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Local, National and Global: Redrawing the Design Historical Map

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Abstract

The history of design has matured considerably as an academic discipline over the past thirty years, benefiting considerably from an understanding of the ways in which a variety of methods and related disciplinary fields can enrich and enhance our understanding of the material world. However,

research and publication have been geographically dominated by a focus on a comparatively limited number of countries in the industrialized world. In recent years a number of international conferences have been held with the aim of extending the territories of the world map generally delineated in histories of design. This has been accompanied by a number of propositions relating to the difficulties of constructing a world history of design. It is suggested here that professional design organizations, such as ICOGRADA, ICSID and IFI, with large memberships in all continents and a large number of countries and an impact on millions of designers throughout the world, may offer some means of beginning to redraw the design historical world map.

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