

DESIGN FOR TOMORROW

The Future of Finnish Design and Going Global

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In June 2012, Finland's National Council for Design and think tank Demos Helsinki summoned 120 Nordic design experts to draw a map of where design is heading.



Taiteen keskus
Centralkommissionen för konst
Arts Council of Finland

Valtion muotoilutoimikunta
Statens formgivningskommission
National Council for Design



In 2030 Finland is a Well-Designed Country

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In 2030, half of Finnish design initiatives deal with developing services and experiences. Finnish design and Finnish designers make living happier, easier and more sustainable. This bold promise is recognized all over the world. Finnish design serves to make public services better and is a motor for successful business.

Design and designers form a significant part of society. Designers work together with people and utilize current information in their work. Their strength lies in providing individuals, groups and organizations with customized solutions.

Finland is known for the public sector's rule of thumb of allocating two percent of all finances to design. Both the state and municipalities finance programs where designers are placed in the forefront of solving welfare issues. Both large and medium-sized businesses know how to purchase design know-how, and appreciate its value.

Governmental institutions support a design-driven internationalization and a tight-knit model of Nordic collaboration. Designers build networks and markets in an agile manner, across national borders and with-

out metropolitan pit stops. Agents come in handy both nationally and abroad, and give support in pinpointing partners, distribution channels and possible new customers. Nordic designers tend to prototype their solutions in the Nordic region before a global launch. The challenges of the public sector are examined in pan-Nordic collaborations.

In 2030, designers are recognized as an able group of problem solvers and pioneers. They are popular to partner with. They are familiar with the fields of art, science, governance and business.

Design has been integrated into the elementary school curriculum, which goes to prove its value in society. Vocational education in the field emphasizes craftsmanship traditions, meaning the constant practice and evaluation of one's skills, as well as systemic understanding. Senior designers support younger designers in various mentoring and residency programs. A new style of design education has led to an elevated appreciation of the field, and designers are highly demanded for managerial and expert positions.

The Present Day as Tomorrow's Bottleneck

The Design Round Table 2012 participants were very informed that current practices need a drastic facelift, if we want to get to the year 2030 as described in the previous chapter.

Let's begin with raw materials. For the very first time in 100 years, we find ourselves in a situation where the global price of basic raw materials elevates at the same time as purchasing power weakens. Our economy has been based on the presumption that the price of raw materials lowers by a few percent annually due to streamlining. This is no longer the case.

With some variation on estimates, peak oil has either already been reached or it is nearing. When the production rates of petroleum plunge and the prices begin to climb, the methods of production need to be altered. The current ways of production will directly lead to higher costs in housing, free time, food and transportation.

The European Union has set a target to cut down climate emissions by 80–95 percent by the year 2050. Global warming and natural catastrophes deriving from this phenomenon will force us to drastically change the way we live. Reusable bags and eco products aren't enough. A sustainable future requires a completely new lifestyle.

In addition to weakening resources, our population structure is also undergoing change. In 2030, one in three Finns will be over 65 years old and the ratio of dependents to individuals of working age will be 73 to 100. At the same time, Europeans have more free time than ever due to society's automatization, and they are more educated than ever before.

Consumption society has taught people to demand more meaningful everyday experiences. Immigration and mobility have led to even more variety in tastes and lifestyles. There is no "average" consumer or citizen. The great design challenge of the future is solving the equation of a meaningful and happy life with less consumption of natural goods. The challenge is immense in the Nordic countries, where consumption of natural resources is fivefold to eightfold the global carrying capacity per capita.

The act of building an alternative future faces the same problems over and over again, even though the need for change is widely accepted. The bridge between now and then is a difficult one to build. But this bridge needs to be built without further ado.

Viewpoint / Marleen Stikker: The Future of Design Is in a Culture of Openness

The Dutch thinker Marleen Stikker opened the Design Round Table with a radical view of the future. Stikker is one of the leading future specialists in design and technology in the Netherlands. She was one of the creators of the virtual community Digital City in 1994. In the same year, she founded the experimental Waag Society, mixing culture, technology and design – now a trendsetter of 3D printing and open design practices.

"Supporting the arts is relevant for design. To me, art is research work for the creative fields. Nevertheless, neither design nor art should lean solely on public funding. Instead, the earnings models of the free market economy should be reviewed completely.

We should look online for models on getting organized. The sharing of open knowledge started with hackers, and has changed the way we share information and how we look at openness. It is gradually expanding to the open design of physical objects, as well.

In the future, material production can be dissected into networks between individuals. This is made possible by open design and, for example, 3D printing – which will revolutionize the whole system of production and product development. Anyone can become a designer, but at the same time, professional designers participate in production at an earlier stage and are therefore able to broaden their professional scope.

As the amount of available natural resources decreases and as the Earth's carrying capacity gets closer, our economic system must change. Designers have a part to play in this equation.

Solutions include an exchange economy, production based on cradle-to-cradle thinking, and revised consumer behavior. Designers have the responsibility to create new needs with their products. Every designer should stop aiming at the perfect product and at pleasing the company producing it and instead, aim at doing their best for society. They can also apply this type of thinking from within the production and managerial structures. It is not easy, but it is very necessary."



Viewpoint / Jan R. Stavik: Investing in Design Speeds up Industry

Jan R. Stavik, Managing Director of Norway's Design Council, told the Design Round Table audience how a nation running on hard industry has been able to boost the meaning of design and of finance.

"Designers should come out of their own little world and learn to speak the language of marketing. Only then can they fulfill the larger service promise of design: a more durable production process and products that tackle the problems of welfare and happiness.

Decision makers must be assured of the fact that design-driven companies are more productive than others. In a Norwegian study, 64 percent of respondents viewed that design had improved their competitiveness. Out of the companies studied, 48 percent had seen a rise in market share and 44 percent

experienced a growth in production profitability. One in three had found new markets through design.

Looking at these arguments, it is easy to justify the need for better financing of design work. Our message to the decision makers was that investing in design speeds up industry, because the challenges lie in innovation.

The difference to Finland is that Norwegian designers are for the most part industrial designers. Fashion designers or designers classifying themselves as artists are fewer in number. I was quite surprised at how arts-driven the design scene is in Finland. We must convince businesses that investing in design is a truly profitable way of enhancing production – so referring to art and its meaning would leave us misunderstood.

The truth is that without competitive markets the promise of design cannot be fulfilled.



IN 2030

EDUCATION

DESIGN AS AN APPROACH IN ALL OTHER SUBJECTS

REVIVAL OF CRAFT

EDUCATING TOP LEVEL DESIGN ELECTORS

WORK AND EDUCATION MIXED

NEW CRAFT

WORLD UNIVERSITY OF DESIGN

DESIGN AS SECOND PROFESSION IN SOME

NEW SPECIALIZATION IN (POST)HIGHER DESIGN

STARTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

DESIGN IS TALKED

-SUSTAINABILITY

-SINCE THERE WILL BE A HIGHER LACK OF RESOURCES

TO MAKE INSTRUMENTAL AND PROGRAMMATIC USE OF THE TERM DESIGN

HOW DESIGN IS TALKED ABOUT IN 2030?

NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

REFERENCE POINT

YOUR DESIGN AS REFERENCE OF TRANSFORMING DESIGN CAPITAL

MONEY

DESIGN IS COMMON PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE (NOT BEING)

MONEY ISSUE 2030 LESS IS MORE

DESIGN IS THE ISSUE, NOT THE MONEY

MORE EXCHANGE OF RESOURCES THAN MONEY?

PROFESSION

EXPERIENCE

DATE DUES TIME COMPANIES EVEN PAY (OR USE)

COMPANIES THAT WANT TO INNOVATE AND BE RESPONSIVE

EDUCATION

SOCIETY

What design means to society
Knowledge of Design tools to communities

What design means to society
Design as a driver of innovation (ie sustainability)

What design means to society
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Design as a driver of innovation (ie sustainability)

What design means to society
Design as a driver of innovation (ie sustainability)

Four Nudges to Another Future

The conversations held at the Design Round Table made clear that design professionals also hope for a different, better future. The change does not come easy, however.

Change makes people and organizations re-evaluate their positions. Habits tend to play a stronger role than so-called inevitable trends. The defenders of current practices are often louder than those looking into tomorrow's world. Money and power also have roles to play, and change means a division of the two.

It has become clear that if designers do not take the initiative in actively shaping the future, somebody else will do it for them. Signs of change can already be seen. Companies save money by cutting down on anything non-vital. Governments are more careful in funding product development and export in the midst of the financial crisis. Several countries see their arts management initia-

tives reformed. In the Netherlands, the sectoral institute for design was recently merged with the architecture and media fields to form a joint center for the creative economy. Finland and Denmark are both working on reviewing their national design strategies. The World Design Capital Year in Helsinki holds a promise to build a better city and to plant the seeds of new growth. Design has a lot to prove in the North.

Both welfare and sustainable society require more than polishing the surface. The current focus of design will not switch to user-driven development of products and services in a heartbeat. All of the aforementioned questions call for big leaps of change.

The Design Round Table participants noted four ways to nudge the changing face of design forward.

I. A Bold Promise for the Future

The theme of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 has been to strengthen the societal significance of design and to make design

a firmer part of society. Design and designers need to come out as more outspoken about their abilities if these wishes are to be granted. Designers need to boldly make clear that their work can help build a better society and a better life. Design requires a clear promise of value which combines commercial, societal and artistic dimensions.

The importance of design will grow in the fields of art, business and politics if design finds its place in solving society's problems. Talking about design outside the immediate sphere of design requires educating decision makers and business management on design practices. The Design ROI project is an excellent first step.

Designers need to be able to explain their professional methods in a way that clients understand. In addition to talking about user-driven planning and service development, it is important to appreciate high quality production, aesthetics and craftsmanship. Professional unions such as Finnish Designers Association Ornamo and Industrial Designers Finland, Aalto University, and export organizations all play key roles in opening up discussion and creating understanding. The Design Round Table participants hoped that further events also invite more non-designers into the discussion.

Design professionals must find ways and tools to hold fruitful discussions with the fields surrounding design. Design could be taken into all walks of life with deeper understanding of technological, social, economic and ecological systems. Unions, centers of excellence and arts education facilities can all give the needed nudge.

Self-criticism and a willingness to learn are also needed within the design field. At the Design Round Table, the field was often compared to the arts

Learn the lesson: The cross-disciplinary DesignROI at Aalto University examines the true impacts of design.

Get it going: Trade unions: Finnish Association of Designers Ornamo, Finnish Crafts Organization Taito, Finnish Association of Interior Architects SIO, Finnish Association of Architects SAFA, Industrial Designers Finland TKO, Helsinki Design Week, Design Forum Finland, Finnish Design Business Association: Help designers speak the language of business.

Get it going: National Council for Design, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Education and Culture, Aalto Entrepreneurship Society, Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation Tekes: Organize more meetings with companies and organizations in other fields.

and to science. What would these fields be without a healthy dose of self-criticism and peer-discussion? The evaluation of one's own work and of one's own status is the key to constant progression.

Changing technology will lead the designer's professional identity into similar turbulence as the media professional has already experienced. As new technology allows for even cheaper, easier and more dispersed production, the design professional must form a refreshed identity within this new system. The field of the design professional must also encompass the roles of sales and marketing professionals, as well as those of agents and managers.

Get it going: Ornamo, Taito ry, SIO ry, TKO, SAFA and the funders Tekes, Finpro, arts councils, Design Foundation Finland, Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland: Renew financial models to take into account the broader definition of design.

I.I. Indispensable Additional Value

Designers must learn to crystallize the value of their work and to market it in an understandable manner to all fields of production – and not only for their own sake. Many value chains and business concepts face reshaping as the availability of energy and raw materials decreases and prices increase. Some solutions can be found in service design and its implementations.

A new type of collaboration must be started in time. Designers must participate in production processes at an earlier stage than before so that their input can be relevant. Companies that plan products and services on a clean plate and with sufficient resources can get a prominent advantage compared to companies that only turn to design when it is too late.

A descriptive example of this is Kone, a global leader in the elevator and escalator industry. The corporation has successfully placed user understanding in the core of its design work and has radically renewed its value promise. At the Design Round Table, Vice President of Design Anne Stenros shed light on a major corporation's employment strategy. According to her example, Kone is highly dependent on the expertise of highly specialized small-scale companies. Networks of small actors can offer flexible solutions to large demanders and are able to find enough work to employ themselves.

There is more and more proof of the vitality of design-driven companies. Encouraging examples must therefore be carefully documented. Designers must look to other professionals to help them document the changing field.

Get it going: Design promoters: Teach designers to explain the value offered by design.

II. The Public Sector as a Testing Ground

The public sector can help to speed up the recognition of design as a societal force through offering public services and organizations as a testing ground for new solutions. Design Round Table participants felt that a good way to walk this path would be to hire designers to work with, for instance, tax authorities and social services.

Learn the lesson: If the state partakes in a bold change, it is not charity. In Rome a market for organic food was created through school food, and the US Army as well as the White House favor local food products.

Hands-on examples of how the public sector can boost change can be found all around the world. In Rome, Italy, a market for organic produce was created around school food and in the United States, local food production got a kick from new purchasing policies by the White House and the US Army. Sweden boasts several good examples of collaborations between designers and the public sector. In Helsinki, the World Design Capital 2012 initiative has been a significant force in new ways of thinking. For example, Helsinki's social services as well as the nearby city of Lahti, have teamed up with Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra in hiring designers as a part of their organizations. The next step is to make sure that the pace doesn't slow down and that the state and municipalities are able to offer possibilities for designers to

Get it going: User-driven thinking and design can offer a significant competitive edge to companies. This was visible in the Kone example.

partake in solving societal challenges. The pressure faced by the public sector in the coming years also makes for interesting business opportunities for designers.

Well-planned service design is the key in developing solutions for the combination of electronic services and the aging population. The service designer understands both the sides of the user and the civil servant or engineer.

In certain fields, a totally new viewpoint is sometimes needed, as services and their planning are seen in a different way than a designer would. Design can, at its best, help identify the underlying problem in initial presumptions. The state can clear the way for new understanding of service design by supporting prototypes detached from the usual way of doing.

Public IT projects could find cost-efficiency in applications of open design practices. Not many suppliers can offer the full array of solutions needed for immense nation-wide IT efforts in a country the size of Finland. Splitting tasks into smaller pieces and opening up the design process would bring efficiency without compromising on hierarchy, administration or organizational costs.

One way to strengthen the design know-how of the public sector is to learn a lesson from so-called Percent for Art schemes. Many public construction projects place a percentage of project costs in funding and installing public art. Percent for Art is already stated in the Government Program of Finland, and incentives are in the planning to ensure it is followed. Perhaps a similar scheme could be

Get it going: Trade unions like Ornamo, Ministry of Education and Culture: Build opportunities for designers through reminding that public services must emphasize usability and reach.

introduced for design processes allowing for better accessibility and agreeable user experiences? The Percent for Design should spread most importantly to the educational, social, health and cultural sectors. An excellent example of combining service design and user-derived planning with construction development is the Loppukiri co-housing complex for senior citizens in the Arabianranta neighborhood of Helsinki. The residents were involved in the planning of the compound and are in charge of their own community events.

In Denmark's Copenhagen and Aarhus, design and art have found their ways into public spaces in an admirable manner. The traffic arrangements in the Nørrebro neighborhood of the Danish capital are worth looking up to. The once unsafe and hard-to-grasp area has

Learn the lesson: Social Services of Helsinki, the City of Lahti and Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra have hired designers as part of their organizations.

Get it going: Municipalities, health care districts, student housing foundations: Order prototypes.

Learn the lesson: Nørrebro, one of Copenhagen's traffic knots, was redeveloped placing pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation in the forefront.

Learn the lesson: Estonia has focused on developing electronic services. Prime examples include the national gene bank, access to Internet and electronic services, and Skype.

cleaned up through simple solutions. In Estonia, the government has decided to focus on developing electronic services, as natural resources are less plentiful. The national gene bank, access to the Internet and all-around e-services serve as good examples.

ments and to grasp even bigger problems in society. New collaborations are needed to shake up the borders between the design field, the private sector and society. Knowing all the answers beforehand leaves no space for the new and exciting. On the other hand, if no answers are demanded, the questions should be made even tougher. This dual role of financing is something that needs inspection.

Designers also called for financing structures that support their personal projects. The concept of the design professional should be broadened to include the tasks of sales, marketing, management and agency work. In addition to purely financial support, the aid can take the form of, for example, communications and marketing expertise offered by export specialists such as Design Forum Finland, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation Tekes, and Finpro.

Many Design Round Table attendants demanded that designer expertise be recognized outside the design field. This requires a bold approach from the designers themselves, as well. One way to advance understanding is to announce theme-specific financial rounds that would serve to encourage designers to closely review the societal impact of their work from early on.

Get it going: Funders: Define the conditions of fundings according to the aims, and not to the ways of doing.

IV. Redefinition of Places

One of the underlying findings in the Design Round Table was the shared vision of rethinking places. We are still very much bound to national limits and thinking that they define business environments and options for collaboration. Many Design Round Table participants felt that internationalization talk sounds very dated. Up-to-date collaboration not only widens but also fragments into more precise efforts between smaller players. The concepts of core and marginal change when one does not have to go through national hot spots in order to reach out abroad.

Participants felt that the very organizations that were created to boost internationalization might actually delay new forms of collaboration. The modern designer is both hyperlocal and global. This new situation changes the way we think about the Nordic region and the global community.

In a country the size of Finland, designers need global markets to secure their livelihood. A wider market would also allow experts

Get it going: Trade unions such as Ornamo, SAFA, Taito, SIO and TKO, and funders such as Tekes, Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, Design Foundation Finland, Centers for Economic Development, Sitra: Gather information on financing and assist in the application processes.

Checklist for taking over the world

- ☑ Design Forum Finland: Exhibitions and promotional activities, country brand
- ☑ National Council for Design: Internationalization grants
- ☑ Ministries: Design policy
- ☑ Finpro: Export subsidies
- ☑ Embassies: Dinners and meetings
- ☑ Cultural Institutes: Residency programs and network building
- ☑ Designers: Personal networks in the field
- ☑ Grassroots collectives
- ☑ Representatives hired by companies
- ☑ Designers
- ☑ Agents
- ☑ Finnish Designers Association Ornamo
- ☑ Partner organizations such as producers
- ☑ International academic networks

in niche areas to concentrate on their own specialty by finding partners around the world. In addition, local fluctuations couldn't pose a similar threat as the whole world forms a potential clientele.

IV.I. Agile Internationality

The design field already has several routes and tools to assist in reaching international markets. Possibilities for work and the understanding of markets should, nevertheless, be wider. In addition to international trade shows, highly specialized professionals of small volumes would benefit from identifying their own niche markets globally.

However, the quest for new collaborations should not rest solely in the hands of labor unions and central organizations. Designers need to stand up, too. This means becoming acquainted with the basics of marketing and marketing communication. One workshop in the Design Round Table looked into the possibilities of international collaborations. A Finnish designer was stressing over finding a contact person to help with arrangements for a trade show trip. A Swedish colleague explained how to contact the local embassy and ask the cultural counselor to arrange a dinner meeting with relevant local professionals. The advice was received well in a group of designers, who often struggle with finding the means for marketing. The situation showed how important it is to share tips from one's own experience with peers.

Unofficial networks and tacit knowledge can often play an important role. A Japanese employee at Stockholm's Konstfack is known for helpfully assisting designers with contacts dealing with the Japanese market. Ways to support these types of personal resources could be found through, for example, mentoring programs. Helsinki's Aalto University's mentoring programs have recently opened up to include design students. These types of actions are extremely important and should be promoted.

It is fairly easy to get started with basic research on one's own. Several Design Round Table discussions addressed this flipside. Design professionals really shouldn't afford to wait for outside help. Many see themselves as victims of a complicated market. In the present day, any entrepreneur will have to pick up the phone and find the right contacts.

Finance was seen as a clear nudge towards agile internationalization. Current grant systems often react slowly to urgent needs, and many designers are left with heavy financial burdens to carry right from the start of their career. Lagging decisions might lead

Get it going: Ornamo, SAFA, Taito, SIO, TKO and other trade unions, Design Forum Finland, Tekes, Aalto: Educate designers in marketing, PR and communications.

Get it going: Ministry for Foreign Affairs: Announce possibilities offered by Finnish embassies abroad.

III. Experimental Project Funding

The reshaping of design practices must also transfer to the reshaping of its financing. What position do public funding and grant systems hold? Is it hard to draw the line between the costs to the client and the finances offered by an outside organization? Can arts-driven design projects hold economic or societal value?

The Design Round Table participants felt that financing should, on one hand, be bolder, and on the other hand, be more logically categorized. Finances offered to individuals were not seen to support new collaborations, nor strengthen the societal value of design. One solution suggested that labor unions could form collectives of designers to apply for financing as groups.

Design is about creativity and giving birth to something new, in addition to producing solutions. Many success stories as we know them were initially ones that nobody knew to ask for. Seed funding is necessary for design and for designers to enable diving deeper into experi-

Get it going: Center for the Promotion of The Arts, Sitra, Tekes, Design Foundation Finland, development initiatives in the creative fields: Offer seed funding for experiments in collaborations between companies and designers.

Get it going: Ornamo, SAFA, Taito, SIO, TKO, among others: Build designer collectives that can apply for bigger projects together.

to situations where a designer is forced to, for example, cancel a trade show trip due to financial insecurity. In the future, a more flexible way to support international efforts would be through networks of agents both at home and abroad. At the moment, such efforts are often in the hands of Finnish Cultural Institutes and export organizations. An agent structure would facilitate contacting the right people and organizing low-threshold marketing, PR and communications training already at home. The agent structure could run on a provision system, meaning that the compensation would actually correlate with the additional value offered to the designers.

Many Design Round Table participants saw the Russian market as something unfamiliar. Experiences were often fruitless, although the size of the potential clientele is significant. Designers are often averse to a pioneering role in a new market, but this doesn't have to be the case. Some familiarization with the market combined with the know-how of local agents could open many doors for Finnish design in Russia.

Get it going: Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Education and Culture: Try outsourcing some of the financing schemes to a more agile and smaller actor. Demand reporting on the set aims.

up, there is less paperwork, and the threshold for first contacts is lower as the individual doesn't have to work out grant agreements with governmental institutions. The grant supplier can concentrate on building the network and its aims instead of a situation where an applicant spends significant amounts of time working out the heavy application and reporting processes often associated with public funding.

Centralized export and marketing conventions obviously shouldn't be forsaken. The World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 brand is too valuable to be buried once the year is through. Many design initiatives only started during the year and are still awaiting visible results to the design community. It was discussed that World Design Capital accomplishments and projects be presented in a worldwide road show. In this way, World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 could offer visibility and momentum for Finnish design abroad.

Get it going: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finnish Cultural Institutes, Finpro: Create contacts with local agents that can assist Finnish designers.

One solution to the time-consuming conventions could be to coordinate finances through a smaller and more agile organization. The model is gaining popularity internationally. In the Digital Pioneers program in the Netherlands, the state handed over the digital culture support systems to the Kennisland think tank. Decision-making speeds

up, there is less paperwork, and the threshold for first contacts is lower as the individual doesn't have to work out grant agreements with governmental institutions. The grant supplier can concentrate on building the network and its aims instead of a situation where an applicant spends significant amounts of time working out the heavy application and reporting processes often associated with public funding.

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Learn the lesson: The Dutch think tank Kennisland handled the operational level of financing.

IV.II. The Nordic Game

"My hometown Shanghai has 23 million inhabitants in a single city. That is roughly the same amount of people as in the whole Nordic region. We are such a small group on a global level that collaboration is something essential", noted former University of Art and Design Helsinki dean Yrjö Sotamaa. The reminder is a valuable one: the Nordic countries form a very small area from any other region's perspective.

Just before the Design Round Table, the Finnish business magazine Kauppalehti Optio featured Swedish Industrial Design SVID's director Robin Edman. In the interview Mr. Edman demanded a more Nordic way of thinking about the internationalization of design. Design Round Table participants seconded the opinion. Structures and ways of thinking are far too concentrated to the national limits in a time where globalization and digitalization have transformed the concepts of region and place. Individual actors, as well as urban and rural centers, have far bigger possibilities than before to find a position in the global design field, past national structures.

Many changes would merely require changing one's point of view. The rest of the world already sees the Nordic countries as one region. This should be recognized in the North, and turned into an advantage. As the Swedish Röhsska Museum's director Ted Hesselbom noted, the Nordic countries feel about each other as something similar – but not quite the same. Structures of the society, the economy and organizations are fairly similar, yet there still exist differences, meaning that it is useful to exchange tips and information. Neighboring countries can be seen as testing ground in preparation for global moves. They can offer useful insights into what makes sense and what doesn't, and how different support systems function.

The Nordic countries already have a lot residency programs for artists and designers. Design Round Table participants wished that the programs supported more professional exchanges, as for now most programs only offer working spaces and residential quarters. For example, professionals involved in the traffic arrangement example

Get it going: Governmental organizations: Add a Nordic angle to national strategies.

Get it going: Export organizations: Focus projects and products first on the Nordic market and use this experience as a final test before reaching for international markets.

Get it going: Foundations, design councils: Organize residency exchanges in cooperation with municipalities and companies, so the expertise by designers in residence can directly be put to use.

from Nørrebro, Copenhagen could offer inspiration for urban planning in the Finnish city of Lahti. The development group should then include Danish experts working together with local Finnish experts.

The natural next step is to introduce more contacts and space for collaborations among Nordic designers. Learning from others' experience and sharing good tips in informal sessions were seen as important, even more so than permanent pan-Nordic structures or a shared design strategy. Such efforts were feared to bring more bureaucracy into collaborations.

Get it going: All design organizations, developers of the national design strategy, ministries and foundations: Designers need unofficial and freely structured meetings in order to exchange experiences and to solve problems without a strictly set agenda.

IV.III. Agile Regions

Regions do not necessarily always need governmental instances to create meaningful bonds with other regions. In the Nordic countries, counties and other smaller national regions should look towards regions of similar size or character in neighboring countries. This could prove fruitful also towards the professional identity and work options for designers.

Different types of shared working and exhibition spaces make it easier for regional actors to meet and greet. The Finnish artisanal community of Fiskars was named as a great example of a well-functioning and vital community. The whole region's attraction centers around arts, crafts and design. Meeting places do not necessarily have to be buildings. The Norwegian Design Council created online pools that would enable companies to find design experts in their area without having to turn to the big Oslo enterprises. Similar solutions could be written down in local development strategies so regional Centers for Economic Development could, together with local arts councils and trade unions, define the area's creative resources, possibilities for growth and requirements for collaborations.

Examples of successful design companies outside the Finnish metropolitan already exist, for example the weaving mill Lapuan Kankurit in the Os-

Get it going: Regional organizations: Set up communal working and meeting spaces also outside busier areas.

Get it going: Regional organizations: Network with similar regions in your neighboring countries. Not everything has to happen through metropolitan areas.

trobothnia region and the global playground manufacturer Lappset, based in Lapland.

In addition to exchanging information within the field, the Design Round Table called for possibilities to broaden collaborations with other fields. Regions need to gain experience in cross-discipline projects dealing with problems already recognized internally. Such networks could be built by local arts councils together with local Centers for Economic Development.

It is essential to build success stories into models in the time of global locality. Obviously, no area or situation is the same. Regional center figures could therefore exchange experiences with those of other regions. To learn from a Danish lesson, city developers in Lahti would need to be connected with the expert in charge of Nørrebro traffic planning.

Get it going: Regional arts councils, agencies: Regional network of professionals could be set up in Finland together with Centers for Economic Development.

Learn the lesson: The artisan and artist community of Fiskars is a good example of well-functioning collaboration through geography. In Norway many pools of experts connect regional professional virtually.

How Did We Get Here?

The Design Round Table was a one-day event in June 2012 with a focus on Nordic design, open to design professionals such as designers, employers, investors, and representatives of trade unions and the government. In addition to Finnish participants, guests were invited from all other Nordic countries, as well as the Baltic region.

The event was organized by Finland's National Council for Design and independent think tank Demos Helsinki. The aim of the day was to collect thoughts, ideas and viewpoints from a wide array of professionals dealing with design. The focus was on future prospects, positioning, and pinpointing challenges, and how to tackle these from within the field.

The day was divided into four intensive workshops in order to define four different aspects of design:

1. Regional success stories. Exciting examples of success stories and businesses were gathered from areas outside the metropolitan region. A questionnaire by the Arts Council of Finland served as the basis. It investigated the vitality of design practices and the support received in different areas.

The workshop gathered best practices and discussed which factors lead to success, and how support can be given where needed.

2. The internationalization of Finnish design now and in the future. The report by Katja Oksanen-Särelä was used as the basis for examining financial models and possibilities.

The workshop built understanding on how designers perceive the current system, whether new systems are

required or whether current resources need to be re-divided. An ideal future was constructed after summing up the status quo. Different gatekeepers and roadmaps leading to this future were then identified.

3. The state of Finnish design and trends leading towards 2030. This workshop used a so-called 'counting backwards' method, which allowed participants to first define the state of the design field in 2030 after which routes to reach these goals were defined year by year, leading back into the present day. The next steps for today were defined in the very last round.

4. What can we learn from our neighbors? This workshop was joined by Jane Oblikas from the Estonian Design Center and Danish designer Hans Christian Asmussen. Their accounts from national initiatives led the discussion into considering how Nordic collaboration could be harnessed and how local success stories could find new markets. The workshop also identified the gatekeepers of Nordic collaboration in design.

The Design Round Table day also included two keynote presentations in addition to the four workshops: Jan R. Stavik from the Norwegian Council and Marleen Stikker, the Dutch pioneer of open design. Two panel discussions also tackled the impacts of design on economy and how governmental structures and institutions can play their part in shaping the field of design.

The results of the day are summarized in this report. Many workshops dealt with different sides of similar or intertwined topics, so it is justified that this report is divided by themes and not by the workshops.