

Inclusivity should be a design standard

Launching Design Can, a campaign and tool to fight for the future of the design industry



Design Can is an online tool and campaign for an inclusive design industry

A group of designers, editors and activists have joined forces with an up-and-coming design collective to empower those who want to create an inclusive design industry.

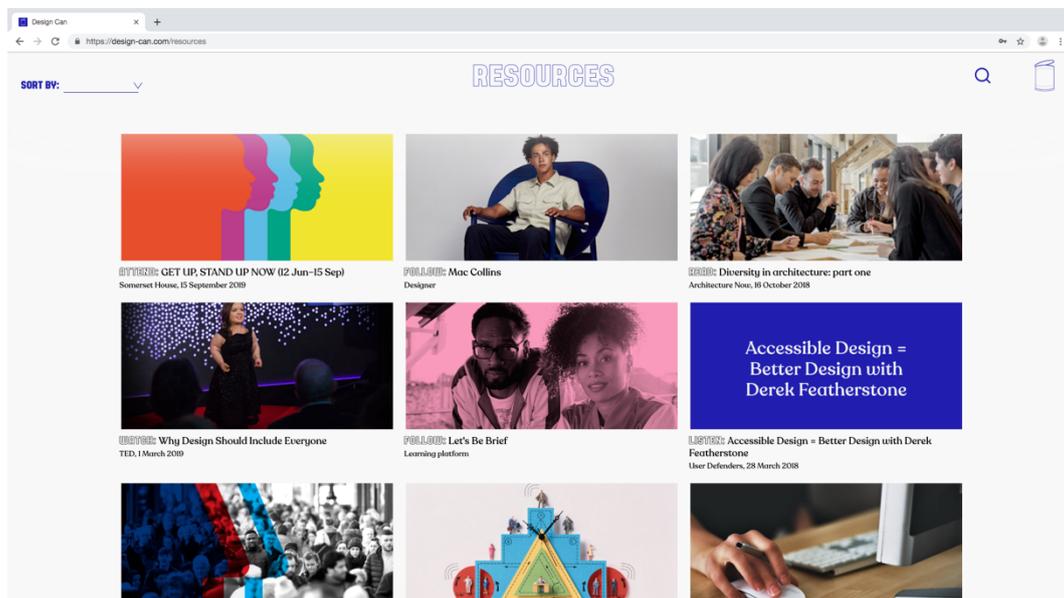
The creative industries are booming. Since 2017, creative employment has grown twice as fast as the wider UK economy and now accounts for a phenomenal two million jobs, according to figures released this month by the Department of Culture Media and Sport. But the figures also show this shift in the power of creativity hasn't been equally shared.

It's a fact that the make-up of the UK's design industry doesn't reflect society at large – it's 78% male; only 13% of employees are from BAME backgrounds; and women still struggle to make it to the top, filling just 17% of senior design roles, according to a 2018 report from the Design Council. There are few comparable

statistics for people with disabilities, none that are recent or particular to the design industry, and that is an imminent concern.

“When I once asked a magazine editor why he didn't commission more diverse design writers, including women, he said: but where are they? Design Can will hopefully help us rebut the 'but'.”

– Priya Khanchandani, editor of ICON

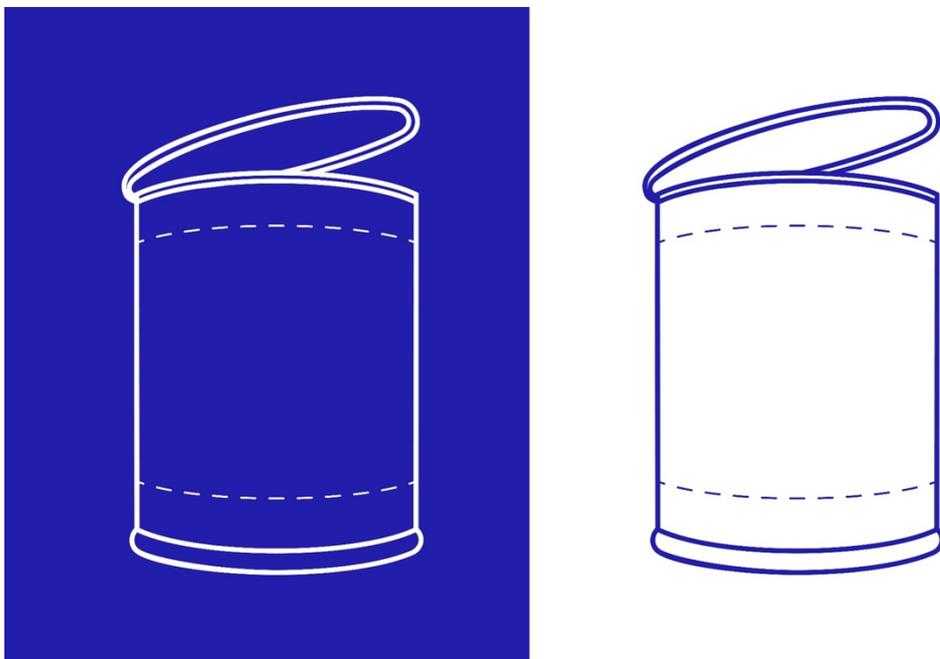


On the Design Can website you can read, watch, listen, follow or find events to attend

Design Can is a new online tool to help the design industry change for the better. Through five simple sections – read, watch, listen, follow, attend – an inclusive view of the booming design industry will champion emerging and established designers; highlight important articles, videos and podcasts; and spotlight not-to-miss events. For those looking to organise a panel, an exhibition or just experience an inclusive view of the design world, this will be a source for reports, portfolios and knowledge to empower change.

Designed and built by the up-and-coming collective Not Flat 3 and developed into a campaign and online tool by communications agency Zetteler, Design Can will be a two-way conversation. Content will be crowdsourced through an open submit section, welcoming articles, events, links and reports, as well as creatives and organisations to follow. The Design Can team will also select content, and champion all the resources across social media.

For the Design Can identity, Not Flat 3 wanted to balance the urgency of this conversation with playful optimism. The 'can' motif acts as a symbol of the hidden potential waiting to burst into the forefront of the industry. The choices behind the typeface communicate their global outlook - with Recoleta from Mexican foundry Latinotype, and Yoshida Sans which was developed by London's Typeunion inspired by the Tokyo subway system.



The can suggests the potential waiting to burst into the forefront of the design industry

From the design curious to industry leaders, Design Can aims to open up the conversation. With a manifesto demanding a better, inclusive industry, and You Can, a set of practical actions for allies and mentors, the demand for change is rooted in a radical vision while offering practical steps for individuals.

Design Can was conceived in 2018, emerging out of growing frustrations with the lack of progress on these issues. Following these conversations, a separate group evolved and conceived Design Can as a campaign. This group includes Priya Khanchandani (editor of ICON), Yinka Ilori (artist and designer), Ella Ritchie (co-founder of Intoart), Ansel Neckles and Steph McLaren-Neckles (founders of Let's Be Brief) and Dr Jane Norris (associate professor of creative and digital culture,

Richmond University). They will meet to continue evolving the campaign in response to industry feedback.

“People with learning disabilities are rarely thought of as cultural producers in the design industry, which is a missed opportunity for everyone. Design Can reflects our values as a design studio and collective of people with learning disabilities, we champion an equal platform for emerging designers.”

– Ella Ritchie, director and co-founder of Intoart

A healthy design industry should reflect society. An inclusive industry will create more diverse creative approaches and consequently more relevant ideas, products and solutions. But if the industry doesn’t include us all, it can’t deliver for us all.

“Design Can might not solve the problem, but it’s a refusal to accept the status quo. We want to stop the standard excuses and expand the narrow view of what design can be. This is another step towards an inclusive industry.”

– Sabine Zetteler, founder and director of Zetteler



The Design Can identity by Not Flat 3



Notes to editors

For further information, please contact Emma Collins at hello@design-can.com.

Design Can

Design Can is a campaign and tool to make the design industry inclusive. We're calling on designers, curators, editors, writers, filmmakers, event organisers – anyone and everyone who influences the design industry – to be allies. Find out what you can do. Join the campaign.

#DesignCan

design-can.com

[instagram.com/_designcan_](https://www.instagram.com/_designcan_)

twitter.com/_designcan_

[facebook.com/designcan2019](https://www.facebook.com/designcan2019)

Priya Khanchandani

Priya Khanchandani is the editor of design and architecture magazine ICON. She has published dozens of articles for publications ranging from the The Sunday Times to Bloomsbury's Encyclopedia of Design and spoken at numerous festivals, conferences and on BBC Radio 4. Trained at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Art, she went on to work at the Victoria and Albert Museum on the acquisition of new objects and then as Head of Arts Programmes for India at the British Council. Priya curated the India Pavilion, State of Indigo, at London Design Biennale 2018 and is co-curating an exhibition about pattern for Lisbon Architecture Triennale 2019. In 2014, she and a group of colleagues came together to form the influential pro-diversity collective Museum Detox.

Yinka Ilori

Yinka Ilori is a London based designer. He specialises in up-cycling vintage furniture, inspired by the traditional Nigerian parables and African fabrics that surrounded him as a child. Humorous, provocative and fun, each piece of furniture he creates tells a story. Bringing Nigerian verbal traditions into playful conversation with contemporary design, Yinka Ilori's work touches on themes as various as hope, sexuality and social class. Conscious that the parables are as relevant today as ever, Ilori wishes to share his work with people throughout the world.

Ella Ritchie

Ella Ritchie is director and co-founder of Intoart, an art and design studio in London working inclusively with people with learning disabilities. Over the last 19 years Ritchie has championed the inclusion of people with learning disabilities as visible, equal, established artists and designers. She has initiated ambitious visual arts programmes and curated exhibitions in internationally renowned galleries and museums including V&A museum, Whitechapel Gallery, London Design Festival. In 2018, Intoart launched its first fashion collection in collaboration with John Smedley knitwear.

Dr Jane Norris

Dr Jane Norris has a cross disciplinary background in Speculative Material Design, Critical Writing and Digital Media. Before joining Richmond University, she structured and led a BA Hons in 3D Design Craft for ten years, teaching material engagement and design theory. She recently undertook post-doctoral research in the Critical Writing department at the RCA. She is currently researching for a book: Material Relations - de-colonialising our relationship with matter, to design in the Anthropocene, which investigates the impact of posthuman approaches to listening to materials, digital theories of crumpled time, and de-colonial making.

Ansel Neckles and Steph McLaren-Neckles

Stephanie McLaren-Neckles and Ansel Neckles co-founded Let's Be Brief in 2013, a learning platform for curious and creative minds. Let's Be Brief is a learning platform that champions the work of creatives doing things differently. Often focusing on socially impactful work or entrepreneurs from BAME backgrounds, it equips creatives with the tools to take their ideas to the next level, democratising the design industry and helping people to start their own studios on their own terms.

Not Flat 3

Not Flat 3 is a multi-disciplinary design collective founded in 2017 by Jonathan Quaade, Nada Debeauumont, Wei Prior and Anna Sheriakova, four up-and-coming designers with the ambition to do things differently.

Zetteler

Zetteler is a London-based communications agency providing strategic consultancy, film production and PR services to inspiring international brands, enterprises and individuals. Driven by the desire to build a better, equal world, Zetteler finds, shapes and shares stories that matter.

Sources

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2019

Creative industries continued to power the growth of the UK's workforce last year, adding new posts at twice the rate of the rest of the economy, according to official data. bit.ly/2KcMtEN

Design Council, 2018

The Design Economy 2018 states that the UK design industry is 78% male and only 12% from BAME communities (pp 53–61). bit.ly/2xoTBWx

GOV.UK, 2016

A 2016 report found a number of statistics relating to gender, income and BAME people. bit.ly/2Klja1N

The Creative Economy and Creative Industries employ a lower proportion of women than the wider UK economy.

In 2015:

- 37.2% of jobs in the Creative Industries were filled by women.
- 36.1% of jobs in the Creative Economy were filled by women.
- 47.1% of jobs in the UK as a whole were filled by women.

In 2015, 91.8% of jobs in the Creative Economy were done by people in more advantaged socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 1-4), compared to 66% of jobs in the wider UK economy.

11.4% of jobs were filled by BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) workers. bit.ly/2Klja1N

Skillset, 2010

Altogether, 6% of the workforce reported themselves as disabled as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). bit.ly/33jWOoR