

Introducing Design Dutch Design theory Studio Bas Sala 20150227

preface:

Please consider the content of this article not as an absolute truth. The article is far from a complete and up to date summary of the Dutch Design history. It highlights some of the important eras of Dutch Design. We at Studio Bas Sala see this as an open-source article. Feel free to contribute your own paragraph . Please send us your remarks to info@bassala.com.

**Thanks Bas Sala
Studio Bas Sala
Design-coordinator Mtic-Design Project.**

Introducing Design Dutch Design theory

Following a value free analysis of the dutch design history, it should be addressed that design is part of the creative and national economy since 2005. After the 16th-17th century of the golden age and more realistic art, modernization and industrialization occurred in the Netherlands in the 19th century. However, the following one was the one where more industrial or applied art took place. Some characteristics are minimalism, experimentation as well as innovation.

گ TIMELINE *گ*

1900	1920-1930:	1930-1950:	1950-onwards:	Nowadays:
... More conservative dutch design culture .. dutch known as decorative artists i.e. Artisanal design	Design as Art German Bauhaus De Stijl and members of Bond voor Kunst. i.e. Piet Zwart and constructivism i.e. Willem Gispen and functionalism	Moral Modernism .. Simplicity, functionality, honesty i.e. Nieuwe Bouwen: modern movement in architecture	Industrial design More professional design	Intellectual Design More conceptual design and social design i.e. Droog Design

German Bauhaus

Bauhaus was first founded by Walter Gropius in Germany with the idea of bringing together all arts, with an important influence from modernism (*Bauhaus*, Wikipedia, 2015). Breuer Marcel (1902-1981), Walter Gropius (1883-1969) and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) are among the important figures of that school of design and along with Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, are considered as

one of the pioneering masters of modern architecture (). It was shaped by the 19th and early 20th centuries trends such as Arts and Crafts movement, which had sought to level the distinction between fine and applied arts, and to reunite creativity and manufacturing (Borteh 2015, The ArtStory.org; Furniture Design, The Red List).

“Let us together create the new building of the future which will be all in one: architecture and sculpture and painting” –Walter Gropius (Reginald 1991).

Most of the Bauhaus principles formed the basis of modern German and Dutch design schools.

Neo-plasticism 1917–1931: De Stijl

This artistic movement is characterized by pure abstraction and universality, by a reduction to the essentials of form and color; they simplified visual compositions to the vertical and horizontal directions, and used only primary colors along with black and white. Piet Mondrian writes, “this new plastic idea will ignore the particulars of appearance, that is to say, natural form and colour. On the contrary, it should find its expression *in the abstraction of form and colour, in the straight line and the clearly defined primary colour*” (Tate 2014; Wolf 2015).

In general, De Stijl (Dutch for the Style) proposed ultimate simplicity and abstraction, both in architecture and painting, by using only straight horizontal and vertical lines and rectangular forms, limited to the primary colors, red, yellow and blue, and the three primary values, black, white and grey. The works tried not to design symmetrical and attained aesthetic balance by the use of opposition. This element of the movement embodies the second meaning of *stijl*: “a post, jamb or support”, best exemplified by the construction of crossing joints as seen in carpentry. The De Stijl movement was also influenced by Neopositivism. The works of De Stijl would influence the Bauhaus style and the international style of architecture as well as clothing and interior design. However, it did not follow the general guidelines of an “-ism” (e.g., Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism), nor did it adhere to the principles of art schools like the Bauhaus; it was a collective project, a joint enterprise (*De Stijl*, Wikipedia, 2015).

De Stijl stands out because of its social and aesthetic aspirations. “By ostensibly removing the individualism of the artist in favor of precision and universal harmonies, the De Stijl group believed they were laying the groundwork for a future utopia” (Bigman 2014). To conclude, De Stijl’s on-going fame is mainly the result of the true modern master, Piet Mondrian (Wolf 2015, The ArtStory.org).

A list of an overview of contributors

Ilya Bolotowsky (1907–1981), painter and sculptor; Burgoyne Diller (1906–1965), painter; Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931), painter, designer, and writer; published *De Stijl*, 1917–1931; Cornelis van Eesteren (1897–1981), architect; Jean Gorin (1899–

1981), painter, sculptor; Robert van t Hoff (1887–1979), architect; Vilmos Huszár (1884–1960), painter; Frederick John Kiesler (1890–1965), architect, theater designer, artist, sculptor. Anthony Kok (1882–1969), poet; Bart van der Leek (1876–1958), painter; Piet Mondrian (1872–1944), painter; Marlow Moss (1890–1958), painter and sculptor; J. P. Oud (1890–1963), architect; Gerrit Rietveld (1888–1964), architect and designer; Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948), painter; Georges Vantongerloo (1886–1965), sculptor; Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, painter; Jan Wils (1891–1972), architect

1990–2000: Contemporary dutch design

Droog Design was founded in 1993 by product designer Gijs Bakker and design historian Renny Ramakers. During the Milan Furniture Fair in 1993, the duo presented a selection of sober designs made of industrial materials and found objects. The presentation was titled Droog Design because of the simplicity and dry humor of the objects (*Droog*, Wikipedia). Critique: Droog, which started in 1993, launched the careers of an entire generation of Dutch designers, including Marcel Wanders, Hella Jongerius, Jurgen Bey and Richard Hutten. But recently Droog has been criticised for persevering with conceptual pieces when the tide seems to be turning towards more accessible – and cheaper – products. Droog design revealed Marcel Wanders, Hella Jongerius and Jurgen Bey.

Bey, Jurgen (1965): The Dutch designer imagines conceptual pieces that rest on the border of design and art. He believes that there is nothing new to invent as everything already exists in the world and, therefore, translates into useful objects, living forms such as a tree trunk bench or seats filled with dust. His unusual approach gives a dreamlike feel to his creations. ‘What I like is that my pieces of furniture are an investigation; that they are not answers but questions transformed into products. Characters asking to be used.’ (*Furniture Design*, The Red List).

Jongerius, Hella (1963): The Dutch designer has defined her own design vocabulary, naming it “Dirty Realism” with a very personal way of mixing craftsmanship and industrial design as well as tradition and contemporary. Her creations celebrate imperfection, humour and bear a strong temperament. By revisiting classical objects with a touch of urban aesthetic, she redefines recycling. Hella Jongerius also has a strong personality and is never afraid of speaking her mind out: ‘design is a profession that I hate and like in equal measure. There’s no reason to design anything, yet it’s something that I like to do (*Furniture Design*, The Red List).

Wanders, Marcel (1963): The exuberant Dutch designer once called “the Lady Gaga of the design world” sees minimalism as a plague. To him, design is about propagating wonder and passion: his objects, furniture and interior designs are therefore fuelled with fantasy. He privileges simple forms associated to lavish ornamentations that tend to highlight an assumed kitsch aesthetic. Marcel Wanders, who has chosen a picture of himself wearing a golden clown nose as his studio’s logo, truly treasures humour yet, he glorifies the seriousness of his work when dreaming of designing a mosque that would emphasize his love and respect of others (*Furniture Design*, The Red List).

Remy, Tejo (1960): The Dutch designer was considered a pioneer of the collective Droog Design when he created, in 1991, the Chest of Drawers made of used drawers, and that denounced consumerism and therefore strongly shook up traditional design’s codes. He has now left the group but still explores the concept of recycling through the recovery and reuse of diverse objects that give birth to playful

and original pieces that yet remain functional. Tejo Remy thus sees his work 'as an expression of the idea of creating your own paradise using what is available' (*Furniture Design, The Red List*).

Moooi 2001

For more than ten years Moooi has inspired and seduced the world with sparkling and innovative designs. The venture founded in 2001 by Marcel Wanders and Casper Vissers is named after their native Dutch word for beautiful.

'Moooi leads the understanding of culture, human needs and technology. It contributes by creating the most successful innovative design-collection ever and creates unprecedented value and opportunity for its customers, employees, investors and partners. This is our challenge and vision and we ask you to hold us to it and help us realise it' (Moooi, 2015).

Moving into the next century, the design landscape changed rapidly after 2000. Designers, clients and educational institutions took the initiative to implement design methods on other fields of society. Not galleries and museums were to be conquered. The next generation wanted to develop and design solutions for societal problems. Social design in which the social value is as important as the financial benefit was introduced.

Victor Papanek is among the initiators of that type of design. According to him, design is a tool that demands social and moral responsibility (Papanek 1984). Not only the end product but the whole process was important as well. Designers went on the streets and began with urban interventions, working in their own neighborhoods with bottom-up initiatives. Although not new, Jane Jacobs started this in the sixties it got widely accepted as a design method. In social design, critical attitude is of crucial importance aiming to transform the society in any social aspect.

Additionally, the internet and new production methods like CNC milling and 3D printing changed the approach towards design. Cooperation and the sharing of ideas is widely accepted by the younger designers. The internet and other multimedia applications and interactive technologies offer the designers the chance to work worldwide, being now able to find markets for their products. As happened to the music industry, independent designers do not depend anymore on acceptance by big labels or firms to get their products in production. This trend of the designers offers the possibility for them to develop and produce their own products.

The Dutch design history as followed here is mostly related to art, industrial design and architecture. Other related fields are engineering, graphic design –quite popular until 1980s, and design science. Some powerful intellectual influences of the history of Design are Simon Herbert, Rittel Horst and Papanek Victor.

There is always a theory behind design thinking. For example:

- Simon Herbert: Design as science “Our brains, as computers, have limits” (Simon 1969).
- Rittel Horst: Creative approach. “Design science full of wicked problems, unique, ambiguous and has no definite solution” (Rittel 1973).
- Papanek Victor: Sustainable design “design has become the most powerful tool with which man shapes his tools, society and himself” (Papanek 1984).

References

“Bauhaus”. Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Available at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bauhaus> (Accessed 26 February 2015).

Bigman A. (2014). A brief visual history of the utopian De Stijl movement, *99Designs*. Available at: http://99designs.com/designer_blog/2012/12/18/know_your_design_history_the_utopian_de_stijl_movement/

Borteh L. (2015). Bauhaus, *TheArtStory.org*. Website. Available at: http://www.theartstory.org/movement_bauhaus.htm

“De Stijl” Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Stijl (Accessed 25 February 2015).

Furniture Design, The Red List, by Julien A. Available at: <http://theredlist.com/wiki-2-18-392-1335-1376-view-1990-2000-1.html>

Jirousek C. (1995). De Stijl, *Art, Design and Visual Thinking*. Available at: <http://char.txa.cornell.edu/art/decart/destijl/decstijl.htm>

King E. (1999). New faces, Typotheque. Available at: https://www.typotheque.com/articles/new_faces_chapter_five_the_netherlands

Moooli (2015). *Who is moooli*, Accessed at 25 February 2015. Available at: <http://www.moooli.com/company>

Papanek Victor (1984). Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change, *Academy Chicago Publishers*, Completely Revised Second Edition

Reginald I. (1991). Walter Gropius: An illustrated Biography of the Creator of the Bauhaus, *First English-language Edition*, Berlin, Bulfinch Press.

Rijk De T., Pijbes W. (2003) Designers in Nederland: Een eeuw productvormgeving. Ludion Amsterdam/Gent

Rittel H., Webber M. (1973) "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." Policy Sciences 4.2, pp. 155-69.
<http://www.metu.edu.tr/~baykan/arch467/Rittel%2BWebber%2BDilemmas.pdf>

Simon H.A. (1969). The Sciences of the Artificial. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Tate Glossary (2014). Neo-plasticism. Available at: <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/n/neo-plasticism>

Thomas M.S. (2008). Dutch Design: A History, Reaction Books, China. Available at:
http://books.google.nl/books?hl=el&lr=&id=DcsXHeA7UkcC&oi=fnd&pg=PT6&dq=Mienke+Simon+Thomas%E2%80%99s+Dutch+Design&ots=w6QcqVBkyH&sig=nejBMFKzNdsYtroSomT81WSwYdM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Mienke%20Simon%20Thomas%E2%80%99s%20Dutch%20Design&f=false

Wolf J. (2015). De Stijl, *The ArtStory.org*. Website. Available at: http://www.theartstory.org/movement_de_stijl.htm (Accessed 25 Feb 2015)