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Editor's letter

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PRIDE

EDITOR'S LETTER

ISSUE TEN

A DESIGNER WITHOUT pride is like a yacht without sails, but one infused with pride is a capricious vessel that could veer onto rocks at any minute. Such is the nature of pride, an ambiguous concept with a chequered history. A noun form of the adjective "proud", the word "pride" is like a troubled celebrity. It has great qualities, but still manages to mess up. In religion, pride is frequently condemned as a source of arrogance and sin. The sophisticated Confucian philosopher Xunzi, who lived 2300 years ago said that "pride brings disaster to man" and he married the word to "excess" as if the two were opposite sides of the same coin. And yet the word "pride" is common in the design community and designers use it frequently to describe their emotions and sense of self-worth, especially after reaching a milestone in their careers. It's a word that's also

used by writers and artists when their work gives them pleasure or wins accolades. The great Italian poet Dante described pride as a "spark" that's capable of "setting fire to the hearts of men" and there's no doubt that "taking pride in one's work" is a key aspect of good and passionate craftsmanship. If we take a step back from the word's modern usage it is possible to see why "pride" is so appropriate for the design process and as the theme for this tenth edition of SIGNED magazine. The origins of the word can be found in 11th century Old French when its root was rendered as "prud", and meant "brave, valiant" with the phrase "prud'homme" meaning "brave man". The noble knights of England adopted the word and, over time, the serfs and poor farmers whom they ruled and oppressed began to detest the term. The English downtrodden divorced pride from its roots in bravery and gave it the negative connotation of arrogance. In its original form, the word "pride" is perfectly suited to the design process, especially as it is allied with the Latin "prodesse" (be useful). In this linguistic setting, "pride" perfectly describes how a creative craftsman or artist must have the courage to break boundaries in order to make something unique, beautiful and functional. Read in this way, all of the designers featured in this edition of SIGNED are men and women of pride, who are justly proud of what they have achieved, having had the courage to step outside convention. The young designers from Switzerland featured in "Mothers of Invention" have all made brave decisions in creating work that stands out, as have the photographers featured in "Outside the Frame" and "Eternal Evolution". In "Brave New Media" and "Sign of the Times" creatives working with very different tools show how the valiant use of innovation can produce forms of communication that are strikingly memorable. As a creative community we should take pride in what we do, and be brave in using skills that the world needs in order to be a more inspiring and sustainable place. And for those designers who fear that success will trap them upon the slippery slopes of ego and arrogance, there is a simple rule – take pride, but do not let pride take you.

DANIEL JEFFREYS
Editor-In-Chief