



# jamming the signal

A MANIFESTO ON DESIGN RESPONSIBILITY  
AND MAINSTREAM CULTURE JAMMING

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“I want to be a designer”. With this utterance, a simple and innocent choice is made, without prejudice or a sense of consequence, only a deep-seeded desire to do the thing you love most. In an uninformed world it almost seems like the most logical of choices. In reality, we come to a realisation that being a designer bears the crushing weight of responsibility and integrity that we desperately try to balance out on our shoulders, while juggling a work ethic built around mainstream cultural values and the driving force of mass production and capitalism.

Through this, it has become for designers a battle of morality, as we constantly struggle to retain our innocence in a consumerist society fixated around unrealistic necessities of modern life. And we cater. Sitting behind our screens, countless late night hours, adjusting brand labels and products to optimize the message, which clearly states “BUY ME”, becoming increasingly ignorant and naive towards the impact we have not only on ourselves in tainting our purpose, but also on the younger generations who’s innocence and unfamiliarity is so much easier to influence, shape and persuade.

This contrast of consumerist culture as a driving force of “need” can be made between the first and third world, where a child’s hunger for the latest’s trends match those of another, who’s greater concern lies in necessities such as food and shelter, using products as requirements rather than filling and un-fillable void that serves no purpose but the fulfillment of enticing emotions constantly overpowering our logic with desire.

These are the issues we must address in our practice, our sole responsibility as designers is to relay the messages by any means of creative communication, ‘jamming the signal’ being transmitted by the consumerist sovereignty.

Rebel against the system with ‘culture jamming,’ ‘subversive marketing’ and ‘subvertising’, using the negative to spark the positive, translating the message from its purposeless intent into one of informative and educational nature. Through this, we can open the channels and widen our frequency, creating new design trends and ideas that override what has been programmed into our practice and embedded into our social structure.

Turn away from the night-lights of consumerism and look towards the brighter future of ‘good design’, where positive change lies behind a purposeful intent and not behind deceitful gain, where social, political and cultural issues are explored and not exploited, where the visual message stands to promote freedom and not control.

Through the influence on society we influence ourselves, and through this, we can make a difference.