

# **CHILD LABOR**



We are a group of students using  
honesty as a vehicle for change;  
trying to ask the right questions.  
So enjoy this appetizer of thought,  
the main course is yet to come.

- Child Labor



You know what? I think I love child labor. There is a general consensus that children are great. They have little hands. They're speedy. They don't complain. They bounce instead of breaking. They will work for peanuts, give them some candy and they will do whatever your heart desires. So yeah, I heart child labor. Before you turn the page in disgust or call the editor (Jan Pieter Kaptein) to find out where I live so you know which house to firebomb, hear me out. As designers, let's consider the real value of the child laborer. I mean really, we all call ourselves "open minded" designers don't we? Experimental even. Just for a moment, I propose re-appropriating the idea, of the child laborer.

Nike was on to something brilliant, they just had it backwards. Children should be in control.

As designers we like to assume we have the creativity as pure as that of a child. The kind of creativity that compels children to taste mud because they can imagine mud as a kind of new world discovery, of the variety, that brings about some form of pure enlightenment. Normally we adults think of children as blank slates or "tabula rasa." upon which we write our will. Rather, the common consensus in science and philosophy is that children are born with limitless possibilities that can be affected by the way they are nurtured— and ultimately limited.

As designers, we can never regress to this level of limitless possibility, but it is honorable to try. However, it seems our efforts at "child" labor always feel oddly undignified. So why is this? Why do our efforts seem to always fall short?

My conclusion is, that it all falls upon honesty and integrity. Children have a level of emotional integrity, unmatched by us adults, their weath-ering shepherds. Our emotional integrity is, tarnished by a decade or two of "reality", 'shoved down our throats by cynics and misanthropes. Children don't hold the sort of attachments that we do as adults, they have a personal sense of style, no desire for wealth, nor fame. More importantly they have hope, and they see magic in everything.

They, yes them... those people, call us the Peter Pan Generation, a generation that isn't growing up, a generation that isn't taking responsibility for our time.

I used to resent the name-calling, but now I can honestly say, that I resemble it.

I will hold on to a childish sense of integrity and honesty, I will translate this ideal in to the very fabric of my being. And I encourage you, yes you my brethren, my sister, my comrade, to join me in a new kind of movement. The re-instatement of the rights of the child laborer.

**LOVE**

**CHILD**

**LABOR**



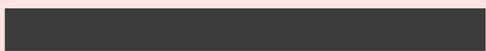
**FADING**

**INTO**

**DESIGN**

**ACADEMY**

**GREY**





# DO YOU WANT TO GIVE US MONEY

---

## THIS IS ABOUT PUNCHING RABBITS IN THE FACE and lemme tell

you this is not a manifesto,  
but this is a call to arms.  
Pack your bags and hop on that  
train because we are ready to  
do this. We want you, and more  
than that, we need you. The  
daily trials and tribulations

just ain't good enough anymore because shit is going down.  
So sit a little bit more and digest this. We have no real  
plans and the solutions are boring. What, you think today  
is the day we are going to change this old story? Wrong  
baby [1]. We're tired and hungover, but you know what? I  
dare you to make that one little step to your front door.  
Yeah, I'm still tired too. I've eaten too much chocolate  
cake and the mornings coffee is burnt, just like it was  
yesterday and the day before, for that matter.  
Don't walk away just yet, okay? So honey let's do this.  
We can call it a dance if you want. You bring the money  
and I'll make the art, and then maybe you throw out a  
concept and I'll call it real good and we'll put it on the  
market and then we'll be billionaires. I think it is even  
sustainable.

This ain't no miracle, because I've never met a prophet  
who was quick enough with his answers. Clairvoyance died  
with the digital age just like the little Greek man I used  
to buy fresh tomatoes from, when tomatoes were ripe and  
spaghetti wasn't culturally appropriated and bastardized.  
You little dirty scumbag. I'm tired of your mom and dad  
telling me what to do. (This isn't a manifesto and don't  
you dare think it is.) C'mon I dare ya. Just bring your  
milkshake the to yard [2] and let's dance. We are waiting  
for you and we are saying congratulations little one.  
Two full moons have passed and we want you to step up your  
game, because we don't got no time. No Siree!

## THIS IS NOT YOUR MOTHER SPEAKING

You've got your work done; you know what? It just ain't  
good enough anymore. So you're a fine artist now and your  
designs are perfect. You go home and you make your toast  
and you eat to the sound of your neighbour fighting with  
her boyfriend. You swallow that final bite that just never  
feels like it's enough because now you actually have to  
do something, So you turn on your favourite little jingle  
and now you're in a real good mood because your girlfriend  
said she's going to call ya tonight and you'll plan your  
vacation to Morocco where you'll strap a back pack on your

back and meet and greet the locals while you drink fine mint tea straight from the breast of the oldest Berber in the village. And dammmmmmmn is that the elixir of youth, or what? You feel okay because I do too, and we all do, because we've done our part and we've met the locals, and we've even got the testimonies to prove it. So you're back in your room and the toast is gone and your shaking your hips out of excitement and you know what? The revolution hasn't even begun yet.

But when it does we'll all be the first to sign that petition. Ohhhh yes we will. But let's try to do more. Can't we? I'm not talking about strapping yourself to your gun. But you can actually do something. In fact, that's our role; that's what we signed up for when we said, "I'm gonna make something today and it's going to be real good too. Because it's got the sign of approval from everyone that knows somethin'."

Now, only for a second, I want you to remember that this is it. It's now baby and I'm here to hold your hand because I've been outside too and I'm also freezing. My feet feel like popsicles but they're not even saturated with orange flavoured deliciousness. Yesterday the future happened and your lips are still stained red from all the wine you drank.

Yesterday the future happened while I was falling asleep to the voice of Garrison Keillor whispering on the radio. While I was dozing off, I remembered this little fact of life --- and I betch'ya my final 10 euros, that I'm not alone on this one, Every second another moment has wilted away, like your favourite playground childhood memory that you told yourself you'd never forgot. No, n'uhuh no never, not me. I want you to know, since January 1st, untill February 22nd, that's just 52 days, two full moons and about 115 espressos, 24 nations have embarked on their own personal revolutions. This is due to the momentum that's been cosmically accumulated by all us tired angry kids. You see, once it's built it is easy to join in with the masses. As designers, we play an integral role in building that sort of excitement. We can design excitement. We can do that. We have the power to radicalize and invigorate people, to restore faith in ourselves, and humanity at large. The question is how? How to do this while creating a self-sustaining atmosphere, that draws upon the energy of the masses, those very people that we design for. I think this can all be achieved by bringing honesty as a fundamental value in our design. Honesty, as a way of life.

I think, you'd agree with me on this one.

To be continued..

[1] My mama taught me real good. She told me that all is okay. But she aint telling me now no more because I 've joined the revolution. And everyone I know is a little sick of hearing the truth because it's always a bit like masturbating to the voice of Obama

[2] 2004 Kellis.



# SOCIAL DESIGN CHECKLIST

## CHOOSE A SOCIAL CONTEXT

- PICK A VULNERABLE MEMBER OF SOCIETY
- FOCUS ON TRADITIONAL VALUES
- REFER TO THE HELPLESS USER
- TAKE PICTURES: POLAROID, BLURRY, CLOSEUPS, CROSS-PROCESSED

## MAKE IT LOCAL

- WORK WITH REGIONAL PRODUCERS
- TELL PERSONAL STORIES, I.E. INTERVIEWS
- USE LOCALLY SOURCED MATERIALS

## BE PERSONAL

- CHOOSE YOUR PERSONAL THREE COLOURS (*AVOID PURE WHITE, REDS OR YELLOWS; ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT'S PREFERENCES*)
- MAKE CHILDISH DRAWINGS
- ADD MYSTERY OR POETRY
- CRAFTSMANSHIP

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT MATERIALS

- SOFT/ORGANIC MATERIALS: COPPER, NUT WOOD, WHITE WOOD, STONE, AND WOOL
- SUSTAINABLE/AVANT-GARDE: BIO-PLASTICS, BAMBOO, RECYCLABLE,
- BUDGET SUSTAINABILITY = EMMAUS

## TIPS

- IF YOU CANNOT FIND A FUNCTION FOR YOUR WORK SAY IT IS A SCULPTURE OR CALL IT ART
- HANG YOUR WORK FROM THE CEILING IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A STRONG SENSE OF ATMOSPHERE.
- USE "POP" WORDS SUCH AS: ZEITGEIST, SPACE, COLLECTIVE MEMORY, GESAMTKUNSTWERK.

