

Hoftijzer

Design for DIY: the designer's responsibility to establish a better relationship between people and the things they use

Design practice, design academia and design education all consider, and even emphasize, the importance of user involvement, e.g. by implementing co-creation techniques or using big data to discover consumer patterns. Probably all with noble intentions.

This presentation attempts to provide a reasoning why designers (and academia and society in general) should take a step back. Why they should – from a rather neutral point of view – reflect on the whole of today's user-product relationship within the system of cheap mass-production, long-distance distribution and (for a big part) unnecessary consumption of things.

In order to really pursue the noblest intentions, to achieve sustainable solutions for both people and the world they live in, it is this very system that needs to be critically addressed, evaluated. Supposingly, many designers, academia and teachers acknowledge this, it is however the industry that keeps the system running.

This presentation addresses not only the causes of the unsustainable situation we're in, when the production and consumption of goods and food is concerned, it will also present a plausible (and maybe obvious) solution direction, to 'democratize' design. That is: bring back (re-connect) production and consumption together again: re-establish an honest and fruitful human-product relationship by supporting Do-It-Yourself (DIY) activity. Recent manufacturing and information technologies support and mediate this. Designers (representing society) should (1) take responsibility to help people develop (regain) their skills, knowledge and Self again, and (2) doing so increase people's awareness of the consequences of their actions. Last-but-not-least, the resulting - improved – human-product relationship will help to establish (3) a better care for nature and our position in it.

A new model will presented to get designers started.

Key words:

Human-product relation; Do-It-Yourself; democratizing design