3. Designers and Design Discourse

Read chapter 3 of *The Culture of Design* 'Designers and Design Discourse'

In this chapter we see how the design profession has historically been quite marginal. On the one hand, designers are concerned with being seen as professionals with specific skills and knowledge to offer. One way they do this is by creating professional associations to promote and protect their interests. Another has been in promoting a kind of 'normative' history in which, often, modernism appears as a strong point of reference. On the other hand, the design industry is a highly flexible field that is always inventing new ways of doing design. New specialisms for design are constantly emerging. Thus, it becomes quite fragmented and difficult for norms to be institutionalized.

Here are some things you could do to explore these ideas.

1. Modernism in design discourse

Browse through professional design magazines. In the first instance, see whether you agree with this idea that 'modernism' is still an important point of reference. This might not be explicit. It might just be by the way 'modernistic' ideas or aesthetics are present. Record your observations. Does this analysis take you to any ideas as to why modernism might function for designers in this way, if at all?

2. New design disciplines

Historically, graphic design, fashion, industrial design and interior design have been the core sectors for design as a whole. But are there more than these? Taking each of these as a starting point, list any sub-sectors these might have. For example, under 'graphic design' you might put web design, typography or infographics. But there are probably plenty more. You might even be able to invent sub-sectors yourself. There may be some disciplines in design that sit between others, using specialists from each (e.g. museum or retail design). Consider what specific training might be necessary for each of these. Present your thoughts diagramatically.