design against Design
Design Against Design is a creative research project investigating critical and oppositional graphic design practice and theory.

Conventional narratives of graphic design position the discipline as a glorified handmaiden to capitalism or as a purely aesthetic and technical practice largely divorced from the social contexts within which it exists. With the growing popularity of “design thinking”, “service design”, “social innovation” and “social impact design”, the language of marketing and commerce are further naturalised and celebrated. Participation, diversity, and inclusion are subsumed into a managerial and mercantile logic with, at best, token gestures towards charity or incremental political reform.

This narrative logic masks a vibrant counter-history of critical and activist design practices, rooted within struggles for social change and social justice. It marginalises the roles of contemporary politically engaged practitioners who are actively challenging the definitions of what design can be, what design can do, and whom it could serve.

**Design Against Design** seeks to deconstruct this logic and demystify graphic design in order to explore how it can genuinely support movements dedicated to social change and contribute to a dynamic and vital culture of resistance.

**Kevin Yuen Kit Lo** is the creative director of LOKI, an independent, multidisciplinary design and communications studio working at the intersection of graphic design and social change. The studio is widely recognized for its avant-garde design practice and its commitment to social justice, anti-oppression and anti-racism through design for direct action and cultural production.

Kevin has over 18 years of experience working in design, bridging art direction, graphic and interactive design at leading agencies to creating campaigns and visuals for front-line social justice movements and grassroots community organizing work. He is a member of Howl Arts, Memefest, and Artivistic, co-initiated the Imaging Apartheid poster project, and has previously been a member of the boards of ARCMTL and Articule. Between 2004 – 2014, he published the experimental literary arts zine *Four Minutes to Midnight*.

Kevin teaches in the Design and Computation Arts department of Concordia University, with a focus on typography, editorial design, and visual culture studies, linking material studio practice with critical thinking and social engagement. He is an experienced speaker and facilitator, drawing from his personal experiences to make the relationships between art and activism accessible, engaging, and thought/action-provoking.

We invite you to use the #designagainstdesign hastag to highlight projects and initiatives that fit within this context. We aim to create a living archive to document, articulate and disseminate contemporary socially engaged design practices.
Within the context of Design Against Design, Kevin Yuen Kit Lo is available for a variety of presentations and workshops to share and generate deeper collective knowledge.

SELECTED PAST PRESENTATIONS

2018 “Food/Media/Crisis,” Memefest Los Angeles Sessions, Pomona College, Claremont, CA
2017 “Art and/as Activism”, Anarchist Summer School, Institute for Advanced Troublemaking, Worcester, MA
2017 “Graphic Design as Symbolic Counterpower,” Print Culture: Circuits and Counter Designs, Media Assemblages Conference, McGill University, Montréal, PQ
2016 “The Propaganda of Pantone: Colour and Subcultural Sublimation,” Memefest Symposium, Swinburne University, Melbourne, AU
2016 “The All Token Speakers Panel,” with Artivistic, Common Aliens: Diaspora in Time, Atelier Celadon, Montréal, PQ
2016 “Belonging: Creation and Resistance,” Decolonize Palestine, SPHR Concordia/UQAM, Montréal, PQ
2016 “The New Collectivity,” Festival Culture: Growth and Gentrification, Pop Montreal Symposium, Montréal, PQ
2016 “Howl! Art + Activism,” Howl Arts Festival, Montréal, PQ
2015 “Graphic Design and Capitalism,” Shoufen Talks, Jackpine, Ottawa, ON
2014 “Visual Identity and Networks of Solidarity,” Memefest Symposium, Swinburne University, Melbourne, AU
2014 “Designing Cultures of Resistance,” Future Design Lab, Allied Media Conference, Detroit, MI
2014 “Art, Anarchism & Social Movements,” Howl Arts Festival, Montréal, PQ
2014 “Demo or Die: Promiscuous Infrastructures,” la Recherche-création: Territoire d’innovation méthodologique, Hexagram, Montréal, PQ

INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA

Adjust Your Margins – Profile: Kevin Yuen Kit Lo
Mile-End.com – Meet LOKI
Free City Radio – Interview with Kevin Yuen Kit Lo on Making, Racist Afraid Again
Howl Arts – Howl! Art + Activism Panel Discussion
Graphic Design as Symbolic Counterpower
The Propaganda of Pantone
First Things Next – Socially Engaged Design Studios
Hexagram – Demo or Die: Promiscuous Infrastructures

CONTACT

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