Here Comes the Ocean

Part optimism, part pessimism

Invited by SUSAN BIJL to explore the theme of ecology, Amsterdam-based graphic design collective Experimental Jetset arrived at the slogan “Here Comes the Ocean” – a song lyric taken from rock music and pop culture, with a tone that’s as optimistic as it is pessimistic.

Reflecting on both the dystopian and utopian sides of ecology, the slogan is used on the bags and raincoats in a distorted way, wilfully interrupted by the garments’ flashes.

Elsewhere in the collection, peace signs and ecology symbols make appearances as well, caught in fragmented patterns that show the signs and symbols rotated and orientated in various opposing directions – as if to show their contrasting meanings and internal paradoxes. A slogan without an easy message, a pattern without any sense of rest.

Experimental Jetset

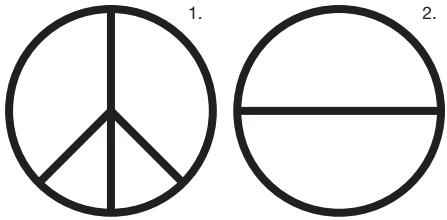
Experimental Jetset was founded in 1997 by Marieke Stolk, Erwin Brinkers and Danny van den Dungen. Focusing on printed matter and site-specific installations, EJ have worked on projects for a wide variety of institutes, including Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Centre Pompidou, MoMA NY, NADA, V–A–C, and Whitney Museum of American Art.

In 2015, Roma Publications (Amsterdam) released a monograph titled *Statement and Counter-Statement: Notes on Experimental Jetset*, featuring essays by Linda van Deursen, Mark Owens, and Ian Svenonius.

Peace sign

The symbol known internationally as the “peace symbol” (or “peace sign”) originates as a symbol representing the threat of nuclear annihilation used in British anti-nuclear activism from 1958. It was widely adopted in the American anti-war movement in the 1960s, and was re-interpreted as generically representing world peace.

The symbol was designed by Gerald Holtom (1914–1985) for the British nuclear disarmament movement. Holtom, an artist and designer, presented it to the Direct Action Committee on 21 February 1958, where it was immediately accepted as a symbol for a march from Trafalgar Square to Aldermaston, on 4 April, 1958. Holtom’s design was later adapted by the graphic designers Eric Austen (1922–1999) and Ken Garland (1929–2021).



Ecology sign

American-Australian designer and cartoonist Ron Cobb (1937–2020) created the ecology sign – a symbol he first published on October 25, 1969, in the *Los Angeles Free Press*. The symbol was formed by taking the letters “e” and “o” (taken from the words “environment” and “organism”), and putting them in superposition – thereby forming a shape reminiscent of the Greek letter *Theta*.

Experimental Jetset,
pattern (detail), 2021



Here Comes the Ocean

SUSAN BIJL meets Experimental Jetset

Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star is the title of one of our favourite albums of the 90s, by one of our favourite artists from that era – noise rock legends Sonic Youth.

When a graphic design studio named 'Experimental Jetset' emerged in Amsterdam around 1997, our attention was immediately drawn. We ran into the Experimental Jetset designers at various punk shows in the legendary squat buildings on the Oostelijke Handelskade in Amsterdam, and our paths crossed many times after that.

Their graphic work consists of straightforward typography with a functional nature, which stood out during the time and in the gritty context they appeared. We fell for the album covers and shirts for Amsterdam punk band NRA, as well as their posters for Paradiso.

The first plans for a collaboration materialised around 2005, when we asked Danny, Marieke and Erwin to make a print for the Japanese market, using our shopping bag as a canvas. The design referenced the iconic 'Thank You' texts, seen on regular single-use plastic bags, a nod to the inspiration for The New Shopping Bag. The bag was released as a limited collection in 2015, and we still get questions about it today.

This year, we invited Experimental Jetset to make a print for a collection where we, as a brand, speak up about the need to change our consumption behaviour to combat global warming. Their poetic way of dealing with social dilemmas transfers our message beautifully.

Vincent van Duin
Co-founder and creative director
of SUSAN BIJL



Susan Bijl (circa 2000), wearing the RIOT sweater designed by Experimental Jetset for the punk band NRA, in 1996.

Here Comes the Ocean



Experimental Jetset,
slogan (detail), 2021

Plastic Soup Foundation

www.plasticsoupfoundation.nl

10% of the SUSAN BIJL X EJ collection revenue will be donated to the Plastic Soup Foundation.

Our collaboration emerged from a wish to give something back. Plastic Soup Foundation (PSF) sparked our interest as an organisation that invests its money into direct action. 'Here Comes the Ocean' emphasises the problem of climate change and our worries as a country below sea level.

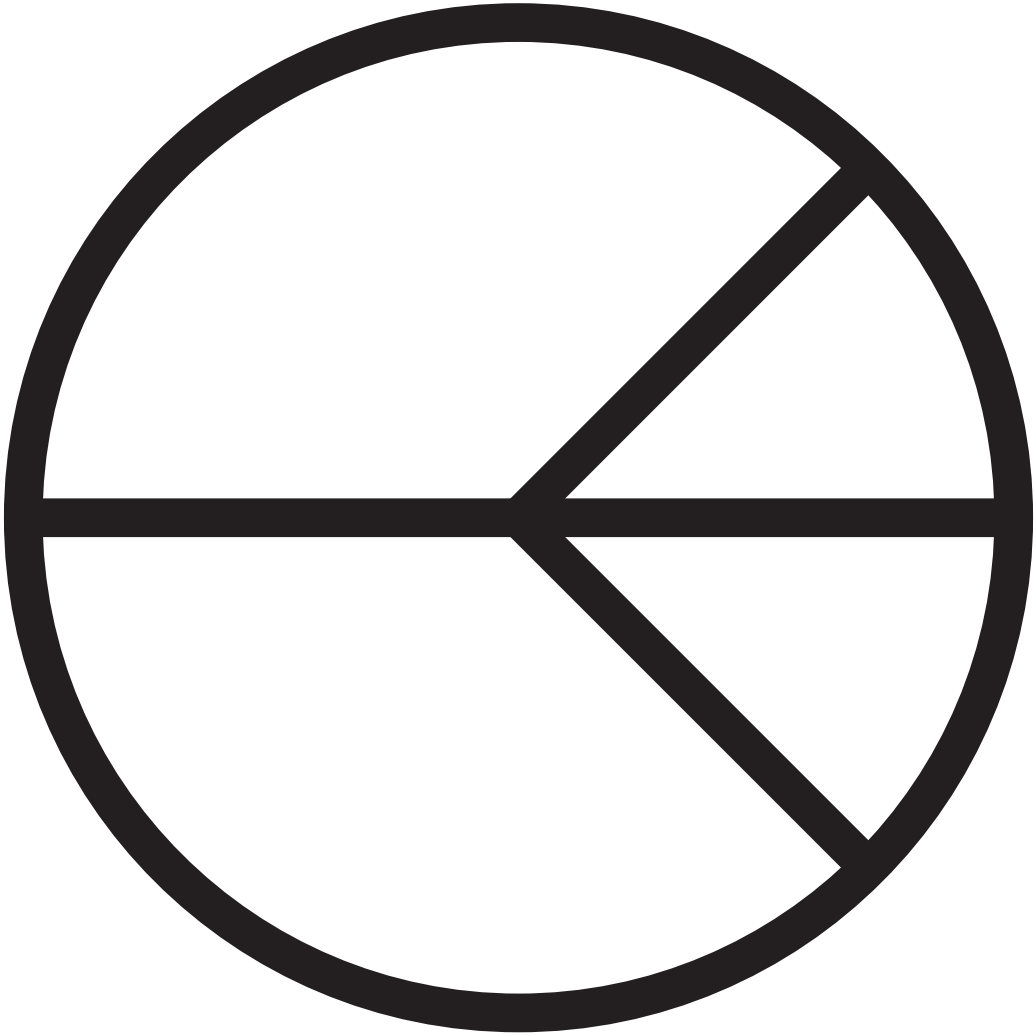
There are many ways to address climate change and countless places to look for improvement. As surfers and swimmers, we are drawn to the sea; it is a place we treasure and hate to see destroyed by plastic waste.

PSF is a 'single issue' environmental organisation concerned with stopping plastic pollution at its source. As part of their mission, they call out the industries and Dutch government where they fall short.

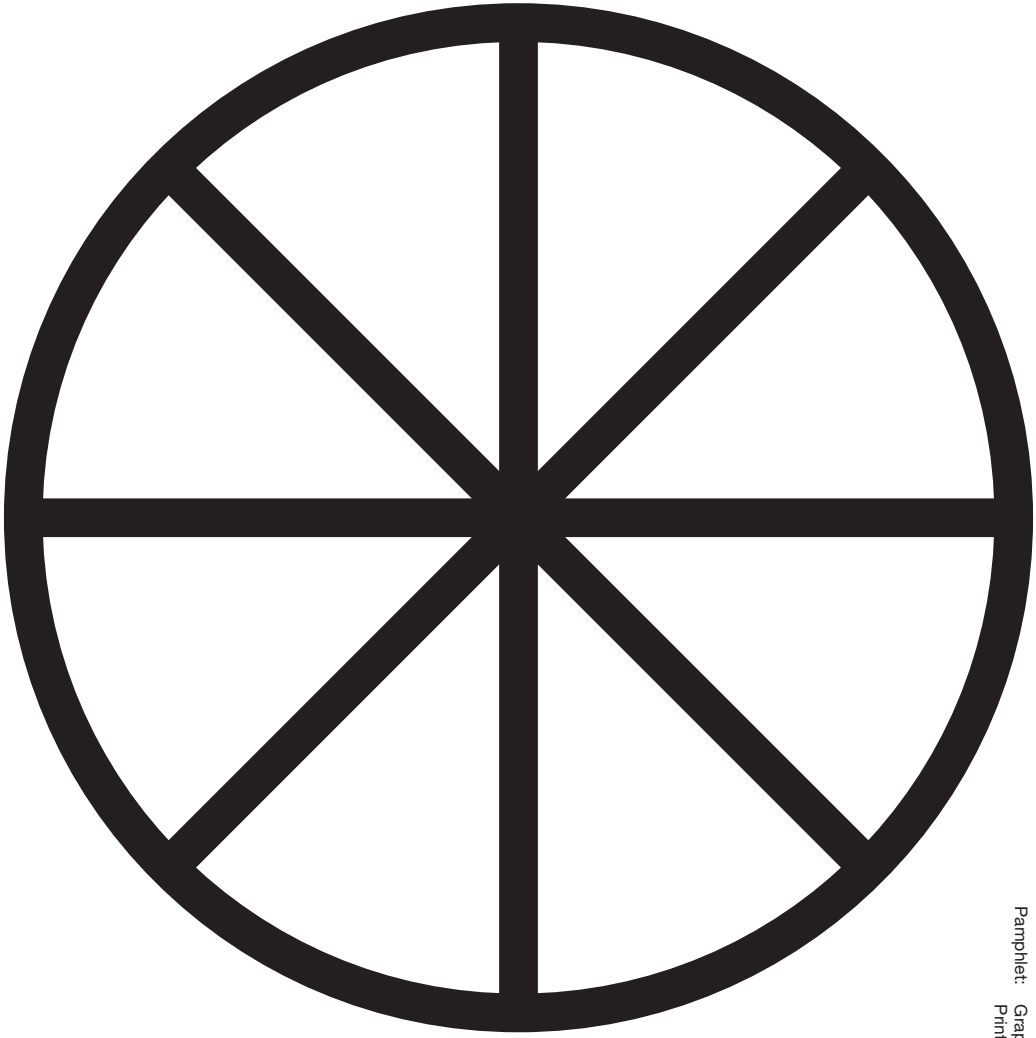
PSF also focuses on the relationship between plastics and human health. Their recent work in this field includes campaigns on microplastics and the effects on our health caused by plastic waste. Education underlies everything PSF does, as children are the future.

We have advocated accessible alternatives for single-use plastic bags for over 20 years. We see the change it has made so far and will continue our quest with future generations in mind, to end this harmful plastic plague.

SUSAN BIJL



PEACE

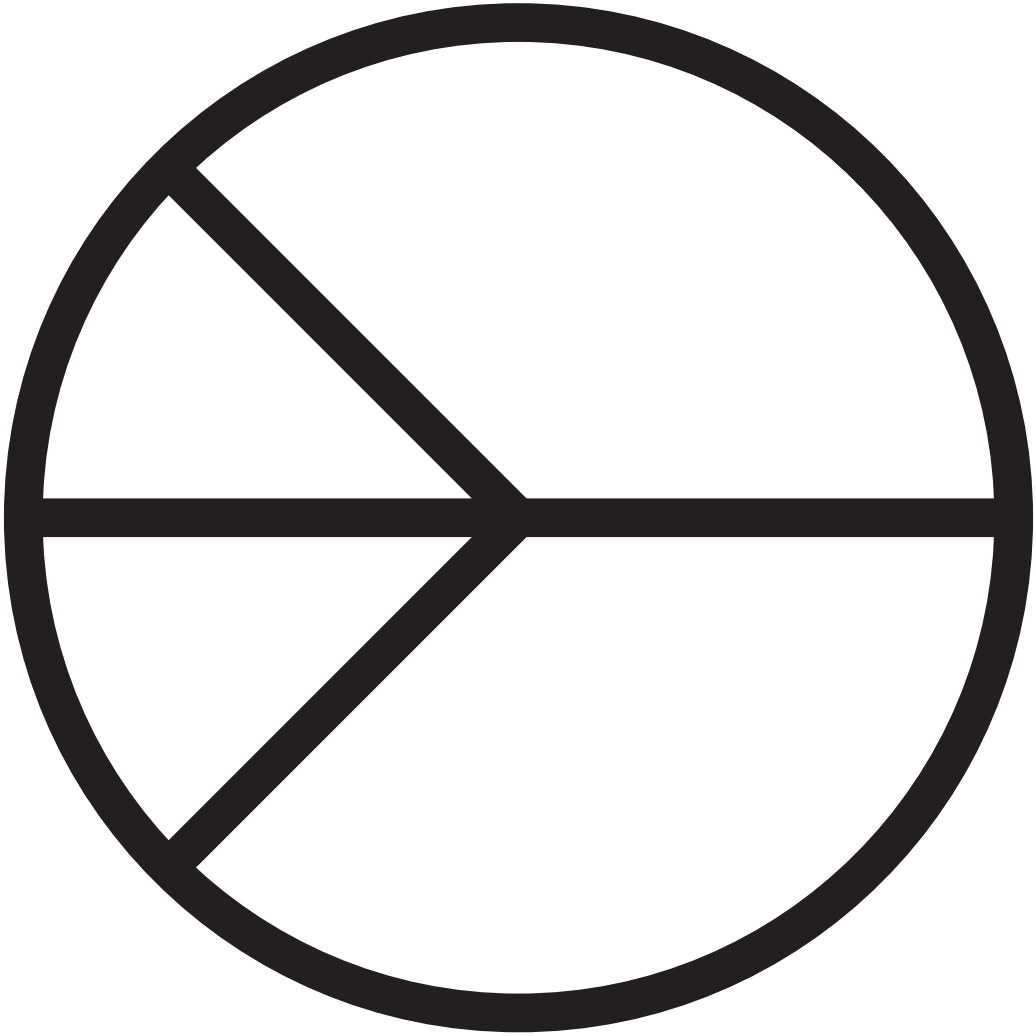


SUN

Pamphlet: Graphic design by Experimental Jetset
Printed by SSP / De Raddraaier

Here Comes the Ocean




WAR