

# first

# things

# first

## A manifesto

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as:

cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before-shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons.

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

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films, television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our

society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes. With this in mind, we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students and others who may be interested.

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

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The original First Things First manifesto was written 29 November 1963 and published in 1964 by Ken Garland. It was backed by over 400 graphic designers and artists and also received the backing of Tony Benn, radical left-wing MP and activist, who published it in its entirety in the Guardian newspaper.

# The First Things First Manifesto

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

It rallied against the consumerist culture that was purely concerned with buying and selling things and tried to highlight a Humanist dimension to graphic design theory. It was later updated and republished with a new group of signatories as the First Things First 2000 manifesto.

# **The First Things First Manifesto**

We propose a reversal of priorities in favor of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication - a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning.

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# Barbara Kruger



is an American conceptual artist. Much of her work consists of black-and-white photographs overlaid with declarative captions—in white-on-red Futura Bold Oblique or Helvetica Ultra Condensed. The phrases in her works often include use of pronouns such as "you", "your", "I", "we", and "they".

# Barbara Kruger

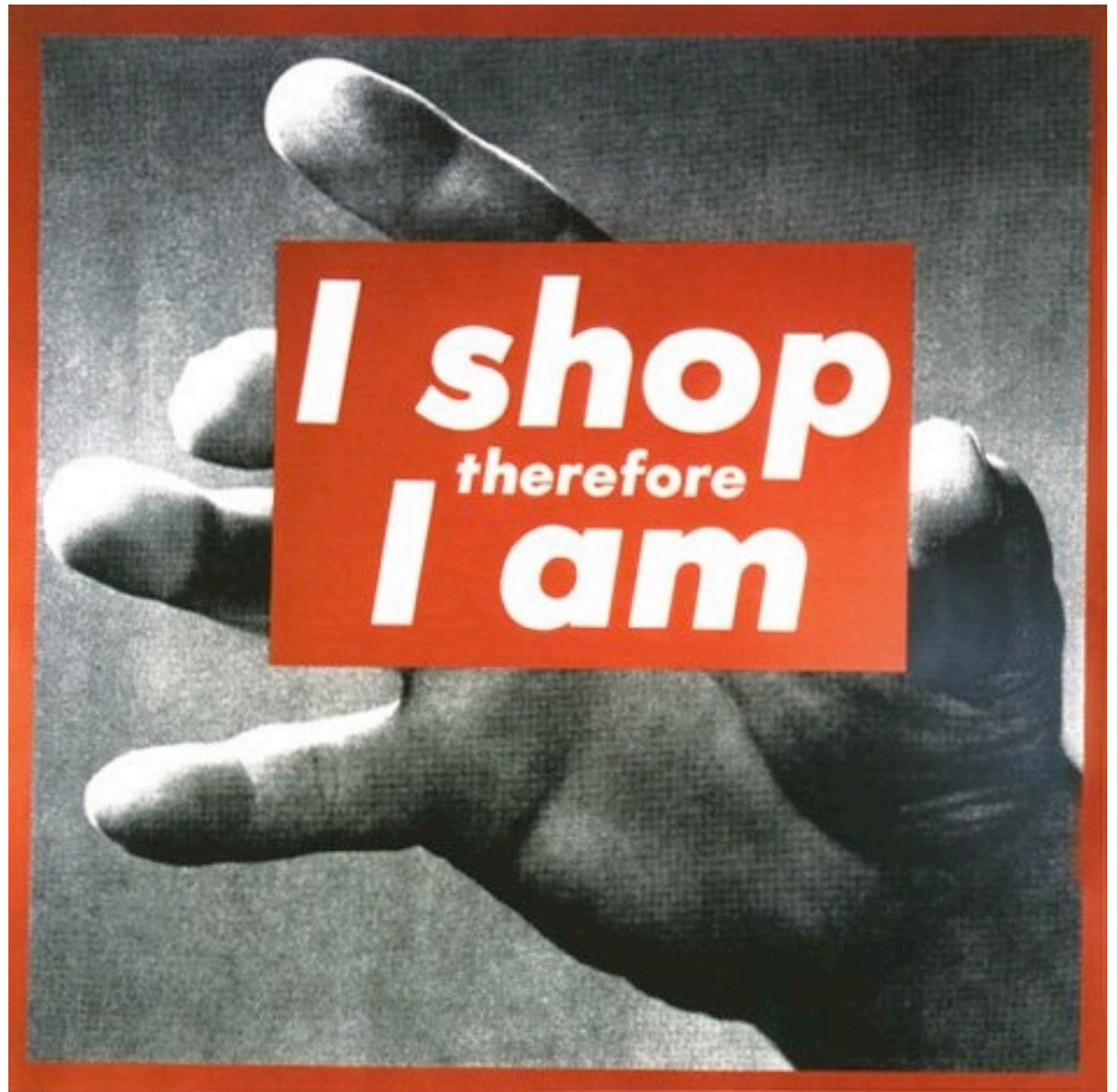


While studying art and design at Parsons School of Design in New York, Kruger obtained a design job at Condé Nast Publications. She initially worked at Mademoiselle Magazine and later at House and Garden, Aperture, and other publications.



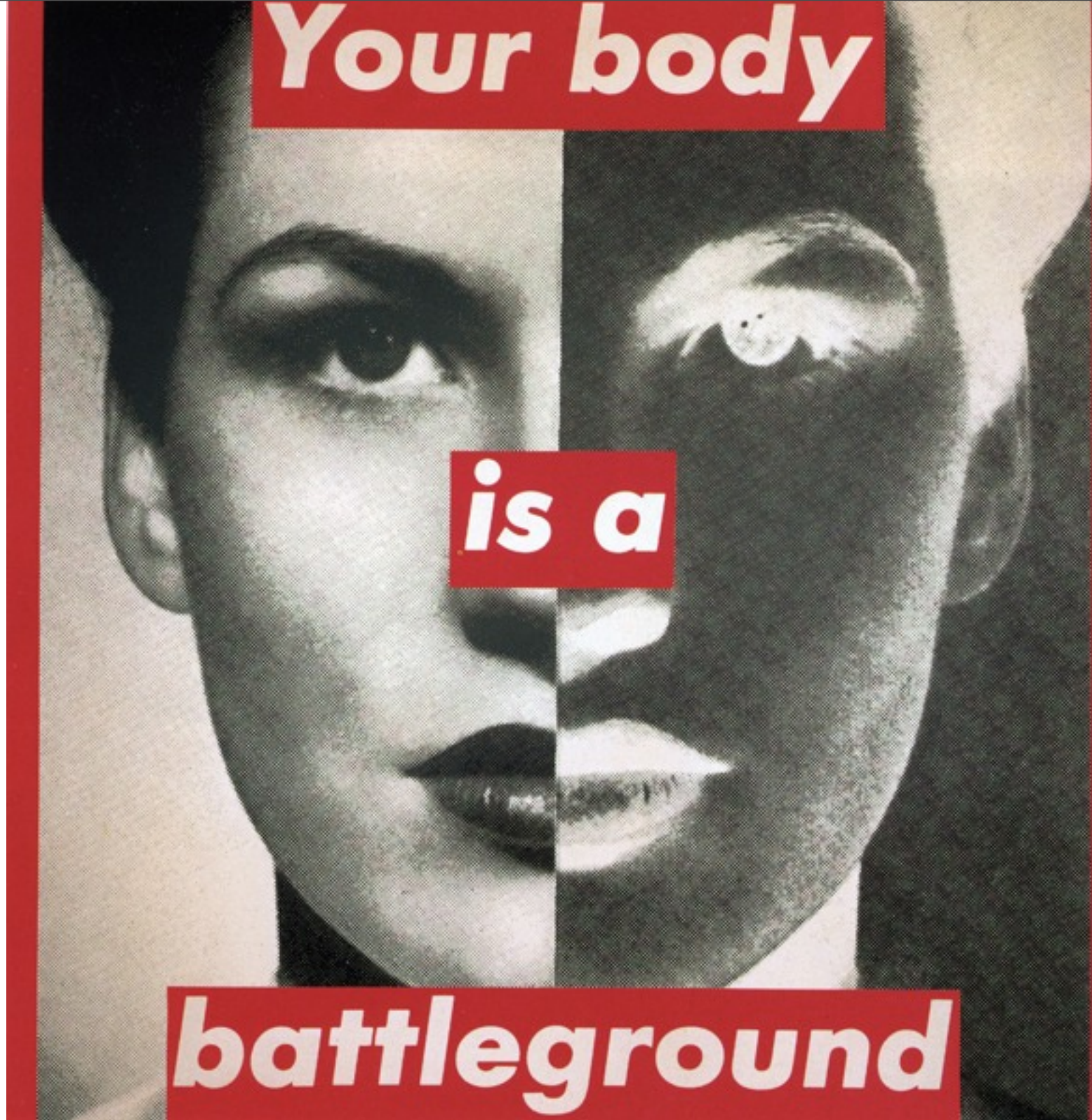
Much of Kruger's work engages the merging of found photographs from existing sources. Much of her text questions the viewer about feminism, consumerism, and individual autonomy and desire, although her black-and-white images are culled from the mainstream magazines that sell the very ideas she is disputing.

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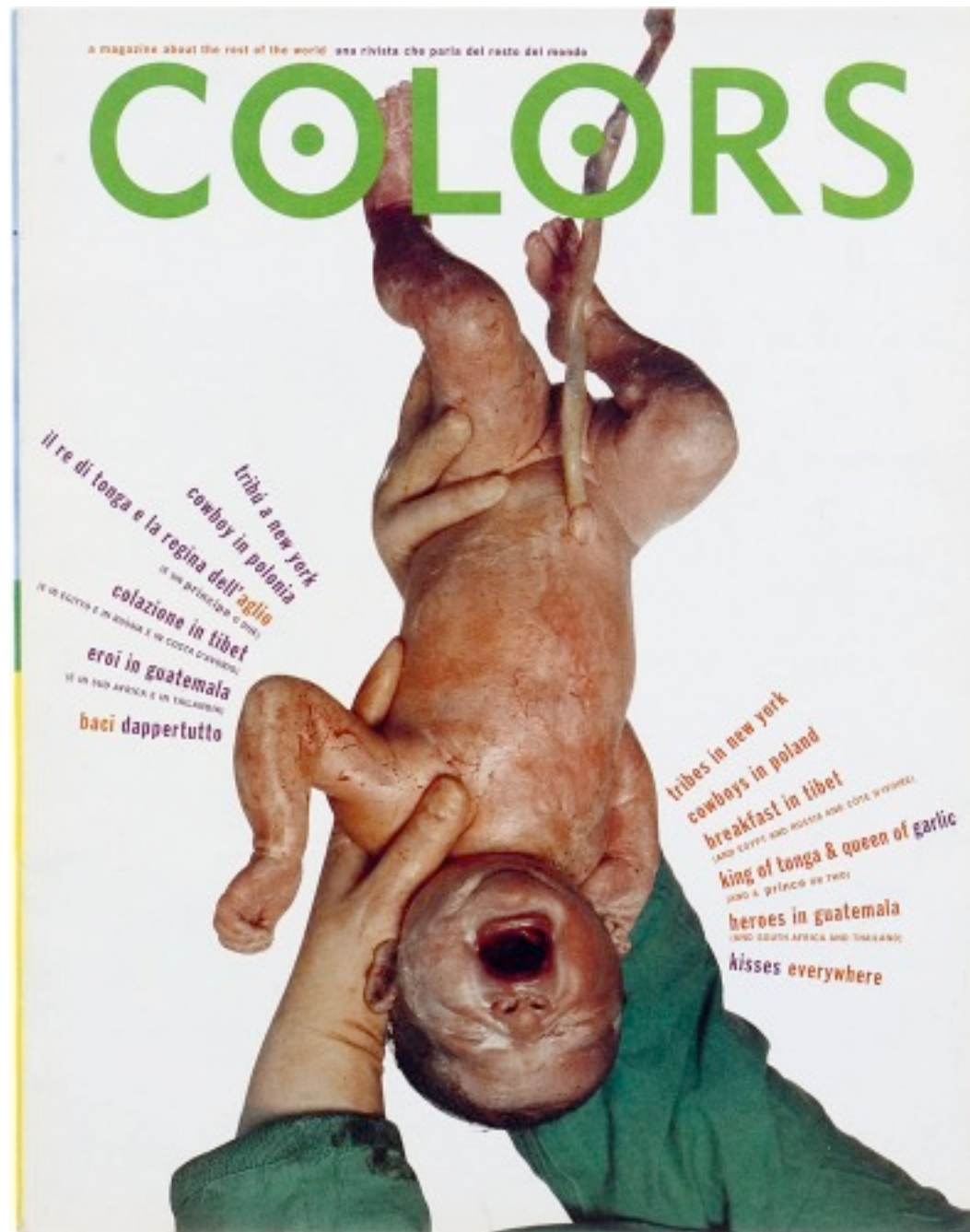
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# Tibor Kalman



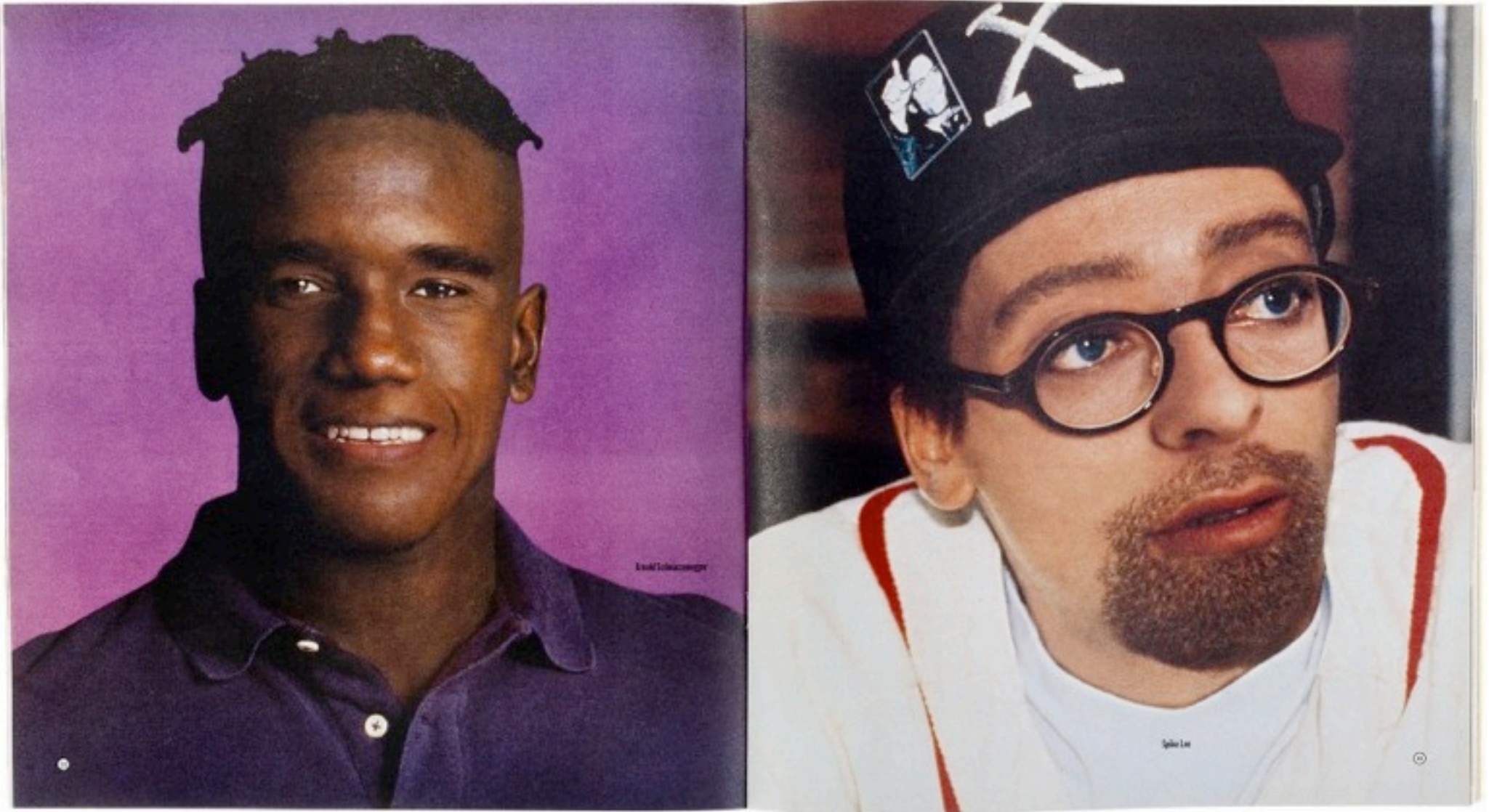
In 1979 Kalman, helped start the design firm M&Co, which did corporate work for such diverse clients as the Limited Corporation, the New Wave music group Talking Heads, Kalman also worked as creative director of Interview magazine in the early 1990s.

# Tibor Kalman



Kalman became founding editor-in-chief of the Benetton-sponsored Colors magazine in 1990. In 1993, Kalman closed M&Co and moved to Rome, to work exclusively on the magazine. Billed as 'a magazine about the rest of the world', Colors focused on multiculturalism and global awareness.

# Tibor Kalman



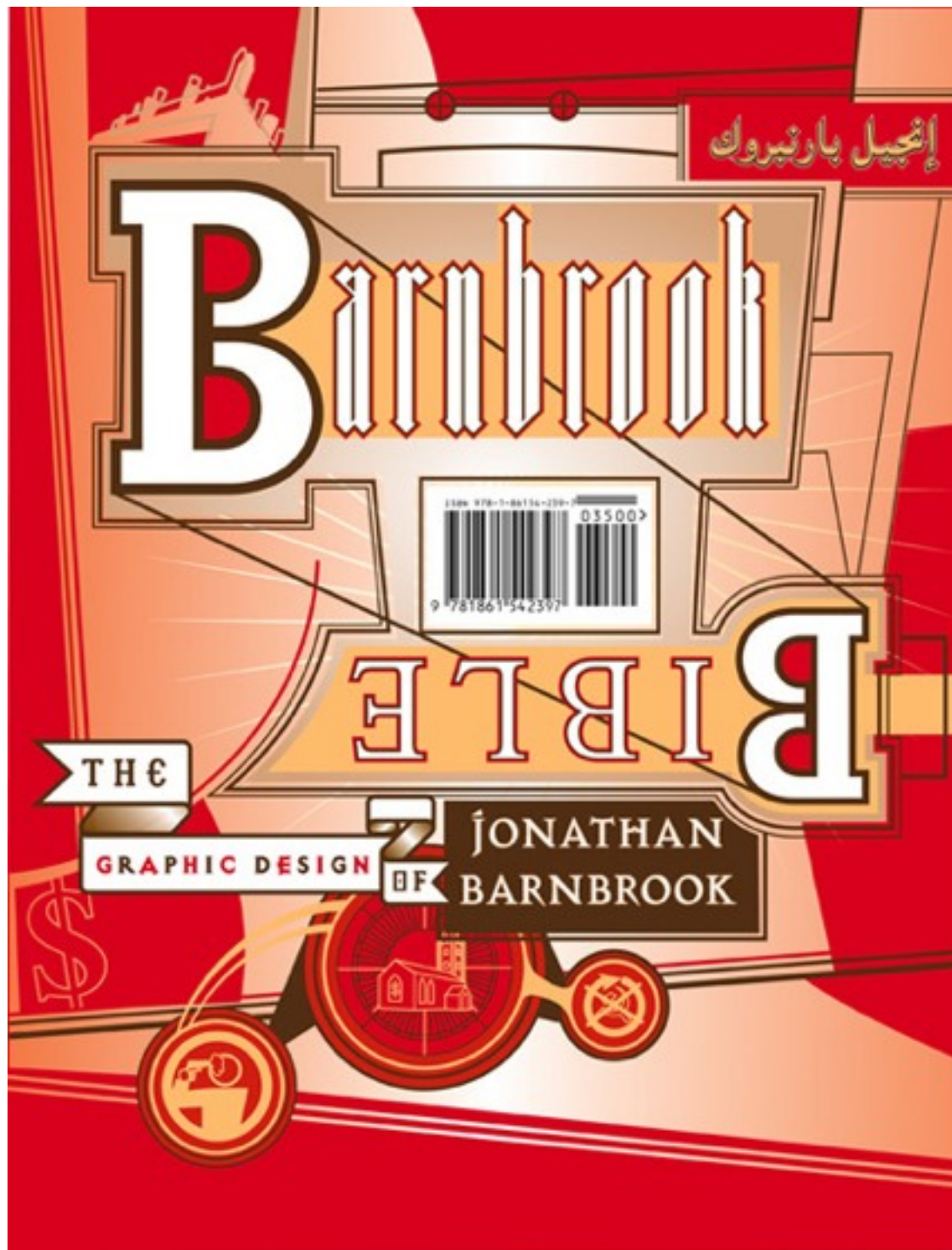
Kalman was one of the 33 signers of the First Things First 2000 manifesto.

Jonathan  
Barnbrook



A recurring theme of Barnbrook's graphic design is the series of personal responses to noted political events, that often follow or develop detournement methods. He describes as a major influence to his work 'an inner anger which is a response to all the unfairness that is in this world'. [8] He has stated his ambition to use 'design as a weapon for social change'

**Jonathan  
Barnbrook**



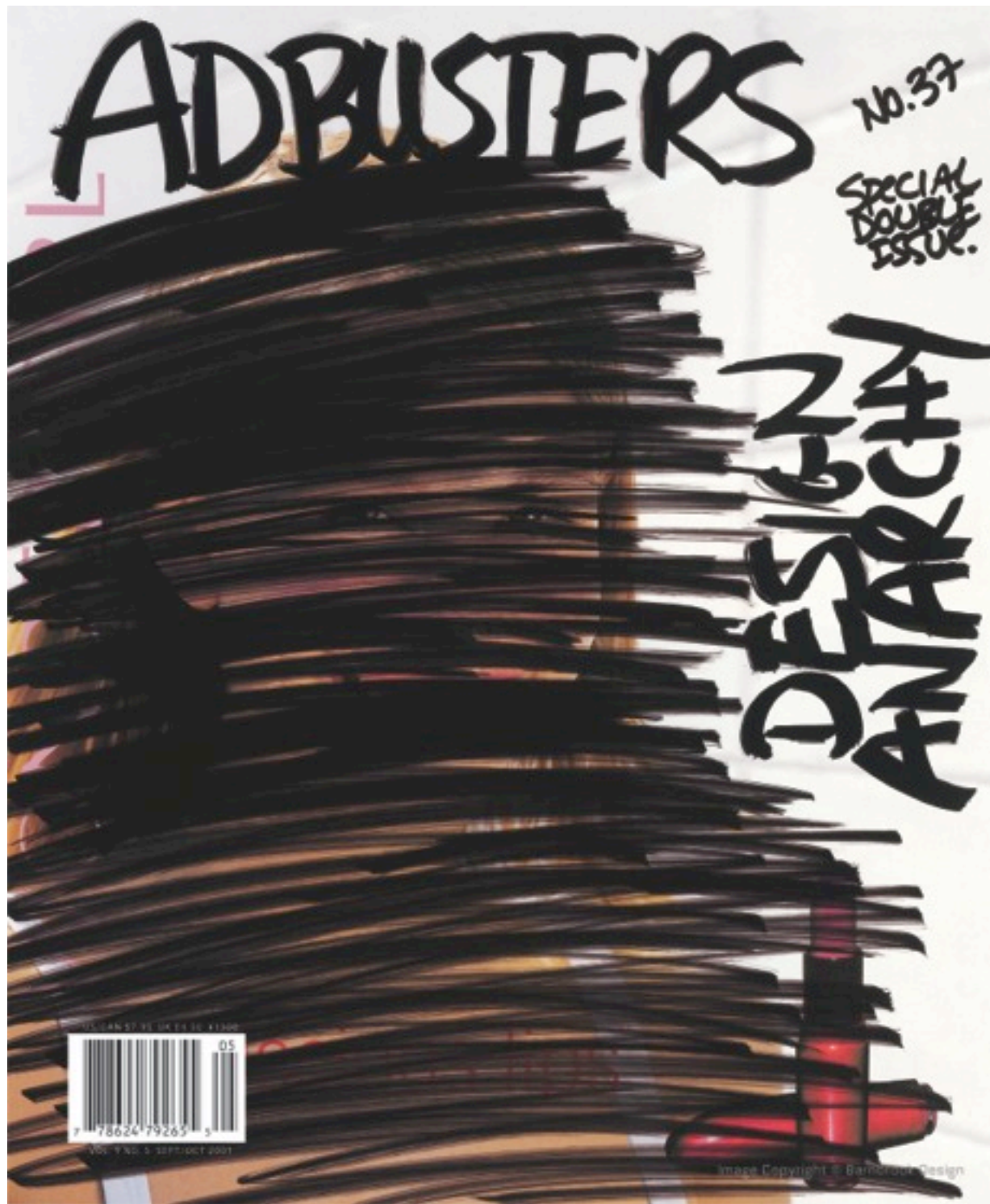
He was one of the 33 signers of the First Things First 2000 manifesto.

# Jonathan Barnbrook



A détournement is a technique developed in the 1950s by the Letterist International and consist in "turning expressions of the capitalist system against itself."

**Jonathan  
Barnbrook**



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# Bruce Mau



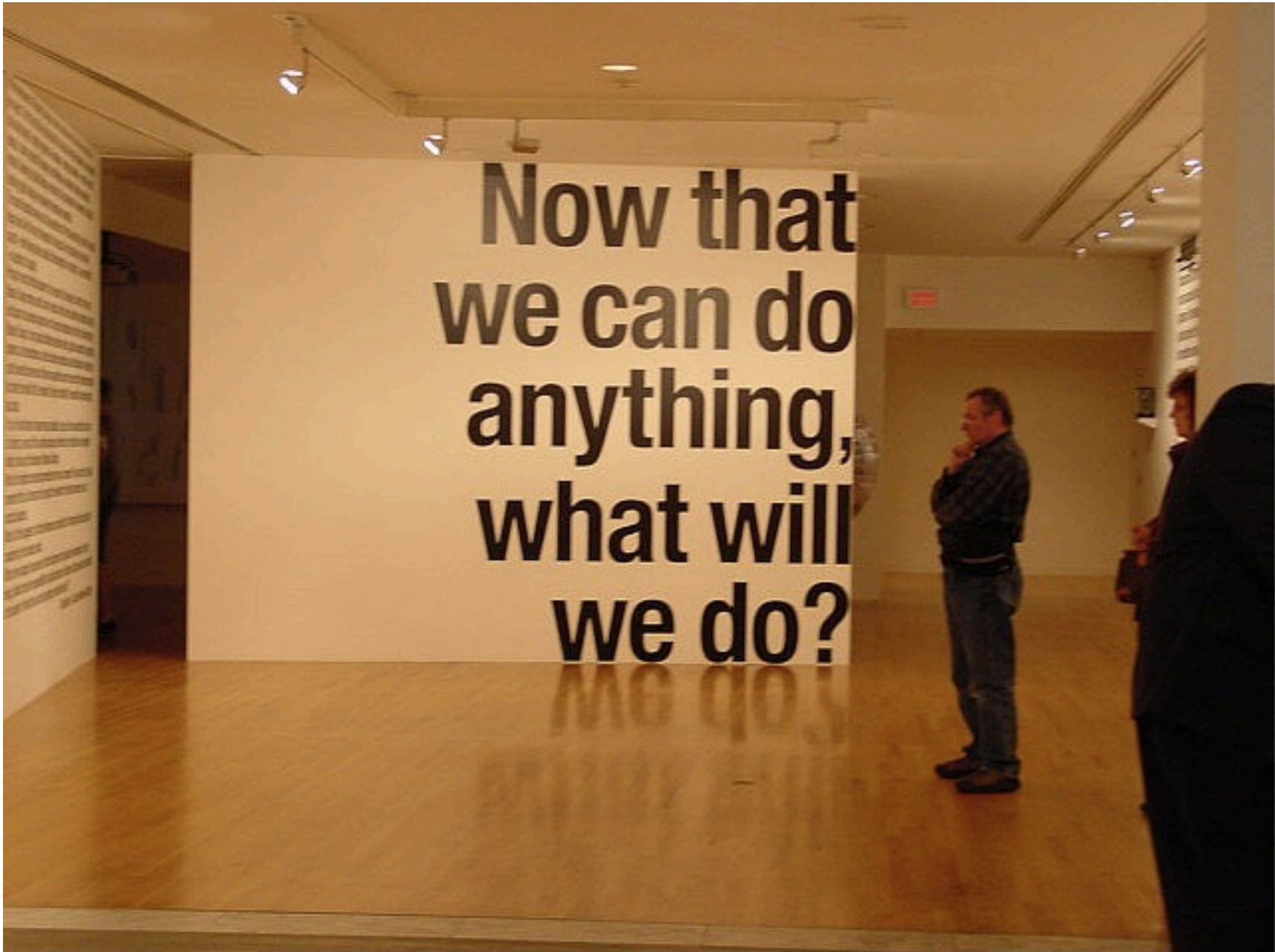
is a Canadian designer. Mau is the creative director of Bruce Mau Design, and the founder of the Institute without Boundaries.

# Bruce Mau



Massive Change. The exhibition, which was commissioned by the Vancouver Art Gallery and sponsored by Altria, looks at how design can be used as a methodology to address the problems inherent to our social, economic and political systems. The exhibit looks at the implementation of new ideas and technologies to address issues like environmental sustainability and poverty.

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# James Victore



James Victore runs an independent design studio hell-bent on world domination. He is an author, designer, filmmaker and firestarter. He continually strives to make work that is sexy, strong and memorable; work that tows the line between the sacred and the profane.