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## Seize the day

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# SEIZE

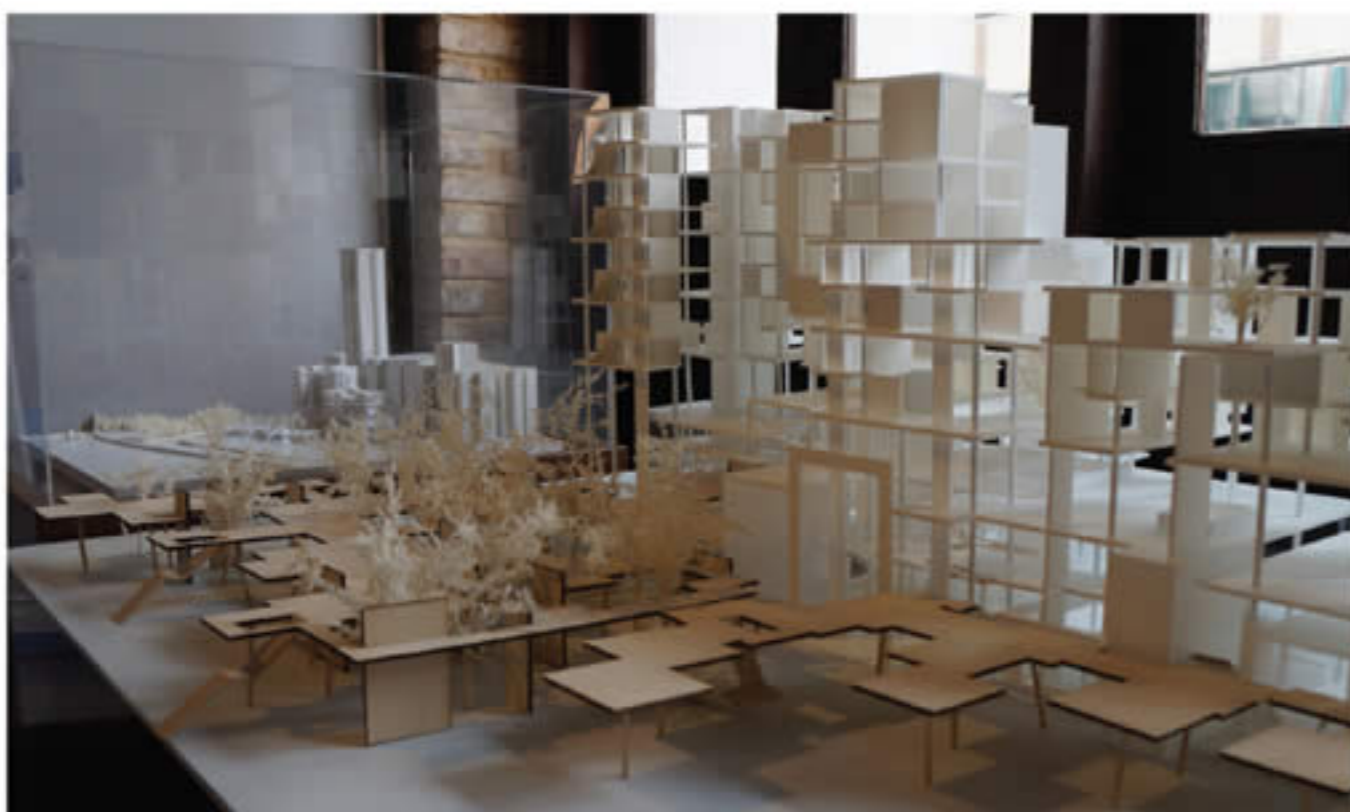
THE DAY



*We have entered a new era, when taste and appetites are in flux and opportunities can evaporate in seconds. To triumph, designers need to think with creativity, deploy craft and technique, step forward with passion, and diligently observe the market. The work unveiled at the HKDI's annual design show had all these elements.*  
*LIBBY ZENG reports.*



ALL IMAGES: HKDI



Colourful lights danced to the rhythm of stirring music as professional models walked the runway to showcase exquisitely stylish designs. An ecstatic audience held their breath, while still managing to take photos with cameras and cell phones. It sounds like an international show in one of the four fashion capitals, but in a way, this was something better. When the young student designers took their richly deserved curtain call this June after “New Fashion Force”, the annual design show of HKDI’s Fashion and Image Design Department (FID), the audience could believe they had seen the talents who will help Asia take its place as a leading force in the global fashion industry.

“The students’ work was truly brilliant and a testament to the determination and dedication of the fashion team to provide quality education,” says Elizabeth McLafferty, Head of the Department of Fashion and Image Design.

Thirty-two students presented their exceptional work to the public this year, with a special emphasis on texture, as part of “Emerging Design Talents 2014: New Voices”, which featured projects from students of HKDI and IVE (Lee Wai Lee).

“They adopted various techniques such as print, laser cutting, embroidery and 3D effects with great attention to detail,” says Portia To, Senior Lecturer and leader of the Higher Diploma Fashion Design Programme.

This year’s show ratcheted up the excitement a notch

with the inauguration of an Accessories Show, which introduced intriguing works from the first cohort of graduates of Accessories Design. Every student was tasked with designing full sets of works including garments, hats, bags and shoes to create a symphony of fashion and style.

This new course was created to meet a new trend in the fashion industry, in which clothing and accessory collections are inspired by the same theme. “We want to have designers with these skills and mindsets to satisfy the market demand in Hong Kong,” said To.

HKDI has always celebrated a market-focused passion for creativity and innovation. The first cohort of graduates from Architectural Design provides an illustration. Comix Home Base, a beautifully revitalised historic building in Wanchai was chosen as the venue for FORM/SHIFT, an exhibition that displayed the outstanding student designs.

Weaving creative imagination and solid skills into unique Hong Kong streets and spaces including Hollywood Road, Pound Lane, Po Hing Fong area and the coastline of To Kwa Wan, the students succeeded in unfolding the city’s fascinating stories with design projects that included underground

rock climbing, an interweaved tower art school, and a get-fit park for the elderly. The topics “highlighted the students’ own interest in architectural exploration and discussion, and of course their passion,” says Carol Leung, Visiting Fellow of HKDI Architectural Design, who says that one of the most positive aspects of the



« WE WANT TO HAVE DESIGNERS WITH THESE SKILLS AND MINDSETS TO SATISFY MARKET DEMAND IN HONG KONG. »



work was the students’ positive attitude toward learning from industry professionals.

“We invited experienced architects to conduct a public review of the projects during the exhibition. I was impressed by the active engagement of our students during and after the review,” says Leung.

If the Architecture Design Graduation Exhibition was a sunrise, indicating a bright future for the architectural education and design scene of Hong Kong, then the well-crafted works in the iConique - Jewellery and Lifestyle Design Show were a sparkling constellation, imbuing a sultry summer’s eve with twinkling romance and elegance.

“The show has been a complete success. The fabulous and exciting atmosphere can be seen in the wide eyes, giant smiles, and nonstop flashing of cameras,” remarked Bill Chan, Course and Stream leader in Jewellery Design.

More design approaches were pursued in this year’s exhibition covering new forms, topics, materials and styles. Chan believes it proves the students’ creativity and dedication to the design process.

The ability to innovate has always been considered a key factor for success

PREVIOUS PAGE FASHION COLLECTIONS FROM HKDI'S 'NEW FASHION FORCE 2014' OPPOSITE PAGE TOP WORKS IN HKDI'S ARCHITECTURE DESIGN GRADUATION EXHIBITION OPPOSITE PAGE LOWER LIEW WAN SING'S DESIGN FROM 'ICONIQUE - JEWELLERY AND LIFESTYLE DESIGN SHOW' THIS PAGE TOP TWO WORKS FROM HKDI'S FASHION IMAGE SHOW 'THE REVOLUTIONARY IMAGE OF THE NEW GENERATION' THIS PAGE BELOW A PARTICIPANT ENJOYS A GAME AT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DESIGN AND DIGITAL MEDIA EXHIBITION



LEFT PERFORMANCE FROM MUSIC IN MOTION  
OPPOSITE PAGE TOP  
A SCREEN CAPTURE FROM MICRO FILM SCREENING  
OPPOSITE PAGE LOWER  
PERFORMANCE FROM THE MULTIMEDIA ENTERTAINMENT SHOW

in the design industry. However, Chan believes a good designer should also have a keen awareness of the market. "Our society needs change and enhancement every day." Says Chan.

For Chan, listening to the voices of the industry plays an important role in a designer's development. Only when designers understand an industry's values can they capture trends and make successful innovations.

The same spirit was observed in "Music in Motion", vibrant concerts presenting diverse music genres offered by students of the Higher Diploma course in Digital Music and Media. From composing, writing lyrics, arranging, to live shows, the students showcased remarkable ability.

"The abundant opportunities available through the Internet and social media have made it much easier for a fresh graduate to publish their work, showcase talent, and get great exposure nowadays, compared to the past when releasing music to the public would cost a large amount of money," says Shirley Cheung, Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication Design and Digital Media who leads the programme for the Higher Diploma in Digital Music and Media.

However, chance still favours the prepared mind. That's why this programme covers all necessary techniques, integrating education and training in both music production and audio technology, so that students can adapt themselves to the industry's intense competition, and some even received contract offers from music production companies before graduating from HKDI. Lil' Ashes, an emerging folk-pop duo being one example.

The Music industry is not alone in confronting both the opportunities and challenges of the digital era. The movie industry is also going through great changes with the birth of microfilms.

"Microfilms have become popular and our department has a corresponding module, so we decided to hold a screening to test our students' skills," says Peter Si, Acting Principal Lecturer, in the Department of Multimedia and Internet Technology, IVE (Lee Wai Lee).

The Micro Film Screening was jointly held by the Department of Communication Design & Digital Media (CDM) at HKDI and the Department of Multimedia & Internet Technology (MIT) at IVE (Lee Wai Lee). According to Si, students' performances were more mature than last year, with advanced techniques and storytelling skills.

Most of the works presented were creative advertisements and animations. The nature of the microfilm genre requires students to master the skills they have learned and display them in a confined time limit, ranging from 30 seconds to three minutes.

Versatility is one of the most important traits for students to meet the ever-changing market trends and the graduates from Fashion Image Design are well acquainted with this principle. This year, students from two streams worked together, combining make-up styling, hair styling, fashion styling and stage costume at the Image Show.

"Throughout the preparation they learned the importance of team building and understood that arguments and compromises are inevitable to achieve satisfying outcomes," says Shaun Cheung, Programme Leader of Fashion Image Design. He also emphasised that in this industry, creative stylists are expected to have a well-rounded set of skills.

The stories narrated at the Multimedia Entertainment Show offered a sensational journey fused with laughter and tears. Students ingeniously blended stage setting, music, lighting, and visual effects



with their distinctive storytelling skills and valuable life experiences with a positive attitude towards the city's prospects under the theme "Our Happy Days."

Steve Leung, Lecturer in the Department of Multimedia & Internet Technology and Creative Director and Production Manager of the Multimedia Entertainment Show, believes it's the keen observation of life and the in-depth portrait of human nature that resonated so much with the emotions of the audience.

"Real life is the source of their creativity. It's not about acting, but about being human," says Leung, who believes this pursuit of human nature's peculiarities will never be outdated, since it's deeply rooted in everybody's heart.

New Voices was the theme of this year's graduation show. Passion, creativity, perseverance, diligence and determination were the key words used by HKDI's lecturers – all of which should be based on a solid foundation of proficient and comprehensive skills.

HKDI strives to bring voices from the industry to their students through seminars, lectures and exhibitions in order to ensure they understand market values and current trends. For the same reason, HKDI works closely with host companies, providing internship opportunities to prepare students for future employment in the Student Industrial Attachment Programme.

"Students of the Higher Diploma Programme need to complete a period of Industrial Attachment, which allows them to step into the market place," says McLafferty. "Without this, their education is incomplete and too abstract."

The Industrial Attachment provides the perfect platform for students to practice their skills, gain insights into the industry and learn from experienced professionals. "Fashion Design attracts a lot of industry projects, so students have the chance to work alongside local and international designers such as Barney Cheng, Yohji Yamamoto, Stanley Wong, Mao Jihong and so on and so forth," says McLafferty.

Denis Diderot, the prominent French philosopher, art critic and writer once said, "There are three principal means of acquiring knowledge... observation of nature, reflection, and experimentation. Observation collects facts; reflection combines them; experimentation verifies the result of that combination."

HKDI successfully combines these three principles to get the best from its students. With a solid foundation of skills, great personalities, and a keen observation of market principles, graduates are well placed to seize the opportunities of the industry, establish their own style, and be inspiring new voices on the local and international stage. 