

## Manifestos

At the 2007 NACIS conference, Steven R. Holloway displayed and distributed a letterpress broadsheet/ poster titled *Right Map Making*. The text was a manifesto, of sorts, setting out five precepts the author “intended [would] articulate the fundamental principles of ethical conduct in mapping & maps and to stimulate ‘right action’” (Holloway 2007, <http://www.tomake.com/future/fivewaystomakemaps.html>).

Several NACIS-ites traveled home from Saint Louis with one or more copies of this broadsheet under their arms, and some may have gone so far as hanging one on a wall once they were there. One wonders how many of these people read or subsequently re-read the entire text, and what they made of the whole idea. Cartography has not, traditionally, been a realm where one encounters manifestos. Controversy in our field has generally been hidden under a blanket of purported objectivity and dispassion, while a manifesto is, by definition, a vehicle for proselytization and declamation. While maps (the things most map makers spend most of their time making) can play a part in stoking a call to action, it is relatively seldom that the call to action comes from the mappers themselves, and the mappers generally seem uncomfortable when such calls come. The memory of Arno Peters proselytizing over the (unmitigated?) Gall/Peters projection might be a case in point, although that blast came primarily from outside the cartographic community.

Manifestos have gone in and out of fashion over the years (mostly, if truth be told, out), but nonetheless they have at times been the clarion call of monumental changes. When Parisians opened their *Le Figaro* on 20 February, 1909, and read:

We have been up all night, my friends and I, beneath mosque lamps whose brass cupolas are bright as our souls, because like them they were illuminated by the internal glow of electric hearts. And trampling underfoot our native sloth on opulent Persian carpets, we have been discussing right up to the limits of logic and scrawling the paper with demented writing . . .

(F.T. Marinetti. 1909. “First Futurist Manifesto” <http://www.cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/T4PM/futurist-manifesto.html>)

did they realize they had read the opening lines of the birth announcement for all twentieth century art?

There have been other manifestos of significance as well. Thus begins another:

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. ...

(Jefferson, et.al. 1776. *Declaration of Independence*. <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/>)

Mr. Holloway, then, is in good company, even if he is not proclaiming the shifting of all paradigm and convention; his is not of the stamp of that manifesto which begins, “A spectre is haunting Europe . . .” (Marx and Engels. 1848. *Communist Manifesto*). His manifesto is simpler, shorter (cer-

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tainly), and directed not at society at large, but at certain people engaged in certain practices. One assumes, good *CP* reader and maker of maps, that he is addressing you and me, and that he intends his precepts to shape our practices and our maps.

*Right Map Making* has been placed before us, whether as a guide, as a challenge, or as a lone crazed voice crying in the street one must decide for oneself. Still, it may be useful to examine Mr. Holloway's manifesto, and to compare it to others of similar ilk. As it happens, an appropriate comparison can well be made between *Right Map Making* and the two existing versions of the design manifesto, *First Things First*. This paper will attempt both the examination and the comparison. We should begin by reviewing the text of *Right Map Making*.

### Right Map Making

"The most obvious characteristic of our age is its destructiveness."  
T.H. MERTON

THE PROBLEM for the maker of maps being that our maps are, in part, engaged in the active and wanton destruction of the world. Thus AWAKENED, we VOW to take the right effort & engage in cartographic disobedience, map making "for a future to be possible" T.N.HANH. Unacceptable it is not to ACT.

### Five Ways to MAKE MAPS for a future to be Possible

REVERENCE; *the first precept of right map making*

From the awareness that our maps are, in part, responsible for the great and unnecessary destruction of life taking place in the world today. We vow to map and comment on spatial relationships in a manner non-harming, with reverence and with respect, and to reflect and reveal the beauty of life in a manner non-objectified, where the economic, the non-economic, and the unseen elements are given voice. We vow to recognize and incorporate story with the arguments on our maps. In agreement with M. Gandhi's "first . . . non-cooperation with everything humiliating," we vow to refrain from economicism, the objectification of sentient beings, and cartographic pornography. Such mapping and maps reflect agreement with the first principle of right action: REVERENCE.

THE PRACTICE of GENEROSITY; *the second precept*

From the awareness that our maps are, too often, in our self-interest, greedy consumptions of endless desire, human biased and nationalistic. We vow to engage in a mapping of that which desires to be mapped and shared, not taking that into map form that which does not belong to us, desiring to remain unmapped. We vow to be generous to all sentient beings on our maps and in our mapping. Where generosity is also the courage to leave blank on the page that which does not belong to us, not mapping to take what is not ours, and honoring the sanctity of the commons. Leviticus: "fields are not to be reaped to the border." Such mapping and maps show agreement with the second principle of right action: GENEROSITY.

COMMITMENT TO THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PLACE; *the third precept*

From the awareness that our maps are, in part, reflective of a lack of relationship and commitment to the place in which we reside and map. We vow to resist the temptation to map places with which we have no intimate or committed relation. We seek to remember and honor our relationship to the place; mapping with an honesty of lines, colours, and shapes, the naming of places, the unnamings as well, without gossip or intent to harm, or to divide, but rather with a clarity of intent to all sentient beings with whom we are committed to with & in the relationship. Such mapping and maps show agreement with the third principle of right action: COMMITMENT TO THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PLACE.

DEEP LISTENING THROUGH DIRECT-CONTACT & STOPPING; *the fourth precept*

From the awareness that our maps are, in part, a failure to deeply listen and have been made without stopping to directly contact and listen to the place we are mapping. We vow to refrain from mapping what we do not know to be the truth, to first stop to experience the interconnected, ever-changing and interwoven space we are privileged to map. These maps acknowledge the intimate Other, the desire for the awakened heart and mind with & in direct contact with the place itself. Such mapping and maps show agreement with the fourth principle of right speech: DEEP LISTENING THROUGH DIRECT-CONTACT AND STOPPING.

ON BELONGING TO ONE BODY; *the fifth precept for a future to be possible*

From the awareness that our maps are, in part, disconnected from the body of the earth. How can this be? Kabir says, "Whose Body is it anyway?" We vow to make our maps about the body living, our own body, the body in motion, ever-changing and interconnected, the body free from addiction and enslavement to the toxicity of drugs, ownership, objectification, disconnection, greed, capitalism, all the isms. We vow to map that delight in the body that serves to reduce suffering and misery. Maps, and the making of maps that respect all sentient beings, the living breathing air, the changing clouds, and the wind and the tides in motion, the soils, the interwoven rocks, the waterways and the water bodies entwined & circling, mountains rising & falling, compost building. Maps respecting and awakened to belonging to the OneBody without separation. Such mapping and maps show agreement with the fifth principle, oikos as the ecologic, economic and ecumenical whole of right livelihood: BELONGING TO ONE BODY.

We see that the five precepts are:

Reverence

The Practice Of Generosity

Commitment To The Relationship With The Place

Deep Listening Through Direct-Contact & Stopping

Belonging To One Body

These seem, on their face, to all be good and laudable attributes: reverence, generosity, commitment, listening, belonging. They would be welcome to find in a marriage, and one imagines they would be welcome precepts in a map-making practice, but one wonders just how these some-

what abstract precepts would be manifested in that practice? The text does not say.

The text does refer to shortcomings that would be corrected by implementation of the positive precepts. In fact, there are some very serious charges leveled against map making in *Right Map Making*. For instance, it says that maps are “responsible for the great and unnecessary destruction of life taking place in the world today.” They are not only “greedy consumptions of endless desire, human biased and nationalistic,” but they are also “reflective of a lack of relationship and commitment to the place in which we reside and map.” Furthermore, they are “a failure to deeply listen and have been made without stopping to directly contact and listen to the place we are mapping,” and, to top it all, they are “disconnected from the body of the earth.”

These are profoundly disturbing charges.

The charges are also disturbingly vague. How exactly are “our maps” responsible? How are they greedy? In what way do they fail to listen? How are they disconnected? How at all, let alone “too often,” or “in part”? That is hard to say; the text itself says little about how, but only focuses on an awareness of the existence of these purported facts. It assumes the existence of the facts, assumes the awareness, and, significantly, it assumes the locus of the shortcoming.

Each precept discussion begins with the formula: “From the awareness that our maps are . . . . This formula clearly pins each problem squarely on “our maps.” Is this realistic? Have our maps run amok? Have the maps seized control and placed the Smurfs in charge? This seems problematic; it would seem to deny human agency and human responsibility, but that is not quite so. This is because, at the same time, this shortcoming of our maps can be corrected by improving ourselves: WE are making destructive maps because WE are imperfect. We must seek the better way, this somewhat ambiguous five-fold way. Somehow, too, this is a way of “cartographic disobedience,” but disobedience to whom, or to what? It is all very unclear.

The ambiguity is centered, it would seem, on the prayerlike form the manifesto takes. It opens with a quotation from a Catholic mystic and proceeds to insert a single, disembodied phrase from another mystic source (“for a future to be possible”) into its preamble. The prayerishness of *Right Map Making* becomes even clearer when one encounters the companion *Vow of the Bodhisattva as MAP Maker* (Holloway, <http://www.tomake.com/future/vowbodhisattva.html>), but, as discovered in *Right Map Making* itself, the mystic overtones are not, at first, so apparent. Still, the problem as forwarded by *Right Map Making* is a personal problem, and a problem of sin.

That is problematic as a guide for action. Mapping, as a professional activity, is transactional: We make maps for clients with their own agendas, and we make maps for users who will read into and onto our maps narratives and understandings of their own. A map that honors the land and respects the people who do not desire to be mapped can still be used to facilitate a mountaintop removal.

This is not to deny that problems, even the very problems to which *Right Map Making* alludes, exist. The difficulty lies rather in the way the problems are framed and presented: What should be a sharp and focused reflector is more of a fun house mirror.

Generally, manifestos identify problems and lay out the causality of agency and correction more specifically than this. We should look to the *First Things First* graphic design manifestos for a model of what a workable, actionable manifesto can be.

In 1964, British designer Ken Garland first issued his manifesto titled *First Things First*. Dashed off during a meeting of the Britain's Society of Industrial Artists, and declaimed from the podium at the meeting's close, it was met with prolonged applause. Signed by twenty-one of his colleagues, it was first published in an edition of 400. *First Things First* was an appeal to graphic designers to reject the lure of advertising and high-pressure selling in favor of what was defined as socially useful graphic design work. It came at a time when design was evolving into a professionalized industry, and the frenetic, screaming, saturating tsunami of branding, selling, and advertising which has engulfed our society today was just beginning in Britain and Europe, and was still in its early stages in North America. Many designers were disturbed by the way their craft was changing, and *First Things First* pointed to a criteria for judging the validity of practice. Not everyone welcomed the manifesto, and much (but certainly not all) of the established design industry was openly hostile to the manifesto's denunciation of trivial, commercial design work. Nonetheless, news of the manifesto spread, and copies and translations proliferated across Europe, Britain, North America, and around the world.

As Andrew Howard wrote in an article titled: "There is Such a Thing as Society" that appeared in Issue 13 (Summer 1994) of the design journal *Eye*:

It is crucial that we recognize that there is a direct correspondence between the condition of our culture and the ways we organize the production of materials. The form of economic organization we refer to as capitalism ceased long ago to be simply that, and has become a means of organizing the consciousness necessary for that economic system to flourish. As designers whose work is concerned with the expression and exchange of ideas and information and the construction of the visual vocabulary of day-to-day culture, we must establish a perspective on where we fit into this scheme. We must ask in what ways our function helps to organize consciousness. We must also discover to what extent and in what ways the solutions, vocabularies, and dialogues that we are able to conceive and construct are determined for us. The *First Things First* manifesto was an attempt at least to address these issues. (<http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature.php?id=42&fid=53>)

### First Things First 1964: a manifesto

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as: cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before-shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons.

By far the greatest effort of those working in the advertising industry is wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high-pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are

other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films, television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

We do not advocate the abolition of high-pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes. With this in mind we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students and others who may be interested.

*Signed:*

Edward Wright	Geoffrey White	William Slack
Caroline Rawlence	Ian McLaren	Sam Lambert
Ivor Kamlisch	Gerald Jones	Bernard Higon
Brian Grimbly	John Garner	Ken Garland
Anthony Froshaug	Robin Fior	Germano Facetti
Ivan Dodd	Harriet Crowder	Anthony Clift
Gerry Cinamon	Robert Chapman	Ray Carpenter
Ken Briggs		

(<http://www.xs4all.nl/~maxb/ftf1964.htm>)

The editors of the Canadian journal *Adbusters* re-discovered the *First Things First* manifesto through that "There is Such a Thing as Society" *Eye* article, and re-published it in 1998. The editors then, in consultation with the late Tibor Kalman and the original author, Ken Garland, decided to update and renew the declaration as *First Things First Manifesto 2000*. This new manifesto appeared in the Autumn 1999 issues of *Adbusters*, *Emigre*, and the *AIGA Journal* in North America, in *Eye* and *Blueprint* in Britain, in *Items* in the Netherlands, and in *Form* in Germany.

According to the editorial accompanying the new manifesto in *Eye*: The aim is to stimulate discussion in all areas of visual communication—in education, in practice, in the organizations that represent design's aspirations and aims—as well as outside design. The changing relationship of advertising, graphic design, commerce and culture poses some profound questions and dilemmas that have recently been overlooked. If anything, these developments are accepted as an unproblematic fait accompli. (Barnbrook, et al. 1999. "First Things First Manifesto 2000." *Eye* 33, Autumn. <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature.php?id=18&fid=99>)

### First Things First Manifesto 2000

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, art directors and visual communicators who have been raised in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable use of our talents. Many design teachers and mentors promote this belief; the market rewards it; a tide of books and publications reinforces it.

Encouraged in this direction, designers then apply their skill and imagination to sell dog biscuits, designer coffee, diamonds, detergents, hair gel, cigarettes, credit cards, sneakers, butt toners, light beer and heavy-duty recreational vehicles. Commercial work has always paid the bills, but many graphic designers have now let it become, in large measure, what graphic designers do. This, in turn, is how the world perceives design. The profession's time and energy is used up manufacturing demand for things that are inessential at best.

Many of us have grown increasingly uncomfortable with this view of design. Designers who devote their efforts primarily to advertising, marketing and brand development are supporting, and implicitly endorsing, a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact. To some extent we are all helping draft a reductive and immeasurably harmful code of public discourse.

There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. Many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programmes, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help.

We propose a reversal of priorities in favour of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication—a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.

In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.

*Signed:*

Jonathan Barnbrook	Nick Bell	Andrew Blauvelt
Hans Bockting	Irma Boom	Rudy VanderLans
Bob Wilkinson	Max Bruinsma	Siân Cook
Linda van Deursen	Chris Dixon	William Drenttel
Gert Dumbar	Simon Esterson	Vince Frost
Ken Garland	Milton Glaser	Jessica Helfand
Steven Heller	Andrew Howard	Tibor Kalman
Jeffery Keedy	Zuzana Licko	Ellen Lupton
Katherine McCoy	Armand Mevis	J. Abbott Miller
Rick Poynor	Lucienne Roberts	Erik Spiekermann
Jan van Toorn	Teal Triggs	
Sheila Levrant de Bretteville		

What was the effect of the *First Things First Manifesto 2000* on the world? Certainly, there has been no epiphany in graphic design; no great turning away from the more debased forms of advertisement-based design. Nonetheless, it has served as a rally point, a day mark or beacon

for anchoring other calls and other actions. It has established itself as a position to be reckoned with: Designers cannot simply pretend there is no other road.

Design is not just an “industry”: it goes to the heart of what it means to be human. The ability to use our creativity to transcend our limits as individuals and as a society is surely needed now more than ever [ . . . ]

One of the most organized expressions of designers’ collective desire to do the right thing is the *First Things First* manifesto [ . . . ], which pointed to a different set of priorities for graphic designers. The revived *First Things First 2000* (see *Eye* no. 33 vol. 9, 1999) created a stir, but that was eight long years ago. The time for pledges has gone and it is time for action. Graphic communication cannot be limited to the process of selling commodities; it is a powerful tool for both re-imagining the world, and expressing the truth of our situation [ . . . ] (Noel Douglas. 2007. “Whose Space?” *Eye* 66, Winter. <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature.php?id=152&fid=657>)

In both versions of *First Things First*, there is a clear and unambiguous setting of the stage. Each says, there is *this* problem, caused by *these* forces and circumstances; *this other* set of concerns are more important and more deserving of our attention and expertise. In the manifestos there is established a conception of *design as marketing* set against an antithesis of *design as communication*: design to *create desires* against design to *meet needs*. Through this dichotomy is forwarded a plan of action that privileges the second term and counters the prevailing paradigm’s myopic focus on the first.

The situation laid out in *Right Map Making* is, by contrast, more diffuse. It sets forth the position that something is rotten, somewhere, and we should stop doing it and try to be better. The opposition it sets up is of *mapping as alienated* verses *mapping as connected* and, frankly, equates the former with evil and the latter with good without offering much in the way of explanation or justification. All we are left with as guidance are the worldviews we already hold. Both the evils and the curing precepts remain in the eye of the beholder, to each be defined any which way. There is nothing in *Right Map Making* that can compare to Tibor Kalman’s call: “Designers . . . stay away from corporations that want you to lie for them” (Kalman. Quoted in *Adbusters* 27, Autumn 1999, back cover).

How are consequences approached in these manifestos? *First Things First* addresses them rather plainly: Designers are helping build “. . . a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact. To some extent we are all helping draft a reductive and immeasurably harmful code of public discourse” (*First Things First 2000*). Obviously, the danger anticipated is an erosion in the mental environment, brought about by a poisoned public discourse. *Right Map Making*, in its turn, speaks of an attempt to “make a future possible” (RMM). Not a good future, not a better future, but *any* future. The opposite of any possible future is no future whatsoever. That is dire indeed, but how would this loss happen? The manifesto is silent on this point.

## Conclusion

What, in the end, can be said of *Right Map Making*? Clearly, it falls a bit short in terms of a manifesto for better practice, but it is far from worthless or pointless. Mr. Holloway is pointing to some real problems, although his

indicating gestures are a bit inscrutable. He is proposing some valid and wholesome precepts, albeit somewhat obscure ones open to a good deal of interpretation. Taken as a whole, or ingested only in parts, *Right Map Making* is a sort of theological text; its value may lie more in the discomforts of digesting it than in its actual pronouncements.

There is, clearly, a place for a manifesto of map making. In this era of not only ubiquitous maps but of ubiquitous map making, there are few guideposts to assist individual map makers in grappling with the very serious fundamental questions. There are lots of books on using software, quite a few technical map-making manuals, a few good theoretical assessments, and a whole lot of chatter on cartographic message boards, but very little to answer the question, "Should I do as I am asked?" Cartographers have, on the whole, rather ignored that question. In a large part, it could be because there is a real coincidence and identification of the end, interests, and ideologies between the mapmakers and their employers or clients. Ambivalence is a useful refuge and camouflage, and few cartographers are in much of a position to disagree with their masters. Nonetheless, it is important for each individual mapmaker to look at her situation and "... discover to what extent and in what ways the solutions, vocabularies, and dialogues that we are able to conceive and construct are determined for us" (Howard, 1994, *Eye* 13, Summer. <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature.php?id=42&fid=53>) and just what we think of the world we are helping create.

Graphic designers have had to do this, although it was and is still a struggle and effort. It is far easier to think in terms of tasks and deadlines than in terms of right and wrong. As Rick Poynor remarked in his *Adbusters* introduction to *First Things First* 2000:

When the possibility is tentatively raised that design might have broader purposes, potential and meanings, designers who have grown up in a commercial climate often find this hard to believe. "We have trained a profession," says [Katherine] McCoy, "that feels political or social concerns are either extraneous to our work or inappropriate." (Poynor. 1999. "First Things First: A Brief History." *Adbusters* 27, Autumn 1999, 56)

The cartographic profession, on the whole, is very much the same—in spades.

Poynor further observes that:

What's at stake in contemporary design, the artist and critic Johanna Drucker suggests, isn't so much the look or form of design practice as the life and consciousness of the designer (and everybody else, for that matter). She argues that the process of unlocking and exposing the underlying ideological basis of commercial culture boils down to a simple question that we need to ask, and keep on asking: "In whose interest and to what ends? Who gains by this construction of reality, by this representation of this condition as 'natural'?" (Poynor. 1999. "First Things First: A Brief History." *Adbusters* 27, Autumn 1999, 56)

is apt as well, and speaks directly, it would seem, to the concerns raised in *Right Map Making*. At its core, one can discern in *Right Map Making* the key questions as framed above by Drucker: "In whose interest and to what ends? Who gains by this construction of reality, by this representation of this condition as 'natural'?" (Drucker, quoted in Poynor. 1999. "First Things First: A Brief History," *Adbusters* 27, Autumn, 56), but they are obscured by the prayer-like presentation.

It would appear, then, that *Right Map Making* is a good, noble, and