems and designing new visions or ways of living.

Design is in its essence active, it thrives on doing, it is visionary and solu-



tion oriented - to quote the designer Richard Seymour “If you are not positive and with a belief in the future then you should do something less dangerous than design.”<sup>30</sup>

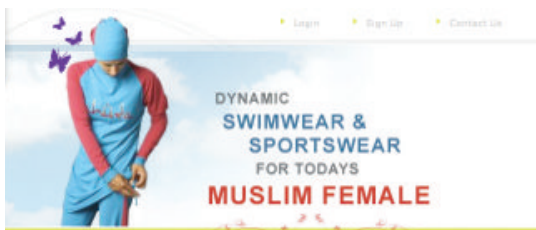
It is easy to point out many examples of design, especially within graphic design and advertising, that are sexist and/or old fashioned in regard to gender. Such examples will be collected to point out the need for change, but the focus is not on criticising bad design. The focus is solution oriented, on design as a positive tool to address social issues.

In a report from the Nordic Council of Ministers a policy for Nordic cooperation on gender equality 2006-10 is proposed.<sup>31</sup> In the report this question is put forward: “A question relevant to this context is if we can work towards integration and equality through art and culture?”<sup>32</sup> DIG-Equality takes that question seriously, believing in the potential that lies in design and design thinking.

The report, also considers effective communication of results, research and facts an important step towards a more equal society. In that case designers can make a valuable contribution, not just by creating the reports better visually, but by working creatively with the knowledge resulting from gender research. Financial resources are most often limited to research activity and the results are often poorly communicated. Cooperation of gender researchers and designers who are action and product focused can give this knowledge a different set of wings.



Created in 1966 by famous couturier Yves Saint Laurent, the Le Smoking tuxedo for women caught attention in the fashion world and in popular culture. It pioneered long, minimalist, androgynous styles for women, as well as the use of power suits and the pantsuit in modern-day society. Yves Saint-Laurent was seen by many as having empowered women by giving them the option to wear clothes that were normally worn by men with influence and power.<sup>33</sup>



**VOLVO CAR:** The idea for the car began two years ago, when a group of women, including engineers, designers and marketers, at Volvo's global headquarters in Sweden attended a seminar about how to better cater to women customers. Inspired by the event, the women began questioning two facts: Women purchase about 65 percent of cars and influence about 80 percent of all car sales; yet men have made most of the design decisions in the development and production of a car.

This car includes features not typically found in 'man-made' cars. Among dozens of unique items: no hood; no gas cap; easy-clean paint; numerous exchangeable seat covers of various colors and materials (linen, leather, felt, etc.); compartments for handbags; gull-wing doors that make it easier to load and unload larger items and children; computerized assistance for parallel parking; and improved sight lines.<sup>34</sup>





# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

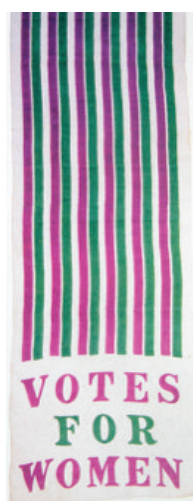
The research will focus on historical mapping, comparative analysis of similar projects, definition of methodologies and definition of a platform for actions where design for gender equality will be in the forefront.



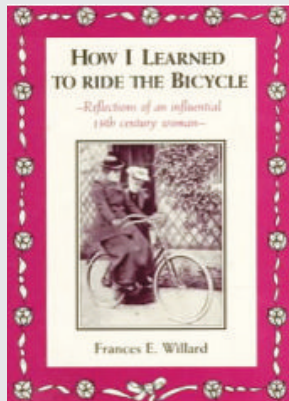
### Mapping

The historical mapping is focused on collecting examples that can throw a light on the touchpoints of design and gender equality. Both examples where the gender aspect is missing, as is the case in many gender separated areas of life that were designed only for men or women, and examples where design has in some way created steps towards gender equality. These can be minor changes, for example the introduction of new products that had positive effects in some way, or through images that affected attitudes.

The visual propaganda of the English suffragettes fighting for women's right to vote is an interesting example of an inventive use of the communication media at its time and an extraordinary innovation in marketing and fashion. Their methods were copied around the world by political movements.<sup>35</sup> Another interesting example is when bicycling became an option for women. It both had profound effect upon women's ability to get around and it created changes in the uncomfortable ladies fashion of the era. On next page there is an interesting overview of the bicycle story and here on the left are glimpses of other examples.



Graphic design in the English Suffragettes campaign for women's rights to vote in the 19th century.



Francis E. Willard, How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle

## “THE POSSIBILITY OF MOBILITY” - AN EXAMPLE OF DESIGN RESULTING IN WOMEN’S LIBERATION

The bicycle certainly put its mark on gender relations in the 1890s. It was an era of rigidly defined gender roles, with distinctly separate spheres of activity for men and women. However, as the 19th century came to a close, women were gradually making headway into the male-dominated public sphere. Perhaps as a response to the seemingly increasing potential for equality amongst the sexes, men began to more and more delineate themselves in terms of physical prowess. Cycling, then took its natural place amongst football, baseball, and other male dominated spheres of activity. One can imagine the indignation, often expressed in terms of health or morality, that many men felt when the woman was shown to be just as adept at handling the bicycle as her counterpart.

Simply put, the bicycle allowed for movement into new spaces, literally and figuratively. The woman of the 19th century who had been given little opportunity to cultivate or express her autonomy now had a vessel with which one could not only develop autonomous power, but do so while leaving behind the old reliance upon men for travel. It’s easy to see then, why the women’s rights advocate Susan B. Anthony, was to say that the bicycle had “done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world”.

The woman on wheels was a threat to the well ingrained system of practical inferiority that men had been taking advantage of for centuries, and outraged men were quick to point to the bicycle as a threat to the social order. The cycle, it was argued, would disrupt the delicate sphere of the family unit by allowing the woman to travel beyond her previous limits without the surveillance of a knowing husband nearby.

There were also concerns about health and sexual stimulation. An article in the Iowa State Register, typical of the times, warned that exposure during cycling to wet and cold “may suppress or render irregular and fearfully painful the menses, and perhaps sow the seeds for future ill health.” Furthermore, straddling a saddle combined with the motion required to propel a bicycle could lead to arousal. So-called “hygienic” saddles began to appear, saddles with little or no padding where a woman’s genitalia would ordinarily make contact with the seat.

The leveling effect achieved by the woman on the bicycle was so great that the coming of the automobile and subsequent demise of the bicycle can be thought of as a major step backwards for women’s empowerment.<sup>36</sup>

### The Bloomers

This emancipation of the bicycle came in many forms, and not the least of which was the casting off of the impractical clothing styles that had long kept women’s bodies uncomfortably covered. The advent and the ensuing popularity of the safety bicycle, with its appeal to both sexes mandated that women cast off their corsets and figure out some way around their long, billowy skirts. The answer to the skirt question was to be found in the form of bloomers, which were little more than very baggy trousers, cinched at the knee. Bloomers provoked wrath in conservatives and delight in women cyclists, and the garment was to become the centerpiece of the “rational dress” movement that sprung up at the end of the 19th century. The Rational Dress society statement of purpose reads in part: The Rational Dress society protests against the introduction of any fashion in dress that either deforms the figure, impedes the movement of the body, or in any way tends to injure the health... (Dodge, 126) The bloomer quickly made a host of enemies, however, and many a bloomer clad woman complained of being ridiculed, fined, and even treated “like a prostitute” by local authorities.<sup>37</sup>



The Bloomers trousers that Amelia Bloomer made popular



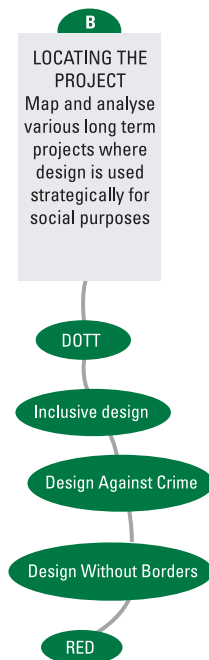
Amelia Bloomer



“Bloomer Club Cigars”: A somewhat silly 1890’s cigar box lid which combines a number of incongruous elements in a way that would have been mildly titillating to males of the 1890’s.

This cigar-box label goes far beyond reality (indulging in an elaborate social satire and put-on), by imagining that women would wear knickerbockers/ bloomers to an elegant social club, and by imagining that such a women’s club corresponded to some men’s clubs in featuring cigar-smoking, heavy drinking, and athletic activities.

The humor is in the rather extreme contrast with the actually-existing decorous and genteel women’s clubs of the time, in which firmly-corseted and long-skirted ladies were generally extremely earnest in pursuing goals of social betterment, literary self-improvement, etc.<sup>38</sup>



### Design for social change projects

Various design projects that address social challenges will be investigated. Such projects operate on the premise that design can play an important role in dealing with social issues. Everyday situations in various forms are studied and addressed with design methods. Various design research and innovation institutes have been running such projects. Here is an overview of few examples:

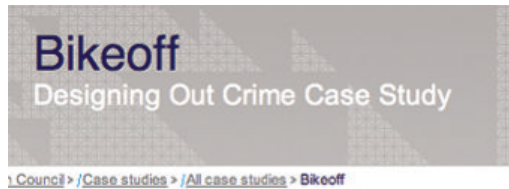
#### a) *Design Without Borders, The Norwegian Design Centre (Norsk Form)*

The vision that design can be a valuable actor in creating social changes in the developing countries has been manifested through successful projects. The most known project is the design of an outfit developed to protect people that work with landmine clearing. Design Without Borders worked with the Norwegian People's Aid (Norsk Folkhjelp) in defining possible design tasks. The outfit is a well developed product and has created new standards in protection equipment. Another of their projects takes place in Uganda addressing sanitation problems where estimates are that only 2% of the nation has water toilets and another 2% have other toilet provisions. The aim is to develop ecological sanitation facilities that can be profitable for the country as well as improving sanitation generally.<sup>39</sup> The World Bank runs project with similar agenda; to improve toilet conditions in schools. Many girls drop out of school at puberty because the sanitation facilities are not available.<sup>40</sup> Design without Borders has also cooperated with women weavers in San Juan la Laguna since 2004. Weaving and handicrafts are an integral part of the Tz'utujil culture and a great potential for the women to build up their industry. The collaboration has resulted in a collection of textile products intended for the European market and several micro-enterprises have been founded in the villages.<sup>41</sup>



From Design Without Borders projects: a) land mine clearing outfit and b) product development in Guatemala.





a) Above: Design solutions dealing with crime  
b) Left: Service design for diabetics  
c) Below: Design project for sexual health service



## A new sexual health service for Gateshead

This page gives an overview of each stage of the project, detailing the methods used by the design team to reach the final recommendations.

### Visual Mapping



The Gateshead area was explored, photographed and mapped in collaboration with the co-design team to discover the key infrastructure, health services, transport links and so on.

### Provider Meetings & Workshops



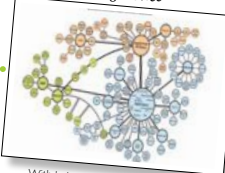
The project established a co-design team with staff from the local PCT as well as a steering group and advisory board of experts. These working groups met regularly throughout the project to contribute their expertise.

### Stakeholder Mapping



The team, together with key people from the primary care trust, mapped out who the stakeholders of the new service were, both locally and nationally, in order that they may be kept informed and consulted throughout the project.

### Mapping Existing Service



With help from the design team the co-designers mapped the existing sexual health services in the Gateshead area.

### Clinic Visits



The design team visited a number of established GUM clinics around the UK as well as local existing sexual health services in order to draw inspiration from best practice.

### Street Interviews



The team interviewed 500 Gateshead residents in locations throughout the district in order to discover what people wanted from the new sexual health service.

### Questionnaires & Vox Boxes



Questionnaires and 'vox boxes' were distributed to health centres and community centres throughout the area to capture the opinions of local residents about sexual health services.

### Cultural Probes



Booklets and packs of tools to capture rich information about people's lives - through writing, drawing and taking photos were given to Gateshead residents. The information gathered helped the designers ensure the new service fitted into people's everyday lives.

### One to One Interviews



Professionals from local organisations were interviewed to find out what they felt was important for the new service, as well as members of the public with experience of using services.

### Service User Workshops



Interactive workshops were held with different community groups, to undertake inclusive activities designed to capture how they would like the service to look, feel and work.

### Persona & Scenario Creation



The team used the findings from the Cultural Probes to create 12 'personas' - descriptions of fictional people living in Gateshead. Each character had a scenario telling a story of how they came to need a sexual health service.

### Care Journey Mapping



Together with the co-designers the team explored the personas' ideal experiences of a sexual health service. This allowed us to look at the service from many perspectives and design all the elements appropriately.

### Consultation Document



The blueprint for the new service, including the design recommendations, was published and sent out to over 100 professionals both locally and nationally, with invitation to comment.

### Blueprint



The team produced two key documents for Gateshead Primary Care Trust: The blueprint set out strategic recommendations for service networks, information management, clinical leadership, ongoing monitoring and workforce development.

### Service Experience Document



The service experience document set out guidelines for the promotions strategy, clinic environments and care journey experiences.





b) *Design Against Crime. The Innovation Centre of Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design*

A project that has been in development for several years. Interdisciplinary teams of designers, researchers, criminologists, manufacturers, the police and other stakeholders have united to design out the opportunities for crime. Their underlying theory is *Situational Crime Prevention* which considers ‘opportunities’ (linked to objects/environments and sources as well as users and abusers) to be the ‘root causes’ of crime, not just offenders.<sup>42</sup> Various projects have resulted, both student work and marketable products. Examples are the anti theft Karrysafe bags and Bike-Off! A safe bike parking research. “Secure design does not have to look criminal!” is one of their slogans.<sup>43</sup>



c) *DOTT (Design of the Time). The British Design Council*

A one-year long community projects, held in North-East England in 2007 and in Cornwall 2010. The aim was to explore “what life in a sustainable region could be like, and how design can help us get there”.<sup>44</sup> The community projects deal with five aspects of daily life: movement, health, food, school and energy. In the project designers worked with basic everyday life. One of the DOTT projects was DASH; Design and Sexual Health. The key question was “Wouldn’t it be great if... people who needed to use sexual health services did?”<sup>45</sup> The question addresses the fact that UK has a worryingly high rate of sexually transmitted infections, specially among the young people and they are reluctant to use health care options. The design team interviewed ca. 40 health care professionals and 1000 Gateshead citizens in their design process and delivered recommendations for a people centered health service with key focus on user experience. It is important to treat people as soon as possible after infection. To get people to consider sexual health care as part of their normal lifestyle demands a smooth and clear service that fits with their everyday life.



d) *RED. The British Design Council*

One of the RED projects is an interaction and service design project developed with the National Health Service for Diabetes in Bolton, England. Diabetes is a fast growing problem in the UK. It is a lifestyle disease and demands a behavioral change. The designers studied the ethnographies of diabetic behaviour to understand the needs. Among various solutions was a pack of cards that the patients could use to prepare for the few minutes every three months they had access to their doctor. The cards display various symptoms for the patient to select the ones that fit her/his condition each time before visiting the doctor. A low tech but effective solution.<sup>46</sup>

It is important in the development of DIG-Equality to look at some of these projects in detail to search for methodologies and learn about best practice and pitfalls that can be useful to be aware of.

**C**

DIG-THEORY  
Develop a  
theory for the  
project from the  
combined  
perspectives of  
gender  
research and  
design theory

Gender studies

Design thinking

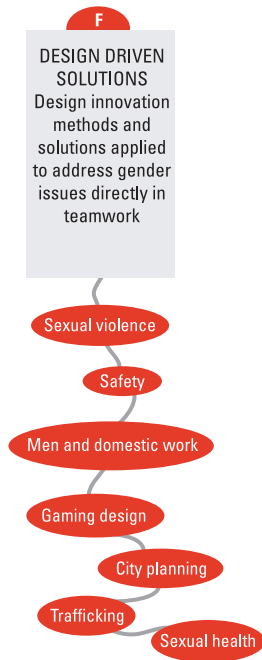
### Theory for DIG-Equality

A theory for DIG-Equality from the combined perspectives of gender studies and design will be developed. Both these fields are utopian in perspective and driven by a vision for positive change. The gender equality field is driven by a vision for a socially just society for all and design is driven by a passion to make life simpler, better, more effective and beautiful. Both fields break traditional boundaries in their search for analysis and idea generation. Gender studies is an interdisciplinary field including womens' studies, mens' studies and queer theory and uses a feministic point of view to address gender in different aspects of society.<sup>47</sup> Design looks everywhere for its problems, solutions and sources. The best design ideas and innovations often come from looking at things in an unusual way, combining ideas or fields in a cross pollinary way. Design is solution and action orientated and not only bound to a specific methodology, even if it uses methodology in its working process.

The synergy between these two fields is not always positive. Design solutions often iterate old or negative gender stereotypes and build on sexist ideas, especially within advertising design. Until recently the design specialisations have mostly been dominated by men. Today, the gender balance in design has become more even, but the culture within the design field is still quite male orientated.



From a lecture by Arnold Weissman from Ideo-Factory showing human centered design activity, involving many in the design decision making.



## ACTIVITY & PROJECTS

The goal of the activity part of DIG-Equality is to manifest it as a long term project supporting activities for gender related social change. Design innovation for gender equality (A) and gender awareness within design (B) embody the main focus. Addressing the gender balance within design is secondary but supports the main focus.

### Design Innovation for Gender Equality

Projects will be initiated where designers cooperate with gender researchers in specific areas to pinpoint possible design tasks that could be influential for the future. Such projects could become paradigmatic models for introducing new ways of thinking and would potentially result in further projects.

Today, there are various design projects that tackle problems related specifically to gender. For example graphic campaign material dealing with violence against women or against discrimination in the workplace. Less common, today, are projects where the innovation factor is involved in addressing gender issues. The involvement of designers is often limited to poster campaigns or to the creation of books addressing the subject. Institutions or partnerships that work for womens rights and gender in society have limited budgets and therefore design innovation is rarely on the agenda.

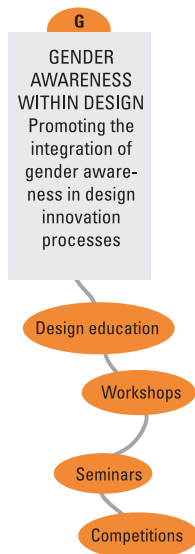
The world has unlimited possibilities for design innovation for gender equality projects. How could, for example, the report ‘The Quality of Life and Equality’<sup>48</sup>, quite a vast research on gender equality, be an inspiration for a design innovation project? It is common that highly valuable research material is presented in a dry and methodological way only accessible and interesting for researchers. This means that valuable work in the field does not become disseminated to the wider audience.

How could a DIG-Equality project in computer gaming look like? Is it possible that the development in the computer industry, driven by young teenage guys, has resulted in less interest by girls in electronics and thus created differences in digital compatibility between the sexes? Is it acceptable that the development of technology is mostly in the hands of men?

How could a creative design innovation for equality address issues like:

- Woman’s protection against sexual violence?
- City planning and security?
- Gender related health-care service?
- Increasing domestic work as natural part of men’s work?
- The relationship between women and tools?
- Sex education?
- The low self esteem of girls, the high suicide rate of young men?
- The gendered atmosphere of sports?

## Gender awareness within design



It is important to create projects that promote gender awareness in the design-field, so that the gender aspect will become a natural, integral part in all design innovation processes. Also to present to the design community clear and accessible material on gender issues and research. To pinpoint and explain possibilities for change and what gender awareness deals with, it is important to assemble both a pool of examples where gender awareness is lacking and best practice examples.

A clear problem definition is one of the fundamental elements in good design. If there exists good availability of material about gender in society and the challenges that need to be addressed, designers will seek for solutions with gender equality in mind. Such projects could be within all the different fields of design from industrial design to the use of graphic communication. At this preliminary stage these projects can not be defined as yet, but ideas are afloat for many issues that have to be addressed.



An ad for Komatsu trucks. Slogan: Seek Experties when the view is of high importance. One of endless examples of scantily clad women are used to sell almost anything.



**GENDER AND THE DESIGN WORLD**  
Address the high gender imbalance in the design world

Conferences

Lectures

Network

## Gender balance

The high gender unbalance in the design world will be addressed by collecting and presenting information about women within the field.

In design, like in many fields of society, men hold the power positions, in decision making and education. After several design conferences it is possible to assume that there are very few women working in the field that have anything important to say. On the other hand it would be possible to wonder about the criteria that are used to determine who is important and who is not. For example for the conferences held by The Norwegian Design Council.<sup>49</sup> They are very professional and well organized, but demonstrate an extreme lack of women in the arrangements. Another recent example is the ONE FLAG competition held by ADBUSTERS. The flag is supposed to embody the idea of global citizenship, and should trigger pride and cohesion. A beautiful idea but one starts to think when it becomes clear that the jury consists of seven white males.<sup>50</sup>

It has been only recently that the veil has been lifted of many invisible women that have been seminal in the development of design and architecture whilst not mentioned in the history books. Many of the biggest names in design and architecture, although being men, actually did most of their work in collaboration with their wives or female working partners. The Eames couple are a good example, in addition to many more like Alvar Aalto, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Daniel Libeskind etc.



A presentation of design awards during a Cumulus design conference in Nantes 2006. No woman was eligible for an award.



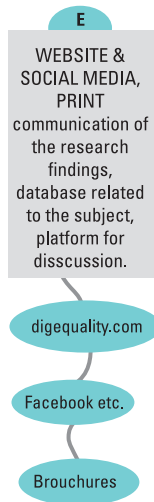
Speakers at Business and Innovation Conference in Oslo 2007



Speakers at an European Business Conference on Inclusive Design in Oslo 2008

## COMMUNICATION

Communication is central to the project. The goal is to create a public awareness of the various touchpoints of design and gender equality in society and of design innovation as a catalyst for equality and diversity. The communication part is both linked to the research & analysis and the activity & projects, as its task is to communicate from both feeds. The research will make the foundational part in the beginning as it is intended to establish an understanding about the topic.



### Website, social media, print.

An essential part of this project is to disseminate it. Its focus has a very wide relation to peoples everyday life. As has been said here our world is man-made, we live our everyday live in a designed environment, from the tiniest things to big systems. To create change we have to create an awareness and dialogue. The project is positive and solution oriented, believing in the power of design and innovation to improve life.

A website will be designed with various informations about the subject and social media used for a wider communication.



### Exhibition

One of the powerful ways to disseminate a project like this is creating an exhibition of the findings. An exhibition, rather than just reporting in a book form, will create an opportunity of a much deeper dialogue and realisation and a much wider audience. Hopefully it can be a travelling exhibition.

Along with an exhibition the vision is to be able to do a publication with selected articles and host a conference along with some activities.

# PARTICIPANTS

## LIST OF INITIAL PARTICIPANTS

- Sóley Stefánsdóttir, freelance graphic designer.
- Halldór Gíslason, professor, Faculty of Design, Oslo National Academy of the Arts.
- Irma Erlingsdóttir, director of RIKK, Centre for Gender Research, University of Iceland.
- Jóhannes Þórðarson, dean, Faculty of Design and Architecture, Iceland Academy of the Arts.
- Sarah Knutslien, Director, Norsk Form.

Future steps of the project are being discussed and the partners participation and contribution.

# NOTES

1. Soley Stefansdóttir, Halldor Gislason. Hönnun - auðlind til framtíðar. (Reykjavik: Iceland Academy of the Arts, 2007)
2. Report on the Gender Equality Training Programme, (Center for Gender Research, University of Iceland, 2007), p.1.
3. Link: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat\\_id=SPLASH](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat_id=SPLASH)
4. Thorvaldsdottir, T and Einarsdottir, T: Equality Discourses at Cross-roads. Gender Equality vs. Diversity (Lodz: Paper presented at the 6th European Gender Research Conference. Gender and Citizenship in Multicultural Context. University of Lodz, Poland, 31. August - 3 September 2006).
5. Holter, Ø. G and Svare, H. and Egeland, C, Livskvalitet og Likestilling 2007 (Oslo: Report 1/2008 from the Norwegian Work Research Institute, 2007).
6. Holter, Ø. G and Svare, H. and Egeland, C, Livskvalitet og Likestilling 2007 (Oslo: Report 1/2008 from the Norwegian Work Research Institute, 2007), p. 104.
7. Holter, Ø. G and Svare, H. and Egeland, C, Livskvalitet og Likestilling 2007 (Oslo: Report 1/2008 from the Norwegian Work Research Institute, 2007), p. 128.
8. Link: (<http://nerdapproved.com/bizarre-gadgets/supermom-action-figure/>).
9. Link: (<http://www.gender.no/Topics/12>).
10. Link: ([http://www.ssb.no/ola\\_kari\\_en/inntekt\\_en/](http://www.ssb.no/ola_kari_en/inntekt_en/)).
11. Link: ([http://www.ssb.no/likestilling\\_en/](http://www.ssb.no/likestilling_en/)).
12. Link: ([http://www.ssb.no/likestilling\\_en/](http://www.ssb.no/likestilling_en/)).
13. Link: (<http://kilden.forskningsradet.no/c17224/artikkel/vis.html?tid=49612>).
14. Link: (<http://unifem.org/>).
15. Link: (<http://www.gender.no/Topics/15>). The Norwegian ministry of Justice and the Police executed an action plan against domestic violence 2004-2007, but Amnesty International points out that here has not been a thorough research about violence against women in Norway and therefore secure figures are not to be found, which limits the possibilities to develop the right service. (<http://www.amnesty.no/web.nsf/pages/2087302F8AEA96CDC12574050033EA63>)
16. Trafficking in Persons Report, (U.S: Department of State Publication 11335, Office of the Under Secretary for Global Affairs, June 2006), p. 13.
17. UNFPA State of the World's Population 2006. (Quote from United States Department of State Figures, 2006), p.44



18. Link: (<http://www.gender.no/Topics/10>).
19. Link: ([http://www.gender.no/Facts\\_figures/1319](http://www.gender.no/Facts_figures/1319)).
20. Papanek, V, Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change (New York: Random House, 1972) p. 23
21. Friedman, K, A presentation from a current investigation published in the PhD-Design list: (PHD-DESIGN@JISCMail.AC.UK).
22. Link: ([http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/philippe\\_starck\\_thinks\\_deep\\_on\\_design.html](http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/philippe_starck_thinks_deep_on_design.html)).
23. William McDounough, W and Braungart, M, Cradle to Cradle, Remaking the Way We Make Things (New York, 2002, North Point Press). The book presents how the dismantling and recycling becomes part of the production process.
24. The Impact of Design on Stock Market Performance. An Analysis of UK Quoted Companies 1994-2003. (London: Design Council, February 2004).
25. The Impact of Design on Stock Market Performance: An Analysis of UK Quoted Companies 1994-2003. (London: Design Council, February 2004). Also: The Economic Effects of Design. (Copenhagen: Dansk Design Center, September 2003). Also: The economical impact of design on companies in Flanders. A research by the Belgian Design Centre (Design Flanders), 2007. Link: (<http://www.honnunarmidstod.is/avinningur-honnunar/nr/351/>).
26. Design 2005!, The Government Decision In-Principle on Finnish Design Policy, (Helsinki: Finland Government Publication, 2005).
27. Zizek, S: The Plague of Fantasies, (New York, Verso 1997).
28. Zizek, S: The Plague of Fantasies, (New York, Verso 1997). (Icelandic translation: Óraplágan, Rvík. 2007), p. 41-50
29. Link: ([http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Alan\\_Kay](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Alan_Kay)).
30. Link: (<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/en/Design-Council/Files/Podcast-Transcripts/Richard-Seymour-Leviathan-The-rise-of-the-polymath/>). Richard Seymour lecture at the Intersections Conference Newcastle 2007.
31. Med fokus på køn er målet et ligestillet samfund, Nordisk ligestillingssamarbejde 2006-2010 (Copenhagen: ANP 2006:702, Nordisk Ministerråd).
32. "Et spørgsmål, som er relevant i denne sammenhæng er også, om vi gennem kunst og kultur kan arbejde for integration og ligestilling i fremtiden?" Med fokus på køn er målet et ligestillet samfund, Nordisk ligestillingssamarbejde 2006-2010. p 20
33. Link: ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le\\_Smoking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Smoking)).
34. Link: (<http://www.roadandtravel.com/newsworthy/newsandviewso4/volvoconceptcarbywomen.htm>)
35. McQuiston, L., From Suffragettes to She Devils, (London: Phaidon 1997), p. 18

36. Link: (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UGo2/hendrick/women.html>).
37. Link: (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UGo2/hendrick/women.html>).
38. Link: (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Bloomer-Club-cigars-satire-p-advo54.JPG>).
39. Link: ([http://www.norskform.no/default.asp?V\\_ITEM\\_ID=3482](http://www.norskform.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=3482)).
40. Link: ([http://www.unicef.org/emerg/uganda\\_37819.html](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/uganda_37819.html)). "They also often drop out when they reach puberty. Many schools here don't have separate sanitation facilities for girls and they are embarrassed to continue."
41. Link: ([http://www.norskform.no/default.asp?V\\_ITEM\\_ID=2735](http://www.norskform.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=2735)).
42. Link: (<http://www.designagainstcrime.com/index.php?q=designmethodology>).
43. Link: (<http://www.designagainstcrime.com/index.php?q=aimsandphilosophy>).
44. Link: (<http://www.dotto7.com/go/what-is-dott>).
45. Link: (<http://www.dotto7.com/go/dash>).
46. Link: (<http://www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/health/#B10>).
47. Link: (<http://www.felags.hi.is/page/kynjafraedi>).
48. Holter, Ø. G and Svare, H. and Egeland, C, Livskvalitet og Likestilling 2007 (Oslo: Report 1/2008 from the Norwegian Work Research Institute, 2007).
49. Link: (<http://www.norskdesign.no/2008/designrevolusjon-til-norge-article3236-639.html>).
50. Drettel, William. "Whoose Flag" <http://www.designobserver.com/archives/entry.html?id=38804>



