

Can design be socially responsible



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There is a need for a commitment for addressing the needs of social responsibility among designers. The capability of a designer to instill into the minds the concepts of clarity and efficient information can create the benchmark for addressing social responsibility. This paper seeks to summarize and critique the paper entitled “ Can Design be Socially Responsible? by Michael Rock. Rock tries to associate the call for social responsibility in design. He first pointed out on the issue of responsibility. The issue of responsibility in a profession involved in the modulation of information is daunting.

He then discussed the misconceptions regarding the issue pertaining to social and personal responsibility. The designer, like any professional, must examine the implication of any activity or client relationship in light of his/her position. Rock then points out the misconceptions about designer’s social responsibility with regards to personal conscience and the environment. Rock argues that “ the social responsible designer should be conscious of the cultural effect of all products that pass through the studio, not all of which have great significance.”

In his conclusion, Rock argues that recognition, clarity, and efficient communication can help facilitate the concept of social responsibility in design. In response to the article made by Rock, the section will be divided into two sections. The first one will deal with the misconceptions regarding social responsibility and design; the environment and personal conscience. The next part of the paper will be dealing with the idea that Rock mentioned with regards to achieving social responsibility.

I will have to agree with what Rock is saying regarding misconception about the environment and personal conscience in relation to social responsibility of designers. The paper believes that these notions continue to exist because of the lack of information. Social Responsibility has often been associated with helping in on social factors like the environment and thinking the appropriate action for a design which describes the concept of personal conscience. However, the concept of social responsibility goes above the application of personal conscience or environmental concern.

The idea of corporate responsibility is for designers to effectively and efficiently communicate with other people thru their design. However, as Rock has mentioned, these things are difficult for designers to accomplish due to the restraint and parameters set by the project or company. Perhaps the most socially irresponsible work is the over-designed, over-produced, typographic stunts that serve no real function, speak only to other designers and the cultural elite, and through opulence and uselessness revel in a level of conspicuous consumption that glorifies financial excess.

The paper sees agrees with the claim of Rock that clarity & simple and effective communication is necessary for achieving social responsibility in design. These ideas seem to manifest the criteria for social responsibility. However, as it has been pointed out in the previous section, achieving this is important due to the constraints by (1) the system and (2) the designer themselves. There must be a consolidated effort from both the designer and the system to address the need for social responsibility To conclude, the paper highlighted the arguments presented by Rock's paper.

It says that there has been a clamor for social responsibility in design but hindrances like the system, misconceptions and lack of initiative often destroys the objective. The real challenge for designers is to find a way to merge the missing link between the concepts prescribed by social responsibility in design and the institution, groups and individuals that handles design.