

IT'S TIME TO SHAKE THINGS UP

MARCH 2021  
ISSUE 141

# MONOCLE

**INSIDE:** REWILD THE CITY **CLEAN UP IN BUSINESS FIX,**  
DON'T THROW **TALK MORE** GROW YOUR OWN FOREST

**M** **A** to **F** **AFFAIRS:** Asia's new generation of politicians **BUSINESS:** Keep on trucking **CULTURE:** Nature's fluffiest film stars  
**DESIGN:** Why modernists have never lost their cool **ENTERTAINING:** Recipes for success **FASHION:** Brands that don't outsource

## Let's Do It Better

*Simple plans and wise shifts that will help you tread a little lighter, save some energy – and be happier.*



### Your Monocle Checklist — 2021

- 1. Think provenance   
Care about the maker
- 2. Be a good consumer   
Buy less, buy better
- 3. Sustain real debate   
And get off social media
- 4. Tread lightly   
Mend, reuse and cherish
- 5. Lend a hand   
And look after seniors



Mobility mavericks



Chefs go country

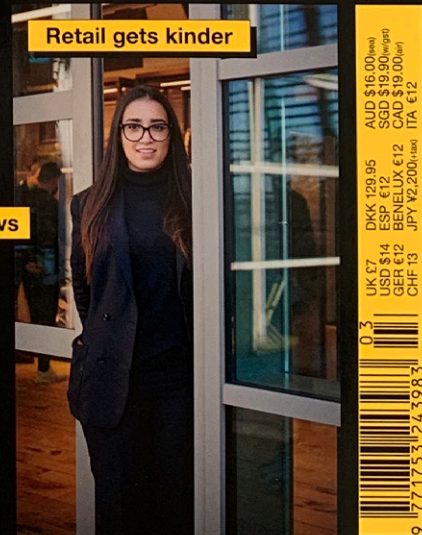
Remember me?  
I'm back



Simple solutions

I feel totally stuffed today

That's because you're a rice-ball holder



Retail gets kinder



Kiosks in the news

0 3  
 UK £7 USD \$14  
 DKK 129.95 AUD \$16.00(inc) SGD \$19.90(inc)  
 ESP €12 BENELUX €12 CAD \$19.00(inc)  
 CHF 13 JPY ¥2,200(inc) ITA €12

9 17717531245983

+ **WELCOME MAT** The hotels in Reykjavik, Florence and Bali awaiting your arrival **NATURE CALL** Companies putting down rural roots **INVENTORY** From massage pants to banana cases, Japanese products that might just change your life

# Change for good

Big improvements can often come from small adjustments to our behaviour. So how can we ensure that we do things better? We asked 20 thinkers – from authors and professors to artists and architects – for their take.

**1. — COMMUNICATION**  
**Sarada Peri**  
Former speechwriter for Barack Obama  
**How can leaders be better, more effective communicators?**

It's not just about world leaders; it's business leaders, community leaders and the leaders of any given organisation. Obviously, we are facing a global pandemic and consequential economic crisis, but the way that our fragmented media system has changed means that even if you have an intention in your communication, it might be misperceived entirely; it can be sliced, diced, repackaged and completely distorted. And you're also competing against misinformation. So the challenges involved are significant and one leader can't solve them.

I do think that, right now, people can smell untruths from a mile away. What people want to hear from their leaders is an authentic and real sense of who they are and what they plan to do. I don't believe that people are easily persuaded by lofty language; they want to feel rooted in something. The job for leaders, as Joe Biden said in his inauguration speech, is to level with folks and be clear about their intentions – and why they're doing what they're doing. All too often what we hear from our leaders is a programme or list of policies but not necessarily an umbrella narrative under which these ideas can cohere. People don't really know, "What are we signing up for? Why are we following this person? What do they have? Where are

they taking us?" So being really clear about that for yourself – and then finding a way to communicate that clearly – is extremely important in these times. — CCE

**2. — MEDIA**  
**Rainer Nowak**  
Editor in chief and publisher of Vienna's 'Die Presse'  
**How can we ensure reporting is fair and balanced?**

Last year has shaken the world and turned things upside down in a way that we hadn't been able to imagine before. Journalism was challenged to a degree that meant not all quality requirements were met all the time. Therefore, it is important to focus even more on fulfilling the high standards of quality journalism.

*Audiat et altera pars* (the other part should be heard as well) must not be neglected even if the other part is paranoid, aggressive or simply stupid. Even if you detest a certain opinion, it must not show in the reporting.

We have realised that science and medicine can be fallible too. We are facing a situation where our knowledge and understanding can change from day to day. Therefore, the need for transparency about the source of information is bigger than ever before. Traditional media have lost readers to the so-called alternative media that bend facts and disclose sources. Our reporting must have the utmost clarity about what we know – and where we get it from – but also about what we don't know.

For many of us, the pandemic manifests the first worldwide crisis that can be felt in our daily lives and that affects us individually too. Therefore, emotions and personal experiences might have influenced the reporting more than before. It is important to take a step back and strive for a helicopter view. It is our job to educate our readers. We have to deliver arguments and facts so that readers can form their own opinions – whether we like it or not. — DBA

**3. — HOUSING**  
**Alejandro Aravena**  
Pritzker prize-winning Chilean architect and founder of the Santiago-based Elemental studio  
**How can we build better housing?**

Housing is not a product, it's a process. In housing you ignite: you create the first spark and then the whole process begins. The moment you understand it dynamically and not frozen, like other architectural buildings, then the forces at play change. Then you channel people's interventions.

The state, the market, the private sector, cannot deliver enough of what is needed. So that's why we talk about the four Ps: the public-private people's partnership. Evidence shows us that shared spaces that require agreements should not go beyond 30 units. Also, living space has to be flexible

and big enough. In doing so, we've forgotten about the balcony spaces. In the moment of fresh air and sunlight, riots appeared in the vertical spaces. The pandemic has proven that we need to update our approach to housing. It has huge consequences for social stability and democracy.

**4. — AGRICULTURE**  
**Daan Roosegaarde**  
Dutch artist and founder of Studio Roosegaarde, who develops projects that use technology and art  
**How can we grow food, sustainably, in agriculture and farm better?**

The future of agriculture is about harmony between people and the fields that feed us currently disconnected from our lives. The gap that technology has created is inspiration for my latest projects.

In the project's development in dialogue with Wageningen, the Netherlands' biggest agricultural college, and we were discussing of light that can be used to encourage growth and boost plants, allowing up to a 50 per cent reduction in the use of pesticides. So far, we've worked with a farmer to use this on a huge field of leeks and it's been effective in stimulating plant growth.

Grow's aim is to show how to produce crops more sustainably, encourage people to connect to places that feed us. Hopefully, it's a platform to speed up the development of similar projects and can be scaled to a larger scale. In the same way, the invention of Technicolor allowed expressions in cinema, light can provide new solutions when connecting us to our food sources, lessening their environmental impact.

**5. — AMBITION**  
**Sou Fujimoto**  
Award-winning Japanese architect known for working on ambitious projects in Europe and Asia  
**How can we keep thinking big and designing ambitiously?**

I like to keep a certain amount of freedom for myself to work on one or two projects at the same time. Otherwise, just completing actual projects, there's no freedom where you can allow to really grow. Experimentation is very important to do conceptual work but so that we can think to push ourselves further forward.

Conceptual thinking is like a big river network; sometimes, suddenly, new come out and a new river starts, and sometimes two different rivers join to create new ideas. Realised projects based on these flows of conceptual where if you're lucky you can make an idea possible. But even then, it's not about a simple translation from conceptual thinking to the real project; through process of realisation you learn, get and further develop your conceptual thinking to achieve the project.

Conceptually thinking about the possibilities of projects without any and remaining grounded in reality, kind of future situation in society, endless discussion with no answer, quite exciting and important. — N

**6. — FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**Bessma Momani**  
Professor of Political Science at the University of Waterloo  
**How can we do diplomacy better?**

The global economy is facing a low growth, high unemployment, productivity, spluttering international trade and a huge debt overhang. Significant diplomatic efforts among leading global economic powers which will involve firing up the G20, IMF, and the UN to ensure a recovery for all – we will enter another volatile period of "beggar thy neighbour" that will rival the Great Depression.

The 2007 global financial crisis birth to a brief period of co-operation in diplomacy, which was reflected in leaders' meeting at the G20. This international co-operation and co- needs to be revived if we are to a worldwide economic pain. However, approach will not be easy, especially some global leaders have become nationalistic. There is an opportunity, however, for the new US administration to reach out to the G20, particularly China's Xi Jinping, and host a summit, multilateral summit focused on post-pandemic economic recovery.

World leaders also need to focus on stimulating economic growth, while attentive to concerns about climate and growing inequality. Leaders should listen to new ideas about reviving an economy that take these concerns seriously. A renewed diplomatic approach is the only way to prevent a lost decade.

**7. — CIVIC POLICY**  
**Penny Abeywardena**  
New York's International Affairs Commissioner  
**What have cities learned from the past year – and what can make them better?**

We have learned a lot in the past year, it would be a travesty not to have

## A SOCIETY/ GLOBAL

emphasis on shared solutions – public transport and many more shared cars. Actually, shared cars should be the norm rather than the exception. Both climate, cities and efficient mobility are suffering from the steady increase in numbers. Let us instead have much fewer units, fewer problems and much better cities. — CCR

### 11. — CLIMATE ACTION

#### Mark Watts

Executive director of C40 Cities, a group of 96 global cities working towards a greener future

#### What role do cities play in shaping a more prosperous future?

Most immediately, cities can show how a green and just recovery from the pandemic will create more jobs, protect people's health, reduce emissions and improve resilience. Mayors have been the strongest champions of the Paris Agreement and, in the absence of intergovernmental co-operation, they have kept the flame of internationalism alive. We need national leaders to get behind them with decisive green stimuli and regulatory support.

Against all odds, cities continued to progress climate action in 2020. Since the start of the pandemic, Paris has invested €20m in cycling, Bogotá announced hundreds of new e-buses, making theirs the largest order outside China, and the 15-minute city is being adopted globally.

The pandemic has exposed systemic inequalities, the fragility of our economic, political and social systems, and the urgent need to protect and restore our natural world. We must emerge on a path forward that guarantees economic, environmental, racial and social justice for all.

In 2021 more than 1,000 cities around the world will be mobilising to do this – by signing on to the Race to Zero, a campaign to unite cities, businesses and investors around a green and just recovery ahead of this year's crucial UN climate change negotiations in Glasgow [COP26]. — NM

### 12. — EDUCATION

#### Rosanne Somerson

Academic and president of the Rhode Island School of Design

#### Should we rethink the way we teach?

For education to be real, it must also be equitable. Some private schools have access to facilities and resources that set up their students with a huge advantage over others in school districts with restrictive budgets and outdated facilities. Class sizes must be determined by ideal learning outcomes rather than demographics. Adaptable classroom spaces would allow for different kinds of assembly. There are major takeaways

from this instant reinvention of learning environments over the past 12 months, which must be assessed to decide what we should and can carry forward. A key discovery is the inequity for some students who really suffered under remote learning, either due to learning styles, lack of technology access, internet reliability or personal time and space with the necessary technology.

With new teaching tools, the notion of a field trip is amazingly expanded, as are the opportunities for collaboration and experiential learning. We should invest in major curricular revision and infrastructure so education can address what we have discovered. This includes inventive ways to learn, share, and experience, while also addressing the structural racism and inequities present in our curricular materials and student experiences. — CFC

### 13. — HIGH STREETS

#### Andrew Carter

Chief executive officer at Centre for Cities, a think-tank improving the economies of UK cities

#### How can our high streets be better run and managed?

A thriving high street is based on the strength of a wider economy. Lots of well-paid workers create a market for restaurants, shops, bars and other amenities that can't be sustained in cities where people don't earn as much money. Because of this, the most effective way to create a high street that is appealing to businesses and shoppers is to focus on the wider economy. Councils and business-improvement districts should consider how they can encourage skilled firms to set up in the city centre and create a market for high street businesses.

Struggling high streets are the symptom of deeper economic problems in a city. Any strategy for a "better" high street should recognise this and tackle the root cause of the problem: a lack of disposable income in the area. Improving people's skills and encouraging more well-paying businesses into city centres will create a market for restaurants, shops and bars. Because of this, I'd encourage councils to spend more time thinking about how to attract office-based firms. Where offices go, retail, hospitality and leisure will inevitably follow. — NM

### 14. — HOME PLANNING

#### Petra Marko

Architect and co-founder of Marko & Placemakers

#### Why should our homes be important, beautiful and handsome?

Home should be a place to hold one's own, a safe space to retreat to. But, importantly, it is also an area for social connection – from the intimate

relationships that grow in the street and wider neighbourhood.

The quality of the home therefore impacts on the quality of the city. Through the day lives, prompting matters – is it the site of the quality of spaces for privacy and social interaction?

The notion of beauty is often deemed too subjective. But the basic ingredients of architecture – such as proportion of space and materials – are timeless. While the kind of housing we want for future generations. From daylight and access through to views from the well designed homes can make a positive difference to our and wellbeing. — CCR

### 15. — ADDRESSES

#### Deirdre Mask

Author of 'The Address: What Street Addresses About Identity, Race and Power'

#### Why is it important that we have a functional address that can street names and addresses to positively shape our lives?

We take our street addresses for granted but in fact billions of people clearly defined way to find them. This might seem obvious but addresses play an important modern economic and social one, you will often struggle to bank account, establish credit, cast a vote. Even receiving a prove impossible. And governments be able to find people and to send out ambulances and, quarantines and track diseases. why international organisations addresses as a key tool for

Addressing seems easy but on the street and mark a door. But it's actually surprising to devise an effective address that will grow with a city. organisations help: the World an online course explaining fundamental techniques. though, most of the work and maintained by cities. Several companies offer digital but even these can't replace of traditional street addresses.

Apart from the practical names have become living community memories. One names – Market Street, history on their signs. Street

after local and national heroes explain what people valued or even didn't value the paltry number of streets named after women. Meanwhile, debates over whether slaveholder street names should be changed also provide focal points for much-needed debates about race and identity. Even the numbered street names in the US say something about a nation's founding values. A street never just a street name, even when number. — CCR

### 16. — ARCHITECTURE

#### Alex Bozikovic

Co-author of 'Toronto Architecture: A City Guide' and Canadian National Magazine award-winner

#### How can we design a better learning environment?

"We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us." When Winston Churchill said that, he was referring to the UK's House of Commons. But certainly true more broadly – not of the spaces we occupy as children. Architects and educators alike have long believed that school buildings have a profound impact on children's learning and development. Tall stacks of piles enforced the regimentation of 19th-century schooling. Low, brick open buildings of the postwar era Perkins and Will's Crow Island school in Illinois, or Denys Lasdun's Harrow Primary School in London – reflected new political and pedagogical realities while presenting young lives with ideas about form, space and light.

So where is that ambition today? Many contemporary schools in the UK and North America are drab exercises in efficiency and economy. One comes from Prague. There, a local government conducted an international competition for a new elementary building. Its winners, the Canadian studio Office Ou, responded to the challenge with a four-level structure that shows off sustainable mass construction, provides generous access to the outdoors and natural ventilation and gives the school community of room shapes and configurations. Truly, then, this is the kind of architecture that directly models a generous, sustainable, creative society. Who would say no to that?

### 17. — PERSPECTIVE

#### Liza Donnelly

Cartoonist at 'The New York Times', CBS News, CNN and more

#### How can we get better at seeing the funny side?

I've been doing this for 40 years, observing people and drawing since I was a child, so it's part of