

spin cycle

FIVE DESIGNERS REIMAGINE A FAMILIAR SYMBOL.

One of the most familiar symbols in the world of design—indeed, in the world—is the recycling icon, a three-way Mobius triangle of arrows suggesting the endless promise of reuse and rejuvenation for glass bottles, cardboard boxes, aluminum cans, and other disposable materials. The mark is credited to Gary Anderson, who was a 23-year-old student at the University of Southern California in 1970 when his logo won a design contest. The symbol has been borrowed, copied, tweaked, and recycled around the globe ever since.

With the world's fragile environment and resources in an increasingly precarious state, and with Anderson's logo now 35 years old, *PRINT* invited several designers to recycle the symbol itself. Their responses vary in optimism and disaffection. One particularly vocal idea came from Michael Strassburger, cofounder of Seattle design firm Modern Dog, who notes, "I thought I'd express what the logo would really say if it could speak." His version reads: "RECYCLE YOU ASS WIPE." Here's a look at five other approaches.



AMY FRANCESCHINI • FOUNDER AND DESIGNER, FUTURE FARMERS
SAN FRANCISCO

"I made this logo a long time ago for a project we printed on recycled paper with soy inks. It symbolizes that nature and humans are linked, and that every organism is just one link in a very long, connected chain—a reminder that every cause has an effect, and that those effects affect us all."



BILL THORBURN • EXECUTIVE DESIGN DIRECTOR, CARMICHAEL LYNCH THORBURN
MINNEAPOLIS

"This mark is so identifiable; I wanted to move it from a functional idea to a personal aspiration. Everyone knows what the icon means, but the next level is, how do you relate to it? A good mark should not only identify an idea or company but also give it credit for its values, aspirations, and emotions. What if we replace 'Recycle' with the rallying cry 'Join'? So it becomes less about a civic duty and more about a shared movement. The green stays: It's not only a nod to the mark's equity, but also a great cue. It works perfectly with the new design."



ROB ALEXANDER • DESIGNER, TANK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

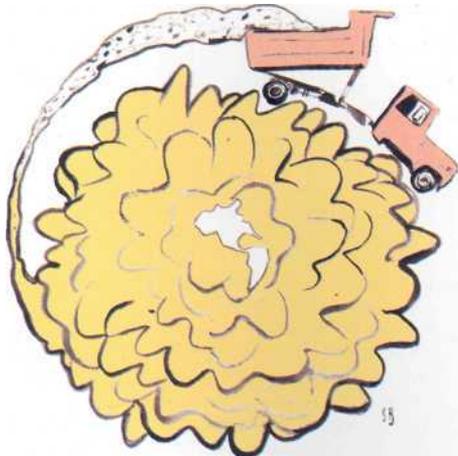
"My solution does not involve the replacement or redesign of the existing symbol. Instead, the new mark is an extension of the current vernacular. The original symbol does not distinguish between items that can be recycled and items that have been manufactured using recycled materials (a greater concern now than when the symbol was originally designed). The pair of symbols is intended to create a more articulate language by communicating the difference between recyclable and recycled products."



ROBYNNE RAYE • COFOUNDER AND DESIGNER, MODERN DOG
SEATTLE

"I wanted this symbol to question the idea of consumption. Recycling is important, but the bigger message should be 'use less.' I used the international symbols of aid—the cross and crescent moon—because the earth is obviously in a crisis."

STEVE BRODNER • ILLUSTRATOR
NEW YORK



"The dumptruck has the elements of life and renewal flowing out of it, forming a yellow flower. It's a world remade from recycling, with respect paid to nature. I believe in this stuff—I think we're going to hit the wall, and we're going to figure out how not to die, because that's human nature. We sacrifice ourselves in our ignorance, and when the pain rises to a certain level, our eyes clear up. That might be the thing that saves us, but it's going to be a hell of a price to pay. I think the 21st century is going to be terrible, but the 22nd century is going to be fantastic."