

# Why (and How) Design Must Change

Kozma, Robert<sup>a</sup>; Berry, Anne<sup>b</sup>; Lima, Manuel<sup>c</sup>; Norman, Don<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> SRI International, San Francisco, California, United States

<sup>b</sup> Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, United States

<sup>c</sup> Interos Inc., Libson, Portugal

<sup>d</sup> University of California San Diego, La Jolla, California, United States

\* bob@RobertKozma.Com

## 1 Introduction

The existing situation in the world is, for the most part, the product of our designs. And while we have designed many wonderful things and generated much wealth, we have left much of humanity and a diminished planet in our wake. The world we have designed is too often unjust, inequitable, inhumane, and unsustainable. Some of this is due to our harmful designs, but much is due to the fact that we have failed to explicitly address these problems with our designs. The business models of far too many companies treat profit as the only measure of success, while their products destroy the ecosystems, increase inequalities, and lessen the quality of life for many. While it has contributed to this situation, the design profession also has the potential to play a major role in reversing it.

Unfortunately, the profession currently tends to focus on a narrow range of designs. In addition, the design profession is filled with myths and practices that focus on a narrow range of designs, designers, and voices, which exclude narratives that have been passed down over generations. If we are to change the existing situation, if we are to have life-changing design, we must first change design.

The four members of the panel have each recently published a book that focuses on many of the major issues facing the world today and addresses why and how design must change, if the world is to improve.

### 1.1 The Four Books:

- *Make the World a Better Place: Design with Passion, Purpose and Values.*
- *The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression, and Reflection*
- *The New Designer: Rejecting Myths, Embracing Change*
- *Design for a Better World: Meaningful, Sustainable, Humanity Centered*

## 2 The Issues

Drawing on multiple perspectives and addressing multiple sub-themes, the panelists will discuss and debate the issues that must be confronted and the changes that must be made to realize life-changing design, considering not just changes in design practices, but the full complexity of the systems in which design is embedded: the many modes of thought and values, educational schemes, ways of living, community structures and interactions, government institutions and policies, and in the economic systems of the world. The considerations to be discussed are:

- Confronting the dominance of the profit motive and the need to explicitly incorporate values into the design process.
- Addressing the negative impact of colonialism, racial and religious discrimination, and the lack of diverse representation within design education and design practice.
- Moving from human-centered design to humanity-centered design, changing the role of design as a tool of industry that increases profits to a voice of those most affected by design, eliminating addictive digital technologies and designs that pollute the environment.
- Changing the design educational system, which fails to educate, inspire, or motivate or provide the skills and experiences needed to bring about change in the design profession.
- Addressing ways in which Black, Indigenous, and people of color are not given credit for their contributions, and the ways in which their work and ideas are co-opted by others.
- Why designers are seldom in a position of authority to enable companies to change to a less destructive design and to the circular economy.

The discussion will then move to the audience.

#### **About the Authors:**

**Robert Kozma:** is Emeritus Principal Scientist at SRI International where he designed and conducted research on advanced technology systems in education. He consulted with national and multinational agencies on technology policy. Previously, he was a professor at the University of Michigan where he taught graduate design courses. He is the author of *Make the World a Better Place: Design with Passion, Purpose and Values*.

**Anne Berry:** is a writer, designer, and Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Design at Cleveland State University. She is co-creator of the award-winning project *Ongoing Matter: Democracy, Design, and the Mueller Report* and managing editor of *The Black Experience in Design: Identity, Expression, and Reflection*.

**Manuel Lima:** is a RSA fellow, TED speaker, startup mentor, educator and head of design at Interos.ai. He is the author of 3 bestseller books and the latest, *The New Designer: Rejecting Myths, Embracing Change*.

**Don Norman:** is a distinguished professor emeritus at the University of California, San Diego, is the author of *Design of Everyday Things*, and *Design for a Better World: Meaningful, Sustainable, Humanity Centered, Design of Everyday Things*, and *Emotional Design*, among other titles.