

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART  
SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
DESIGN PRODUCTS**

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**PLATFORM PROPOSAL**

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August, 2016**

# Platform Proposal

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## Existing Program Themes

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**Networked Design:** We will explore the role of new innovations in business models, which are helping people become even more connected. Challenging assumptions around ownership and exploring the shareable economy and online platforms in terms of increasing access to education, products and services.

**The Making of Things:** A hands-on understanding and exploration of the design making process. I will create sci-fi prototyping workshops so students can create quick mock-ups and use this physical constructions as empathy experiments and use them to create potentially disruptive applications. An understanding of materials and material development methods will be explored to give students confidence as design-makers and experimenters.

**Designing Things Better:** As designers of products we have a responsibility to understand the life-cycle process of our solutions, so designers will be required to track the whole life of their products. Students will be encouraged to explore fresh ways to create products, from the source materials, transformation or manufacturing process, the end user relationship with them and the eventual swap or discarding stages. Looking at modularity and other design approaches to tech products will be explored as well.

**Human Culture:** The whole spectrum of the designed world is made up of intrinsic values and cultural codes. Students must be able to anatomize these and to understand the social, political and cultural contexts that give rise to them.

As designers they will be encouraged to critically analyse their own work and explain the narratives they are embedding in their own products and services.

**New Notions & Actions from New Technologies:** Students must be able to scan, forecast and propose new ways of engaging with technology to encourage the empowerment of people and communities. How will emerging technologies affect communities? What are the cultural, social, political & economical implications? What are the challenges and opportunities? How can they best be used to create a more harmonious and resilient world or to highlight it's imbalances?

## Workshops

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**I. Materials and Trends.** Material analysis and understanding of trends in terms of what they reflect of the world around us.

What do trends this tell us? How can we spot trends and make predictions for other areas of societies?

**II. Creating fictional objects using waste to develop hypothetical scenarios and empathy experiments.**  
The students will construct quick mock-ups of imagined objects using discarded parts and broken products they find. By understanding the object's affordances they will create a fictional story about the user, their culture and the codes and values that are embedded in the object. This experiment will

give students the ability to study objects in terms of cultural and social circumstances. The deliverables would be a series of sculptural constructions and a series of short stories to accompany them.

**III. Mapping and Geographical Analysis.** Using mapping to better understand local contexts, their priorities and the potential of certain solution's stickiness factor to certain geographies.

**IV. Storytelling and the creation of Meta-narratives**  
what is the purpose of meta-narratives and how they affect how we live and how we function as a society?

## Lectures

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Below are some ideas of themes to explore with students so they get a foundation knowledge around some issues related to the workshops and briefs.

**I. Sustainable Development: The role of design in creating social change; Understanding the landscape.**  
Sustainable development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Social entrepreneurship and generation of new business models. Exploring the Sustainable Development sector, what are the SDG's and the efforts of institutions to help tackle them? Urban & Rural specific Challenges (what are the main challenges in the next decades?)

**II. We are all designers: Juggad (frugal+ innovative+ creative) and design as human nature. Learning from the ground. Students will get a sense of the how the non-academic design happens and some examples of the resourcefulness of individuals and communities that create solutions for problems around them. Understanding the local relationships with surplus materials, the potential economic impact and business opportunities to reuse some of these resources in a clever way.**

**III. Measuring Impact. How do we make sure our solutions work and can be replicated? Know approximately how many people are affected and where are they located (who, what, how and where) Who is suffering? What are they suffering from? Where are they located? Establish the boundaries. How will your enterprise alleviate the problem? Who and how many people will benefit from this? What will the major costs be? How will revenues or income be generated? Because you are dealing with people, you need to think about how your solution will affect others.**

**IV. Creating New Business Models. Understanding the Business Model generation canvas. We will answer: who is the end user?, What is the value proposition?, Is the pain point we are addressing strong enough?, What are the key resources, activities and partnerships? What is the cost and revenue structure? How will the solutions be delivered? How will your product establish a relationship with the user and how will this relationship be managed?**

# Briefs

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## A. Material Development

We begin by analysing which trends are prevalent in the different industries/products that cater for each of the human needs based on Maslow's pyramid of needs.

We then create a material pack based on researching which materials could be used for each of the trends observed. The material development stage begins after a thorough research on a specific waste material and the systems observed.

It follows a deep understanding of the issues surrounding the creation, the use and the disposal of a material.

We would use an approach that reinvents the material's identity by taking the material back to its most essential form, and from that place examining the potential and possible uses.

As we begin the material experimentation process we gradually re-construct the new identity of our material.

### **Brief for Material Development:**

To create a new material, based on a waste stream. You will need to justify your choice by showing a deep understanding of the material's ecosystem and the benefits of creating a new material using your waste stream of choice.

You will show the advantages of your material and its place in an industry or craft. (Market)

**You will develop applications that highlight and take advantage of your material's qualities and benefits.**

**You will create a brand and a mini business plan to scale up your material process. You will prototype one or many applications for your material and your newly created brand.**

## **B. Policy Analysis and Design**

**Create a product or service that comes as a result of a policy analysis.**

**Tell me how the policy relates to people in the ground, and find ways design can help achieve the policy targets better. Map the relationships and tell me the different scenarios that relate to the different players.**

**You will choose a policy document of your choice and use this as the starting point to further analyse the policy makers' impact needs and measurements and how design can better deliver these with the development of a product or service.**

**You will show a clear understanding of the player-map and the potential consequences and challenges of your approach. You must show a clear understanding of the local landscape of the proposed solution and the benefits for each of the related groups.**

**Who is your market, who benefits directly and indirectly, who is affected by this directly or indirectly and how could the affected parties respond to your proposal?**

**Develop a 1 page Business plan that shows your business proposal and the USP values for potential investors.**

**Deliverables: A full prototype, a 1 page business plan, a**

presentation and detailed report of the project.

### **C. Product or Service Development – Potential trip to India or Africa to do a project with a local NGO**

Determine an area from the challenges outlined in the lectures. Research everything there is to learn about that theme, engage the local actors and get as much information as you can about the local needs based on your interviews.

Design a product or service that addresses the problem. Show a clear understanding of the different players; who will pay for the product, who will use it, who will help the adoption. Show the relationship map for the product, benefits, challenges, etc.

Create a sustainable plan for the deployment of the product or service.

Create an investment proposal: context, problem, solution, USP, opportunities and challenges, competition, what is the market like?, Manufacturing, delivery, partnerships, how will you address the adoption challenges?

### **D. Final Project + Written Manifesto (2000 words)**

Open brief.

Develop your own methodology and way of working. What is your design philosophy and how does your work as a designer fit into the world today?

## Further Reading

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**This Changes Everything. Naomi Klein**

**Gaia. A New Look at Life on Earth. James Lovelock**

**Hertzian Tales. Anthony Dunne**

**Science Fiction Prototyping. Brian David Johnson**

**Cradle to Cradle. Michael Braungart**

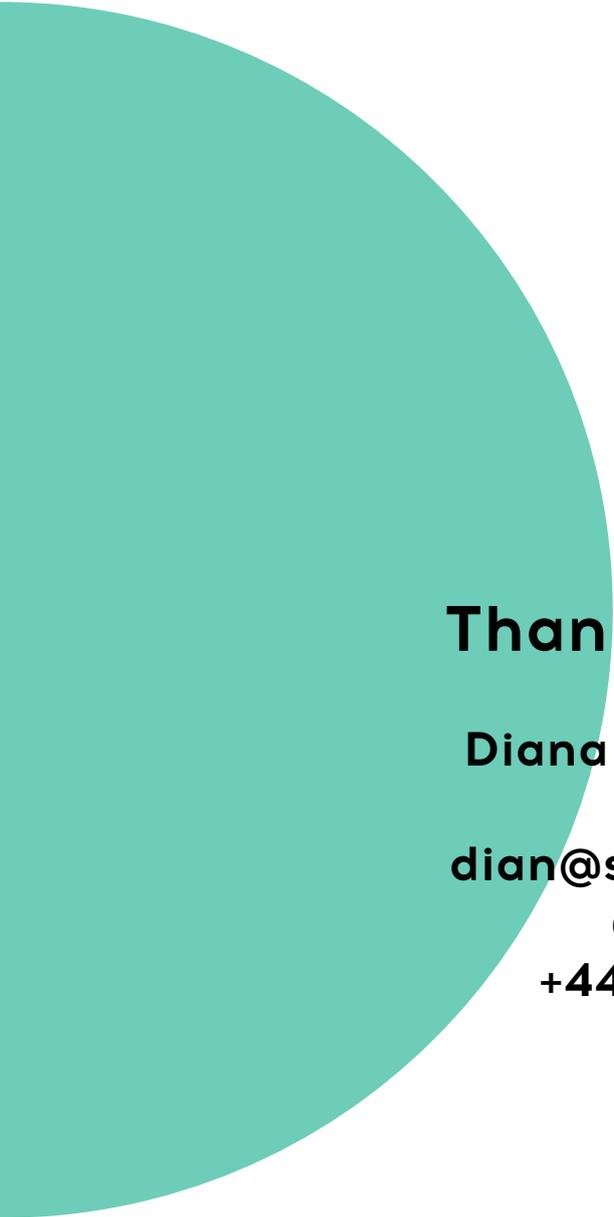
**Design for the Real World. Victor Papanek**

**The Green Imperative. Victor Papanek.**

**The Spell of the Sensuous. David Abram**

**Meme Wars: The Creative Destruction of Neoclassical Economics. Kalle Lasn**

**Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

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**Thanks for your time**

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