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People often ask me what makes a good design story. I'm sure they expect me to say something like using responsible materials. Or winning awards. But the best design stories have one perfect, crystallized moment: That time when the designer got mad. Like, really, totally pissed off.

That's because the best design solutions, in my opinion, come from anger. Anger can take any form: a deep-seated resentment, a roiling frustration, a slow-burning distaste, a quiet rage. You don't have to get all Michael Douglas in *Falling Down*. But if you're mad, that means you're passionate. That you're enthusiastic. That you're committed. I can see it in

what you design. You'll probably have to explain that material you picked and how it's so sustainable you can eat it, but in a smart design project, without any description needed, I can clearly see the part of the process where you just. couldn't. take it. anymore. I can envision your idea enveloping your being, coloring you in this brilliant Amazing Hulk-green, your biceps bulging through tears in your shirt, as you push all of that pent-up, transformative energy through your oversized hands and into something good. Scary good. That's what the best design epitomizes. Anger forced into action.

It's natural for humans to bristle at the injustices we face in our daily lives, but designers are perhaps the most heavily burdened of all. Designers notice things. It's a curse that designers must carry with them for their entire lives. A pleasant walk through a nice-enough neighborhood suddenly becomes an assault to the senses because a designer starts to see all the things that are wrong. The sign is kerned poorly. The fence post is crooked. The window is broken. The parking meter is confusing. That person living on the street should be able to afford health care.

There's so much to fix it's hard not to spend the days in perpetual annoyance. But designers are better-equipped to handle anger management than most. Designers, by nature, solve problems. They have the means by which to fabricate and implement a feasible solution. So while those poor environmental advocates stand outside the local grocery store in the blinding heat, trying to persuade enough shoppers to sign a petition, a designer can make something that actually functions, that works, that looks good, that makes a difference. Today.

Designers also excel in the ability to translate their anger into a vision that gets others on board. When a politician tries to rally a crowd, he'll build a bad PowerPoint and show it in a fluorescent-lit conference room that smells like stale coffee. A designer creates a poster, a campaign, a website—an attractive way to build buy-in. Using realistic visual renderings or abstracted symbols, designers can illustrate the future for a new audience: "This is what it will look like, this is what you will like about it." An idea, transformed by a designer, gets attention.

The New York–based artist and designer Jason Eppink is known for his street art interventions like screens which fit over illuminated advertising panels, transforming them from commercial messages into pleasant, softly-pixelated art. But his most famous proj-

ect to date was a reaction to a leaky pipe in Astoria, New York. The valve, located outside an Amtrak station, had been spewing water across a sidewalk for twenty years. In summer, it was a stinky nuisance; in winter, it was an icy deathtrap. For two decades, wasted water seeped onto the street. For two decades, local residents had complained. But Eppink and his friend, fellow street artist Posterchild didn't complain. In one afternoon, using sourced materials reclaimed from the neighborhood, they designed and installed the Astoria Scum River Bridge, a seven-foot span wooden bridge that created safe passage over the urban drip.

The solution—simple in its brilliance, hilarious in its execution (they even added a cheeky dedication plaque to the front)—was so appreciated that New York council member Peter F. Vallone, Jr., presented the duo with a special commendation from the city. Two days later, Amtrak began work to fix the pipe. Within three months of the Astoria Scum River Bridge's installation, it was returned to the curb, its service no longer needed.

How many people complained about the pipe to Amtrak? How many people called that council member? How many people ruined their shoes in the ooze? How many people fell, flat out, on the iced-over concrete polka-dotted with gum, dropping their groceries, their laptops, their dignity? How many people spent hours fuming, the rest of their day ruined, but did nothing? Until one person—a designer—got fed up. But, more importantly, he got to work.

Start right there in your neighborhood. Walk until you see bad kerning and broken windows and scum rivers and people who really should be able to afford health care. Walk until you get mad. Really mad. Seethingly, spine-tinglingly mad.

And then go home and make something beautiful.

Alissa Walker is a freelance writer in Los Angeles. She writes about design, architecture, cities and transportation for publications including *Fast Company, GOOD, Dwell, Print, ReadyMade, The Architect's Newspaper*, Design Observer, Core77, and *LA Weekly*. She is associate producer for the public radio show "DnA: Design and Architecture," hosted by Frances Anderton. Alissa lives in a royal blue house in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, where she throws ice cream socials, tends to a drought-tolerant garden, writes infrequently on her blog, Gelatobaby, and relishes life without a car.