



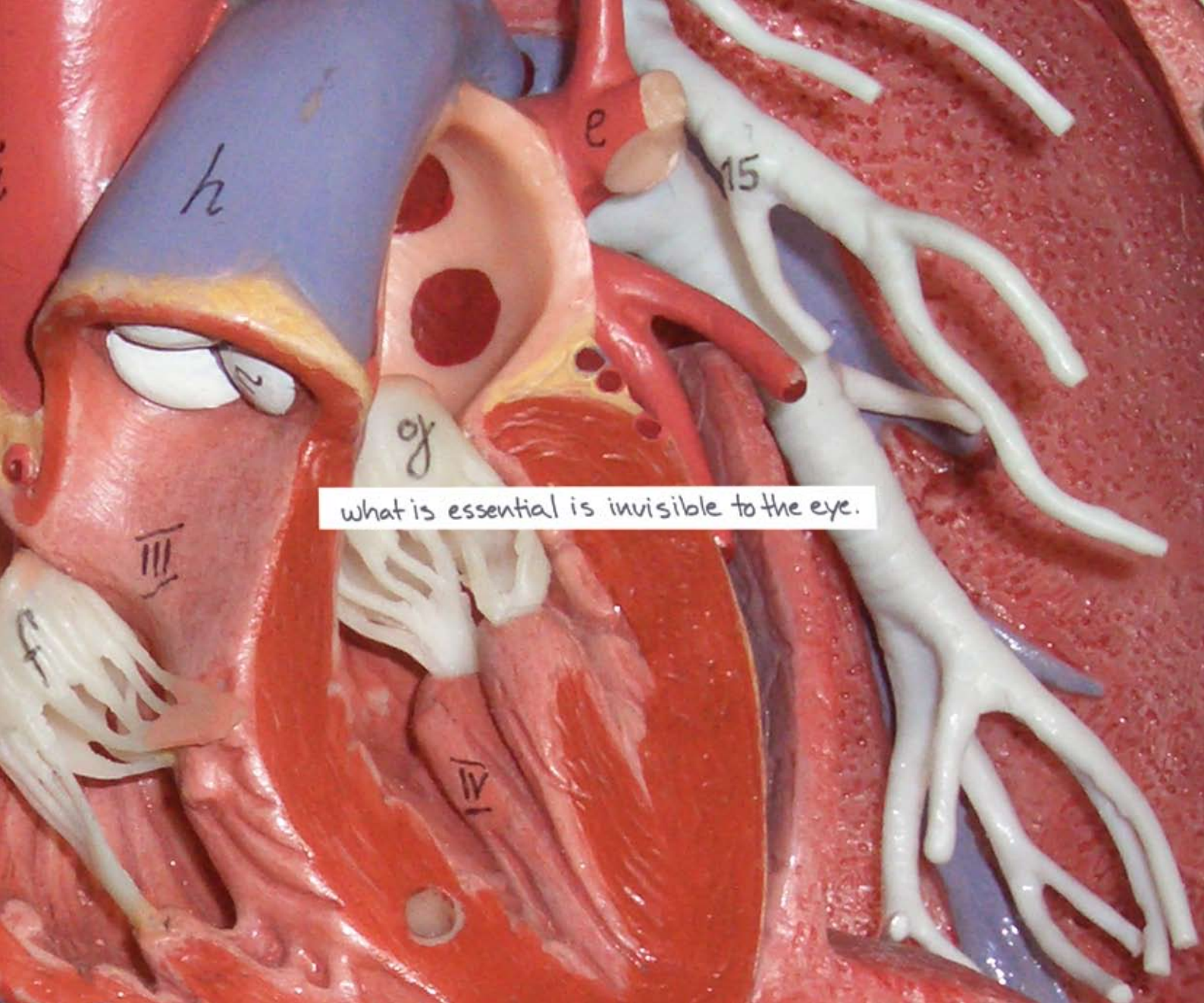
# Kärlek and Industrial Design - I'm choosing my life

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Diploma Work by Anna Persson,  
spring 2006

It's only with the heart that one can see rightly;





what is essential is invisible to the eye.

“We are filling up the world with technology and devices, but we lost sight of an important question: what is this stuff for? What value does it add to our lives?... We need to design from the edge, to learn from the world and stop designing for, but instead with. If we can design our way into trouble we can design our way out”.

(John Thackara, In the bubble 2005)

# Kärlek and Industrial Design

## - I'm choosing my life

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Diploma Work from Lund University, Institute of Technology, Department of Design Sciences, Division Industrial Design by Anna Persson Spring 2006 Supervisor Professor Bodil Jönsson and Senior Lecturer Per Lilljeqvist Examiner Professor Claus-Christian Eckhardt ISRN LUT-DVIDE/EX--06/5053--SE



LUND UNIVERSITY

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School: Lund University, Industrial Design Programme/LTH  
Examiner: Professor Claus-Christian Eckhardt  
Supervisors: Professor Bodil Jönsson and Senior Lecturer Per Liljeqvist

# Acknowledgements

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## Professor Bodil Jönsson

I did not do my Diploma Work in cooperation with a company, but, I did do it in close cooperation with my wonderful and esteemed mentor, Professor Bodil Jönsson. To me; a true friend and a godsent sanctuary for lonely thoughts and reflections, to the rest of Sweden; best selling author, established scientist (professor of rehabilitation engineering at Lund University, PhD in Physics, Doctor of Education (honora causa)) and commonly considered to be one of the great thinkers of our time.

Our somewhat unanticipated relation springs from providence fusing with the potential inherent to a design school that is part of and subsequently situated in the heart of a University environment – in the spring of 2004 I heard Bodil lecture and decided to look her up, the rest is history.

To learn more about Bodil Jönsson and her prominent work (on topics such as ‘personal time management’ and ‘designing for the human sector’) please go to: [www.certec.lth.se/bodil/](http://www.certec.lth.se/bodil/)

## Professor Claus-Christian Eckhardt

Today earning a Diploma from Lund University Industrial Design Programme

is worth *gold*. The reputation of this school has been dramatically turned around in the last five years and as a student it's been undeniably gratifying to feel its credibility, steadily increasing with each passing semester. For this positive change there is but one man to thank: Professor Claus-Christian Eckhardt.

As a teacher Claus serves as the ultimate motivational force, with any idea I know, that if I can convince him, I'll convince anyone. He also deserves some major credit for believing in a student enough to let her pursue a Diploma Work of this nature – it took some guts, I'll be forever in your debt.

Thanks also to:

Supervisor Per Liljeqvist, 3D assistants Annika Norén and Bo Berggren, Friends and Family for general Diploma Work support – feel the love!



# Abstract

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*By questioning the foundational driving force of Industrial Design (that being traditional market thinking – supply versus demand) and replacing it with Kärlek, one accesses a whole new world of possibilities, exceedingly full of potential...*

K&ID is about all the intangible stuff in life that gets rationalized away because it can't be directly translated into numbers, but, when left without, makes our lives seem empty and leave our souls yearning for deeper meaning. In such a state, no product, no matter how well designed, can make you feel any better...

The easy way out would have been to join a yoga class, but instead I decided to give myself these 20 weeks to try to come to terms with what this stuff is to me. Because, as I am about to head out in the world earning my living by working as an industrial designer (which sometimes means being the creator of products which sole purpose is to fool people into thinking they'll be happier once they own one), it feels crucial to have my priorities straight. I guess I could say that the point of this project was to give myself a sense of how far I'm willing to prostitute myself and my values for economical gain. Or put in another way – to what extent am I willing to let numbers rule my life? – In the end the choice is mine.

# Synopsis and Aftermath

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*Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.*

/ Bertrand Russell

Essentially Kärlek and Industrial Design – I'm choosing my life, is a diploma work that deals with my moral and existential issues connected to my decision to become an industrial designer. It started out as a proactive measure to deal with stuff that would catch up with me sooner or later anyway, but progressively it turned into being in charge of my destiny – hence the subtitle I'm choosing my life.

My aim was that anybody remotely receptive should know who I am and what I stand for (which consequently implies that I had to find out those things). When I set out on January 16th this year I had a title – Kärlek and Industrial Design – two supervisors, an examiner, a finish date 20 weeks later and an invincible incentive to take on this project. As far as method and demarcations goes, that's it, the rest was made up along the way.

The tangible outcome of K&ID is a concept of Philosophical Design (describing thoughts and ideas through objects instead of writing), three rapid-prototyped symbols (concept of Philosophical Design applied) and this report (describing the journey, themes and struggles in paragraph form). It's important to keep in mind that the report is as much an account of my process as of my findings, less about where and more about how (if how is not in your favourite cup of tea skip along and go straight to chapter 4).

Report and symbols aside the main result of K&ID is a forever altered Anna – major watershed caused by insightful introspection. Though self-centred by all means K&ID still brings up issues that more or less apply to everyone. In the end, we all strive to find love, happiness and meaning in life, I just happened to make it my top priority.

### Aftermath

I was predestined to get hung-over, there's no such thing as four months on a natural high sans payback. The natural high experience climaxed on May 30th 2006, the day of my final presentation. Featuring Pia Rosengren on harp, an auditorium filled to the brim – everyone there to listen to me(!) and a “faxed hug” from Mr Ingvar Kamprad, it was by far the grandest time of my life, but what a ruthless discharge! In the immediate aftermath all I felt was an enormous void of nothingness; I'm not quite sure when life stopped being that.

In the meantime three months have passed. And as the dust finally begins to settle, it feels as though the thoughts and ideas that I had during K&ID have had the time to gradually cement into fresh, new knowledge. As a re-

sult, I've almost forgotten about the nerve it took to go through with it. The thought of doing a Diploma Work on Kärlek and Industrial Design has gone from being a crazy unthinkable idea to something perfectly normal. In that way, waiting three months to finalize the report that was almost finished back then was not a great idea. I feel as if I'm light-years away from where I was then and it's been a real challenge to fight back the urge to rewrite everything. Which of course I shouldn't, but it's a bit amusing, considering that you'll read, in my concluding remarks, that I'm looking forward to two years from now when I will be able look back and see how I could have done things differently – guess I didn't have to wait that long.

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# Definitions

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## Kärlek

Swedish for love yet with a different connotation, hence the word remains in Swedish.

## And

The importance of and. It's not Kärlek for Industrial Design, Kärlek or Industrial Design, Kärlek through Industrial Design. It is Kärlek and Industrial Design and that little word determines the relation between the two apparitions. And means that one is not dependent of the other more importantly it states that they are not mutually exclusive. And suggests that together they are – the sum of them is – something more. (And: conjunction showing connection between two things /Webster's Student Dictionary)

## Industrial Design

Artefacts designed to be industrially produced.

(Industrial: adj. referring to manufacturing work. Design: 1.n. plan; drawing of something before it is constructed 2. v. to plan something /Webster's Student Dictionary)

## Kärlek and Industrial Design

What the words mean/become when put together is the intangible force that I have chosen to explore through this thesis...

## Additional Swedish Vocabulary

*Övrigt*: Swedish for miscellaneous/what remains/what doesn't fit into a given set of categories.

*Känsloträng*: Emotional string, a fictional string on which emotions/emotional experiences resonates.

*Sammanhangsföreställningar*: term referring to conceived relations or perception of relation (sammanhang = context/relation, föreställning = perception)

# Introduction

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20 weeks of “free” time don’t come along very often, that’s how I reasoned. I had been longing to deal with all the stuff that I think about for a very long time, with the Diploma Work I saw my opportunity and accordingly seized it.

There was however one undeniable drawback. By virtue of being my Diploma Work, these 20 weeks ultimately implied that there should be something to show for them – an ironic paradox since I knew from the start that the core result of this project would never actually be seen (at best possibly sensed). With Kärlek and Industrial Design I’ve gone through a fundamental mind shift, a parting of ways that shall subsequently affect every choice that I make for the rest of my life.

Arguably that’s not half bad for a Diploma Work on any given subject – but even so it is beside the point. In the end, for quite obvious reasons, results want to be seen. And so voila, here’s my attempt at sharing this change, this attitude, this intangible force that is K&ID. However, as you go ahead and flip through these pages, please do me the favour of remembering that what you see and read is only the physical result of something far greater, something way beyond the reach of words or form.



## Background: Plato's Doctrine of Ideas

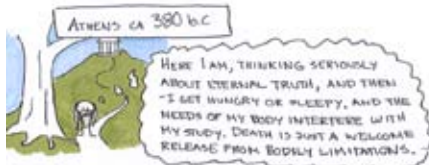
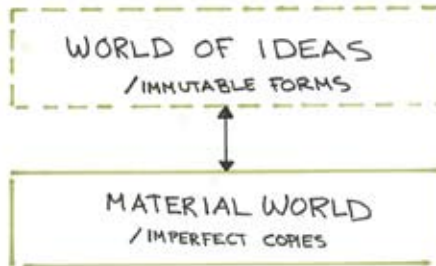
Philosophy is second nature to me, I've studied some but it really isn't a typical study subject, either you seek it or you don't. Nonetheless, to understand where K&ID comes from it may be useful to have a brief understanding of Plato and his "Doctrine of Ideas".

*"As Plato saw it, hope of survival comes naturally to the philosopher, whose whole life is one of preparation for death. What happens when we die, after all, is that the human soul separates from the human body, and it is concern for the soul rather than the body that characterizes a philosophical life. In fact, Plato argued that since knowledge of the most important matters in life is clearest to the soul alone, its customary attachment to a mortal body often serves only as a distraction from what counts. Here I am, thinking seriously about eternal truth, and then . . . I get hungry or sleepy, and the needs of the body interfere with my study. So, Plato concluded, the philosopher may properly look forward to death as a release from bodily limitations. (Phaedo 67d)"*

*"For Plato, human beings live in a world of visible and intelligible things. The visible world is what surrounds us: what we see, what we hear, what we experience; this visible world is a world of change and uncertainty. The intelligible world is made up of the unchanging products of human reason: anything arising from reason alone, such as abstract definitions or mathematics, makes up this intelligible world, which is the world of reality. The intelligible world contains the eternal "Forms" (in Greek, idea ) of things; the visible world is*

BACKGROUND: (TO) MY WAY OF THINKING

## PLATO'S DOCTRINE OF IDEAS



*the imperfect and changing manifestation in this world of these unchanging forms. For example, the “Form” or “Idea” of a horse is intelligible, abstract, and applies to all horses; this Form never changes, even though horses vary wildly among themselves—the Form of a horse would never change even if every horse in the world were to vanish. An individual horse is a physical, changing object that can easily cease to be a horse (if, for instance, it’s dropped out of a fifty story building); the Form of a horse, or “horseness,” never changes. As a physical object, a horse only makes sense in that it can be referred to the “Form” or “Idea” of horseness.*

*Plato imagines these two worlds, the sensible world and the intelligible world, as existing on a line that can be divided in the middle: the lower part of the line consists of the visible world and the upper part of the line makes up the intelligible world. Each half of the line relates to a certain type of knowledge: of the visible world, we can only have opinion (in Greek: doxa); of the intelligible world we achieve “knowledge” (in Greek, epistemē).”*

### **Background: Why I got into Industrial Design in the first place**

I have an inherent interest for the way things look, feel and appear. I want things in my personal environs to be aesthetically pleasing and operationally functional for the simple reason not to be disturbed by them. Raymond Loewy believed, and accordingly named his autobiography “Never leave well enough alone”. Not to be taken completely literally, but looking back, the reason I got into Industrial Design was basically that I felt and still feel, not enough people seem to share his opinion, our lives are full of mediocre “well

enough” solutions and I want to do something about it.

On, what can seem to be, a superficial level, I’m as if by nature drawn to detail – but au contraire, studying a product is like entering the mind of its designer and to look at the attention given to detail in i.e. Macintosh’s design language can be close to a religious experience. In my ideal world nothing would be designed with less care, because essentially, what you see when you study the execution of any given Mac product is a result of something that has been designed with love, (that is from the software it contains to the case it is kept in). It’s proof of beautiful craftsmanship and you have to love what you’re doing in order to design in that way.

However, for the most part it’s an undeniable fact in the socio-economic systems of western society that we seem to be more passionate about “beating index” than designing with love. And thus we find ourselves surrounded with a lot of soulless, shitty products and I find myself doing my diploma work on Kärlek and Industrial Design. It is quite plain to see that Industrial Design, for me, embodies the potential to penetrate and combine several diverse areas of interest.

### Background: Day 9643

October 25th, 2005 – the nine-thousand-six-hundred-and-forty-third day of my life (Ulf Lundell’s book “Sömnen” made me count) – what a mind opening experience! Naturally I couldn’t fall asleep that night, I lay awake contemplating what to do with the coming 9643 days – and as if struck by lightning it hit me – Kärlek and Industrial Design!

It started out as a question of priority – at all costs Kärlek has to come





first in my life, Industrial Design can't come along all big headed thinking it's going to dictate its outcome just because I chose to do it for a living. Since then of course, K&ID has evolved come to represent a whole lot more than a simple question of priority.

### Problem definition

What finally convinced me to go with K&ID was the insight that the objects in my portfolio are exchangeable. It's not that I'm unhappy with the outcome of the projects that I have done so far, on the contrary I'm very pleased with the way that they've helped me evolve into the kind of designer that I have in fact become. Still I can't help but feel that the actual objects themselves are exchangeable.

People have a natural tendency to look at end-products without necessarily considering the almighty process leading up to the result – when viewed in that bleak manner the objects portrayed in my portfolio could belong to anyone.

It came down to a matter of defining skills. As much as I would want to, I could never claim to be a super sketcher, an ALIAS Goddess nor an ace when it comes to production technology. Apart from lacking in those areas, what makes the situation even trickier is that my strengths are much, much harder to pin down. Let's see, I seem to see things differently, I'm multidisciplinary, I can't work strapped to a desk at certain hours but I can let great ideas come by taking a stroll in the park – now, would you like to hire me?

Not to worry of course, I know I'm a good designer and I know what makes me good is my process – the delectable “in-between the lines stuff” that

AIM...

ANYONE WHO'S REMOTELY  
"RECEPTABLE" SHOULD KNOW  
WHO I AM AND WHAT I  
STAND FOR ...





doesn't show at first glance but is evident once you scratch the surface. To make these strengths tangible and thus leave less up to chance I decided that my Diploma Work should be all about manifesting my "hard to pin down, yet highly valuable qualities". On a more profound level; to explore stuff in life that tends to get rationalized away because it can't be directly translated into numbers.

### Aim

Primary aim: To give some time and serious introspective thought to life. To deal with elements that tends to get rationalized away in the cold endless strive for increased efficiency on the treadmill.

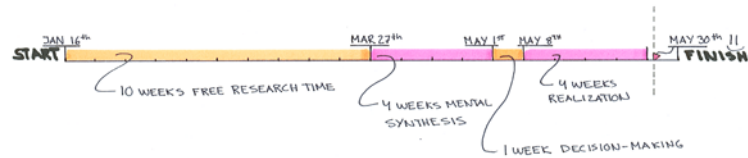
Secondary aim: To present this project in a manner that enables anyone remotely receptive to get a feel for who I am and what I stand for. Essentially equipping me with a torch that burns bridges to the kind of jobs I know I don't want, but possibly, in a pinch, would be inclined to take – thus saving both myself and possible employers from a state of mutual unhappiness.

### Demarcations: The Significance of deadlines

The only demarcation this project ever really had was the 20 weeks, that being the planned duration of a Diploma Work at our school. The 20 weeks provided me with a framework as well as a clear target. A target very much needed in a project of this nature, which essentially had no other boundaries; therefore its significance can't be stressed enough. It can be compared to a choir director telling you to aim your note; aim gives guidance and keeps you from wandering off track.

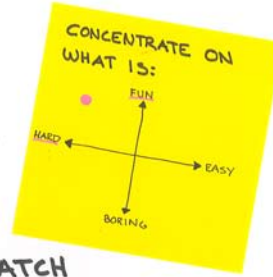
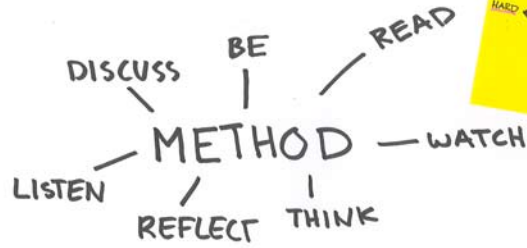
## DEMARICATIONS:

20 WEEKS → THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEADLINES...



... makes you stay on track

HOW TO DO IT...



At times during this process when I've known nothing else I've still been able to hold on to the fact that come May 30th I'm presenting – that's Basta! Not always a very comforting thought but it saw me through.

## Method

Before commencing, I consciously set precise start and finish dates for the project (January 16th and May 26th, respectively), feeling the need to exploit the only two certainties it had. In that sense the 20 weeks also became very much part of my method. As stated earlier it was the set time limitation that provided me with the necessary structure, framework and aim to take on this project.

As far as actual procedure is concerned, I told myself that I was “allowed” to read whatever I wanted for three hours a day and, up to mid-March I did not have to think about the end result. That gave me about ten weeks of unconditional, free research time to read, think, talk and live. Apart from taking regular notes, I kept a weekly journal throughout the project to document my process. And above all, I had regular meetings with my super supervisors who showed unwavering support and constantly challenged me to evolve my thoughts.

## Three levels of presentation

Something which has been an underlying theme for this whole project is the constant oscillation between different planes/levels of thought. In a second I'll associate from a physical object to an intangible meta-physical idea and vice versa, or from a personal view to a strong political standpoint.

# 3 LEVELS OF PRESENTATION...

- MINGLE PARTY SURVIVAL → ENOUGH INFORMATION TO SURVIVE  
A MINGLE CONVERSATION ABOUT MY THESIS

- CLIFFS NOTES → (REPORT) THE MAIN  
THEMES OF THE PROJECT EXPLAINED IN  
PARAGRAPH FORM

- EXPERIENCE → CAN'T BE GIVEN OR DICTATED ONLY ENCOURAGED



... PICK YOUR POISON →

It's often hard enough for me to keep track of my speedy synapses and thus it would be wrong for me to expect someone else to completely understand. However, in the presentation of K&ID, I am very dependent on the receptiveness of my audience; I need to bring you along as far as I possibly can – make my thoughts accessible. To effectively come across I have chosen to view my diploma work as having three different levels of presentation: 1) Mingle Conversation (seminar presentation): a brief description of Kärlek and Industrial Design in wide terms – enough information to last you through the Mingle Party that follows the presentation – nothing asked of the receiver, all up to me. 2) Cliffs Notes/ Regurgitation (report): what we have here, the main themes of the project explained and expressed in paragraph form. For the people who show interest but want shortcuts – still asks relatively little of the receiver, he/she only needs to read. 3) Experience (up to you): Can't be given/dictated only encouraged. Miss Sant, my 10th grade English teacher, used to say that every one can learn to regurgitate but that there's a difference between regurgitating someone else's reasoning and to really understand it. Put in another way – you can teach a kid how to walk but not where to go. On this level I really don't have any say, it's all meta-physical and if you're there, you're there.

The levels are in no way static entities, but rather a versatile framework to build the presentation around. The way I've picture it in my mind, each step demands more and more of the receiver and accordingly so less of me. As you move up you go from being a mere recipient to becoming an active partaker. The biggest challenge lies in coming across at the mingle conversation level – reaching as wide an audience as possible (meaning simultane-

" I DON'T DESIGN BY SKETCHING, I DESIGN BY THINKING AND SKETCH BY WRITING - AND THAT IS OK! "



ously accommodating various levels of interest), without compromising the essence and integrity of the project.

### My process

I did flirt with the idea of doing an all out theoretical thesis, but I am a designer and not a writer, hence I decided against it. For as much as I appreciate the art of writing I could never do it justice.

At the end of the day my thoughts are represented by objects (no matter how exchangeable they can seem to be). And there is something very striking/powerful about communicating that way as objects speaks directly to people, bypassing language.

All the same, I've come to understand and value that writing is very much part of my design process. After years of excruciating panic-attacks and anxiety caused by "insecurity in the sketching department", it feels wonderful to proclaim: *I don't design by sketching, I design by thinking and sketch by writing.*

As a design student, coming to terms with that fact was easier said than done. To confidently recognize that there are alternative ways to communicate ideas and that there is much more to industrial design than the sketching and 3D-modelling that meets the eye. In the end, by whatever means you choose do it, defining the exact shape and colour of something is generally just the last step of a very long process.

### Three Symbols, Four Thoughts of Encouragement

The physical outcome of K&ID is three rapid-prototyped objects. They are



symbols of what I perceive K&ID to be all about and examples of what I've come to call Philosophical Design. (Read more about it in chapter 4)

The four thoughts of encouragement are ideas that have come about (or resurfaced) while working on K&ID. Carrying far less weight than the symbols these thoughts are simply dispersed throughout the report to promote and evoke reflection.

### Supervision

It's invaluable to have someone with super vision when it's hard to see – which is often the case if you are in the middle of something, i.e. forest and diploma work alike. In K&ID I was fortunate enough to be flanked by:

Supervisor number one: Bodil Jönsson, professor of rehabilitation engineering at Certec, Lund University, PhD in Physics, Doctor of Education (honora causa).

Supervisor number two: Per Liljeqvist, designer and senior lecturer at Lund University, Industrial Design Programme.

And examiner: Claus-Christian Eckhardt, Professor of Industrial Design, designer and director of studies at Lund University, Industrial Design Programme.

K&ID would not have made it without the support and encouragement of these wonderful people, but there are also some unofficial supporters worth acknowledging...

# 1. K&ID makes people talk

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About two months into the project I had a major epiphany: Kärlek and Industrial Design makes people talk! It hit me over the head like a ton of bricks a Sunday afternoon after having spent the previous night talking to a newfound friend, Daniel, a 5th year medical student about to write his thesis on the experience of dying – no wonder we hit it off.

What's funny is that this had not become clear to me yet, "this" being the apparent effect that K&ID was having on me in relation to my surroundings. Up to that point I had been astounded enough by how K&ID seemed to affect my supervisors, I always left our meetings thinking "K&ID really has a life of its own in their heads", but I figured it was innate to the project. The fact that I also found myself having existential discussions with just about anyone with the ability to talk had not quite hit home yet. It took meeting Daniel to really understand that this was the whole point of K&ID as a project. Essentially K&ID works like a key to genuine exchange, a tool for identifying like-minded people.

## INSIGHT

"KQID MAKES PEOPLE TALK!"



## 1.1 My conversation buddies

A brief introduction of some of the people that informally have been very much part of the development of K&ID and thus played a key-roll in its and my happy ending.

### **Pulkan**

My dear Pulk has an unconquerable sense for knowing what I need to hear, a project of K&ID's nature requires support from friends like that. Pulkan can handle dejection without having the (for others common) need to solve it like "it" were a crossword-puzzle. No matter what the starting point may be she'll make me feel at ease and if she can't, that's when I know I'm in real trouble...

### **Hanna**

Old ever evolving friendships don't grow on trees... Only Hanna and I could come up with "Kärlek & Industrial Design – mad, nun or possibly lesbian (only probable outcomes really)..." when in need for some perspective on an agonizing Diploma Work issue.

### **Johan and Daniel**

Johan (design manager) and Daniel (5th year medical student) don't know each other but for me they represent two unanticipated perspectives that I gained through our valuable K&ID-triggered discussions during this process. K&ID has essentially given me an "ignition tool" for excellent conversation and in my opinion that's one of the greatest outcomes of this project.

### Annika and Tina

I wonder how many hours we've spent in and outside school reflecting on what we learnt, who we are and what we want to be. The unrestricted support from Tina and Annika – and our little mini-network of complementing strengths – was a prerequisite for me to dare to head out on this K&ID adventure.

### The Rest of ID01

Best in test! Group dynamics is an interesting phenomenon. If I enrolled a year earlier or a year later – would I have turned out the same? Through out the years, ID01 has generally served as a great source of inspiration and positive motivational force for me. It's hard to assess the effect of being part of such an ambitious, unafraid and humbly confident group of people, but it's quite evident that it has helped to shape me

### My family

K&ID spill over effect – I don't know that I have ever talked about life to this extent with any of my family members before. It's a testimony to the unplanned effect that conduct in one area of life can have on another...



## 2. Sources of Inspiration

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Part of my method was stating that I was allowed to read whatever I wanted for at least three hours a day. The material did not have to be Industrial Design related at all, the only requirement being that it made me think. I'm super-intrigued by the way these books and other media, have influenced the outcome of this project, fully aware that other books, movies, shows etc. would have taken me in other directions.

Some of the sources were actively chosen, especially in the beginning, but for the most part I've let sources find me. It got to the point where my inspirational synapses were so active that I could draw out something useful from just about anything that happened to come my way (we are talking old Dallas episodes here) – the serendipity of it all is wonderfully charming.

I've chosen to present a selection of these sources (as opposed to only listing them in the back) to amplify their significance and diversity. Also to communicate a sense of how design for me is anything but an isolated discipline.

### JFK's moon speech

January 16th, reading JFK's moon speech from Rice University was my official Diploma Work kick-off. (It had been handed out the previous semester

when we were doing a project with NASA and was lying on top of my “read when you get the chance pile”).

*“We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too”.*

Let’s just say it effectively laid down the law; I choose to do this project, not because it’s easy but because it’s hard...

### Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: *The Little Prince*

Depending on where you were schooled, chances are that you were “force fed” this rather perceptive, existentialistic children’s book, over and over again, in every language class you ever had growing up – so I fully understand if you feel the instinctive urge to physically harm the “little prince” and all of his friends, at the bare mention of the title!

Nonetheless, I defend this, to some highly questionable, reference by arguing; just like an overplayed song, a book’s intrinsic qualities fade when overexposed. Duly noted, if it had not been for the super quote that I desperately wanted to use in setting the tone (*“It’s only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”*), I probably would have crossed this French classic of my reference list just to avoid evoking any



negative association to my project. It's easy to underestimate how shaped we are by cultural curriculum.

### Adrian Forty: *Objects of Desire, Design and Society from 1750*

In his book, Adrian Forty combines two of my main interests, history and design, in a most brilliant way. Because of the nature of the book, it requires that the reader has an understanding of economics, politics and history as well as of how they relate to each other. Not an easy read but definitely worth it.

*“The History of Design is also the history of societies; any account of change must rest upon an understanding of how design affects, and is affected by, the process of modern economics.”*

This book had also been lying around waiting to be read for a long time. It was on the reading list from our design history class that we had years ago. I thoroughly enjoyed finally getting a chance to indulge in it.

### SVT 24

A most unexpected source of inspiration, nonetheless a reliable companion throughout the project, it has effectively helped to broaden my perspective – a window to the world so to speak. For example, I've spent several afternoons with unedited airings from the World Economic Forum in Davos where super-interesting world personas have talked freely on topics such as “What keeps you up at night”.

## Torsten Hägerstrand: Sammanhangsföreställningar

I was talking to Bodil about the numerous insights that I had gotten through Objects of Desire when she introduced me to Torsten Hägerstrand and his concept of sammanhangsföreställningar. Sammanhangsföreställningar (which translates to something like ‘perceived relations’ perception of relations), basically refers to how we perceive things to be connected with one another. A concept that has provided me with useful terminology and which has inspired me tremendously in my own thinking. Sammanhangsföreställningar is here to stay on my part.

For those of you who can read Swedish here’s a taste of Torsten:

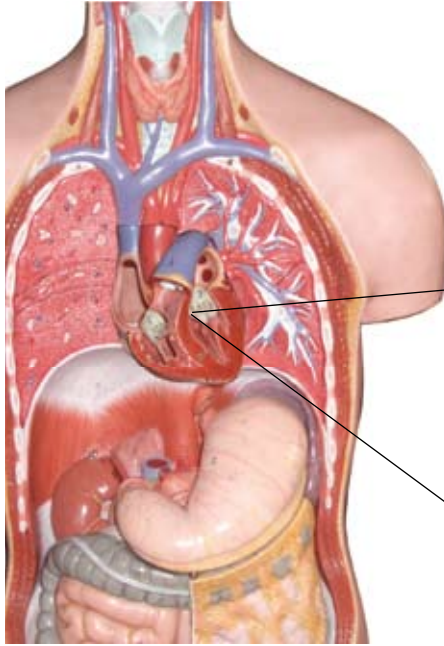
*“Nu gäller det att utöver de traditionella uppgifterna hjälpa till med att hålla den levande naturen ren och uthålligt produktiv. Vi kan inte längre betrakta naturen som en robust och outtömlig tillgång... Som saken nu står handlar ekologi om naturens hushållning uttryckt i reala termer, medan ekonomi handlar om de transaktioner människor emellan, vanligtvis uttryckta i pengartermer. Inget ont om pengar, de är föga skrymmande och duger till lite av varje. Dock för de oss bakom ljuset vad gäller de påtagliga effekter våra transaktioner leder till...”*

## Arthur Hiller’s Love Story

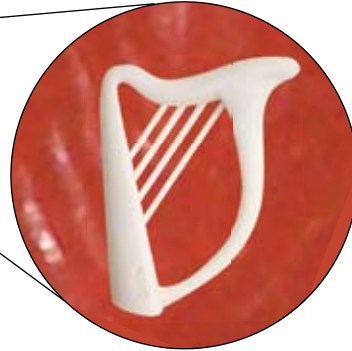
One of the great benefits of doing ones Diploma Work on a theme like K&ID is that there are no rules, one gets to do whatever one wants. So when I woke up on a Tuesday morning in early March with the sole objective to do nothing but watch Love Story that’s exactly what I did (perfectly justifiable research seeing as love is 50 % of my diploma work theme). And what do you know;

"WHAT IS IT THAT GIVES SOME THINGS THE  
POWER TO OVERRIDE ALL PRECONCEPTIONS AND  
MAKE PROFOUND IMPRINTS IN ONES SOUL?"





KÄNSLOSTRÄNGSHARPAN  
/THE EMOTIONAL STRING HARP



it was watching Love Story that gave me the idea of the Emotional String Harp.

I enjoyed the movie so much that I watched it twice, once straight through and once listening to the audio commentary with director Arthur Hiller. As Arthur talked about the making of this movie that took the world by storm 30 years ago, it made me realize how very similar the role he has as a director is to the roll that I want to have as designer – it's all about having a vision and great people to work with...

*“I just think how fortunate I was to have such a wonderful cast and script and it's, I, it reminded me also how important team work is. How, how the importance of film making is the coming together of all these creative juices and pouring into the pot and out comes this new little entity a movie. And it just amazes me how, particularly during the filming part of it, how, how everyone works together, caring for each other, works together towards this one, one goal – I was just thinking, I wish our governments could work that way, boy – but it's amazing you know. People often say to me, they say “Oh you like to direct, you should like to be the boss”. No I love it because it's a group activity because it's a coming together, all these people all as I say working, working together. Yes by the nature of the way a film is made, the, the director has to be the boss because the director is the only one in touch with every aspect of the film. It doesn't say the director is smarter than the writer, or smarter than the producer. Just by the nature of film, you can only have one vision. If everybody's working towards a different vision, then you're not, you're gonna get a jumbled movie – and you need one vision and by nature, as I say, the way film is made it falls upon the director to steer everything towards that vision.”*

### Dag Hammarskjöld: Vägmärken (Markings)

I've had a notion that we belong together, Dag and I. Not that I had read anything by him before, Vägmärken just happened to be one of the books that I picked out the day I went shopping for *The Little Prince*. The excerpt that I have decided to share is not representative for the book as a whole (since it's less ambiguous than most of the other texts). However his view on responsibility that comes across in this piece is one that I have taken to heart and I have found myself coming back to it numerous times already. (See appendix for original Hammarskjöld excerpts in Swedish)

*"He was impossible. It wasn't that he didn't attend to his work: on the contrary, he took endless pains over the tasks he was given. But his manner of behaviour brought him into conflict with everybody and, in the end, began to have an adverse effect on everything he had to do with.*

*When the crisis came and the whole truth had to come out, he laid the blame on us: in his conduct there was nothing, absolutely nothing to reproach. His self-esteem was so strongly bound up, apparently, with the idea of his innocence, that one felt a brute as one demonstrated, step by step, the contradictions in his defence and, bit by bit, stripped him naked before his own eyes. But justice to others demanded it.*

*When the last rag of a lie had been taken from him and we felt there was nothing more to be said, out it came with stifled sobs.*

*"But why did you never help me, why didn't you tell me what to do? You knew that I always felt you were against me. And fear and insecurity drove me further and further along the course you now condemn me for having taken. It's*

*been so hard – everything. One day I remember, I was so happy: one of you said something I had produced was quite good –“*

*So, in the end, we were, in fact, to blame. We had not voiced our criticisms, but we had allowed them to stop us from giving him a single word of acknowledgement, and in this way had barred every road to improvement. For it is always the stronger one who is to blame. We lack life's patience. Instinctively, we try to eliminate a person from our sphere of responsibility as soon as the outcome of this particular experiment by Life appears, in our eyes, to be a failure. But Life pursues her experiments far beyond the limitations of our judgement. This is also the reason why, at times, it seems so much more difficult to live than to die.”*

My notion was right; I identify myself in Dag's writing, his struggles and his quest to come to terms with life and what ultimately follows – death. I can't claim to understand everything, but I have a feeling that I will. Vägmarken will hang around and when needed I'll pick it up and find what I'm looking for.

Worth noting: I come back to the question of responsibility later on (see chapter 3.2) as it was one of the major motivational forces behind K&ID. For is it not so, that one has to take/claim responsibility for one's actions? – Can I wholeheartedly sit around and design more pretty products for the relatively small amount of people in our over-consuming society without thinking about the consequences it is having on the rest of the world? More relevant still – can't my skills come to better use?

### Sigrid Kahle: Jag valde mitt liv

Sigrid has shown me; all of a sudden it's become clear to me why women are so underrepresented in history. Even if there have been women in all times who've felt the need to express themselves (which of course there has been – Sigrid is a living example) they have been trapped or blocked by the role of the caregiver. Women never had and still don't have the luxury of having family as a secondary passion next to their true calling.

However, the fact that Sigrid was born female is just a side issue (even if it is most likely to blame for her not being a more well-known persona than she is) – her book “Jag valde mitt liv” (I chose my life) is packed with insight and existential reflection. Again you'll have to excuse the Swedish.

*“Jag gav upp. Jag var helt enkelt världens sämsta ryttare, förstod jag. När Joe Yachchi kom tillbaka på hösten stod vår avresa från Bagdad för dörren och Joe ville överta Antar och hela min ridutrustning. Efter sin första ritt kom han hem till oss alldeles utschasad. ”Har du verkligen ridit denna häst? Det är den svåraste häst jag någonsin ridit! Den var ju inte ens inriden!” Det blev en läxa för livet. Våldigt ofta när jag misslyckas med en svår uppgift säger jag mig: ”Det är inte jag som är en dålig ryttare, det är hästen som är svår!”*

During hard times of K&ID it was always a comfort to think “I'm not an inadequate horseman, it's the horse that is difficult”...

It was while retelling this story to Bodil that she had the sudden epiphany “Kärlek and Industrial Design – I'm choosing my life” and just like that I had the perfect subtitle and an effective “three second” one-liner.





## 3. K&ID in the World of Ideas

Themes, reflections and struggles – thoughts that have been socialising in my mind during these twenty weeks, both old and new, some amplified by what I've happened to come across in my various sources – all accumulating to explore the meaning of K&ID, thus also foreshadowing the end result.

In the World of Ideas, all thoughts more or less overlap and somehow relate to each other, some on higher and some on lower level. If given half a chance I would gladly write a book on any given subject in this chapter, so please view the following paragraphs as the brief touch points that they are.

### 3.1. K&ID themes

From the very start, three main themes have been setting the tone for this project and kept moving it forward. Together they encapsulate the essence of K&ID, and provide a sense of what it is all about.

#### **Constant Oscillation between different levels of thought**

A constant oscillation between different planes/levels of thought is basically a way for me to describe myself and my thinking. In a second I'll associate

from a physical object to an intangible meta-physical idea and vice versa, or from a personal view to a strong political standpoint.

The oscillation between different levels of thought can be illustrated by considering four entities (Humanity, Technology, Man and Artefact) and how they relate one another. It's a big picture (Humanity and Technology) of forces moving the world forward versus a small picture (Man and Artefact) of how it affects the life of the individual and vice versa.

### Sammanhangsföreställningar

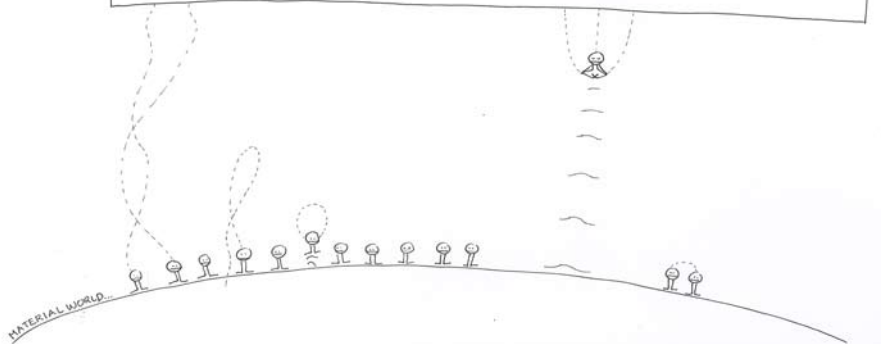
Introduced earlier in my reference to its creator Torsten Hägerstrand, Sammanhangsföreställningar is a term referring to perceptions of relation, or perceived relation.

The way Torsten saw it, we have very much taken to heart the first part of philosopher Cartesius advice “to divide difficulties into manageable fractions” but forgotten all about the follow-up which deals with going from the simple to the complex. Sammanhangsföreställningar as a concept has opened up a whole new world to me; it's super useful when contemplating how society, technology and nature and I interlink.

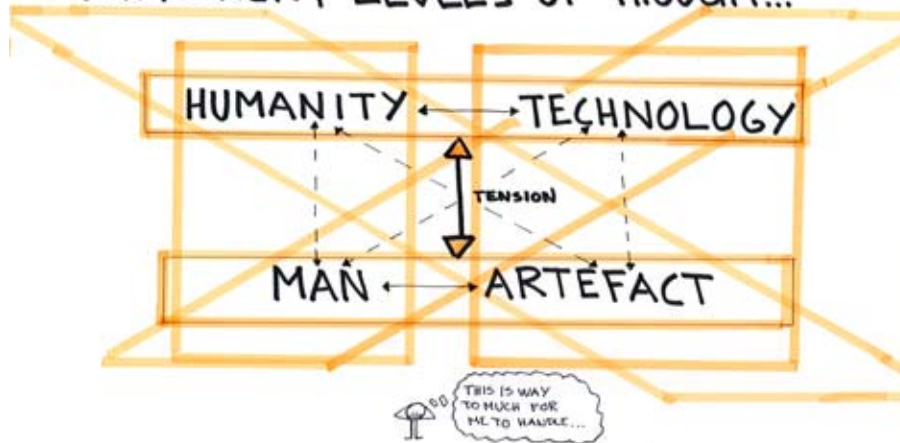
### Self-examination

Who am I? What do I want to do with my life and how do I want to live it? Questions, questions, questions... Unanswered questions were ultimately the main driving force behind K&ID.

# KQID IN "THE WORLD OF IDEAS"



CONSTANT OSCILLATION BETWEEN  
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THOUGHT...



CONCEPT OF:

## SAMMANHANGSFÖRESTÄLLNINGAR...

(PERCEPTIONS OF RELATION)

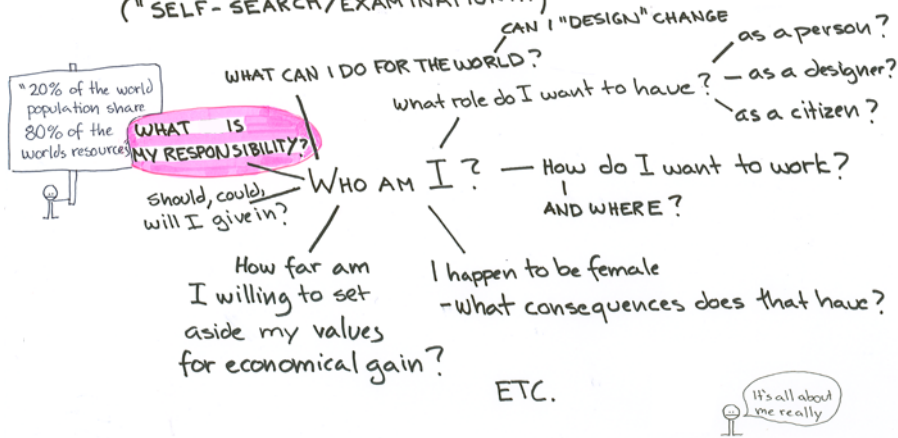


Vi har troget hållit fast vid första delen av det råd som filosofen Cartesius gav, nämligen "att dela upp varje svårighet i så många delar som möjligt" men sedan försummat fortsättningen som innebär att gå från det enkla till det komplexa.

→ Trying to understand how society, technology and nature interlink...

# SJÄLV RANNSAKAN

("SELF-SEARCH/EXAMINATION...")



### 3.2. K&ID reflections and insights

During this project I spent my days socializing with myself and my thoughts. I basically took the time to reflect upon various aspects of life and how I want to live it, all of this in the name of K&ID. The gathered data (so to speak) is consequentially as diverse and open-ended as the point of departure. The paragraphs in this section are literally taken straight from my notebook and to some extent that is the only thing that they hold in common. So when reading through this chapter, I can see how one could easily choose to judge it as an incoherent mishmash of mumble jumble, lacking any apparent relevance to a Diploma Work in Industrial Design. But the truth of the matter is that in the end (as you'll see in the next chapter), these thoughts have led to some very tangible results so just bear with me.

#### **Needs vs. Desires**

It is technically incorrect to talk about created needs because; all created needs are essentially desires. Human needs are only made up by what's actually needed to survive (food, water, shelter) and everything else makes up desires – products/services/experiences that we successfully make ourselves believe that we need and can't live without. Understanding this habitually understated distinction between needs and desires is key if one wants to start thinking about how we can change our current world order.

#### **Responsibility**

80% of the world population share 20% of the world's resources. Bottom line, we are part of and thus supporting a system where people in large parts





of the world are living under dire circumstances so that a few others can enjoy comfortable and wasteful living standards. Being aware of this fact I find it hard to conform, I don't want to go out making my living by producing yet another product for us to consume – there must be better things for me to do, finding out what that might be is my responsibility. There is of course a cynical part of me who thinks it's just a matter of time before I give in, but I know for sure if that day comes I'll be one very unhappy camper.

It's plain to see that the guilt experienced by aware individuals in the developed world today, is creating nothing but more unhappy people. Just going to the local food store is a source of endless bad conscience – you're basically forced to leave with a bunch of items that have been shipped half across the world; after all one has to eat.

I can't help pondering around what hidden agendas and twisted logic that must be ruling this world and us, the people in it. When viewed objectively, whose interests can possibly be gained by a system in which local food markets in Malmö (Sweden) makes more profit from selling onions imported from New Zealand than those that have been locally grown? It's not about pointing fingers and not about onions par ce, I really don't know what forces have come together to land onions from New Zealand in my local supermarket, all I know is that it seems INSANE!

People like to say, it's not that simple, you can't change these things – it would mean turning the whole world order upside down etc. I say hell, it is that simple, but there is a lack of general will and objective overview in the places that matter.

Bottom line, responsibility for big “snowball systems”, the likes of global

markets, can't be put on the shoulders of common individuals, it requires higher level management, regulations etc. The common individual should not have to think about whether the consumer goods (food, clothes, electronics) he/she chooses to buy are ecologically sound, sustainable or fair trade, it should be presumable.

### Administering (förvaltande)

*"Vi ska kunna förutse och hindra I stället för att passivt upptäcka och bota"*

*"Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step: only he who keeps his eyes fixed on the far horizon will find his right road"*

Who has an overview and whatever happened to administering? In our hyper efficiency seeking day and age it sometimes seems to be a lost art.

It's no news really but seemingly easy to forget, like a relationship requires constant management to stay alive, any organisation or movement, big or small needs to be constantly looked after to be rightfully maintained and get room to evolve or else it will stagnate and loose content and meaning. Administration/management is the oil that keeps any motor running smoothly. Higher level administration (rising above national and economical interests) is imperative to a sustainable development. On this point the world is in evident need for a shift in priorities and an increased awareness.

It's in the air...

...A tangible feeling that I'm not alone thinking about this stuff. It's not by chance that I found myself in the spring of 2006 feeling the need to do my diploma work in this manner. Once made aware, there is a tangible sensation of some sort of metamorphosed "John Lennonism" in the air.

### My USP (Unique Selling Point)

What is Anna Persson's USP? What makes her different from the 500 other Swedish design graduate students this year? One aim with this project was to come up with some answers to some very tough questions.

Here's what I'm thinking, maybe what makes me unique, apart from me being the only me there is, is the fact that I have been exposed to a respectable amount of subjects/disciplines on a fairly thorough level. Or at least enough to be able to entertain myself by finding similarities between them, seeing patterns in how subjects, which are new to me, are structured and then drawing parallels to old knowledge. This little hobby keeps the knowledge already gained and my respect for the yet unknown constantly growing – and I have no intention for it to ever stop doing so.

### What falls in-between the cracks

It's all related, different subjects/disciplines is just a way to structure something endlessly big (absolute knowledge) that would be impossible for the human mind to deal with in any other way. But if you fail to see that all these subjects interlink/relate you lose invaluable insight, knowledge that is simply lost between the cracks of the structure. It's like thinking you'll learn history

by memorising isolated dates (structure). Failing to see what different factors lead up to a certain event and failing to see the ripples/effects that event caused in the future (relation). Subject classification could be compared to the outline of an essay and the stuff in-between to the actual content...

On that note, industrial design is my major but I don't in anyway view it as an isolated discipline (which of course in its nature it's not – depending on where in the industrial design spectra a designer has his/her strengths she/he has to work with other disciplines in order to do a good job – there is just no way that you can know all you need to know to do it all by yourself. In many ways I think it's exactly this phenomenon that totally appeals to me). Nor do I view industrial design as something that can only be applied to industrially manufactured artefacts. To me industrial design is essentially a process; a process for finding, defining and finally solving problems in any given area with a creative thinking. I'm convinced that this process is not being used to its full potential and I'm intrigued by the idea of applying it to society-related issues such as public transportation, taxation systems and healthcare, especially in developing countries since you can start from scratch, bypassing many of the mistakes we're still stuck dealing with over here.

### Misconception of Mutual Exclusivity

Conflicting interests are often mistakenly presumed to be mutually exclusive, you'll settle for either or when in fact you could probably have both if you only bothered going down to the root of the problem.

It often comes down to an exercise in questioning unwritten laws of perception existing in the social consciousness. We accept the way things are

"THIS IS HOW I WANT TO WORK"



... 9-5 is old already...

by tradition – because they always have been like that and because not enough people choose to see them differently.

### Social consciousness

Social consciousness refers to ideas that are held in common by people in society, e.g. the idea of that work by definition is more or less a boring activity that one has to perform Monday through Friday preferably between the hours of 9-5 in order to make a living. I say “Let’s get over it already!” although to many others it’s a commonly accepted way of life and few people feel the need to question it.

Social consciousness is beyond doubt a fascinating concept, in *Objects of Desire*, Adrian Forty sheds quite a bit of light on it and how it helps to shape our lives (probably to a greater extent than many ever stop to think about). In the following passage he also effectively sets it in relation to design. Enjoy!

*“No design works unless it embodies ideas that are held in common by the people for whom the object is intended. To represent design purely as the creative acts of individuals, as for example Nikolaus Pevsner did in *Pioneers of Modern Design*, temporarily enhances the importance of the designers, but ultimately only degrades design by severing it from its part in the workings of society. This book has set out to show the ways in which design turns ideas about the world and social relations into the form of physical objects. Only by exploring this process and by shifting our attention away from the person of the designer can we properly comprehend what design is, and appreciate how important it has been in representing to us the ideas and beliefs through*





*which we assimilate and adjust to the material facts of everyday life.”*

It's when grasping the concept of social consciousness that the idea of working as a designer becomes truly interesting...

### So I happen to be female

Kirche, Kinder, Küche, has anything really changed? My intention is not to step up on the barricades for the sake of women. I'm not a confrontational feminist in that way. But I am a humanist and there by, I believe that everyone should have equal rights to lead a content life whatever it may consist of. The things that I touch upon in this section are tendencies, I'm not saying all women are like this and all men like that, but there are unconscious behaviours of which some are more common to women and some to men nevertheless not exclusive to either gender. These behaviours/tendencies are signs of how we are shaped by the society which we live in. Example; as late as in 1921, that is only 85 years ago, married women in Sweden were not considered legally competent (myndiga). We can't fool ourselves into thinking that we are free from the past – Nissen hänger med (Danish expression "the little brownie tags along...") we are branded by our history.

Viewed in this perspective it is a fact, women never had and still don't have the luxury of having a family as a secondary passion next to their true calling. To successful women who have made it work, I salute you but you are still exceptions to the rule. And most probably you have hired help at home where as your male colleagues have housewives. So basically until I start seeing some female presidents/statesmen in the world that on top of it all

are mothers I'll continue to view it as a problem. It's all about choosing your life. As a woman in today's society, starting a family consequently cuts down on ones personal freedom to a greater extent than it does for a man. Even if society is more tolerant for working women today than it has been in the past, it's on a very superficial level. Salaries are still far from equal (which in itself is just plain stupidity) and there's nobody/no system picking up the slack on the homefront.

Things/behaviour/tendencies (like equal salaries) that we are aware of, which potentially could be legislated are one thing. But for my own sake, on a personal level, I'm more concerned with the unconscious behaviour that undoubtedly creates imbalance at home. Example: I have to be very preoccupied with something in order to pass a coffee stained kitchen counter without automatically wiping it off – the skill of multitasking, seeing to the whole picture – in general a female trait. I used to live with this guy; he did not automatically wipe off dirty kitchen counters simply because, for him it didn't register as something needing immediate attention – he had the skill to concentrate solely on what he was doing not getting distracted by things surrounding him – in general a male trait.

Before we came to that insight this caused major friction in our everyday life – I was constantly nagging him to do stuff but often ending up doing it myself under unvarying muttering and discontent. I loathe the position it put me in. It's not that I minded doing the actual work so much as it felt unfair that I should do it all just because I happened to see that it needed to be done. Finally in one of our numerous vacuum cleaning showdowns he said

that he'd rather pay someone to do all this stuff than fighting about it whereby I, who couldn't agree more, said fine, pay me and there you have it, it was a done deal. In this way we put economical value on stuff that essentially is time consuming labour like any other. There are solutions; the trick is to be aware of the problem.

In the end you have to be egocentric to wholeheartedly devote yourself to something – I know, for I speak from experience. When I'm in the middle of a project I'm basically unreachable – my otherwise quite well managed apartment looks like a case for the healthcare department – I'm simply good for nothing else (hard to picture taking care of a family in that life), nonetheless I'm extremely grateful for having the ability to give something my full attention. Many of my (female) friends tell me how fascinated they are by their partner's ability to do that. They are fascinated because it is something which they feel they can never do themselves, in their minds there are always so many other things craving their attention. In this way I think it's fair to say that when it comes to devoting oneself fully to one cause, the otherwise admired and popular “female trait” of multi-tasking is your worst enemy.

### Lost in translation

My friends and I happily told the “two tomatoes crossed the street, one got hit by a car and the other said – C'mon catch up!” joke when we were kids. We laughed our little heads off at the image of a walking Ketchup bottle, never realizing that the main punch of the punch line had been completely lost (i.e. zero wordplay, in Swedish “catch up” only refers to the condiment put on hotdogs).

At one point I had to choose which language to present this project in. I went with English (being the Latin of our time), to make it accessible to as wide an audience as possible. However it was never as obvious a choice as one might think it would be. Because from the very beginning, K&ID was very much a “Swedish Anna project”, which consequently meant that I thought about it in Swedish. As a result, when writing about it in English, I didn’t even get past the title before I ran into trouble – Kärlek just doesn’t translate well.

What it all comes down to is that unless what you have to say is flat and totally one-dimensional (leaving little room for interpretation) there is always a loss in translation, e.g. even Dag Hammarskjöld’s acute language in Väg-märken seems to fade in its intensity with the English translation. It’s not so much about finding the exact translation of a word; the point is that a language is so much more than the words.

Language contains mentality and is charged with social reference. The question then ultimately becomes; how much does language influence identity? Does personality get lost in translation too? I’ve spent a considerable amount of time contemplating this question due to my own bi-linguality (a result of growing up abroad). I’ve realized as much, that the English speaking Anna and the Swedish speaking Anna are two entirely different characters, sometimes with quite varying attitudes. And few people in my life know both of them, so to some extent I’ll forever be lost in translation.

### The Importance of Recovery (Återhämtning)

Often when I’ve found myself in Diploma Work distress it’s a result of me taking this whole thing too seriously, constantly raising the bar only to bring

it crashing back down again with eyes that are sometimes way to critical for their own good.

No doubt, doing ones Diploma Work on a theme like K&ID takes you for a ride. Bodil thus encouraged me to figure out what some of my “recoverers” (“återhämtare”) are – in other words, if footing is lost, what are some of the things that can get me back on track? Here are my top 3 ways to recreate me:

1) **Let go to release:** when physically or mentally stuck it's a natural reaction to pull harder on what's keeping you. What I had to learn to accept with K&ID was that ideas are released when they are released; and force is not part of the equation. It's been a very liberating experience to implement this insight, to actually say that “OK, today does not seem to be the day for me to do this so I'll go and have lunch with Hanna instead” and what do you know on the way back home whatever it was you were not seeing before is there clear as crystal in your mind.

2) **Relax to re-approach:** like letting go to release, relax to re-approach is about not getting stuck in mental stalemates. It's tricky not to get tense and blinded by stress, sometimes it's key to realize that you can actually win time by taking a break. By relaxing you give yourself the chance to re-approach difficulties with fresh eyes.

3) **Wit, humor and the ability to step aside:** I think these three concepts are to thank for me still being sane. When life gets too heavy they are the only way out...



### 3.3. K&ID struggles

The idea of having something to present at the end of these 20 weeks has been my main motivation as well as the source of many of my K&ID struggles, it has forced me to bring ideas out of my head but as a result it has also exposed me and my thoughts to the cruel judge of the outside world. To some extent the struggles represent the more personal aspects of this project and generally portray more of the process than the outcome.

#### **Believing vs. Doubting: The mother of all K&ID struggles**

K&ID's potential and magnitude is directly dependent on me – I have to believe its significance and value what these 20 weeks have done to me, because if I don't this Diploma Work is doomed.

However believing is sometimes easier said than done, in many ways it would have been more convenient for me, come May 30th, to present a well-designed product of some sort, accompanied with a bunch of semi-bogus facts speaking to its pre-eminence. That way we could all have gone home with a light heart and think to ourselves “well that Anna Persson turned out to be quite the industrial designer didn't she” – end of story, which brings us to the next K&ID struggle...

#### **...My Alternative Universe Diploma Work**

*“Maybe it would have been better to go with a chainsaw, at least it would have been more kosher– no questions raised, on the other hand neither any answered...”*





# BELIEVING VS. DOUBTING



The Chainsaw Dilemma – not so much a struggle as a personal query that I've had to battle no-end ever since I made the decision to go with K&ID. Even if K&ID always prevails, a part of me believes that in an alternative universe another me will step up to the plate next week and present a “chainsaw made with love”...

### All the Why, What, How's

K&ID has been about constant questioning – sometimes that in itself can be a struggle, so many open-ended questions and so few solid answers. But here is proof of what questioning can lead to; the idea of the alternative shape sorter is born.

*“Apparently the new “green wave” has started. Maybe one should reconsider moving out to the woods after all – if I did, would I ever come back? What is it in fact that I want – how dependent am I on other people?*

*Maybe part of the problem is that I haven't bought the system... I have a fair understanding of how it all works but I have not agreed to live under its tyranny. Somehow I came to mentally drift on top of it as opposed to becoming a blind partaker.*

*Nothing is unattainable – but I wonder, what is it that I'm trying so hard to attain? What is the purpose of an underwater-scooter? – To ease underwater exploration. What is the purpose of my Diploma Work? – Yeah, what's the purpose of K&ID? – It's just something I got to do. – But why? – I'm sorry, I'm afraid your project and you can't be typecast at this moment...*

" LIFE IS FULL OF ESSENTIALS THAT DON'T  
SEEM TO BELONG IN A GIVEN SPACE "





Ö FOR ÖVRIGT  
-AN ALTERNATIVE  
SHAPE SORTER

*In a world addicted to shape sorting, is it a problem that my “block” doesn’t belong in a specific “cubby”? When you assort, be it papers, toys or feelings, you always end up with a pile of “Övrigt” (Swedish for miscellaneous or other), essentially various keepers that don’t have an obvious sense of belonging and thus ends up stored in the file/box/cupboard labeled ÖVRIGT... It’s funny that these unassortables seem to make up stuff that we really have a need – for if not it would be easier to simply get rid of them than to desperately sort them under a collective label, right? Possibly what we tend to label “övrigt” is in fact most essential...”*

### Personal vs. Private

There’s a significant difference between being personal and being private. And in a project of this nature – where I’m practically wearing my heart on my sleeve – it’s been important at times to take a step back in order to clarify where that distinction lies for me. Put in another way – what parts of this process do I want to share and what should remain undisclosed? It’s a fine line, I have to be fairly open in order to get my ideas across and make them convincing. On the other hand nothing is more uncomfortable than receiving too much information about someone especially when uncalled for.

### Feeling alone/Acceptance

As is clear, I’ve put myself on the line with K&ID – I have no flashy product to hide behind, there’s just me. And even if I’ve made the decision to hike this trail alone, on not so good days the sense of self-imposed alienation is overwhelming. Being confronted with the rest of the world often makes me

# "PERSONAL VS. PRIVATE"



wish that I was just one of the regular shapes in the shape sorter; in the end all we strive for is to belong somewhere...

### Presenting in front of my family

As stated earlier, I don't know that I ever talked about life to this extent with any of my family members before. But during the first three quarters of the project, this rather wonderful side effect of K&ID was overshadowed by the reoccurring nightmares of them attending my final presentation only to watch me fail...

School and family, two quite diverse conceptions of Anna colliding at a crucial moment in her life – very plausible grounds for potential disaster... However, these nightmares have not been all bad. The fear of possibly having to re-experience the humiliation of my “4th grade piano recital gone bad”, has motivated me to make a “killer presentation”. It's acted as a motivational force to eliminate all grounds for disaster that I can control and in the end it has made me very conscious of how I'm going to present this thing.

Worth noting; of course these fears have been all in my head, in reality I'm overwhelmed by the amount of interest and understanding that my loving family has shown me.

### Working alone

It's been very useful to manage and execute a twenty week project all by myself. If I didn't before, I definitely now know what my strengths and weaknesses are.

I not only had to but gladly did the first part of this process by myself (the first

# "FINDING STRUCTURE"





part being the 14 weeks of thinking and structuring). However, when it came down to finalizing and making presentation material I missed having other people around to do deal with some of the pure production work so that I could stick to being project manager. It's a very frustrating situation to be in. Because, even if you want to, you can't allow yourself get too wrapped up in details since it'll make you lose sight of the big picture. Of course, this is an overhanging threat when trying to finalize any project of this magnitude, but even more so when doing it alone.

### Finding Structure

It is always essential to see to what a structure or framework is supposedly holding. And on that note finding the structure for presenting this project is probably one of the trickiest challenges that have ever been put before me. Here I was – fourteen weeks into the project with all this wonderful newly gained insight about life, design and my relation to it all. But whenever I tried to structure it, the essence seemed to escape me, and what was left felt forced and trivial. Let's just say this part of the process put those “recoverers” hard to the test – it was like being asked to carry water in a strainer – Argh! That my previous experience kept telling me “relax, it will all work out, the structure will present itself” was little reinsurance – for until it did, how could I possibly be sure?

### Finding Balance

One could say that K&ID is structured around three main pillars: Kärlek, Industrial Design and Me. Through out the process I had to be cautious not to put too much focus on one or the other as to prevent the project from ending

up lopsided.

Though challenging, exploring the right balance between the three proved to be a fruitful endeavour – it gave me the idea for the Balance Stool.

Life – lilla farmor

*“Du kan inte hindra sorgens fåglar från att flyga över ditt huvud men du kan hindra dem från att bygga bo i ditt hår.”*

- or -

*“You can’t hinder birds of sorrow flying over your head, but you can prevent them from nestling in your hair.”*

If I had been working on a chainsaw when my grandmother passed away earlier this spring chances are that I would not be presenting my diploma work in the near future. Now, even if her death threw me for a loop, K&ID stood its ground, I still felt it was meaningful to proceed – to me that’s the ultimate verification that my choice of Diploma Work has been worth its while...

"LIFE IS A CONSTANT BALANCING ACT..."



... THE TRICK IS TO FIND EQUILIBRIUM

THE BALANCE  
STOOL  
"promoting mental  
as well as physical  
balance in life"



## 4. K&ID in the material world

In other words – the results! At an early stage, I did flirt with the idea of only presenting in writing because I figured that this project was not about products – which it still isn't – but I realized that design is my language and I communicate ideas that way. So instead of just writing about it I decided to take models of thought, like the shape sorter, and make objects out of them thus creating physical messengers of K&ID.

Yet, the physical outcome of K&ID, the three rapid-prototyped symbols, are not traditional design process results, in the sense that they did not come about as a planned result of this process. I.e. the conceptual idea of the shape sorter, for instance, has been around as a tool since week two, helping me mentally to define and justify the nature of this project


### 4.1. Concept of Philosophical Design

The symbols are exemplifications of what I've come to call Philosophical Design. They are designed objects, designed to communicate and to encourage reflection, yet not designed as products with the inherent intention of ending up on a shelf with an accompanying price tag.

What differs Philosophical Design from traditional Product or Conceptual Design is the motivational force behind it. Traditional Industrial Design

# KQID IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

IN OTHER WORDS  
→ RESULTS.

A simple stick figure is positioned at the bottom of a vertical post that supports a rectangular sign. The sign contains the text 'IN OTHER WORDS' on the top line and '→ RESULTS.' on the bottom line.

CONCEPT OF:

# PHILOSOPHICAL DESIGN



→ WITH KARLEK AS DRIVING/MOTIVATIONAL FORCE  
THERE IS NO END TO THE POSSIBILITIES...

THE CONCEPT OF  
PHILOSOPHICAL DESIGN APPLIED

## 3 SYMBOLS FOR KQID

ESSENTIALLY A SET OF 3D-PRINTED THOUGHTS...





whether realized or conceptual is commonly derived from traditional market oriented thinking (supply vs. demand) because that's just the way things work. K&ID as a project has been very much about questioning that undeniable driving force, and as an unforeseen result, I actually managed to eliminate it from my thinking.

Designed without any consideration for things like market segments or target groups, I find myself at the end of this process with three (in every sense of the word) designed objects, ironically all of which have more or less product potential. But the point is they could never have been intentionally designed as products since the underlying ideas behind them would never have come about in that way. The three symbols of K&ID are models of thought visualized by physical objects – that, my friends, is the Concept of Philosophical Design.

## 4.2. Photos and Symbol Explanation

Without further ado, here they are: The Alternative Shape Sorter, The Emotional String Harp and The Balance Stool – the physical crystallisation of this otherwise intangible project.

### The Alternative Shape Sorter – Ö för Övrigt

There's a multitude of essential entities in life that don't seem to fit in any given space. The alternative shape sorter – the Ö for övrigt – is an acknowledgement of all those things as well as a comment to our apparent over-confidence in various forms of shape-sorting.









From an early age we are taught that everything belongs somewhere and to some extent that is a valuable lesson. It's good for helping us to organize and structure our lives along with its content but, when taken too far it's a breeding ground for prejudice and intolerance. The block shaped like the Swedish letter Ö doesn't fit into any of the holes in the lid – tough luck – to me that is an equally important lesson.

On a personal level the alternative shape sorter speaks to my own unwillingness to be typecast – I am the Ö personified and K&ID is an Ö surrounded by a cavalcade of square Diploma Works.

### The Emotionalstring Harp (Känslosträngsharpan)

It was watching and getting so completely wrapped up in Love Story that gave me the idea. I was deeply moved, and kept thinking – what is it that gives some things this amazing power to override all preconceptions, leaving lasting imprints in ones soul? What delicate internal instrument governs our unpredictable receptiveness? (That Tuesday morning back in March, I was in the ultimate Love Story mood yet, I'm fully aware that another day, in another mood I might just as well have written it off as a sentimental bla, bla movie). Conclusion: maybe it's not so much about what it is that affects us, but rather what it is that is affected in us ...

The Emotional String Harp: a hypothetical and symbolic organ, an illustration embracing our intangible inner verve. Its fictional function: to tune in, respectively play on, our inherent, dynamic emotional strings.

Worth noting: The Emotional String Harp has brought up some interesting

discussions on topics such as internal body branding, Pace Maker design and internal jewelry..

### The Balance Stool

Life is a constant balancing act; the trick is finding equilibrium. The three legs of the balance stool can represent any three factors that have the need to be balanced against each other (e.g. work, home and you or society, technology and the environment etc.). The only way of using it is finding the middle point i.e. the balance between the three factors.

The balance stool is interesting in many ways but maybe especially because it links the importance of mental balance to the equal significance of physical balance in life.

Worth noting: Of the three symbols, the Balance Stool is the one with most product potential and yet I can't get over how the idea for it came about in such a non-commercial related way.

### 4.3. Last but not least – A Forever Altered Anna

I can confidently claim that if nothing else my mind has been thoroughly exercised by K&ID. But I dare venture further and state that working with K&ID has profoundly enlightened me. Concept of philosophical design and its symbols aside – the main result of K&ID is a forever altered Anna!

The only way I can attempt an explanation of this change is to use the notion of the secret club. Here it goes – I have this notion of having joined

a secret club. A club that pays no attention to space and time, and it is so unheard of that one can't be quite sure of its existence. I've not received a member card or anything but I feel as though I've reached a higher level consciousness which in turn has given me instant recognition powers for spotting like-minded people, or fellow club members if you will.

It's quite entertaining really, I'll be sitting around watching TV on any given subject and I'll just know she's got it, he's on the way, oh, if we would have lived at the same time we would have been friends etc. And yes, I can see how this probably seems crazy but to me it's fun, fun, fun!



THE MAIN RESULT OF K01D

## A FOREVER ALTERED ANNA



"It's only with the heart that one can see  
rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

*/Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

# Summary

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In the end, my Diploma Work consists of two parallel yet wholly intertwined journeys. There's the external journey that can be seen and consequently judged, namely the visible process of K&ID resulting in something as tangible as the concept of Philosophical Design. More significant to me, however, is the introspective journey that I have gone through. As this report hopefully conveys, K&ID has had a profound impact on my life.

Five years of studies accumulating in a grand finale, in terms of being the last project I'll ever do as student at this wonderful school, K&ID has truly given me a great sense of closure, but gazing ahead, it bestows an even greater sense of commencement.



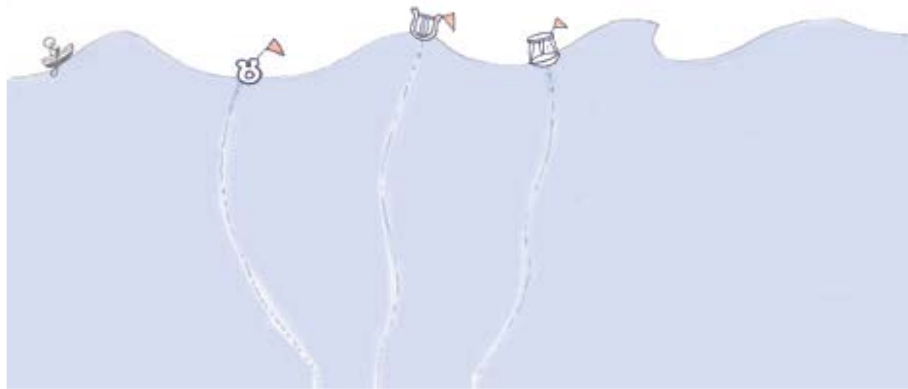
SUMMARY

KOLD has really been two parallel projects

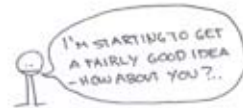
- one introspective
- one "extrospective"...

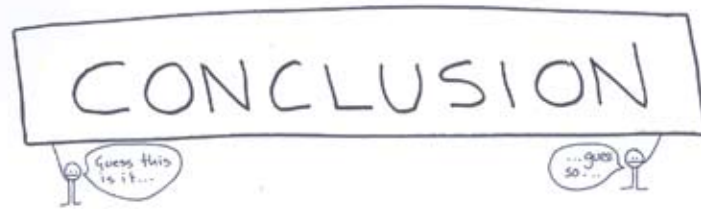


The 3 symbols of Kō ID can be seen  
as bouys anchored in endlessly deep  
waters of thought...



THE AIM WAS THAT ANYONE REMOTELY  
"RECEPTABLE" SHOULD KNOW WHO I AM  
AND WHAT I STAND FOR ...





"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-  
I took the one less travelled by,  
and that has made all the difference."



- Robert Frost



# Concluding remarks

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Kärlek and Industrial Design. Looking back on it all, knowing what I know now but didn't know then, I don't see how I dared. I am actually impressed that I had the guts to go through with it because this project is just crazy. Nothing about it was a safe card, I never knew if it was actually going to work out. At the same time much of the appeal laid in that uncertainty and since it did work out I'm so SUPER happy about it. Somewhere in a parallel universe another Anna will be presenting a great chainsaw project but it won't be me and I have no regrets.

The best thing is that nothing about K&ID or how I've presented it feels forced – it is what it is and thus what it should be. In Hamlet, Polonius tells Laertes *“This above all: to thine own self be true”* – wonderful advice, I love it. I mention it here because it's exactly what I feel that I have done; I have been true to my own self by doing my Diploma Work on K&ID (and true to K&ID in the way I've chosen to present it). In a couple of years I'll look back and see things that I disagree with or would do differently but that's alright. More than alright – I'm looking forward to seeing those things since they'd imply that I've kept moving on forward.

The next best thing is that it's not over; K&ID will go on living with me for-

ever. My relation to just about everyone and everything I know has evolved thanks to this project and that is just very cool – something I could never have anticipated.

My aim from the beginning was that anybody vaguely receptive should know who I am and what I stand for, which also meant that I had to find out those things – I think I nailed it – you would have to be dead not to feel it and I have never known myself better.

It's interesting because I would have thought that I would have put more focus on global issues in my Diploma Work (sustainability, local-glocal etc.), but the project took on a far more fundamental and introspective nature. A level on which sustainable thinking is a given that does not need to be stated nor proclaimed.

I set out to explore to what extent I'm willing to let numbers rule my life but, as the project evolved, a more intriguing hypothesis surfaced; inevitably, does my personal integrity and the potential for economical gain necessarily have to be conflicting interests? – Don't they merely represent another example of two entities wrongly presumed to be mutually exclusive? – I should think so, because I definitely have a strong sense of being on a path to find ways for them to coexist.

It's about promoting a shift in priorities, and exploring change to create a more caring capitalism and a materialistic sustainability for all mankind. First step of course, is making ourselves realize that this is possible, generating social consciousness. Design is a crucial part of that equation – I believe I have my work cut out for me.

Still (in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld): *"The great commitment all too easily obscures the "little" one. But without the humility and warmth which you have to develop in your relations to the few with whom you are personally involved, you will never be able to do anything for the many. Without them, you will live in a world of abstractions, where your solipsism, your greed for power, and your death-wish lack the one opponent which is stronger than they – love (KÄRLEKEN!). Love which is without an object, the outflowing of a power released by self-surrender, but which would remain a sublime sort of superhuman self-assertion, powerless against the negative forces within you, if it were not tamed by the yoke of human intimacy and warmed by its tenderness. It is better for health of the soul to make one man good than "to sacrifice oneself for mankind." For a mature man, these are not alternatives, but two aspects of self-realization, which mutually support each other, both being the outcome of one and the same choice."* Thus, Kärlek and Industrial Design it is.

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# Appendices

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## Appendix 1: Original excerpts from Dag Hammarskjöld's Vägmärken

*"Han var omöjlig. Inte så att han inte skötte sitt arbete: tvärtom lade han ned en oändlig möda på de uppgifter man gav honom. Men hans sätt bringade honom i konflikt med alla och började till slut skada hela verksamheten.*

*När krisen kom och allt måste upp i dagen lastade han oss andra: på honom fanns det ingenting, absolut ingenting att anmärka. Så starkt som hans självaktning var utan skuld, kändes det motbjudande att steg för steg demonstrera motsägelserna i hans försvar, stycke för stycke klä av honom inför hans egna ögon. Men rättvisan mot andra krävde det.*

*När den sista lögtrasan tagits ifrån honom och vi kände att intet mer fanns att säga kom det under krampgråt:*

*Men varför har ni inte hjälpt mig, varför visade ni mig inte till rätta – . Jag har nog känt att ni var emot mig. Och rädslan och osäkerheten har drivit mig längre och längre in i vad ni nu klandrar. Det har varit så tungt, allting. En dag minns jag, var jag så glad: en av er hade sagt att någonting jag kommit med var riktigt bra –*

*Så var felet till slut dock vårt. Vi hade tigit med vår kritik – men låtit den hindra oss att ge honom ett enda erkännande. Och på så sätt spärrat alla vägar till bot.*

*Så felet är alltid den starkares. Vi saknar livets tålmod. Vi söker instinktivt att eliminera en människa ur vår ansvarssfär, så snart utfallet av detta livets experiment i våra ögon ter sig som ett misslyckande. Men livet fullföljer sina experiment långt bortom gränsen för våra värderingar. Därför ter sig också livet ibland svårare än döden.”*

(p. 29-30)

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*”Pröva icke vart varje ditt steg för dig: endast den som ser långt hittar rätt...”*

(p. 13)

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*”Det stora sammanhanget fördunklar så lätt det ” lilla”. Men utan den ödmjukhet och värma som du måste nå i ditt förhållande till dem i vilkas personliga liv du infogats kan du intet göra för de många. Därförutan lever du i den abstraktionernas värld där din solipsism, din makthunger och din destruktionsdrift sakna sin enda övermäktiga motståndare: kärleken. Kärleken som är det objektlösa utflödet av en kraft frigjord i självunderkastelse men som skulle förbli en sublim form för utommänsklig självhävdelse, maktlös mot den negativainom det negativa inom dig, om den icke böjdes in under en mänsklig närhets tuktan och fylldes av dess innerlighet. Det är bättre att av hela sin själ göra en människa gott än att ”offra sig för mänskligheten”. För den mogne är detta icke alternativ utan självförverkliganden inneslutna i samma avgörande, som ömsesidigt stödjande varandra.”*

(p. 106)



In tranquillo mors - in fluctu vita

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Thanks for reading  
/anna