The State of Design History as a Discipline
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Design History is a new field of knowledge that has developed in the international academy as a scholarly discipline during the last forty years. Its emergence within universities during the 1970s and 1980s was the product of an era of dynamic cultural and economic change that stimulated intellectual interest in design as a mode of cultural and economic production and created an increased demand for qualified designers to work in new and expanding specializations. As Dilnot (1) asserts the post war expansion of capitalism and the explosion of popular culture and mass consumerism was pivotal to the institutionalization of design as a professional practice and academic discipline and with this the intellectualization of the history of design. First generation design historians tell of how the impetus to develop design history came from the impact of these changes on design education, which stimulated an acute need for a history that in defining and explaining how design as we know it came into being also identified its subject, players and manifestations (2). The postwar elevation of Design ('Design' here meaning a specialist practice, profession and disciplinary field) to degree, postgraduate and research status within universities having created a demand for contextual studies that dealt not, as in the past with art and architecture, but with design as a field of knowledge in its own right. The challenge, therefore, was to rescue the history of design from the margins of the modernist historiography's grand narratives of art, craft and architecture as exemplified by Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design* (3)*,* and create a new history, which Dilnot (4) advocated in his vision statement, 'The State of Design History' would explore the boundaries of what design is and could be. A new historical practice that initially took as its focus the task of defining and explaining design as a specialist activity within the wider context of its development as an economic, social and cultural mode of production that was inextricably linked to the history of how the world was made modern.

The emergence of design history as an academic practice is usually dated to the formation of the Design History Society in the Britain in 1977. The significance of this event being the existence of a critical mass of practitioners concerned with converting the study of the history of design into an independent disciplinary field.

When the society's mouthpiece the *Journal of Design History* was first published in 1988 the field was beginning to take form with several texts, including Dilnot's 'The State of Design History' essays, Forty's *Objects of Desire*, Fry's, *Design History Australia,* and Sparke's *Introduction to Design and Culture* (5)*,* attempting to theorize its intellectual potential and its intent, methods and challenges. All these texts reflect the considerable impact that Cultural Studies (centered in Britain at the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) was having on traditional academic fields such as history, literature and art history within universities around the world (6). For design historians the work of cultural theorists, including Bourdieu, Baudrillard, Certeau and Williams (7), in theorizing how meaning is constructed through the everyday engagement with visual and material culture, including mass consumer culture, was particularly useful in developing critical frameworks for writing about the history of design. By 1989 Walker was able to argue, in *Design History and the History of Design,* that the study of the history of design was being shaped into a disciplinary field with its own logic, set of concerns and importantly methodology. The main value of design history being according to Walker 'to deepen and strengthen the writing of histories of design' and play a critical role in shaping the discourse of design. (8)

In reviewing the development of design history as a discipline and the issues that have and are shaping its practice, this essay is mindful that each era looks at the past through the lens of its own concerns, which for design history means seeking to understand how design as we are experiencing it today has come into being. This, as Dilnot (9) argues, demands building an understanding of the processes of modernization and capitalist expansion that have driven the development of design as a global mode of economic and cultural production and consumption. Integral to this is using historical hindsight to question and understand the latest phase in the globalization of capitalism which is witnessing the emergence of post-communist and non-western countries, such as China and India, as centres of low-cost production, the impact of which is felt by the design profession and design education. A question that underpins this essay therefore is what role could and should design history take in building this understanding?

Defining the object of enquiry
Debate and controversy has been at the heart of design history since its beginnings as competing stakeholders have debated the potential scope of its field of enquiry and the nature of its questions and definitions. As Woodham (10) records there have

been the attacks from established disciples such as social anthropology questioning the credibility of such as endeavor. Within the discipline feminist scholars have attacked the patriarchal ideologies of modernist historiography that marginalized women and their designing activities from the history of design. (11) Another faction led by Margolin and Buchanan (12) argue that, while excellent, the practice of design history lacks the consensus of disciplinary values and definitive boundaries necessary to be recognized as an established discipline. Yet another faction, questioning the pedagogical relevance of design history to design education, has promoted the development of Design Culture as an alternative field of study (13). Most recently a new generation of multi-national scholars are challenging design history's Anglo/Euro/American orientation and questioning whether the Western historiography that underpins its practice is appropriate for shaping local and regional histories of countries which have been historically outside or on the margins of Western capitalism's project of modernization. (14)

Pivotal to these academic debates is the challenge of how to shape a discipline and its methodology, the scope and boundaries of its knowledge, objects and purpose, and the appropriateness of its questions and narratives to its audiences. There is also the challenge of how to shape a critical and rigorous form of history-making that, as Dilnot and Walker (15) posited, would be open to the possibility that there can be no one history of design. Rather there are many different ways in which the history of the idea of design and circumstances of its production, practice and consumption can and should be told. Most important there is the vexing question, that troubled the formative years of design history and continue to bother it today, of whose interests should the practice of design history serve and who should decide its purpose and focus of enquiry?

Should the primary intent of design history, as many within the design education and design research fields argue, be to raise the consciousness of Design as a scholarly discipline and a professional practice (16)? If so it would take the form of a practice-based history dedicated to the understanding of design's development as a specialist activity with its roots in modern capitalism's project of industrialization and its economies of mass production and consumption. Historians accordingly would take up Margolin's (17) proposal and focus their enquiry on the historical formulation of design as an industrial practice implicated in the translation of technologies and resources into modern products and in the wider 'practice of human invention and the conception of the artificial'. Their task would be to build on the foundation studies

of Heskett, Meggs, Meikle and Sparke (18) in developing disciplinary and professional histories that investigate the development of design as an intellectual and professional practice from within the context of the histories of Anglo/European industry and modernism and American capitalism's entrepreneurial systems of manufacturing and marketing. A sub-text would be to follow the lead of Freidman, Fry, Pulos and Remington (19) in developing national and regional histories that trace the internationalization of design as integral to the growth of Western capitalism's industrial businesses. They would also need to develop historical categories and narrative strategies for investigating the complex culture of the design artifact in all its different manifestations from concept through to its abundant, material presence and visual representation within the spectacle of consumption and the fabric of everyday life. Within this schema design history would function as a sub-discipline of the academic fields of Design Studies and Design Research and play a prescribed pedagogical role in advancing the status of design as a discipline by providing it with a legitimizing discourse that, based in historical precedence, assists in establishing standards of professional quality and role models for young designers (20).

On the other hand design history could, as its early protagonists advocated, be developed as an independent disciplinary practice the focus of which was the historical coming to be of design in all the complexities and associated meanings of the word, be it verb or noun (21). It could seek broader possibilities for understanding the value and meaning of design by drawing inspiration from the wider fields of history and cultural studies with their questioning of the role of material and visual culture in the construction of meaning. As a new field of academic enquiry its intent could be as Attfield proposed to produce a history of design which: 'concerned with all aspects of the modern material world and … the multifarious ways it has threaded itself into our everyday lives … [would offer]… a way into the mysteries of how the artefactual world has been shaped and formed by the powerful determining forces of politics and economics, a well as the softer, but nevertheless equally influential, value-driven thrust of social dynamics.' (22)

 A contemporary history
In adopting this charter design historians could position the history of design within the emergent field of contemporary historiography the primary concern of which,

Michel de Certeau argues, is not the grand narratives of empire building, great men, progress and impressive deeds, but the practice of meaning. (23) With the aim of challenging modernist historical practices, contemporary historians take up concerns formerly consigned to silence or situated outside the frame of traditional disciplines including the impact of modernism's different material and visual languages on the unconscious relationships that inform the objects and practices that have shaped everyday life: concerns that might rightly include design. Practicing within this wider field design historians could rigorously question the value and significance of design as a fundamental human activity pertaining to the shaping of not only physical order but also social and cultural order. They also could join with scholars from complimentary fields including material and visual culture, art and architectural history, sociology, cultural anthropology, psychology, the history of business, consumption, technology, retail and post-colonialism, in building understanding of how individual and collective consciousness was constructed in the modern age of capitalist production and consumption beginning with the industrial revolution and the birth of consumer society.

As a mode of contemporary history design history has been able to formulate wide ranging questions that rather than narrowing the object of enquiry test the possibilities for different varieties of histories of design which would collectively build a scholarly depth of understanding. Questions like those posed in the *Journal of Design History* about the history of design's implication in the production, distribution and consumption of capitalism's world of goods and its part in the everyday communication of ideological messages pertaining to issues ranging from political and economic power, freedom and social justice, identity and ethnicity, domesticity and gender (24). And questions concerning when and how the separation of labor together with the growth of industrial businesses (print, media, manufacturing, retailing, transport, leisure, urban development, trade, housing) created the need for a multiplicity of designing activities-graphic, typographical, industrial, product, interior and fashion design, the purpose of which was the creation of cultures of consumption (25).

This in turn stimulated questions about the gap between the ideal of the modernist designer as a creative social reformer who brings technical and aesthetic innovation to industry, and the reality of design's origins as a commercial practice serving the need of modern industry and commerce to shape consumer societies. Central to this as Mazur Thomson, Hewitt and Poynor (26) show is understanding the manner in

which practitioners have collectively defined the role of the designer in response to demands of new industrial businesses, such as print, advertising, packaging, product, shaping specialist work practices and career paths which they institutionalized through the development of unions, trade journals, education and training, and professional regulation. Also central is the questioning of the designer's role in the shaping of meaning: is it the user who creates the meaning of the object (27), or does the designer as the '*sine qua non* of the modern commercial system' ensure 'through the activities of production and consumption, that people's needs and desires…are met by visual and material images and artifacts that enter the marketplace and help us define who we are'? (28).

Strategic narratives
But before this could be achieved design historians had to retrieve the telling of the story of design from the ideological restrictions of modernist historiography with its rhetoric of the avant-garde, high culture (art and architecture) and man's (white) creative contribution to the universal advance of civilization (Western). To move as Dilnot, Fry and Walker argued beyond Pesvnerian and art historical practices of canonization and connoisseurship, and the privileging of the innovative designer, aesthetic form and *zeitgeist*, in order to develop a new historiography for design. A new methodology that underpinned by contemporary theories of cultural production would, Fry (29) theorized, allow for a greater understanding of the role of design in prefiguring and manufacturing the world in which we live.

While identifying a new set of objects, players, materials, technologies, theories and practices to study, design historians had to develop narrative strategies for writing about design that moved beyond modernist concerns with formalism, innovation and the functional object to the investigation of design as an economic and cultural practice. Social narratives such as those proposed by Forty*,* Sparke and Lupton (30) that use a post-structuralist analysis of the encoded nature of mass consumer products and their promotional rhetoric to reveal design's implication in the construction and mediation of social discourses, including those of family and home, work and leisure, the social body, gender, age, race and class. And critical gender narratives that introduced women as producers and consumers to the history of design, and in the process opened the field to a new set of players and concerns stimulating enquiry not only into gender and design (feminine and masculine) but also the marginal fields of interior, fashion and retail design and their ephemeral

modes of representation as in magazines, advertising and the spectacle of shopping (21).

They also developed user narratives that examine the complex practices and self-understanding that people build of themselves as consumers as they negotiate the abundance of mass culture (22). The concern with consumption as opposed to production being essential to rupturing modernism's ideal of good design and extending the understanding of the social dynamics of how ordinary people engage with the idea of design within the realities of their daily lives, be it within the home or beyond. This demanded widening the definition of design to include its practice by ordinary people as they creatively engage in the selection and arrangement of goods and spaces and in DIY activities, within the processes of self-construction and identity formation (23). It also involved opening the field to include the anonymous design of the high street manufacturers and traders with their mélange of traditional and contemporary styles (24). The practices of styles, taste and fashion were also need recovery from the negativity of modernism's ideology of anti-consumerism by rethinking their centrality to the urban spectacle of habitus and with this modern mode of identity and value formation (25). The unifying concern of these new narratives being to establish a more inclusive definition of design and culture that celebrates diversity and difference.

Underpinning these thematic narratives is the shared concern of contemporary historians with the pivotal role of capitalism's production and consumption in cultural formation and the construction of modern identities and experiences for mass audiences (26). The identify formation, as Fry (27) stresses, extends beyond social groups and individuals to the economics and politics of international trade and its conversion of regional and non Western countries into primary industry nations and markets for mass consumer goods and services. These narratives also are marked by design history's distinguishing focus on the materiality of the design object and the processes informing its production and consumption together with the mediating discourses that situate it within circulating systems of meaning *(*28). Production as Lees-Maffei explains not only involves the manufacture of physical objects, but also the production of the meaning of designed goods as 'understood through mediating discourses of advertising, curatorial and retail strategies, advice discourses, education, consumer magazines, television, radio, film and internet media,' and how 'the goods themselves also mediate between production and consumption, maker and user, as advertisements for themselves and as carrier of messages about the

people who own or use them'. (29) While Lees-Maffei's interest lies with the mediating role of the exhibition, Aynsley and Forde (30) have interrogated the modern home magazine analyzing its visual format and representational strategies including drawings, plans, display rooms, typography and photography to reveal how design not only encodes the magazine object and the objects within it with performative possibilities, but also presents design itself as an experience to be consumed through the process of reading.

Finally as the varied nature of the narratives indicates, there is the recognition that there can be no one totalizing, global paradise history of design (31). Rather there is belief in the importance of multiple histories that foster complexities of understandings by focusing attention on specific themes and aspects of design practice or specific geographical locations and moments, and cumulatively shape depth and breadth of understanding.

The state of design history today

Forty years on from when design historians began shaping these concerns into what is now an independent field of enquiry there is still dispute as to whether a discipline of design history can be said to exist (32). This stems from the inherently contested nature of history making. Like all histories, design history contributes to the shaping of public consciousness as the stories its tells filter into the public imagination through various media, through academic and popular publications, the press, museum and gallery exhibitions, television programs and films. And because of this it has the power to stimulate public controversy and even, as in Australia 'history wars' over which story should be told of white Australians' treatment of indigenous people. History is not a neutral practice, rather individuals and institutions bring subjectivities be they cultural, professional, ideological or theoretical to the making and reading of history. Thus while Margolin and Buchanan argue that design history lacks the definitive boundaries and identifying focus on professional practice necessary for it to be a recognised discipline, their rhetoric is to some extent political being informed by the professional and ideological conflict between design academics and design historians over the purpose and intent of design history. There are also the unexplored historical and philosophical biases of design education towards certain modes of knowledge and learning, especially history, the roots of which are to be found in Enlightenment theories of creativity which were institutionalized by Bauhaus and post World War II art and design pedagogy (33).

The reality is that design history is a well established disciplinary field which is increasingly being mapped through varied modes of exposition; academic journals, exhibitions, dictionaries, document and essay anthologies, catalogues, monographs, TV and film documentaries, all grounded in scholarly research. While small, it draws strength from cooperation with historians from complimentary disciplines such as the American Studies scholar Jeffrey Meikle and from gallery and museum curators who, like the London V&A's Christopher Wilks and Australia's Powerhouse Museum's Ann Stephen (34) are making significant contributions to design history. It also draws strength from trans-disciplinary ventures (35) in which design history concerns (cultures of consumption) are collectively analysed by scholars from different disciplines (especially from material and consumer studies) work to build a richly contextualized study with relevance to diverse audiences. This practice of historians (Conekin, Mort, and Walters ;Betts (36), of working across different disciplines, subject and thematic areas is a feature of contemporary historical practice that is troublesome for some (37) who view it as a threat to the establishment of design history's territorial boundaries.

In Britain where the practice is strongest the Design History Society and supportive government policies have provided a springboard for the formation of a disciplinary space with the supporting intellectual networks that cultural studies scholar John Frow (38) argues are necessary to drive and generate a body of knowledge. These networks as the *Journal of Design History* indicates reach nationally and internationally across universities and the different disciplines therein, into archival, museum and gallery systems as well as the design, publishing and culture industries. As a result a cohesive research culture has formed around a network involving the London's Royal College of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, universities such as Kingston and Brighton and a network of special interest study groups. Their unifying concern is the design of cultures of consumption, with the radiating centre being the home (ideal and real) on which the energies of design world, everyday consumerism and identity formation are predominately focused. The important point being that when one reviews the publications emanating from the V&A and RCA's Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior (39), and Manchester University Press's Studies in Design (40), it is evident that this research is marked by a cogent set of disciplinary questions and definitions that reflect the shared identification of materials for research, methods of interpretation and interlinking narratives. This together with the funding from the UK's pre-eminent Arts and Humanities Research Council is

evidence that design history is now recognized within the academy and beyond as a significant field of intellectual research.

While Britain has set the methodological framework and narratives for others to build on, there are signs of a strengthening of practice in the US where a younger generation of design historians with links into the design studies, decorative arts, galleries and museum fields, are using the Design Studies Forum of the College Art Association to build networks with a particular interest in opening the field towards Asia (41). While the US field shares a concern with social narratives including those of the consumer and the marginalized, it is distinctive in its focus on the regional and on the history of design as a commercial practice and its professionalization within the wider development of US manufacturing and marketing and the shaping of an American way of life.

The issue of how to shape professional and disciplinary histories is a source of friction between American academic historians and practitioner-cum-historians as the critical debate around the Stephen Heller led Graphic Design Movement indicates (42). In an effort to create scholarly as opposed to celebratory disciplinary histories, academic historians (43) argue the need to interrogate the 'real' history of design as in the shaping of its practices, processes, businesses and discourses and the dynamics informing the institutionalisation of different design specialisations, including graphic design and industrial design, into professional disciplines. By focusing on a particular moment in the development of design in a specific region, as did Mazur Thomson and the innovative Toledo Museum of Art's *Alliance of Art and Industry* (2002) exhibition, they are drawing attention to how specific sets of economic, technological and human dynamics (gender, transportation, resources, labour, manufacturing and production technologies, entrepreneurship), inform the production of design centres and industries.

The push to demystify design is further evident in a growing concern amongst historians, galleries and museums with the mainstream consultant and in-house designers as in Henry Dreyfuss, Brooks Stevens, and Russel Wright. (44) These exhibitions, and the monographs that accompany them, are building detailed and accurate understandings of the nature of design expertise and practice, including the collaborative nature of design work, the process of product development, advertising and market placement, the importance of self promotion, and the mediating role of designers in shaping styles and market trends in response to the life styles

aspirations of society. Importantly they are developing methods for giving concrete form and intellectual understanding to the design process through the exploration of new evidential material in the forms of plans, drawings, photography, publicity and promotional materials together with detailed product and project case studies.

A world history of design?

Thus far I have focused on two of the three driving concerns that I perceive are shaping design history as a disciplinary field; the need for a disciplinary practice-based history and the dominant concern with design as a mode of social and cultural production. In concluding I want to explore the third concern, the globalization of design history that is accompanying the international expansion of design education and practice and our entry into what Dilnot (45) terms the fourth stage of capitalist expansion. While many countries produce local histories of design the output is uneven and often driven by nationalist and trade agendas. Change is evident, however, in the formation of academic focus groups such as the Japanese Design History Forum and the International Committee for Design History and Design Studies (ICDHDS) whose conferences are drawing together scholars from all regions, Western, non-Western, post-communist, post-colonial, Asian and Southern Hemisphere, to remap the scope and narrative concerns of design history. In their endeavor to develop histories to support the development of design education, research and practice in their regions (long regarded as marginal or outside the history of modern design) these scholars are advocating a new geography of design that critically rethinks the impact of the Western capitalism's dissemination of the idea and practice of design. The intent being to build this geography through the comparison and synthesis of the different histories of how specific countries, regions and localities have responded to design as an agency of modernization.

Such a history, Calvera (46) and her fellow global history protagonists (47) argue, would challenge the Euro/Anglo/American focus of design history and broaden its definitions of design beyond its concern with modern industrialization and consumer culture to address the value and historical systems of non-Western cultures and their distinctive modes of production and consumption, including craft based industries. But before intellectual consideration can be given to the development of critical histories of different countries, regions and localities within a global context, new systems of interpretation need to be developed that question the modernist ideological biases that underpin the conventional modes used for telling national and internationalist histories of design.

In calling for a new world history Woodham, Margolin and Calvera (48) argue the need for a unifying narrative that rethinks design as a global and multi-cultural phenomenon. Calvera's aim being to create a theoretical narrative that brings intellectual logic to the multiple stories of how different countries- Australia, China ,Cuba, Hong Kong, India, South Africa, Spain (49) have negotiated the process of westernization and the idea of design according that their specific economic, geographical, political and cultural circumstances.

For Margolin and Woodham a way forward would be to widen the scope of the grand narratives of design history, as in the art and design dictionary and the international, disciplinary and era surveys, to include a more comprehensive range of countries. These encyclopaedic histories are much favoured because their familiarity and facility to map the totality of a field and give it definitive boundaries while canonising its significant definitions, centres of creative power as well as key players, objects and concerns. Ideal for textbooks and blockbuster exhibitions, their conventions were established by art historians in the post World War II era of international modernism and popularised within design history during the 1980s and 1990s. While many express concerns about the inherently western and exclusive nature of these narratives and their practices of canonisation, their appeal is strong as the latest trend for totalising texts evidenced in Raizman and Eskilson (50) indicates.

However, as Certeau, Conekin, Mort and Walters (51) argue the totalising world narrative was born of an attempt to theorise the expansionist properties of the West's ideal of a modern world system and disseminate its systems of intellectual power which, for those colonised would demand multiple shifts in knowledge and material culture including the reorganisation of concepts of time, history, place and space. Within histories of design these imperialist ideologies have been signified through a European world consciousness including chronological time, and a meta-narrative of the evolutionary 'progress' of modern 'civilisation' as driven by man's 'pioneering' spirit and quest for the new horizons. As Calvera notes its geographical order with its mapping of centres, regions and peripheries is also power based as its privileging of euro-centricity renders those distant from the 'centre' as silent or other, and their experience of modernism as non-existence or, as the British educated Fry (52) once argued of Australia, a simulacrum of the real thing. This power play reaches further into design history's agreed definition of design as the product of industrialisation, technological innovation and mass manufacture, which excludes countries that

lacking mass manufacturing and its technologies nevertheless shape sophisticated design cultures.

The issue of specificity: the building blocks of a global design history
Calvera proposes that the new geography of design history be built by working from the specific as opposed to the general. The focus on 'particularities' and 'specificities' working to dismantle the power politics inherent in disseminated Western cultural practices and identify the shared strategies of reception, resistance and exchange that characterize post-colonial and non-Western cultures. Calvera's aim is to build new histories that strategically compare the stories of different countries in order to identify the patterns of similarities and differences that characterise the world's experiences of modernization and with this the development of multiple design cultures and multiple manifestations of modernisms.

The challenge for design history is the development of interpretative methods and narratives that can bring a critical focus to this process. Initially this demands posing new questions, most specifically about how the idea of modern design and the concepts of modernism, modernization and modernity have been disseminated, understood, received, rejected and negotiated in different places at different times according to specific circumstances and needs. Questions about 'When, how and for what purpose was modern design imported into or rejected by a country?' About whether this process is always linked to the progress of industrialization and mass production, or whether it can be governed by other needs? Could the idea of modern design, as in the case of communist East Germany, provide inspiration for an industrial design aesthetic that was the antithesis of Western capitalism's ideal of good design? (53) Could it be rejected as a threat to national cultural identity as in Catalonia? (54) Or imported as a signifier of cultural change and prosperity as in 1950s Cuba? (55) Or, as in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s, used as to signify a new nation's cultural maturity? And if this was the case how then does Australia's experience of modern design align with that of other 'new' and modern nations such as Brazil, India, Hong Kong and Singapore?

There are also questions pertaining to the legacies of Western capitalist expansion, including how do design historians in non Western countries relate traditional historical values and practices with those imposed by modernist historiography when shaping their histories of design? How do they theorise the tension between the need to protect traditional modes of production and consumption that are central to cultural

distinctiveness, and the economic and social need for the benefits of global capitalism? How do post-colonial design historians address the role of design in advancing the nationalist ideologies of white settlement and racism and their impact on indigenous people (56)? Finally how have and do the politics of world trade shape the economies of different countries and how has this shaped the peculiarities of regional design cultures and industries and informed the internationalisation of design as a profession and discipline?

The history of design history as we have seen is marked by an intense and productive debate about whose interests it should serve and what should be the objects of its enquiry. As a new mode of history it is alive with the questioning and competing concerns of different interest groups who are nevertheless united in their struggle to come to terms with the multiplicity of meanings and practices associated with the concept of design. By reviewing the past through the lens of contemporary concerns, design historians are building intellectual understanding of the significance of design within the history of how the world as we know it has come into being. As they are revealing, design can no longer be defined simply in terms of the designer, the object, technology and manufacturing. Rather it comprises a complex and changing dynamic that on the grand scale pertains to economic, social and cultural production and consumption, and on the micro level to the collaborative practices of designers and ordinary people in the construction of everyday meaning. Central to this is an understanding the role of design within the shaping of the human consciousness and materiality of everyday life: with how the world is continuously being made modern. As Dilnot (57) argues by critically rethinking the history of design, design history is casting light on the dilemmas and debates facing the design profession and education as the global process of modernization enters its fourth stage, in the process changing the global order of production and consumption and with this the nature of design as a significant global profession and cultural practice.

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Not surprisingly, the discipline has been dominated by British historians.Every discipline has to stake its own territory, and so Walker begins his book appropriately, by proposing a definition:Design history, it is proposed, shall be the name of a comparatively new intellectual discipline, the purpose of which is to explain design as a social and his torical phenomenon.But what is. "design"? That is not a simple question to answer, given the va riety of people we have seen involved, and the ambiguity of the term "design" itself. Its seven essays attempt to survey, not the discipline of design history, but the state of current design practice; he even has something to say about its fu ture. The article attempts to present the author's view on the history of the formation and development of a scientific discipline, referred to as the ontology of designing. The presented material summarizes the work carried out by the author over the past ten years. The author as the founder and executive editor of the journal of the same name with as the discipline under consideration uses the articles published in it and the materials of his works presented at various international conferences, in other specialized journals and published monographs. Do other disciplines use historical methodology? Does this alone make them historians? historiography. Skocpol is trying to explain "states and social revolutions," while Clark is trying to explain "How Europe Went to War in 1914." Sample Size: Historians are allowed to write monographs, but social scientists are not. To explain an event, a historian's explanation may look something like "factors leading to the Russian Revolution were A, B, C, D, E, F, G History as a discipline can be differentiated from other disciplines firstly due to its uniqueness of being interdisciplinary- it comprises may disciplines like that of medical, military, cultural and linguistic history. Secondly history is always an expression of "change over time." Sound Design. Windows Phone. more (28). Walker studies the intellectual discipline of Design History and the issues that confront scholars writing histories of design. Taking his approach from a range of related fields, he discusses the problems of defining design and writing history. He considers the different methods that leading scholars have used in the absence of a theoretical framework, and looks critically at a number of histories of design and architecture. eISBN: 978-1-78371-878-8. Subjects: Art & Art History. crime and vandalism; new housing designs and the re-design/renewal of city centres such as Belfast as a way of countering the effects of Save. Cite this Item. Design history is the study of objects of design in their historical and stylistic contexts. With a broad definition, the contexts of design history include the social, the cultural, the economic, the political, the technical and the aesthetic. Design history has as its objects of study all designed objects including those of architecture, fashion, crafts, interiors, textiles, graphic design, industrial design and product design.