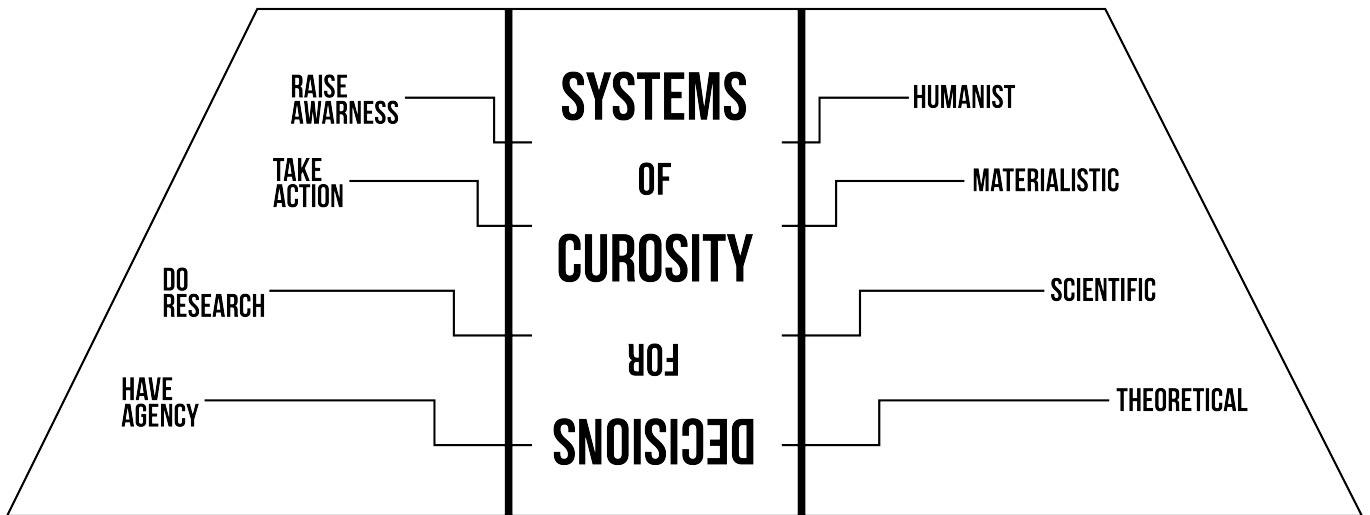


# SYSTEMS OF CURIOUS CHANGE



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Making Sense and Meaning

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## **SYSTEMS OF CURIOUS CHANGE (Abstract)**

What do you think of, when I say these words? - Curiosity, critical point of view, agency, decision making. - I think of design. Then you would think, yes we need a tons criticism, a load of agency and those beautiful so-called design decisions as designers, but no. These all come after a course connected to design, but design starts somewhere, some time in the every day society. When we are curious, when we question things, when we have the agency about the surrounding world and make decisions. Design is the systems we live in. To transform, in a way sustain and always renew our world - my world, your world we just always have to be curious and conscious about Design - the systems we live in.

## **Systems and our decisions as means of design**

Being involved in systems and services as a small particle, it is hard to see the whole picture and is easy to let entropy manifest. We are surrounded by systems, we are existing in systems. **The systems are designs: designs of politics, designs of nature, designs of actual makers or thinkers - who are designed by society, by every day people who make decisions and by that design, plan and create systems around themselves.**

Without being able to control it, we think in systems as well. These range from very basic systems focusing on individuals, such as going to work every day, to systems that have an effect on the greater society, such as how to raise more conscious generations. Although the design of our thinking system seems very complicated to me, it is based on, inspired by all the above mentioned systems created by us, but how can we create them by our thoughts which are not evolutionary organisms by themselves.

Meaning this these system designed by the principle of circularity, I live in systems created by others, based on the creation of 'other' others. I acquire a kind of identity, the perspective of my own from those systems and by being able to own them, I am also able to rethink them, by being able to see the needs of mine and my societies', I live in. Why are these needs and new approaches seem to be different from the previous ones? Because we are all individuals and we create new triggers. When a particle goes through many triggers it always changes a bit, our universe is always under the state of dissipation.

And that dissipation requires design: It requires decisions from us, but it is really hard to make the right choice or decision when we have no agency for that. And here the question comes back again: *"Our thinking system seems very complicated to me, it is based on, inspired by all the above mentioned systems created by us.* But how do we distinguish between illusion and reality? What is just our reality and what is others' as well? *"Some men see things as they are and say why? I dream things that never were and say why not?"* - Robert F. Kennedy

In conclusion, design is systems and the decisions which drives these systems. There is the design which is driven by our decisions and there is the design that is driven by kind of the quantum physics. To be able and regulate the last one and to transform these organic systems we use design as a tool and individuals and as professionals.

## **My role as an individual**

**What is my role in these systems as an individual?** As individuals we can decide if we want to be a part or want to be out of our specific systems. These decisions range from product preferences to political movement preferences. However, for that we have to be aware of those systems (a political, a social, an ideological, an educational or a system that combines these). Personally I've always wanted to be part of these, I was never a rebel enough to stand out. Not a rebel, but curious... Though I was always really curious and that curiosity made me question everything. By the help of those questions I had the urge to instead of leaving systems, modify them a bit and think more and more in systems. By the help of that urge I could become a product designer, later a service designer and a researcher at a point when I had at least 5 Whys? about everything. **Thanks to my expertise I got a voice in these systems. A bit more loud than before.**

Expertise is a very commonly used word around me, I hear it when we talk about, how we should do our job, one of our contribution of society. That we have to use all the skills and knowledge we acquired and not be influenced by our personal identities. However the disassembling of our expertise would help us understand what is our personal identity in it. In this essay I will disassembly mine from the point before I arrived to my professional development to the point how I develop professionally these days, when everything shakes me to different paths.

I've always wanted to be an architect, the buildings and the built environment was the first, which taught me about design. I've been always fascinated about the affects of

those, how they reflect our how they change our ways of living. The decisions made by urbanists, local governments, designers and decision makers influenced and gave a frame to the systems of our mobility, play and every day life. Sometimes for better, sometimes for worst, but mostly in a way that we are not even aware of the influence of it, we just exist in it and how I said let the universe change us and itself how it just supposed to.

Thus I entered the world of critical creative thinkers by applying to a design course, the *credo of my major was: Play seriously! In other words, creativity can only be spread in a creative way*, and this is what I would like to give those for whom I design. Through the years of university we were dominated by the educational system of designing object cultures that dominates our society, to rethink it and create a conscious society by the conscious use of conscious objects. However these years made me understand I don't want to design for anyone, I want to design with everyone.

My design studies were strongly influenced by the school of Bauhaus, the university where I studied was named after László Moholy-Nagy, who was invited by Walter Gropius to teach in Weimar at the school of Bauhaus, and our teachers strongly followed these principles, by enabling us a mindset about design as major force of societal aid. An educational approach that combined different disciplines of art, science and technology for the transformation of our society. Through my studies, I spent a semester in the US, which showed me the evident side of design, which was so not evident for me to follow. During my studies in the States I learned how important top quality is in the business sector, where designers are expected to work with very short deadlines meeting the needs of a well identified target group, while bearing in mind brand identity. It was also in the US that I learnt how to pitch my ideas and how to create products that reflect my creativity and are still competitive and successful in the market. These sounds really nice to me from a point of professional view, but I maybe I am not assembled as a designer through this perspective. By designing an and product - the front end, I don't see the possibility of decisions. I still want to remain curious and ask as many questions I can from the society for more questions from them to sustain our own society.

## My role as a designer

**What is my role in these systems as a designer?** Now I try to find the key insights and intrinsic challenges connected to my curiosity through the tools and methods I gathered through my education and experience. I deeply feel that my responsibility as a decision maker in my own life that is not detachable from a collective life, is to consciously rethink these already existing systems. I am also dreaming of a society which is curious as me, whose habits and everyday life depends on curiosity and changes which sustain these systems.

To be honest I am also trying to modify my own system of being a designer. Thus I found myself at MDEF: When a system needs some changes under the sake of sustaining it, maybe due to an emergent or rapid change, the perspective of a designer is not enough. We have to create questions and dialogues based on them between many experts, researchers, individuals and also decision makers. Instead of being a designer, the so called everyday people with every day decisions, I want to be a thinker, a dialogue maker, a visionary who can speak the language of different disciplines to be able and start common discourses for a common challenge or fight we need to tackle together.

## Influences on my systems of thinking

There are many designers who influenced my will to modify my own role as a designer. The first was B. F. , who is an architect the co-founder and leader MOME EcoLab, the University's Sustainability Research Group, where she has been leading projects, courses and research on social design, eco- and humanitarian design. She told me when preparing to my BA application: to **just be even more curious, always look up and critically question everything**. So I took her advice and and became even more curious.

After B., during my BA studies I had a lecturer, now the head of the design department, P.

P was the one who was always next to me when I had too many questions and very few answers in a design project. In my eyes he deeply believed in the power of good questions in transforming our society and addressing important problems, rather than a good product that we give to the poor.' So by the influence of P. **I became a researcher, in every day use a person who asks a lot of questions with tons of empathy.**

When we are talking about empathy, I can not think about mothers, parents, caregivers, just people with people. Who constantly design systems and services with their decisions and act for wellbeing and for a better way of life. By writing this, I would like to emphasize more and more how can we learn as designers, future makers from very every day approaches for change making. Our will to transform our world comes from some very basic needs and instincts. We want to be useful in our society, just how the Maslow theory says and we have a basic instinct for helping others and situations which can improve by the help of us, it is something like altruism - the principle and moral practice of concern for happiness of other human beings or other species, resulting in a quality of life.<sup>1</sup>

For being a helper or a caregiver Victor Papanek was the one who influenced my practice the most. "The designer can imagine and give form to material and non-material products that can address a wide range of human problems and contribute to social well-being." - Victor Papanek<sup>2</sup>. In his practice a design team definitely didn't consist of designers, it was built up from different disciplines such as: anthropologists, someone from medicine, from psychology and representatives from the mathematical and biological sciences. But not to forget his biggest approach<sup>3</sup> for designing with and not for. His influence strengthened the ideology of being an actual designer, because the role of a designer is the role and responsibility I imagine as someone who can transform our ways of thinking.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altruism> - 19.04.2022.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Papanek (1971). Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change, New York

<sup>3</sup> Victor J. Papanek, "The Minimalist Design Team", detail of Big Character poster No. 1: "Work chart for designers" (1973, draft 1969). © University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Victor J. Papanek Foundation © Vitra Design Museum



And last but not least it is really important to mention IDEO, which is not a mindset of one human being, but a collective mindset about sustaining our world by innovation, by questioning and rethinking. They are driven by curiosity and ask questions, such as: <sup>4</sup>

Thinking back to their staff in 1999, they were a group of thinkers and conversation makers, how they said they were not experts in any field, they are experts on how to design stuff and how to ask questions to solve problems. Their team was eclectic as well, they had people from finance, from linguistics, from psychology and biology all of them “designers” of IDEO, all of them solving challenges, but asking questions and making decisions and by those creating systems with a toolkit they built by their way of thinking.

## **Assembling the purpose**

As an individual I am curious, I have empathy, I ask a lot of questions and I am responsible for my surroundings: my family, my friends, the people around me, the society who I am part of. For the systems, infrastructures I use and I live in, and for my environment, the natural and the built environment as well. As a designer my purpose is to generate conversations between caring stakeholders and users whose habits and everyday life I may influence for a liveable future with carefully designed and viable present. Today the so-called designer mindset calls for responsible experts to get acquainted with different cultures and perspectives, global and social issues as well. In this rapidly changing world, thanks to the state-of-the-art technological, biological and social innovations, reaction to these is not an option, it is a very basic necessity. Thus the ownership of design and information is a fundamental right in the 21st century, and the idea of the ongoing sustainability of the world and society must become a fundamental norm.

How can us, who had the privilege to study and think about it (under privilege I think of the time, the resources and knowledge we could use) help in this? We have to create dialogues between people, we have to create conversation by interventions about speculative or alternative scenarios, we have to ask questions in a way that everyone hears them

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ideo.com/questions> - 19.04.2022.

and last but not least we have to enable everyone to be able and design with us and for us. Sometimes I wish I haven't acquired design degrees, sometimes it sounds like someone who wants to solve everything and tries to understand everything, which usually means nothing, if you do too much things at the same time the knowledge of your can be a bit shallow about them. One of the first word of the old testament is ebrah k'dabri which literal translation is Abracadabra, following its' etymology, the meaning of it "I will create as I speak," thus the act of conversation will magically create new realities. As I said before, I want to be a thinker, a dialogue maker, a visionary who can speak the language of different disciplines to be able and start common discourses for a common challenge or fight we need to tackle together in our systems to sustain and if needed transform them.

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"Work chart for designers" (1973, draft 1969). © University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Victor J.Papanek Foundation © Vitra Design Museum