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Editor's letter

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EDITOR'S LETTER

ISSUE SEVEN

«ACTION IS
OBLIGED
TO STICK TO
POSSIBILITIES
BUT THE
TRUTH ISN'T.»

MARK TWAIN

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY American designer Charles Eames once wrote, "It is almost impossible to reconcile self-expression with the creative act." For a man who (with his partner Ray Eames) had such a creative life and was possessed of such a forceful personality this seems a strange thing to say. There are many who would claim that the work of Charles and Ray Eames is a perfect example of creativity and self-expression combined in perfect harmony and yet Charles Eames would almost certainly disagree. For him a designer had to lose himself in his work and allow the creative act to overcome self-expression in order for the results to be authentic. His point was that self-expression is an artefact of the ego and where a designer's ego dominates his or her creativity there will always be false notes. And so for this seventh edition of SIGNED magazine we have chosen Truth as our theme. The famous American literary agent and poet Matt Bialer, giving advice to an aspiring novelist, once said that "a writer cannot write fiction based on what he thinks will be popular or commercially successful, he can only write fiction that is authentic and comes from his inner truth." His point was that a writer (or any kind of creative person) has to get out of the way of his or her own work for it to come through as honest and truthful. All of the design work featured in this edition has some element of this kind of truth.

The work of designers from Belgium featured in the stories *Symbolic Style* and *Perpetual Emotion* reveals the extent to which Belgian design has a special kind of truth that forces authenticity and avant-garde creativity to the forefront in fashion, architecture and product innovation. A similar spirit is found in *Dead Reckoning*, *Mythic Moments* and *Making an Impression*, three stories that draw from design principles to reveal powerful truths about our attitude toward death, the family and ancient means of symbolic communication. George Nelson, another iconic American designer who worked in the same era as Eames and is featured on our cover said, "Good design, like good painting, cooking, architecture or whatever you like, is a manifestation of the capacity of the human spirit to transcend its limitations." One of those limitations is our capacity to be honest about our talents and desires. When a designer with true talent closes down the filter that prevents his or her true spirit from coming to the forefront the results can be truly remarkable. That is the benefit truth bestows upon us – it may cost us all our pretensions but the reward is often an act of creativity that is made timeless by its authenticity.

DANIEL JEFFREYS
Editor-In-Chief