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SIGNED

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HONG KONG DESIGN INSTITUTE

2019
ISSUE 22

DESIGN SERVES



THE COMMUNITY, NOT JUST AN INDIVIDUAL

EDITORIAL

THE FUTURE IS HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

In the following three issues of SIGNED we will explore the changing nature of design, and the growing trend toward putting people as the locus, and the focus, of designing more livable and sustainable societies.

Design, as an objective and as a profession, has been fundamental to the creation of our modern world; but evolution in design practice and technological progress have also, undeniably, contributed to exacerbating the problems we face as individuals and as a broader society. While the roots of contemporary design lie within pre-modern artisanal designer-craftsmen, we now live in a world where it is possible to press a button on a computer, download an open-source design and 3D print a product without even leaving our chair. Notwithstanding, Design's founding principles of "form" and "function" remain timeless. However, it is also imperative that the practice of Design move with the times, and the evolving needs of individuals and the society at large.

Now the watchwords for effective design are collaboration, connection, openness, replication, modularity and ubiquity. The critical task for designers in this complex new age is not so much the creation of a standalone product, whether physical or informational, as it is the designing of connections between people, products, and services. Like striking a light in the dark, it will be the work of designers, with their ability to make sense of available choices, strengthen connections, create new relationships, and spark ideas that will prove indispensable as we make our way in this complex and increasingly technologically-mediated world.

In the coming three issues of SIGNED, we will explore the ways Design is adapting to the needs of societies and individuals. The central theme running through each issue is Human-centred Design, a philosophical stance that not only prioritises the needs of end-users, but includes them as part of the design process. Our starting point in Issue 1 is Social Design, a set of design principles used to empower those directly affected by political, economic and technological change, that is proving effective in tackling the challenges people face in their daily lives. Next, Issue 2 shines a light on the possibilities for improving society by applying Human-centred Product Design methodology; using technology and a consultative mindset to connect products and people in ways never before possible. Finally, Issue 3 looks to the future of Human-centred Service Design, where expectations of increased sophistication and ubiquity are placed on creating services to deal with the needs of life in fast-paced networked societies.

Simply put, Human-centred Design is focused on improving peoples' wellbeing and livelihoods and is based on the belief that designers can, and should, use good design to make positive contributions to society. Each of the three issues will focus on a distinct aspect of Human-centred Design, nurturing citizen designers, making better products and creating effective services. Albeit in different ways, each area highlights the potential for people-centred design methodologies to create a more humane and inclusive place for all.



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The Hong Kong Design Institute is a member institution of the Vocational Training Council.

For more information about HKDI, please check our website on www.hkdi.edu.hk, or email us at hkdi@vtc.edu.hk

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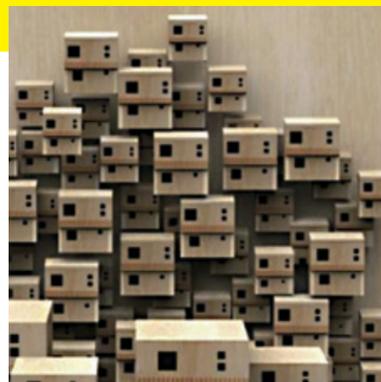


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BULLETIN

“ Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI) is devoted to provide students with a wide range of art and design experiences, such as participating in the HKDI x Art in MTR - “TKL_WE_IMAGINED” Exhibition and Global Design Camp ”



HKDI x Art in MTR — “TKL_WE_IMAGINED” Exhibition

To energise the city with arts and design elements, HKDI and MTR Corporation will jointly launch the exhibition project “TKL_WE_IMAGINED”, which showcases a collection of playful design ideas by six groups of HKDI students and presents Tiu Keng Leng in diverse ways that are inspired by community characteristics and the history of the district.

The artwork “The Transformation” consists of four sets of seats in cubic shapes with the history of the community embedded. Passengers can see the seats with iconic Tiu Keng Leng landmarks from 1950s to 2000s. Another work “Architectural Evolution” also reveals the neighbourhood from a historical perspective. Done as a long computer-drawn scroll, the project presents the architectural changes in the community over the past century. “Bi-cycle” introduces one of the major elements of Tiu Keng Leng

community: bikes, into the station art. “Mirage” is a geometric mirror wall statue based on old pictures of Tiu Keng Leng’s shores, echoing one of the neighbourhood’s earliest names, “The Ridge of Mirror Reflection”. For “Colour of Tiu Keng Leng”, The “TKL Ranger” group invited passengers to observe the surroundings in terms of colour, take pictures and name them, in order to create a visual art installation. The “TKL Ranger” group also designed three characters to attract passengers to learn the characteristics of Tiu Keng Leng, namely Gough Battery at Devil’s Peak, Pak Shek Chu beach and Hong Kong Design Institute. Collaborations across multiple design disciplines bring diversity to the works, as well as deepen public understanding and cohesion to the community. Two of the six works have been selected for display in MTR Tiu Keng Leng Station next year as the rejuvenation project’s final designs.

This Tiu Keng Leng Station Project exhibition at Exit J in MTR Central Station highlights the pride that HKDI and its students take in being a part of the Tiu Keng Leng community and Hong Kong at large. The exhibition will take place in early 2020. Tiu Keng Leng residents will be able to see these works when the exhibition is brought to the HKDI campus in Tiu Keng Leng later next year.



Students from HKDI and MMU Joined the Global Design Camp



Students from multiple design disciplines from Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) of the UK completed a 5-day intensive workshop (15-19 July) at the MMU campus to propose creative solutions for their “Ideal City” in the Global Design Camp facilitated by industry expert and designer Jonathan Ball. The workshop brings together



students from across the globe to form a global design studio and supports them to develop “glocal” design skills they will need for future economies.

Prior to the summer camp, students from HKDI and MMU collaborated using virtual communication tools and started their research on five “challenge” areas, namely Health, Places, Food, Work and Networks. Upon arriving at MMU, international design teams were formed and they started to design and test their ideas and collaborated in various ways using presentations, sketches, notes, their crafts and technology to develop their concepts towards building the “Ideal City”, receiving feedback from industry experts to help them shape their solutions. Creative proposals included the “City on Wheels”, which was designed to bring services to communities in the Ideal City and for them to host events; “YUMM Passport”, aimed at children, through which they

could earn rewards upon acquiring different key skills, such as food waste skills, cooking skills, food growing skills, planet knowledge etc.; “Time for Change” was a watch designed for the homeless that would provide individuals with access to shelter while enabling them to earn points by upskilling in key areas and put these points towards food, new clothes and other necessities; and the “Lean Green Jelly Machine”, which supported communities to design the spaces and places they want by reusing waste and turning this into mouldable building blocks.

The next stage of the programme is to create a digital design studio. Students developed their initial concepts into gallery-ready exhibits while collaborating online rather than face-to-face. Their refined solutions will be on display at Design Manchester in November and Business of Design Week in Hong Kong.

SPECIAL

Design Students' JOURNEY TO THE WORLD

In educating the next generation of design talents, HKDI always emphasises interdisciplinary and overseas learning so that students can absorb broader knowledge and better understand themselves in an international context. In this issue, we interview five award-winning outstanding graduates from different design fields to learn about their signature works, and how their exploration abroad further inspired their design-learning and practices.



Leung Chun Ting, Anthony Signature work: Reality

Video games should be for all. Seeing the difficulty of including elderly people in video games, Anthony Leung, together with a group of students, designed a video game called "Reality" that is particularly for the elders. As a student specialising in Creative Media, Anthony led the team consisting of peers from various design disciplines to create this work. The team took 360-degree pictures of streets of Hong Kong and recorded the ambient sounds to create virtual reality scenarios in the game, so that elderly and disabled people can explore the world while staying indoors. In addition, the game involves tasks that encourage users to move their body more. The design process of "Reality" deepened Anthony's curiosity about the difficulties senior citizens face in an urban city, which provided him a fresh perspective as he went on an exchange programme in the Estonian Academy of Arts in March. "I was particularly enlightened by the concepts of Social Design for the welfare of senior citizens in Europe, such as co-living and time-bank." While in Estonia, Anthony took a Human-centred Design course. "It taught me that a good design is not only about making innovations, but also being considerate about the actual experience of users and fulfilling their needs. It was an impressive journey," he shared. Recently graduated from the school, Anthony aims to keep exploring the possibilities between technology and human interaction, and is planning to pursue a master's degree in art and design.



Lau Tsz Chun, Jordan Signature work: Tri Cane

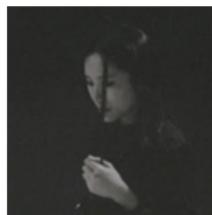
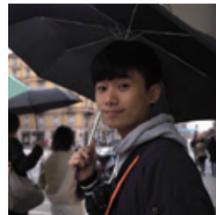
Jordan Lau has long reflected upon the use of folding cane seats by people in need, which include his father, who is a working man with leg problems. Going through the struggles of using a folding cane seat with his father, Jordan realised how the product is stigmatised as an object for the disabled and elderly. Consequently, as a student in Product Design, Jordan started brainstorming a better folding cane seat that is lighter with a trendier look, and finally created "Tri Cane", earning him "The Red Dot: Best of the Best" award, a high recognition for ground-breaking product designs. With all the accolades, however, Jordan emphasised that the key feature of "Tri Cane" is actually its subtlety. "I consulted my father, relatives and many elderly people with a number of draft drawings." Hoping to reduce the stigma of cane seats, Jordan initially tried to design the seat with fascinating shapes, but from the consultations, he learned that users actually hope that the cane seats will not attract much attention. That is why the seat of "Tri Cane" is designed to be expanded from the cane handle or is otherwise "hidden" in it. "I hope that this low-key cane seat will make it easier for the people in need to accept the tool for improving their lives." As the prototype of "Tri Cane" was showcased at the Milan Furniture Fair in April, Jordan collected valuable feedback from international audience and learned how to improve the product. With the recent announcement of his Red Dot award, Jordan is looking forward to working with a manufacturer to launch the product and truly help people in need.



Wong Chi Kin, Kenny

Signature work: Sidekick

While being a student in Furniture and Lifestyle Product Design, Kenny Wong time and again felt the difficulty of using a cane. Once, he was injured and was struggling to pick up one of his crutches from the floor. It reminded him of a similar situation he saw as an old man's cane fell. The personal experience pushed Kenny to design a cane that is more user-friendly, one that will not require the user to bend the body in order to pick it up. The innovative cane, "Sidekick", was born as a result, with which the user can just step on its base to elevate it from the ground, so that the cane handle will return to the user's reach again. "Sidekick" soon earned the opportunity to be showcased at the Milan Furniture Fair this April. It opened new doors for Kenny as he got to learn from countless design works from all over the world. "I saw a variety of furniture designs. Some furniture works were simply created from slight twists of unexpected materials," he shared. The eye-opening experience at Milan encouraged him to study more about design. "I hope to enrich my design techniques so that in the future, I may try to play with different materials and combine them to create a unique product."



Chung Lai Yau, Lyau

Signature collection: No One Heard A Thing

Winner of the Best Menswear Award and the first runner-up at HKDI New Fashion Force 2019, Lyau Chung created her signature collection, "No One Heard A Thing", from a memorable journey. As Lyau took a one-year working holiday in New Zealand prior to enrolling in the Higher Diploma in Fashion Design Menswear programme at HKDI, she had to stay apart from a depressed friend in Hong Kong. Her worries and empathy for the friend had her constantly reflect upon the lack of care in the Hong Kong culture, which finally inspired her to create "No One Heard A Thing", whose title reminds people that sometimes, we are not aware of the voices within us and others. Later, Lyau won the first runner-up at the Hong Kong Fur Design Competition 2019, earning her the opportunity to go on exchange to Copenhagen Fur in Denmark. She was amazed by the professionalism and advanced tools in the studio. In particular, Lyau saw a contrast in the design culture and consumerism in Copenhagen and Hong Kong. "Denmark values sustainability and design very much. In the streets of Copenhagen, you can often encounter stores selling handcrafted products that are meant to have long lives. It is such a contrast against Hong Kong where fast fashion thrives. I think there is a lot that we must learn from Denmark," she shared. Before studying at HKDI, Lyau was not sure if fashion design could be her profession. Now, having graduated and won several awards, Lyau is more confident in her designs and is planning to study further in the field.

Yau Chi Yan, Coco

Signature work: Tearing Off



Recently graduated from the Higher Diploma in Fashion Image Design programme at HKDI, Coco Yau's final-year project, "Tearing Off", is a refreshing dress reminding Hong Kong people of the everyday

practice in their tradition - tearing off sheets from the Chinese daily calendar. This habit of Coco's grandma inspired Coco to create the signature piece. Coco likes the idea of starting a new day by tearing off outdated calendar sheets. Therefore, ruffles were added to the design to create a cheerful mood. Coco also hoped that the spirit of the dress would really speak to her audience, which is why she incorporated such feminist element as the shoulder pads to symbolise women's desire for more power in society. During her design process, Coco participated at the Macao Fashion Week as one of the dressers, which gave her the opportunity to explore the designs and structure of fashion pieces made by various world-renowned brands. "It broadened my horizons in terms of the use of fabrics and cutting methods," Coco shared. Previously, she did not realise that she was actually curious about the ways of creating a garment from scratch. However, her creative experience with "Tearing Off" gave her a sense of achievement, which encouraged her to keep exploring fabrics for more of her own designs as she completed the programme. Currently working hard, Coco looks forward to creating her own online store in the near future.



THEME INTRODUCTION

CREATING CITIZEN DESIGNERS

Text by Steve Jarvis

This issue of SIGNED focuses on Social Design, and introduces three organisations that are bringing people together to collectively create better lives.

In a process generations long, governments and corporations have increasingly shaped the boundaries of modern life. However, the prevailing sense of individual powerlessness to effect change to spheres beyond their direct control is now being challenged. We see a rise in organisations addressing local concerns and helping instigate positive actions at the local level. While in many ways it is the most natural of processes: people being involved in the decisions that affect their lives, this is something that requires some structure and direction. Using design principles to empower those directly affected by political, economic and technological change, Social Design is proving an effective approach to tackle deeper problems found in society.

studio-L, the first story, is a Japanese Community Design company working with communities facing changes such as the aftermath of a natural disaster, or issues like ageing or population decline. The second story, City Repair, based in Portland, in the U.S. state of Oregon, is a Placemaking organisation that is re-igniting human interaction by bringing neighbours together to plan and create local art projects and build shared spaces for the community. The final story, Waag, in Amsterdam, is a Social Technology ecosystem that enables Dutch citizens to become familiar with the technologies in their everyday lives, and stimulates them to actively participate in the use and creation of technology that will directly benefit the society as a whole.

Each story introduces an intermediary organisation facilitating community-building activities at different scales and scope of action. Their goals, however, are similar: to help people find and then create solutions to the problems they are facing, and have them take ownership of this process. There are also strong parallels between their approaches, prioritising communication and placing people at the centre of the design process in a structured and systematic way. As we will see in the following pages, a key to getting people involved is to make participation meaningful, fun, engaging, and setting a low bar to participation from as wide a spectrum of people as possible. It is a recipe for powerful design.

THEME STUDIO-L BY RYO YAMAZAKI

COMMUNITY DESIGN IN JAPAN

studio-L is Breathing Life Back into Declining Communities

While Tokyo remains the vibrant economic hub of Japan, many regional cities, towns and villages are struggling to generate adequate employment opportunities and provide basic social services to their dwindling populations. Forecasts for the continued decline of rural communities are widespread, but one company, studio-L, is at the forefront of efforts to use local resources and local creativity to revitalise communities on the margins of Japan's success story.

Text by Steve Jarvis Photographs by studio-L

What is Community Design?

Since 2005 studio-L has been helping people to come together and look afresh at the challenges they face, and the possible resources and options available to improve the health of their communities. Studio-L has pioneered the practice of Community Design in Japan. Their body of work is extensive, and includes helping bring shuttered shopping streets back to life, re-imagining dated department stores, and stimulating the creation of hundreds of small-scale local projects that bring energy and hope back to rural communities in decline.

The concept of Community Design first emerged in the fields of Architecture and Urban Planning in North America during the 1960s. It was an acknowledgement that expert knowledge alone has limits, and having local input into the planning of public space produces better results for all concerned. As a design methodology, the Community Design approach starts with workshops inviting local residents to gather, discuss, and brainstorm. After consolidating these opinions, a community designer then translates them into a design project. Ideally the project will turn out to become a better utilised space appreciated by the local community.

studio-L was originally conceived by its founder Ryo Yamazaki to fill the communication gap in public space creation in Japan, between local governments, architecture firms, and expected users. While excelling in this task, Yamazaki realised that community participation is most effective when participants become committed to smaller projects and activities related to the larger spaces they are planning. Whether it is a local public space or a larger community redevelopment project, studio-L's goal is to get local participants to generate uses and activities for the project after completion of the Community Design process. Not only does this approach increase prospects for achieving social goals, it starts a ripple effect within communities. These newly strengthened bonds amongst local populations can act as a springboard for tangentially related activities to emerge, and allow for possibilities far beyond what was originally anticipated.



The Evolution of studio-L:

Ryo Yamazaki's journey to becoming Japan's most high profile Community Designer started in the late-1990s when he was working at an architecture and landscape company. Public works such as buildings and parks were a staple business, but the firm's leadership was conscious that relying on bureaucrats to guide the design process was far from effective, and they started to

incorporate public opinion into the design process. Yamazaki realised there was industry-wide frustration at the difficulty in accessing people to help make more appropriate designs for public spaces. This prompted him to form studio-L in 2005, as a way to gather and collate opinions from local people through interviews and workshops, and then pass them on to architecture firms.

studio-L's first steps into community design proved effective. Being a trained architect himself, Yamazaki was able to collate and present the opinions gathered in a way that was useful and easy to understand for the architectural firms. However, Yamazaki's vision for studio-L went beyond just gathering opinions. He had become increasingly convinced that management of the built environment is more important than building new architecture or creating spaces. Consequently, Yamazaki resolved to use the workshops as a way to build teams of people that would then be ready and waiting to use the public spaces that were being created. In effect, he envisioned a process of creating a space with the users already in mind.

Japan's prolonged economic recession, rural depopulation and demographic decline loomed ominously, and the

consequent falling usage of public space since the 2000s has translated into reduced government spending on public spaces. With fewer opportunities to plan new parks and community centres through participatory design workshops available, Yamazaki started thinking of ways to manage space with civic participation. He was now on the path to being a community designer. "If no new public facilities are going to be built, then there is no point in trying to bring people together to discuss what kind of spaces they would like to have built. Instead, I thought why don't we bring people together to discuss how they can solve or improve the issues facing their communities."

A critical step for Yamazaki, "It was the beginning of a new era for me and for Community Design. We asked local residents to come together so we could collectively discuss the issues facing their community and come up with activities that could help solve these issues. We then formed teams of participants to sustain the ideas that they had put into place, so that they could begin to solve their local issues gradually over time. In other words, in the age of population decline, I thought that what was needed was a kind of Community Design that doesn't make spaces."

Yamazaki illustrates the importance of this shift with the example of government-generated Development Master Plans. "One of the more conventional approaches to revitalising an area is for the governments, in collaboration with consultants and business groups, to create comprehensive 10-year plans. However, the local people directly affected by the plan will know nothing of the comprehensive plan, most often not even aware of its existence. What studio-L can do is a similar comprehensive plan with local people collating, synthesizing and distilling local opinions and wishes through the workshop process. Additionally, we also incorporate actual activities local communities desire into the comprehensive plan. Essentially it is the same approach as the public space design, but can be used at a wider scale, and can be tailored to help communities that are struggling with particular problems."

Another less obvious advantage of the studio-L approach happens between the participants. "Holding workshops helps people become familiar with each other, strengthens bonds, creates friendships, and on occasions can even play cupid. These are human connections that go beyond the simple building of public space,

so the workshops take on a greater meaning within the community," says Yamazaki. This wider perspective catches the essence of the studio-L approach to community building, and is a foundation for the increased vibrancy and potential that is captured in the Japanese word *machizukuri*. It is a concept that goes beyond simple town planning, or creating a space, activity, or business. *Machizukuri* is more about the re-enlivening and creating of social connections between people, which in turn becomes the raw material for building stronger and more vibrant communities.

Although offers of work flow in from private industry to, for example, increase social interaction in a new apartment building, studio-L tends to work primarily with local governments that actively seek community participation in projects. For Yamazaki, it is a highly meaningful focus for the company. "Working with bureaucracies is not easy, often a slow problematic area to work in, but because the challenges local governments are dealing with are often very serious and complex in nature, these are the type of problems that can also benefit most from the reframing and creativity that can be initiated through the Community Design process."

While defying easy definition, Yamazaki is happy to call his work Community Design. "Community Design is a technique that helps members of a community to revive their own local community through the power of design. It is akin to community organising and community empowerment, but what sets our approach apart from these other strategies is the central role that design plays. Local residents are not motivated just by rational organisation. Positive effects are what draw people's interest and make a project sustainable. In other words, it's not just about being 'correct.' You also need people to feel that something is fun, beautiful, delicious, comfortable, or cute in order for the project to succeed. This is why we refer to what we do as 'design,' rather than 'organisation' or 'empowerment.' "

1. Beach meditation course in Hiroshima Prefecture
2. Ryo Yamazaki — Community Designer
3. Generating enthusiasm at a community building ideas forum
4. Build-your-own wooden racing cart event in Hiroshima Prefecture
5. Festival events are a staple of Community Design
6. Community participation covers all ages



1. Group brainstorming to generate ideas
2. Interviewing in local residents' homes
3. Workshops build a base of participants
4. Teamwork activities to build solidarity

In its 15 years of operation, studio-L has worked in a diverse range of settings, from revitalising marginalised small villages and towns to fortifying inner city areas. The solutions they work toward are equally diverse, and include re-branding existing community spaces and businesses, assisting in creating completely new businesses, and instigating social enterprises and volunteer-led activities. There is no set target for these solutions, sometimes increasing tourism may be a focus; other times diversifying the varieties of use of a location is a good option; or, they may be focusing their attention on developing human resources in particular areas that can then take the lead in developing their communities.

While it is difficult to distil the studio-L approach into a formula, there are four important elements they usually adopt. The first step is an "Interview" process. They go into an area and talk to 3 people about the particular issues they are dealing with; on completion they ask them to introduce a further 3 more people they can interview. This process of talking and requesting contacts continues until they have interviewed about 100 people in the area. After talking to 100 people it is possible to get a profile of the community: who is respected, who works well with whom, and who has interpersonal conflicts. After gaining this knowledge they are ready to proceed.

The next stage is to open "Workshops." As they have done extensive interviews and created personal relations with the people they have interviewed, it becomes easier to invite them to workshops and solicit involvement. The workshops involve brainstorming and team building, but workshop facilitators aren't just trying to get ideas out of people, they are building the groundwork for actually putting these ideas into action. This leads to the next stage "Team Building" as workshops start to focus on connecting people and creating teams that come up with concrete plans. Lastly, the "Action" stage, where studio-L supports community action, helps get access to funding and make appropriate connections to smooth the process.

While the above four elements cover the basic flow of a project, more than anything, the studio-L approach to Community Design puts the local people at the centre of any activity. Local people know better than anyone what needs to be done, and what resources and options are available. Moreover, studio-L does not enter into any project with preconceived answers or strong feelings about what must be done, rather their job is to listen, distil and guide where appropriate. Their work is guided by the firm belief that it is necessary to trust what the people come up with as being the correct course of action.

How to Do Community Design



Hajimari Art Centre— An art gallery for all

The Hajimari Art Centre in Fukushima prefecture plays a role in the small town of Inawashiro far beyond what would be expected of an exhibition space. The centre is housed in a 120-year old former storehouse, this striking building has previously been used as a sake brewery, garment factory and dance hall. Severely damaged in the 2011 Great East Asia Earthquake, the building's restoration was funded by a charity auction of world-famous artists' works and stands as a symbol of solidarity and recovery. This alone is noteworthy, but it is the core concept behind Hajimari Art Centre, brought to the fore by Community Design, that makes it special.

Hajimari Art Centre is founded on the principle of "anyone can be an artist" and is dedicated to exhibiting Art Brut, also known as Raw Art, a genre where art is created by people without formal art education. It is a genre of art that finds a place for all, regardless of whether they are a grandmother, or

prisoner, or have some form of disability. This sense of openness extends to the surrounding community, which was involved in the creation of the centre using studio-L's Community Design methodology. A series of workshops helped refine the goals and activities of Hajimari (a word meaning "to start") into four areas: food, attractive expression, children, and the making of things. Heading toward the centre opening in 2014, teams worked together to create related activities in areas as diverse as cooking, gardening and artwork creation. These four core areas continue to be explored through the lens of open-ended creative expression, with regular exhibitions, workshops and local events. With its café and multi-purpose spaces continuing to attract locals, it has succeeded in bridging art expression and community engagement in a way that has made it a leading space for unconstrained creativity deep into the surrounding regions of northern Japan.



1. The Hajimari Art Centre during reconstruction
2. Simple yet elegant designs
3. Opening celebrations
4. Volunteers preparing the ground



Kokorozashi Shien Project— Creating a wave of local events

Rural Hiroshima, like many regional areas in Japan, suffers from long-term declining population and related challenges with employment and service provision. The Kokorozashi Shien Project was the centrepiece of the 2017 Satoyama Future Expo, a year-long project organised by the Hiroshima Prefectural Government to reinvigorate local towns and villages by attracting people to visit the rural areas and rediscover the attraction of country life. The prefectural government engaged studio-L to run its Community Design programme in each rural district, with the goal of maximising visitor numbers by holding as many small-to-medium scale local events and ongoing activities as possible.

The Satoyama (a Japanese word for the shared space between the human world and nature) Future Expo wanted to expand the interpersonal relationships, both within rural communities and over the rural-urban divide. In this spirit, studio-L's programme guided participants through the four-stages of project creation and team building, with

an emphasis on projects that would attract people from outside to visit their communities. In addition, the large scale of the project, and the availability of sub-project support funding, necessitated an additional tutorial class on funding application, as well as tutorials on marketing their projects to potential participants. Nearly 1000 people attended the studio-L programmes, giving rise to over 150 separate events over a 9-month period that attracted more than 100,000 participants. Events offered were as diverse as learning to fly drones in rice fields and conducting local history tours. While the figures alone are impressive, it is the interpersonal connections and new bonds of trust forged as community members worked together that were considered the most significant result of the entire project. For communities so often battling negative impressions of rural life, proving to themselves the efficacy of branching out into new areas, and with new collaborators, has set a foundation for positive future developments.



1. Learning to fly drones in the countryside
2. Country-city communication over a meal
3. City dwellers experience harvesting



THEME CITY REPAIR

City Repair— DESIGNING NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS

Portland's colourful street intersections are redefining village life.

Are cities in the United States of America designed to isolate people and prevent them from building bonds of community? City Repair of Portland, Oregon, thinks this is the case, but they have a plan to change this by re-creating a sense of community one intersection at a time.

Text by Steve Jarvis Photographs by City Repair

Portland, Oregon is home to City Repair, an organisation dedicated to helping build local communities through the process of designing, funding and building shared spaces. Best known for its Intersection Repair activities, which bring neighbours together to paint a large mural on a shared street intersection, City Repair's scope goes beyond just that. Their goal is to resurrect the age-old role of crossroads as meeting places by creating "sharing nodes" such as benches, rain shelters, community gardens and book exchange shelves. Starting from a small group of neighbours ignoring the law to paint a single intersection 23 years ago, the organisation's

impact on Portland has been profound over the years. It has helped transform over 700 residential intersections into hives of community.

City Repair's community building message is simple: "You don't just need a sense of place; you need an actual place!" And their mission is to make this happen. Placemaking is about creating a sense of belonging, and it is an important antidote to many of the isolating norms defining city life. Coming together to plan and then build something is a reminder that people share common interests and have the power to manifest them. The power

of placemaking, however, resides as much in the sense of psychological ownership and reclamation of space as it does with physically building a place. Something as simple as neighbours coming together to paint an intersection can dramatically change the relationship between all the people sharing that space, help reduce crime, and even raise property values. Evidence for the power of placemaking in Portland is compelling, and City Repair's message is spreading throughout North America as dozens of cities seek to replicate this virtuous circle of civic engagement.

Interview with City Repair Co-founder Mark Lakeman

Creating places to make communities



As an activist designer, Mark Lakeman spends his time devising ways to help people to get out of their houses and be active participants in their society. Formally trained as an urban designer, he is the third generation in a storied family of architects heavily engaged in people-centred design and urban planning in Portland. Following his instincts, Mark resolved to put his architectural training to use in an area that would actively build community rather than put people into segmented boxes isolating one from the other. So, together with some neighbours, he set about building places for people to come together and create human connections. The result is City Repair.

It is no accident the organisation Mark co-founded with his neighbours is called City Repair, because he, and his

now extensive network of collaborators, are convinced that cities are designed for profit, not people, and this needs to be fixed. Mark's overseas travels, including living in a Mexican village and engagement with native Indian culture, helped him realise the city he grew up in lacked shared spaces for people to gather and actually create and perform the act of community. "Fundamentally most American cities have been designed using the same grid street and neighbourhood formation as the Romans used when building their empire. Having no village squares in the places that we as villagers actually lived, it's no surprise that we don't know each other, or have the chance to actually speak to each other, and as a nation that we suffer from intense feelings of isolation."

As Mark delves deeper into the work of City Repair, time and time again he comes back to the notion of a village. What he is referring to is "A place that is human in scale, place based and participatory, somewhere that you know your voice will be heard and you know something more about your neighbours than what they look like, and maybe their names. By knowing who you live with it is possible to understand the diversity that exists in neighbourhoods and the different skills and professions of people. When viewed from this perspective, it is possible to see your neighbourhood as a village with the diversity necessary to make things operate well on a much smaller scale than the extended boundaries of a

larger city."

Starting Intersection Repair

"The intersection is an often overlooked part of everyday life, but its importance can be traced back to ancient times. The crossroads have traditionally been a place of meeting, but in modern design this fades into the background because so much emphasis is put on movement and flows of people, especially in larger cities. Fast-moving cars and village squares are not compatible. Even in city centres, characterised by the typical American main street, the emphasis is on flows of people, there are few places for people to gather in informal and casual ways in the middle. The fact that intersections are public space, but not used by the public, goes to the heart of what is wrong in American neighbourhoods." For Mark and his collaborators, it was the obvious place to start their placemaking work.

When Mark and his neighbours first came together to paint their intersection in 1996, it was considered an illegal activity and they were fined for their transgression. When given the opportunity to plead their case before the city council, they put the serious flaws of city design into stark perspective. Mark recounts, "We told them that the United States has the lowest number of outdoor gathering places of all First World nations, and the highest incidences of violence related



3.

to people not being able to even know who they live with." It was a compelling argument, and the city council has transformed into an active supporter of the community-building activities run by City Repair.

Building a new normal for the city

Well aware that cooperative governing bodies can smooth the path to progress, City Repair always intended to affect the political culture of Portland. Mark puts it succinctly, "The goals of City Repair only become possible if we don't fight with the authorities. Instead, we treat them as villagers." A goal achieved. In 1997, Portland City introduced the Intersection Repair Ordinance, which permits every residential intersection to be recreated into any form of public square that local residents agree upon; opening up the city's 96 neighbourhoods, with their thousands of street intersections, for community development. Continued progressive action by the government and the rise of community building organisations such as City Repair, has helped make Portland one of the country's most inclusive and livable cities.



4.

Proof of City Repair's effectiveness goes beyond painted street intersections and shared spaces on street corners, it is making communities more stable, crime is down, people stay resident for longer, and families with children are attracted to the area. City Repair is also a valuable teaching tool, giving participants important interpersonal growth as well as more practical experience in sustainable ecology, natural building techniques, project management and much more, all of which can be applied to their daily lives outside of the neighbourhood. For Mark, "The difference between a thriving neighbourhood and being part of an isolated grid-bound city is the communication that happens between neighbours. The focus that we have participants constantly keeping in mind is that they're not building stuff. They're building relationships."



5.

1. Mark Lakeman — Placemaker
2. Intersections are blocked and become a hive of activity for a day
3. Intersections are fun places to be
4. A design takes shape
5. Everybody has an input into intersection design





The Village Building Convergence

For ten days every June, the entirety of Portland becomes one large showcase for the possibilities and sheer enjoyment of City Repair activities. Starting in 2001, the Village Building Convergence (VBC) draws its inspiration from Barn Raising events of a bygone era, when communities would come together to build something of significance in short order. This ten-day work-festival draws thousands of people into its fold, attracting participants and experts from around the region. Over the duration, there may be as many as 45 projects of various sizes underway during a VBC, and the whole city feels the energy. During the day people can attend hands-on workshops and join in building projects taking place simultaneously at dozens of sites around the city. The evenings are for sharing meals and kicking up heels, building connections and community in the most enjoyable of ways. While the events are organised and based in communities, City Repair plays a central role in facilitating

projects, helping with technical and logistical facets, as well as coordinating events and lectures during the ten days. Organising an event on this scale is time and energy intensive, but the payoff is potentially large. Sharing knowledge and gaining experiences helps to develop capacities in active neighbourhoods, and the festive mood easily catches media attention, bringing evermore people into the City Repair fold.



1. A big effort deserves a celebration
2. Planning community has to be inclusive
3. Share-It Square is a model to follow



How To Do Placemaking

Doing City Repair — The Process is the Goal

Evolving from a collection of neighbours and friends, City Repair became a not-for-profit organisation in 1998 and is governed by a Coordinators Council, while funding comes from private donations and on-the-ground operations are run by hundreds of volunteers. City Repair's role in facilitating the creation of public gathering places starts upon receiving a request for assistance from a budding local community. These neighbourhoods have already reached a consensus amongst affected residents to do a community-building project, and have an idea of what they want to do and what they need from City Repair. With this foundation in place, the main function of City Repair is to act as a conduit of placemaking knowhow, covering design and organisational aspects, as well as the facilitating of funding and negotiations with authorities necessary to carry out community-building activities. City Repair's project facilitation is guided by a number of principles: consensus building at all stages; a focus on community ownership; and prioritising the process over the final product. It is common for City Repair to assist the residents over months of meetings to help them reach a consensus on design. For City Repair, the final design is not what matters; it is the act of cooperating with residents and leading them toward positive changes and future interactions that is of primary importance.

Community building is a process formed by smaller achievable tasks. It usually begins with

an intersectional mural, but as bonds form and a sense of accomplishment grows, so can the scale, complexity and magnitude of projects undertaken. In order to encourage community ownership, City Repair volunteers work only as facilitators and give opinions only when asked. The residents are involved in the funding, design, and maintenance of the project. City Repair volunteers also encourage residents to hold celebrations in between their intermediate steps to help cement the bonds between people as they work toward their goals. In the more advanced City Repair neighbourhoods, such as Share-It Square (p.27) the village mentality is taken even further to include gateways, pathways between properties, nodes of activity such as children's clubhouses, treehouses and playgrounds, and one neighbourhood even has

a community hot tub. Established communities take on a life of their own, determining what they want to do and how to do it, but they can still draw upon City Repair's expertise and connections to acquire skills in ecological landscaping, permaculture and communal gardening, and building with natural materials such as cob (mud and straw), and more. While only a community can build community, the City Repair playbook provides a massive advantage for people in search of a more connected and grounded lifestyle.

1. Many hands are needed to complete a painting in one day
2. Paints are collected from residents or donated by local businesses



Share-It Square Intersection Painting— Share-It Square

A play on words for Sherret Street, one of the intersecting streets, Share-It Square is the original site of activity for City Repair and its prime showcase for the possibilities of community engagement and collective action. Tracing its origins back to a temporary tea house (named T-Hows) located on one of the intersection corners, it became a locus for bringing nearby residents together to share thoughts and aspirations over a cup of tea. Ordered to dismantle the unauthorised structure, the locals responded by getting together to paint their intersection as a symbol of community solidarity. The resulting tussle with bureaucracies gave birth to City Repair, and the square played an important proof-of-concept role as residents' efforts in creating shared places was rewarded with reduced traffic speeds, lower crime rates, and increased tolerance for diversity and goodwill amongst residents. All important goals for the city, this successful test case proved critical in swaying the government to adopt the City Repair agenda. Share-It Square has grown from strength to strength and now has cob structures on every corner, including a 24-hour tea stand, children's playhouse, fresh produce and book sharing spaces and a community bulletin board. The intersection is closed down a few times a year for block parties and, when needed, the repainting of the intersection mural.

Social Design × Technology

The Waag Social
Technology Ecosystem

So we have seen how people power can design vibrant communities and livable neighbourhoods, but can these social design principles be used to create technology that directly benefits ordinary people? One social technology organisation in Amsterdam is making a strong case that it is not only possible, but necessary to do just this.

Text by Steve Jarvis Photographs by Waag

In the centre of old Amsterdam stands Waag, an organisation that for the last 25 years has been refocusing the role of technology in people's lives. Within the walls of this medieval, castle-like building are laboratories full of scientific equipment, computer-controlled machines creating all manners of products, and a wide array of classes, symposia and events open to all. Their goal is to engage Amsterdam's citizens, young and old, with the importance of understanding and participating in the creation of technology, and to do this in the most fun, practical, and meaningful way possible.

Waag operates at the intersection of science, technology and the arts, and focuses on technology as a tool to bring about social change. It is a middle-ground organisation composed of research groups that work with both grassroots technology initiatives and institutional partners across Europe. Waag identifies its niche as Public Research, because it is actually being done by the public, and for the public, and the organisation has made important contributions in civic technology, open-source technologies, and the fusion area between art and science.

Waag's activities run the full gamut, providing technical expertise, tuition, equipment, and giving hands-on experience. It also offers networking opportunities, both horizontally, between people working in separate fields, and vertically, connecting ordinary citizens and giving them the experience and opportunities to influence policy making and the development of new technologies. This connecting role is part of Waag's mission to democratise technology by actually including society in the process of creating and making technology. Their end goal, however, is to foster Citizen Scientists that can make informed decisions on what, why and how they use technologies, and are fully aware of its effects on society as a whole and on the future of the planet.



Marleen Stikker — Social Technologist

Interview with Co-founder Marleen Stikker

Creating a sustainable technology future in Amsterdam

To get a deeper insight into the broader meaning and importance of Waag, we turn to Marleen Stikker, a pioneer of the Internet in Holland, and also the President and Co-founder of Waag.

Her starting point is that technology is not neutral, it is man-made, and therefore has the biases and objectives of its creators intrinsically tied into the fabric of the technology and how and why it is used. She has long been concerned about the loss of the “common good” aspect of the Internet, and technology in general, worried that it is increasingly used as a tool by business to create profit, interest and control. Waag is an attempt to bring back

social responsibility to technology creation, and to make it work for society rather than for profit.

According to Marleen, this loss of responsibility is not just for technology, but can be seen in all aspects of our lives, such as loss of control over the fate of the environment and the inability to identify a fixable cause. She answers her own question, “Does responsibility for change lie with governments, or corporations, or all of us? Of course, we are all responsible, and we need to recognise this, and use it as a way to take ownership, not only of the causes, but also the solutions to the vast array of problems our planet and our

societies face.”

Marleen firmly believes cooperation is the antidote to the market-centric nature of contemporary society. Advocating a paradigm shift away from this “survival of the fittest logic” of the market, which generates a lot of losers, she points out that nature also shows us that survival by cooperating is fundamental to ensuring the most positive outcome for all. “Waag is a way of helping people to understand that success comes from cooperating, and it is an important step toward fully appreciating the other key concepts of rights, ownership, commons, and openness that are the foundation of the organisation’s mission.”

For Marleen, education is the key to bringing about these changes, but this also means making knowledge less specialised and easier to understand for non-specialists. It requires altering the language we use to describe and understand technology, changing it from exclusive to inclusive. “By fostering a new environment for how technology and society can work together, Waag is actively creating this new “demystified” language for people to

understand and talk about technology.” The process of de-specialisation happening at Waag is critical to its success, as it sanctions cross-over between the many areas of research and development, and allows a space for curiosity, play and experimentation to thrive.

Having an openness to ideas and approaches stimulates new possibilities that are outside of some business objective, even allowing for developing technology for which there is not yet a perceivable demand. She notes, “We need to repudiate the business logic for technology because it warps our sense of value of technology and why we need it.” Waag’s role is to help people navigate their relationship with technology in a participative and responsible way, it is a worldview that goes beyond treating technology as a business strategy to further commercialise our lives and reinforce a consumption model of society.

The principle of openness is also fundamental in a different sense, because many of the technologies that play an essential role in our society are closed

and proprietary technologies. This means the public has given control of important aspects of their lives to corporations according to their agendas. We need to open up technology to make it accessible and accountable to the people that are using it and are affected by it. Marleen states it simply, “As a society we are only creating problems if we require technologically illiterate users to operate in some form of Smart City, what we need are Smart Citizens.”

She contends that a society built on open-source technology, and guided by the values promoted by Waag, will lead to a very different type of city structure. Marleen envisions a future that is more fair, inclusive and livable than one where the city is built on closed and proprietary technology. Waag provides opportunities for the public to be part of the creative process, rather than just passive consumers of progress and technological change. Moreover, being better informed and technologically competent will have profound implications for how we see ourselves in regards to society, politics, and the ability to create the future.

A social technology ecosystem operating on Waag values

Waag is considered a “social technology ecosystem” because it has three key components: a research foundation, maker spaces, and education platforms. Each is an independent entity with its own specific mission and governance, but they operate as a single unit. By combining these areas, Waag can take on the role of a technology incubator able to produce new materials, techniques and prototypes. They can even nurture seedling companies, such as Fairphone (see p.32), which began life as an idea that was developed with social technology values as part of a Waag research project.

Engaging the public in research activities, and having this relationship generate new research possibilities, is a core mission for Waag. Addressing social problems means actively engaging with those affected, often where they are affected. While most of the organisation’s activities are based within the Waag building, a lot of the application happens within communities, such as Smart Citizen pollution testing (see p.34) and digital mapping projects. There is an active outreach education programme in schools for students, and technology training for teachers, and their partnership with Amsterdam’s public libraries is creating local learning centres for digital fabrication (FabLabs) throughout the city.

Waag offers a wide variety of ways to participate. For the curious there is a weekly open night, but a mainstay for people getting involved with Waag are Learning Academy programmes tied to one of the Labs (see p.31). Over the course of a year, participants get theory and technical training mixed in with a lot of hands-on experience in a workshop environment as they plan and make projects. There are concentrated versions of these academies, usually in the form of a Hackathon, which takes a problem or task, such as mobility (see p.34), and focuses the attention of participants over a shorter period of time to get a concrete result. In addition, Waag runs a wide range of ad hoc workshops, symposia, and events of varying sizes with collaborative partners.

1. Traditional skills are updated for the digital era
2. Confidence in technology builds futures



2.

Maker Labs are the engines of Waag research

Labs gather research findings to formulate design questions and methods, and develop viable prototypes for adoption of open, fair and inclusive technology. Even though labs have a thematic focus, there is much cross-fertilisation of ideas and resources multiplying possibilities for unique and important technology developments.

FabLab A world network of digital fabrication

Downloadable design plans, customised and modular production, and digital fabrication methods and machines have changed the nature of manufacturing. Equipment such as 3D printing and digital machine cutting allow for precise and complex designs to be produced, making it incredibly easy to create prototypes and experimental products. Waag is home to the first European FabLab, and its machinery is both extensive and cutting-edge, and the lab has made important contributions to the ever-expanding database of DIY designs that can be accessed from anywhere in the world.



Printing 3D products

Open Wetlab Bringing Biotechnology to the people

Biotechnology modifies organisms to produce pharmaceuticals, materials, and foods to make human lives easier and healthier. Although an increasingly important area of technology research, it is not well understood by the general public. Bringing together artists, designers, scientists and hackers, the Open Wetlab is making its mark in bio-art, bio-design and DIT (Do It Together) Biology. The lab’s internationally renowned and ground-breaking Biohacking Academy teaches how to build a biotechnology lab with open hardware, set up experiments and covers the basics of synthetic biology and stimulates critical reflection.



The biology lab in action

TextileLab A new horizon for fashion

TextileLab researches the production of new materials by experimenting with raw materials and manufacturing methods. By bridging the innovation areas of technology and textiles it is possible, for example, to make material that will actively extract CO2 from the air as you wear it. By combining materials research, digital manufacturing processes, handicraft techniques, and prioritising sustainable and circular materials, this lab is helping to redefine what we can use as a textile, what we wear, and why we wear it.



Inventing new materials

How To Waag

Case Studies

Smart Citizens

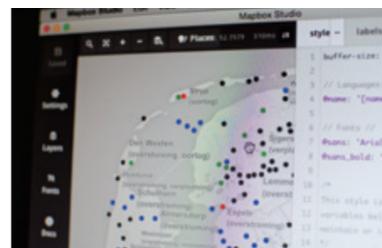
Networks of engaged Citizen Scientists

The Smart Citizen (see p.40) research agenda helps people also understand and use the tools and applications needed to map their surrounding environments. Waag provides crash course workshops where they teach participants to measure air quality, water quality, noise pollution, and even radiation. Workshops are often held in local communities, as it is important to have local citizens involved so they can formulate a measurement strategy amongst themselves. A sense of ownership of the project is further strengthened by having the participants build their own simple measuring devices. The device itself is modular, produced by FabLab and only requires

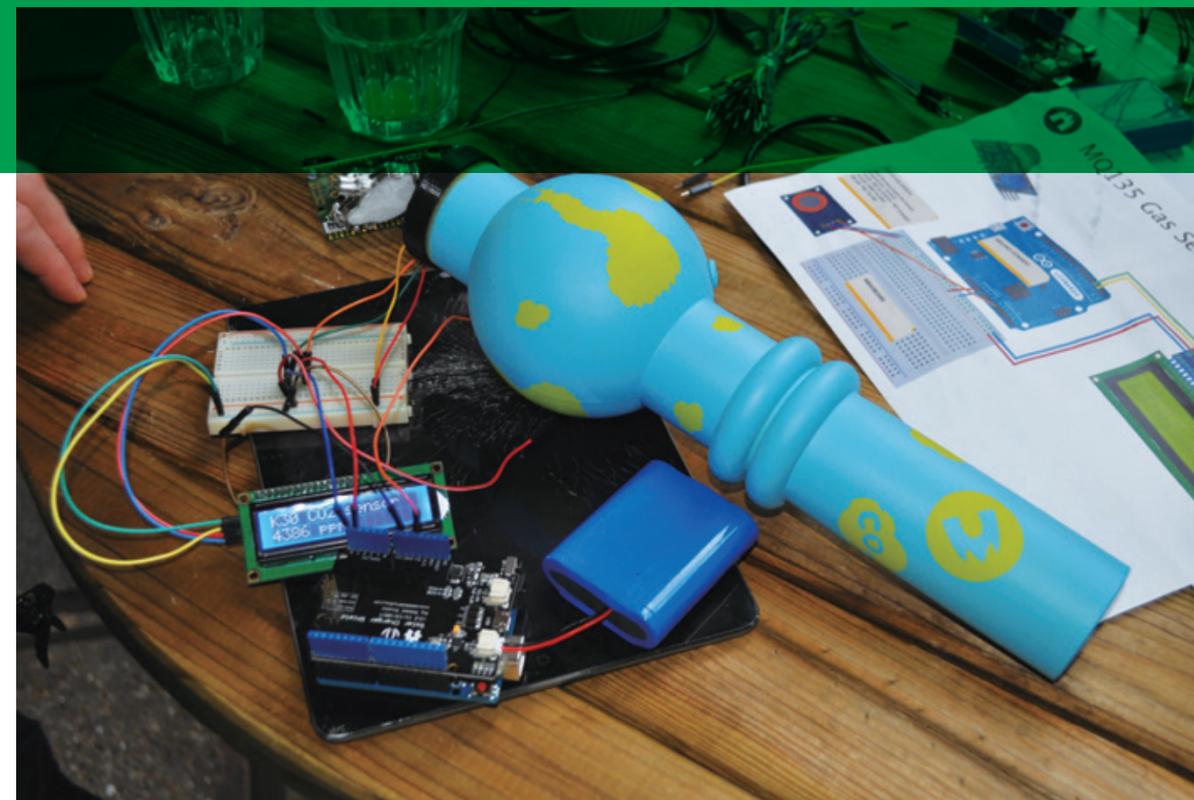
a few simple components. The design is freely available online so anyone, anywhere, can build one if they want.

By constructing open-source testing device kits, and then connecting them to the Internet, people can create monitoring networks within their local areas. Knowing the levels of pollution where they live, and having hard scientific data to back it up, is very empowering to people. They get a greater understanding of their local conditions, and how their actions affect the environment. In addition, by generating hard scientific data, these Citizen Scientists can highlight areas of concern, and influence policymaking

and corporate behaviour. The act of creating technology networks to test environmental issues has another profound level; it brings together people with shared concerns, helping them become accountable for their own actions, or hold others accountable for negatively affecting their environment.



Testing sites are easily mapped



Measuring devices are made with easy to access components

Fairphone

Fair and responsible electronics is possible



Fairphone is an example where values-based research turns into a product, and then a company directly addressing the initial issue. Now in Version 3, Fairphone sells a smartphone produced according to strict ethical and environmental standards. It is a completely modular phone with an open design, meaning all the parts can be easily removed and replaced by the user, it even has a do-it-yourself repair manual. More than that, its components are made from responsibly-mined minerals and metals, and produced in factories with verified fair work practices. Made of high-quality upgradable components, the devices are built to last longer than comparable phones, reducing the environmental burden from consumers constantly changing handsets.

Dissecting a mobile phone to identify components

Now a consumer product, the Fairphone has its origins in an awareness campaign started by Waag in 2010 about conflict minerals, where minerals in war zones are illegally mined and the profits put to war making. The Fairphone research project aimed to open up a phone, identify component origins, and replace them with sustainable parts, thereby creating an ethical smartphone prototype. The goals then changed to bringing a "fair" smartphone to the market — made as far as possible— of parts produced and utilised without harming individuals or the environment. By 2013, Fairphone had spun out of Waag to become a social enterprise selling a working version of an ethical smartphone. By applying ethical guidelines to smart phone production, Fairphone is making a positive impact across the value chain in mining, design, manufacturing and life cycle, while expanding the market for products that put ethical values first.



The 3rd Generation Fairphone is now on sale

MakeHealth

Co-creating fair and affordable health products

The goal of the MakeHealth research area is to come up with innovative designs and open-source applications enabling citizens to better participate in society, regardless of physical limitations. Epitomising the principles of co-creation and inclusive design, this research field brings together patients, health professionals, hospitals, designers, artists and healthcare entrepreneurs to brainstorm on solutions to challenges faced by people with healthcare needs. To actively identify problems and then create solutions, multidisciplinary teams collaborate at all stages of development, from workshop to FabLab production. Each team has a 'problem owner'. This can be a patient, a healthcare professional, or healthcare entrepreneur. Along with young designers, makers, and health professionals, the teams then design prototypes to solve the problem at hand.

The focus of MakeHealth is everyday products or services that are not a core business for manufacturers or suppliers, and often not even identified as potential products or services. Take, for instance, the glow-in-the-dark white cane for the vision-impaired. With an illuminated cane, users are visible to traffic, providing them with a sense of safety when travelling the streets. Or, the transportable mid-step that can help elderly to climb stairs. In both cases the problems were identified, and the solutions initiated and developed in a co-creative process with the end-user. Finally, the entire process is documented and shared online, allowing other users to create and adapt these solutions in their own environment.



Glow-in-the-dark walking canes makes it safer to go out at night

THEME CONCLUSION

SOCIAL DESIGN— CREATING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Having people at the centre of Design is important

Text by Steve Jarvis Photograph by studio-L

Social Design is an appropriate place to start our exploration of Human-centred Design. Rapid technological development has vastly empowered design, making it possible to draw on a wealth of talent and expertise to create the goods and services redefining how economies and societies function, and for whom. However, many products, services and technologies, regardless of how exquisitely designed they may be, do not pay sufficient attention to their effect on the lived experience of everyday people, and their impact on wider society. For the majority of the population, economic and technological progress is something of remote origins, a process underway while people are busy dealing with the demands of work, family, and their personal goals and desires. As Waag's Marleen Stikker reminds us, being conscious of why things are designed, is a central design principle that needs constant fortification.

The three approaches to Social Design featured in this issue demonstrate the potential and importance of having an intermediary organisation capable of adding focus and expertise when needed and appropriate to help bring about positive change. With defined missions and a series of methodical

steps that can be applied to their goals, the sustained success of studio-L, City Repair and Waag are proof of concept, demonstrating the power of organisations to facilitate positive social change. Highlighting the effectiveness of Social Design methods is a timely reminder that "people" are the critical third leg of Design's foundation of "form" and "function". Everyone has the capacity to design, and sometimes they are the very best choice to be doing this.

However timely and appropriate, for non-professionals the design process does not just happen spontaneously and perfectly, it requires systemisation to make the most of the opportunities of people wanting to change their lives and circumstances. Regardless, the end-users are the stars in Social Design and there needs to be a high degree of trust and responsibility that the people on the ground, with local knowledge and strong motivations, will find appropriate solutions to the issues at hand. It is the process of fostering ownership of the solutions generated, which in turn sparks longer-term commitment from participants, and generates enthusiasm and willingness to be involved by those on the margins. In the coming issues of Human-centred Product and Service

Design, we will shift our attention away from intermediary organisations and place-based design methodologies to explore changing trends in product and service design.

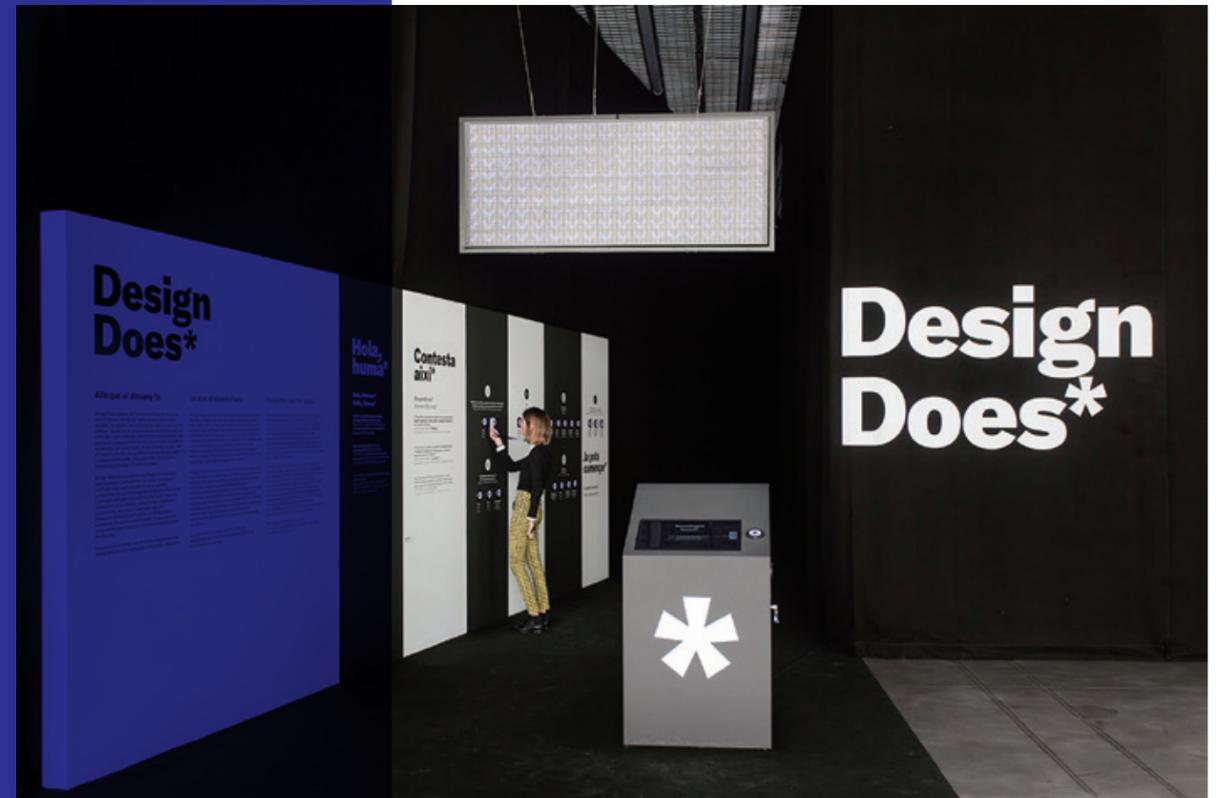
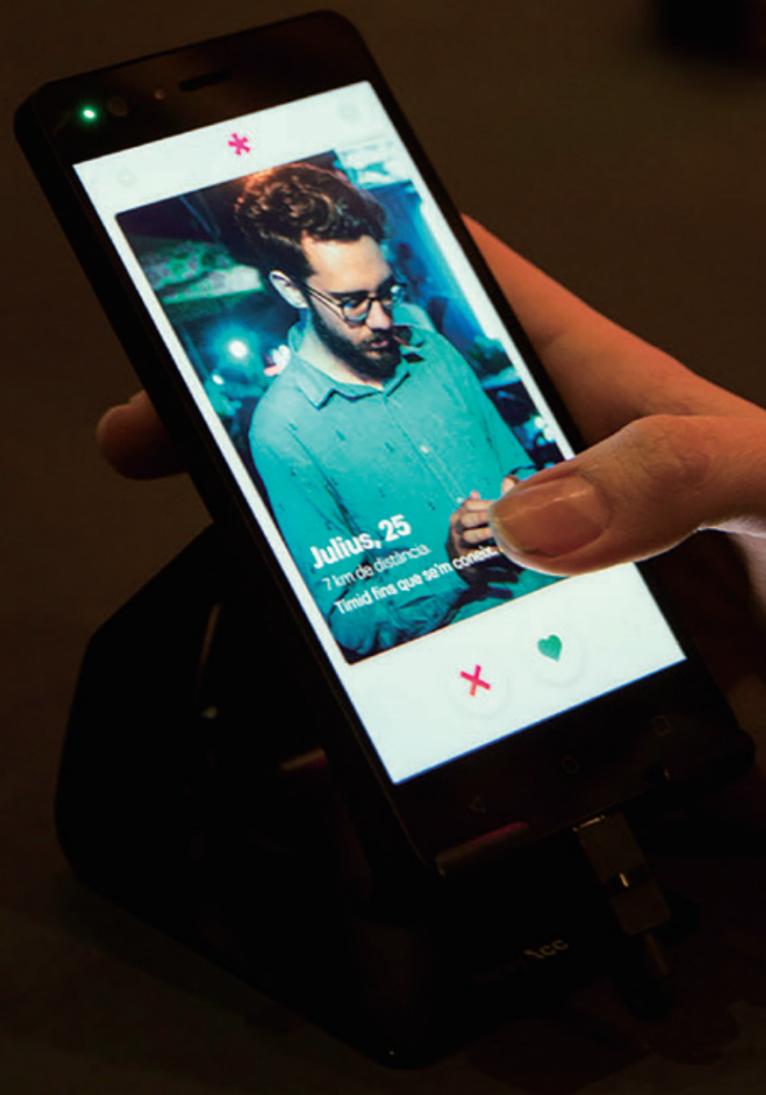
Design in this century is facing a dichotomy, with the rise of open technologies and collaborative creation designers now have less control over the design process. At the same time, their role is ever more critical to the functioning of these products and services as they become interconnected, and to making systems of technology more appropriate, inclusive, and adaptable. Nowhere will the role of designers be more important than in tackling the critical problems plaguing society and the planet. Imagining, and designing the connections between people, and between people and technology, is key to the future of humans and the planet. As we will see in the coming issues, designers have a critical role in making these connections possible.



EXHIBITION

HOW DOES DESIGN INFLUENCE THE MODERN WORLD?

The exhibition "Design Does* - For Better and For Worse" presents a series of international designers' interactive projects.



The definition of design can be very elusive as it has different meanings in different contexts, and continues to evolve and adopt new meanings as time progresses. However, one can understand design as an agent of change - at times solution-oriented facilitating a need or purpose, at times artistic and conveys the abstract and expressive message of creators, and at times a combination of both forms. American inventor and entrepreneur Steve Jobs once said, "Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works." No doubt many great designs in history have helped mankind transcend into the modern world on both a practical and emotional level, with a profound impact on our daily lives and the society.

Design should ideally be enlightening and in the service of a better life. Unfortunately, that may not always be the case as everything can be a double-edged sword, even the best-intentioned design projects may occasionally have unforeseeable adverse effects. To help better understand the roles designs play in today's society and the effects which they may have, the Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI) and the Hong Kong

Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) (Lee Wai Lee), member institutions of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) plan to bring the exhibition entitled "Design Does* - For Better and For Worse" to Asia for the first time in 2020, in collaboration with ELISAVA Barcelona School of Design and Engineering, the Design Museum of Barcelona and Domestic Data Streamers, a Barcelona creative office with the mission to tackle challenges society faces with data, storytelling and arts.

It should be noted that the exhibition does not aim to provide a clear definition for Design, but rather to examine the influence of Design on our communities, behaviours and lifestyles, and to question the roles designers play and will be playing as humanist and strategic solution providers. "Design Does*" revolves around questions related to topical issues and future challenges including sustainability, ethics, connectivity, marginalisation, consumerism, innovation, new materials and disadvantaged groups. The exhibition provides insights with a series of projects developed by international designers.



“Design Does*”
aims to transcend
the limits of space, time and
conventional formats.

Inspired by the question “Can we live without plastic?”, Ooho!, a flexible, edible and biodegradable packaging designed by the English sustainable design startup Notpla, deep-dives into how Design has contributed to plastic’s negative impact on the environment and how Design can also help eradicate its use. For “What came first, flags or identity?”, Yara Said collaborated with The Refugee Nation and Amnesty International to create a symbolic nation through designing The Refugee Nation Flag in the context of the Rio 2016 Olympics, which helps to raise awareness concerning the refugee situation. In asking “Do all cultures consume in the same way?”, Love me tender by Domestic Data Streamers delves into how customers will learn to adapt a single-design product to satisfy their own needs, reflecting that an object or service’s possible uses are flexible and often beyond the intentions of the designer. To investigate “Where do things come from?”, Christien Meindertsma published a book after 3 years of research, with a total of 185 products derived from Pig 05049. Some of them are shown at their true scale in the exhibition. Design can thereby serve to make industrial processes more transparent and help us better understand the origins of what we consume.

“Design Does*” aims to transcend the limits of space, time and conventional formats while exploring

the responsibilities design has in its impact on industries, human, social systems and cultural values. One of the highlights is the live manifesto showing the world’s updated status. The exhibition progresses from the usual monologue format structure of exhibitions, and instead seeks to generate a dialogue with the public by encouraging participation and content creation from its visitors. Through a system of real-time data collection and display, visitors can interact with various items and share their sensations and opinions, the exhibition will then transform and evolve each day taking into account these contributions.

All in all, the exhibition brings the general public a more dynamic vision of Design, and presents an interactive exploration of how design tackles the global challenges of our society, offering insights to sustainable solutions for building a brighter future. It conveys the message that everyone of us is responsible for shaping the world with decisions we make, for better and for worse.

Design Does* - For Better and For Worse
Coming soon



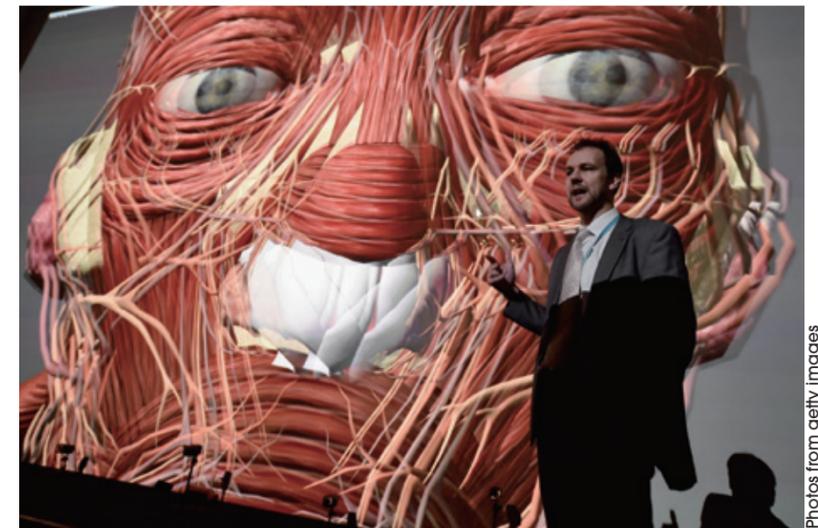
INTERVIEW

Paul Chapman

Virtual Reality as a Tool to Integrate Sciences, Arts, and Technology



As an expert, educator, and avid researcher in the field of virtual reality application, Dr Paul Chapman brings his insights to "HKDI inspire* Design Thinking 2019". His lecture, "Virtual Reality: Temporary Distraction or Real Opportunity?" explains and discusses the evolution of VR and future opportunities of utilising such technology. At the core of his technological and innovative endeavour, Dr Chapman still believes that empathy and establishing an understanding of end-users' needs are the keys to effective designs.



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“VR is only going to get better and better, and with huge investments in the technology, now is the time to get involved.”

In the beautiful Scottish port city of Glasgow, technological innovation is as vibrant a scene as the city's rich Victorian and Art Nouveau heritage, thanks to the School of Simulation and Visualisation of the Glasgow School of Art. Also known as SimVis, it is an undergraduate and postgraduate research and commercial centre based in the Digital Media Quarter in Glasgow. SimVis boasts state-of-the-art virtual reality, graphics and sound laboratories, providing an ideal environment for students, faculties, and researchers to explore the interface between Sciences, Technology and the Arts.

Since 2009, Dr Paul Chapman has served as head of SimVis, responsible for all aspects of activities at the school including research, commercial and academic teaching. Hailing from a background in Computer Sciences, Dr Chapman is a Chartered Engineer, Chartered IT Professional and a fellow of the British Computer Society. Dedicated to the education of future generations, Dr Chapman is also an inaugural member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Young Academy of Scotland, an organisation established in 2011, providing a platform for young entrepreneurs, professionals and academics to develop a coherent and influential voice and to address the most challenging issues faced by the Scottish society and beyond. "Most of my time is spent doing management activities, but I'm lucky enough to still be able to do research and a small amount of teaching," says Dr Chapman.

With a passion in technology, Dr Chapman has been applying his expertise to address real-world problems in fields such as Experimental Psychology, Archaeology, Marine Visualisation, Speech Rehabilitation, and Flying Simulation. His current research interest lies in the field of Medical Visualisation using VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality).

Dr Chapman gained his master's degree in Computer Graphics and Virtual Reality in 1996. While the general public became widely familiar with the idea of commercial virtual reality headsets in the 2010s, the discussion and exploration of the actual technology has been going on since the end of the last century. However, VR experienced a rough and stalled beginning, failing to reach expectations and conceptualisations. With his academic background, Dr Chapman realised that the technology for VR development was growing far too slowly. Decades passed, seeing how schools today are providing primary school students with VR headsets, Dr Chapman believes that virtual reality is finally no longer an emerging technology, but rather an opportunity that should and could be embraced by the public. "Children can walk around the moon or the bottom of the ocean from the comfort of their classrooms, which is significantly better than traditional methods of learning," he comments, "VR is only going to get better and better, and with huge investments in the technology, now is the time to get involved."

Dr Chapman recently brought his innovative concepts built on years of experience to Hong Kong, and participated in "HKDI inspire* Design Thinking 2019". At the event, he gave a lecture titled "Virtual Reality: Temporary Distraction or Real Opportunity?" Through the lecture, Dr Chapman stated and justified the notion that "previously VR was a distraction, now it's a real opportunity." Following the lecture, a workshop was held. Workshop: XR Case Studies revolves around virtual reality and augmented reality and their applications to various real life and hypothetical situations. XR (extended reality) has long been incorporated into projects at SimVis. The school has an interactive VR programme as well as various XR tools providing intuitive learning environments for medical students. "One example is our Definitive Human project, which is the creation of an accurate 3D model of the human body." Dr Chapman explains, "Our goal is to revolutionise healthcare and medical learning – we think and see in 3D, so providing true 3D tools really helps us understand complex three-dimensional anatomical datasets."

Although verging on the innovative and technology-driven side of design, Dr Chapman firmly believes that Design Thinking has to revolve around a deep interest in developing an understanding of the end-users. He thinks empathy is crucial to design, an element allowing designers to really understand and gain insights about what users want and need. "In my work, I've found it imperative to get into my users' heads and sometimes question the questions that they are asking me!"

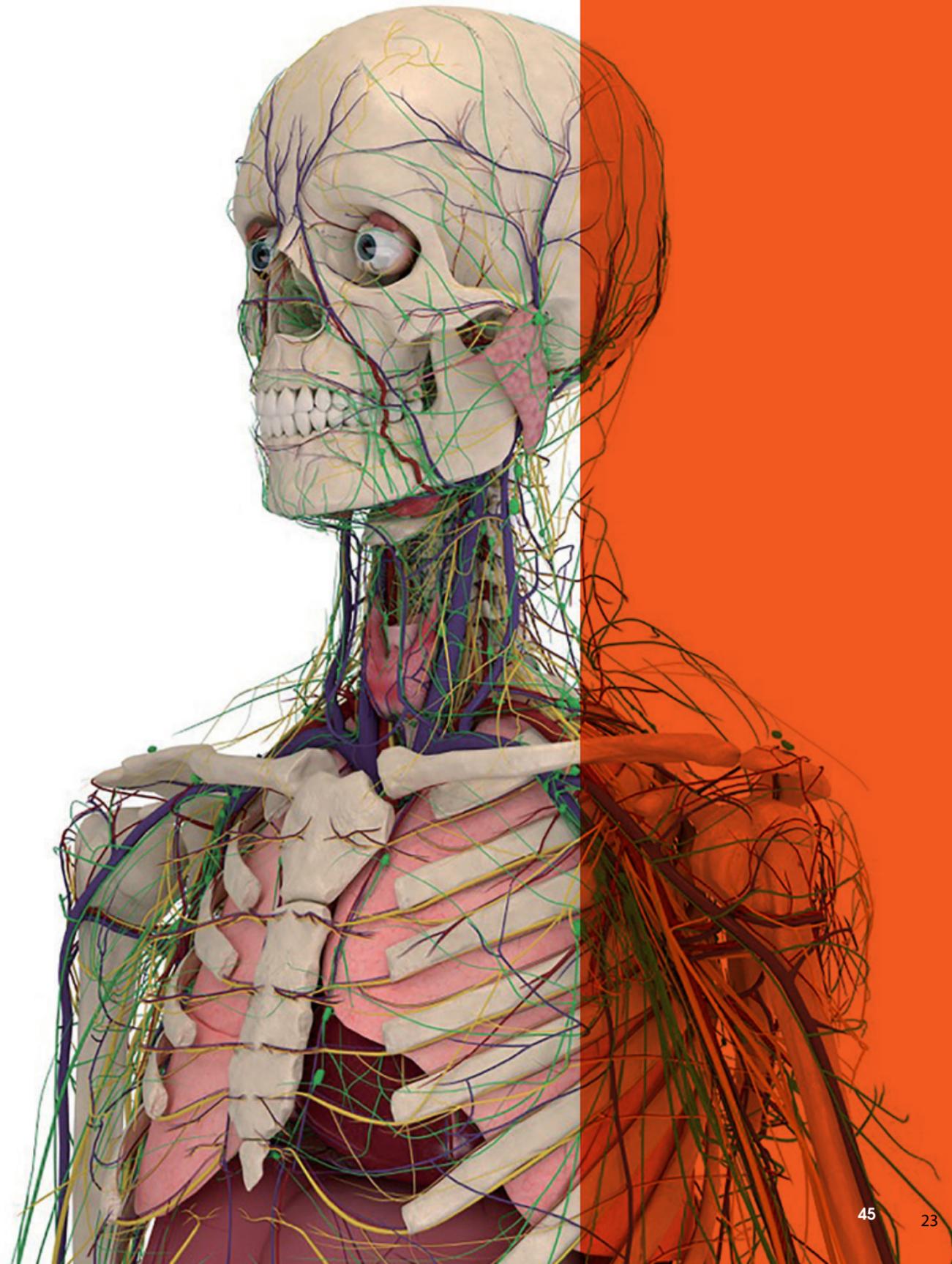
Before SimVis, Dr Chapman worked as the director of the Hull Immersive Visualisation Centre, and had spent years working as an offshore engineer in the oil, gas and diamond mining industries. His mindset for Design Thinking has been proven to be feasible in many of his previous work experience and challenges faced. "When I worked in the offshore industry, some of the tasks were extremely complex. For example, I was involved with the clear-up of a submarine base in Scotland which involved removing lots of debris from the bottom of a large deep loch. The work environment was complicated with underwater remotely operated vehicles, a barge, grab, sonar

surveys, etc. The person in charge of the operation, the Party Chief, struggled to have a good understanding of the current state of operations. By designing and developing a real-time 'natural' marine visualisation system, it was possible for the Party Chief to look at a 3D real-time visualisation of operations and have an immediate understanding of the position and state of all offshore objects, because the new visual interface was extremely intuitive to understand. This was significantly better than the previous plethora of complex graphs, dials, and visuals that hadn't been designed with the end-user in mind."

Surely a clear-cut example of empathetic and Human-centred Design approach, but for a more day-to-day practical advice than clearing the bottom of a loch, Dr Chapman suggests keeping up-to-date with VR keynotes on YouTube from companies like Facebook and figures such as Michael Abrash. If planning to go down the research route, he suggests keeping up with journals such as Springer's Virtual Reality. "Unity is a good tool to get to grips with for developing VR applications."



Photos from getty images



INTERVIEW

Hernan Diaz Alonso

Embracing Multiplicity and Disorder in Today's Architecture and design

Hernan Diaz Alonso visited Hong Kong this September to give a lecture under "HKDI inspire* Design Thinking 2019", which is part of a series of master lectures and workshops that aims to promote design thinking as a way to stimulate open questions and the continuous search for creative avenues beyond disciplinary and contextual boundaries. In this interview, Alonso shares his visions about the education and practices of architecture and design, and how design thinking will help to bring innovations in cultures.

Hernan Diaz Alonso is the director and chief executive officer of Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), a renowned avant-garde school of architecture located in Los Angeles, United States. Despite being a leading educator and one who plays a key role in shaping SCI-Arc's graduate curriculum, Alonso is also an architect. He is the principal of architecture office HDA-x (formerly Xefirotarch) based in Los Angeles, but he certainly sees himself more than that. "I am an architect by training, but I consider myself a designer at large because in our office, we do architecture, fashion, art and product design," he explains.

When saying he likes to teach with what he does not yet know, Alonso means that when one has an overall view of a design, the question becomes what else one can incorporate into it, and one should keep exploring and pushing the boundaries. "SCI-Arc is a speculative institution. We explore what 'next' is, what the new frontiers and limits are," he emphasises that teachers play a key role in encouraging such evaluation in design. "Sometimes, the problem at schools is that some teachers feel too comfortable. They need to accept criticisms and allow themselves to be more experimental in what they do." His emphasis of the exploratory spirit in education comes from a simple idea, as he explains, "it is much easier to pull back than to go forward."

It is always reassuring to know that the teachers are also practitioners in the fields that they teach. In fact, that is the tradition of SCI-Arc. All faculty members have their own practices and offices, and the school serves to be a place for experiments. Running the school and the architecture office at the same time, Alonso describes the experience to be symbiotic and interactive. "I like to teach with the things that I do not know, the ideas that I have been thinking about, including how my designs may develop at the architecture office." That will in turn provide directions for the teaching activities. "Architecture and design are a collective endeavour. It is important that we engage in the cultural dialogue," he shares.

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Nowadays, success is highly valued. It is needless to say that being experimental often bears the price of failure, but Alonso sees it the other way, "I believe that every design should set up itself to achieve something impossible, for what is possible is already known." He further illustrates, "pure originality is impossible in design, but that should not stop you from pursuing it. It is like in sports. Even though it is rather impossible to do everything right all the time, that does not stop an athlete from trying."

Furthermore, Alonso states that design is not to simply provide what people want, “you should assume that people do not know what they want. It is your job to stimulate their thoughts.” After all, his definition of success is to venture into territories that one has not tried before, learn something along the way and stimulate others. In other words, success comes from trying. “Take a look at the many things that we admire today. People did not think they were feasible. Yet, all the things were made by somebody.” Alonso believes that as one gains more knowledge, one should have the courage to jump into the unknown to achieve something innovative. “Do not be paralysed by the ways of history or the possibility that you may fail,” he advises.

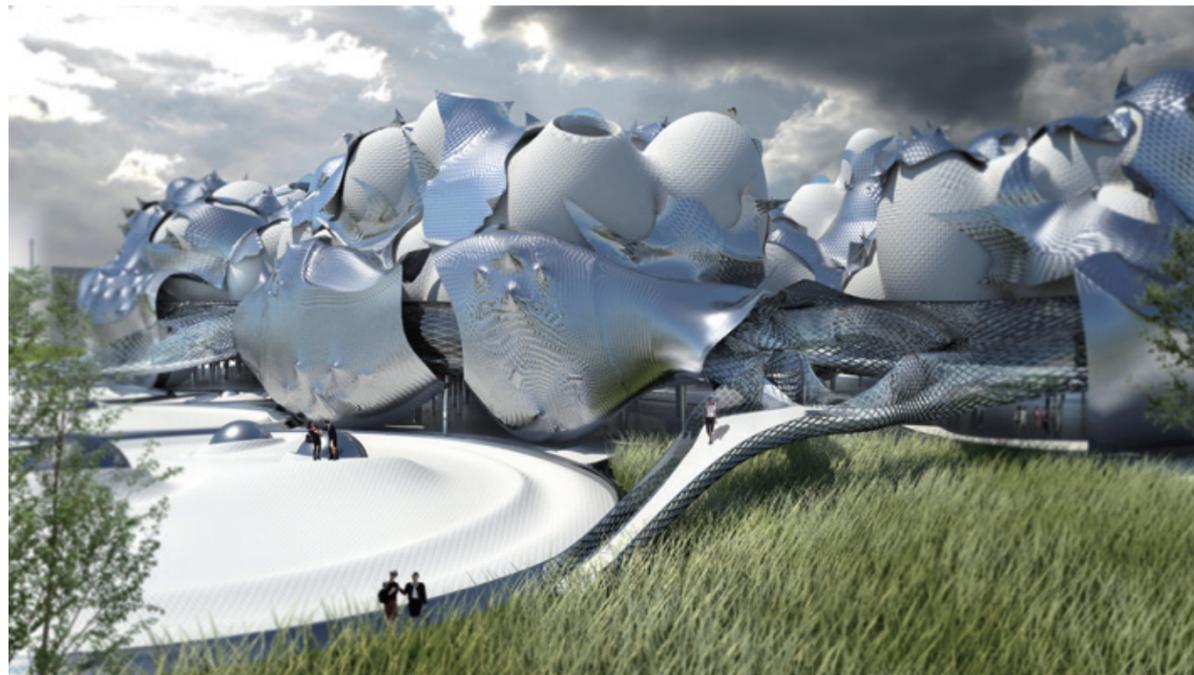
While encouraging students to be more open to explore the unknown, Alonso is well aware that the world is changing quickly because of technological advancement. Technology has changed not just our design practices, but every aspect of life, including the way we communicate and travel around the world. In fact, Alonso sees the development of digital technologies as a natural process of civilisation, which is why he has led SCI-Arc’s transition to digital technologies and is widely credited for that. Nonetheless, Alonso does not think that it is worth special

mentioning. “Architecture is always connected to the evolution of culture. (In SCI-arc,) we do not talk so much about design in terms of digital technologies. I think they are elements that can be absorbed.” He gives an example, “gothic architecture would not have happened without the gothic culture, which learned ways to cut stone. Now, it happens that technology is pushing the possibilities of design. It is just like we would not have electronic music without the computer.”

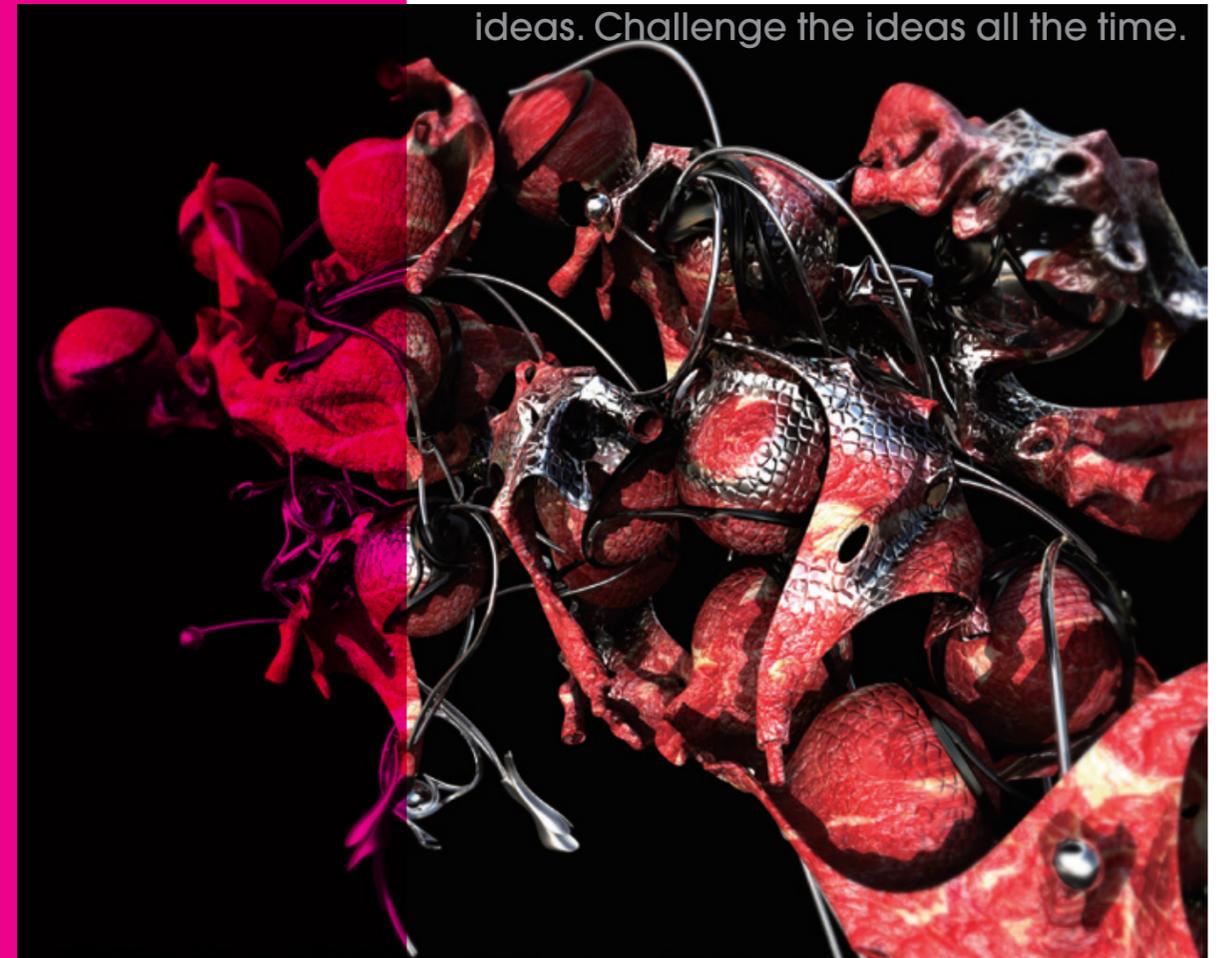
However, with technology pushing the boundaries rapidly, the roles of architects and designers in the world are changing as well. Alonso sees it as an opportunity for architects to achieve in broader aspects. “We architects think in a holistic way. There is a joke about architects being generalists,” he believes that nowadays, there are more ways for architects to contribute to society, “in terms of the ways architects think about cities, technologies, transportation, sustainability, ecology, food and fashion,” he points out. That is also why Alonso always encourages students to learn outside the traditional curricula of architecture. “As an architect, you must be like a sponge to absorb anything that is available in the culture. We live in a culture in which the multiplicity of knowledge is emphasised. Everyone should be thinking in multiple dimensions all the time.”

His beliefs echo with the title of his master lecture at HKDI, “architecture through the aesthetics of disorder”. “Historically, in the western culture since the Renaissance, there had been the desire to produce perfection, but now computers have perfect mathematical equations for us to work with,” he explains. Thus, while designing, Alonso thinks it is crucial to try allowing the design ideas to be more “contaminated”, “to an extent that the work is much more chaotic, even though there will be more design and order later on.” His concepts of “disorder” seem to correspond to his attitude of embracing interdisciplinary possibilities as stimulations of thoughts.

In visiting HKDI this time, Alonso hopes to encourage aspiring designers to be fearless in thinking and actualising their ideas. “Find your own voice and identity. Learn from various things. Learn from your teachers, but do not just accept their ideas. Challenge the ideas all the time,” he believes that a designer should play the role of a provocateur, “find your way to challenge society and your audience, do not try to do what the market wants.” Yet, ultimately, the goal of design is to find joy, as he expresses, “design and architecture are some of the most beautiful contributions you can make to the world. Be grateful for that, but also be like a child. Play, play and play, but play seriously.”



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International Design Calendar

From December 2019 to March 2020, the highlights of the most interesting design and art events around the world.

Dec

Design Miami / Dec 3-8 2019 Miami, United States

Design Miami/ takes place alongside Art Basel Miami Beach (Dec 5 – 8 2019), and brings together the most influential collectors, gallerists, designers, curators and critics from around the world in celebration of design culture and commerce. Over the years, it has become the expert event for collectible designs.



World Architecture Festival Dec 4 – 6 2019 Amsterdam, Netherlands

A three-day conference incorporating architect talks, discussions, and award ceremonies. Speakers include Architecture big names such as Elizabeth Diller from Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Kai-Uwe Bergmann from BIG Architects. Awards including World Building of the Year, will be announced at the festival.

Seoul Design Festival Dec 4 – 8 2019 Seoul, South Korea

The theme for Seoul Design Festival 2019 is the host city, "Seoul". It looks at the city's innovative energies and traditional local roots through creative designs. Since 2002, the festival has served as a portal to raise awareness of local emerging designers as well as introducing international brands to the domestic market. The festival also invites renowned designers to give seminars at charming hidden spots in the city.

Jan



imm cologne Jan 13- 19 2020 Cologne, Germany

The entire interior design industry gathers together at the beginning of the year at imm cologne to introduce and experience the latest designs and products. The show focuses on contemporary interior design and furniture, and at the same time explores innovative technology and materials used in design.

Formex - Stockholm Jan 14 – 17 2020 Stockholm, Sweden

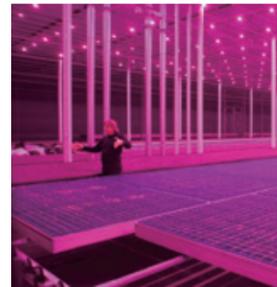
Formex – Stockholm is a fair for interior designers. It brings together domestic and international buyers, agents, designers, producers, and journalists. At the fair, visitors share and discuss knowledge, information and trends through a series of well curated exhibitions and lectures.



Feb

Countryside, The Future Feb 20 – Summer 2020 New York City, United States

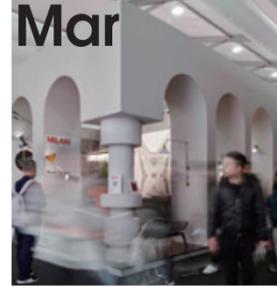
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum invites architect Rem Koolhaas, founder of architecture firm OMA, and the firm's think tank AMO, to collaborate on an exhibition addressing 98% of the world's surface: the countryside. The exhibition explores a wide range of factors impacting countryside transformations, such as artificial intelligence and genetic experimentation, and offers speculations about the future based on insights gathered from current context.



Stockholm Design Week Feb 3 – 9 2020 Stockholm, Sweden

Stockholm Design Week showcases the best of Scandinavian designs in the week of February, together with Stockholm Furniture and Light Fair. Hundreds of events will be packed into one week. Stockholm Design Week aims to help visitors and exhibitors establish new relationships and foster communications cross industries and cultures through the shared passion for Scandinavian designs.

Mar



Art Basel Hong Kong Mar 19 – 21 2020 Hong Kong

Art Basel Hong Kong showcases modern and contemporary art works ranging in a variety of artistic medium. It makes an effort in promoting Asian art and artists in its Insights sector, supported by extensive background information. The show also incorporates significant numbers of emerging artist and new media arts. Films, magazines, and conversations all play an important part in the upcoming Art Basel Hong Kong.

Asia Contemporary Art Show Mar 13 – 16 2020 Hong Kong

Asia Contemporary Art Show brings together artists, galleries, buyers and collectors in an intimate hotel setting. The art show features international pieces but at the same time focuses on promoting Asian artists. This year, the art show also emphasises on works reinterpreting traditional Asian concepts, techniques, and materials.

Geneva International Motor Show Mar 7 – 17 2020 Geneva, Switzerland

The Geneva International Motor Show is one of the biggest events in the automobile industry. Here, manufacturers proudly present their latest offers ranging from alternative powered vehicles of today to concept car designs for tomorrow. 2020 marks the 90th anniversary for the grand event.

Design Shanghai Mar 12 – 15 2020 Shanghai, China

Design Shanghai is Asia's leading international design event. It showcases acclaimed design brands from all over the world, and aims to connect Asian architects, interior designers, property developers, retailers and private buyers with one another.

ONES TO WATCH

"UKIYO-E"

by Wong Sze Wa

Student : Wong Sze Wa

Programme: Higher Diploma of Jewellery and Image Product Design

Work: "UKIYO-E"

Description: The artwork has a well-recognised image of waves, but the waves themselves are unique and abstract, accentuated by the refracted light through the sun. This design uses hand-crafted techniques as the focus of the work to bring out its distinctiveness. The combination of jewellery and shell contributes to the overall aesthetics and at the same time enhances the observability and comfort of the work.





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