What is design?



Head

Problem solving

The ability to visualise and conceptualise the intangible.

Critically and purposefully creative – understands the ways things are now, sees what is not acceptable and imagines what it ought to be in the future.

Daring and original – looks at old problems through different perspectives or frames, is playful, daring and cheekily provocative about what could be

Doesn't jump straight to a solution – understands the problem first...

...and is comfortable with simply posing questions or provocations – for others to respond to

Humble – recognises that you don't have all the answers or ideas

Synthesis – brings together and combined ideas (from lateral places), sees how elements fit into a bigger whole

Iterative and reflexive – thinks through making things (makes a 'move', sees what happens, makes the next move based on that)

Creates a plan of action for turning ideas into change

Is ok with ambiguity and change – sets out on a path without knowing what the answer will be, and being ok with an idea changing over time

Tenacious and resilient – sees things that don't work as learning points, and keeps eye on the goal

Heart

Humanity centred

The passion and curiosity to design solutions that are right for people and planet.

People at the heart – deep empathy for whom you're designing for and with, understands different perspectives, ethical implications and personal blind spots

Inclusive – communicates visually and inclusively so that everyone can get involved, and values diversity and difference

Asset based – starting with what is strong, not wrong, and physical, natural and cultural assets

Builds relationships and connect the dots – between ideas and energy that are already there

Curious – to find out what is happening, existing contexts, and how people respond to new ideas

Collaborative – working with others to bring in different skills and perspectives and co-design ideas, and support others to use design

Facilitates listening and sharing – creates dialogues between different points of view, to create new meaning and shift power

Acts as a trigger for change – knows that your attitude – creative and actionoriented – inspires the same in others

Hand

Practical skills

The technical abilities to enable the end goal to be reached.

Thinks through making - imagines what could be through physical or visual artefacts

Mastery of materials – understands materials, whether physical (e.g. clay) or abstract (e.g. data, power) and knows how to manipulate and handle/change them

Circular – uses existing assets or materials and designs in how they can be re-purposed at the end of their current use

Makes invisible visible and complex understandable and useable – to see where to act

Makes things to spot errors and to show others what could be possible to get them to join in

Makes things desirable, convenient, enjoyable and communicates values – so they stand out and people want to buy or use them

Provides choice and flexibility in how things are used or accessed

Types of making skills

Drawing and sketching; graphic design, service/interaction design, prototyping, building and construction, programming, digital visualisation, drafting and layout, textiles/sewing, fine arts, craft, material design, advertising and branding

The head enables us to frame the right questions, explore diverse types of knowledge and make a creative and daring leap to an answer; the heart tells us to empathise with the people who are affected, understanding what works for them while thinking about the collective impact on others and our planet, as well as building relationships with organisations and individuals that might be involved in future solutions; the hand puts our creativity into use, working with materials to bring ideas to life and manipulate them into prototypes and real life objects and digital products and systems.