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SIGNED

2019
ISSUE
21

MUDDIED OAFS
OR DEEP DESIGN
THINKERS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HONG KONG DESIGN INSTITUTE



It may be instructive, as this special three-part series of *SIGNED* draws to a close, to look back at the origins of the practice that inspired it, what has come to be known as Design Thinking, which is posited on applying the practical way in which designers create their work to other fields and disciplines.

The actual term “Design Thinking” was coined by David Kelley (who conceived the Apple computer’s first mouse) when he founded a company called Ideo. When asked to help a healthcare foundation to re-structure its organisation and a university to create alternative learning environments to the traditional classroom, he realised that he was dealing with a fundamentally new kind of design challenge.

To distinguish this new kind of challenge, he began to refer to it as “design with a small d”, but increasingly found that when asked to define what designers do, he was inserting the word “thinking”. This is how the term “Design Thinking” emerged.

We decided to take a look at how three types of studio operate: the one-person band, a duo and a medium-to-large-scale outfit. Then to draw comparisons with the world of sport. The solo artist was juxtaposed with an individual cyclist, the couple working together with a fencer duelling against an opponent, and the bigger enterprise with a rugby team.

This latter pairing was perhaps the most surprising. Far from being the somewhat

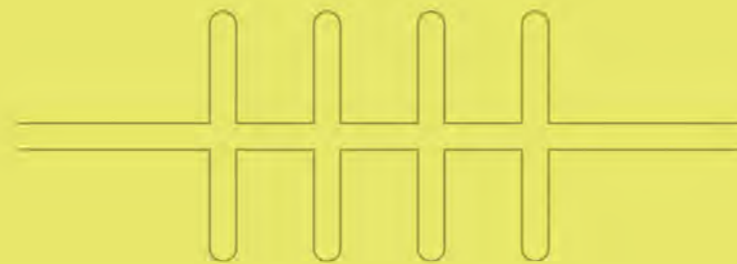
chaotic, often violent clash of two groups of muscle-bound men that it can appear to the casual observer, rugby in all its many manifestations was found to be a game of high strategy and on-the-spot inspiration that has a great deal in common with a studio full of specialists seeking a successful route to a common goal.

Among the larger organisations with which parallels can be found with sizeable creative agencies are those pertaining to government and the service industries. The former, though adhering to the same Design Thinking principles, is usually a more straightforward challenge, revolving around a more efficient method of organisation with more effective outcomes.

Delivering better service — be it to do with health or nutrition or a more equal spread of opportunities — is a far more amorphous subject and therefore prone to a greater variety of solutions. Which is precisely what makes it so amenable to a Design Thinking approach and so influential in the entire DT ethos.

At the end of the day, what we hope to have proven throughout this hopefully fascinating series is that the key factor in Design Thinking is “testability”. In contrast with conventional top-down lines of action, DT relies on actual feedback from actual people. Does it work? Is it what those it sets out to help really want? If not, why not? In the immortal words of the medieval Scottish warrior-king Robert the Bruce: “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try and try again.”

A SPORTING CHANCE: “TESTABILITY” SETS DESIGN THINKING APART



CONTENTS

01	02 — 03	04 — 05
Editor's Note	Table of Contents	HKDI Happenings

A sporting chance:
"testability" sets
Design Thinking
apart

06 — 07	08 — 11	12 — 15
Feature Article	Studio Showcase	Studio Showcase

Muddied oafs or deep
Design Thinkers?

Perceptual Thinkers

Oppenheim
Architecture

16 — 19	20 — 23	24 — 25
Studio Showcase	Studio Showcase	Feature Article

Way Studio

Layer

Governments
opting for practice
over theory

26 — 27
Master Thinkers

Tech x Design
Bernard Suen

28 — 29
Master Thinkers

Architecture x
Design
Aaron Tan

30 — 31
Master Thinkers

Consultancy x
Design
Iva Sladic Keco

32 — 33
Feature Article

Providing real-
world services
that actually work

34 — 35
Case Study

Kudos for human
touch of Kudoz

36 — 37
Case Study

Co-ordinated
communication
path to
Patchwork's
success

38 — 43
Denim Festival

Celebrating nearly
150 years of
denim culture

44 — 47
Design Talents

HKDI alumni
making a name for
themselves

48
Worldwide Happenings

49
Student Award

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HKDI HAPPENINGS

Coldefy, Architect of HKDI

01 The making of an iconic building: "Coldefy, Architect of HKDI"

Running until mid of March at the Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI) is an exhibition titled "Coldefy, Architect of HKDI", which tells the story of its emblematic building by French architects Thomas Coldefy and Isabel Van Haute, with visuals, sketches and models. The exhibition brings together the strengths of its four design departments, that offer programmes spanning architecture, interior and product design, communication design and digital media, design foundation studies, and fashion and image design.

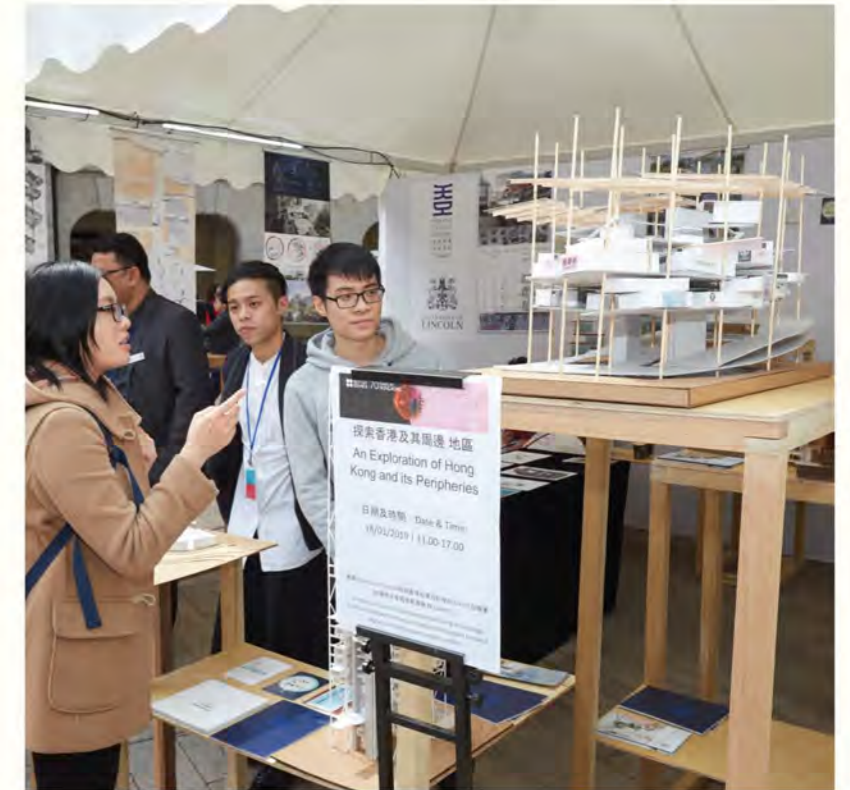


Exhibition | 31.01.2019 - 13.03.2019

02 Sparking ideas with the British Council

The Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI) participated in the British Council Festival Of Ideas, titled Spark, at Tai Kwun, Central in January. Dr. Lay Lian ONG, Principal of HKDI and the Institute of Vocational Education (Lee Wai Lee), was invited to join the leadership panel discussion on how skills can be engendered in the future workforce through creativity and innovation.

Two groups of HKDI graduates from the Higher Diploma in Creative Media and Architectural Design programmes displayed an altered-reality game and an exhibition of architectural projects respectively. To kick off the ideas exchange, two students from the Higher Diploma in Architectural Design programme joined the Spark: Bricks Debate to share their visionary thinking on the role of social innovation in today's society and the key challenges that the world faces with academics, practitioners of social enterprise and the public.



02

03 More deliberations on the denim jean pool

Following the success of the inaugural Denim Festival organised by the Hong Kong Design Institute, an exhibition titled "DDDenim Life & Style" is running until June this year at the HKDI. This represents a comprehensive overview of denim, encompassing the material's various styles, its history and its impact on modern culture. The show features celebrities' collections, rare collectibles from the Fashion Archive, and new interpretations of the denim style and culture by young creatives.

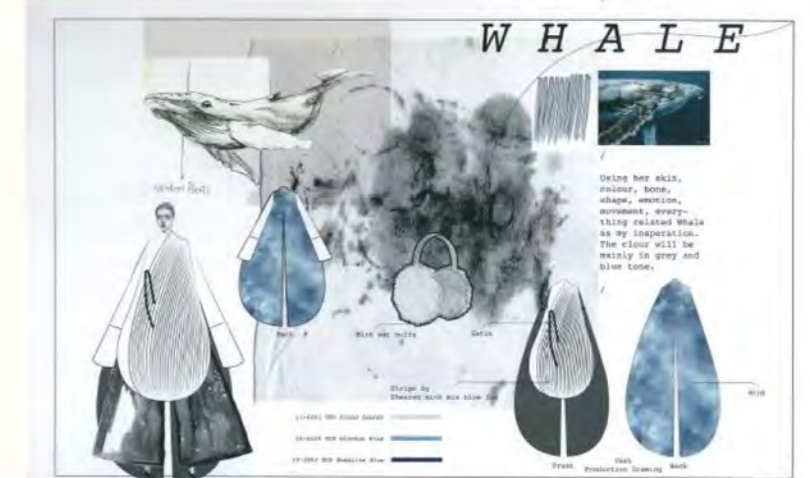
04 Brushing aside the competition in fur awards

Hong Kong Design Institute Fashion Design students swept nine out of the 10 awards on offer in the Fur Design Competition 2019, pocketing more than \$50,000 cash prizes in total. The first runner-up, Chung Lai Yau from the Higher Diploma in Fashion Design Menswear, adopted the concept of the giant marine mammal in her work Whale, that presented a grey-and-blue art piece; while second runner-up Ng Leong Yin from the Higher Diploma in Fashion Design took a bold approach, using neon green to highlight the "love and passion for fashion" in his work.

Chung and Ng will take a short overseas course in Copenhagen and Toronto respectively to further enhance their skills and professional knowledge in fur design.



04



04



MUDDIED OAFS OR DEEP DESIGN THINKERS?



The sport of rugby was so called after the English public school where it was invented almost 200 years ago. The culprit was one William Webb Ellis, after whom the game's premier tournament, the Rugby World Cup, is named. Although its origins are shrouded in myth and mystery, legend has it that the young Webb Ellis — ironically, a much better cricketer than he was footballer — transgressed the rough-and-ready rules of the school's primitive form of football by picking the ball up and running with it. This was then accepted as an integral part of the game that came to be known as Rugby Football.

With time, lots of other major differences were established: in rugby, the ball — not round as in football but elliptical — can only be passed backwards or sideways, never forwards; the goal-posts are shaped like the letter H and the ball has to be kicked between the upper parts of them, even if it sails way above. This is worth three points, as opposed to the five points for a “try”, gained by placing the ball over the back line. The relative complexity of the game is probably what has kept it from becoming anywhere near as popular as football.

Irish playwright Oscar Wilde famously said that “rugby is a game for barbarians played by gentlemen, while football is a gentleman's game played by barbarians”. He also opined that “rugby is a good occasion for keeping 30 bullies far from the centre of the city”. English comedian Peter Cook was even more scathing: “Rugby is a game for the mentally deficient, that is why it was invented by the British. Who else but an Englishman could invent an oval ball?”

What has all this got to do with Design Thinking? Well, it may be instructive to consider that one of the fastest-growing design trends today is something known as Scrum, which “encourages teams to learn through experiences, self-organise while

working on a problem, and reflect on their wins and losses to continuously improve.”

It takes its name from the scrum, short for scrummage, in Rugby Union, which is a means of re-starting play after a minor infringement. It involves up to eight players from each team, known as the pack, binding together in three rows and interlocking with the opposing team's forwards. The ball gets fed into the middle of the scrum towards the hooker, who tries to win possession by kicking backwards towards his team-mates, who then put all their force into trying to drive the scrum forwards.

Many neutral onlookers regard the scrum as a major hindrance to spectator enjoyment. Just when the game has begun to flow, with the backs forward-passing to each other in an exhilarating race to their opponents' line prior to touching-down for a try, everything stops for a scrum. In the Design Thinking world, however, it is a key part of the process, a pause to reflect on progress made and consider how best to continue. It brings order to the otherwise chaotic interaction of creative minds all looking for answers.

This is just one of the apparent anomalies between making comparisons of Design Thinking with the rough-and-tumble game of rugby. In fact, despite appearances to the contrary for the uninitiated, rugby is one of the most tactically challenging games there is, with infinite variations in strategy both in coaching and impromptu decision-making on the field. Those men with their crunching tackles and insouciant attitude to injury are actually among sport's foremost intellectuals when it comes to knowing how to combine to achieve victory. Which is what makes the similarities with a large design studio, attempting to integrate all manner of experts into a cohesive team, such a winning analogy.

PERCEPTUAL THINKERS

Budapest, Hungary
www.pthinkers.com

Perceptual Thinkers draws inspiration from the behaviour and clothing preferences of people living with autism. Its clothing lines aim to give an insight into this specialist perception by using stimulating fabrics and playful design patterns to experience clothing as a sensorial phenomenon.

It believes that the clothes are a means of communication — that the way we dress is the way we interact with other people. And that clothes are capable of serving many different needs, either completely ordinary or special ones.

The company's main focus is on physical perception, therefore it places playful, stimulating details, or conversely, calming effects on the clothes. It thinks that this sensitive state of mind provoked by the clothes helps us to understand the peculiar perception of people living with autism as much as it concentrates on our inner needs.

Because they follow the ethos of design for all, these clothes are as suitable for neurotypical people as for those who are affected by autism. They are not medical aids nor are they fully conceptual clothes — they aim for something in between. Their goal is to spread the notion of "conscious shopping", so as much background information as possible is provided about the products.



01
"We Need a Bit of a Twist"
Perceptual Thinkers's Autumn/
Winter 2018 Collection
Photos by Balázs Máté

01



What do you see as the main advantages and main drawbacks of working in a large or medium-sized design studio?

More freedom and responsibility. Having your own time and resource allocation and complete creative freedom. However, we are fully committed to ourselves and to the market. As a novice, though, it is very difficult to get close to the fire.

Can any comparison be drawn between the way design studios function and a rugby team plays?

The main thing is that everyone has their own dedicated task and only needs to focus on that. By working with a variety of specialist professions, we can achieve a more efficient and comprehensive operation in a design team. Specified knowledge for a team, combined with a common unified knowledge, can provide a good basis for effective working.

How do you believe Design Thinking can help governments in public service design to increase their effectiveness?

In my opinion, design is a universal knowledge that affects our communities on many levels. It can give a concrete solution to everyday problems but also to larger problems. Beyond its economic role, it can also help people in social issues. Through the Perceptual Thinkers brand, we are investigating the ability of a fashion product to help us get to know a foreign social issue. Our clothes are capable of presenting (positively) a social phenomenon such as autism, which is really misunderstood. So design can also act as a social shaping force beyond product development.

01



01



01



01



OPPENHEIM ARCHITECTURE

Miami, United States
www.oppenoffice.com

Oppenheim Architecture is an award-winning architecture, planning and interior-design firm specialising in hospitality, commercial mixed-use, retail and residential buildings worldwide. It has received many honours, including some 45 AIA Awards and the 2018 National Design Award for Interior Design by the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum. The firm's work is built on "both a physical and spiritual contextual sensitivity, supported by evocative and economic design solutions that all serve to enhance life".

The company's buildings are "crafted to establish the perfect balance between artistry and economics — timeless architecture that is as beautiful as it is functional". With projects spanning over 25 countries, it aims to "design with sensitivity towards human beings and Nature — harmonising with the surroundings of each context". Oppenheim Architecture is headquartered in Miami and has offices in New York and Basel.



01

01
Architecture & Interiors for
Emiliano Hotel, Rio de Janeiro
Photos by Fernando Guerra

01



01

13
8

02



02



What do you see as the main advantages and main drawbacks of working in a large or medium-sized design studio?

In a medium-sized studio, it's easier to apply a design vision across a team and promote it as a part a culture. A lot of the work that the designers do at Oppenheim Architecture is to translate the ideas I have into living works of art. This requires a lot of attention to detail, and it's something that's very difficult to scale up past a certain team size.

Can any comparison be drawn between the way design studios function and a rugby team plays?

Maybe we can compare it to the need for communication and teamwork. Everyone is working towards a similar goal and equal in the sense that we're all facing the same challenges. It's the studio leader's job to put everything in place to allow for successful collaboration.

02



03



03

02
Architecture for Star Metals Offices and Residences, Atlanta
Renderings by Luxigon; Methanoia; Taller De Escalas

03
Architecture & Interiors for GLF Headquarters, Commercial Office Complex, Miami
Photos by Karen Fuchs



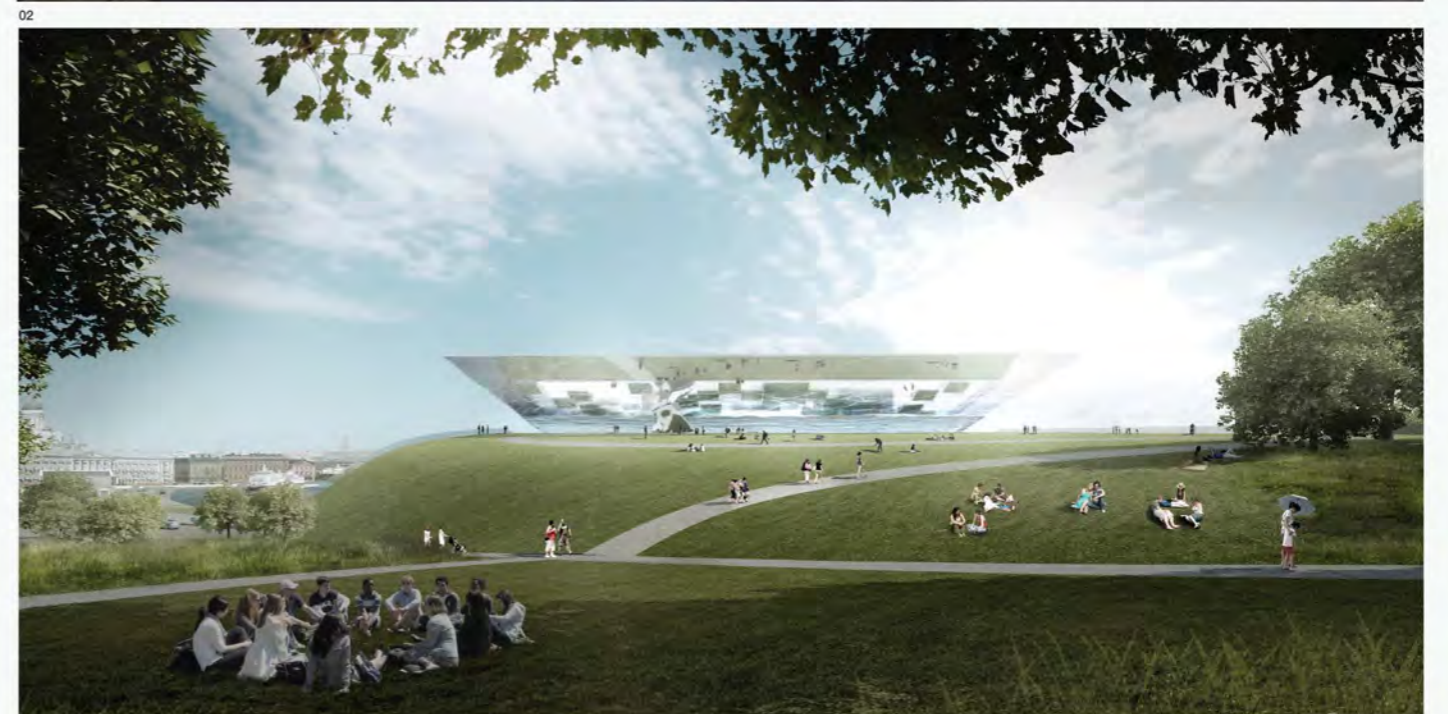
03

WAY STUDIO

Beijing, China
www.way-studio.com

Way Studio is an innovative architecture and design studio with a focus on coalescing architecture with art and technology. It has focused on discovering new possibilities through cross-disciplinary collaborations. Its scope of work covers urban planning, cultural projects such as galleries, museums and opera houses, mixed-use buildings, architectural renovations, residential projects, exhibitions and installation designs. Its collaboration with other disciplines “results in an adaptive, flexible approach and methodology in our work”.

The studio has done a lot of inter-disciplinary work alongside artists, designers, consultants, engineers and others, always with a focus on finding new ways of doing things. It says it is interested in discovering the balance between people and Nature, culture and technology. Way Studio currently has offices in Beijing, Hong Kong and Vancouver.



01
“Dreaming Someone”, Architecture
& Interiors for MS-II Restaurant,
Beijing.

02
Guggenheim Museum, Helsinki.

03
LangFang Theatre, Langfang.

Can any comparison be drawn between the way design studios function and a rugby team plays?

The most obvious is team-work, of course; it is essential that everyone plays their own part well in the team for a functioning whole that moves together, and training, to build up “muscles” in order to perform when and where it matters.

Design is laborious work, which rugby also obviously is. You have to be dedicated and to really enjoy it more than a job to commit all the sweat and tears to become a designer.

Both are considered professionals, and there is a certain level of “talent” involved. Not just anyone can become a designer, there are certain artistic and logical pre-sets you need to possess in order to excel in this field.

What do you see as the main advantages and main drawbacks of working in a large or medium-sized design studio?

The advantages of larger studios are their resources such as available projects and clientele, but also suppliers and employees. It isn't just external resources but internal resources, too; the fewer the people in a company means less brain-power to use, as practices such as knowledge-share are great for growth in the workplace.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of larger firms are the politics involved; that is an inevitable by-product of any organisation with multiple people, where structure becomes a necessity. With structure comes power, and with power, competition and internal relationships to navigate. With smaller firms, it is vital to work as a tight-knit family, because you cannot survive otherwise.

It has been an on-going discussion alongside other similar-sized firms as to whether we can, and how we can, level that playing field by creating a network of smaller firms, a league if you will. The possibility would be intriguing.

How do you believe Design Thinking can help governments in public-service design to increase their effectiveness?

When we entered architectural education, we all carried naive dreams about changing or creating the future. As we mature, exit the bubble and enter reality, we realise that there is a limit to what we can do, often finding ourselves restricted by the other parties of the trifecta (architect, client and government). We have all the imagination, but none of the power! Though you would sometimes have to admit that it would be dangerous to give the inventor full reign.

Traditionally, the government will set the direction, while the designer will fill in the details, but more and more, designers are given the opportunity to create their own directions, testing grounds, creating incubators for pioneering thought and ideas. Governments often prioritise what is political correct over the necessities of the public. Designers on the other hand are less burdened with political pressures, and can therefore be more considerate to the experience of end-users. We believe that the role of the designer, in this case, is to push the government to dare to go beyond its restricted realms and help them dream bigger and higher. The designers remind them to reflect upon their decisions, to digest criticism, and turn it into the next project forward.



LAYER

London, United Kingdom
www.layerdesign.com

Founded by award-winning British design entrepreneur Benjamin Hubert, Layer is a close-knit team of industrial and digital designers, engineers, artists, researchers and branding specialists from around the world. They create products that they hope will help define the way we live, work, travel and communicate in the future, from smart wearables and furniture systems to the next generation of AI and communication tools.

Situated in the heart of East London, Layer aims to “transform human-centred insights into evocative design stories that resonate with people and their lifestyles”. The firm has received three Highly Commended accolades at the Fast Company’s annual Innovation By Design Awards, including product design and creative direction for Nolii, Axyl for Allermuir and Playr, an innovative new wearable designed for Catapult to enable amateur footballers to prepare, perform and recover like the world’s best.



What are your thoughts on the current state of crypto currencies and how does TROVE fit in?

Usage of crypto currencies has been growing slowly but steadily since 2009, when Bitcoin was developed, and will soon be widespread as a form of currency. There are currently over 1,384 different crypto currencies available. Bitcoin was the first crypto currency, and remains the best-known and largest blockchain network, followed by Ethereum, Ripple, Bitcoin Cash, Cardano, and Litecoin.

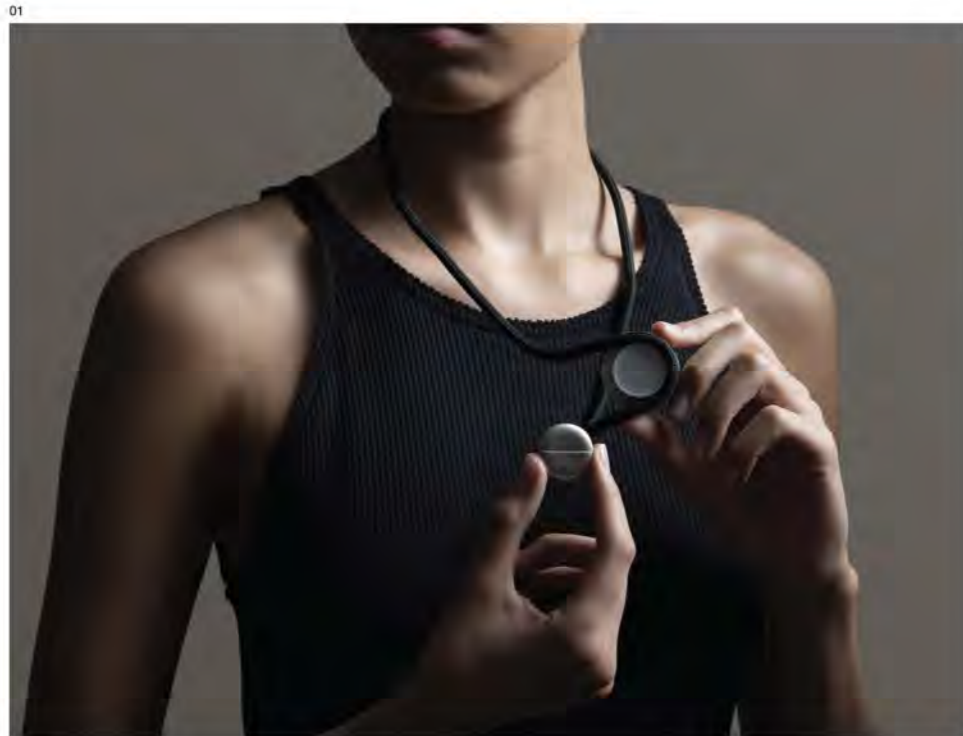
For crypto-currencies to become more widely used, they have to first gain widespread acceptance among consumers. TROVE simplifies and amplifies the crypto currency experience as a modern fashion accessory, and addresses some of the limitations currently faced by crypto currencies — such as the fact that a user’s digital fortune can be lost if a password is forgotten, or that a virtual wallet may be ransacked by a hacker.

What are some of the thought processes behind the making of the GO wheelchair?

We listened to the stories of wheelchair users and medical practitioners and then translated those stories into insights that helped us to transform the wheelchair as we know it today.

Wheelchair users are seated for up to 18 hours each day and associated injuries and discomfort are commonplace. The made-to-measure seat (via 3D printing) of the GO wheelchair accurately fits a user’s form, helping to reduce pressure points and the issues they cause.

One of the primary concerns of wheelchair users who took part in the research conducted by the studio was the stress and strain involved in self-propelling. The GO wheelchair has super tactile push rims with a surface designed to lock into the GO wheelchair glove system, also designed by Layer, to deliver greater power-to-push ratio. This unique system — the first of its kind — decreases the risk of injury and painful conditions common to wheelchair users, such as arthritis in the shoulders.



01
TROVE Coin with 3 magnetically attached accessories: wristband, neck pendant and brooch





02

02



02

What are your design philosophies when designing products such as the AXYL collection?

At Layer we focus on finding new forms and formats that deliver something visually unique to the market whilst exceeding the necessary functional requirements. With the AXYL collection, I believe we have created a stacking chair with a truly new expression embodied in the identifiable inverted 'Y' silhouette of the aluminium casting."

The AXYL collection is part of our ongoing commitment to working with companies to lower their impact on the environment. The recycled aluminium in the Y-frame of the chairs uses just 5% of the energy required to create new aluminium and also offers significant cost savings; the chair shells, stool tops and café table tops are available in a variety of low-impact materials, including recycled wood fibre, reclaimed timber and recycled nylon, offering an efficient way of re-using waste product from the furniture industry.

02
GO Wheelchair, world's first 3D-printed consumer wheelchair created in collaboration with Materialise

03
AXYL collection for United Kingdom furniture brand Allermuir comprising a chair, available with and without arms, a barstool and a café

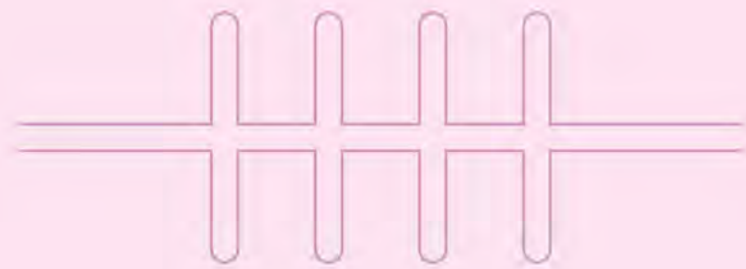


03



03

GOVERNMENTS OPTING FOR PRACTICE OVER THEORY



Design Thinking is taking over governments around the world, changing how they deliver services. Faced with an increasing sophistication of contemporary challenges including inter-connected economic patterns, diffused social dynamics, blurred governance boundaries and reduced public trust, governments everywhere are adopting what we have already seen in corporations — a Design Thinking approach that shapes services to better meet user needs.

While policy development is a design activity, it has rarely been spoken about in design terms. Design is understood as an enabler for change, which in government is often linked to digital transformation. Because digitalising services often necessitates re-thinking them entirely, governments are now required to work at the intersection of multi-disciplinary knowledge.

Many countries have set up digital service teams to improve public services. Team Digitale Italia in Italy, for example, works on guidance, front-end frameworks and tools for developers and designers, and was led by a former senior manager at Apple and Amazon who reports to the Prime Minister, upon establishment in 2016. Portugal's LabX, established in 2017, is made up of service designers and anthropologists that experiment with new solutions to improve public services.

Once designers have been hired, teams set up and the first services re-designed, dedicated digital-service groups develop patterns and establish standards to ensure consistent quality. In the UK, for instance, Government Digital Service (GDS) paved the way for different departments to fill more than 800 design positions, thus leading the digital transformation of the UK government by providing standards, guidance and components to build quicker, cheaper and better digital services.

User-centred design has matured and moved beyond simply designing digital services. Design in government increasingly covers holistic, end-to-end services that requires not only capabilities in digital solutions but also knowledge in social sciences, and authorities in policy-making.

Denmark's innovation unit MindLab has been one of the pioneers of the design revolution in government by inciting changes to a wide range of public-sector settings — from re-thinking waste management in Copenhagen to reducing tensions between inmates and guards in prisons to transforming services for mentally disabled adults in the city of Odense. Now operating as the Disruption Task Force, it acts as Danish Ministries' in-house consultancy for user-centred design projects and training.

Hospitals and clinics in Singapore have also shaped services and facilities around their patients' needs, ranging from simple chair designs to the planning of an entire ward. Khoo Teck Puat Hospital simplified service delivery for the elderly by grouping together all geriatric-related specialists. Some clinics employ an "island design" whereby the work-stations for both doctors and nurses are placed in the centre of the wards to increase mobility. By re-organising the structure of services — improving communications between departments and simplifying medical processes for its patients — Tan Tock Seng Hospital has cut patient waiting times by 40 percent.

Governments understand that cities are more than their architecture and infrastructure. Foremost they are about the people living in them — and it just makes so much sense to focus on their needs when designing services for the public to facilitate a better and more sustainable urban living environment.

TECH X DESIGN BERNARD SUEN

Co-founder, InTechnigence
Master Lecturer at HKDI inspire*

Design Thinking 2018

HKDI
inspire*

01

Hong Kong's Bernard Suen has worked in the digital technology, business consultancy, design and education sectors for more than 30 years. He has domestic, Mainland China and international consulting and management experience. In 2010, he co-founded InTechnigence Limited, a Hong Kong-based company providing digital-technology consultancy and training services. Currently, he is also a Project Director of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Centre for Entrepreneurship.

Suen has held management and executive positions with Ernst & Young, the Kenneth Leventhal Real Estate Group, the Emperor Group, Panorama Distribution Ltd., Lovable Products (Hong Kong) Ltd., yU+Co and SharpMotion Enterprises Ltd., where he was responsible for information and communications technology and New Media strategy, solution-development and operations.

Since 2001 till the present day, he has taught courses in New Media, entrepreneurship, creative industries, Design Thinking and data-driven product and service design for The Chinese University of Hong Kong, as well as at Swinburne University of Technology (2011-2012) and the Hong Kong Design Institute (2011-2016). He has also conducted workshops and consultancy services for various organisations in private, public and NGO sectors.

Suen is the author of *Eight Lessons In Entrepreneurship For Design And Creative Business* published by ET Press in 2013, and co-author of the *The Heart's Way — Design With Empathy Through Creative Thinking*, published by the Hong Kong Design Institute in 2014.

01

HKDI inspire* Design Thinking 2018

An initiative by HKDI that encourages the adaptation of Design Thinking to resolve "wicked problems" in everyday life through a series of activities that engage the general public

02

HKDI inspire* Master Lecture

Interdisciplinary Thinking for a Disrupted World, by Bernard Suen

03

HKDI inspire* Workshop

From Journey Mapping to Data Mapping: Telling UX Stories with Data, by Bernard Suen

As a renowned teacher of Design Thinking, can you explain in a few words what you see as its main benefits for commercial companies?

Design Thinking is user-centric, which includes taking on board the perspectives of customers and other related stake-holders with empathy when looking at a problem. In addition, its emphasis on using a multi-disciplinary approach throughout the entire process can bring tremendous insights and capacities to problem discovery and solution.

And how can it help government departments and public services to become more effective in their organisational activities?

Public engagement is essential for government departments and public-service providers. Being user-centric involves leaving the comfort of one's office to interact with the affected communities and stake-holders in issues that most concern them. Again, the multi-disciplinary approach fosters more cross-departmental collaboration, bringing different expertise into the situation and breaking away from the silos that prevent more effective handling of complicated matters.

Do you see any synergy between motivating a large body of people to work well together as a team and the sport of rugby in any of its manifestations?

I don't know rugby so I will stay away from that metaphor for comparison. But like any team sport involving multiple skills, effective collaboration between the members is almost mandatory for achieving set goals. Design Thinking can become the common language for them to communicate in, bringing out the best from everyone to accomplish the tasks at hand throughout the process.



02



03

ARCHITECTURE X DESIGN AARON TAN

Founder, RAD
Master Lecturer at HKDI inspire*

Aaron Tan studied architecture at Harvard from 1990-1993, where he completed his thesis on the Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong. Inspired by its innate intelligence, and by the dynamic growth of Asian cities in general, he founded OMA Asia in Hong Kong in 1994 with Rem Koolhaas, to explore new design possibilities. In 2001, the office became independent and was re-named RAD. Tan continues to operate it with a similar vision and interests. He works with a team of talented multinational designers to pursue new design approaches in the unique Asian socio-cultural matrix. His aim is to make meaningful intellectual and physical contributions to our culture and the built environment.

Tan and his team have received numerous design awards for projects such as the SK Telecom HQ, urban resort W Seoul and Jeon Ju University Star Centre in South Korea, Chin Sui Service Centre in Taiwan, the Xixuan Spa Boutique Hotel in China and Vivanta Hotel by Taj Dwarka in India. Their works have been publicised and exhibited at a number of international biennales. Tan also frequently delivers public lectures. Internationally, he is an active design critic, and has served as the External Examiner for The University of Hong Kong.

01
Chin-Shui Service Centre, Taichung,
Taiwan

02
Xixuan Spa Hotel, Xixi Wetland Park,
Hangzhou, China

03
SK Telecom HQ, Seoul, South Korea

04
SK Pavilion, Yeosu Expo, South Korea



01



02

AARON TAN

Given your extensive experience working with government bodies and public-service departments, how do you think such entities can be helped by using Design Thinking techniques?

Many years ago we were involved in the master planning of Orchard Road in Singapore. Although at the time we did not explicitly engage in the processes of Design Thinking as prescribed in today's textbooks, namely to empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test, our approach to the problem resonated with the ideology.

For a start, the project was temporarily headed by the Singapore Tourism Board, whereas traditionally the Urban Redevelopment Authority would be responsible. Our initial meetings dedicated to "discovery" took up to six months before any "designing" was done — only to find out that the planning of Orchard Road was an out-of-the-box, cross-departmental collaboration, along with the Landscape and Traffic Departments.

The protocols of Design Thinking had provided us with a structure to discuss problems and solutions between people in different disciplines who also had different stakes in the project. The result was a comprehensive brief that later served as an important blueprint for Orchard Road in Singapore.

How do you view the application of Design Thinking in general? Is it as successful as it could be or are there improvements that you would like to see made in its application?

Design Thinking is extremely helpful in the world of architecture for it is vital in defining a well-thought-out brief at an early stage. But this process is usually only applicable to larger commercial clients who have the resources and vision to invest in Design Thinking — a process that is extremely time-consuming and serves primarily as a discovery tool. The long-term benefits, such as those concerning the sustainability of environments and the suitability of changing social landscapes in architecture projects, are enormous.

We at RAD are aware that Design Thinking methodologies can effectively remove bias in design decisions by replacing the traditional top-down hierarchy of most architecture practices today and introducing team-induced decisions from the very beginning of a project. It is a pity that the application of this discovery process is almost exclusively reserved for large commercial clients and governments.

Having worked with such large architectural-design firms, do you see any similarities between organising so many talented individuals into an effective unit and how the game of rugby is played?

The key word for me is collaboration. Through collaborations such as those between architects, interior designers and planners, as well as engineers and philosophers, we can achieve a whole new perspective towards a particular problem.

In the context of RAD as an architecture firm, not only do we have expertise in obvious fields such as architecture and interiors, but we also have Ewelina Tereszcenko as an expert in the field of Design Thinking, as well as Iva Sladic Keco, who coaches us in the subject.

More heads are definitely better than one — I personally see a lot of benefits in involving cross-disciplinary expertise as mechanisms to discover and solve problems.



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CONSULTANCY X DESIGN IVA SLADIC KECO

Founder and Managing Director
WakeMake
Master Lecturer at HKDI inspire*

Iva Sladic Keco is the founder, strategist, facilitator and designer of WakeMake, a next-generation hybrid change+design consultancy. She conducts workshops and corporate training with the aim of awakening the collective creative talent of individuals, teams and organisations, and rendering their ideas able to be shared with the world. Aside from running WakeMake, Ms. Keco is a seasoned designer herself with 20 years of experience focusing on graphic and web design. She holds a Master of Design degree from the University of Zagreb in Croatia and an MA in Comprehensive Design from the China Academy of Art.



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WakeMake Project: Making Ethics Tangible
02
WakeMake Project: Human-centred Partnership Framework
03
WakeMake Project: Creating & Empowering Intrapreneurs

Your company trains groups and teams of people to work productively together — is this akin to a team of rugby players trying to win a game, and if so, what do you see as the main similarities?

Yes, a rugby team is a good analogy to what we are trying to achieve for the teams in organisations and businesses. There are similarities in the team structure, roles and behaviour, but we have to emphasise the importance of the environment. A rugby team operates in a known and controlled environment, it is a game that lasts for a certain limited time and there are clear rules to it. In a business environment, the rules are constantly in flux and there are multiple teams playing, often in uncharted territory.

If we are talking about innovation, no-one knows what is going to happen next and the hardest part for people is to be comfortable with ambiguity. With rugby, as with other sports, you can lose or win the game and you know the result when the game ends. With innovation, the game never ends and our workshops and training are just the beginning.

At WakeMake we like to say that we believe that every change is possible with the right mindsets, robust methods, correct tools and some leadership. But to change a dysfunctional team into a highly operational one in business is the same as it is in rugby.

How do you view the application of Design Thinking in general? Is it as successful as it could be or are there improvements that you would like to see made in its application?

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Do you believe in the efficacy of Design Thinking for those working outside the design field, in government departments, for instance, or public services?

Definitely, I believe in the efficacy of Design Thinking everywhere. The basis of Design Thinking philosophy is to start with people's needs. The methodology that has developed over the last 20 years is very flexible and complimentary to other methods. However, Design Thinking is not a magic wand that can solve everything. Complex challenges require complex systemic approaches; Design Thinking on its own is not enough.

Design Thinking brings a human component into problem-solving that is often easily overlooked. Many governments around the world as well as public services are big users of Design Thinking methodology. And I think it is just beginning in Asia, with exception of Singapore, where it has already begun. Europe has been doing it for a long time. For example, the British Design Council, founded back in 1944, is an independent charity and government advisor tasked with making lives better through design.

Especially in the above-mentioned occupations, there is a preponderance of bureaucracy. Does this militate against creativity and is it one of the obstacles that Design Thinking can help to overcome?


I am not a big fan of bureaucracy, but I do think it is necessary. If we did not have order and structure nothing could be done and we would not need to be creative. To be creative you need to know your boundaries; if there are no boundaries, there is no need to be creative, you can just do nothing, or do whatever you want, which doesn't necessarily help others. The problem is not in strong bureaucracy, it is in having bureaucrats that don't think, feel and adapt fast enough. People who make decisions on policies and rules and maintain administrative systems are the key to developing healthy and supportive bureaucracy.

This is where Design Thinking can help. I believe that if people in decision-making positions would think more like designers and look into the people component in the right way, they would be able to build frameworks that inspire and support creativity in the whole system. If empowered by higher structures to learn and practise the method, all employees in the public sector would benefit from human-centred design and application of it to their work.



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PROVIDING REAL-WORLD SERVICES THAT ACTUALLY WORK



Design Thinking crosses the traditional boundaries between public, for-profit and non-profit sectors. By working closely with clients and consumers, Design Thinking allows high-impact solutions to bubble up from below rather than being imposed from the top.

From solving the riddle of why so many young children of poor peasant families in Vietnam suffered from malnutrition (by looking at the diet of “positive deviants”, i.e. the exceptions), to the unequal distribution of anti-malarial mosquito nets in parts of Africa where it was difficult to obtain them (because a limited number were given away free, thus disincentivising shopkeepers), Design Thinking has played an important part in the provision of radical social and service solutions to apparently intractable problems.

With its focus on the facts on the ground and how they affect end-users, rather than theorising possible answers in advance, Design Thinking can get to the heart of questions that have long vexed agencies employed to deal with them. It's not so much a matter of using common-sense as employing uncommon sense.

As an approach, Design Thinking taps into capacities we all have but that are overlooked by more conventional problem-solving practices. Not only does it focus on creating products and services that are human-centred, but the process itself is also deeply human. Design Thinking relies on our ability to be intuitive, to recognise patterns, to construct ideas that have emotional meaning as well as being functional, and to express ourselves in media other than words or symbols.

Nobody wants to run an organisation on feelings, intuition and inspiration alone, but an over-reliance on the rational and the analytical can be just as risky. Design

Thinking, the integrated approach at the core of the design process, provides a third way.

The Design Thinking process is best thought of as a system of overlapping spaces rather than a sequence of orderly steps: inspiration being the opportunity that motivates the search for solutions, ideation the process of generating, developing and testing ideas, and implementation the path that leads from the project stage into people's lives.

Many social enterprises already intuitively use some aspects of Design Thinking, but most stop short of embracing the approach as a way to move beyond today's conventional problem-solving. Certainly, there are impediments to adopting Design Thinking in an organisation. Perhaps the approach isn't embraced by the entire organisation. Or maybe the organisation resists taking a human-centred approach and fails to balance the perspectives of users, technology and organisations.

One of the biggest impediments to adopting Design Thinking is simply fear of failure. The notion that there is nothing wrong with experimentation or failure, as long as they happen early and act as a source of learning, can be difficult to accept. But a vibrant Design Thinking culture will encourage prototyping — quick, cheap and “dirty” — as part of the creative process and not just as a way of validating finished ideas.

As Yasmina Zaidman, Director of Knowledge and Communications at the Acumen Fund, puts it: “The businesses we invest in require constant creativity and problem-solving, so Design Thinking is a real success factor for serving the base of the economic pyramid.” Design thinking can lead to hundreds of ideas and, ultimately, real-world solutions that create better outcomes for organisations and the people they serve.

KUDOS FOR HUMAN TOUCH OF KUDOS

Service Design Case Study 1
Kudoz by InWithForward

Kudoz is an award-winning community-learning platform by InWithForward (IWF), a social-design organisation that makes human services more human!

Research has shown that adults living with cognitive disabilities were not always socially isolated, but they were often missing the opportunities to try new things, go to new places or to find new sources of purpose and meaning.

Kudoz connects people via a new kind of face-to-face interaction between adults with a disability and volunteer hosts within one-hour experiences — most of which were prototyped through dozens of iterations.

While there is unanimous agreement that services are intangible and that the service emerges in co-production between service

consumer and service provider, some argued that service design is about creating the right prerequisites for the service, including the resources of the service system — staff, organisational structure, physical/technical environment.

Others argue that the focus on service infrastructure has neglected what is essentially the core of the service, i.e. the service interface, and claim that this should be the object of service design.

Kudoz highlights that service design is in fact the facilitation of the entire experience — where both the service infrastructure and service interface are indispensable. And that the objective of the social-service design is to produce high-quality interactions between service deliverer and service consumer.



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Kudoz by InWithForward
A new learning platform with & for
people with cognitive disabilities

CO-ORDINATED COMMUNICATION PATH TO PATCHWORK'S SUCCESS

Service Design Case Study 2
Patchwork by FutureGov

Policy used to be a linear, paper-based process that moved slowly from abstract theories to practical implementation. But the academics who used to generate policy are no longer inventing ideas. Instead, they're making sense of what's emerging from the public consciousness.

In response to a series of child-care failures in the UK, independent design agency FutureGov came up with the idea of a social network for public services. Having identified a lack of shared, co-ordinated communication between government agencies as a key issue, the team brought together children's and social services, teachers, police, health workers, technologists, designers and funders to prototype Patchwork.

This is a secure web tool that connects professionals from different organisations and

allows them to access the contact details of others working with their clients.

Design research was fundamental to articulating the problem accurately. Patchwork as a public service took six months of prototyping with Staffordshire County Council. Today, 1,894 professionals across the UK and Australia are currently supporting 5,375 clients through Patchwork, enabling a considerably higher quality of care.

This phenomenon is an acknowledgment that experimentation and discovery are credible paths to public welfare. In a very real way, it's all happening in innovation labs at every level of government; these labs are prototyping the future of government itself.



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Patchwork by FutureGov
Connecting care workers across
agencies

CELEBRATING NEARLY 150 YEARS OF DENIM CULTURE

Hong Kong Denim Festival
11-27 JAN 2019
PMQ & Sham Shui Po Fabric Wholesale District

Organised by Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI), the inaugural Hong Kong Denim Festival was a three-week cultural and design event to promote the promulgation of denim — the iconic material invented in 1873 by Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss (and named after the Italian city of Genoa, where the cotton corduroy from which denim evolved was made).

This one-of-a-kind festival featured a dynamic series of activities including a denim bazaar, exhibitions, design workshops, seminars and presentations that embraced both the history and future of denim. Visitors from all walks of life were intrigued by the chronological development of the denim culture — mixing the nostalgia of the fabric with new techniques in manufacturing as well as fashion trends and styles.

This dual-location festival featured three distinct tracks: “King of Fashion: Denim” Exhibition, a Denim Bazaar and Sham Shui

Po Downtown Denim. Together, they comprised a comprehensive timeline of the brands, manufacturers and talents that have shaped today’s denim culture.

To help visitors understand the evolution of trends in denim, HKDI Fashion Archive put together 10 pieces from brands including Christian Dior, Jean Paul Gaultier, Moschino and Comme des Garçons from the 1980s to the 2000s — led by Ms Elita Lam, Head of the HKDI’s Department of Fashion and Image Design and Director of its Fashion Archive.

Levi’s participation didn’t disappoint: it exhibited one of the oldest pairs of blue jeans in the world, made in Nevada in 1880. Also on show by Levi Strauss & Co. were the classic 501 Homer jeans (1917) worn by an Arizona miner every day for three years except on Sundays; and a pair belonging to the late Apple founder Steve Jobs from the 1980s.



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Hong Kong Denim Festival 2019, PMQ, Central

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Interview with Ms Elita Lam, Head of Department of Fashion and Image Design at HKDI and organiser of the Hong Kong Denim Festival

How did you source the pieces you exhibited at the Hong Kong Denim Festival? Were they difficult to find/select?

We sourced the pieces from various brands, local designers, artists and denim lovers. In the beginning, we were aiming at local brands with an historical background, such as Bang Bang, Apple, York, etc. We were lucky enough to get in touch with the founder of York who let us have signature items from the '80s when we went to his shop in Prince Edward — the only one left.

Before the event, two project team members visited New York Denim Day where they met the Turkish artist Deniz Sagdic and invited her to showcase her work at the HKDF. Advance Denim, a strategic partner, introduced to us a number of renowned overseas brands to participate, including Levi's and G-Star.

ImagineX Group presented items from one of its brands, Scotch and Soda, at the exhibition, while Sidedame, another partner, gave us some items from one of its brands, 45R. An exhibitor introduced to us Chevignon, which also contributed exhibits. Other exhibitors included HKDI alumni with successful brands, including Koyo William and Luddite.

The selected items were mainly products with a story to tell. We spent several months consolidating and received very positive feedback and support from our industry partners, either in contributing items for the exhibition, or to workshops, seminars, souvenirs or sponsorships.

How influential do you think denim has been in the fashion world and do you foresee it continuing to be so for another century and a half?

Denim is an all-encompassing, bottom-up fashion. It was originally worn by workers (or Gold Rush miners in the 18th century). In the '80s, many fashion brands started jeans lines, and there are now millions of denim lovers worldwide. Almost everyone has at least one pair at home.

What kind of feedback were you expecting from partners, brands and fabric sellers? And how do you think this first-of-its-kind event will help bring the industry closer together?

We received very positive feedback from designers, design associations, manufacturers, brands, students and staff. We were surprised to find that there are so many passionate denim designers in Hong Kong. During the event, the HKDF facilitated potential collaborations between various exhibitors. The workshops and seminars were fully booked a day after we opened for online registration. We drew more than 100,000 visitors throughout the three-week event.

The Hong Kong & Kowloon Textile Fabrics Wholesalers Association Ltd. was very supportive and it lined up fabric shops in Sham Shui Po to support the event. Renowned international fashion designer Vivienne Tam joined us in Sham Shui Po, where she met with students and young designers. We were inspired to continue our activities at the HKDF and host more fashion events in Sham Shui Po in the near future.



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02 Hong Kong Denim Festival 2019, Sham Shui Po Fabric Wholesale District

03 The Denim Skin Project by Deniz Sagdic and Selçuk Sepici

04 Homer 501 from Levi Strauss & Co. Archives

05 Nevada Jeans, 1880s, from Levi Strauss & Co. Archives

DESIGN TALENTS BURSTING WITH AMBITION

Every year, the Hong Kong Design Institute produces thousands of graduates across the many faculties it operates, including the Departments of Fashion and Image Design (FID), of Architecture, Interior & Product Design (AIP), and of Communication Design & Digital Media (CDM), to name a few. Among these outstanding design talents, a handful are already creating a name for themselves in the industry through competitions and awards. We asked some recent HKDI graduates what their long-term objectives are as designers. This is what they told us.

JULIETTE HO LONG SUM

Graduate in
Fashion Design 2018



Juliette Ho is a fashion designer specialised in Contemporary Evening Apparel. She is the winner of DFA Hong Kong Young Design Talent Award 2018 along with a \$250,000 scholarship. She received an International Exchange Scholarship sponsored by Esprit Cares Trust Fund to study at Designskolen Kolding, Denmark in 2017. She was the winner of The Most Glamorous Award at HKDI Graduation Show 2018, and the first-runner up at the Hong Kong Fur Design Competition 2017.

What is your long-term objective as a designer?

Cultural preservation is my design philosophy. My final-year collection titled "Re-Couture" is a new representation of haute couture — experimenting with a mix and match of historical craftsmanship details with the application of modern silhouettes. Stylish, unisex evening-wear is my major direction. I believe that affordable couture is the best weapon against the massive attack of fast fashion nowadays. In the future, my aim is to achieve a luxury-design career and promote cultural fashion through the arts and education.

SO MAN CHING

Graduate in
Fashion Design 2018

Winner of the CreateSmart Young Design Talent Special Award at DFA 2018, along with a \$250,000 scholarship, HKDI fashion-design graduate So Man Ching is currently undertaking the Fashion Design BA programme at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. So was also the winner of The Most Stylish Award at the HKDI Fashion Show 2018, Best Women's Wear at the Advance Denim Design Competition 2018, and the Overall Champion at the Hong Kong Fur Design Competition 2018.

What is your long-term objective as a designer?

I have always wanted to establish my personal fashion label. My long-term goal is to become an outstanding fashion designer and to operate my own studio in Hong Kong. It is not easy to be a fashion designer in Hong Kong — especially if you do not wish to simply follow the trends. I want to tell my story through garments with a focus on the draping technique of my designs. I'd like people to be able to feel my personality when they see my collections.



CYNTHIA LAM HIU CHING

Graduate in
Interior Design 2018



Cynthia Lam Hiu Ching graduated in interior design at HKDI last year and is currently doing a top-up degree at Birmingham City University. She has garnered a clutch of commercial awards including Perspective's A&D Trophy in the student category and the Gold Prize in the AluHouse Design Competition.

What is your long-term objective as a designer?

Hong Kong is a mountainous city where the scarcity of flat land is over-populated. One of my long-term goals and ideals is to tackle the social and environmental issues that arise with such population density. By joining extra-curricular activities such as design competitions and international exchange programmes, I can learn various skills such as problem-solving and forward-thinking, and gain a lot of valuable experience, which will be beneficial for my future career. Communicating with partners and consumers is important to designers as we should be able to understand a customer's needs clearly. I would like to be a good listener and an interior designer who is worthy of being trusted.

FINGER HO

Graduate in
Digital Film & Television 2012

Finger Ho graduated in digital film and television at HKDI in 2012 and has pursued his dreams in the cinema industry as a screenwriter. His most recent achievement includes the script for *Vampire Cleanup Department*, a Hong Kong horror-comedy directed by Yan Pak Wing and Chiu Sin Hang, which was released in 2017, receiving multiple nominations at the 37th Hong Kong Film Awards.

What is your long-term objective as a designer?

As a screenwriter making a living in the creative industry, I have been very fortunate to have participated in feature films, television and online works. Moving forward, not only would I like to accumulate more experience through a variety of distributed motion pictures, but I am also interested in exploring different media, not limited to novels and stage performances. My long-term objective is to live by the motto "If there's a story, there's my work"!



CHEUK KIN CHI

Graduate in
Graphic-Information Design 2010

A graduate in graphic-information design at HKDI in 2010, Cheuk Kin Chi is the co-founder of Beams Creative, a design studio that offers spatial design services that range from the exhibition, interior, and landscape architecture. Cheuk describes himself as a minimalist that looks to create spaces that are functionally efficient. His studio was recently awarded a Silver A'Design Awards for Interior Space and Exhibition Design in 2018 and was the finalist for an Asia Design Awards 2019 and a Global Design Award 2018.

What is your long-term objective as a designer?

Eventually, we want to be in a place where we can choose the type of projects that we want to participate in as opposed to taking any challenge that presents itself as we do now. I think every designer hopes to gain enough influence and trust from clients or the general public to be free to roam around and execute things as we imagine or as we please.

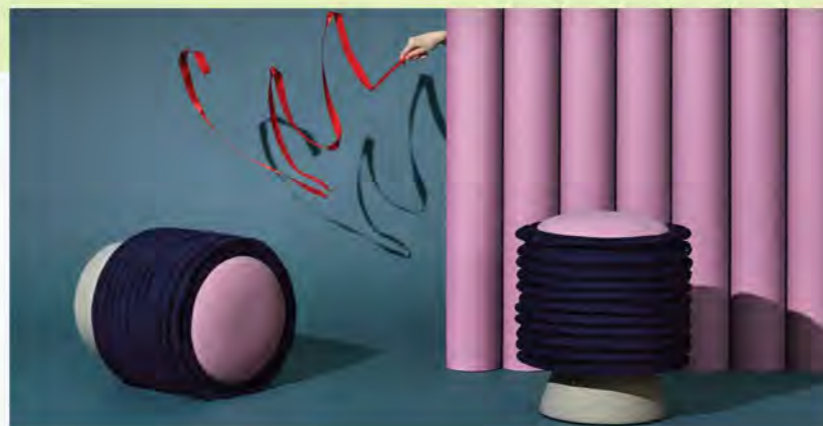
WORLDWIDE HAPPENINGS



SALONE INTERNAZIONALE DEL MOBILE

9-14 APR 2019
Milan Fairgrounds, Rho
Milan, Italy

The Salone Internazionale del Mobile was founded in 1961 as a vehicle for promoting Italian furniture and furnishings exports and soon became the most keenly awaited event of its kind. Now into its 58th edition, the Milan Furniture Fair is gearing up again to gather together top-notch products from around the world, with an emphasis on innovation. This year, the event will be divided into three sections — Classic, Design and Lux — featuring furniture that draws on the values of traditional craftsmanship; products that speak of functionality, innovation and style; and objects that are devoted to timeless luxury with a contemporary twist. Over 10 outstanding students ranging from programmes in Furniture & Lifestyle Product Design, Exhibition Design, Product Design and Visual Communication Design at HKDI will be showcasing their works in an exhibition called “SaloneSatellite” at the fair this year!



NEW DESIGNERS

26-29 JUN & 3-6 JUL 2019
Business Design Centre, Islington
London, United Kingdom

New Designers provides a unique platform for fresh design talent to connect with design educators, professionals and consumers for creative exchange and collaboration. It gathers more than 3,000 of the brightest and most radical new creative minds under one roof to launch the next generation of thinkers, makers and disruptors. Running over two weeks, New Designers is a place to discover new ideas, products and trends — a celebration of visionary design that sees students of 200-plus creative courses unveiling never-before-seen work to thousands of industry professionals.



熙日U臂
可靠·温暖

KINSEY GIVES MEDICS AN IMPROVED MECHANICAL HAND KINSEY YU HOI MING — MEDICAL U-ARM

Higher Diploma in Product Design, Hong Kong Design Institute

Top-Up Degree in Product Design, Birmingham City University

Silver Award (Concept Group), DiD Award (Dongguan Cup)
International Industrial Design Competition 2018

Bronze Award, Shunde D-DAY Creative Design Award 2018



The medical U-Arm is a crucial aid for doctors and nurses who need to diagnose patients by photographing parts of their body when illness has immobilised them. A piece of equipment with a camera affixed, it can be directed at any part of a patient from head downwards and student Kinsey Yu Hoi Ming has re-designed its basic industrialised appearance with a much more modern look, as well as making it easier to use — the handle, for instance is made of aluminium alloy, which gives it a smoother grip.



Member of VTC Group
VTC 機構成員