Formulating National Design Policies in the United States: Recycling the "Emperor's New Clothes"?
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The Emperor walked under his high canopy in the midst of the procession, through the streets of his capital; and all the people standing by, and those at the windows, cried out, "Oh! How beautiful are our Emperor's new clothes! What a magnificent train there is to the mantle; and how gracefully the scarf hangs!" In short, no one would allow that he could not see these much-admired clothes; because, in doing so, he would have declared himself either a simpleton or unfit for his office. Certainly, none of the Emperor's various suits had ever made so great an impression, as these invisible ones.

Hans Christian Andersen, *Fairy Tales Told for Children*, 1835

Introduction: Design Policy Proliferation

This article was prompted by the publication on January 5, 2009, of the American design communities' *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals for the United States of America's Economic Competitiveness & Democratic Governance*.[1] It considers the extent to which self-confident, yet historically very familiar, assertions about the capacity of design to engender real change in national and international settings stand up to scrutiny. Furthermore, given the often mantra-like repetitiveness of such contentions, it also considers the possibility that their reiteration is more a reflection of an underlying desire to effect transformation than any comprehensive articulation of a series of well-researched arguments that would, in fact, be likely to bring about significant change. Indeed, if such propositions show little that is new, design historians and others with a longitudinal perspective of design activity may see them as reminiscent of the "Emperor's new clothes," insofar as it can be argued that "none of design's various suits had ever made so great an impression as these invisible ones" or, if viewed more positively, their recycled equivalents.

The fact that the "American Design Council," a title and trademark owned by the AIGA,[2] was envisaged as "a unified body representing all U.S. design bodies" to be "revitalized as a collective voice for the design community"[3] is perhaps one of the reasons why the American design communities' traditional, conservative,

1   American design communities, *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals for the United States of America's Economic Competitiveness & Democratic Governance.* Also see www.designpolicy.org/files/redesigningameri-caredesig.pdf%20 (accessed 1/11/2009).

2   Established in 1914, the AIGA was the American Institute of Graphic Art until 2006, when it controversially changed its name to AIGA "the professional association for design."

and innocuous proposals are largely framed in twentieth-century thinking and emphasize the priorities of the design profession rather than those of society as a whole. In fact, at the original National Design Policy Summit in Washington, DC, on November 11–12, 2008, the "Ten Principles of Design's Necessity" that were used to frame discussions were thirty-five years old, echoing down the decades from the First Federal Design Assembly of 1973. They reappeared in the January 5, 2009, report on *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals* and again in the more action-based *Report of the U.S. National Design Policy Summit* issued on January 19, 2009. Although both 2009 documents acknowledge the significance of the environment and citizen-centered design, they lack the bite of those created by many external international design organizations that are more fully engaged with the needs of the new millennium. The key participants responsible for drafting the policy proposals at the U.S. Summit included seven representatives from design professional organizations, four representatives of design and design education accreditation bodies, and four representatives from U.S. federal agencies—a questionable cross-section for devising a design policy reflecting the aspirations of society as a whole. If they had not already been documented in their original publication for the Summit of November 2008, there would be no clear indicator that the U.S. policy proposals are in any way mediated by an in-depth knowledge of prevailing design strategies and practices elsewhere in the world.

A rash of national design policies has spread across the world in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In New Zealand the government's Design Taskforce issued *Success by Design: A Report and Strategic Plan*[4] (2003); the Singapore government established in the same year the DesignSingapore Council as its national agency for the promotion and development of design, and the Indian government formally adopted a radical National Design Policy in 2007. In fact, numerous countries have developed national design agendas even across the centuries, some characterized, for example, by the visual and material power of the architecture and design of the Roman Empire, the British Empire, Fascist Italy, or Third Reich Germany. Other manifestations include the establishment of the French Royal Manufactories of the Gobelins (tapestry and furniture) and of Sèvres (pottery) under Louis XIV and Louis XV respectively, the founding of an extensive national art and design school network throughout Victorian Britain, following the Parliamentary *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures* (1835),[5] and the proliferation of national design promotion bodies in the decades following the Second World War, including those in Britain, in Canada, in Germany, and in South Korea. More recently Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil, the Czech Republic, China, Thailand, Finland, and other countries have developed their own national design agendas

3   Press release: "Designers Explore U.S. National Design Policy," *Designer Today*, 12/1/2008.

4   *Success by Design: A Report and Strategic Plan*, (Wellington: New Zealand Design Taskforce, May 2003).

5   *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures* (1835): *together the minutes of evidence, and appendix* (London: HMSO), 1835. See also the *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and their connexion* [sic] *with Manufacturers: with the minutes of evidence, and appendix* (London: HMSO, 1836).

and design promotional organizations. (For more complete details, see the Appendix: Selected Twentieth and Twenty-First Century National and International Design Initiatives.)

Changing Priorities, National Agendas, and *Redesigning America's Future*

Design priorities can shift quite radically in a comparatively short period of time, as can be seen in the contrast between the landmark Indian government-commissioned *Eames Report* (1958, also known as the *India Report*) and the 2007 Indian National Design policy. The former was constructed around possible ways of developing a modern industrial economy while respecting the sub-continent's rich heritage of handicraft traditions and "those values and qualities that Indians hold important to a good life," while the ambitions of the latter foregrounded "global positioning and branding of Indian designs and making *Designed in India* a by-word for quality and utility in conjunction with *Made in India* and *Served from India*."

Among other countries that have experienced considerable adjustments during the past half-century is Japan. Her national design policies have changed significantly, moving from the economically focused policies of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), established in 1951, to the Japan Industrial Design Organization (JIDPO), established in 1969[6] and the global acceptance of Japanese design as sophisticated, innovative, and exciting. A more consumer-oriented plan is seen in the 2007 *Kansei Initiative — from "Manufacturing" to "Storytelling."* "Kansei," a three-year plan, seeks to engage with everyday consumers using a sophisticated understanding of a "high-order function of the brain, including inspiration, intuition, pleasure and pain, taste, curiosity, aesthetics, emotion, sensitivity, attachment, and creativity;[7]" from this perspective the plan seeks to build emotional ties between consumers and manufactured goods.[8] The Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), the successor to the Policy Office for Design at the MITI, established in 2001, was responsible for its promotion.

One country that has never had a consistent national design policy on a broad front has been the United States. The publication of the American design communities' *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals*,[9] on January 5, 2009, is one of many American federal design promotion documents produced over a period of four decades. During the past 150 years, such documents and manifestos often have emerged around the world in moments of deep economic uncertainty. Thus, in the wake of the global financial collapse of 2008 and the final months of the George W. Bush administration, *Redesigning America's Future* takes its place as a distant relative of the British Parliamentary *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures* (1836),[10] where improved standards of design were seen as a panacea to declining export markets. Nonetheless, it is surprising that, given many of the most pressing concerns facing

6 This resulted from a proposal made by the Design Promotion Council of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

7 *"KANSEI" Initiative–Suggestion of the fourth value axis* (Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, Japan, May 2007).

8 For a fuller discussion of such ideas, see Jonathan Chapman, *Emotionally Durable Design: Objects, Experiences, and Empathy*, (London: Earthscan, 2005).

9 American design communities, *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals for the United States of America's Economic Competitiveness & Democratic Governance*, 2009.

10 *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures: together the minutes of evidence, and appendix* (London: HMSO, 1835). See also the *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and their connexion* [sic] *with Manufacturers: with the minutes of evidence, and appendix* (London: HMSO, 1836). There was growing concern in the years following the defeat of the French at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 that although Britain had held a prominent position in terms of its ability to mass-produce a wide variety of goods, it did not compete in terms of design quality or aesthetic appeal. The parliamentary inquiries resulted in the implementation of a national art and design education system, as indicated.

the world today and despite the American design communities' advocacy of setting a target of 2030 for carbon-neutral buildings (in the third of its ten proposals), the word "sustainability" is mentioned only twice in the text, while use of the term "climate" is relegated to a single appearance in the endnotes.[11] In this respect the document follows the pattern of the rather more sophisticated *Good Design Plan: National design strategy and Design Council delivery plan 2008–11*,[12] a 2008 British plan. Sir Michael Bichard, Chair of the Design Council (2008–), maintains in his foreword that:

> Solutions frequently seem elusive or at odds with each other. For example, addressing the business challenges of intensified global competition must be reconciled with pressure on natural resources and the threat of climate change. Equally, the universal provision of essential services, such as healthcare, must take account of an aging population, rising levels of chronic disease, and limited resources.

However, such apparent radicalism flattered to deceive when it came to the detailed delivery plan itself: "Climate," "natural resources," and "aging" were never mentioned again, and "healthcare" only twice.

An earlier report published by the UK Treasury and to which significant reference is made in *Redesigning America's Future* is the 2005 *Cox Review of Creativity in Business: Building on the UK's Strengths*.[13] In it Sir George Cox (Sir Michael Bichard's immediate predecessor as Design Council Chair) wrote of the emergence of the economies of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) and their significant rates of production increase, drawing attention to the heightened importance of investing in design as a means of being able to compete in the perceived economic new world order three decades hence. In 2009, only four years after the Cox Review, these BRIC countries already account for more than thirty-five percent of the world's economic growth and have been investing heavily in design programs of their own. As mentioned earlier, the Indian government had confirmed its ambitious national design policy in 2007, with an increase in the number of trained designers by 5,000–6,000 per annum as an essential platform for the future. Meanwhile, China plans to develop its creative industries by twenty percent per year, making a huge investment in design education, which is represented by more than 400 design schools.

It was in this context of international activity that the somewhat self-enclosed and self-referential American design communities' *Redesigning America's Future* (2009) was published.

The NEA and the Federal Design Improvement Program: Through the Years[14]

As has been indicated already, the 2008–2009 Federal Design initiatives had a considerable period of germination. In the early 1970s

11 However, in the *Report of the U.S. National Design Policy Summit, January 19, 2009,* global and environmental considerations were given greater consideration.

12 Design Council, *The Good Design Plan: National Design Strategy and Design Council Delivery Plan 2008–11* (London: Design Council, 2008).

13 *Cox Review of Creativity in Business: Building on the UK's Strengths* (London: HMSO, 2005).

14 For a concise history of early NEA initiatives for Federal Design Improvement, see "Setting the Standard: The NEA Initiates the Federal Design Improvement Program," *Highlights in NEA History* at http://www.nea.gov/about/40th/archive.html.

15 National Endowment for the Arts, *First Federal Design Assembly Report,* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978).

16 The Assembly cost approximately $100,000 to stage, including the accompanying book, film, and exhibition.

17 Ralph Caplan et al., *The Design Necessity: A Casebook of Federally Initiated Projects,* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1973); Guest editors Lois Craig, John Massey, Harry Weese et al., "Design and Architecture for the Federal Government," *Design Quarterly* Special Edition 94/95 (1976); Mildred S. Friedman, *Federal Regional Design Assembly, Western States,* (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, c.1975); and National Endowment for the Arts, *Federal Design Matters: An Exchange of Information and Ideas Related to Federal Design,* Issue 15 (August 1978) featuring guidelines for rating and hiring designers. This was discussed the following month at the Federal Design Assembly's Washington meeting on the theme of "The Agency Team."

18 Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley, 2005). 412–14.

19 Resulting from Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations to President Kennedy on Federal Office Space in Washington, DC.

20 Lois A. Craig, *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics and Symbols in United States Government Buildings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978). However, after 1977 the Federal Architecture Project was officially inactive.

21 The British Council of Industrial Design (COID) had established a design *Stock List* in the late 1940s in the lead-up to the Festival of Britain of 1951. Providing exemplars of well-designed products, it became the Design Index, located in the Council's central London Design Centre. Here, interested parties could consult photographic exemplars of approved "good design" that also contained contact details of the manufacturer, designer, and retailers. In the United States in 1944, the Walker Art Gallery established the Everyday Art Gallery for the exhibition of design, curated by Hilde Reiss, and launched *Everyday Art Quarterly,* the first American journal on design, in 1946 (becoming *Design Quarterly* in 1954).

22 *A Proposal for a White House Council on Design: A Strategy to Harness the Power of Design* (National Endowment for the Arts Design Program, June 1994).

the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), established in 1965, had responded to Richard Nixon's 1971 call to the heads of federal departments and agencies to consider possible ways that the arts might have a role to play in their operation. The following year a Federal Design Improvement Program was instituted, aided by the sponsorship of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities and leading to a series of annual design assemblies charged with brokering relationships between federal agencies and designers. The first of these assemblies was held in Washington, DC, in April 1973.[15] More than a thousand designers and federal officials attended the opening of this two-day inaugural Federal Design Assembly (FDA);[16] a more modest 300 attended the second day's workshop sessions on architecture and planning, and on graphic, interior, and industrial design. Further FDAs were held in 1974, 1975, and 1978 and were marked by a series of publications.[17]

One prominent and visible outcome of the Federal Design Improvement initiative was the Federal Graphics Improvement program, which ran from 1972 to 1981 and brought together prominent graphic designers and more than forty-five government agencies (e.g., NASA and the U.S. Postal Service) for a review and overhaul of their graphic design policies. In his brief coverage of this program, graphic design historian Philip Meggs[18] also drew attention to John Massey's prototype federal graphic standard system for the Department of Labor, laid out in the Department's graphic standards manual in 1974. In addition, Vignelli Associates' Unigrid system was developed for the United States National Park Service in 1977, in collaboration with the Park Service Division of Publications, headed by Vincent Gleason. High on the Federal Design Improvement agenda was the Federal Architecture Project, led by the Task Force on Federal Architecture. It also reviewed and developed further a much earlier 1962 report titled *Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture*[19] and put together *The Federal Presence,*[20] a key work on contemporary federal architecture. Also seen as essential to the development of a more effective relationship between federal agencies and the design world was the formulation of a set of guidelines to help commissioning bodies use appropriate design expertise.[21] Such ideas were moved forward with the establishment of an advisory panel, culminating in the General Services Administration's Design Excellence program for federal architecture.

However, between 1981 and 1993 federal design initiatives of consequence were constrained by the politics of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush and their commitment to the cutting of government expenditure. With the election of Bill Clinton in the 1992 presidential race, the time once more seemed propitious to float the possibility of a federal design program.

Further Developments in the USA: *A Proposal for a White House Council on Design***, NEA Design Program, June 1994**[22]

23   Ibid., 1.

24   Ibid, Appendix A, 8–10.

25   He had also been President of the
      International Council of the Societies
      of Industrial Design (ICSID) from 1985
      to 1987, had been knighted by Queen
      Beatrix of the Netherlands in 1991 for
      his services to design, founded Blaich
      Associates in 1992, and had written
      *Product Design and Corporate Strategy:
      Managing the Connection for Competitive
      Advantage* (New York: McGraw-Hill,
      1993).

26   Some of these speeches were published
      in a special issue on design and national
      policy of the *Design Management
      Journal* 4:3 (1993): 3–77.

27   Established under the Government's
      Board of Trade in 1944.

28   Founded in 1978 (rather than 1987, as
      stated in the 1994 *Proposal*) and linked
      to the Danish Design Council. On May
      20, 2008, the DDC merged with Danish
      organization INDEX: Design to Improve
      Life (http://www.indexaward.dk/), with
      its design themes of Body, Home, Work,
      Play, and Community.

29   A quasi-governmental organization, IdcN
      was founded in April 1992. It opened its
      new offices in Sakae, Nagoya in 1996.

30   BCD was legally established as a private
      not-for-profit foundation in 1973, a
      design promotion and information center
      concerned with a wide application of
      design in business.

31   Taiwan Design Promotion Center estab-
      lished under the Taiwan External Trade
      Development Council. In 2004 it was
      reorganized and expanded, becoming the
      national Taiwan Design Center (TDC); by
      2007 it had three overseas branches: in
      Dusseldorf, San Francisco, and Tokyo.

32   In Appendix B, *A Proposal for a White
      House Council on Design* (1994), loc. cit.,
      11.

33   loc. cit.

In June 1993 the NEA Design Program returned to its cyclically repetitive urge to campaign for the establishment of a national Design Council, arguing that the "design of products, communications, and environments is a strategic national resource whose full potential has yet to be realized."[23] Possible approaches and potential benefits were considered at a three-day conference/workshop sponsored by the NEA Design Program and held at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC.[24] Robert Blaich, Senior Managing Director at Philips Electronics until 1992 and Design Consultant to the Taiwan Government,[25] opened the conference with an address titled "An Overview of Existing Design Councils;" afterward, the directors of a number of overseas national design organizations and institutions offered formal presentations.[26] Presenters included Ivor Owen, Director-General of the British Design Council;[27] Jens Bernsen of the Danish Design Centre (DDC);[28] Kazuo Kimura of the International Design Center NAGOYA (IdcN);[29] Mai Felip of the Barcelona Design Center (BDC);[30] and Paul Cheng of the Taiwan Design Promotion Centre.[31] At the conference it was suggested[32] that there were more than 100 design councils around the world, no doubt to strengthen the argument for the pro-Federal Design Council lobbyists; in reality, a number of these councils were relatively small and lacking weight, authority, and influence. On the second day, the event concentrated on moving the agenda forward by dividing the participants into four discussion groups. They were asked to consider a number of possible initiatives: the outline development of an American design council and office of federal design quality; the key elements of such an organization's mission, structure, initiatives, and funding; and a strategic development plan. Each group had to report back in plenary sessions that were held at the end of the day and on the morning of the third day. These sessions were led by Arnold Wasserman, Senior Fellow for Design Strategy at IDEO; Donald Rorke, President at Steuben Glass; Katherine McCoy, co-chair of the Design Department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art; and Tom Hardy, an independent design strategist and former Corporate Manager of the IBM Design Program. After a final open discussion, closing remarks were led by Alan Brangman, Acting Director of the NEA's Design Arts Program.

The primary outcomes of the Washington, DC meeting were presented at the 1993 International Design Conference at Aspen and were followed up with a series of discussions between the NEA's Design Arts Program staff and representatives of government, business, education, and the design professions. In March 1994 the Chairs of the four Washington discussion groups met to consider the best way to implement a national design policy, resulting in the publication of *A Proposal for a White House Council on Design*[33] in June 1994. This document was circulated in September to a wide spectrum of potentially interested parties by Thomas R. Grooms, Program Manager for Federal Design Improvement at the NEA.

Unfortunately, this was not as propitious a time for the NEA, or indeed any federal design initiative, as might have been originally envisaged following Democrat Bill Clinton's election as President. When the Republicans took control of Congress in the mid-term elections in 1994[34] and then leaders in the House of Representative and conservatives agreed that NEA's budget would be reduced in both 1996 and 1997,[35] the likelihood that any proposed White House Design Council would be established became slim.

Even though unrealized, the 1994 *Proposal for a White House Council on Design* embraced an enlightened set of premises. As with almost every national design initiative in history, it included the ever-present and inevitable economic rationale for the place of design in a globally competitive market place; however, from an environmental perspective, design was also seen as "an essential element in providing a clean, safe, and sustainable environment…as well as offering strategies for the long-term use of natural resources, land, and infrastructure."[36] In addition, education and society were also seen as important. In fact, design was envisaged as a mechanism for opening the way "for a democratic and economic system that is truly inclusive," achieved "by making products, communications, and environments universally accessible."[37]

Changing Landscapes for National, International, and Professional Organizational Design Agendas

Before discussing further the federal design initiatives that have recently been undertaken in the United States, we first put it in a broader context by considering the wider contemporary global panorama of design thinking, planning, and organization. (For an overview, see the Appendix, *Selected Twentieth and Twenty-First Century National and International Design Initiatives*.)

There were many significant developments early in the new millennium, including the establishment of the Korean and Hong Kong Design Centers in 2001 and the Thailand Creative and Design Center in the following year. In addition, the Argentinian Plan Nacional de Diseño de la Secretaria de Industria y Comercio was launched in 2002, the Third 5-Year Design Plan (2003–7) was initiated in South Korea, and in 2003 the Design Taskforce/New Zealand Government's *Report and Strategic Plan* was published (to which further reference will be made). Indeed, the extent to which design had become almost a sine qua non for future economic planning was further evidenced in national design policy reports prepared for Estonia and Latvia by the Danish Business Sector Programme for Eastern Europe, in collaboration with the Estonian and Latvian Ministries of Economy in 2003 and 2004.[38] Important, too, insofar as it was widely referred to in discussions of national and international design promotional policies in and beyond the UK, was the 2005 *Cox[39] Review of Creativity in Business*,[40] which had been commissioned by Gordon Brown, the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time

34 Republicans actively sought to publicize past grants to the NEA that they saw as offensive, including the grant to the Institute of Contemporary Art for the *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* show, curated by Janet Kardon in 1988, seen as undermining "family values."

35 Although in fact it leveled out in 1997.

36 *A Proposal for a White House Council on Design* (1994), loc. cit., 1.

37 Ibid.

38 *Establishing the Basis for the Elaboration and Application of the Estonian Design Policy Measures* (The Danish Business Sector Programme for Eastern Europe and the Estonian Ministry of Economy, 2003); *Forming the Strategic and Operational Basis of Intensified Use of Professional Design Measures in Latvian Enterprises* (The Danish Business Sector Programme for Eastern Europe and the Latvian Ministry of Economy, 2004).

39 Much has been written about Sir George Cox. Prior to becoming Chair of the Design Council, he was Director General of the Institute of Directors between 1999 and 2004, with a background in information technology.

40 *Cox Review of Creativity in Business: Building on the UK's Strengths* (London: HMSO, 2005).

of the 2005 Budget. As has been indicated, among many subsequent citations, the Cox Review was also evidenced in the formulation of the sixth of the ten proposals in *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals*.[41] This sixth proposal sought to "commission a report to measure and document design's contribution to the U.S. economy… similar to the United Kingdom's Cox Review."

The Cox Review had been researched in parallel to the British Department of Trade and Industry's investigations into *Creativity, Design and Business Performance*,[42] also commissioned by Chancellor Brown. Both were generated in response to the view that the "UK's underlying creative strength and body of design expertise are now seen as a possibly under-utilized source of competitive advantage."[43] As intimated earlier, it had been clear for some time that the UK needed to respond to the pressures of global competition, in particular the emerging BRIC economies in Brazil, Russia, India, and China, which were in the process of changing from low-value, labor-intensive industries to becoming high-technology and high-skilled competitors. Despite reference to the phenomenal growth of the Indian software industry and the country's increasing prominence as a center for research, the speed of change perhaps accelerated more swiftly than Cox might have envisaged, as the ambitious National Design Policy in India was launched in 2007[44] and as design developments emerged from the Programa Brasileiro do Design (PBD, Brazilian Design Program), established by the Brazilian government in 1995, and that also embraced the *Programa Imagem do Brasil no Exterior* (Brazil's Image Abroad Program). The Chinese design agenda was also rapidly developing.

John Thackara, the first Director of the Netherlands Design Institute and co-founder and Director of the design futures network, Doors of Perception (with offices in Amsterdam and Bangalore), commented that the Cox Review had referred to:

> "a window of opportunity—perhaps five or ten years— while the new economies develop the kinds of creative skills necessary to compete across the board." I [Thackara] don't think those years exist. Pretty much the same words greeted me when I joined the Hong Kong Design Task Force in 2001: we had "ten years to move the Hong Kong design industry up the value chain," we were told. A single visit to the Pearl River Delta [a major manufacturing centre and leading economic region in China] and an encounter with a room full of PhDs developing acoustic software for Bose, persuaded us that the gap in capability between Hong Kong and the mainland was nearer two years than ten.[45]

For his 2005 review Cox had engaged John Heskett,[46] who had been appointed as Chair Professor in the School of Design at Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2004, to undertake a study involving China, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan. In this study, parallels were

41 Dori Tunstall, *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals for the United States of America's Economic Competitiveness & Democratic Governance*, (The American Design Communities, 2009).

42 DTI, Economics Paper No. 15, *Creativity, Design and Business Performance* (London: HMSO, 2005).

43 Ibid., iv.

44 Sulfikar Amir in his article, "Rethinking Design Policy in the Third World." *Design Issues* 20:4 (Autumn 2004), drew attention on p.71 to the ways in which design policy had an increasingly significant role for governments in emerging economies, including those of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, India, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, and South Africa.

45 John Thackara, "Creativity in Business," Doors of Perception Archives, December 8, 2005.

46 Best known in Britain as a design historian, Heskett had previously been a professor at the Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago for 15 years.

drawn between later twentieth and early twenty-first century developments in Taiwan and South Korea and those of the late nineteenth century in the United States and Germany or, in the decades following the Second World War, in Japan. Cox also referred to the challenges facing the UK in 2005 as analogous to those being experienced by Western Europe and North America. Attention was also drawn to the long-term Finnish design vision in the late twentieth century, underpinned as it was by close collaboration of government and industry, and a deep commitment to R&D and innovation. However, the Cox Review rather underplayed the extent to which, in the years leading up to the publication in June 2001 of the Finnish *Design 2005!* policy paper, there had for a number of years been a strong sense of awareness that Finnish design policies "should be seen in parallel with agendas in Taiwan, South Korea, Brazil, Canada, and, closer to home, those of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden."[47] Closer to home, only one year after the publication of the Cox Review, Paul Simpson wrote in the Winter 2006 Issue of the British *Design Council Magazine* that:

> the BRIC countries, a term coined by investment bank Goldman Sachs in 2001, are merely the most obvious threat. Just behind BRIC comes TVT—Thailand, Vietnam and Turkey—who have a combined population of 230 million, a collective GDP of £305bn, and are enjoying the kind of economic growth that must have the US Treasury secretary John W. Snow turning the colour of his national currency[48]

The solutions that Cox proposed for the UK centered on "creativity," "design," and "innovation" as strategic tools for improved business performance and economic development. They were, in essence, ideas that had been recurring across the years.[49] Eight years previously, in his foreword to the Design Council's promotional pamphlet, *Millennium Products* (1997), British Prime Minister Blair had presaged Cox's three major strategic tools, writing that:

> I believe it is time to show a fresh face to the world and reshape Britain as one of the twenty-first century's most forward thinking and modern nations. We must demonstrate that Britain can lead the world by creating products and services that exemplify our strengths in innovation, creativity in design.[50]

These words, "innovation," "creativity," and "design," were widely used in design policy formulation and aspirations around the world. In New Zealand, for example, the country's Minister for Industry & Regional Development, in his foreword to the New Zealand Design Taskforce's *Success by Design: A Report and Strategic Plan* (2003), wrote that:

> The [New Zealand] Government recognises that innovation, imagination, and creativity will be the driving forces

47   Pekka Korvenmaa, "Rhetoric and Action: Design Policies in Finland at the Beginning of the Third Millennium," *Scandinavian Journal of Design History* 11 (2001): 7. This gives a clear and detailed account of the problems facing the Finnish economy in the later years of the twentieth century and shows how close collaboration between government, industry, research funding bodies, and education resulted in a national design blueprint.

48   Paul Simpson, on "How far can they go?" in "Global Warning: Are Emerging Economies a Real Threat?" *Design Council Magazine* 1 (Winter 2008), http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/en/Design-Council/3/Design-Council-Magazine/Design-Council-Magazine-Issue-1/Global-warning.

49   These ideas are discussed in some detail in Jonathan M. Woodham, "Design and the State: Post-war Horizons and Pre-millennial Aspirations", *Utility Reassessed; The Role of Ethics in the Practice of Design*, Judy Attfield, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1999) 244–260.

50   *Millennium Products* (London: Design Council, 1997).

to get New Zealand back into the top half of the OECD in terms of per capita income.[51]

Gordon Brown, who had taken over as British Prime Minister from Tony Blair in 2007, was also to add his support for what was fast becoming seen as a global economic panacea when he echoed his predecessor's words on *Millennium Products* (1997) in his own foreword to *Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy* (2008),[52] in which he wrote:

> And today, the force of British creativity is renowned throughout the world. People across the globe are inspired by the sheer diversity of our creative talent and the consistency with which that talent takes the arts in new and exciting directions. They recognise Britain as a hub of creative endeavour, innovation and excellence, and they are drawn to the strength of our creative economy.[53]

Despite Cox's considered articulation of the economic significance of design and creativity in the highly competitive global marketplace, blended with greater awareness of the ways in which the world map of design innovation was being radically redrawn in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, his underlying design rhetoric is nonetheless one that has periodically recurred over many years, particularly at moments of economic uncertainty. It was suggested in the *Design Council Review for 2004/5: Futureproofed*,[54] published five months before the Cox Review, that:

> To understand the role of design in Britain's future we must first look at the past. It's hardly new. The potential of design to help secure our future has been recognised for at least 150 years. Select Committees of the 1830s and 40s, a Royal Commission on Design in the 1880s, initiatives during and immediately after two world wars and moves by the Thatcher government all sought to strengthen British business with a liberal coating of 'design'.

Although the anonymous author went on to claim that "it worked,"[55] such a view was immediately qualified by the remark that "while undeniably creative, its application was haphazard."

Much of the efficacy of the Cox Review depended on certain assumptions about the real significance of the creative industries, the promotion of which had been in line with the idea of a knowledge economy,[56] a concept widely adopted in the previous decade. The endorsement of the creative and cultural industries as an economic tool had originally emerged as a means of countering the widespread notion that the arts were a drain on public finances, parallel to the mid-1990s NEA debates in the United States, already mentioned. James Heartfield, a firm critic of the ways in which the creative and cultural industries were promoted as an economic panacea, and

51   Jim Anderton, *Success by Design: A Report and Strategic Plan* (Wellington: New Zealand Design Taskforce, May 2003), 2.

52   DCMS/BERR/DIUS, *Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy*, 2008.

53   Ibid., 1.

54   *Design Council Review 2004/5: Futureproofed* (London: Design Council, 2005). "Futureproof" was a term first used in the early 1980s in relation to computing technologies but by the late 1990s was becoming more widely used.

55   Ibid., 10.

56   DTI, *Economics of the Knowledge-Driven Economy* (Conference Proceedings, Department of Trade and Industry, 1999). The popularizing origins of the idea of a "knowledge economy" may be traced to the concept of the "knowledge worker" in Peter Drucker's *The Effective Executive* (1966).

author of *The Creativity Gap* (2005)[57] and *Great Expectations: the Creative Industries in the New Economy* (2000),[58] has suggested that:

> Much of the research into the profits and employment in the creative industries cited by the task force was started at the Arts Council, drawn up as ammunition against cuts.[59]

In 1997 Chris Smith, Secretary of State at the UK's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), had established the Creative Industries Task Force.[60] In tune with the ethos of change epitomized by New Labour's landslide victory in the 1997 general election, the Design Council commissioned a report from independent think-tank Demos. Titled *Britain™ Renewing Our Identity*,[61] its author, Mark Leonard, invested considerable energy in seeking to demonstrate the economic value of creative and cultural industries. This was promoted through publication of such documents as the *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (1998),[62] *Creative Britain: A Design Council Report on Behalf of the Prime Minister* (1998),[63] the *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (2001),[64] and their many successors. Furthermore, shortly before the publication of the Cox Review in late 2005, the Minister for Culture, James Parnell, had launched the British government's Creative Economy Programme (CEP) and went on later to commission a report from the Work Foundation, titled *Staying Ahead: the economic performance of the UK's creative industries* (2007).[65] The DCMS, in conjunction with the Department for the Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department of Innovations, Universities and Skills (DIUS) also responded with its own publication, *Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy* (2008),[66] with its 26 commitments to support the creative industries.

Global Design Debates

In 2003 two of the three major international professional design organizations, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA), had established the International Design Alliance (IDA)[67] to bring "the benefits of design to world bodies, governments, business, and society" and "working together for a world that is balanced, inclusive, and sustainable." Between them they had more than 300 member organizations in more than 70 countries, representing more than 300,000 designers worldwide and with affiliations to a number of international organizations, such as UNESCO and UNIDO. However, like their national counterparts, these international design, professional, organizational, and promotional bodies also developed a heady and effusive rhetoric about the power of design to change the world in terms of economic prosperity and social, cultural, and environmental well-being. In this context, whether envisaged as a concept, a process, or something to be experienced or consumed, "design" may be seen to have become some-

57   James Heartfield, *The Creativity Gap* (London: Blueprint, 2005).

58   James Heartfield, *Great Expectations: the Creative industries in the New Economy* (London: Design Agenda, 2000).

59   "Smith's task force for a spot of creative accounting," *The Guardian*, 3/8/1999.

60   For a fuller discussion of the shift in emphasis of design outlook and British identity encountered in the late 1990s under the Labour Government, see Jonathan M. Woodham, "Design and the State: Post-war Horizons and Pre-millennial Aspirations", *Utility Reassessed; The Role of Ethics in the Practice of Design*, Judy Attfield, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1999), 245–260.

61   Mark Leonard, *Britain™ Renewing Our Identity* (London: Demos/Design Council, 1997).

62   DCMS, *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (1998).

63   Design Council, *Creative Britain: A Design Council Report on Behalf of the Prime Minister* (1998).

64   DCMS, *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (2001).

65   Work Foundation/NESTA, *Staying Ahead: The Economic Performance of the UK's Creative Industries*, 2007.

66   DCMS/BERR/DIUS, *Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy*, 2008.

67   The International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICSID) had been founded in London, in 1957 and 1963 respectively. They were joined in the IDA by the third major international design body, the International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers (IFI) in 2008. IFI had been established in Denmark in 1963 and now has seventy member associations in forty-five countries, representing more than 65,000 designers.

thing of a seductive global brand, possessing a univalent face to be marketed like the products of multinational corporations in what is still a pluralistic world. Furthermore, since the national design activity of many countries is directed toward the global marketplace, the extent to which the globalizing initiatives of international design organizations respect national difference is becoming an increasingly significant issue.[68] Perhaps a belated effort, in light of the design and art historical discourse over a number of years, was the establishment of the IDA's Indigo initiative in 2007, following a pilot project at Monash University, Melbourne. Indigo seeks "to understand what makes design distinctive to its home and the connections to the place where it is made and for whom it is made." How effective and concrete this initiative will become is yet to be seen; little of it is visible as of yet.

One early tangible outcome of the IDA's global ambitions was the World Design Capital initiative: in September 2005 ICSID announced that Turin would become the inaugural World Design Capital 2008.[69] To be granted such status, the city had to demonstrate that government, industry, educational institutions, designers, and the inhabitants of the city could work both individually and collectively in the pursuit of the beneficial exploration and utilization of design, in ways that were sustainable and visible and enhanced the quality of life for its inhabitants.

As part of the calendar of design events associated with its standing as World City of Design, the Turin organizing committee mounted an international conference[70] on the theme of *Shaping the Global Design Agenda* in early November 2008.[71] It involved speakers from 16 countries, including China, Finland, Germany, Japan, Italy, and the UK, with about half of the 200 delegates coming from overseas. It was also linked to a week-long International *Design Casa* (*Design Home*) exhibition mounted in various locations around the center of Turin, where visitors could compare Torinese-Italian design culture with that of other cities and countries: Austria, Belgium, Central and Eastern Europe, France, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Seoul, Singapore, and Spain. These "Design Homes" presented national and civic design contexts, design promotion policies, and future design agendas.

Michael Thompson, President of the Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA)[72] and *Shaping the Global Design Agenda* conference coordinator, commented that:

> The need to develop national design policies as soon as possible is becoming an urgent requirement felt all around the world, from Qatar to Costa Rica, from New Zealand to the Far East. Torino, on the strength of its title as the first World Design Capital, created in these two days of debate the conditions for international dialogue. The hope is that work begins immediately together to ensure that design, underpinned at the institutional level, will become more

68   This has been of increasing concern to design historians, marked by the 1st ICDHDS colloquium in Barcelona in 1999 on "Historiar desde la Periferia: Historia e historias del Diseño/Design History Seen from Abroad: History and Histories of Design." I have followed this up in Jonathan M. Woodham, "Local, National and Global: Redrawing the Design Historical Map," *Journal of Design History* 15:3 (2005), and, more recently, in a keynote on "Design Peripheries, Hidden Histories and the Cartography of Design," at the International Conference for Design History and Design Studies, Osaka, Japan, in 2008. A recent specific case study I authored was "Post-1945 Industrial Design Perspectives—Slovenia and Iskra in a Changing World" in Barbara Predan and Cvetka Poža, *Iskra: Non-Aligned Design 1946–1990*, Architecture Museum Ljubljana/Peckinpah Association, 2009.

69   http://www.torinoworlddesigncapital.it/portale/. Accessed 12/16/09.

70   A three-page report/ on the conference, "The challenge of the development of national design policies starts from Torino," was issued on 11/10/2008, by the Turin 2008 World Design Capital, outlining the highlights and reporting on the handover to Seoul, designated World Capital of Design for 2010.

71   http://www.torinoworlddesigncapital.it/portale/. Accessed 12/16/09.

72   Founded in 1969, BEDA has 22 national members.

and more a strategic asset in the development of every country, proposing sustainable solutions to people's real needs.[73]

Importantly, in the context of such debates, Ibrahim Al Jaidah, Managing Director of the Arab Engineering Bureau of Qatar, was critical of the radical modernization of cities like Dubai or Doha and the proliferation of skyscrapers and other buildings representing an architecture that fails to recognize indigenous cultures and traditions. Noting that in Doha there had been increasing attention to architecture that takes into account the climate and everyday needs, alongside restoration of the souks, he argued that design policies must be sensitive to the culture and environment in which they are located.

On November 7, 2008, the day on which the Turin Conference closed, the three-day *World Economic Forum Summit*[74] titled *the Global Agenda Council (GAC) on Design*, opened in Dubai. Again, in a time of economic crisis, design moves up in the political agenda and on the world stage. This event took on particular significance because it played out in the wake of the global financial crisis that had gathered dramatic pace since August 2008. The Dubai summit embraced many of the aspects of design that were threatened by the global financial crisis and yet, seen through the other end of the telescope, also might offer a way forward for the common good: architecture and urbanism, industrial design, service design, innovation strategy, communications design, and interdisciplinary practice. At the summit, design was also seen as having reached a stage of evolution beyond that of being a mere "tool of consumption, chiefly involved in the production of objects and images;" instead, it was perceived as a mechanism for meaningful engagement with "developing and building systems and strategies, and in changing behaviour often in collaboration with different disciplines." Summit attendees identified the greatest challenges, and opportunities, facing design as well-being,[75] sustainability,[76] learning,[77] and innovation.[78] At the Dubai meeting the Global Agenda Council on Design was approached by other GACs with a view for collaboration on common themes. Imaginative, design-led solutions were encouraged by a number of GACs, including those representing climate change, demographic shifts, terrorism, global governance, and water security.

U.S. National Design Policy Summit in Washington, DC, November 2008

Commencing only two days after the Global Agenda Council on Design meeting in Dubai, the U.S. National Design Policy Summit was much more constrained and conservative in its scope. It was called in response to a national agenda that sought to "create a shared actionable agenda of U.S. design policy for economic compet-itiveness and democratic governance among the professional design

73 "The challenge of the development of national design policies starts from Torino," loc.cit., 1.

74 Founded in 1979, the World Economic Forum is an independent, international not-for-profit organization that seeks to improve the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional, and industry agendas. In the early twenty-first century the Forum's annual meetings have involved many heads of government, including those of Canada, China, Japan, Russia, and the UK, as well as many G20 leaders from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

75 Aiding the world's population, particularly the deprived majority, to lead dignified lives through a particular focus on acute problems, such as aging, youth crime, health, and housing.

76 Through ethical and environmental responsibility in the development, production, delivery, retailing, and disposal of products, systems, and services.

77 Participating in the redesign of the design education system so that it reflects knowledge of wider cross-disciplinary thinking to ensure that it is fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

78 In the creation of new business models and the adoption of a strategic and systemic role in both the public and private sectors.

79 Goal of Summit statement, *U.S. National Design Policy Summit* program, November 2008, 5.

associations, design educational bodies, and the design-related federal government agencies."[79] Such a conservative ideology was reinforced by the Summit's adopted definition of "design policy" as something firmly located in the language of national design agendas of the post–Second World War Reconstruction Era, rather than in language expressing a more obviously progressive design outlook for the twenty-first century. The assertion, that "Design policy is the promoting of technology and design as a means of gaining economic advantage by enhancing national competitiveness,"[80] could easily have been written sixty years, or even 160 years, earlier.

Other than a thirty-minute historical overview of U.S. design policy, most of the two-day summit was organized around a series of discussions and knowledge-exchange activities. The accompanying printed program provided participants with a number of brief design promotion and policy "sound-bites" and visual prompts. Awareness of design promotion agencies was signaled by referring to international state-funded design entities and their mission statements, including the Danish Design Center, Copenhagen, the Korean Institute of Design Promotion's (KIDP) periodical *designdb+*, the Design Forum Finland shop in Helsinki, the Hong Kong Design Centre Competition, including the Design for Asia Award, and exhibition work of Premsela[81] in the Netherlands.

Similar brief references were made to design and human innovation policies seen in the R&D work of the Ireland Centre for Design, the transfer and diffusion processes of the Hong Kong Design Centre, Singaporean intellectual property rights, small and medium enterprise (SME) and large enterprise support exemplified by Design Wales, and the higher education and industrial employment of *designaustria*.

Quality was referenced to the KIDP's Good Design outlook; sustainability to the work of the Taiwan Design Center; and inclusivity to the Design Quality Label of the International Design Center in Berlin, the German Design Council, and TÜV Nord. Meanwhile, design policy creation was indicated by the UK's Design Council with a web page that included reference to "design in a changing climate," the Danish MindLab's involvement of citizens and enterprise, and DOTT 07's embrace of design and sustainability in North East England.

Reference was also made to the Federal Design Improvement Program from 1971 to 1981 and the outlook of the Federal Design Assemblies of 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1978, as well as the Federal Graphic Improvement Program and the Federal Architecture Program. However, there is little evidence to show that this extensive bricolage of international design policy and practice "snippets" played any fundamental role in the U.S. Design Summit's outcomes.

This almost bullet-point informational run-through in the *U.S. National Design Summit* program was concluded with Ten

80 John Heskett, *Toothpicks & Logos: Design in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 180.

81 A Dutch design promotion organization established in 2002, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science and the City of Amsterdam.

82 A term used by the National Endowment for the Arts in the title of the book produced in conjunction with the first of the NEA-sponsored Federal Design Assemblies: *The Design Necessity: A Casebook of Federally Initiated Projects*, 1973. The *Design Necessity* Exhibition mounted at the 1973 Assembly illustrated maxims of good design and was planned to tour nine states in the Midwest. An identical show was to tour the lobbies of federal office buildings in Washington, DC.

Principles of Design's Necessity,[82] many of which were characterized by a blandness with which it is difficult to take exception, but all of which have a very familiar ring to historians of national design policy formation, design promotional agencies, and related activities over the past century and more. Indeed, they were drawn directly from the First Federal Design Assembly of 1973, the very first of these Principles proclaiming that "there are sound, proven criteria for judging design effectiveness." What was missing in 2008 had been missing as a response to exactly the same words in the *Design Necessity* publication[83]—a meaningful discussion about what these criteria actually might be, and recognition that the word "design" might have very different connotations and values in one period than another. Other principles were short and to the point, lacking passion or contagious excitement, as exemplified by the Seventh Principle, that "Design necessity is recognizably present in projects ranging from a postage stamp to a highway," which had none of the lyrical drama of Raymond Loewy's agenda of sixty years earlier: to design everything "from the toothbrush to the locomotive, from the lipstick to the ocean liner." It also seemed rather prosaic when set alongside Ernesto Rogers's 1946 evocative definition of the designer's task: "to transform in poetic song every formal representation of existence, from a spoon to a city,"[84] in the strong socialist ethos of the early post-war Recostruzione period in Italy.

The remainder of the 2008 summit involved participation in a "Current Design Policy Self-Assessment" exercise and a series of "U.S. National Design Policy Ideation" breakout sessions and discussions. Although the format of the second day largely followed that of the first, a wider context was acknowledged in the printed program, including a series of what were termed "Design Realities[85]": the total U.S. public debt of $10.5 trillion, the then–President-elect Obama administration's policy priorities, and the claim that design was still invisible in government policy. Group discussion centered on value to the American people, value to the design communities, operational feasibility, and political feasibility, with a final collective "Wrap up and Evaluation of the Summit."

By January 5, 2009, when the summit discussions were translated into a consolidated document, the American design communities' *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals,* there was a fresh agenda based on the belief that "scandals, corruption, and the Iraq War have eroded the American sense of democracy" and the accompanying maxim that:

> Design serves to advance the goals of the United States' economic competitiveness by saving time and money and simplifying the use, manufacturing, and maintenance of goods and services. It enhances democratic governance by improving the performance and delivery of government services.[86]

83   See note 80.
84   Ernesto Rogers, "Ricostruzione dal'Oggetto d'Uso alla Città," *Domus*, 215, November 1946.
85   With the term "Design Necessity," so did the summit's term "Design Reality" echo the vocabulary adopted by a Federal Design Assembly publication, "The Design Reality," *Design Quarterly* Special Edition, 94/95, 1974.
86   American design communities, *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Design Policy Proposals for the United States of America's Economic Competitiveness and Democratic Governance*, 1/5/2009, 1.

The ten design policy proposals are entered under two headings: Design Policy for Economic Competitiveness and Design Policy for Democratic Governance. Again, in the follow-up document, published two weeks later on January 19, 2009, *Report of the U.S. National Design Policy Summit*,[87] further elaboration is accompanied by an action plan on which the U.S. government and the American design communities should collaborate. This plan is divided into four major aspirational initiatives: innovation that supports the country's entrepreneurial spirit and economic vitality, better performance in government communications, effectiveness, and accountability, sustainable communities, environments, cultures, and the earth, and forms of thinking that advance the educational goals of knowledge. Two brief essays are written under the earlier headings, Design Policy for Economic Competitiveness and Design Policy for Democratic Governance, giving rationales for the position. The first is less than 1,000 words in length and the second about 1,400. The latter recognizes the significance of sustainability and the global environmental crisis, as well as promoting a limited view of civic inclusiveness. Overall, this approach results in more substance, but it is ultimately a manifesto based more on aspiration than any deep-rooted or penetrating evaluation. There is also a listing of many of the ideas that had been posted at the Design Policy Summit itself: seventy raw proposals on design promotion, forty on innovation, sixty on design standards, and eighty on policy as designed, alongside a sequence of tabular audits under a number of headings. The latter includes aspects of Design Promotion, Innovation Policy, Design Standards, and Policy as Designed. These areas of projected activity are set against a variety of supportive organizations, including the AIGA, the Professional Association for Design,[88] the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), the Association for Computing Machinery Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interface (ACM-SIGCHI), Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), the Design Management Institute (DMI), the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA), and a number of federal agencies.

> Importantly, the document also claims that:
> Unfortunately, the U.S. Government does not view the design industries as a major service industry. Because design is handled by many different agencies, there is no way to accurately measure its contribution to the U.S.'s economic vitality.[89]

Measuring Design Competitiveness in the New Millennium
There have in fact been a number of attempts internationally to measure design competitiveness. In South Korea in 2008 the KIDP published a *National Design Competitiveness Report 2008* (*NDCR 2008*).[90] Earlier attempts at such quantification by the DESIGNIUM

87   American design communities, *Report of the U.S. National Design Policy Summit, January 19, 2009.*

88   AIGA was known as the Institute of Graphic Arts until 2006, when it became AIGA, the Professional Association for Design.

89   Ibid., 11.

90   KIDP, *National Design Competitiveness Report 2008*, http://cdx.dexigner.com/article/17907/KIDP_National_Design_Competitiveness.pdf.

Position	Design Competitiveness	Average 100	Satisfaction of general companies with government design-related support	Average 3.1	Satisfaction of design firms with government design-related support	Average 39
1	Italy	134	Finland	4.0	Taiwan	380
2	France	132	Taiwan	3.8	Japan	375
3	US	126	India	3.7	China	372
4	Germany	110	China	3.6	Germany	350
5	UK	109	UK	3.5	South Korea	350
6	Japan	108	Brazil	3.3	France	322
7	Sweden	101	Denmark	3.2	Finland	320
8	South Korea	99	South Korea	3.2	Italy	300
9	Denmark	99	Singapore	3.1	Singapore	300
10	Finland	95	Italy	3.0	UK	289
11	Australia	94	Sweden	3.0	Brazil	285
12	Canada	93	Canada	2.9	India	283
13	China	90	Japan	2.7	Canada	267
14	Taiwan	83	Germany	2.6	US	267
15	Singapore	83	US	2.5	Australia	267
16	Brazil	80	Australia	2.5	Sweden	229
17	India	79	France	1.8	Denmark	229

Table 1

Figures drawn from the KIDP National Design Competitiveness Report 2008

91   *Design Policy and Promotion Programmes in Selected Countries and Regions 2003* (Helsinki: Designium, 2003); *Global Design Watch 2006: Update to the 2003 report Design Policy and Promotion Programmes in Selected Countries and Regions 2003* (Helsinki: Designium, 2006); and Katja Sorvali & Eija Nieminen, *Global Design Watch 2008: Update to the 2006 report* (Helsinki: Designium, 2006).

92   *Building a Case for Added Value Through Design* (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research), 2003.

93   KIDP, *National Design Competitiveness Report 2008*, http://cdx.dexigner.com/article/17907/KIDP_National_Design_Competitiveness.pdf

at Helsinki University (2003–08)[91] and the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (2002)[92] were dismissed in the *NDCR 2008* as "not sophisticated enough to measure comprehensiveness[93]"; both rely on indices from the World Economic Forum. The KIDP *NDCR 2008* evaluates 17 countries: three Western European, three Northern European, three American, and six Asian. In it the public sector (design policy), manufacturing and corporate sector (design for industry), and consumers (design culture) are each calibrated against performance, human resources, and investment/environment. The overall position of U.S. design competitiveness, compared to that of the perceptions of government support to industry, is clear (see Table 1), and many other interesting findings are in the substrata of the report as well. These include the comparative strengths of three of the four BRIC countries (excluding Russia), particularly in relation to government design-related support.

It is also useful to refer to other data and analytical frameworks to help confirm wider trends (see Table 2). It is debatable whether the evaluation of design policy and promotion programs in selected countries and regions, which was studied in the *Global Design Watch 2008* prepared by DESIGNIUM, the Design Innovation Centre at the University of Art & Design Helsinki, has the capacity to deliver as meaningful a picture of national design competitiveness as that produced by KIDP in 2008. Nonetheless, there are a number of trends that are of significance for discussions on federal design policy in the United States. The three key elements examined in the DESIGNIUM report are: (1) the main objectives and implementation of design programs, (2) the measures used for promoting national design, and (3) the organizations at which they are targeted. Of greatest significance is the downward trend experienced by the United States, falling from second to seventh place in terms of design competitiveness. Unlike Germany, where government, design profes-

Design Competitiveness Ranking 2007			Design Competitiveness Ranking 2005			Design Competitiveness Ranking 2002		
1	Germany	6.1	1	Japan	6.2	1	Finland	6.3
2	Switzerland	6.1	2	United States	6.2	2	United States	6.2
3	Japan	6.0	3	Germany	6.1	3	Germany	6.1
4	Sweden	5.9	4	Switzerland	5.9	4	France	6.1
5	Denmark	5.9	5	Denmark	5.8	5	Japan	6.1
6	Austria	5.7	6	France	5.7	6	Switzerland	6.0
7	Finland	5.7	7	Finland	5.7	7	Netherlands	6.0
8	United States	5.7	8	Sweden	5.7	8	Sweden	6.0
9	Korea Rep.	5.7	9	Belgium	5.6	9	Denmark	5.8
10	France	5.6	10	Austria	5.6	10	United Kingdom	5.8
Sources: World Economic Forum 2007, *Global Design Watch* 2008			Sources: World Economic Forum 2005, *Global Design Watch* 2005			Sources: World Economic Forum 2002, *Building a Case for Added Value through Design,* NZ Institute of Economic Research 2003		

Table 2

Figures drawn from Katja Sorvali and Eija Nieminen, *Global Design Watch 2008: Update to the 2006 Report*, 2008.

sionals, and industry are seen as the main actors of design programs, the main cast in the United States is seen to be design businesses and organizations, including the IDSA, the Corporate Design Foundation, and the DMI.

A Final Look at *Redesigning America's Future*

To conclude, a brief revisit is made to the original impetus that gave rise to this article: *Redesigning America's Future: 10 Policy Proposals*. As has been suggested, the individuals accredited with putting together these proposals are neither disinterested nor objective parties: eleven are drawn from U.S. design and professional organizations, four (including the convenor) are from U.S. art and design education organizations, and four are from federal organizations. In support of their mission to establish a federal Design Council, they cite President Jimmy Carter's belief in good design as a means of improving governmental efficiency, draw on President Abraham Lincoln's words on "the legitimate object of government" for contextual support, refer to an economic definition of design policy culled from John Heskett's design primer, *Toothpicks & Logos: Design in Everyday Life* (1999),[94] and seek to ally their quest to the energy of the new political regime by quoting remarks made by President Barack Obama. In a January 2009 speech, Obama spoke of Americans being "a people of boundless industry and ingenuity… innovators and entrepreneurs." All of this is almost incontrovertible. However, as the Presidential campaign publication, *Blueprint for Change: Obama and Biden's Plan for America,* makes clear by omission, there is much to be done to achieve the goal of establishing an American Design Council in partnership with the U.S. government: the word "design" is not mentioned once in any appropriate context. Furthermore, although the design communities' commitment to commissioning a U.S. design version of the British HM Treasury Cox Review is understandable, the basis of the ten design policy proposals is extremely slight in terms of evidence and quantitative and qualitative analysis, and there is little reference in *Redesigning America's Future* to the

94   John Heskett, *Toothpicks & Logos: Design in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

good practices, or even strengths and weaknesses, in other national design policies around the world. In addition, as indicated earlier, the much-admired Cox Review was not itself without criticism or possible shortcomings and, in the view of some critics, was already out of date by the time it was published in 2005.

The often-intoxicating, self-referential rhetoric of national design promotion has an air of familiarity to design historians and others with a historical and international perspective of design matters. For many of them, the aspirations of the *10 Design Policy Proposals* are unexceptional. In terms of the context in which the proposals were created, they may be seen to exhibit many of the qualities of the "Emperor's New Clothes," hallmarked by the tailoring of representatives of the American design profession. To bring full-circle the story of "The Emperor's New Clothes," quoted at the beginning of this article, it is worth completing the tale:

> *"But the Emperor has nothing at all on!" said a little child. "Listen to the voice of innocence!" exclaimed his father; and what the child had said was whispered from one to another.*
>
> *"But he has nothing at all on!" at last cried out all the people. The Emperor was vexed, for he knew that the people were right; but he thought the procession must go on now! And the lords of the bedchamber took greater pains than ever, to appear holding up a train, although, in reality, there was no train to hold.*
>
> – Hans Christian Andersen, *Fairy Tales Told for Children*, 1835

APPENDIX (continued on following page)
Selected Twentieth and Twenty-first Century
National and International Design Initiatives

Year	Organizations, Institutions, and Reports	Nationality
1944	Establishment of the Council of Industrial Design (COID, restructured as Design Council, 1972) under the government's Board of Trade	Britain
1948	Establishment of National Design Council	Canada
1951	Establishment of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)	Japan
1953	Establishment by Parliament of Rat für Formgebung (Design Council)	West Germany
1956	Establishment of the COID's Design Centre in central London	Britain
1958	Establishment of the Design Department (later known as the Design Policy Office) of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)	Japan
1958	Industrial Design Council of Australia (IDCA) established, government funded (until 1976)	Australia
1958	*Eames Report*, also known as the *India Report*, commissioned by the Indian Government	India
1963	Design Council (NDC, Norsk Designråd) established under the Ministry of Trade and Industry	Norway
1964	Design Centre established in Belgium (closed in 1986)	Belgium
1964	Australian Design Centre opens in Melbourne	Australia
1969	Establishment of the Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization (JIDPO).	Japan
1970	Korean Design Packaging Centre established	South Korea
1972	Federal Design Improvement Policy developed by Nancy Hanks, Chair of National Endowment for the Arts	

APPENDIX (from previous page)
Selected Twentieth and Twenty-first Century
National and International Design Initiatives

Year	Organizations, Institutions, and Reports	Nationality
1973	Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines (PDDCP, formerly Design Centre Philippines) created by Presidential Decree. Reorganized 1987.	Philippines
1973	Barcelona Design Centre established, partially funded by government agencies	Spain
1978	Danish Design Centre established, working with Ministries of Industry and Education	Denmark
1979	A Product Design Division established under the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) and later expanded to become the Design promotion Center in 1990	Taiwan
1980	Establishment of the Oficina Nacional de Diseño (ONDi)	Cuba
1983	Agence pour la Promotion de la Création Industrielle established in response to the Ministries of Culture and Industry, becoming fully private in 1993	France
1987	Australian Design Council (ADC) replaces IDCA, following Government review	Australia
1989	Australian Design Summit, Canberra	Australia
1991	Design Vlaanderen (Design Flanders) is established under Flemish Minister for Economy	Belgium
1991	Slovak Design Centre (SDC) established by the Ministry of Culture	Slovakia
1992	International Design Center NAGOYA established as a quasi governmental corporation	Japan
1993	Publication by the Design Promotion Council of MITI of New Design Policy in Response to Changes in the Times	Japan
1993	First 5-year Design Plan initiated in South Korea (1993–97)	South Korea
1993	Malaysian Design Council established	Malaysia
1994	A Proposal for a Whitehouse Council on Design: A Strategy to Harness the Power of Design, Design Programme: National Endowment for the Arts, June 1994	USA
1995	Beijing Industrial Design Centre established	China
1995	Indonesian Design Centre established	Indonesia
1995	Competing by Design, National Design Review Report published	Australia
1995	Brazilian Design Program (Programa Brasileiro do Design - PBD) established by Government	Brazil
1997	Czech Trade Promotion Agency/CzechTrade established by the Ministry of Industry and Trade Czech Republic	Czech Republic
1998	Second 5-year Design Plan initiated in South Korea (1998–2002)	South Korea
2000	Metropolitan Design Center (CMD) established by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires	Argentina
2001	Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) established 2001, successor to MITI	Japan
2001	Korean Design Centre established. Korean Institute of Design of Design Promotion (KIDP) renamed, previously Korean Design Packaging Centre	South Korea
2001	Hong Kong Design Centre established, funded by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)	China
2002	The Hungarian Design Council established as successor to the Hungarian Council for Industrial Designs and Ergonomics	Hungary
2002	Premsela, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the City of Amsterdam. Established to promote Dutch design activity.	Holland
2002	Plan Nacional de Disegno de la Secretaria de Industria y Comercio	Argentina
2002	Taiwanese Government's Cultural and Creative Industries Development Program Phase 1 (2002–7)	Taiwan
2003	Thailand Creative & Design Centre (TCDC) project approved by Government Cabinet	Thailand
2003	Third 5-year Design Plan initiated in South Korea (2003–7)	South Korea
2003	Design Taskforce/New Zealand Government: A Report and Strategic Plan	New Zealand
2003	DesignSingapore Council for design promotion and development	Singapore
2003	International Design Alliance (IDA) established by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icsid) and International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icograda)	Global (Montreal)
2004	Taiwan Design Center (TDC), the national design promotion organization established in Taipei with support of the Industrial development Bureau, formerly the Design Promotion Center under the Taiwan External Trade Development Council	Taiwan
2005	Department for Trade & Industry Economics Paper no.15: Creativity, Design and Business Performance	United Kingdom
2005	Cox Review of Creativity in Business: building on the UK's strengths published by UK Design Council	United Kingdom
2005	Thailand Creative & Design Centre opened	Thailand
2006	Designium, the New Centre of Innovation in Design, established to promote national design policy, a cooperation between higher education and Tekes, the National Technology Agency	Finland
2007	National Design Policy launched	India
2008	Taiwanese Government's Cultural and Creative Industries Development Program Phase 2 (2002–7)	Taiwan