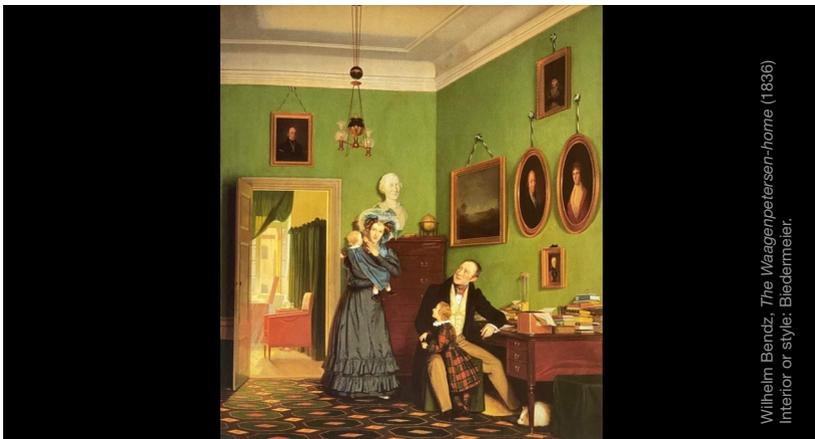


Velázquez, *Las Merinas* (1656)

In the present exploration of *saddle-points* and their significance to how we fare in the present of alternative realities, the way we relate to children is at cause: a cause for meticulous attention in Velasquez's painting, while attention is moved to the parents in the Wilhelm Bendz's portrait of the W-home. At the bottom of the Velasquez painting we can see the artist at work, in the glimpse of a mirror (self-reflective). While at the bottom of the Bendz painting we see a chair (alter-reflective). The two paintings may feature two different positions on the interest and appreciation of childhood.

Along this vein, how can we understand e.g. Adolf Loos' relation to children: he eventually became a convicted pedophile. This is not included to cause moral offence. But to advance the following question: is there a relation between how we engage with time and how we conceive childhood?

Wilhelm Bendz, *The Waagenpetersen-home* (1836)
Interior or style: Biedermeier.

We are now ready to move from writing to discuss *theory*, and the directions of theory that we may opt for (based on such discussions). As some readers may already have noticed repeatedly, theory often appears as a kind of judge. What a paradox! It *depends* on DA, but wants *the last word*...

Critical theory will typically astonish us by revealing us what is *really there* (when we think about it), while being really quite dependent on it: what would the critic have to do or say if s/he didn't have the pastures of DA and had nowhere else to graze? Design curricula contain texts of this kind.

However, the problem we may have to solve—that we have on our plate, and may be on our way of solving—is to discuss the reasons designers *themselves* may have to be that critic, and making it part of the work, rather than leaving the job to professionals who are specialists in the humanities.

Maybe we do not need this divide, and perhaps it has never worked very convincingly in *design*, anyhow. Design has always been a fragile topic in the public realm. Most likely because the relations of dependency between *design* and *public culture*, are broadly quite different from in the art-field.

On the other hand, perhaps these questions raise more readily in the design field—precisely for this reason—with a growing relevance for the art-field, because the time-linear concept of history has become questionable. As for the other question: not all artists have a story to tell. Art is not told in story.

In this train of things, a different need may be on our horizon: that of bringing *others*—peers and publics—to the *saddle points* where *possible alternative realities* can exist (given that DA will exist only inasmuch as the peers and publics can be brought to this point): w/pasts, futures and presents.

How can designs be proposed if they do not feature *possible alternative realities*? Design is not a problem-solver, but dealer across different problem spaces. It is part of the work. But how exactly could we describe a cycle that would characterise *design work* productively as a *contemporary agent*?

So, let us retrace our steps. **Step 0:** the portrait of the W-home provides us with *specific* starting-point. The relationship between *adulthood*, *childhood* and *present* are different, in their relation to the *current*, than in our time. The painting could be for design what Velasquez's [Las Meninas](#) is in art.

Then **Step 1:** do sufficient research for the relation between the place of *art* & *science* in current affairs, the conventions allowed in painting at that time—in combining [templates and live motifs](#)—along with the way mundane matters were presently expressed, to become *precise* enough.

It means that you have made a *saddle-point*. After this first round of *precision*, a second one in **Step 2:** here the saddle-point involves *drawing*, *photography* and *writing* as you engage with current affairs, but with the premises from steps 1 & 2. An ecological approach to work on the present.