I'd like to posit that designers are presently the least adequately prepared profession to address climate change and in turn the least likely to help engage ordinary citizens.

I've worked growing technology-centric communities since 2007 and over the last three years have transitioned to climate change related work. From running an innovation department in an energy company to helping a bank understand the limitation of green building certification the amount of technical literacy in the creative sector remains low. How can design take a position of leadership if it lacks even the most basic understanding of the dynamics of carbon counting, trading, supply chain limitations, trade deals, grid structures, green finance and other complex but accessible economic and ecological dynamics.

Most of the designers who will visit the Biennale don't know that they don't know any of this. And that's a problem.

The environment, green policy-making and green actions are all currently 'designed' by people who do not have a design background because those people read the relevant 50 page European Commission documents. This isn't to say that designer don't read, it's to recognise the average UK person doesn't read. So where does this leave us?

In 2018, I started to design the scaffold of a climate change education for designers: The Low Carbon Design Institute. This was supposed to take place in Summer 2020.

Structured around a two-week residency for creatives, the program includes visits to an EDF nuclear and wind sites as well as a visit to a Veolia waste management site in Bermondsey. Evenings are peppered with movie nights and talks and the weekend involves building an architectural structure using ancient materials (delivered by New Earth). The end of the two weeks culminates in an exhibition of participant's (20 ideally) reaction to what they have learnt. The full 2 week schedule can be viewed here. To design the outcomes we want, we have to rapidly upskill designers.

Initiator

Alexandra Deschamps-Sonsino is an author, consultant and founder. Her work is in the permanent collection of the MoMa NYC and the London Design Museum. She studied industrial design at the University of Montréal and interaction design at the Interaction Design Institute Ivrea.

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