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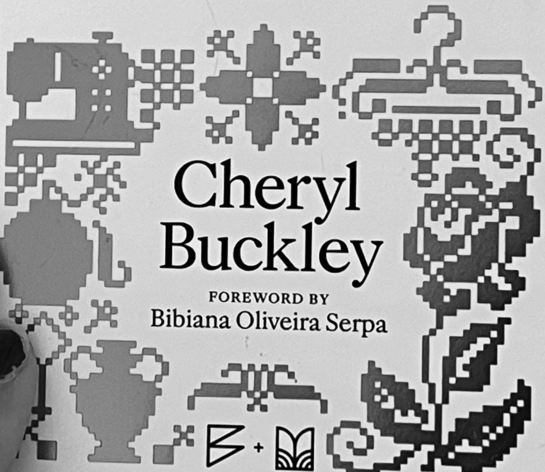
MADE IN PATRIARCHY
CHERYL BUCKLEY & BIBIANA OLIVEIRA SERPA
EXTRA BOLD
ELLEN LUPTON, ET AL.
WITH HER OWN HANDS
NICOLE NEHRIG
THE DESIGN ECONOMY 2018
DESIGN COUNCIL UK


Made in Patriarchy
Cheryl Buckley
FOREWORD BY
Bibiana Oliveira Serpa

Zapatista movement typically wear balaclavas, which were originally designed to protect against the cold mountain air. Within the movement, however, the balaclavas guarantee anonymity and individual safety while unifying the struggle. In Brazil, the Marcha das Margaridas[6] uses straw hats adorned with daisies to represent peasant labor, symbolizing the fight for women's rights. Another well-known feminist symbol is the coat hanger, which, since the 1970s, has been used to represent the dangers of unsafe abortion caused by criminalization.

Everyday objects tied to domestic chores, like *pañuelos*, often get sidelined in design history. They rarely appear in books, which typically favor factory-made, mass-produced objects designed by well-known figures—often white men. These objects are usually aligned with a modernist esthetic that symbolizes progress. As a result, traditional designs made by hand, crafts, or items produced collectively are often overlooked. Ultimately, design history is told through a series of

6 Founded in 2000 and named in honor of Margarida Alves, a union leader who was assassinated, the Marcha das Margaridas is considered the largest women's [illegible] in Latin America. It brings together rural women workers from the [illegible] and forests to fight for socioeconomic and environmental justice, as well as for gender equality in Brazil. The march takes place every four years in Brasília, in August during the first term of the federal government, to mark the anniversary of Margarida Alves's murder. Over 120,000 women—peasants, farmers, anglers, rubber tappers, *quilombolas*, Indigenous women—came together from across Brazil for the most recent edition of the march in 2023.

biographies and styles. This means that important contributions made by women and other marginalized groups often remain hidden, regardless of how much they actually shape society.

Patriarchy sets the rules of design: who gets to create, what is valued, and how the story is told. This is where Cheryl Buckley's 1986 essay "Made in Patriarchy," republished in this edition, takes center stage. The British scholar exposes this structure and flips it on its head with a feminist and materialist lens. Her ideas challenge us to rethink what design is. By questioning the norms that dictate what should or shouldn't be preserved as history, she advocates for recognizing the value of the stuff of everyday life. Anonymous, traditional, and household items—created and used by working and oppressed classes—emerge as integral to a history that deserves to be told. Social movements, as collective subjects with their own material practices, get woven into the fabric of design history. This is not simply an expansion; it's a profound transformation of the field itself.

"Made in Patriarchy" was one of Cheryl's first articles, published while she was still working on her doctorate, which focused on women's roles in the ceramics industry of Staffordshire, in the West Midlands of England. Coming from a working-class family, Cheryl delved into factory archives and found objects that didn't fit into

texts in their original versions, with an introduction written from a Latin-American point of view, is a gesture that seeks to build bridges and expand dialogue. This edition allows Cheryl's work to be read in the light of feminist and popular practices, offering a new perspective for those already familiar with it.

The recent history of Latin American feminisms reveals how political action reinvents itself through esthetic and collectivity. Likewise, design must reclaim its narrative from the margins; by intertwining different perspectives, new stories can emerge. As Cheryl argues, the stories we ought to tell are unsettling and disruptive, full of complexities and contradictions. How can we tell these stories? By weaving together texts, gestures, words, fabrics, and other "wild things" that cross borders and spark social change. Feminist movements have already shown us that, even in the most restless seas, the tide always turns and the waves that crash against us can also carry us forward. May they also inspire us to see design not merely through its celebrated objects but as an insurgent, living, and collective force.

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CHERYL BUCKLEY

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Methodologically, the pivot of contemporary design history is the designer, whose central role has been legitimized by art historical precedent in which the figure of the artist is all-important. Some art historians, such as Nicos Hadjinicolaou, T. J. Clark, and Griselda Pollock, have done so; the last wrote, "The central figure of art historical discourse is the artist, who is presented as an ineffable ideal which complements the bourgeois myth of a universal, classless man ... our general culture is furthermore permeated with ideas about the individual nature of creativity, how genius will always overcome social obstacles."[30]

Numerous biographies of designers have focused the production and meaning of design on the contribution of the individual. In this approach, design history mirrors art history in its role as attributor and authenticator. First, it attaches meaning to a name, thereby simplifying the historical process (by de-emphasizing production and consumption) and at the same time making the role of the individual all-important (by aiding and simplifying attribution). Second, as a direct consequence of this first strategy, historians have analyzed the design in terms of the designers' ideas and intentions and in terms of the formal arrangement of elements (just as formalist art history analyzes a painting or sculpture), rather than as a social product. The design

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MADE IN PATRIARCHY [1986]

is thereby isolated from its material origins and function, and if it conforms to dominant definitions of "good" design, it and its designer are obvious candidates for the history books. At this point, the design has been firmly positioned within the confines of the individual designer's oeuvre, aiding attribution and authentication of the design as art object and simplifying historical analysis.[31] The history of design is reduced to a history of the designer, and the design is seen to mean and represent what the designer identifies. Extraordinary designs are judged in terms of creativity and individual extraordinariness.

This is problematic for women, because "creativity has been appropriated as an ideological component of masculinity, while femininity has been constructed as man's and, therefore, the artist's negative."[32]

The notion that the meaning of design objects is singular and is determined by the designer is simplistic, ignoring the fact that design is a process of representation. It represents political, economic, and cultural power and values within the different spaces occupied, through engagement with different subjects. Its meaning is therefore polysemic and involves the interaction of design and recipient. Designs, as cultural products, have meanings encoded in them which are decoded by producers, advertisers, and consumers according

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CHERYL BUCKLEY

also by drawing on critical theory. As a result, for those practicing as design historians in Britain, design history was never only a sub-branch of the humanities; rather, it was intimately linked to practice with a concern for critical and theoretical discourses, as well as historical ones. Although design history emerged differently in the United States, an engagement with the history of design was increasingly articulated around the emerging field of design studies, which again addressed practice and theory, as well as history.[45] The consensus was that, to understand contemporary practice, one needed to understand its past; as Victor Margolin put it, "the challenge for those of us who study design at the end of the twentieth century is to establish a central place for it in contemporary life."[46]

Indeed, we might now contend that design has secured a place at the center of contemporary life, but is it a univocal and totalizing notion of design that has little space for routine, mundane, everyday practices? Further, as Brewer has pointed out, the fundamental difficulty of refuge history is dealing with its heterogeneity; but he also saw this heterogeneity as its greatest potential. Arguably as design historians, our responsibility is to recognize complexities and complications, to look for the awkward and disruptive; and not to settle for easy and comfortable narratives.

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MADE IN PATRIARCHY II [2020]

Looking back and forward, "Made in Patriarchy" in 1986 was didactic and provocative—the product of a particular point in an academic and intellectual life. Feminist theory and history provided essential critical tools that helped to challenge some of the embedded assumptions about design and the designer. Today's reinvigorated feminism can do this again. The title of my original article was "Made" in patriarchy, not "Designed" in patriarchy because then, as now, design was an ideologically loaded term that I wanted to question. With Ahmed's contention as the starting point—that "in a world in which human is still defined as *man*, we have to fight for women and as women"—we might return to the question of women's relationship to design, helping to prize open understandings and to change perceptions of what design means and who does it, so as to illuminate the possibilities of design as a vital component of everyday lives.[47]

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EXTRA BOLD

a feminist inclusive anti-racist nonbinary field guide for graphic designers

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intersectionality

TEXT BY JENNIFER TOBIAS

In 1976, five Black women sued General Motors for discrimination after losing their jobs during a company-wide layoff. Employees who had worked at the firm for a certain amount of time kept their jobs, while people hired more recently were fired. Because no Black women had been hired in the earlier history of the company, every single one of them lost her job. According to the judges in the case, the Black women could not prove discrimination either on the basis of sex (because White women weren't fired) or on the basis of race (because Black men weren't fired either). Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw studied this troubling US legal case and developed the theory of intersectionality, arguing that individuals experience multiple forms of oppression at the same time.

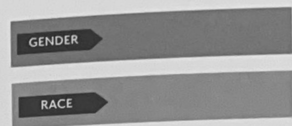
Crenshaw showed that discrimination cases tend to presume women to be White, while race discrimination cases presume that Black people are men. In each instance, this presumption excludes Black women, who experience discrimination differently than their White or male counterparts.

In another illuminating story, Crenshaw describes her experience as a law student at Harvard. A male friend became one of the first Black members of an exclusive private men's club. He invited her and another colleague for drinks at the club; together, they were excited about visiting this bastion of power and prestige as Black people. But at the entrance, they were told that women had to enter through the back door. Although Crenshaw felt humiliated, she chose not to speak out because she didn't want to lessen the experience of her fellow Black students. Nor did she want to "make a scene" that might be amplified by the race of her party of friends.

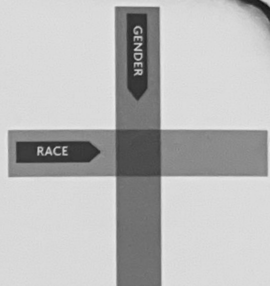
Crenshaw recounts a third story, told by law professor Patricia Cain. The professor asked each student to identify three factors important to their identity. The women of color all mentioned first their race and then their gender; the White women didn't mention their race at all. Their seemingly invisible Whiteness did not represent a source of adversity for them—and thus didn't merit mentioning—whereas the women of color faced more discrimination based on their race than their gender.

An image of a traffic accident can help us understand the concept of intersectionality. Crenshaw writes, "If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination."

Crenshaw's article focuses on the intersection of gender and race. Today, the concept encompasses multiple modes of identity and privilege. Imagine many streets intersecting: gender, race, class, religion, ability, age, and so on. Each street has multiple lanes, because many identities are possible within each category. Indeed, this fictional intersection could have an enormous number of streets divided



single-axis view of discrimination



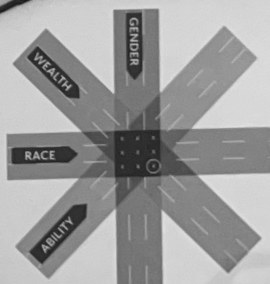
intersectional view of discriminaton

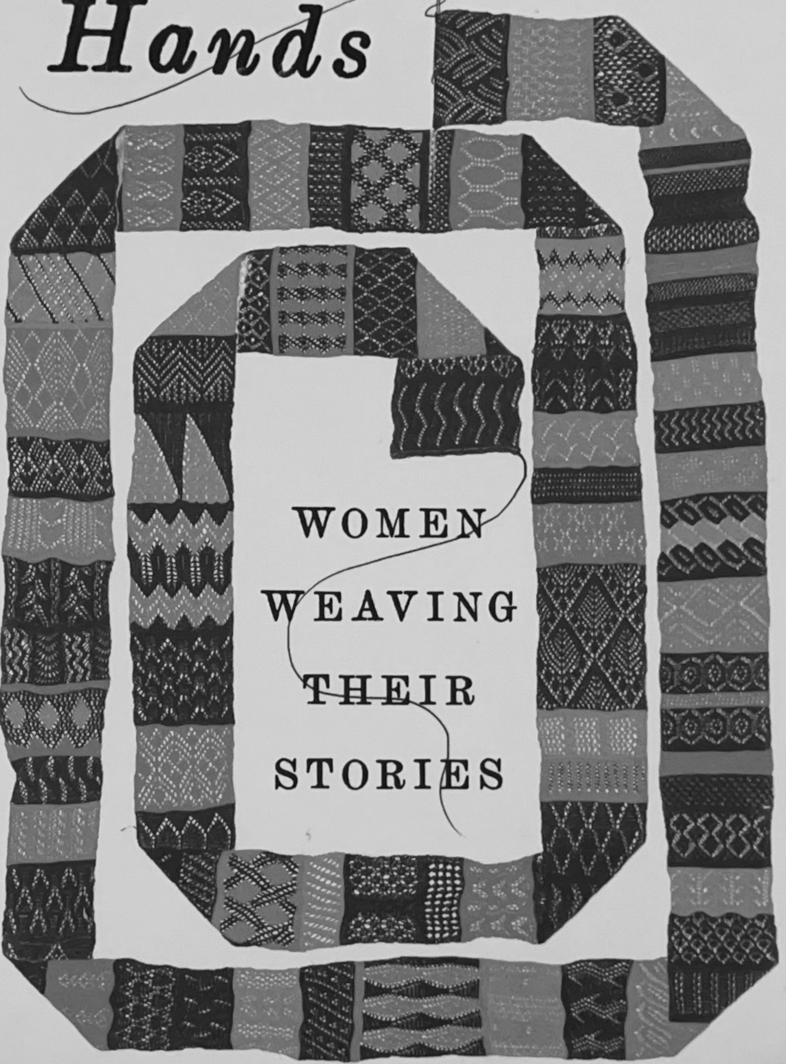
into countless lanes. A cisgender woman could be Black, queer, and middle-class; she could also be a Muslim designer with a learning difference. Identities aren't fixed. At any given moment, we might experience some identities more strongly than others.

Some parts of identity are based in biology, while other emerge because of society. Over time, we make choices about who we are and how we want others to see us. Class, gender, race, disability, and religion are socially constructed categories. They are reinforced by laws, institutions, and designed environments as well as by individual actions and attitudes. In a college classroom or a creative agency, a designer may be perceived differently because of their native language, nationality, age, immigration status, or family duties as well as their race or gender. Movements such as feminism and Civil Rights activism have helped transform social attitudes.

Over the course of a lifetime, a person may change lanes in one or more avenues of their identity. A person could come out as queer or gender-nonconforming, or embrace their identity as mixed race, or alter their economic status. Understanding one's own identity (including Whiteness or maleness) is a step toward understanding intersectionality.

SOURCE Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, special issue: "Feminism in the Law: Theory, Practice and Criticism," 1989: 139–68.





WITH HER OWN HANDS:WOMEN WEAVING THEIR STORIES, 2025

that I didn't miss it—I had found other activities to stimulate my mind and a more sustainable balance between professional and personal pursuits. I decided to leave the academic career I was building and reenvision my life. I realized how much of my identity was entwined with the institution where I worked and the roles I played as a therapist, teacher, and researcher. I felt like I had been a tightly wound ball of yarn and all the threads were coming out in a tangled mess. I had to pull at the different strands to liberate the yarn so it could be transformed into something more functional and beautiful. I thought a lot about how to make meaning during times of struggle, how to be creative within constraints, how to locate yourself when suddenly under radically different circumstances, how to unravel old identities and knit them anew. As a mother in a caregiving profession who was knitting daily for sanity and a sense of self, I wondered how women throughout history had overcome the challenges they faced in life and what role textile work played in the process. I started a small private practice to continue working as a therapist and began researching these questions. This book is the result of my exploration.

Women's roles in society have been intertwined with textile work to such a large extent that the tools of textile production have served as a metonymy for female. In ancient Greece, a tuft of wool was hung on the door of a family's home when a daughter was born (a crown of olive leaves was hung for the birth of a son). The distaff, a traditional handspinner's tool used for holding raw fibers as they are spun into thread on a spindle, became shorthand for "women's work" in the English language. By the sixteenth century, the "dis-

taff side" was a common way of referring to the mother's relatives. Making textiles has essentialized the differences between men and women and served as a means of inculcating the virtues associated with femininity—patience, obedience, silence. Yet, throughout history, it has also been a way for women to exercise agency.

Textiles have been used to express political protest, convey coded messages, record historical events, transmit cultural ideology, process traumas, earn an income, celebrate, and mourn. That may explain why, for millennia, women went well beyond what was necessary for survival, to dye yarn, create complex designs, and make textiles that are beautiful, expressive, and personal. Even when textile work was compulsory and tedious, the repetitive nature allowed space for women's minds to wander—to daydream, process emotions, find comfort in the familiar, and ground themselves in the tangible while creating something of value, often in the company of other women. Today, many women carry on this legacy and continue to take an interest and find meaning in textile crafts. A National Endowment for the Arts survey found that in the United States, fiber arts were the most common form of craft for women of nearly all ages and ethnic groups.[1] I am fascinated by how these women, in the past and present, have used textile work to create meaning in their lives.

While we may have little choice regarding our life circumstances, we can choose to find value and significance in the experiences available to us. The psychologist Viktor Frankl wrote that a wide array of life's activities, if approached creatively, may be imbued with meaning. His ability to make meaning of his suffering while imprisoned at Auschwitz maintained his will to live. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung observed, "Meaning makes a great many things endurable—perhaps everything."[2]

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Throughout history, finding meaning amid constraints was particularly important for women living in oppressive societies. French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir argued that women's subordinate roles in patriarchal societies do not permit the freedom needed to make a meaningful life. However, her focus on the condition of all women may have caused her to overlook the possibility of self-realization for each individual woman.[3] Philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva suggests that although women have often been oppressed collectively, each woman had her own individual capacity for creativity and freedom. While it is critical to strive to collectively free women from the binds of the patriarchy, and whatever other oppressive systems they have been up against, it is also meaningful to explore the ways each woman could overcome the challenges of her particular situation. Women did not wait for the "feminine condition" to change in order to exercise their freedom—if we did, we'd still be waiting.[4] In any given place, on any given day, women have had more control over their individual lives than over cultural norms and institutional restrictions.

Carolyn Heilbrun, a feminist literary scholar, poses the problem and a solution in *Reinventing Womanhood*. She writes:

> Men have monopolized human experience, leaving women unable to imagine themselves as both ambitious and female. If I imagine myself (woman has always asked) whole, active, a self, will I not cease, in some profound way, to be a woman? The answer must be: imagine, and the old idea of womanhood be damned. . . .
>
> Let us imagine ourselves as selves, as at once striving and female. Womanhood can be what we say it is, not what they have always said it was.[5]

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But Heilbrun also highlights the difficulty of imagining new ways to live; we can only live by the stories we have already heard. "We live our lives though text,"[6] she writes, and the stories we have are what we must use to make new narratives.

We have relatively few texts to work with, especially ones with stories written by women or that provide an enticing model to follow or adapt. Women's writing was rarely published, their art was often for private audiences only or overlooked entirely, and their music was often sung among themselves as they worked. Their daily work—cooking, cleaning, making clothes—got used up and worn out. Women were often excluded from census data or classified only as someone's wife or daughter, without a name of her own. Women's lives, their identities, their internal experiences have historically been hidden from public view. But the textiles they created offer a glimpse into their world. It is with thread that women wrote.

The meaning women made from their experiences with textiles certainly varied, depending on personal and cultural factors. In a presidential address in the journal *American Anthropologist*,[7] archaeologist Elizabeth Brumfiel presented three images of women weaving on backstrap looms in Mesoamerica—a ceramic figurine from the Late Classic Maya from eleven hundred to twelve hundred years ago, an illustration from the Aztec *Florentine Codex* written around five hundred years ago, and a photograph of a woman weaving in Guatemala in 1992. Brumfiel observed that at first glance these images suggest a striking continuity in women's work as weavers across over a millennium of Mesoamerican history. Then she asked the question, "But are these women engaged

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have often said is . . . 'How can you go in public and put all your dirty washing out?' We're all very scared of that, but people don't realise that fear is overcome by group support."[28]

The FENIX artists used materials from daily life—buttons, bedsheets, household items, in line with the concept of femmage. Richardson made a soft sculpture of a work apron and pair of pants on a hanger, the many pockets overflowing with granny squares, a crochet hook, tools, and kitchen cutlery—the stuff of middle-class housewives' lives. The apron has the words "bear it in mind," spelled out in buttons as a nod to what we would now call the mental load or women's invisible labor. A silhouette of a hand is embroidered on one of the apron's pockets, and a pair of gloves hangs from the bottom, suggesting the many hands needed to accomplish these daily tasks.

Their art spoke directly to other women. Rather than waiting for the mainstream art movement to recognize women's modes of creative expression, women could recognize it among themselves. In their paper on femmage, artists Miriam Schapiro and Melissa Meyer declare that "the culture of women will remain unrecognized until women themselves regard their own past with fresh insight."[29] Choosing to communicate with each other rather than seek the approval of men shifted the balance of power for women in the feminist movement. Making and exhibiting the forms of art that women have made for generations was an effort to democratize self-expression, creating opportunities to unite women through a shared language and expand the possibilities for how we can live. It also exposed the inaccuracy of viewing "women's work" as only a tool of oppression and showed that it has been and continues to be a symbol of both women's subservient position in the home *and* an empowered and vital contribution to family, community, and culture.[30]

Hands to Power | 207

Feminists of the third wave sought to amplify the empowering aspect of needlework. We tend to think that objects like knitted blankets belong at home, much like women traditionally, but what happens when we move both blankets and women outside of it? We no longer have to hide or obscure our creative power—we can boldly assert it through a variety of acts, from knitting in public to yarn-bombing in the streets. But beyond taking public actions, these feminists endeavored to shift the mindset about what textile work means and has meant for women as an expression of our value and influence. Writer and maker Betsy Greer, who coined the term *craftivism*, says: "It's about making your own creativity a force to be reckoned with. The moment you start thinking about your creative production as more than just a hobby or 'women's work,' and instead as something that has cultural, historical and social value, craft becomes something stronger than a fad or trend."[31] In the Western world, needlework has increasingly become a hobby for women, men, and non-binary people of all ages and is integrated into their lives alongside their careers and family, but generally outside of their specific roles in either of these realms. The Stitch 'n Bitch movement of the early 2000s shifted the aesthetics of knitting "from rocking chair to riot grrrl,"[32] altering the cultural conception of what it means to be a knitter today. These cultural changes further disentangle textile crafts from ideas of "women's work" and misogynistic gender divisions.

The practice of yarn-bombing, also known as guerilla knitting or knitted graffiti, was started in 2005 by Texas-based artist Magda Sayeg. A sort of renegade activity, like graffiti, though one that is more "grandma than gangster," yarn-bombing inserts femi

KADE ALPERS PHOTOGRAPHY

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The state of design in the UK
DESIGN

Design has a diversity challenge:

Ethnicity: The design economy employs a slightly higher proportion of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than are employed in the wider UK economy (13% compared with 11%), and this figure has improved since our previous analysis (11.4%). However, BAME designers are least likely to be in senior roles, accounting for only 12% of all design managers.

Gender: 78% of the UK's design workforce is male. This is higher than the percentage of men in the wider UK workforce (53%). This is also despite women making up 63% of all students studying creative arts and design courses at university. The overall ratio is skewed by the male dominated subsectors of product and industrial design (95%), digital design (85%), and architecture and built environment (80%). Even when employed in design, women earn less. For example in the multidisciplinary design subsector, women working as product, clothing and related designers earn 18.3% less than men in that subsector despite making up nearly two-thirds of that design subsector (64%). Women are also less likely than men to be in senior roles, with only 17% of design managers being female.

Design can generate significant value for local and regional economies:
London remains the powerhouse of UK design, with almost one in three design firms now based in the capital, as well as one in five design workers. This has become more concentrated since our last study. Yet this study also shows that over the past few years most UK regions have also experienced growth in the GVA generated by designers in their area. This growth appears to be driven by a combination of two things. The first driver is localised design specialties such as craft design in the West Midlands (eg, the potteries in Stoke-on-Trent). Outside London and the south-east, the West Midlands, along with the north-west, has experienced the most significant growth in design GVA since [illegible] and 28.5% respectively). The second key driver is a growth in clusters of multidisciplinary design firms – covering firms undertaking specialised design activities ranging from sustainable design and industrial design to interior design, among others. These are strongest in London and the south-east, with the multifaceted nature of the design economies in these regions a strength not always replicated elsewhere.

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