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Design for the
PUBLIC GOOD



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No 5

THURSDAY
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MUSIC DIRECTOR / CONDUCTOR
NOV. 21, 2003 AT 8 P.M.

PROGRAM includes:
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SATIN DOLL CARAVAN TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN
IT DON'T MEAN A THING (IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING)
AND MUCH MORE!

Design for the Public Good

We live in tumultuous times, politically, economically, socially, in our cities and towns, in our countries and in our world. The current climate calls for action in many arenas. For designers, it beckons louder than ever. And nowhere is it needed more than issue-driven design.

Designing for the nonprofit world is both inspiring and complex. It's paramount that the design community recognize its role as communicators—on many different levels. Whether projects are grand for humanitarian programs that aim to make our world a better place, or at the grassroots level for local communities and schools, or for organizations that enrich our lives, such as the arts, theaters, museums and festivals, all fall within the parameters of this feature.

For the designer, these are the kinds of projects that can offer more creative freedom and important balance with work from the private sector, which often comes with increased client restrictions. And it *is* a balancing act. Because today, it's not economically feasible that all work be pro bono. It is a conscious choice, a commitment. While many designers claim that work for the nonprofit sector gives them the creative charge they often crave, making an impact remains the primary objective—no matter the cause.

Public good is a general term and leaves room for interpretation, as you'll see in the following projects, which range from annual reports and brochures to posters and invitations. This is the first time we've focused on pro-bono work in one article, and the response has been significant. In fact, we were inundated with design for the public good, and narrowing it down to just 23 projects was no easy task. What was considered a niche has permeated throughout the design community, from established professionals to newcomers.

One designer who's made issue-driven design a priority in his

career is Jurek Wajdowicz, cofounder and creative director of Emerson, Wajdowicz Studios in New York. His passion for intelligent design is evident in his work and in his words. Perhaps having started as a designer in Poland, then a Communist country, and immigrating to New York twenty years ago to work for Herb Lubalin & Co. contributes to Wajdowicz's intense involvement in real-world issues. With more than half of the work being in the nonprofit sector, it is clearly a driving force for the studio and has attracted international clients including The Rockefeller Foundation, Médecins Sans Frontières [see page 98], United Nations and the International Rescue Committee.

What keeps Jurek Wajdowicz inspired in the complicated world of design for the public good? "I love it when our design work makes an intelligible impact in the 'real' world. It happened to us several thrilling times: from creating posters for Freedom House which were smuggled via Hong Kong to China after the Tiananmen Square confrontation in Beijing, to the memorable fund-raising annual reports we created with Sebastião Salgado for UNIFEM (United Nation Development Fund for Women) in the early '90s that touched the lives of many people.

"In one sentence: I continue to do design for the public good to try to present the truth, to capture the soul and to preserve integrity."

Such a noble endeavor does not come without its share of frustration, Wajdowicz is quick to point out. "Not known for

Right: "The idea for the **clothing drive** was born in 1997, my first holiday with @radical. I was astounded by the amount of gifts that came into the mailroom. It set me thinking that holiday greetings could be about more. Instead of giving clients a gift for the holidays, @radical asked them to give clothing to those truly in need. The commitment began with an original design and manufacture of a bag, and continued in a global effort, with each of the company's offices coordinating pickup and delivery of the donations to chosen charities. My inspiration came from Tibor Kalman. It was time to use the power of good design, in Kalman's phrase 'simple, elegant, seductive,' to rechannel the holiday abundance to places parched with need," said creative director Rafael Esquer. Gregory Gross, writer; @radical.media (New York, NY), design firm.

"Our challenge was to link the venture capital firm's holiday party with a benefit for **Project Read**, which promotes adult literacy, for an audience of venture partners, entrepreneurs and financial professionals. Our concept was a Christmas tree which becomes a 'tree of knowledge' through the support of adult literacy. The viewer first encounters a Christmas tree-shaped window revealing a statement about literacy, the formal invitation, and finally the 'tree of knowledge' composed of open books," said Earl Gee, creative director. "The die-cut tree shape from the front cover of the invitation created a functional bookmark/tree ornament given to attendees as a keepsake of the event. Our client was extremely pleased, as the event raised several thousand dollars in donations for Project Read resulting in a highly successful holiday benefit." Fani Chung/Earl Gee, designers; Earl Gee, illustrator; Gee + Chung Design (San Francisco, CA), design firm; DCM-Doll Capital Management/Project Read, clients.



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