

“WHAT DESIGN NEEDS,” KALLE LASN PROCLAIMS, “IS TEN YEARS OF TOTAL TURMOIL... ANARCHY... AFTER THAT MAYBE IT WILL MEAN SOMETHING AGAIN... STAND FOR SOMETHING AGAIN.” He warns graphic designers, “We have lost our plot. Our story line. We have lost our soul.”¹ *Design Anarchy*, excerpted below, is his sprawling manifesto. Through it, Lasn forces us to look straight at the harmful consequences of our profession. He rolls out the psychological and environmental damage of overconsumption. Designers, he challenges, created a crisis—and they can solve it. Born in Estonia during World War II, Lasn lived in a displaced person’s camp as a young boy. Later he moved with his family to Australia, then spent his early adulthood traveling the world. In 1989 Lasn founded the Canadian-based magazine *Adbusters*. Through *Adbusters* and the larger “culture jamming” movement, this marketing man turned media activist fights media with media.² Graphic design, he reminds us, is a powerful profession that can have nasty societal consequences.

1 Kalle Lasn, “The Future of Design” (lecture, TYPO Berlin, 11th International Design Conference, Berlin, May 2006).

2 For more information about culture jamming, see www.adbusters.org.

DESIGN ANARCHY

KALLE LASN | 2006

CULTURAL REVOLUTION IS OUR BUSINESS

We are a global network of artists, writers, environmentalists, teachers, downshifters, fair traders, rabble-rousers, shit-disturbers, incorrigibles, and malcontents. We are anarchists, guerrilla tacticians, meme warriors, neo-Luddites, pranksters, poets, philosophers, and punks. Our aim is to topple existing power structures and change the way we live in the twenty-first century. We will change the way information flows, the way institutions wield power, the way the food, fashion, car, and culture industries set their agendas. Above all, we will change the way we interact with the mass media and the way in which meaning is produced in our society.

DESIGN ANARCHY

Design Anarchy is madness. Choose it only if you’re certain the other options will corrode your soul and give you a bleeding ulcer, only if you know you are among the chosen few designers who hold Prometheus’s holy fire in your hands. You’ll suffer for years and live like a stray dog, but you’ll have the joy of breaking all the rules, of freely mixing art and politics, of pouring your beliefs and convictions into your work. Eventually, if you’re really as brilliant as you think, you’ll have a crack at pushing the boundaries of global culture with bold new forms and fresh ways of being.