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Board Message

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Celebrate Solidarity

BY ROBERT L. PETERS, PRESIDENT ICOGRADA, 2001-2003

One for all, and all for one

To 'associate' means to connect, to bring into relation and to join. Associations organise around common purposes and achieve collective strengths – of resolve, identity, visibility, credibility and the ability to act – simply put, strength in numbers. On 27 April 2003 (World Graphics Day), Icograda marked its 40th birthday as an association of associations celebrating the value of synergism, the camaraderie of diversity, the vitality of collective processes and the solidarity of the graphic design profession worldwide.

Networks connect

Medieval tyrants kept their fiefdoms from communicating. Modern hegemony overwhelms their audiences through media penetration and broadcast propagation. Open networks counter such controls and create opportunities for sharing, exchange and empowerment. Fostering communicative connections around the world has been one of Icograda's ongoing purposes. One year after creating an online presence for *Friends of Icograda* at www.friends.icograda.net (on World Graphics Day), we have now launched the *Icograda Education Network* at www.education.icograda.net. The aim is to link design schools and faculties on every continent to promote mutual exchange, stimulate dialogue, create common platforms for curriculum development and to encourage development of new thinking. The *Icograda Design Media Network*, an initiative conceived in Brno last year, will launch within the next few months.

United we stand

In the past few years, numerous meetings have been held between Icograda and its sisters, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and the International Federation of Interior Designers/Architects (IFI) regarding closer institutional collaboration. This term a joint committee has examined similarities and differences of our design disciplines, defined the need for a united 'voice' for Design and identified opportunities for joint action. After

exploring various models, a federated relationship or alliance is proposed, respectful of the autonomy of our individual organisations, yet achieving strength through unity. To this end, a joint resolution will be put before Icograda members in October 2003 at the 20th Icograda General Assembly in Nagoya, Japan.

World inclusivity

The Arabic translation of the word 'globalisation' is revealing, as it literally means 'world inclusivity'. This definition goes beyond the narrow view of globalisation as the mere flow of goods, services, capital, technology, information, ideas and labour – without regard for social grievances, increased gaps between 'haves' and 'have-nots,' and unequal distribution of wealth, health and knowledge. Designers have an important role to play in the pursuit of a more inclusive globalism whose purpose lies in expanding opportunities for all, promoting cooperation and increasing liberty – with benefits to those at the margins as well as those at the centre. Pivotal in globalism is a respect for diversity and placing the interests of the entire world above those of individual nations. Polarisation of 'them and us' is a destructive control measure. Division divides, while unification unites, and inclusivity includes. In the words of the UN's Kofi Annan: "We can love what we are without hating what we are not. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others and come to respect their teachings."

In today's information/idea age, the world's estimated 1.1 million graphic designers hold much responsibility – for forming culture, influencing values and shaping the future. We can achieve more and act more collaboratively by sharing our ideas, giving voice to collective values, and integrating synergies as part of the global design community. Together we are stronger than when separate. And together, our hearts and our actions can determine the world our children will live in. ●



Robert L. Peters, President Icograda 2001-2003

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