

Shan

Chuang

PERSPECTIVE

Why DIT Matters?

Hsiang



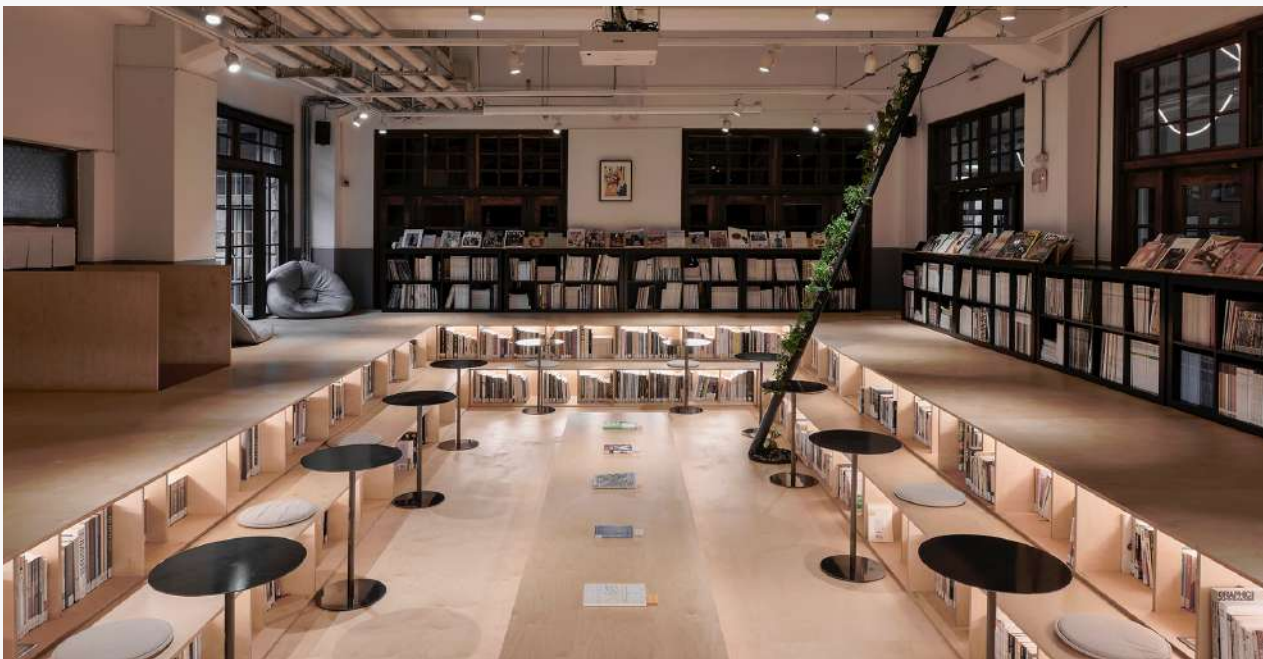
PERSPECTIVE

Why DIT Matters?

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Foreword by President Chang Chi-yi

“Perspective”

Established in 2003, Taiwan Design Center (TDC) was officially upgraded to Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI) in 2020 after 10-plus years of capacity accumulation. During the course of its 17-year development, TDC worked diligently to promote design aesthetics, offer guidance to industries, and forge global links, successfully enhancing the awareness of industries and the entire population toward the value of design. Additionally, through the hosting of international design events such as the 2011 International Design Alliance Congress and World Design Capital 2016, the power of Taiwan’s design has been confirmed to be already on par with global standards.

During the past decade, we have witnessed at large scale events such as the 2017 Summer Universiade hosted by Taipei, the 2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition, and the 2019 Taiwan Lantern Festival how the power of design has gradually become a general consensus among the Taiwanese peoples. Both companies and government agencies alike are trying to reshape aesthetics through design and even invert their initial thinking and ideologies. As such, an important mission of TDRI’s is to continue to boost the design capacity accumulated in Taiwan over the years to an even higher level.

During the past year, TDRI has worked hard to link industry, government, academia, and other sectors, establish a mechanism for cross-sector design, and promote cross-sector cooperation in creation. In doing so, we hope that design can be introduced and implemented in a multitude of aspects, including overall governance, construction promotion, industrial upgrades, public service, and social innovation,

so that we can together find the best answers for Taiwan’s development through the power of design. At the same time, we are actively constructing and cultivating research and development capabilities by taking stock of and analyzing current situations from aspects such as industry, government agencies, and design ecosystem, and using “Taiwan’s Design Blueprint” as a basis to propose concrete strategies and guidelines for industrial and policy development.

With the Golden Pin Design Award entering its fourth decade this year, it can be said that since the Award’s conception as the “good product selection system” in 1981, during the Award’s evolution to the present it has borne witness to the historical context and development of Taiwanese design. At this pivotal milestone which coincides with the first year of TDRI’s operations, we will first sort through and analyze recent Golden Pin Design Award-winning products, after which we will conduct in-depth interviews and document reviews on Taiwan’s foremost design experts as we attempt to further explore the connotations of “Designed in Taiwan” (DIT) from the levels of DIT’s ecological location, value vision, art momentum, and cross-sector integration.

Using “Why DIT Matters?” as the theme, the inaugural issue of “Perspective” launches our exploration into “Designed in Taiwan.” We cordially invite everyone to join TDRI in exploring the strengths and visions of DIT as we together enhance the soft power of DIT and interact with the world through design.

About Taiwan Design Research Institute

With design taking on an increasingly important role in the economy, culture, and society of countries, the Ministry of Economic Affairs upgraded Taiwan Design Center (TDC) to Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI) in February 2020 in order to effectively integrate cross-ministry resources and transform “the power of design” into an important governance value and national strategy.

1 DESIGN TO PROMOTE POLICY AND GLOBAL INFLUENCE

TDRI serves as a research hub for design policies. On the one hand, it systematically diagnoses the current state of policies, formulates action plans, and develops blueprints for the future direction of national design policies. On the other hand, it harnesses local design capacities, integrates the international connections forged by TDC, operates an international design policy exchange platform, and promotes cross-sector discussions on topics such as design cities in order to raise Taiwan’s international standing.

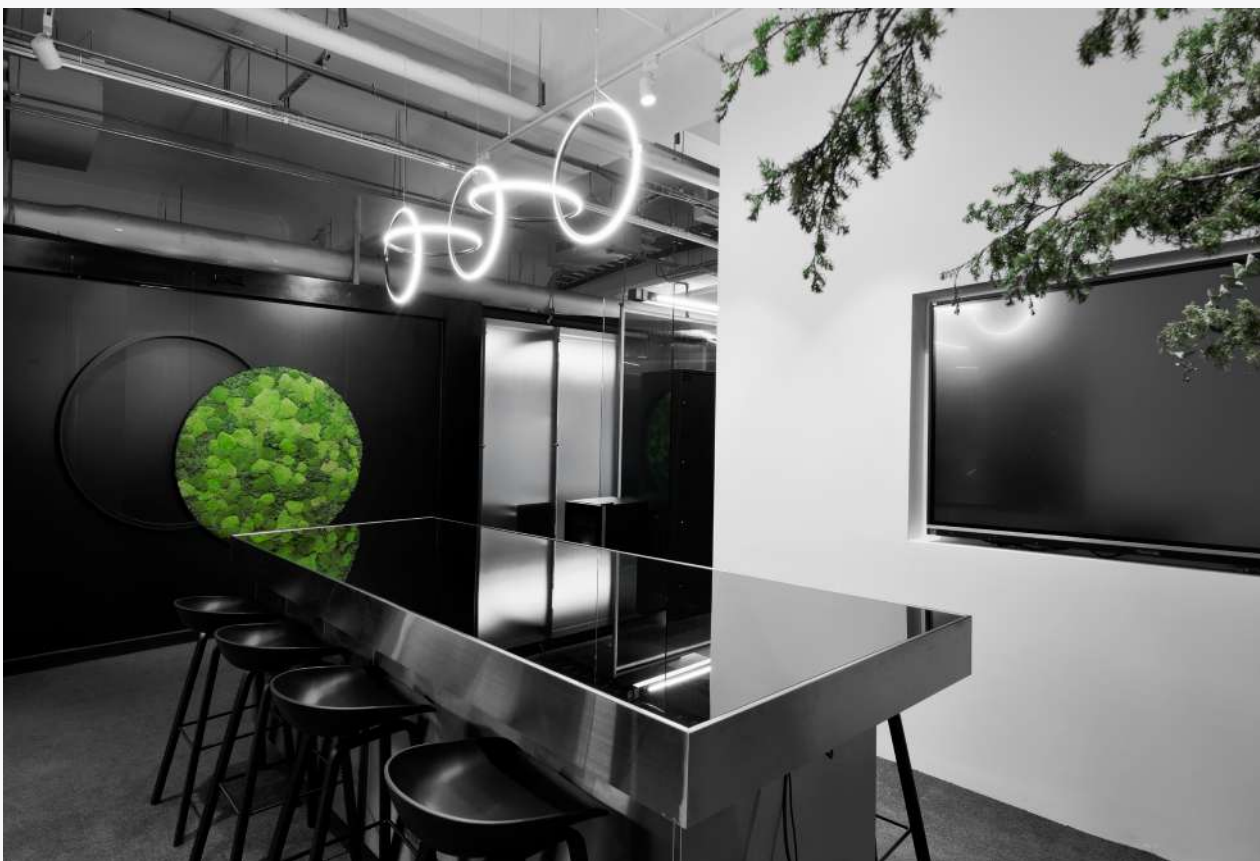
2 DESIGN-BASED THINKING TO DRIVE INDUSTRIAL UPGRADES AND INNOVATION

In-depth industry research and surveys were utilized to establish design power indicators and assessment tools that provide an accurate representation of Taiwan’s design capacity and help evaluate the degree of an enterprise’s incorporation of design. In the future, TDRI will promote collaborative alliances and assist even more companies in introducing design, thereby driving industrial upgrades and innovation.

3 DESIGN TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

In order to guide the design industry to open up a new frontier of high-end design applications, TDRI established an effective mechanism for cooperation between the government and industry, with the results highlighting the innovation that resulted from incorporating design into government agencies. At the same time, TDRI also serves as a social innovation integration platform, where through the forming of connections, more opportunities are created for design to enter the market and changes are allowed to effectively occur.

In the future, TDRI will use “the power of design” to consolidate public resources in hopes of having design become an important governance value and national strategy for Taiwan, in turn leading the way for the sustainable development of industry and society and increasing the value of life for the public.



Shan, Chuang, Hsiang: Discovering the Design Power of DIT Taiwan

Oliver Lin/Vice President of Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI)

As one who has been an advocate and served as a mentor in the design industry for more than 30 years, I have witnessed how the design industry in Taiwan has blossomed as we continue to push Taiwanese design towards the international arena. In 2011, Taiwan successfully held IDA Congress, where people from the graphic design, industrial design, and space design fields gathered for the first time, creating much of a stir among designers around the world and writing a new page in history. In 2016, Taipei held The World Design Capital, which introduced the issues of social design and urban governance and gained much attention from local governments and the public. In 2017, the famous Australian curator Annie Ivanova, inspired by the diversity and potential of Taiwanese design, spent two years visiting Taiwan, where she collected 88 representative works and their background stories and published them in the crowd-funded design handbook *Taiwan by Design*. The above are all testaments to Taiwan's transition from mass production to quality design, where in addition to the world-renowned label "made in Taiwan" (MIT), the label of "designed in Taiwan" (DIT) for the island country has also solemnly taken shape.

On October 23rd, 2019, President Tsai Ing-Wen announced in the National Design Forum that

the power of design must become the power of Taiwan, and "MIT" must transition to "DIT". If "MIT" represents the solid technological foundation and production ability of Taiwan, what then, does the meaning and purpose of "DIT" entail? Especially given that Japan, Germany, Italy, and Finland all have their own national design strategies and brands that not only help to facilitate economic development, social governance, and diplomacy, but also leave a vivid impression on countries around the world, what are the steps that Taiwan should take to find its own position? It is therefore time that we talk about the meaning and value of "DIT".

Since its establishment in February 2020, the TDRI has explored the idea of "DIT" by conducting related work in the aspects of industry, policy, and research. We first established DMIT (designed and made in Taiwan) Research Hub, a knowledge-sharing platform to promote the integration of the key technologies of design and production and explore a 2.0 development path that combines Taiwanese production with design. Through taking stock of the Taiwanese design ecosystem and inviting representatives from industry, government, and academia to plan *Taiwan's Design Blueprint*, we promoted and constructed a design-driven innovation ecosystem. In addition, we completed the

"design impact benchmark research", which establishes objective measures to evaluate the impact of Taiwanese design and perform long-term monitoring and optimization in hopes of becoming a trend indicator for the design industry.

The publication plan of *Perspective* marks the first leg of the "DIT" initiative. Established in 1981 and transitioning to the international stage in 2014, the Golden Pin Design Award is the 4th of the golden series awards in Taiwan after the Golden Horse Awards, the Golden Bell Awards, and the Golden Melody Awards, and is also the greatest honor in design in the Chinese-speaking world. Every year, a panel of experts from all over the world selects exceptional works that have representative and demonstrative value in various industry sectors. The *Perspective* plan begins with the Golden Pin Design Award, where by analyzing award-winning works, design trends, and international trends, and interviewing 27 experts from various fields, we hope to identify and reach a group consensus on the advantages and values of "DIT". Especially when surrounded by the design powerhouses of the U.S., Japan, and in Europe, questions such as the ideas that Taiwan wants to voice to the world are all topics that *Perspective* wishes to explore. To this end, the book uses the core ideas of *shan* (create), *chuang* (create), and *hsiang* (share) as bases to organize and explore the context of Taiwanese design. This is the first step of exploring the value of "DIT", and you are cordially invited to join this journey with us.



Synopsis

Why DIT Matters

1 The scope of “design” evolves and the Golden Pin Design Award reflects these trends.

Throughout history, the idea of “design” has been repeatedly reappropriated into different domains—from early graphic and craft design, product design of the industrial era, modern architectural space design initiated by Bauhaus, UX/UI design during the information era, to various social design, service design, policy design, circular design, discourse and narrative design, etc. Meanwhile, the essence of design has been extended, according to the design ladder proposed by the Danish Design Center, from the pursuit of aesthetic styles to that of innovative processes and organizational strategy. The criteria for good designs also expanded gradually from “aesthetics, functionality, and economy” to including various sustainable development goals. As such, the nominations and selections for the Golden Pin Design Award reflect the above trends.

2 Design in Taiwan (DIT) is characterized in this book along three analytical layers denoted by the Chinese words *Shan* (善), *Chuang* (創) and *Hsiang* (享): global design trends.

(1) *Shan* (literally “good”) refers to the values and visions Taiwanese design aims to pursue other than the traditional objectives of “aesthetics, functionality, and economy”. (2) *Chuang* (literally “create”) refers to the core craftsmanship and creative dynamics

of design activities, which we approached by discussing both the cultivation of Taiwanese designers and the changing landscape of industrial technologies. (3) *Hsiang* (literally “sharing”) refers to the crossover integration of design, for which we focused on the institutional tools Taiwan employed in promoting the communication, integration and innovation of design. It is a dreamland for designing new products. (4) Taiwan, with its vibrant democracy and arguably the most open and liberal society in Asia, provides designers a safe and unrestrained space to create.

3 Taiwan has four advantages to become a Pivotal Center of Design in East Asia:

(1) Taiwan is located at the junction of four major “civilizational plates” (Southeast Asia, China, Japan, and the West), forming a highly heterogeneous and tolerant cultural landscape; it not only suits the role of an intercultural translator, but also has strong potential for integration and innovation. (2) Taiwan, an island of great ecological diversity and sensitivity, limited resources and frequent natural disasters, is an ideal field to develop ecologically-friendly designs, circular/low-carbon designs, and disaster prevention/mitigation designs. (3) Taiwan’s strength in technological manufacturing and flexibility in the industrial supply chain make it a dreamland for designing new products. (4) Taiwan, with its vibrant democracy and arguably the most open and liberal society in Asia, provides designers a safe and unrestrained space to create.

4 “Social design” elicited growing interest in Taiwan over the past decade, partly due to the UN SDGs discourse.

Once focused on improving commercial products and stimulating consumption, Taiwanese designers have moved to consider broader social and human needs such as promoting altruism, social integration to self-empowerment. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed in 2015 played a facilitating role by providing a checklist. The Golden Pin Award in recent years has selected a surging number of design works that demonstrate awareness of certain social issues. If we aim higher on the design ladder to look for process or strategy design for social causes, it’s neither difficult to locate some outstanding cases in Taiwan. However, there is still a lack of integration among the scattered cases of social design.

5 “Circular design” has become a strength of DIT.

Taiwan’s outstanding performance in waste recycling in the past three decades, along with the social consensus on environmental protection, provides a tangible advantage for developing “circular design”. The Golden Pin Design Award has in recent years selected a number of design products made of recycled or ecologically-friendly materials. Some other designs introduced the value of circularity through innovating usage mode or business

models, or integrated planning of spatial environment or community organizations. However, the sustainability of the entire social economy can not be achieved by those single-point breakthroughs. The further development requires more systematic efforts in promoting basic knowledge and the construction of mega datasets of all resources consumed and generated during every stage of economic activities.

6 Place-making by design is Taiwan’s other strength.

The Taiwanese government has implemented several waves of policies to balance the urban-rural developmental gaps, including the “community development movement” in the 1990s, the promotion of “cultural creative industries” in the 2000s, and the recent buzz about “regional revitalization” (an initiative inspired by the Japanese *Chiho Sosei*). To this end, design plays a key role in every step—from the excavation of local knowledge; the identification, translation, and dissemination of the cultural characteristics of a place; the making of domestic brands; or the support of local industries and economic living circles. Designers devoted to such a cause should avoid imposing design ideas that are completely detached from the local cultural contexts. The most important foundation of any design intervention is the understanding of, and the respect given to, the local cultural traditions.

Taiwan helps designers to pursue creativity and innovation.

Designers aim to create—whether a style, a solution, a vision, a communicative space, or a response to the challenges of our time. It's in the process of creating that designers revisit their original aspiration, debate about meanings and think outside any given box; yet meanwhile, designers often need to debate between various values and to find their own balance. In this regard, Taiwan with its cultural diversity, humanist thoughts and sustainable values provide an open yet stimulating space for designers to ponder and to reflect within. Also, Taiwan's technological strengths and industrial flexibility assist designers to convert their ideas into prototypes efficiently. Moreover, Taiwan's mountainous and oceanic nature helps to inspire designers' sensibility.

Traditional crafts, modern industrial technologies, and innovative service trends intertwine in Taiwan's contemporary design landscape.

Designs from different eras reflect the industrial ecology (crafts, technologies and social culture) of a particular time and place. While the contemporary market is dominated by industrial mass production, traditional craftworks with warmth, character and texture have never disappeared. However, the successful commercialization of traditional craftworks requires striking a balance between "artwork" and "product". Meanwhile, the craftsmanship involved in modern design is no longer limited to the traditional hand skills, but also includes the expertises on all kinds of modern technologies, such as precision manufacturing, construction engineering, software programing, and social system planning, etc. Moreover, the rise of product-service systems and the virtual/reality integration trends are important currents that drive the development of integrated design.

Curating, a concept originating from art field, has become a mainstream method for communicating public issues and promoting design in the past two decades.

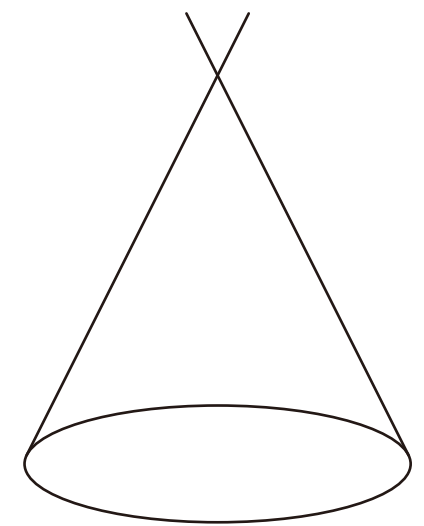
Curated mega-events such as Universiade, Flora Expo, Taiwan Lantern Festival, Creative Expo, and Taiwan Design Expo, etc. have all raised important issues, initiated public dialogue and became major propellers for cross-over interaction and synergy of design. Also, the emergence of social media made "curating power"—namely the ability for a series of activities from "selecting information, providing context, creating scenarios, articulating ideas, reconfiguring values, and connecting and sharing"—a core competence of our time. At its essence, "curating" is an invitation to a series of dialogues, including the dialogues with our time, with the public, and between different professions. The reflection on curating shall go further beyond the curated event, toward the strategic thinking of the "post-curating" legacies.

The key for expansion of the scope of contemporary design is whether design expertises of different domains can be effectively integrated.

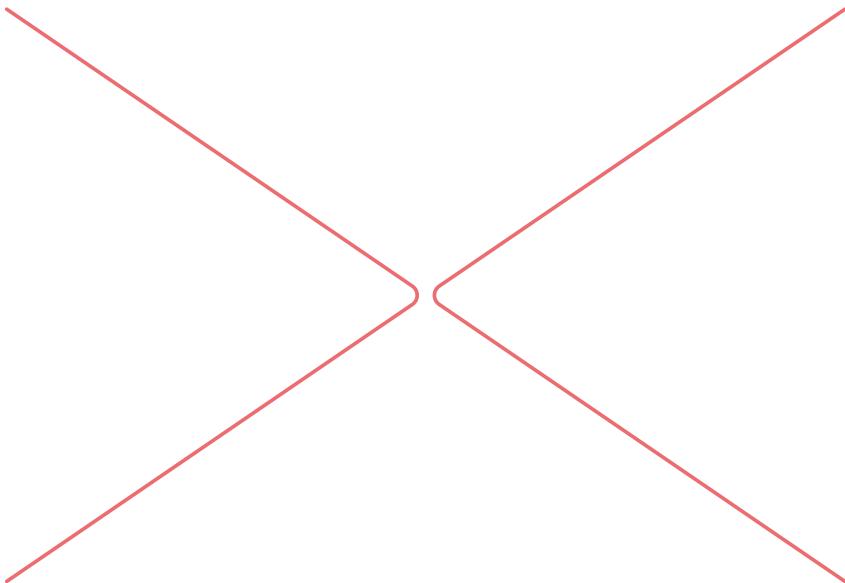
To encourage effective crossover integration requires: (1) more flexible and diversified design education and more mobile career paths; (2) more efforts to implement design in the public sector by the government or public institutions; (3) systemic and policy redesign with the perspective on the overall design ecology. The institutional environment of design itself could actually be a target for redesign! This reflexivity manifests the omnipotent potential of design.

Taiwan entered an era of surging design power in recent years, which presented both opportunities and challenges for designers.

This book presented, along the layers of *Shan*, *Chuang*, *Hsiang*, that: (1) Taiwan has bred design initiatives to address various social issues, to improve ecological sustainability, and to achieve a better urban-rural balance of development—in short, to better the world (for *Shan*). (2) The traditional craft legacies, the modern industrial technologies, and the dynamic collision and synergy of the diverse cultures hosted in Taiwan's energetic society became a stimulating ground for contemporary designers to exert their creativity (*Chuang*). (3) The crossover integration and the "sharing" of resources and ideas facilitated by curated events and government policies enable Taiwan to converge a stronger current of design power, which has the potential for bridging with other cultures in the world. This creates the opportunities and duties for Design in Taiwan (DIT) to contribute to human civilization.



INTRODUCTION



The Changing Ideascape of "Design": A Memo for the Golden Pin Award

What is design? What ends is “design” aimed to achieve? What visions, arguments and strategies of design should Taiwan’s Golden Pin Design Award demonstrate?

The “Golden Pin Design Award” (金點設計獎), the most prominent design award in Sinophone world, celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2020, counting in the years of its predecessors “GD-mark” (1981-2004, for accrediting products of good design) and “Taiwan Design Award” (2005-2008).

Also in 2020, the Taiwan Design Center (TDC 台灣創意設計中心), the hosting institution of “Golden Pin” and its predecessors, was officially upgraded to Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI 台灣設計研究院).

The coincidences create an opportunity to ponder: What visions of design should the Taiwan-based Golden Pin Design Award demonstrate? What role can it play in developing the design ecology in Taiwan?

Before addressing these issues, we must first reconsider two grounding questions: What is design? And what defines good design?

WHAT IS DESIGN?

Etymology,
Ideascape and
History

She-ji (設計), the Chinese translation of “design,” originated from the Japanese Kanji (漢字 Chinese character) phrase *sekkei*, which was coined during the era of Japanese modernization. There has been a number of other Kanji phrases proposed to translate the Western concept “design”: *zuan* (圖案) literally means “illustration by drawing”; *isho* (意匠) means “craftsmanship of imagination/intention” and this term is still preserved in nowadays design act the *Isho ho* (意匠法); *kosei* (構成) means “composition of things”; and *zokei* (造型) means “creation of shapes”. Each of these phrases highlights an aspect of the idea of “design”. By comparison, *sekkei* carries the meaning of “setting goals and executing by plan.”

If we trace the Western etymology of “design”, it is not difficult to draw a linguistic genealogy that stems from the Latin word *de signum* or *designō* (literally “to mark with a sign”), and include the Renaissance Italian verb *disegnare* (of dual meanings of “plot in mind” and “description”), the ancient French *désigner in* and *dessin* and e.t.c. to describe how this concept evolves to be a part of our modern language.

Comparing the actual usages of this word across different times, we can further sketch a path of how the idea of “design” has been repeatedly reappropriated into different domains—from early graphic design of fonts, patterns, handcrafts and printed materials; industrial and commercial design that surged after the industrial revolution; architecture and space design that were regarded as the apex of design pyramid in the Bauhaus movement; UI/UX (user interface and user experience) design that became central in the information age; all the way to the emerging ideas of service design, social design, policy design, integrated design, narrative, and discursive design. This brief sketch demonstrates an “ideoscape of design” that is both diverse and far-reaching.

If we look deeper into history, the invention of words always falls behind the subject it aims to describe. Victor Margolin, for instance, wrote a World History of Design that started from the stone axes and other tools the prehistoric homo sapiens created in the Neolithic age, long before the emergence of language. Margolin was once quoted in an Atlantic article titled “Evolution of Design” saying that design is “continuous with the basic human need to organize the material environment for survival purposes.”

In this broad understanding, “design” is no longer limited to those professional activities named as such, but covers all the processes of human creating tools, manipulating environments, and devising solutions, with the aid of their visual imagination. Margolin argued that design has always been the core of the creation of human civilization, but the term “design” has been more closely associated with just a certain “pursuit of aesthetics”, which obscures our awareness of various design activities in life.

The history of design is also a history of how various *symbols* were invented, used, and disseminated. To name a few examples: the use of lines to represent the boundaries and structures of the material world; circles to symbolize cities on map, transistors on circuit boards, or any nodes of various scales; colors that represent royal heritage, political stance, or different MRT route; pigeons to represent the Holy Spirit, peace or police; and the shape of a whale to represent Taiwan. The creation of these symbols allows designers to represent or to translate complex meanings in more concise forms.

In *An essay on man*, Ernst Cassirer considers the ability to use symbols as the key that sets man apart from animals. The invention of symbols allows humans to conceive complex things with limited mental resources, to communicate and cooperate with others, and to pass down our acquired experience and knowledge to later generations; and thinking, cooperation and education were indeed the basis for human civilization. Cassirer delivered a systematic analysis of human culture that encompasses mythology, language, art, history and science. He described them as different phases of “man’s progressive self-liberation” and concluded that man discovers the power to build up an “ideal” world in each of these endeavors.

Cassirer’s thesis provides a cornerstone to better comprehend why Margolin see design, an activity that is closely connected to both symbolism and idealism, as the “core of the creation of human civilization”

The Christian creationism at the heart of Western civilization sees God as the first designer of the universe, including human beings the “intelligent design.” When design becomes a secular profession, it inevitably inherits a certain *perspective of God*—no matter whether a designer considers himself as a servant to God’s will or a transgressing player of God’s role.

If we take a secular perspective, design is also an activity that demonstrates the *human agency* in exerting their cognitive faculty to comprehend and to simplify, and applying their imagination to change and to dominate the world they confront; it involves imagination, communication, craftsmanship, aesthetic judgements, technology, creativity and other core features that define humanity. Therefore, the more vigorous the design ecology of a society, the more opportunities people have to live out their endowments as human beings.

WHAT DEFINES
“GOOD DESIGN”?

Aesthetics,
Functions and
Ethics

Throughout its linguistic history, the word “design” has been repeatedly reappropriated into different domains, constantly expanding the scope of what design could mean. Parallel to this, the criteria that define “good design” also evolve over time.

The design discourse of the industrial era focused on “products,” and the primary criteria were nothing more than *aesthetics, function, and economy*. The aesthetic pursuit of design may reflect classicism, romanticism, modernism, minimalism, postmodernism or other leading propositions of different eras, or it may incorporate aesthetic elements from different ethnical cultures to enrich user experiences. Functional speaking, a good design should have clear user-interface, considerate functions, accessibility and durability. Economically, a good design should have a controllable production cost and desirable market prospect.



ty. To this end, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promoted by the United Nations in 2015 offer a useful conceptual framework and were soon adopted by many commissioners and designers in the communication of their visions.

The contemporary ideal for excellent design is no longer constrained to the designed object per se; it also takes into consideration how it is related to the larger society, and if this relation meets the objectives and causes valued in contemporary human civilization. Therefore, a leading design award of our time should no longer focus on the aesthetics and functions of the design product itself; instead, its organizers should consider its awarding criteria as a manifesto about our time, our society and human civilization.

GOLDEN PIN AWARD

Triple Boundaries of its Vision



The Golden Pin Design Award, the most prestigious design award in the Sinophone world, evolved from a scheme for accrediting “good product design” initiated by the Industrial Bureau, Ministry of Economics, ROC (Taiwan) in 1981. Starting from the categories of “product design” and “visual communication,” its scope gradually expands to include the categories of “architecture and space” and “integrated design” in ways that mirror the historical development of the concept “design”. A “special award” launched in 2016 further highlighted cutting-edge ideas such as ecological design, recycling design and social design.

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However, the historical origin of the Golden Pin Design Award from a scheme of selecting “good product design” still left a legacy of centering on design “products”. The nominated and awarded works mostly fall within the intersection where “material/ physical technologies” meets “humanistic meanings.” There were three boundaries of exclusion:

- 1 Design that involves little humanistic meaning. The development of integrated circuit (IC) design, genetic design, biological design, or purely mechanical design in science and technology fields, for instance, has little or zero presence in the design horizon defined by Golden Pin.

Nowadays, with our understanding of “design” expanding, the values “good design” is aimed to achieve gradually go beyond aesthetics and functions. More social and ethical aspects were brought into consideration—such as social communication and tolerance, care and empowerment for the disadvantaged, ecological sustainability, resource recycling, and even the elimination of hostility and the creation of peace and equality.

The widely cited *Design-Driven Innovation* by Roberto Verganti, professor of Stockholm School of Economics, makes a distinction between “design-driven innovation” and “technology-driven innovation” and regards “humanistic meanings” as a defining element of the former. This notion seems to match the self-identity of many designers.

- 2 Design that has no material basis, such as the design of concepts, narratives and discourse. For instance, the “The Third Way” discourse developed by British sociologist Anthony Giddens in the 1990s for Labor Party, or the “92 Consensus” proposed by Su Chi (蘇起), the former chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council in Taiwan, are both notions designed to create “constructive ambiguity” in political space. The two notions were both useful exactly because of their deliberate vagueness. Their development requires imagination, delicate sense of balance, and craftsmanship of ideas.

Moreover, many design products achieve excellency because of the concepts, stories or discourse behind them, but the contemporary designer circle still retains an identity that is strongly connected with material craftsmanship. It is still rare to include the non-material design of purely concepts and notions into the horizon of nomination and award selection.

- 3 Design of social processes and institutions. The traditional focus on “products” of the Golden Pin also deprived the attention paid to the design of social processes and institutions, such as emerging fields of social design, service design and policy design.

In 2016 the Golden Pin announced a new “special award” in conjunction with Taipei hosting the “World Design Capital” and awarded the new title to “5% Design Action,” a social innovation platform dedicated to improving senior welfare. It was a milestone for the Golden Pin to be more serious about social and service design. In 2019, the new category “social design” was included in the Golden Pin Concept Design Awards (for student competitors), marking a significant step toward the future.

The 2020 Golden Pin also showed more emphasis on social design than in the past. But a closer look at the awardee list reveals that most of them are “product or space designs with social functions, or awareness of social issues.” The designs of social mechanisms per se are still rare.

REPOSITIONING GOLDEN PIN

Technology, concept, and society

Throughout history, where the word “design” could be applied evolves following the transition of human civilization. As a leading competition that defines the design vision, the Golden Pin Award should also constantly adjust its categories of solicitation and selection criteria. The three boundaries mentioned above all demand reexamination:

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First, the boundary with purely technological design should be *maintained*. The above-mentioned fields of scientific and technological design mostly involve huge systems of professional technology and knowledge, and focus on operations beyond human sensory scales (e.g. at molecular or nanometer scale). The expertises involved are too far apart from the design circle defined by the past Golden Pin Design Award,

and it is not easy to picture the possibility of convergence in foreseeable decades. Therefore, this gap should for now still be maintained to avoid losing focus.

Second, the non-material designs of “concept, narratives and discourse” should be granted more emphasis, even though it may not be easy to consider them as a distinctive category of award yet. In fact, many awarded designs excelled because of the concept and value represented, the story told, or the discursive propositions proposed. Hence this boundary should at least be more “transmissible” and the conceptual and discursive aspects of submitted work should be given more scrutiny in jury’s deliberation, in order to encourage design thinking beyond the material realm.

Finally, the boundary with “the social” should be *substantially opened* to include Taiwan’s vigorous developments of social design, policy design or service design into the horizon of the Golden Pin Award.

Various vibrant civic technological communities like *g0v* (a mimic of “gov”), for instance, came up with many innovative projects that apply information technologies on addressing public issues from tackling fake news, visualizing real-time air pollution, communicating government budgets, to collaborative digitization of historical archives. Their efforts even motivated the government to establish the *join.gov.tw* platform that allows citizens to make proposals of public policy through online petition, and to set up the Public Digital Innovation Space (PDIS) initiative for innovating public services.

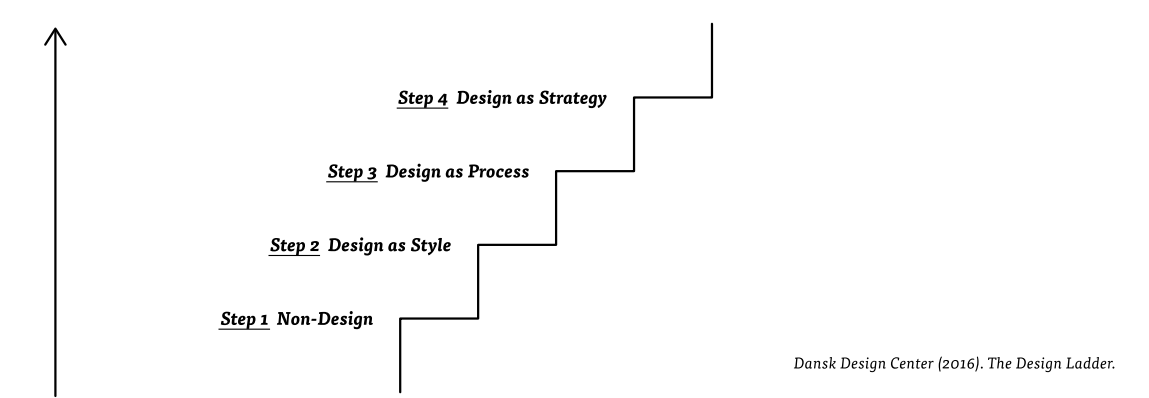
At the municipal level, the New Taipei City government’s collaboration with convenience store chains to safeguard kids and teenagers from hunger, and the “mobile ER” system that connects first-line EMTs (emergent medical technicians) with doctors, are two notable examples of innovative policy design. There were many other innovative designs emerging in fields of education, housing, aging society adaptation, urban regeneration, migrant support and commercial services that deserve more attention.

DESIGN LADDER

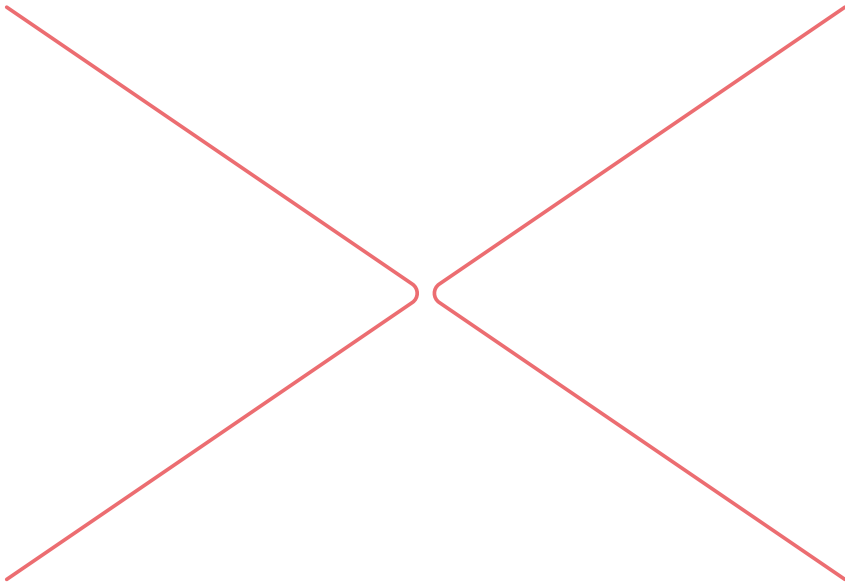
A higher-level landscape

Reviewed in this framework, a majority of the design works submitted for the Golden Pin Award fall at step-2 of regarding design as an aesthetic pursuit, while some proceed to the step-3 of considering design as a process of innovation. There are relatively few submissions reaching step-4 of considering design as an organizational strategy, or even step-5 as systemic change. The objects for design at step 2-3 are mainly

product or service, whereas the objects at step 4-6 became “organization, system or community.” That is exactly the domain for social and policy design.



To keep up with the broadened scope of design in our time and to further extend its influence, the Golden Pin Award should seriously consider modifying its future calls for submission, adjusting the composition of jury’s expertise, and proactively approaching and inviting government entities, NGOs and social enterprises to bring their innovations to the contest. With all these efforts, the Golden Pin Award could lead Taiwan to climb a step or two along the design ladder, to see the horizon from a higher ground.



Taiwan, a Design Pivot of East Asia: Four Strengths

What is special about “Taiwan Design” (or designed in Taiwan, DIT)? Where does Taiwan stand within the global ecology of design, and what potential does it possess?

Based in Taiwan, the Golden Pin Design Award has established its visibility and recognition across East Asian design circles, thanks to its past efforts. Moving forward, the Golden Pin Award not only needs to keep up with the changing ideas and ideals of design in our time, but also has the obligation to clarify the core values and connotations of Taiwan Design.

EXPLORING
“TAIWAN DESIGN”
SHAN, CHUANG,
HSIANG

When the Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI) was established in 2020, there was a wave of discussions about "Taiwan Design" among its founding leaders, staff and associated professionals. The discussion eventually condensed to three Chinese words *shan*, *chuang* and *hsiang* as the focal points for continued exploration. Each of words correspond to different analytical layer:

| *Shan* 善 |
literally “good”, the values and visions of design
| *Chuang* 創 |
literally “create”, the craftsmanship and dynamics of design
| *Hsiang* 享 |
literally “share”, the crossover integration of design

The purpose and values of design have long been a pursuit of aesthetics, functionality and economy. The emphasis on “goodness,” one of the transcendental properties along with “truth” and “beauty”, brings light to this dimension of value that is at least as important as the pursuit of aesthetics, and invites dialectical debate about the good and evil of design. The questions that need to be answered at this level are: What is “good” about design? What are the most important problems we need to face at this time? What visions can we have for design intervention? What contribution can Taiwan make?

The second word “create” highlights that at the core of this profession, design always involves some sort of "creation" or "innovative creativity"—it may be a new definition of problems, a new imagination and solution, or the integration and evolution of traditional craftsmanship. The questions at this level are: What innovative highlights can be found in Taiwan design? What advantages does the professional upbringing of Taiwanese designers bring? Have the technology industry and cultural ecology of Taiwan brought to this island some unique potential in certain fields of innovative design?

The third word "share" has two bearings: first, the interaction, sharing and even synergy of different professions and expertises; second, novel forms of mechanism designed for sharing various resources of the society, such as time, space, manpower, vehicles, etc. The two forms of crossover integration are precisely the driving forces behind many brilliant designs of our time. Questions to be asked: Given Taiwan’s existing industrial, technological, social, and cultural resources, what are the potentials for integration to boost the momentum of design? Are there more effective designs for sharing?

There are two paths to answer these questions: first, through qualitative research (interviews, participant observations and literature study) of the design industry, as the rest of the book attempted; second, through a structural analysis of Taiwan’s advantages in the global design ecosystem, which is the purpose of the current chapter. This article will argue that Taiwan has the potential to be a “design pivot of East Asia” because of its cultural, ecological, industrial and political strengths.

CULTURAL PIVOT OF
EAST ASIAN

First of all, design is based on culture. The analysis about Taiwan’s design edge must start with a discussion about Taiwan’s culture.

Taiwan has been portrayed as "the successor to the essence of Chinese culture" during the half-century authoritarian rule by *Kuomintang* (國民黨, Chinese Nationalist Party) . This positioning was reflected in the initial branding of the Golden Horse (film), Golden Bell (TV) and Golden Melody (music) awards, and was brought into the early discourse about the Golden Pin Award, too. Without doubt, Chinese culture is an important and indispensable cultural asset for Taiwan, considering that it now hosts the National Palace Museum, continues using traditional Chinese characters, and preserves some of the finest practices of traditional Chinese culture. But Taiwanese culture is more than that.

Taiwan was a Japanese colony before the end of World War II, and therefore became an integral part of the Northeastern Asian cultural circle (along with Japan, Korea and Manchuria) which was historically shaped by the colonial expansion of the Japanese Empire. Today, Japanese cultural influence can still be vividly seen in the foodscape, pop culture, architecture and urban design of Taiwan.

On the other hand, post-war Taiwan became a Cold War stronghold of the Western liberal camp led by the United States against the expansion of communism in East Asia. The US troops stationed in Taiwan in the 1950s-1970s left their legacies. Generations of Taiwanese elites who went to study in the United States also introduced American culture back, creating a high degree of affinity to Western civilization in contemporary Taiwan.

If we look deeper into history, Taiwan also has strong historical and cultural ties with Southeast Asia. Taiwan is often believed to be the origin of the Austronesian people who now populated Southeast Asia and Oceania. The Taiwanese aboriginal people can still find cultural and linguistic affinity with their counterparts in the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and beyond. When the Europeans extend their trade network to Southeast Asia, they reach Taiwan too. The Portuguese discovered the island and named it *Formosa* in 1544, and Dutch and Spanish established their colonies here in the 1620s. The labor demand for dock and land reclamation soon attracted immigrants from coastal provinces of China, like other colonies in Southeastern Asia.

Taiwan is geologically an island created by the collision and squeeze of tectonic plates. Throughout history, it is also a collision point among, as well as a synergy site of, four major cultural plates. This has created a highly heterogeneous and tolerant cultural landscape in Taiwan, and it is extremely difficult to define what is “authentic Taiwanese” and what is not. Taiwan preserves familiarity with Chinese, Japanese, Southeast



Asian and Western cultures, and it welcomes a wide range of aesthetics from northern minimalism to tropical expressionism. The confluence of diverse stimulation has allowed Taiwanese designers to be imaginative and creative in all kinds of things.

Because of this, Taiwan, once a marginal island in various cultural spheres, has now become an East Asian hub for cultural creativity, and a pivotal gateway for various design ideas to disperse in Greater China, Northeast Asia, and Southeast Asia.

NATURAL ECOLOGY OF
TAIWAN ISLAND

Taiwan’s second advantage in design comes from our unique ecology as an island:

First, Taiwan’s natural resources are limited, and it depends on imports for many raw materials and energy; the land and the environmental capacity are also limited. So Taiwan has developed an efficient resource recycling system that ranks highly worldwide. This inherent limitation gave Taiwan a strong incentive to pursue "green design," "low carbon design" and "circular design".

Second, Taiwan has 268 peaks over 3,000 meters, along with countless smaller hills, valleys, creeks, plains, lagoons, wetlands and enormously rich flora and fauna, all packed in this island of just 3,6000 square kilometers. Its 1,200 km coastline also includes sandy beaches, rocky cliffs, river mouths and reef banks, and a high concentration of marine species. The geological and ecological diversity of Taiwan makes it a dream-land for the development of "environment/eco-friendly designs".

Third, Taiwan is a fragile island located at the junction of tectonic plates and is frequently hit by earthquakes. It also stands on the West Pacific typhoon route and is literally on the frontline of facing the extreme climate created by global warming. Its rich experience in preventing and mitigating natural hazards, as well as vigilant and helping citizens, are both positive factors for developing novel designs for disaster prevention, hazard relief, risk management and extreme climate adaptation.

In the end, the geological and biological diversity in Taiwan’s natural environment is also a dream resource for the spiritual well-being of designers. The designers and creative workers in Taiwan can easily take a detour and immerse themselves in nature for condensing thought, acquiring inspirations, or reflecting upon the ethical basis of the ways of human life. Works designed in Taiwan also demonstrate natural imprints from time to time.

TECHNOLOGIES AND
INDUSTRIAL BASES

Moreover, Taiwan’s solid foundation in information and communication technology (ICT) industries, flexible production arrangement across industrial clusters, and robust innovative culture also provide strong support for designers.

Taiwan has in the past decades established a leading position in ICT industries such as semiconductors, computers, mobile devices, and automotive electronics; it is also actively developing its competitiveness in the fields of 5G, blockchain, and AI. These industrial bases provide a convenient toolkit of technological solutions for the development and design of new products.

The congregated manufacturing clusters, rapid innovations in technologies, and the flexibility, efficiency and quality shown by the comprehensive industrial supply chains in Taiwan can further assist designers to reduce development costs by transforming their creative ideas into prototype products rapidly. Horace

Luke (陸學森), for instance, once said this cost-efficiency advantage in product development as one major reason for him to choose Taiwan for founding Gogoro, a leading electronic scooters and battery-swapping platform manufacturer.

In recent years, Taiwan saw a strong current of innovation culture. Numerous incubation centers and accelerators have sprung up, and various events and exhibitions for entrepreneurs, designers and developers were initiated. Many young talents left the path of stable employment and devoted themselves to venture entrepreneurship. The World Economic Forum (WEF) ranked Taiwan the 4th worldwide on its 2019 innovation index; Bloomberg also ranked Taiwan the 5th in its innovation potential in 2020. This social momentum has made Taiwan a meeting hub for ideas, creativity, and technological solutions.

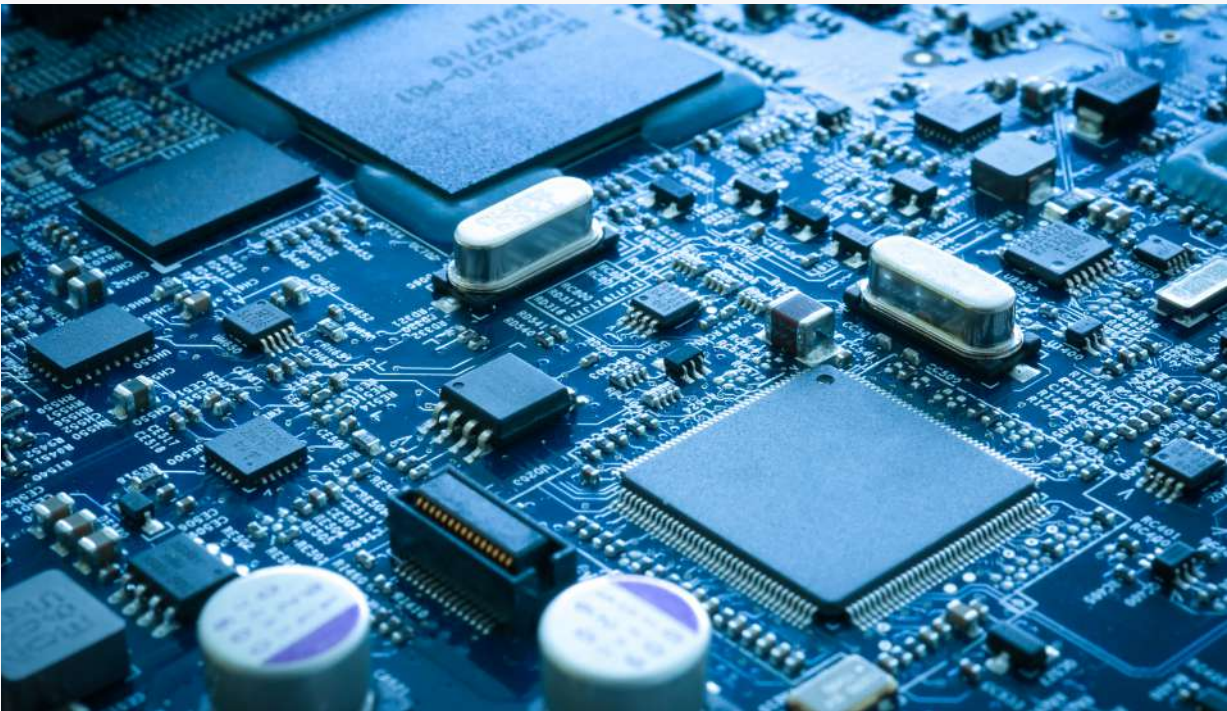
A FREE AND OPEN SOCIETY

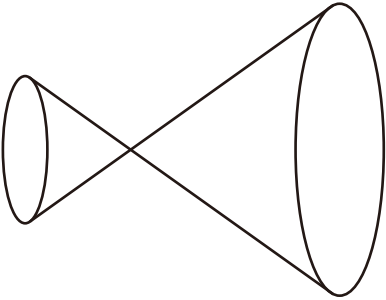
Finally, Taiwan has undergone a peaceful political transformation from authoritarianism to democracy—an achievement often hailed as a “quiet revolution”. The Taiwanese cherish liberal democracy the most because the authoritarian memories are still lingering. There is little taboos or political risk associated with envisioning and coming up with new designs in Taiwan.

The freedom of expression and social openness of Taiwan has been repeatedly ranked at the forefront of Asia. The *CIVICUS People Power under Attack Report 2020*, for instance, considered Taiwan the only open civil society among the 25 Asian countries it surveyed. The *World Freedom Report 2021* published by the Freedom House also gave Taiwan a score of 94, the second highest in Asia.

Democratized for just a quarter century (since the first Presidential election in 1996), Taiwan has even attempted various experiments of deliberative democracy that include participatory budgeting, deliberative policy workshop, citizen conferences, or national conferences for policy consultation. The civic technology communities like "g0v" further incorporate the liberal and democratic culture in Taiwan with its technological strength.

Designers and creative workers need liberal and open society to facilitate the exchange and synergy of ideas; they need freedom from political coercion to liberate courageous imagination. An Asian liberal stronghold, Taiwan is the best lab exploring innovative designs in Asia.



	善
<div>SHAN</div> <div>Values and Visions of Design</div>	



For “Social Design”: Humanism and Social Sustainability

“Social design is not just a design product, a slogan or a theory; instead it has huge momentum to transform the cityscape and promote organic growth.”

—— Hans Wu (吳漢中), TDCE Curator

What is “utopia”? Its Chinese translation *wu-tuo-bang* (烏托邦) often evokes an impression of “un-realistic fantasy” because the first character *wu* (烏) is often used *wu-yao* (烏有), a phrase literally means “non-existence.” But in Western civilization, “utopia” represents an intellectual tradition of continuous pursuit of a better world.

The book *Envisioning Real Utopias* published by the American marxist sociologist Erik O. Wright in June 2010 could be seen as a recent attempt in this tradition. Wright in this book provided a critical diagnosis of the structural problems of contemporary capitalist society, and sought to sketch a social reform map based on what he had learned during his lecture tours in eighteen different countries. He outlined seven paths of social empowerment, and the book stirred much discussion among academics and activists internationally.

Inspired by Wright, Professor Chen Dong-sheng (陳東升) of the sociology department at the National Taiwan University convened a new course titled “The innovation and Design of Social and Economic Organizations” in early 2012. He sought to channel the critical capacity of his colleagues and students at the sociology department to envision innovative “social designs.” Students of this course include

notable practitioners like Tony Chou (周家緯), who founded Happen Social Design (好伴社計) in 2017, and Jerry Wang (王維綱), later the founder of the social enterprise “9floor” (玖樓).

Chen’s initiative attracted more academic and media attention on the emerging field of “social design,” but he still fell behind some early pioneers in practice. Agua Chou (周育如), founder of Agua Design (水越設計), has already departed to seek design path for “addressing human need and solving social problems, instead of serving purely commercial purpose” a decade earlier. In 2002, She assembled a group of young designers to initiate “Plan Global”(世界概念設計), a brain-storming platform for exploring design concepts for addressing public issues. She further conceived the “City Yeats” (都市酵母) project in 2006 as a catalyst for design-driven urban transformation.

In 2012, the Taipei City Government organized the first “Taipei Design City Exhibition”(TDCE) and included a special section devoted to the concept “social design”. Three years later, the 4th TDCE hailed the slogan “Social Design = Power to the People,” making a catchy statement of two homonyms—that Taiwan design will go “from *she-ji* (設計, design) to *she-ji* (社計, abbreviation for social design).”

“Social design is not just a design product, a slogan or a theory; instead it has huge momentum to transform the cityscape and promote organic growth.” The TDCE Curator Hans Wu (吳漢中) clarified, “by discussing ‘social design’, we can better appreciate the city’s value co-constructed by its citizens, consolidate the design energy and social awareness, and build the cultural vision of Taipei.” Wu pointed out the difference in “scale” between social design and the conventional design of products or communication. He argued that social design embodies the core values of “altruism, social integration and self-empowerment.”

A SHIFT OF FOCUS

“Design” has long been used as a means to stimulate and to satisfy the material desires, serving market and capital. The rise of the concept “social design,” to some extent, derives from our critical reflection on the existing paradigms of market economy ideology and consumerism-oriented design.

In *Design for the Real World* (1971), the renowned American designer Victor Papanek urged designers to return to the real needs of human beings, to have their own social-moral judgment, and to rethink if their designs are indeed beneficial to society. In *Design for Society* (1993),

Professor Nigel Whiteley of Lancaster University also reflected upon consumerism-oriented design, and called for a sort of “more responsible, more just” form of design.

As if echoing with both Papanek and Whiteley, Chen Dong-sheng also advocated to go beyond the mentality of “design for the richest 10%” and seek the “design for the 90% majority” for the sake of social justice. In a 2018 interview with *Future City*, Chen argued that “society” should be the subject matter in the discourse about “social design,” not the other way around (“design for society”). Chen believed that there should be more emphasis on the “social”, and less on “design”—because “we are not omniscient nor omnipotent; we should all be more humble in the face of this society.”

“What social design does is to encourage social investment—connecting people who never speak to each other, digging out overlooked issues that need attention, discussing earth sustainability and encouraging multiple-wins, and promoting progressive thoughts and action”

— Aqua Chou (周育如), Aqua Design

“Social design” has attracted passionate discussions in Taiwan in recent years. Designer-Curator Wang Yao-Pang (王耀邦, a.k.a 格子) believes that this reflects a transition in the attitude of design. The profession of designer has focused on how to serve consumers by increasing the added-on values, improving the aesthetic outlook, and enhancing the functionalities of products. Today, people are more concerned about how good design could help create a better life. The focus of concern is “people, the entire citizens and the society.

To conclude, “social design” is about the shift of focus from consumerism to social well-being, and from commodities to humans.

UNITED NATIONS SDGS AS DESIGN GUIDELINES

Yet, what social problems are we referring to when we say that we need to address social problems by design? What values do we have in mind when we talk about “values other than consumerism”? “Everyone says that we can solve problems by design. But designing itself without a theme or aimed criteria is actually pointless!” Justin Yu (游適任), founder of Plan B consulting firm, said in an interview.

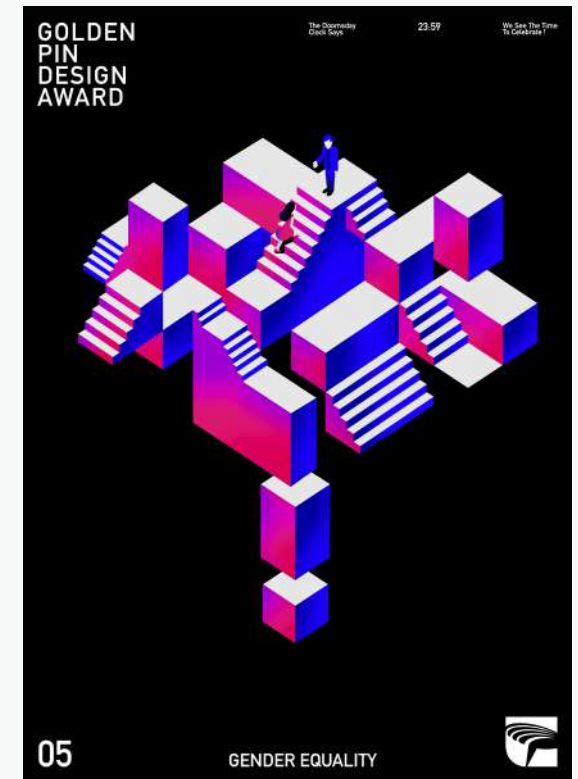
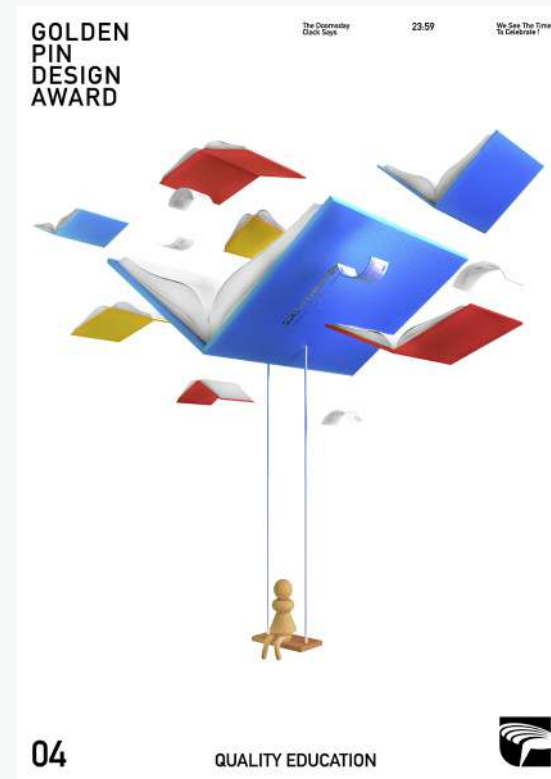
Justin Yu’s own answer is “sustainability,” which he described as “another balancing hand in the market”—as if it holds the world together with the “invisible hand” described by Adam Smith.

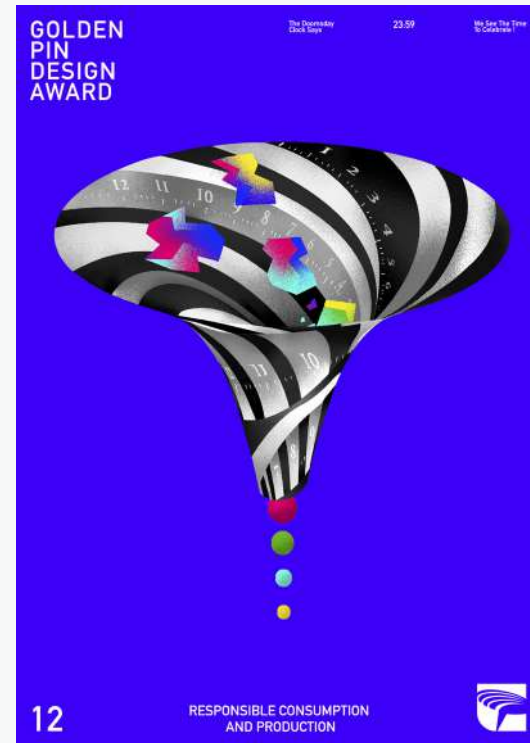
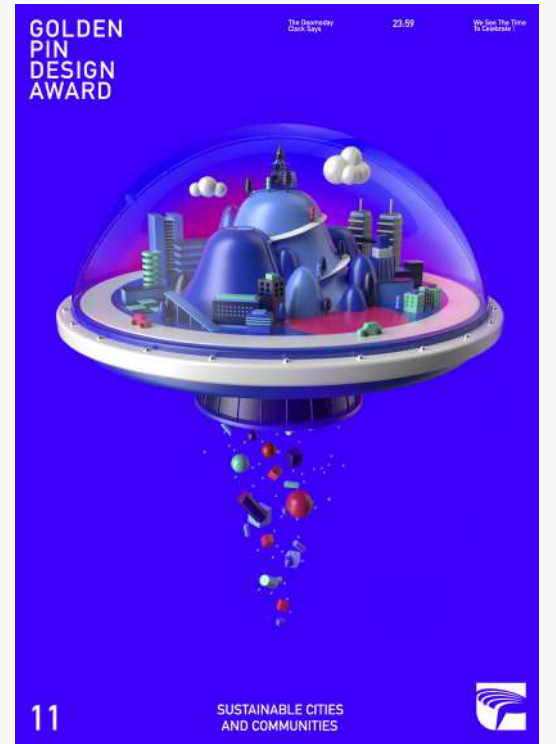
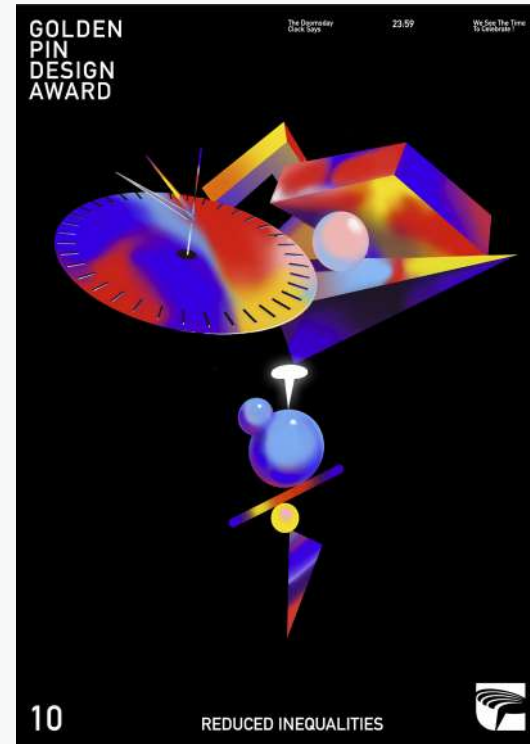
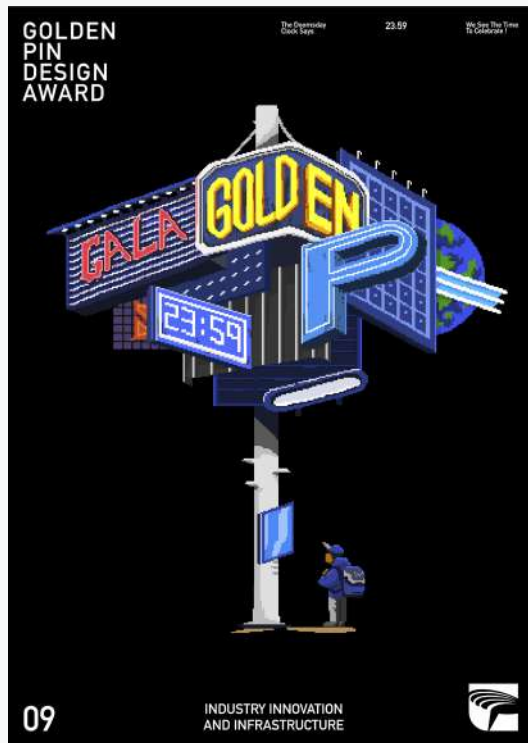
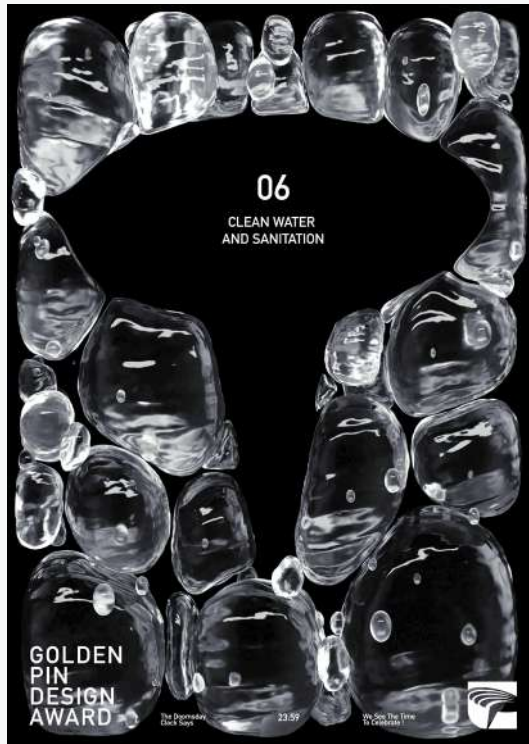


The idea of "sustainable development" came into international spotlight at the 1992 United Nation (UN) Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro. The focus then was to address the problem of "environmental degradation" (e.g. ozone depletion, air and water pollution, reduced biodiversity) raised in the 1987 report *Our Common Future*. Over the past three decades, the meaning of the word "sustainability" has gradually expanded. Justin Yu, for instance, emphasized that contemporary discourse of sustainability includes both "environmental sustainability" and "social development." So its indicators also include education, gender equality, income gap, e.t.c..

In 2015, the UN announced a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), listing a total of 17 policy objectives sorted in three major categories: economic development, social progress and environmental protection. The UN further specified 169 traceable indicators and a series of policy guidelines. The UN SDGs not only provide a clear roadmap for policymakers, but also a set of standardized conceptual tools for conceiving the design for future. Despite not being a UN member, Taiwan shows great enthusiasm toward the SDGs agenda. The 17 goals soon became the standard vocabulary among policymakers, officers, academics and designers.

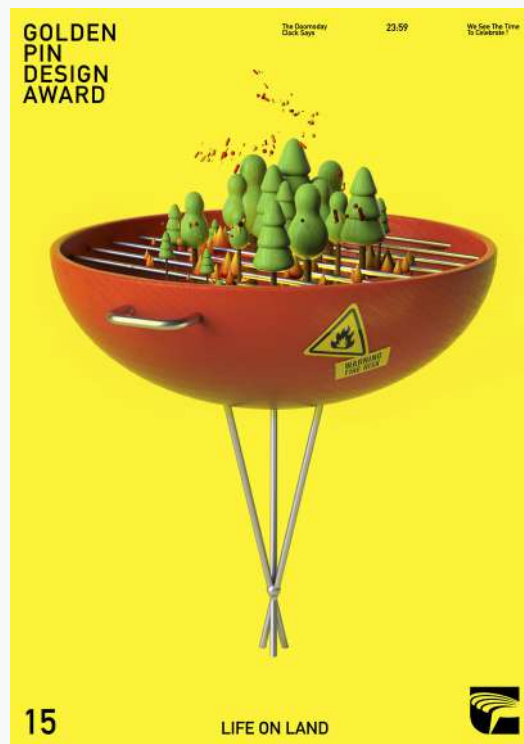
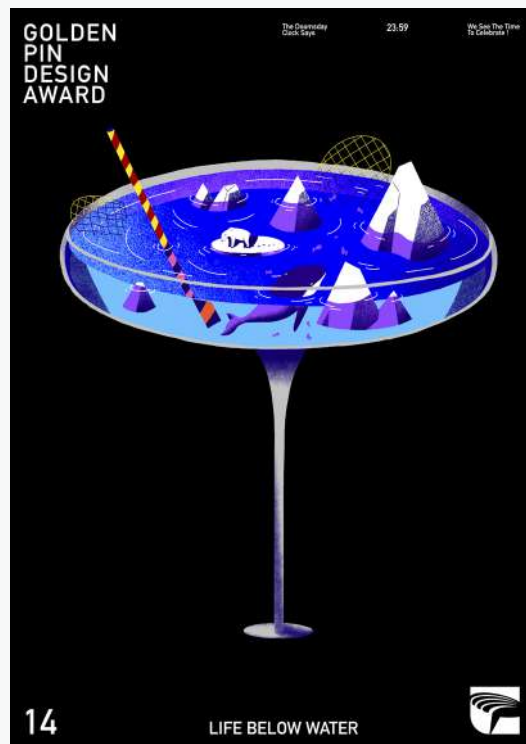
The SDGs were even incorporated into the 2019 Gold Pin Design Award Ceremony's key visual *Gala@23:59* created by director Liu Keng-Ming (劉耕名) and his Bito team. The video clip converted the 17 challenges faced by mankind into a feast of brainstorming, inviting designers and innovative thinkers to address together.





↑ The 2019 Gold Pin Design Award Ceremony's key visual Gala@23:59 / Bito team

↑ The 2019 Gold Pin Design Award Ceremony's key visual Gala@23:59 / Bito team



Eatwell Tableware Set / Sha Yao ←
 The Mystery of Victim Blaming / SimpleInfo ↑
 ZA SHARE / Ozzie Curating & Design Co., Ltd. →

SOCIAL ISSUES IN GOLDEN PIN AWARDED DESIGNS

The nomination and granting of the Golden Pin Design Award in recent years have shown a rising awareness of numerous social issues within the horizon of the professional design circle in Taiwan.

The 2017 award-winning Eatwell tableware set, for instance, was inspired by designer Sha Yao's (姚彥慈) maternal grandmother, who suffered from dementia and gradually lost her ability to communicate and to conduct daily life. Through carefully observing the diners' delicate motions, Yao created the tableware the elderly or handicapped people can use for unassisted dining. The new design not only alleviates the caretakers' burden, but also rebuilds the confidence and dignity of those being taken care of.

The award winners in 2017 also include *The Mystery of Victim Blaming*, a short experimental animated film that invites reflective discussions on the social responses to sex violence.

The 2018 award-winning "ZA Share Expo" (雜學校), hailed to be "the largest alternative education exhibition in Asia", succeeded in stimulating dialogue and reflection about the essence and practices of education in Taiwan. The Expo also brought attention to countless non-mainstream projects of

social innovations, educational entrepreneurship, and co-learning communities; it also showcases the vibrant creativity of Taiwanese society internationally.

The 2019 award-winning "Rainbow in the Darkness" is a piece of temporary outdoor installation art designed by Chuang Chih-Wei (莊志維) and co-produced by Sunpride Foundation (Hong Kong) and Mori Art Museum (Japan). Taking "trauma" as its core concept, the artist erected several monument-like black cuboids to create shaded or hidden corners in a public space, symbolizing the hidden wound, fear and suppression a LGBTQ member (or anyone) could have experienced in the society. The visitors were invited to write down their intimate feelings, including traumatic memories, on the installation walls. Those writings would start to shine at night in all colors and become part of the artwork that is aimed to deliver collective relief and healing in the end.

There were two works awarded at the same year dedicated to promoting the social awareness of ocean pollution. The Best Design Award winner, *The Guidebooks of Marine Debris* (海廢圖鑑) created by Rethink, is the first Taiwanese encyclopedia of

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↑ The 2019 Gold Pin Design Award Ceremony's key visual Gala@23:59 / Bito team

marine debris. Participating in volunteer beach cleanup for years, the design team collected, sorted, professionally photographed all kinds of marine debris and wrote introductions about their properties and geographical distribution. The compiled work becomes an easily accessible text about the marine environment.

The other work, a Young Pin Design Award winner, is the toy set “See the Ocean Smile” created by students of the Product Design Department, Tainan University of Technology. The toy also takes “marine pollution” as its core theme; it consists of story cards and hand-on exercises that allows pre-school children to learn more about marine species and the ecological impacts of marine debris.

The 2020 Golden Pin Award winners further expand the range of social issues addressed by designers. The “Book & Host”(好書伴) project initiated by the migrant worker care group One Forty, for instance, aims to provide free Chinese education resources to migrant workers coming to Taiwan. The Enable Foundation (學老社) of Hong Kong designed activities that allow participants to “experience being old,” helping everyone to get better prepared for the aging society. The “NPO Hub Taipei” renovated from a former teacher dormitory provided a prime example of promoting urban regeneration and encouraging social innovation through well-designed public-private partnership.

THE DESIGN OF SOCIAL MECHANISM

The Golden Pin Award winners mentioned above still belong to the category of “design products that demonstrate concerns about a social issue,” whether it’s a commercial product, a piece of media work, a space or an exhibition. If extend our understanding of “design” and look for cases of “strategic design” at the 4th level of design ladder, or even a case of “systematic change or a culture” at the 5th and 6th level at Bryan Hoedemaekers’s extended ladder, we can still find a few notable examples of “social mechanism” design in Taiwan’s vibrant civil society that enrich our imagination about “social design.”

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The “Parks and Playground for Children and by Children” Alliance (還我特色公園行動聯盟), which won the 2017 Award of Best Social Practice in the “Taiwan Creativity 100” contest organized by the style magazine *La Vie*, was a notable example. The campaign was initiated online by a group of mothers who were concerned of the shrinking greenspace in city parks and the proliferation of unimaginative, plastic playground equipment. They decided to fight for better parks and playgrounds for the next generation.



↑ *The Guidebook of Marine Debris / Taiwan RE-THINK Environmental Education Association*

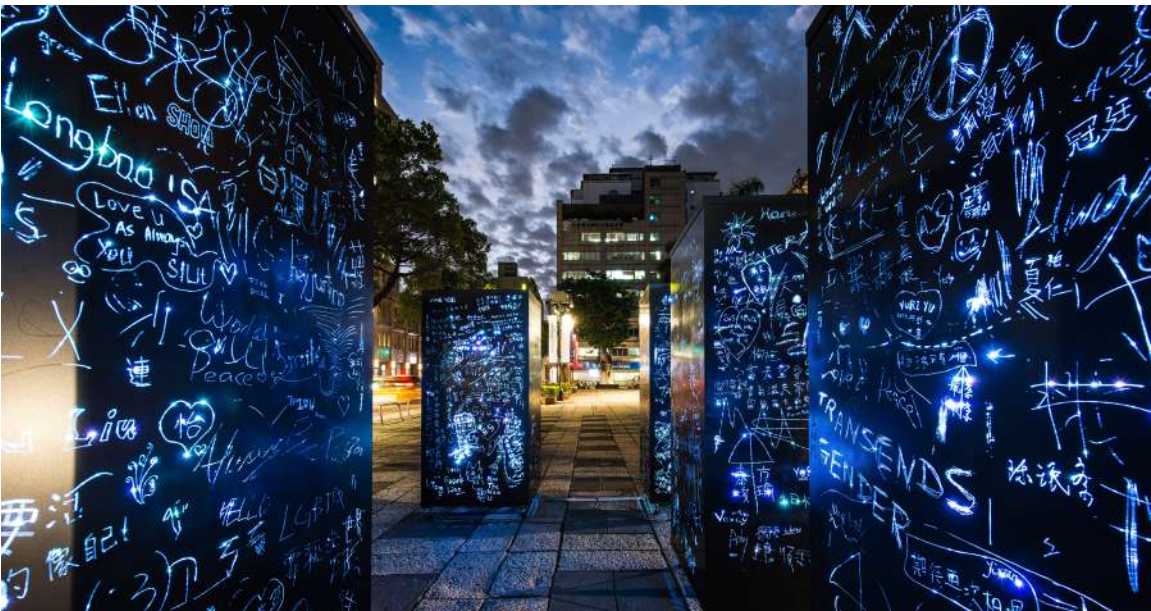


↑ *Education Association Book&Host / One-Forty*

In a series of park renovation projects, they invited government officers, local residents and professional workers to participate in the process of redesign. They succeeded in triggering a wave of park renovation movement across Taiwan, reshaping the landscape of children’s playgrounds.

The 2019 winner of the *La Vie* Award of Best Social Practice, “Teach for Taiwan (TFT)” project, is another example. Initiated in 2013 to address the educational inequality in different localities, the project raised funds from private firms and recruits, trains and sponsors volunteer educators to teach in schools of the disadvantaged area for a two-year term. In a course of eight years, the TFT has sponsored 269 teachers who taught 6000+ kids in 75 schools, contributing a significant force in shaping education in Taiwan.

There were more notable examples of social mechanism design emerging in contemporary Taiwan. The civil technology community “g0v”, for instance, became a trans-disciplinary incubator of ideas of applying technology to solve public problems. Likewise, the Public Digital Innovation Space (PDIS), initiated by “Digital Minister” Audrey Tang, provides a mechanism for improving the operation of government and numerous public services. The New Taipei City government’s collaboration with major convenience store chains to construct a security network guarding kids and teenagers, and the Sedaijin (世代人) company founded by visionary Jou Yi-Cheng (周奕成) as an institutional vehicle for promoting a cultural movement and regenerating the historical district of Dadaocheng (大稻埕), are also notable cases.



↑ *Rainbow in The Darkness / Sunpride Foundation, Mori Art Museum*

THE BRIGHT STORIES AND THEIR ROUGH SIDES

Chen Dong-sheng described this surging wave of social designs and innovation as a movement toward design “for the people, of the people, and by the people”. In this new paradigm, he argued, “design” is no longer a matter dominated by professional designers. Instead, it welcomes public participation and open discussions to consolidate a consensus; it encourages cross-boundary dialogues and collaboration to avoid blindsight from any single perspective.

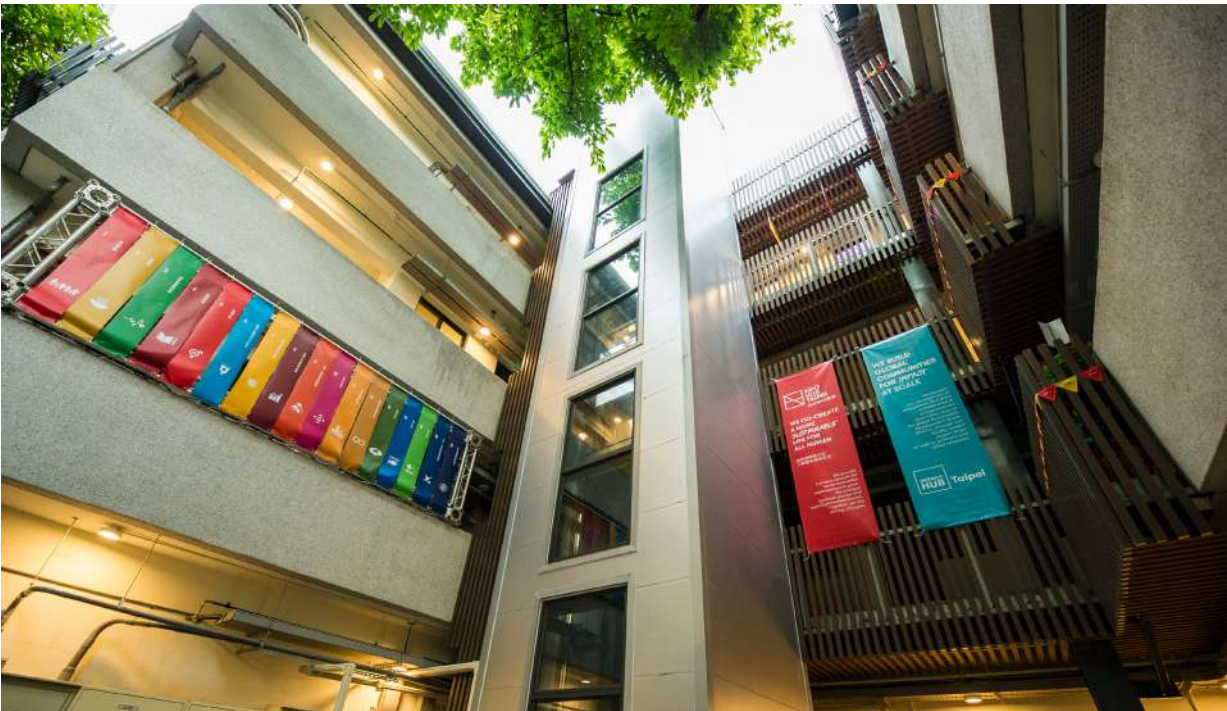
Chen cited conceptual frameworks like “user experience” or “participatory design” as instrumental in encouraging public participation and discussions, thus creating new bonds in civil society. Through these processes, participants could better appreciate their rights and obligations; they would be transformed from a role that “was waiting passively to be served” to an “engaging citizen”, a change manifesting the effect of “civil empowerment” of social designs.

“We hope the introduction of design could facilitate the continued accumulation and breakthrough of the innovative energy of civil society. The most important is to elicit the civil consciousness of every citizen, raising their willingness to participate in public affairs actively and to take responsibilities.”

——Prof. Chen Dong-sheng (陳東升), Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University

However, there are also more reserved assessments of the current development of social design in Taiwan. Professor Kung Shu-Chang (龔書章) of Institute of Architecture, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, and Huang Shu-wei (黃書緯) of National Taiwan University D-School both pointed out that, despite the enormous passion and creativity Taiwanese demonstrate in problem-solving, we still have “insufficient integration” among the diverse attempts of social design. “We have many 1.0 versions, but much fewer 2.0 versions,” Kung put it this way to explain why we are unable to construct more stable mechanisms and to create more profound impacts yet.

46 Huang further reminded: while contemporary discourses about social design often include some sentimental stories, these sentiments often prevent us from seeing the “rough side” behind the narratives. “Aside from being touched, can we discuss these things more rationally?” He asked. In addition to the idea of “solving social problems by design,” he reminded us to be more cautious of “whether the designs also create other problems? Who defines the problem? Who participated



in and who got excluded? How to adjust and modify [the design] in order to construct a solution mechanism that has a higher chance of operating independently and sustainably?”

There are many challenges we need to face other than the bright stories.

↑ NPO HUB Taipei / Department of Social Welfare, Taipei City Government, Hub Taiwan Co., Ltd.



Circular Design: Products, Business and System

"Balance will be achieved, either by disasters or by design."

——Wang Chia-Hsiang (王家祥), REnato Lab

"Earth Overshoot Day (EDO·地球超載日)" is an illustrative calendar date when humanity's demand for ecological resources starting from January 1st exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that entire year.

Guess what date was the EDO of 2019? July 29th. It was the first time in history that EDO was brought forward as early as July. This also means that in 2019, humans have advanced five months of natural resources into the future.

The British think tank New Economic Foundation and the multinational Global Footprint Network cooperated to promote the concept of EDO in 2006. They compiled historical data and found that humans began to overspend the ecological resources around 1970, and the EDO was brought forward to October in 1986, to September in 1997, and to August in 2005. This means that the existing economic mode consumes too much ecological resources to be sustainable, and the over expenditure is getting more and more serious.

In 2020, the Industrial Development Bureau of the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Taiwan organized A *Circular Design Exhibition: Next Decade*. The concept of EDO was highlighted at its very beginning, reminding every visitor the urgent need to promote the recycling of resources. The exhibition demon-

strated 40 circular design cases worldwide organized around six thematic pillars: food, fashion/textile, housing/objects, electronics/appliances, plastics/packaging, and cities. It invites everyone to imagine how we may make life more sustainable through "circular design" in the next decade?

"Balance will be achieved," said Wang Chia-Hsiang (王家祥), curator and founder of REnato Lab, "either by disasters or by design." To avoid a catastrophe in the future, we need design intervention now.



Next Decade ↑

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The growing attention on “circular design” came from the popularization of the concept of "circular economy". In 1990, David Pearce and Kerry Turner in *Economics of Natural Resources and the Environment* pointed out that the traditional industrial economy is based on a linear model from raw materials, product for consumption, to disposed waste. The idea of “recycling” is absent.

They advocated that the traditional linear economy should be transformed into a circular economy, and the resource management should be restructured according to the principle of sustainability. The economy should be made an integral part of the ecosystem.

The Ellen McArthur Foundation published a report titled *Toward the Circular Economy: Economic and Business Rationale for an Accelerated Transition* in 2013. The report stated:

“A circular economy is an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design. It replaces the "end-of-life" concept with restoration, shifts towards the use of renewable energy, eliminates the use of toxic chemicals, which impair reuse, and aims for the elimination of waste through the superior design of material, products, system, and, within this, business models.”

Meanwhile, the discourse of “circular economy” dispersed to Taiwan.

Taiwan is an island with limited land and an economy dependent on imported resources. It has greater pressure to make the best use of every resource compared to many other countries. The regulation of resource recycling was introduced in a 1988 revision of the *Waste Disposal Law*, and was gradually implemented in the 1990s. Three decades later, Taiwan’s achievements either in waste reduction or in the recycling rates of various resources stood in the forefront of the world, providing a valuable model for many countries.

So, the idea of “circular economy” became well-received rapidly once introduced to Taiwan. The CTCI Foundation (中技社, formerly known as China Technological Consultant Inc.) has published a series of related books and reports since 2011. The Circular Taiwan Network (循環台灣基金會) was established in 2015 and has since played an active role in promoting forums and publications on this issue. In 2016, the newly-elected President Tsai Ing-wen promised to bring Taiwan into an age of circular economy in her inaugural speech. In 2019, a Taiwan Circular Economy Award (台灣循環經濟獎) was launched by the Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research (中華經濟研究院) in cooperation with numerous governmental, industrial and academic institutions to launch

So, where is the position of "design" in the promotion of a circular economy?

THE CIRCULAR DESIGN OF PRODUCTS, BUSINESS AND SYSTEMS

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation report *Towards the Circular Economy* (2013, pp.7-8) considers “design” as the key to the development of the circular economy. The report elaborated on three principles:

First, a circular economy aims to “design out” waste. Product design should be optimized for a cycle of disassembly and reuse so that there is no waste.

Secondly, the “consumable” and “durable” components of products should be strictly differentiated. The former should be made of non-toxic bio-ingredients that can be safely returned to the biosphere, whereas the technical material unsuitable for biosphere (e.g. metal or plastic) should be reserved for the durable part that is designed for reuse from the beginning.

Thirdly, the energy required for this cycle should be within the capacity of the natural renewable resources.

While Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s report focuses on “product design” mainly. The consulting firm Accenture’s report *Circular Advantage*, by contrast, further extends discussion to service business models like “sharing platform” and “product as a service.” The former (e.g. ride-sharing company Lyft) enables increased utilization of resources by making shared access possible; the latter offers product access while retaining ownership (e.g. Michelin’s leasing service) creates the commercial incentive for corporations to pursue product longevity, reusability and sharing arrangement.

REnato, the curator of *A Circular Design Exhibition: Next Decade*, summarized six strategies for circular design: (1) designing for inner loop, (2) moving from product to service, (3) product life extension, (4) safe and recyclable material choice, (5) dematerialization, and (6) modularity. These strategies cover the domains of both product manufacturing and commercial services.

CIRCULARITY IN GOLDEN PIN AWARDED PRODUCTS

So, how far has Taiwan advanced on this front? In recent years, the Golden Pin Award has selected a number of design products which manifest the value of circularity.

The majority are products made of recycled materials. For instance, the 2017 award winner “One piece bag” manufactured by TAGather-Goods (日常經典) converted the PVC plastic canvas used in Taiwanese rain canopies into fashion bag. A 2019 award winner “Taiwanese Pineapple Fibre Plate” created by Dot Design (點睛設計) gave the recycled pineapple skin another life. Also in 2019, the champagne bottle-transformed “Wowmoon” cocktail glass (邀月杯) created by PiliWu-Design (吳氏設計) in cooperation with W Hotel and Spring Pool Glass (春池玻璃) won the distinguished Golden Pin Best Design Award.



Taiwanese Pineapple Fibre Plate / Dot Design Co., Ltd.



W Glass / Kiwico Corporation

Works made of recycled material also include some more complicated industrial products. A 2020 award winner, Hewlett-Packard’s Elite Dragonfly notebook, for instance, employed recycled material in 82% of its components. In particular, its speaker cover is made of recycled plastic from marine waste, and its packaging box is 100% made of material from sustainable sources. Also awarded in 2020, the “Black-faced-spoonbill-like Fountain Pen” by SKB and the “ARTWORK TOMii” designed by Green Dot Blue of Thailand both used recycled plastic materials.

Another category of circular design is the products that use environmentally friendly materials. A 2017 award winner “Fibrewood Objects—Dessert Plate” designed by Studio Lim (濯濁), for instance, is made of natural flax fiber which can decompose naturally if being disposed. A 2019 award winner “Rice Husk Beach Toys” is also made of 100% biodegradable materials. So it can decompose completely if being forgotten and buried in the sand, without causing pollution like the traditional plastic toys do.

However, there were very few works that go beyond “material choice” and seek to achieve circularity through the redesign of “mode of use.” An exceptional case is a 2020 award winner, the “MAC WARD” developed by Miniwiz (小智研發) and Fujen University Hospital as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. “MAC” is an acronym of the three concepts “modular, adaptable and convertible.” The MAC WARD is a modular



↑ **ARTWORK TOMii /GREEN DOT BLUE**



↑ **Black-faced Spoonbill Recycled plastic Fountain pen / SKB**

ward made of light-weight, easily transportable components that can be constructed in 24 hrs. Moreover, its ordinary ward can be easily converted into an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) isolation ward with negative air pressure. The MAC WARD provides a solution for coping with the possible ward demand surge of a future outbreak.

Exhibition and design awards are two important vehicles for promoting circular design, but the Industrial Development Bureau of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the TDRi did more. A major attempt was the “Circle Journey”(循環旅途) project launched in late 2020, which involved cooperating with Folio Hotel to construct two guest rooms featuring selected circular design items from thirteen domestic brands, to enrich the customers’ understanding of circular design.

For example, the room features mugs made of recycled glass by Spring Pool, Glass, the “Whims E010” bedside reading lamp made of recycled material from discarded electricity equipments by TPCreative (台電文創), the indoor slippers made of waste leather by Oringo (林果良品), and Minifort audio speakers which was handmade with waste wood from disposed door frames.



↑ **MAC Ward**
Fu Jen Catholic University Hospital & Miniwiz



Fibrewood Objects-Dessert Plate / Studio Lim Co. Ltd ↑

CIRCULAR DESIGN OF LARGER SCALE

If we think of larger scales, the objects for circular design is ever limited to physical products; it could be a space, a service, a community, a company, a mode of business, or even a complicated social system, such as the entire ecology of an industry or a city. Also, a shift of focus from individual commodity design to the larger-scale structural reform might be the only way to deliver comprehensive and fundamental changes. This requires a more systematic way of thinking and interdisciplinary integration.

Wang Chia-Hsiang, for instance, said that the RE-nato initially focused on assisting their clients design “products” based on the idea of circular economy, but they soon realised that this approach would never catch up with the pace of human waste production. So they changed their business model, steering to assisting their clients to clarify problems and to develop more comprehensive “solutions” of larger-scale waste reduction.

The “bottle recycling program” of the Taiwan To-

bacco and Liquor Corporation (TTLc, 台灣菸酒公賣局) is an example of achieving circularity value through redesigning their business mechanisms. It first involves the reorganization of the company’s recycling scheme, and secondly it provides 3 NTD (approx. 0.1 USD) to customers for each recycled bottle as an incentive. This program helps TTLc to reduce the cost of manufacturing new bottles to the minor budget of cleaning recycled ones.

This program was launched in 2016. By 2019, the recycling rate has climbed to 104.48%, which means that the TTLc was able to recycle some older bottles manufactured in previous years. This program creates a triple-win situation in which the TTLc cuts costs, consumers get rewarded, and resources are recycled. It also proved that converting the business model itself, without the use of any advanced technologies, could lead to a major change toward circularity.

The “Trashpresso” developed by Miniwiz, another extraordinary example worth discussion, is a device invented with an ambition to reform the entire

recycling system. Trashpresso is a mobile, automatic, solar-powered industrial-level trash recycling station installed on two trucks. It can convert recycled bottles into plastic tiles that can be used in building walls or floors or in manufacturing other plastic products. “Resource recycling must be decentralized and community-based,” said Arthur Huang (黃智謙), founder of Miniwiz, in explaining the rationale of development. The name “Trashpresso” derives from the combination of “trash” and “espresso”, revealing an ambition to make trash-recycling as convenient as making a cup of espresso.

Taiwan Sugar’s “Shalun Smart Green Energy Recycling Residential Park” (沙崙智慧綠能循環集合住宅園區) designed by Bio-Architecture Formosana (九典聯合建築師事務所) is an example of integrating multiple expertises of design. The project incorporates green architecture, smart building technologies, multi-layered vertical farms, and various renewable energy devices to create a rental-only residential park where its tenants could share resources, reduce waste, and enjoy a sustainable ecology.

As this brief survey reveals, the pursuit of circular design in Taiwan primarily focuses on products and materials, with less attention paid to business models or systematic innovation. Wang Chia-Hsiang offered a possible explanation: Taiwan has built a strength in the manufacturing sector due to its long-term role as an “original equipment manufacturer” (OEM) for Western brands. Hence Taiwanese designers tend to be keen on improving products from its upstream material and applied technologies, while being less insightful on business model innovation.

On the other hand, this bias toward the manufacturing end might be turned into an advantage. The comprehensive manufacturing clusters in Taiwan make it easy to assemble the entire supply chain at low cost for developing a new design. Take the popular bike-sharing service YouBike as an example: it incorporates Taiwan’s existing strengths in bike design and production, material science, precision manufacturing, repair service, information technologies and so on. Everything is readily there; all it takes is just an innovative business model that connects all.

In an interview about the development of Trashpresso, Arthur Huang also said, “Taiwan has manufacturers of electrical appliances, machineries, hydraulic systems, controllers and all kinds of technologies all within a small geographical area. We can do trial and error with very low cost. It’s an advantage of Taiwan.”

A latest instance is ARKVO, a smart appliance that produces pure water from air created by Taiwan’s legendary industrial designer and the founder of Gixia Group (奇想創造), Hsieh Jung-Ya (謝榮雅). Hsieh integrated Taiwan’s past experiences and accumulated technologies as a key OEM manufacturer of dehumidifier, air purifier, and water dispenser to conceive ARKVO as an innovative design solution for recycling environmental water resources.

SYSTEMATIC CONSTRUCTION: EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

You have to consider how a product could be recycled in the end at the beginning of its designing. On many occasions, if you don’t have to make the product ultralight or thin, you would have the choice of using more recyclable material.”

——Arthur Huang (黃智謙), Miniwiz

Some business models such as subscriptions make it easier to recycle products at the end of their life cycle... But the ecosystem in a circular economy is far beyond what a single firm can do; that needs to be constructed with the help of national policies.”

——Hsieh Jung-Ya (謝榮雅), Gixia Group

If we expect more people promoting “circular economy” in Taiwan, the most urgent job is to reform Taiwan’s design education to place more emphasis on the concept and the ground knowledge of the circular economy.

“When we talk about circularity, or even the most fundamental choice of material, we found an absence of related courses in Taiwan’s design schools.” Wang Chia-Hsiang believes this gap in teaching increases the cost of communicating about circularity. In contrast, many schools in Europe or in the United States offer more courses about circular design. Taiwan needs to catch up in this regard.

Arthur Huang argued: it is essential at the beginning of designing a product to consider how a product could be recycled in the end. “On many occasions, if you don’t have to make the product ultralight or thin, you would have the choice of using more recyclable material.” He took architecture as an example and said: “most building materials can actually be recycled as long as you don’t use glue.” Yet the simple objective of “avoiding using glue” actually means a comprehensive rewriting of most construction protocols.

More systematic circular design often involves large-scale and highly complex integration of different areas of expertises, and its participants may come from a wide array of professional backgrounds. Therefore, there is an urgent need for innovation-managing talents who can lead interdisciplinary communication to design new business models.

Professor Kung Shu-Chang of Institute of Architecture, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, pointed out: There are many outstanding manufacturers or firms in Taiwan committed to promoting a circular economy, but their efforts have yet to form a complete operating system. "I'm still confused too. There are points of pursuit for circularity, separated by blocks in between. These blocks have not been opened yet." Kung believed that there were many approaches to achieve a circular economy, but most existing attempts focus on designing the back-end "product" for inner loop. Instead, more attention should be paid to transforming the front-end "aspects of production". The key to system integration is information.

Hsieh Jung-Ya indicated that the circular economy not only involves transforming products and objects, but also requires integrated use of resources and information, which is by no means achievable by the design industry itself. The role of the government is also important.

Wang Chia-Hsiang also considered the insufficient information transparency as a major obstacle for promoting circular design. Many enterprises, Wang observed, adopted a delicate internal division of roles with different staff responsible for overseeing different stages of production. Their interaction and info-sharing tend to be minimal, and they usually have little information about how the recycling system operates. Therefore, he concluded, it was very difficult to consider the procedure of recycling at the initial stage of designing products.

He suggested that a series of "guidelines" fo dif-

ferent design domains need to be formulated, constantly updated and made accessible to designers. The core challenge is to construct an information system that allows designers to learn about, and to consider, the feasibility, price, cost, and required time for recycling certain materials, as well as the availability of recycled resources. Also, the intrafirm flow of information should be more open. At last, the designers should no longer be seen as just a technical branch in the corporate division of labor, but a pivot that should be allowed to participate in more processes of decision making.

After all, the pursuit of systemic circularity requires constant balancing and solution-searching at various scales. Only when we have more complete information about the life and history of all types of material in our society, that we may find the best solution to achieve systemic sustainability.



Place-Making by Design: Knowledge, Brand and Community

The sound of *suona* (a Chinese double-reed horn) roaring. Statues of deified historical generals (神將, pronounced *sheng-jian*) strode around their blessed territory. A “Daxi team” consisting of thirty-one local *Din Tao* (陣頭) clubs paraded across the streets, attracting massive crowd wherever they went. A team of minor *sheng-Jian* performed by domestic school kids followed, dancing traditional steps while passing by the worshipping tables the residents lined up on the roadside. Some elderly were moved to tears, clapping hands without stopping. Young spectators took a folded pamphlet of this festival, trying to identify the role each *sheng-Jian* represented.

It was the opening ceremony of the “Daxi Daxi” (大溪大禧) festival called “Parading with God” (與神同巡), a pilgrimage reformulated on the basis of traditions, which took place on August 1st, 2020, the seventh day before the holy birthday of *Guan Sheng Di Jun* (關聖帝君, “Holy Emperor Lord Guan”).

That night, a variety of modern and traditional art performers including music bands, dance companies, lion dancers and *San Tai Zi* (三太子) were invited to join the event “Daxi Pili Night” in the front yard of the *Puji* temple (普濟堂). They compete in pairs on the stage and rock the audience. One the same day, an exhibition titled “Pilgrimage Office” (遶境事務所) opened in *Puji* temple’s warehouse, showing all walks of dedicated craftsmen who made the pilgrimage possible, as well as the sophisticated ceremonial rituals condensed over a century. There was even a temporary “Golden Joy Grandiose Temple Market” (金喜大廟市) organized in the Zhongzheng Park during the festival, presenting a collection of Daxi delicacies and selected Taiwanese brands.

Tammy Liu (劉真蓉), founder of BIAS Architects (衍序規劃設計) and curator of Daxi Daxi, defined this mega-event “a town festival spanning across contemporary design and folk religion.” She tried to inject design into folklore, and to rejuvenize traditional religion. In addition to pilgrimage, stage performance, exhibition and festival market, the curating team even launched a web service “Lord Guan online” to extend the festival into the virtual world, making it more accessible to the younger generation.

In a longer timeframe, the 2020 Daxi Daxi was just the newest chapter of the endeavors aimed at bridging the urban-rural gap through the power of design over the past three decades.

“Design is certainly the key to success for regional revitalisation! Whether the brand-construction of a place, the development of local industries and in-depth tourism, the strategy of community building and village revitalization, and the curating and marketing of festivals all require intensive input of design.”
——Martin Yang (楊佳彰), Hwat's Graphic Design

BRAND-MAKING OF PLACES

The post-war industrial modernization of Taiwan led to rapid urban-ization. Young people poured into cities and left behind rural villages with an aging population, causing crises of local industries, landscape and cultural sustainability.

Facing the urban-rural disparity, the Ministry of Economic Affairs first learned from the Japanese “one village one product” (一鄉一品) movement, and promoted the “one town one product” policy in 1989. The 1990s saw a rising movement of “community development” (社區營造) in Taiwan and the springing up of local organizations devoted to this cause. After 2000, this momentum converged with the “cultural creative industry” (文創產業) discourse led by the Council of Cultural Affair and was directed toward the industrialisation and commercialisation of place characteristics.

Learning from Shinzo Abe’s experience of confronting the rural decline with *Chiho Sosei* (地方創生, regional revitalisation) policy in Japan, Taiwan’s Executive Yuan (行政院) set up a “Regional Revitalisation Board” (地方創生會報) in May 21, 2018 and approved the *National Strategic Plan for Regional Revitalization* presented by National Development Council (NDC) in 2019. Magazines and exhibitions depicting the identi-

ties of places sprung up; many places joined this craze for policy-driven revitalisation.

Martin Yang (楊佳彰), Director of Hwat's Graphic Design (樺致形象設計) and honorary chair of Taiwan Graphic Design Association, has led the 2016 pilot project of regional revitalisation in Donggang, Pingtung and couched numerous similar projects elsewhere as a NDC expert consultant of regional revitalization. He argued that “*design* is certainly the key to success for regional revitalisation! Whether the brand-construction of a place, the development of local industries and in-depth tourism, the strategy of community building and village revitalization, and the curating and marketing of festivals all require intensive input of design.”

“A very important thing in regional revitalisation is: how to make a place a brand?” said Lin Cheng-Yi (林承毅, or Takeshi Lin), a service designer and founder of the Hayashi Design Office. He argued, “the branding of a place not only enhances its residents’ confidence and sense of honor, but also attracts those native who left before to feel a sense of identity and return.” Moreover, outside visitors would also have aspiration and a sense of connection to this place, and a motive to visit or to assist, bringing the mobility of ideas, economic activities and population.

The successful brand-making of a place requires more than spending in publicity. The key is to identify its particular charm and characteristics, and to find a clear and unique positioning. “Our past impression of a place was often associated with its products, such as Guanmiao’s (關廟) pineapples and Yujing (玉井) mangoes; the imagination of the place itself was thin.” By contrast, Takeshi Lin’s ideal of place branding should deliver a clear image of the place, which elicits the awareness that it’s “a place with particular feelings and atmosphere”.

A key phrase in Takeshi Lin’s elaboration was “sense of life.” However, he also reminded that many people tend to imagine the sense of life in rural locality as “slow-paced, warm, and close interpersonal connections”— anyway a stereotyped imagination opposite to the daily routines of ordinary urban life. In fact, every place has its own mode of life.



CULTIVATING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Brand-making of places by design consists of four methodological steps: (1)Excavating and organizing knowledge about the place; (2) Extracting the DNA of domestic culture; (3)Interpreting these elements and constructing local cultural landscape by design; (4)Brand-constructing of a place with recognizable features.

The first step always starts with the acquisition of local knowledge. Yu Chih-Wei (游智維), the general manager of L-instyle Boutique Travel (風尚旅行) and the founding chair of Dream Travel Taiwan Association (DTTA 台灣觀光策略發展協會), is an expert in this regard. He started field investigations in Jiaxian, Shitiping, Meinong and other localities as early as 2011, learning from people with particular knowledge or expertise of places. His team sought to find local cultural genes “like earthworms plowing the soil. ”

With these solid efforts, Yu Chih-Wei secured a solid ground in the rapidly-emerging market of in-depth travel with his L-instyle team, but also founded the new company Join Cultural Integration (蚯蚓文化) in 2015 which soon became a prominent curator specialized in marketing places.

The social enterprise Grand Vision Co. (鴻梅文創), a subsidiary of Grand View Culture & Art Foundation (鴻梅文化藝術基金會), also had

↑ 2020 Taiwan Design Expo in Hsinchu

accumulated ample knowledge about the specialties and crafts of Hsinchu City (新竹市) from a series of projects of founding a bookstore with a restaurant, a craft shop, a design hotel and other initiatives. These solid insights allowed Grand Vision, which had no prior experience in curating, to be commissioned a major role in the 2020 Taiwan Design Expo in Hsinchu, responsible for representing the domestic culture of the host city in three designated venues.

There are also more scientific, systematic methods of acquiring knowledge about a place in a shorter period of time. When Takeshi Lin assisted Hsinchuang Community College (新莊社大) in preparing an event of historical walks in 2020, for instance, he conducted six “participatory design workshop” to stimulate discussions among the participants, mostly local residents, about what they remembered and what they considered to be charming about this place. Hsinchuang was once a prosperous riverbank settlement more than a century ago, but its development was later stalled due to river siltation, and the past glory was gradually forgotten. Many residents have little knowledge about, and a weak sense of identity of, this place. So the community college initiated the event of historical walk, designed numerous themed routes, and invited more residents to explore the past of their hometown.

Takeshi believed the historical walks would be a starting point for the brand-making of Hsinchuang “The community college’s mission is to prepare a fertile soil for revitalizing the place, so the participating firms and residents could find opportunities to thrive.”

COMMUNICATING THE PLACES' CHARM

Natural landscapes, documented stories, and condensed charms all need to be promoted and broadcasted to become tourist attractions, as well as driving engines for revitalizing local industries. This is where ‘design’ could help too.

Taitung Design Center (TDC, 台東設計中心), for instance, has played a propelling role in rebranding Taitung’s image. It once arranged massive-scale posters of Mt. Dulan (都蘭山), golden needle hills, and starry night over Jia-ming Lake (嘉明湖) at the busy Zhongxiao-Fishing station of Taipei MRT, demonstrating the purity and serenity of Taitung. The TDC also cooperated with Bito (甲蟲創意) and Plan b to produce a short film called *Return to Wild*, alluring viewers to search for their wild self in Taitung.



2019 Creative Expo Taiwan –Taoyuan Reflecting/Informat Design Curating ↑

Targeting abroad, Yu Chih-Wei and his Join Cultural Integration team assisted Tainan City to curate the annual exhibition “Red Chair Tourist Club” (紅椅頭觀光俱樂部) to promote its’ tourism in Japan since 2015. They chose “red plastic chair”— a cheap, durable furniture often seen in Taiwan, to symbolize the “hard-working, durable and resilient” character of Taiwan people. They use red chairs to showcase a hundred objects that represent Tainan’s daily life, ascribing to this historical town an image of sophisticated and delicate qualities.

Also in 2015, a group of young Taiwanese designers launched a crowd-funded Taiwan Pavilion “OPTOGO” at the doorstep of World Expo in Milan, bringing Taiwanese cuisine and “take away” culture to the visiting crowd. Their imaginative design and audacious action successfully secured Taiwan’s presence in World Expo, which was particularly precious given Taiwan’s difficult diplomatic situation.

The 2019 Taiwan Cultural Expo “Culture on the Move,” also curated by Tammy Liu and BIAS architecture, incorporated a section devoted to “place” for the first time. The section, titled “Place on the Move” (編輯地方) brought together four talented designers to curate four city/county-themed pavilions— Wang Yao-Bang (格子) for Taoyuan, Justin Yu (游適任) for Taitung, Joe Fang (方序中) for Pingtung, and Yu Chih-Wei for Tainan.

Wang Yao-bang, the curator of the Taoyuan Pavillion “Taoyuan Reflecting” (桃花源設計事務所), mentioned that he asked many local people “what makes you most proud of Taoyuan?” in his initial fieldwork. The most frequent response was, surprisingly plain, “dried tofu”. Wang believed that Taoyuan needs new imagination—he hanged fabrics from an old local textile factory in the exhibition venue, played the sounds collected from the Taoyuan airport, local tea factory, etc., and uses circles of bright lights to symbolize Taoyuan’s

characteristic water ponds visible from any landing airplane. “Few could recognize it’s Taoyuan, but in fact everything came from there. The sense of contrast would drive visitors to form a new imagination of Taoyuan,” Wang explained.

The curators of the “Place on the Move” exhibition simultaneously published a book series called “The Place” (本地). The editorial team was dispatched to the four places and stayed there for more in-depth surveys and interviews. Looking beyond the ordinary tourist gaze, they deconstructed the residents’ daily routines to reveal the authentic charm of the local life, in order to reverse the readers’ stereotype impressions of each place.

Pingtung, for instance, is often associated with the impression of Kenting’s endless blue ocean, tropical trees and Nanyang-style streets in Kenting. However, the editorial team chose to focus on Taimu Mountain (北大武山), a 3092 meter landmark visible everywhere in Pingtung, and presented the characteristic *luo-shan* (落山, literally “falling from mountain”) wind, a Catholic church that dated back to 1861, some ancient temples and shrines, and ethnical diversity and symbiosis there. They revealed a charming side of Pingtung that is often overlooked by travelers rushing to tourist destinations.



WHERE TRADITIONS MEETS DESIGN

Mediated or curated communication with broader audiences could be influential for place-branding, but it can’t replace the actual experiences obtained onsite. There are certain values of physically being there, such as authenticity, sensational intensity and a more holistic perspective. So there is a critical room for design intervention in the field.

Let’s go back to Daxi. The pilgrimage of *Guan Sheng Di Jun*’s holy birthday on June 24 of the Lunar calendar was often considered the second most important traditional festival, next only to the Chinese New Year. The parade of 31 *Din Tao* clubs and the participating crowd was a shared memory of all Daxi residents.

However, this century-old tradition is also losing its charm to younger generations. When BIAS Architecture, the curating team of Daxi Dax, visited the local ground schools, they were surprised to find that: most children felt “confused why there were so many people” during the festival and “reluctant to stay in Daxi.” They even had a negative stereotype impression of *Din Tao*.

The BIAS team knew the pilgrimage is not only a religious ritual, but is also inextricably linked to the local way of life and collected affections. To alleviate the apathy and misunderstanding of the young generation, as well as to pass on a traditional culture, they

↑ *The pilgrimage of Guan Sheng Di Jun's holy birthday*

constructed a city festival prior to June 24 that combines traditional folklore with contemporary design.

With the aid of design and a spirit of innovation, the traditional celebration ceremonies were transformed into cool new fashion. But as the chief curator Tammy Liu stressed, every piece of innovation must be built upon a sincere understanding and full respect of the tradition, and was achieved through the relentless communication and negotiation between the design team and local collaborators.

Consequently, all the innovative elements carried the cultural gene of local ways of life and represent a sense of intergenerational bond. For instance, the festival included a stage drama written and directed by theater professionals, performed by local young actors, about a succession story of local families, clubs and business. Another example is the light-weighted costume of minor *Shen jian* created by the drama costume designer Li Yu-shen (李育昇), which allows the local school kids to participate in the parade after some basic dance training, a scene that touched the heart of many local residents.

"Many young people who were previously reluctant to return to Daxi came back that year to help, asking their fathers what they were doing [in the event]. 'Can I take a look at your clothes or headscarves?' Those senior people found their children started to be interested in the [traditional] things, and were willing to learn and do it," said



↑ JCA Living Lab / JC Architecture

curator Tammy Liu, who was deeply touched while recanting the success story of passing on tradition.

This sense of glory and unity consolidated onsite will be remembered, in body and in mind, and be regenerating itself forever.

CONSTRUCTING A DOMESTIC “LIFE CIRCLE”

The purpose of “regional revitalisation” is to improve the quality of life and employment prospects of the local residents. In addition to eliciting emotional and cultural resonance through marketing campaigns or events, it is also essential to foster the innovative redesign of public space and the empowerment of industries, so the reconstruction of the domestic life circle might be completed.

For instance, Hsinchu City has undergone a phase of design-driven transformation recently. One of its major strategies is the revitalisation of old buildings and public spaces—from redesigning Hsinchu Park and Zoo, reopening the “Hsinchu State Library” (新竹州圖) which has been closed for 36 years, to the reutilizing historic buildings such as SJ House, Datung 108 and the Image Museum. These efforts granted Hsinchu City a vibrant cultural landscape that also leads to its history.

In the 2020 Taiwan Design Expo in Hsinchu, many visitors were surprised to realise that Hsinchu City has so many beautiful places.

Many revitalized old houses are used as exhibition venues, cafes or restaurants, but there are also cases that they were remodeled to provide a new option of contemporary urban residency.

A notable example is the “JCA Life Laboratory” (JCA生活實驗室) in Wenzhou Street, which was remodeled from former staff dormitory of National Taiwan University and won the 2019 Taipei Old House Renovation Award. The original building consisted of century-old Japanese wooden houses and concrete walls added in the post-war era. The J.C.Architecture (柏成設計) created numerous openings in the original walls, or applied light-transmittable material, to reconnect previously-segregated spaces. They created a platform on the roof with an exclusive view of the sky, and opened up some spaces for social gatherings in the neighborhood.

The designers believe, “going home” shouldn’t be just “being wrapped by the building”; they hope to encourage the sense of connec-



tion with the building, the city and other people. A unique value of old houses is their potential as the intersection between “historical space” and “new imagination of living”; they could be the fertilizer for a more organic sense of urban living.

Regarding the revitalization of local traditional industries, the “Nakagawa Masanori Store” (中川政七商店) founded in 1716 in Nara (奈良), Japan has recently paved a path with impressive achievements. More than a decade ago, like most traditional stores, Nakagawa Masanori faced cruel competition with new challengers like Muji. But under the reform by its 13th owner, Nakagawa Jun (中川淳), they started to cooperate with numerous old crafts workshops to create high-quality commodities. Nakagawa Masanori Store witnessed a rapid growth from five branches in 2002 to 64 branches (including subsidiary brands) in 2021.

In 2017, Nakagawa Masanori Store took a leading role in the founding of the Japanese Craft Production Area Association (日本工芸産地協会) and the initiation of *Sanchi no Ichiban Hoshi* (産地の一番星, literally “the best star of production area”) project. They dispatched a team of professional consultants to assist local craftwork clusters to build their own brand, to turn in profit, and to revitalize the regional industry. They managed to assist 20 local brands in the first year, providing a critical force in revitalizing the traditional craftsmanship in Japan.

In 2019, Taiwan Design Center (TDC) signed a memorandum with Nak-

agawa Masashichi Store to introduce this strategic mechanism. The TDC collaborated with Taiwanese design teams to launch “T22”, a project to revitalize traditional craft production sites in the 22 cities or counties. They chose Yingge (鶯歌), a historical town known for ceramic production in New Taipei City, to construct a “mechanism for design-driven innovation in production area” (設計導入産地創新機制), with a hope to create new prosperity of the ceramic industry in Yinge.

The project of constructing a local brand for Yinge has two major objectives in the first three years. The first, “a star in production area” (產地一顆星), is to make a star brand out of the local firms by providing consultancy assistance in the financial planning, management and international marketing. The second is to construct “production area academy” (產地學院), a platform for connecting and empowering the CEOs of local firm by organizing seminars, workshops and regular social gatherings. The purpose is to allow the various types of business owners to obtain the most advanced knowledge about brand management, as well as to encourage cross-field cooperation.

Moreover, the TDRI plans to organize a “Craft Production Areas Expo” (產地博覽會) in the future. This idea is partially inspired by Japan. In 2013, the Japanese design celebrity Yu Yamada (山田遊) founded the Tsubame-Sanjo Factory Festival (燕三条工場の祭典), which triggered a trend of “factory learning” across all over Japan. This trend made craftwork sites a tourist resource no less than natural beauty or cultural legacies.

A DELICATE BALANCE

Design drives regional revitalisation and reconstructs the past cognitive frameworks about geography, industries, and sense of life; it opens up a range of possibilities for the future. But successful implementation of design still relies on persistent communication and empowerment. When a de-

signer attempts to cast an influence, s/he must be cautious of the danger of imposing a decontextualized “design” that is nothing more than a detached marketing wrap.

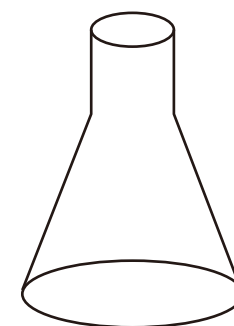
Tammy Liu, the chief curator of Daxi Daxi, argued: any innovation must be based on a sincere understanding and full respect of the local traditions. When the BIAS team tried to design a new sequence of pilgrimage parade formation, they spent a lot of time researching the traditional lineups and the relative strengths of each of the 31 *Din Tao* clubs. When Tammy visited the head of *Puji* temple with the new design, “he was of course annoyed in the beginning, but after a closer scrutiny [of our proposal], he surprisingly discovered that we are not ignorant.” When the design team wish to place the sedan chair (神轎) at the parade’s end, there were initial objection too. But we decided to ask for god’s permission through *bwa bwei* (擲筊, a Chinese divination method using two pieces of moon-shaped woods); “when we got the divine permission, everyone would obey the decision.”

There is a delicate balance here. “Place” is the subject in the making; “design” is a tool or a path. Design for a place can never be a designer’s solo show. Tammy Liu reminded the importance of “leaving space” (留白). “You have to accept what would happen by itself in the place, leaving space for those things to grow.” It is only when the authentic essences and needs of a place are well respected that the design-driven brand-making can really revitalize the domestic life.

Taiwan has just departed on the road toward regional revitalization; design would be a powerful companion on this journey.

CHUANG

*Craftsmanship
and
Dynamics of Design*



創



Designers' Pursuits: Transcendancy, Dialectics and Future Prospect

"Creating is a very sacred thing for me, because it's God's job!"

Hsieh Jung-Ya (謝榮雅), founder and President of Gixia Group (奇想創造), stepped in the field of industrial product design when he joined Acer in 1990. He has in the past three decades won hundreds of design awards including iF, red dot, GMark, IDEA, etc., and is a legend in Taiwan's industrial design industry.

Less known is that he was born into a pastor's family. Probably due to this background, he noticed the theological implications of design work early on. "To devote oneself to creating things, you must have a lot of dreams, aspirations and ideas to support your sense of mission to make changes for the benefit of mankind." A devoted industrial designer, Hsieh Jung-Ya has a missionary temperament.

Other interviewed designers do not necessarily bear a comparable weight of missionary devotion, but also from time to time reveal the energy and charm they felt from the creative process— either for the pursuit of aesthetic expressions, for the search for a practical solution, for a imaginative vision of a space or a city, for an invitation to communication, or for questions and answers of our time.

It is also at these creative moments the designers could revisit their initial aspirations, reflect upon the path from the beginning, redefine meanings in a dialectic process, and to challenge any rules and framework given by the society. It is also in this process that a designer could exercise his/her human agency, and live out the ideal status as a human being.

For instance, Tammy Liu (劉真蓉) of BIAS Architecture once described her feelings about design work: "I can really discover and solve prob-

lems, create value; I am learning every time." In talking about curation, Wang Yao-pang (王耀邦) of informat design also indicated that its charm was the opportunity "to draw a new line of meaning in the process of reorganization." Hsiao Yu-Chih (蕭有志), assistant professor at Department of Architecture, Shih Chien University mentioned his realization that "an architect is in the end a resource allocator. But by coming such work with design, one has the opportunity to become an "author" instead of just a service provider."

To become an "author" means the establishment of "authority" in a certain field, having one's position and voice, and even the chance to inscribe his/ her name in history. In a nihilistic era when the torrent of information washed everything away rapidly, this seems to become an aspiration hidden deep in the heart of many devoted designers.

THE PURSUIT OF "BETTER LIFE"

"I was a country boy who never had a chance to use really good stuff. How can I design a product that the rich people are willing to buy?"
——Hsieh Jung-Ya (謝榮雅), Gixia Group

Creativity, in Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" theory, belongs to the highest level of the need for "self-realization." Based on Maslow's theory, people start to seek opportunities for self-realization once the basic needs for survival, safety, love and self-esteem are largely met. Post-war Taiwan underwent a transition from turmoil to stability, and from poverty to prosperity. With cultural resources available to the public accumulating, the Taiwanese people also have a growing aspiration to go beyond merely surviving, and to live a "better life". The desire and imagination of "better life" became a driving force for the emergence of numerous new designs.

Chan Wei-Hsiung (詹偉雄), vice president of Xue Xue Institute (學學文創志業), once described his "pain" of growing up in a time when "no aesthetics nor design" in Taiwan. Therefore, he expressed his special appreciation of the existence of Eslite Bookstore (誠品書店) in the 1990s, which became an "aesthetic oasis" of the city, a showcase of beautiful designs, in this "suffocated, ugly world." Throughout his career, Chan has founded numerous magazines, published extensively, and contributed significantly to the rising cultural creative industries. One theme that penetrates all these endeavors is the persistence of cultivating the aesthetic consciousness of Taiwanese society.

The zealous pursuit of beauty and the impatience toward all sorts of ugly banalities in real life have even led Chan to expect a "major discontinuity" in Taiwan. "The ignorance of our generation about beauty and the banality of our collective aspirations need to be bluntly rejected by another generation, so we may create an incredible new generation."

Architect Hsiao Yu-Chi grew up in Nangang, a suburban district east of central Taipei. "It was dreadful," he recalled, "of growing up in the disadvantaged environment of that industrial community, where almost everyone headed toward an identical career path (labor)." The salvation of his youth was literature, animation and painting. Therefore he chose to major in "printing design" when he enrolled in a vocational junior college, but he remained confused about life.

One day he came across the book *Bauhaus: The Origin of Modern Design Education* (包浩斯：現代設計教育的根源) and saw "architecture" at the top of the pyramid of design, even higher than the graphic or visual design that he was familiar with. This encounter triggered his aspiration. He wanted to see what's up there.

Industrial designer Hsieh Jun-Ya also stressed the importance of a good aesthetic environment for the development of designers. He came to realize in his twenties that he was "a country boy who never had a chance to use really good stuff". He questioned himself: "how can I design a product that the rich people are willing to buy?" So he plucked up the courage and asked his client to take him for a ride with their Mercedes Benz, so he could experience the pursuit and demand of "texture" by the affluent class. Many years later, Hsieh always encouraged his design students "not to be afraid" of stepping into the boutique shops beyond their affordability, in order to gain a broader and more meticulous perspective.

Whether it's Chan Wei-Hsiung's pursuit of beauty,

Hsiao Yu-Chih's aspiration for the "top of design", or Hsieh Jung-Ya's aesthetic self-cultivation beyond his class background— their paths of design all involve transcendence of their original life.

DIALECTICS OF DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Design represents a pursuit for "better life;" but for whom? Is the ultimate design something affordable only for the rich, or should good design be made accessible to all? In an era of continuous class differentiation and relentless battle between the right and the left, it is inevitable for every top designer to engage in the introspective dialectic of "designing for whom and what?"

Hsieh Jung-Ya, for instance, still remembers the psychological impact of realizing he was "designing products for foreign customers that he couldn't afford", and how this drove him to reflect upon "for whom" he designed. He now describes his position "not somewhere in the middle, but at two ends" of the class spectrum. He does designs for the richest, making products of the highest specifications and qualities as a way to drive out his best. But he also goes back to the bottom and thinks about how to help the people of the third world, making designs that are beneficial to them. "The two ends are not contradictory."

Hsiao Yu-chi, on the other hand, reflected that the professional architect's role in public affairs "is often elitism-oriented, top-down in fashion". "The nice way to describe it is providing design and planning service to people, but the reality is often imposing one's own will on the imagination of many others." He mentioned the left-wing discourses, the spatial political analysis, and the public participation initiatives promoted mainly by the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, National Taiwan University, but in the end he stressed that architecture "has a capital side, which is something indispensable."

Therefore, Hsiao Yu-chi refuses to choose a stance

between the left and the right, instead he understands architecture as a complicated incident, tries to digest opinions from various perspectives, and aims to form more sophisticated judgments according to different situations. He coined the concept “mega-weaving” (大量交織) as the theoretical basis of his various creative and teaching projects. The concept, which originated from his graduation project in Cranbrook Academy of Art about “complexity,” emphasizes on cultural diversity, resource maximization, zero waste, crossing projects, and do-it-yourself urbanism. One of its features is the rejection of dichotomy.

Hsieh Jung-Ya also mentioned some struggles he faced between “to do or not to do” in his professional career. He had refused to cooperate with a gardening equipment firm as he found the later installed easy-embroidered iron parts in a water spray gun in order to increase its long-term sales, but he also had taken a case from a tobacco company for his own survival. He gradually realized: visions and reality, public interest and business, sensibility and sense are not necessarily contradictory to each other.

He even advocated that any young designer with dreams should also obtain commercial genes; “no matter how honorable your vision is, you have to realise your dreams in business.” The circular design expert Wang Chia-Hsiang also expressed a similar attitude when he talked about the choice between functionality and sustainability. “Functionality first, then sustainability could be considered. Only those products that are good to use can have a longer life cycle.” Dreams and business, functionality and sustainability, are not just contradictory values, but the dual helix of dialectical progress of design.

Hsieh Jung-Ya coined the term “eagle path” to describe the constant rebalancing in the process of designing. The ideals of aesthetics, craftsmanship, ecological sustainability and humanistic care are indispensable in the process of designing; but the reality of available technology, patents, equipment, industrial specifications, and even economic cost and benefit of the manufacturing processes must also be rationally considered. Hsieh believes that the real design process relies on the constant reconsideration and modification back and forth between the two ends, to deliver the products that are most accurately balanced. There’s no room for rush. ““It’s like an eagle hovering around a vertical draft to avoid stalling. The seemingly long distance it circles is actually a path of the perfect golden ratio.”

“Sometimes, no-design is a good design!” Hsieh stressed, designers do not necessarily need to deliver new products; sometimes to create a solution with existing conditions and resources is the best design strategy. Wang Yao-Pang also observed a transition of attitudes from believing “having something first, then looking for the better.” (先求有再求好) to questioning “why we must have” in the first place. The inquiry of the most fundamental meanings of the existence of design comes close to zen.

THE ADVANTAGES OF TAIWANESE DESIGNERS

“Taiwan has a liberal society open to different opinions and different cultures. The design teachers came back from Europe, the United States and Japan; there can’t be just one way.”
—Chang Kuang-Min (張光民), Chief Consultant of TDRI

Having an open and resourceful space to reflect and debate about design philosophy is itself an advantage Taiwanese designers have. Creative design often involves challenging existing boundaries or frameworks. In this regard, Taiwan’s freedom of expressions, open society and intellectual vibrancy provide a safer ground for designers to do so.

Chang Kuang-Min (張光民), chief consultant of TDRI, elaborated four other advantages of Taiwanese designers: cultural diversity, technological edges, flexibility, and the values of humanism and sustainability.

The cultural diversity in Taiwan facilitates intercultural dialogues and synergy, and provides a fertile ground for breeding hybrid cultural species. Take food and beverage as an example, a late-starter in making whiskey, coffee, quality bread and chocolate, Taiwan has won various world competition titles in just a few years. Warren Hsu (許華仁), founder of Fuwan (福灣) Chocolate, analyzed: “Taiwan has a diverse culinary culture, with a wide selection of international cuisines available. If you are serious about food in Taiwan, you would have a very unrestrained imagination of tastes.” Fuwan itself, for instance, has tried numerous local ingredients and successfully developed chocolates with special flavors like *Tieguanyin* tea, “ruby” black tea, *makao* (mountain litsea) , sea salt, rose lychee and so on.

On the other hand, Taiwan’s position at the junction of Chinese, Japanese, Austronesian and the Western cultural plates has further granted Taiwanese designers an edge in intercultural translation. Fan Chen-hao (范成浩), assistant professor of the Department of Craft and Design, National Taiwan University of Arts, observed that Taiwanese designers in Japan are “skilled at two forms of language-switching, one between Japanese and Mandarin, and the other between the language of design and of manufacturing.”

Technology and flexibility, Taiwan’s long-standing industrial advantages, are also assets for Taiwanese designers. Chang Kuang-Min said, “Taiwan has a strong manufacturing sector, capable of making any designer’s idea a reality.” He also considered Taiwan’s “flexibility and rapid adaptation to change” a key to its unwavering role in the OEM or ODM market. Taiwan’s existing bases of technological industries, as well as its flexible supply chain capable of rapid conversion of any design ideas, provide powerful support for designing in Taiwan.

At the last, the values of humanism and sustainability are often the key reasons why Taiwanese design impressed international juries in award contests. For example, the Red Dot award-winning *The Guidebooks of Marine Debris* in 2019 and *Go! Go! South Pole* exhibition (去你的南極) in 2020 both delivered a clear message demanding more efforts in environmental protection. The iF award-winning “An Eco-friendly Home for Four” in 2019 and “Urban Smart Fiber Soil” in 2020 both represent efforts to pursue sustainability. Also in 2020, the iF award winner “Sense of Belonging” (veterinary clinic) aimed to reduce anxiety of animals in sickness; the Good Design Gold Award winner “Design Movement on Campus” (學美・美學) incorporated participatory empowerment and aesthetics in an experimental project of redesigning campus; the red dot best of the best winner “Light up 13 Layer Remains” (點亮十三層), in jury’s statement, “transforms the historic monument and landscape in north-eastern Taiwan into a unique artifact.”

In addition to the four points Chang Kuang-Min elaborated, Chan Wei-Hsiung further pointed out the great potential of Taiwan’s natural resources in both inspiring designers’ sensibility and in defining Taiwan’s own aesthetics. He argued that Taiwanese designers should go beyond the prevailing Western modernist aesthetics and revisit Taiwan’s mountains, forests and seashore for inspiration. “Baptize your body in Taiwan’s nature, where you may find the most primitive energy that drives your design, as well as an answer to what Taiwanese features truly are.” Hsieh Jung-ya, too, mentioned that his design was driven by “a calling he experienced in the natural environment.”



↑ [Light up the 13 Layer Remains / Taiwan Power Company](#)
↓ [Go! Go! South Pole | Adventure Horizon / Gamania Cheer Up Foundation](#)

THE FUTURE OF DESIGNERS

Looking into the future, what are the future trends designers need to face?

Hsieh Jung-Ya thought the designers must actively expand their own abilities, in order to see a clearer vision of the roots and the intertwined context of problems they aim to address. The intervention of design must transcend the traditional mode of one-way, single focus approach, and adopt a new mode of “comprehensive design.” The designer not only needs to take good care of the product design itself, but also has to consider its associated services, experience and processes. Meanwhile, organizations must also have the “DNA of design” and familiarize staff at every level with “design thinking, in order to facilitate the implementation of good designs.

Luo Yufen (駱毓芬), the Creative Director of Pinyan Creative (品妍生活美學) pointed out that, the next phase of product design will focus on the “healing, liberating or other novel experiences” the product brings. She took spatial design as an example, and pointed out the market demand has already expanded from the purely architectural or decorative



↑ Chuan Animal Hospital / Chuan Animal Hospital



↑ Design Movement on Campus / Taiwan Design Research Institute

design to include the design and management of visitor flow, culture and commercial models. The new generation design talents, “in addition to the knowledge and skill of design, must have the abilities to understand and to integrate human needs.”

Oliver Lin (林鑫保), deputy director of TDRI, also kept on emphasizing the importance of cross-field communication and integration for the future generations of designers. However, Professor Wei Wan-li (衛萬里) of the Department of Commodity Design, Ming Chuan University, believes a more focused answer is needed. “We can’t always ask students to cross-fields, but have no idea of what to cross.” He believed the future technological trends will focus on four cardinal technologies abbreviated as “ABCD”— namely artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, blockchain, cloud and big data technologies.

Oliver Lin also pointed out that the global supply chain reorganization caused by the rising US-China tension created an important opportunity for Taiwan to revitalize its industries and to develop its design capacity. Professor Liou Shuenn-Ren (劉舜仁) of the Department of Architecture, National Cheng-kung University, also noticed, amid the turmoils of Sino-US trade war, Hong Kong unrest and Covid pandemic impacts, there is a recent trend of more Taiwanese designers returning from abroad to Taiwan. “The growing popularity of work from home allows many of them to work from Taiwan now. Also, as many companies moved their factories to Taiwan, some high-level talents were also relocated from Hong Kong to Taiwan.” He believes that Taiwan should make the best use of this opportunity.

For a larger time scale, Fan Chen-hao urged that designers should more often “take the imaginative perspective from twenty or thirty years from now”, and reflect upon “what kind of life are we bringing to our next generation.” “Once you have an idea of how the future life looks like,” he concluded, “ you can have better speculation of what tools we need

now to make things more smoothly and more convenient in our life.”

Chan Wei-Hsiung emphasized the connection with the soil of Taiwan. “You must liberate your body, spirit and mind, to have them cleansed by the nature of Taiwan. This island has a natural history much longer than any short-term political regime or what an ideology could define.” In particular, he mentioned the “near-death experience” that anyone could more or less have a taste of in the wild mountains. “At the very moment you survived a crisis,” he described poetically, “you acutely sensed the existence and continuity of your life, and became aware of the majority of truth of, and possessed most affections about, life. At that very moment, your creativity comes out naturally.”

In the end, design is the questioning and problem-solving of life. Whether to pursue cross-field integration, to take a perspective from the future, or to revisit the land of Taiwan, are all attempts to reach a more holistic state of life. It is also there that lies the future of design.

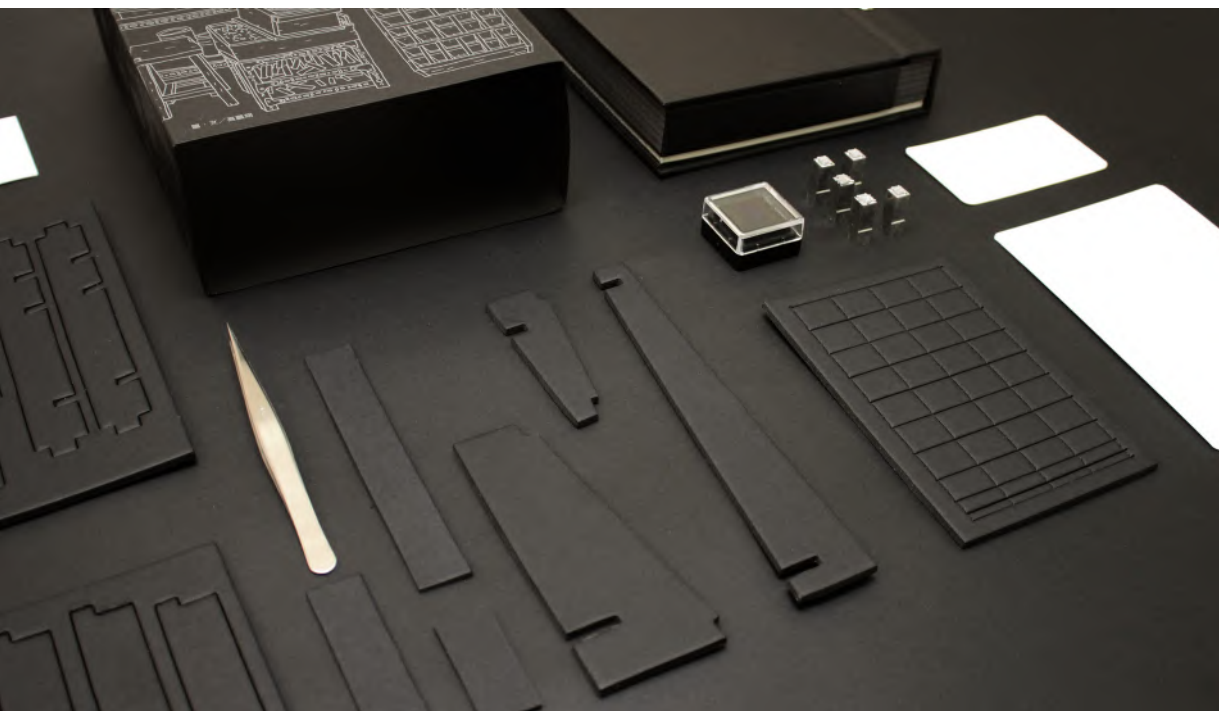


Industrial Shifts and Design: Craftsmanship, Technology and Service

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past." This famous quote of Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* has elicited ongoing debates between various forms of historical determinism and the faith on human agency

So is design. None of the design works that left its mark in history was born in vacuum. The Medieval handicrafts, the post-industrialization product designs, the Bauhaus modernist design in architectures, commodities and visual communication, and the contemporary service design, social design and other integrated design were all created within the context of the craft-thinking, the available technologies, and the social and economic condition of a specific time and space.

Traditional craftsmanship, modern technology, and the service industry innovations constitute three intertwined forces in shaping the contemporary landscape of design.



INDUSTRIAL PRODUCT VS. TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

Traditional craftworks or industrially manufactured products: which is better? What are their essential differences? These questions had been debated more than a century ago in the *Deutscher Werkbund* (German Association of Craftsman) founded in 1907.

One fraction considered hand-craftsmanship as the essence of art, and argued that beauty could only be found in purely hand-made works. After all, industrial manufacturing was at its start then, and the machine-manufactured mass products inevitably appeared coarse relatively. On the other hand, some people believe in the prospect of aesthetic improvement of industrial mass products. Afterwards, due to the drastic growth in demand for daily commodities during the two world wars, the advocate of industrial mass production prevailed, and they were linked to the emergence of Bauhaus in Weimar Germany in the interwar period.

Industrial mass production became the economic mainstream after the wars, but traditional handcrafts that are of higher cost and skill barrier never vanished. There are always people who favor the texture and quality of hand-made crafts, are willing to pay a higher price to acquire or just to “collect” a distinctive handmade craft, or even devote themselves to the inheritance of such artisanship. The Japanese

↑ *The Typesetting Master's Table*

“shokunin” (craftsman with artisan spirit), for instance, remain highly revered today.

While the “industrialism” associated with mass produced goods often evoke the impression of cold, standardized, characterless machines on the assembly lines, handcrafts by comparison retain a certain “naturalistic” touch that gives off a warm, variant and distinctive feeling. For instance, Liao Yi-Ya (廖怡雅) and Lee Yi-Shen (李易紳), the founders of Sunnirush Community Workshop (藺子工作室), emphasized the charming *tshiú-loo* (手路, literally “hand road,” meaning “distinctiveness in hand made work” in Taiwanese) of rush-woven works. Liao said in an interview: “our products are woven by dozens of grandmas. Every hat looks similar, but Yi-Shen and I can tell who made it at one glance.” Through crowdfunding, brand design, modern business management and marketing, Liao and Lee tried hard to ensure the three-centuries old heritage of rush-weaving in Taiwan can be passed down.

On the other hand, with the evolution of technology, some traditional, nostalgic craftsmanship cannot escape the fate of economic unsustainability, and its historical memories can only be preserved in other forms. Fortunately, the book set *The Typesetting Master's Table* appeared, which combined a “movable-type printing toolbox” and an illustrated booklet of the traditional typesetting method to keep a testimony of the lost skill.

FROM ARTWORK TO PRODUCT

“Many artisans tend to think of their work as unique pieces of art, placing the collector’s market in mind. But to face the mass market requires a degree of commercialisation. You need to get prepared for seeing your work as a ‘product’.”

——Erik Chu (朱逸恆), General Manager of Grand View

Some craftworks do survive in the modern mass market, but a degree of compromise in details and distinctiveness is inevitable considering the production cost and demand quantity. When the famous Japanese crafts shop Nakagawa Masashichi (中川政七商店) choose crafts workshops to mentor and revitalize, the first step is to clarify their financial situation. They had also suggested their mentored craft brands to discretionarily simplify the traditional craft-making procedures to make the financial target more achievable.

Take the lacquerware brand Shitsurindo (漆琳堂) as an example. Lacquerware are traditionally high-end art crafts that require sophisticated procedures to make and are too expensive to promote. Therefore, Nakagawa Masashichi advised Shitsurindo to reduce the number of lacquer coating layers on products for the mass market. The reduction of coating layer number made it possible to increase the production quantity, as well as to lower the price.

While preparing for the establishment of “OR Craft Life” (或者工藝櫥窗) in Hsinchu, the Grand View Culture and Art Foundation (鴻梅文創) contacted hundreds of young Taiwanese artisans and cooperated with more than thirty of them. They also encountered similar situations.

“When we get in touch with potential partners, we of course first look at if your achievement in aesthetics and techniques is of some sort of uniqueness. But the second priority is to see if the creative worker is willing to engage a wider base of consumers. For instance, the expected price and the readiness for stable supply both need to be continuously discussed in the course of collaboration,” explained Erik Chu (朱逸恆), the general manager of Grand View. “Simply put, it’s about whether the artisan can gradually see their ‘art piece’ as a ‘product.’ The price should be consumer-friendly, and the product must also meet practical needs of peoples’ daily lives ”

“Many artisans tend to think of their work as unique pieces of art, placing the collector’s market in mind. But to face the mass market requires a degree of commercialisation. You need to get prepared for seeing your work as a ‘product.’” Interestingly, Erik Chu observed that, the artisans with formal craft art training are inclined to the former attitude, probably due to the presumed value and desirability of “artistry in craft” in the academies. By contrast, the folk craftsmen from the grassroots have less such burden, and can more pragmatically participate in the development of the crafts market for the general public.

88 To go a step further, the distinction between industrial technology and traditional hand-craft is not all that clear. Fan Chen-Hao (范成浩) often asks his students: “Is wheel-thrown pottery handmade or machine-produced?” Wheel throwing process requires hands, but it also needs a pottery wheel machine. Then there is the “jiggering and jolleying” technique, where hands can be replaced by machines to produce standardized base shape that is

then adjusted by the artisan. For these types of products, the relation between manual and machine production is a continuous ratio spectrum.

Precisely because there is room for combination, Pinyen Creative (品研生活美學) established by Lo Yu-Fen was able to launch parallel product lines with different hand/tech ratios (70% handmade vs. 30% handmade). Pinyen employed experienced artisans to weave bamboo table lamps using Tainan long-branch bamboo. Once completed and turned on, the lamp cast a medley of light and mottled shadows, emanating a highly artistic atmosphere. However, the exquisite pieces meticulously hand-made by experienced artisans are rare and precious. To balance business operations, Pinyen also developed a cheaper version of bamboo lanterns that are produced with the help of machines to meet the demand of budget customers.

By integrating traditional bamboo crafts and industrial design, Pinyen is able to establish an international reputation.

“NEW CRAFTS” IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

“I’ve always believed that contemporary craftsmanship does not need to avoid the use of modern materials and techniques”, said Lo Yu-Fen when discussing the relation between machines and handcrafts. “For example, it will be extremely difficult for us to live without tap water and electricity, and go back to drill wood for fire.”

Lo used ceramics as an example. Throughout history, the materials, constructions, and techniques of ceramics have never stopped evolving. So how can one be fixated on designating the method used in a particular period of time as “traditional” and deserving the title “craft”? Accordingly, Pinyen develops products produced by contemporary technologies, but also retains the handmade option for consumers who prefer and are able to afford.

Moreover, consider the operational procedures of precision machining, the designing and implementation of civil engineering, the architecture design and coding of software programing, and the planning and promotion of social engineering— every professional work that constitutes the modern society has its corresponding techniques and knack, its own “trick of trade” that an apprentice must learn by working together closely with his/her mentor, and differential level of talents and professional styles. It is those “new crafts” that support the technical bases of contemporary design of

product, architectural space, software and social mechanisms.

Take Gogoro as an example. The new-generation electric scooter launched in 2015 was built by incorporating Taiwan’s top-level technical crafts from mobile communication, energy storage, motor and power system, precision machining, aerospace, and many other industries. The electric scooter has won multiple design awards including the Beazley Design of the Year Award from London’s Design Museum, 2018 Japan Good Design Award and so on. Gogoro’s founder, Horace Luke (陸學森) once said that 99% percent of Gogoro’s machine components are sourced from Taiwanese vendors; he credited his success in building Gogoro to Taiwan’s “world-class advantages” in technology, supply chain and products.

Taiwanese design in architecture and space has also won numerous international awards in recent years.“The biggest advantage in Taiwan’s spatial design is humanism”, observed Professor Kung Shu-Chang of the Institute of Architecture, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU). “But the excellent skills of Taiwan’s interior finish crews also play a part”. Taking woodworking and metalworking as examples, Kung credited the inheritance of traditional folk crafts. Also, “the construction crews and designers work closely together, learn from and inspire one another. The skills of the crew also allow the designers to perform their best”.

Finally, the rapid emergence of Taiwan’s civil tech community attracted international attention in the past few years. Many major tech companies, including Google, Amazon, Apple, and HP, also established design research centers in Taiwan. Both trends reflect the abundance of skilled talents in hardware and software engineering Taiwan has cultivated after investing in information and communication technologies for decades.

SERVICE DESIGN:
HUMAN ORIENTATION

With the service industry becoming a major part of the economic structure, the target of commercial design has also extended from the materials, functions and technological R&D of “products”, to the holistic situations the customers experience in the process of consuming “services”

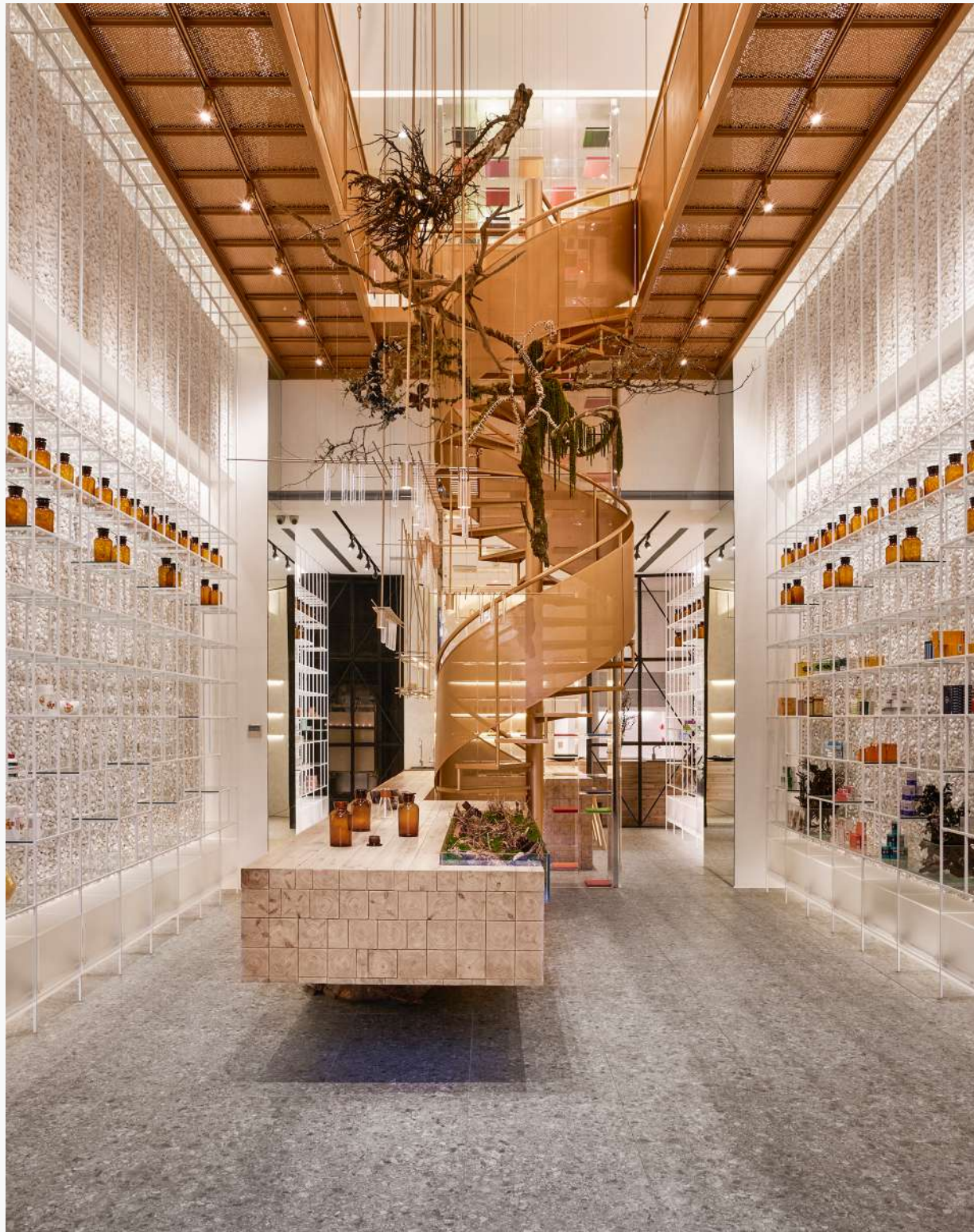
The idea of “service design” was first discussed by Lynn Shostack in his 1984 *Harvard Business Review* article “Designing Services that Deliver” In *Total Design* published in 1991, Gillian and Bill Hollins provided a fuller elaboration on the design management of the service industry. In the same year, Michael Erlhoff and Birgit Mager from the Technische Hochschule Köln (TH Köln-University of Applied Sciences) listed “service design” as a topic for teaching and research in the school’s newly launched design course.

In the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of service design spilled over from academia to industry. Live|work, established in the United Kingdom in 2001, became the first service design company in the world. One year later, American design company IDEO also established a service design department. In 2004, the Service Design Network was founded and connected hundreds of firms, schools and research institutions.

Compared to “products” that are concrete and tangible, stable in appearance, separable for consumption from their production, possessable, and easily quantified, “services” are relatively intangible, variable, consumable while they are being “produced”, experienceable but non-preservable, and with the focus paid on its unquantifiable quality.

Because of these contrasts, products and services tend to be discussed separately in traditional economics. But a clear trend of contemporary industrial development is the emergence of many





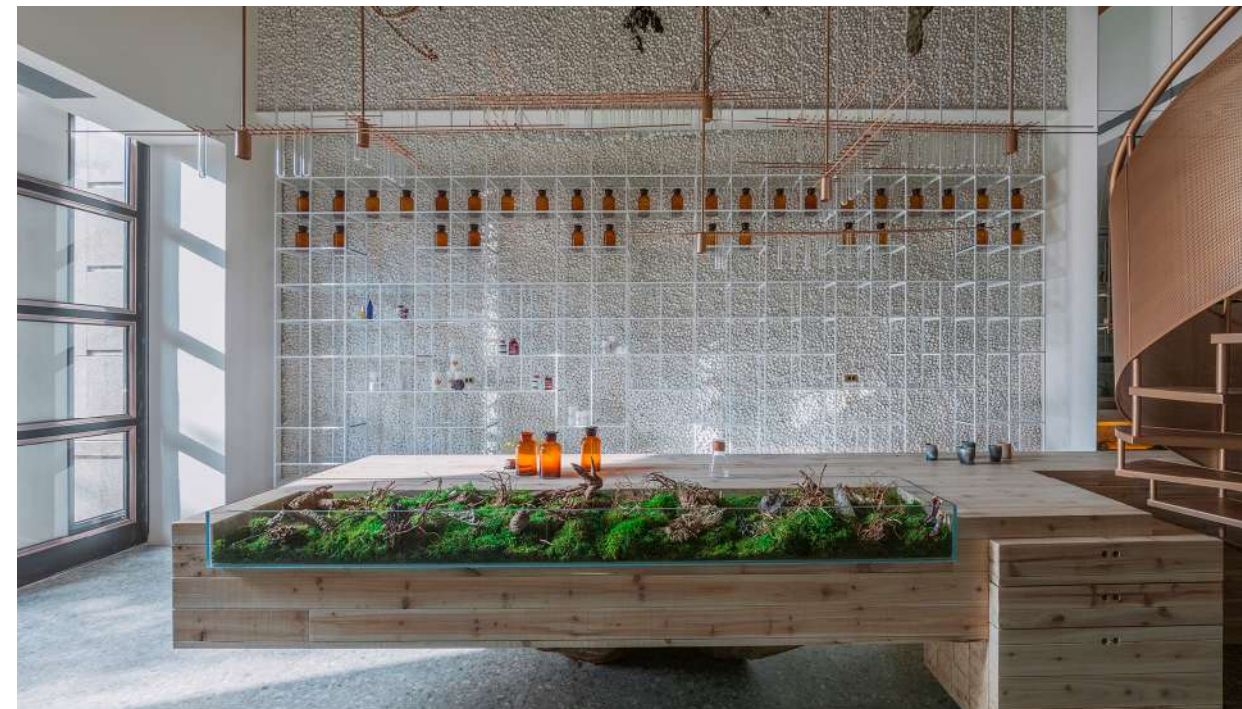
↑ Molecure Pharmacy / Waterfrom Design Co.Ltd

products that incorporate services, or services that require specific products. With the blooming of various "product-service system" business models, the boundary between the two concepts is getting blurred.

An important key of moving from product design to service design is to be more human-oriented. The designers have to start from the human feeling and experiences and design for every node at the service timeline. Therefore, the observational and analytical skills developed in psychology, sociology, anthropology and science and technology studies (STS), as well as the research methods like participant observation, focus group, interview, questionnaire survey, etc., have become new crafts in the development of service design.

Having these said, it must be admitted that the attention paid on "human" has always existed in the history of design. There have been several keywords trending for this in different periods of time—including "human factor engineering" in the 1960s, user interface (UI) and user-centered design in the 1980s, and user experience (UX) in the mid-1990s.

Marketing professionals from the advertisement companies and other industries have neither stopped looking for ways to better profile their target customers, like using planning tools such as Persona or writing all kinds of scenario scripts. The contemporary development of big



↑ Molecure Pharmacy / Waterfrom Design Co.Ltd

data and its integrated application has become an even more powerful probe for investigating consumer preferences and behaviors.

Based on these foundations, modern service design methods not only value human-orientation and the cooperation with various stakeholders, but also emphasize the quantitative assessment of quality, repeated experiments for adjustment, and the designer's control of each node of the service process. In the end, it represents the conviction of paying attention to every aspect of the holistic experience.

TAIWAN'S SERVICE DESIGN WAVE

The service design has attracted a surging wave of attention in various industries of Taiwan in the past decade.

Kevin Yang (楊振甫), the CEO of 5% Design Action and CEO of Dream-Vok Design, co-authored the book *Service Design Tools and Methods* with Joyce Huang (黃則佳) as early as 2011. In the past 10 years, Yang has also participated in over hundreds of service design consultation cases. "There are two trends behind this wave of service design sweeping industries in Taiwan. One is the 'servitization' of the manufacturing industry, and the other is the digital upgrading of the service industry." Yang added that "the support from Taiwan's leading firms provides important momentum."

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC), for instance, launched "virtual fab" more than two decades ago to provide IC design clients better services, which manifest the penetration of "service thinking" into the forefront of Taiwan's manufacturing sector and create an exemplar for the "servitization of the manufacturing industry".

The cases of "service upgrade through digitalization" are even more visible across different industries. The four major convenience stores chains in Taiwan, for instance, have all invested great efforts incorporating online data to provide various OMO (online merge offline) services for ticketing, payments, pre-ordering, printing, etc. They all employ social media campaigns extensively for marketing, and rely on the geo-bigdata of sales for opening new branches and deploying the logistic network.

The real estate agents, too, upgraded the property search service on their website with VR viewing, 3D modeling, and the information of the actual sale price registration of the same community, continuously optimizing the buyers' experience. Major hotels and restaurants already see online booking of rooms or seats as a standard, while some

restaurants also encourage customers to order meals and drinks through tablets or even your own mobile phone. Larger-scale hospitals also provide mobile apps that help patients to check their medical record and manage their appointments.

Some latest trends of service design further reflect the divergent aspirations of people in contemporary society.

Surprise Lab, for instance, overturn the traditional dining experiences through designing new modes of dining—including "table for ONE" pop up event, which proclaimed to allow customers to "use one meal time to enjoy one's own good time"; "Dining in the Dark" (無光晚餐), which reshapes customers' sensory experiences of food through dining in darkness; and "The Great Topsy" (微醺大飯店), which, without a fixed address or signboard, aims to create an eccentric dining experience by combining elements of restaurant, performance, cocktail and food design. The team employs the design strategies of "ceremonial opening", "emotional map" and "peak-end rule" to build an immersive experience, allowing participants to open up their senses and experience surprises.

Play Design Hotel (玩味旅舍), in responding to the contemporary travelers' aspiration for "personalized aesthetic experience", lets customers with advance reservations mix and match the design furniture in their hotel room to construct their ideal living style. The design lamps, tables, chairs, dining ware and toiletries, etc. open for selection are not just room furnishings, but also products that customers can buy. Through physical-virtual integration, Play Design Hotel not just provides more customized experiences of stay, but also makes the room a curatorial platform for Taiwanese design, helping to "build the positive circle of the design ecosystem".

Molecule Pharmacy subverted the traditional business model for pharmacies, using "lab" as the main theme of interior design and redefin-

ing the sales of medicines with a large island platform. The new spatial design establishes a two-way interactive mode of communication between pharmacists and customers. The feeling of healthiness, comfort, and fluidity it creates breaks the stereotype impression that equates "medicine" with "disease," and initiates a positive idea of paying better attention to our body.

PHYSICAL-VIRTUAL INTEGRATION

Design reflects trends of life; the most important design trend in digital time is the "physical-virtual integration" that merges online and offline.

The integration occurs at multiple layers. First, at the layer of "marketing", the investment on social media fan pages for major brands and the integration of physical channel promotion with online campaigns has become standard strategies.

Second, at the layer level of "services", the various cases discussed above manifested that the merge of online and offline services already occurred in retailing, real estate broking, catering and medical care. Even some physical products now offer the option of "online customization." Now you can order custom made T-shirts, accessories, flower art or even oil paintings online in Taiwan.

Finally, at the most tangible level of "product" level, there are many high-end products that come with embedded components of online service, such as:

Gogoro, the electric scooter manufacturer not only sells a new type of vehicles, but also constructs an urban energy network and an intelligent system to utilize it for powering the city transportation. Gogoro's exclusive app allows users to easily access the geographical information of its battery swapping stations "GoStation", last parking location, and the riding and maintenance record. The app also allows riders to check the status of the vehicle, adjust setting and riding mode through



↑ HYM DUO



↑ iDrip Smart Drip Coffee Maker



↑ HYM Seed



↑ YAMAHA EC-05

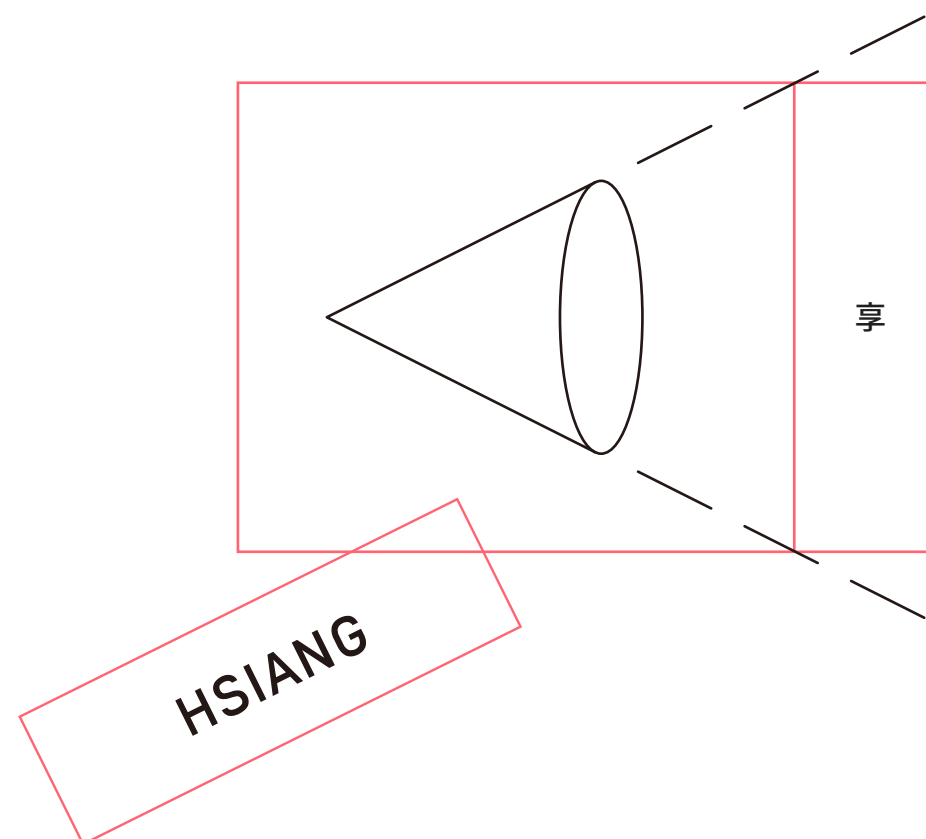
bluetooth connection via their mobile phone. The Yamaha EC-05, which won the 2019 Golden Pin Design Award, shares the battery swapping system Gogoro constructed and developed its own YAMAHA Life Ev app that also allows riders to control their motorcycle via cellphone.

iDrip, the smart coffee machine awarded the 2019 Golden Pin Design Award, can simulate the hand movement and timing of the world's barista champions to reproduce the taste of a champion's coffee. iDrip also developed its own app that allows its users to monitor the status of the coffee machine, browse the barista champions' background information, leave comments on different coffees in the users' online community, keep informed of relevant coffee stories while enjoying a cup of it, and place an order online its dedicated coffee bags.

Hym, a stereo speaker brand compatible for playing both vinyl records and online stream music, had won the Golden Pin Awards in 2018 and 2019 with the retro-style model Hym Seed and the modern-style Hym Duo. It also collaborated with Universal and Sony to establish an OMO vinyl music system, which can create tailor-made music and design exclusive singer combinations for broadcasting in spaces such as bookstores, hotels, and restaurants. This all-in-one service has received enthusiastic responses on crowdfunding platforms such as zeczec and Kickstarter.

With the future development of 5G and internet of things (IoT) technology, the embedding of online services in designing physical products will surely be a significant trend, which in term has the potential to rewrite the possibilities for service and marketing design.

Crossover Integration of Design





Curating as Method: Communication and Sharing

Stepping into the theme pavilion of 2017 Creative Expo Taiwan “Cultural Explosion”(我們在文化裡爆炸), one is immediately greeted by the long strips of white fiber paper hanging from the ceiling, creating a sight of undulating light and shadow as air flows through the venue. However, the all-white color palette of the pavilion was hit with mockeries and criticisms saying that the pavilion resembled a “funeral hall” after the expo’s opening.

Surprisingly, the pavilion’s design was later awarded the Best of Golden Pin Design Award 2017 in Taiwan, the Good Design Best 100 in Japan, and the Red Dot Best of the Best 2018 in Germany. The media coined the term “funeral hall aesthetics” in their coverage about the sharp contrast of responses to the exhibition design.

“There can be different perspectives in seeing white color,” said the exhibition’s curator Wang Yao-Pang (王耀邦) in a media interview. “I don’t consider ‘funeral hall aesthetics’ to have a negative connotation. I am neither upset that my own work evokes such imagery in the public’s eye.” Wang believes that only when people connect the form and content of the exhibition with their everyday life code can we open the space for discussion and dialogue—for example, to ask “do funeral halls have to be disquieting or unaesthetic?”

The attempts to invite “dialogue” can actually be seen throughout the exhibition space of Cultural Explosion. The “introduction area” showed videos of one-on-one conversations between six pairs of cultural professionals to bring out intergenerational views on culture. In the “issue area”, five sectional curators were invited to raise questions, elicit memories, and invite feelings and reflections on one of the following cultural themes—airport signage systems, Taiwanese gro-



cery stores, lunch boxes, traditional industries, and calisthenics dance. The “select items area” featured a series of objects such as metal clips, piggy banks, ink pads, electric fans, and other daily necessities in Taiwan, sketching the cultural configuration of Taiwanese people’s life. Every section of the exhibition guides the visitors to return to their everyday lives and contemplate the meaning of culture.

In the end, curating is a series of dialogue invitations.

A HISTORY OF CURATING IN TAIWAN

The concept of “curating” was introduced to Taiwan in the 1990s after the abolishment of martial law. The book *Contemporary Art Curating in Taiwan 1992–2012* named the 1992 exhibition *Dis/Continuity: Religion, Shamanism, and Nature* curated by Huang Hai-ming (黃海鳴) as the start of art curating in Taiwan. The 1998 “International Chinese Art Curator Conference” and, in the same year, the curating training workshop by Fumio Nanjo (南條史生), the Japanese curator invited to curate the 1998 Taipei Biennial, were regarded as two other key incidents that consolidated the roles of “(art) curator” in Taiwan.

Art curators sift through art creations to look for connections and create context; they wield discourse as sword, raise questions to our time, select artworks as draft answers, and use various media resources and marketing channels to elicit conversation and reflection. However, the art exhibitions are still targeted at an audience consisting of cultural and social elites mainly; its penetration to the general public is still limited.

A milestone that brought curating closer to the general public was the Taiwan Design Expo launched in 2003. The expo was organized by the Industrial Development Bureau, Ministry of Economic Affairs, and commissioned to the then newly-founded Taiwan Design Center for execution. The expo adopted the curating system and from the beginning, granting the first expo the theme “*Design and Life*” to introduce the idea of design and promote design products to the public. In the following years, the expo has been held annually in different parts of Taiwan, demonstrating the design capability of Taiwanese industries with different curating themes like “*Food Aesthetics*, *New Home in Asia*, *Elegant Living*, and *Go Dream, Go Design!*” The local governments of the hosting cities also seized the chance to promote local industries and culture.

While the Taiwan Design Expo focused on industries and brands, the Taiwan Designers’ Week (台灣設計師週) organized since 2007 by Taiwan Designer’s Web concentrated on the statement of designers. The first Taiwan Designers’ Week, simply themed “*Let’s Talk*”, featured seven joint exhibitions, two design forums, and the open house events of nine design studios, greatly enriching the dialogues between designers and society.

The year 2007 was also a critical year for curated exhibitions to bear more role on communicating public issues, which opened up a new axis for design exhibitions. In that year, the newly founded City Yeast (都市酵母) organized a series of exhibitions themed *City Park*, *Green City*, *Freeman*, and *City Workers’ Library* that evoke our imagination for urban environments and human conditions. Also founded in 2007, the Jut Foundation for Arts & Architecture (忠泰建築文化藝術基金會) launched the exhibition series “*Museum of Tomorrow*” that encouraged visitors to reflect on housing, ideal living and consumerism.

The two axes of design exhibitions, namely “the promotion and showcase of design capability” and the “communication of public issues,” gradually converged. The 2012 “Taipei Design & City Exhibition,” for instance, saw the combination of both. The exhibition included a section “*Taipei Design Seed*” that demonstrated the design capacity of Taipei city and two other sections themed “*Social Design*” and “*Design Taipei*” that elicited public dialogue about the city design.

We have seen in many major exhibitions how Taiwanese designers have become more proficient with integrated design exhibitions to elicit discussion and reflection on public issues—for instance the interpretation of what is “culture” in the main pavilion of the 2017 Creative Expo Taiwan, the representation of Taiwanese history in the 2017 Summer Universiade opening ceremony, the advocacy for ecological sustainability of the 2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition, the depiction of Taiwan’s oceanic imagery at the 2018 Taiwan Lantern Festival in Pingtung, and the reflection on bodily experience in the 2018 Creative Expo.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND “CURATING POWER”

2007 was also a year when social media were spreading to the globe and restructuring interpersonal connections at an accelerating pace. Every spectator trying to understand the world was forced to develop his or her cognitive strategies to filter the indefinite flow of information flooding on online platforms. Also, most social media users had to put thought into editing their digital representation through selecting photos, writing posts, and showing off their valuable connections. In other words, the advent of social media facilitated the generalization of a sort of “curating mindset.”

On the other hand, social media helped connect the people who share similar interests or care about the same cause, form communities, and create new opportunities for collective action. Within just a few years, a wide range of social organizations emerged—including new media, nonprofit organizations, startup teams or advocacy networks that formulated around different issues or values.

This wave of multiple social forces arising in the era of social media gradually converged to facilitate the emergence of several novel platforms for public knowledge. Since the founding of TEDxTaipei by Jason Hsu (許毓仁) in 2009, numerous local TEDx teams sprouted across Taiwan and became a vibrant channel for communicating new ideas in society.

The PanSci (泛科學) founded in 2011 also evolved from a website portal for promoting scientific knowledge to the public to a multi-themed network of media platforms; the company further organized the knowledge-sharing event Pan Knowledge Festival (泛知識節) and the educational institution PanSchool (泛科學院). The News Lens (TNL, 關鍵評論網) founded in 2013, after the acquisition of numerous new media brands, also become an new media group particularly influential among younger generations.

Also surfing around 2013, the open source community g0v (台灣零時政府, named to mimic the “gov” for government websites) community facilitated the interdisciplinary collaboration between technicians, designers, social activist, and media workers, and it soon grown to be a prominent civil tech community in the world. The “Naughty Education Fest” held in 2015 was renamed “ZA Share Expo” the next year, which, hailed to be “the largest alternative education exhibition in Asia,” soon became an important stage for a wider range of innovative forces beyond education.

The convening of TEDx conferences, the agenda-setting for g0v summit, the editorial selections for PanSci or TNL, and the preparation of ZA Share Expo all involve the “curating power” for selecting material and setting contexts.

In 2012, *The Age of Curation* by Toshinao Sasaki (佐佐木俊尚) was translated and published in Taiwan. Toshinao defined “curating” as a series of activities that includes “selecting information, providing context, creating scenarios, articulating ideas, reconfiguring values, and connecting and sharing.” He pointed out that in this age of information explosion, “curating” has become a core competence. No doubt he left an accurate footnote of this age.

CURATING: THREE LAYERS OF DIALOGUES

“Curating is the way that we make designs happen.”
——Wang Yao-Pang (王耀邦), Infromat Design Curating

“Curated exhibitions need to face the general public, so [the curator] must think how visitors perceive and comprehend. Curating is actually a process of translation that transforms complicated discourse into intuitively accessible and immersive experiences.”
——Ozzie Su (蘇仰志), Ozzie Curating and Design

As a communication strategy, curating involves dialogues at three layers:

The first, at the most abstract level, is the dialogues between a curated exhibition and the era it resides in. Wang Yao-Pang believes that there are three steps to exhibition curating. The first step is to define “where we are?”— This includes the clarification of the historical background, social context and general atmosphere the exhibition is about to address. Why do we organize this exhibition? What kind of dialogues do we want to engage in with society? Only when these fundamental questions are answered can we move to the second step and give the exhibition a definition or a symbol, and establish its topic and structure. Then comes the last step of deciding technically how we can use visual language, spatial design, objects, or dynamic images to represent.

For example, when curating for the 2017 Creative Expo Taiwan, Wang addressed the core question “what culture is” directly to fill in a

cultural discourse long missing from the previous sessions of Creative Expo Taiwan. For the 2018 Creative Expo, he took “*Body Knowledge*” (從身體創造) as the core theme and invited other participating curators to create sectional exhibitions such as “*Body Knowing*, *Body Imaging*, and *Body Making*,” so as to explore how the human body experiences can be internalized and become one’s knowledge and creativity. In the 2019 special exhibition *View Above Mountains* (見山) curated at the Chi Po-lin Museum (齊柏林空間), Wang expanded upon the *Body Knowing* exhibition’s focus on Taiwan’s mountains, forest and lands by using the aerial photos and film footages the late photographer Chi Po-lin left to guide visitors to re-experience the island we live on.

The second layer is the dialogue with the public. Exhibitions by default face the general public, so the curator must place “how visitors perceive and comprehend” at the core of the exhibition’s planning. Ozzie Su (蘇仰志), the founder of OzzieArt and the chief curator ZA Share, mentioned that many earlier exhibitions were just texts copied from books and printed on walls, which most visitors found hard to digest. So an important role of curator is a translator that can “transform complicated

discourse into intuitively accessible [messages] and immersive experiences.”

“Of course you need to know your target audience, for example the general public; you have to know how to let them comprehend more rapidly in the exhibition.” Wang elaborated with examples of how the space, lighting, and color scheme can be used to create an experience for the audience. For instance, “Huashan [Cultural and Creative Park] is a very noisy venue.

By using an all-black space and casting light from above, you can quickly calm down the entering visitors so they may appreciate the exhibits before their eyes.” Another example is a corner at the *View Above Mountains* exhibition, where he arranged for eight people to discuss an identical photo from their distinctive perspective (as mountaineer, scholar, or social critic, etc), challenging any possible preconception with the diverse narratives.

“Just like a movie, an exhibition has a script and outline. But an important aspect of the exhibition is: its text needs to be completed by the participants.” Wang reminded that the curation



BODY KNOWING [2018 CREATIVE EXPO TAIWAN / HUASHAN CULTURAL CONCEPT HALL] / InFormat Design ↑



design should leave a space for visitors to connect the dots.

The public dialogue of an exhibition may include the public inquiry in the process of curating. Tammy Liu, chief curator of *Daxidaxi* attributed their successful curating of this local expo to the efforts in delving into the local community, gaining the residents' trust, and collaborating with people of different opinions and stances for this event. Liu described this process as "largely political" and identified herself as a "bridge". Hardship and friction are inevitable during the process of curating research and communication, but once the bridge is done, everyone would have common ground to stand, designing together a more shareable and valuable future.

Lastly, at the most technical layer, the curating process of every exhibition involves extensive communication among the professionals of planning, visual design, spatial design, media and public relations and so on. Wang Yao-bang said, at the initial step of defining and interpreting the exhibition's theme, all participating teams need to meet together to have thorough communication on "what we are doing; who are our target audience, and from what angle are we approaching it?" And then for every step afterward, it's essential to ask the fundamental questions: "Do we convey the intended message by doing this? Is this message still consistent with the original definition we set?" This is a way to avoid falling into trivial disputes in the process of execution.

Larger-scale exhibitions or expositions would involve more communicative interfaces between the organizer, venue managers, licensors, the various internal and external teams and experts, and/or even local civic groups. Han Wu (吳漢中), design director of the 2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition, acknowledged that there are often quarrels between different designers, teams, and departments, but he believed "this is the most important step in the planning process."

As Wu pointed out, many choices were made not because who is right or wrong, but just a matter of priority-setting among different values. For example, the Taichung World Flora Exposition had a seemingly crazy design: a rice field inside an exhibition venue that allowed local elementary students to plant the seedlings on. In this case, what was prioritized was not whether the planted crops suit the environment, but whether local kids could get involved, allowing food and farming education to take root.

POST-CURATING STRATEGY

“We should move on to more substantial and concrete things after completing the curation of an exhibition...there should be a more rolling approach to the development.”

——Ozzie Su (蘇仰志), Ozzie Curating and Design

Curating has become a prominent strategy in recent years, attracting both the public and private sectors. A good exhibition restructures information to create a meaningful narrative, “giving visitors a sense of fulfillment when they leave,” said Wang Yao-bang. Wang also pointed out that a good exhibition not only encourages people to question their mindset, but also drives them to take actions or make changes afterward. Therefore, the “post-exhibition” legacies should be taken into account at the initial stage of curating, so we may conceive a “post-curating” strategy. “An exhibition is not just a single event. It can be seen as a system, and curating is the first step for integration.”

Professor Kung Shu-chang (龔書章) of the Institute of Architecture, NYCU and chief curator of the *Hsinchu 300 Expo* put more bluntly: “theoretically, we should move on to more substantial and concrete things after completing the curation of an exhibition.

If everyone keeps curating like this for five more years, this entire circle in Taiwan would be stagnant. It is extremely problematic that everyone is simply ‘overcooking’ the culture.” Kung urged that there should be a more “rolling approach” to the development of cultural exhibition curating: After the closure of a curated event, the government should take a step forward to transform some exhibited content into real world cases, which also grants the curators an opportunity to deliver some actual changes. As the curators step aside, the vacant position they left behind can encourage new talents.

Yet some exhibitions did have lasting legacies afterward. The Taiwan Design Expo, for instance, became a catalyst for urban regeneration and the forging of city identity in the hosting cities of Pingtung in 2019, Hsinchu in 2020, and Chiayi in 2021. Being hosted on a rotatory basis and expected to attract visitors, the Expo gives the municipal government of hosting cities a strong incentive to renovate the designated venues and other public space. The Expo itself often includes curated exhibitions about the hosting city, which not only serve as a showcase for visitors to discover the domestic charms, but also a mirror for local residents to rediscover their shared memories and pride.

Martin Yang (楊佳璋), creative director of Hwat’s Graphic Design (樺致形象設計), observed that “Taiwan has in its unique historical context

developed an urban landscape that is “hasty-done, temporary, and just approximately acceptable.” But with Taiwan’s growth in economic development and cultural literacy, the Taiwanese have gradually found the city’s ugliness unbearable.” Today, city-scale mega-events often become the opportunities for bringing design expertise to improve the aesthetics of civil engineering.

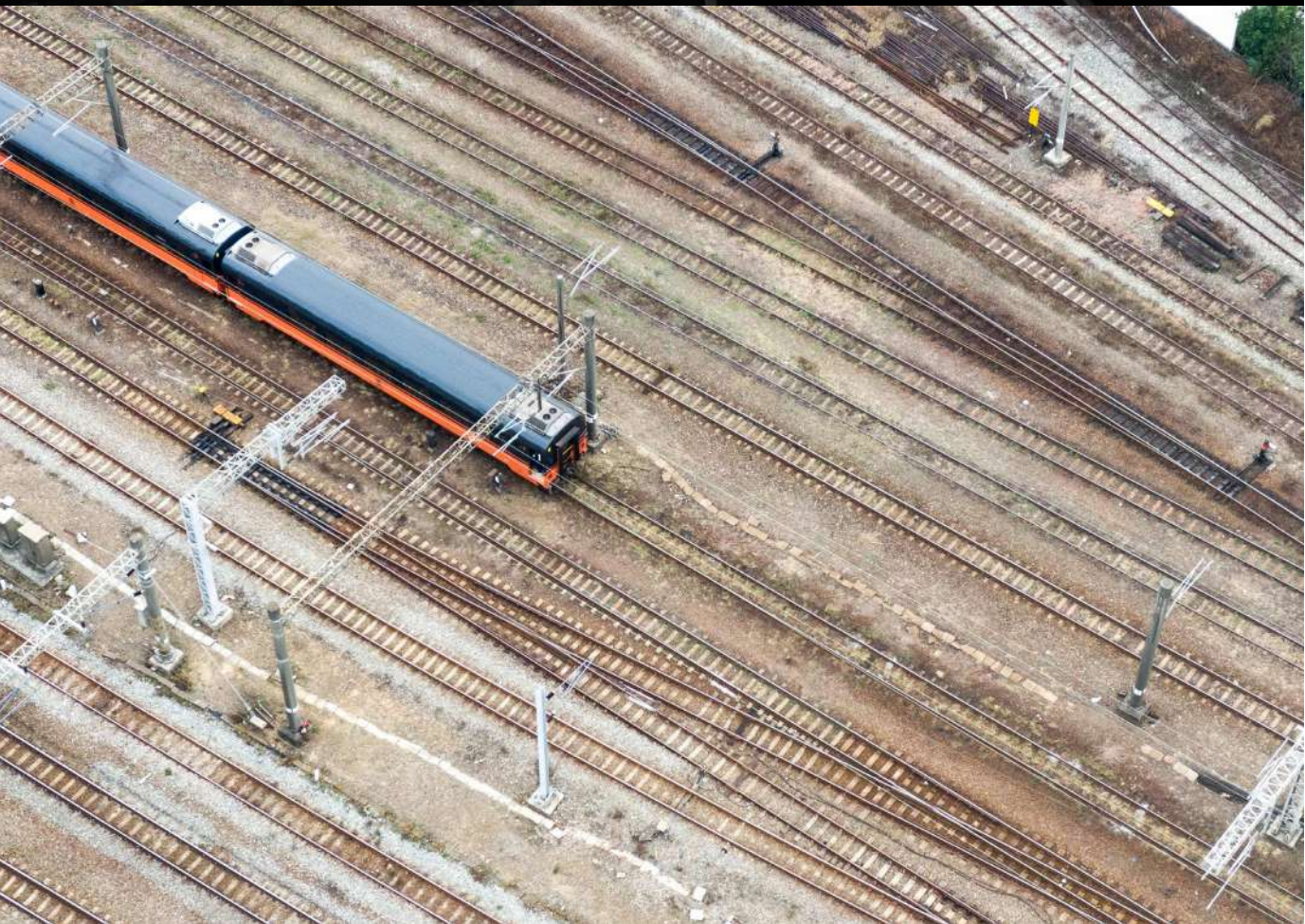
Apart from urban environments, curated exhibitions can also leave its legacies on knowledge ecosystems and social networks. Ozzie Su, for instance, mentioned that his initial motive to convene the “alternative education exhibition” *Naughty Education Fest* and the subsequent *ZA Share Expo* was to stir up a social movement to challenge the conventional education system. By curating interesting Expos, Su not only facilitated social communication, but also connected more change-makers to join the multi-facet movement of educational reform. Having accumulated years of curating experience, Su has further stepped into the field of educational startup incubation to guide his hand-picked teams to grow.

Han Wu, design director of the *Romantic Route 3 arts festival* (浪漫台三線藝術季), also mentioned that the curating team were “actively seeking experienced and energetic community organizations and young people from the local for collaboration” during the planning process. Obviously, those people have a better understanding of domestic issues and are more willing to strive for local development. But it is also hoped that such collaboration would help to empower local talents and leave a more lasting influence.

Wu also assisted Hsinchu City with the planning of the 2021 Taiwan Lantern Festival. “The lantern festival is only temporary”, he once said, explaining their true purpose is to “examine the city’s overall light environment in order to create a better urban culture.”



Wu stressed the importance of placing “publicness” at the center of curating, He concluded “the wonderful seeds that we planted will sprout at the right time.”



Institutional Design: Integration and Innovation

Talents cultivated through design education are well-suited to the area of public affairs. This is because designers can clearly communicate their ideas and visions, and possess the executive capability to garner resources and build consensus.

— Chang Chi-Yi (張基義), President of TDRI

“Let MIT (made in Taiwan) be upgraded to DIT,” proclaimed the President Tsai Ing-Wen of ROC (Taiwan) at the 2019 National Design Congress. Soon after, the seventeen-year old Taiwan Design Center was officially upgraded to Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI). The two events indicated that design has become a strategic area for boosting the next stage development of Taiwan.

What needs to be “designed”? The earlier discussion of “design” was primarily targeted on “products” and then “services,” and the primary purpose was to enhance their aesthetics and functions, in order to improve market sales and economic productivity. But in the past decade, the target of design has been expanded to almost every aspect of human civilization, such as the texture of urban space, quality of public services, platform for social dialogue, social welfare and security mechanisms, institutions of government operation, and the circularity of industrial resources, etc.

The values design aims to achieve have also been expanded, moving beyond the commercially-oriented aesthetics and functionalities, to include many social and sustainable values such as the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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As the scope of design expands, the interdisciplinary integration of design will become more critical. The innovative product Gogoro, for instance, involves technologies and professional know-hows in the fields of mobile communication, electronic motor, energy storage and material science. The transportation vehicle (e.g. train and shuttle bus) redesign also involves pro-

fessional expertises in vehicle body construction, material science, visual design, signage system design, interior finishing and so on. Let alone the design of city space, social mechanism, policy or just a curated event, which all involve the communication and integration among multiple social sectors.

Every crossover step made in the process of design needs to overcome the existing barrier of conventional division of labor and institutional inertia. The integration of divergent design visions and the successful delivery of good design relies on the designers' knowledge, skill, vision and insights, but it sometimes also depends on the institutional environment of the design ecosystem in Taiwan.

"The most challenging breakthrough is: how to redesign the institution to bring about design breakthroughs?" stated Han Wu, design director of the 2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition. He asserted that "only institutional changes can lead to the changes of design."

How can we encourage the interdisciplinary integration of design through institutional redesign? This chapter sought to answer the question from three aspects: design talent education, design policy in the public sector, and institutional environment and policy design.

DESIGN TALENT:
EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER FLOW

A designers' vision frames the scale of design. Institutionally, there are two critical factors for cultivating design talents to have interdisciplinary visions: first, the design of design education, and second, the career paths for professional development.

Taiwan now hosts 500+ design-related degree or certificate programs, producing 17,000 graduates every year. These design schools have many faculty members or students winning major design awards like Red Dot, iF or Golden Pin every year, which manifest their professional capabilities. However, many fresh graduates often found what they learned at school inadequate for coping with the contemporary design trend that demands both professional competence and cross-domain integration.

For instance, Wang Chia-hsiang of the REnato Lab observed that the design education in colleges in Taiwan lacks systemic courses about "circular economy." Hence most of the young designers aspiring to do circular design had to learn from the actual cases one at a time.

The report *Taiwan's Design Blueprint* (台灣設計未來藍圖) published by TDRI in 2020 compiled the expert opinions on design education and suggested, among other points, that the future design education needs "to place more emphasis on the fundamental courses of history and philosophy of design, while allowing more flexibility for taking transdisciplinary elective courses, in order to cultivate "T-shaped" design talent that has both "depth" in professional training and "breadth" in transdisciplinary knowledge.

"Yet interdisciplinarity is a strategy, not the goal," said Liou Shyh-Nan (劉世南), Director of Institute of Creative Industries Design, National Cheng Kung University. He reminded in the *Blueprint* preparatory workshop that "a department or an institute still

"Design is not everything; it's a sort of 'driving framework' that still needs technologies, cultures, issues, and social values. Design just provides an opportunity, a methodology for everyone to talk; it needs not be overly inflated."

——Prof. Liou Shyh-Nan (劉世南),
Director of Institute of Creative Industries Design, National Cheng Kung University

needs a disciplinary core." He also stressed: "Design is not everything; it's a sort of 'driving framework' that still needs technologies, cultures, issues, and social values. Design just provides an opportunity, a methodology for everyone to talk; it needs not be overly inflated."

One feature of design education is that many practical skills can only be learned by doing. Hence the action plan proposed in the *Blueprint* report specified the inclusion of interdisciplinary collaborative courses such as hackathons. Huang Shu-wei (黃書緯), assistant professor of National Taiwan University's D-School, using the "Borderless University" teaching project as an example, illustrated how to spark interdisciplinary thinking in the classroom with real-world problems. Taking urban issues as a focus, the project asks students to observe and analyze social phenomena, encourage them to work together to design a solution, and connect them to external industrial, governmental or other academic partners for potential transborder collaborations.

The in-class discussion of this course always reveals issues of a wide range of aspects. Take the Ubike (the bike-sharing service in Taipei) for example: a young mother hoped to install kid-chair on some Ubikes that would allow her to ride for grocery shopping while carrying a child; elderly users wished there were electric bikes for the ease of riding; some residents near the university campus were often annoyed by reckless students riders and hope there could be an automatic warning alarm; there were also discussions about "how to keep a safe distances between bikes and kids" as there were many parents strolling with toddlers in the campus.

The design education might be improved, but will the design students be able to find space for continued development after graduating? Professor Chen Dung-Sheng (陳東升) of the Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University pointed out that compared with the rapid expansion of design-related degree programs, the industrial sector was not able to create enough job vacancies to absorb all the graduates. The imbalance between supply and demand also suppressed the salary structure. "The most pressing challenge is to create a decent work environment."

Professor Kung Shu-Chang of Graduate Institute of Architecture, NYCU noted the different opportunity structures faced by different generations of designers. “When we came back to Taiwan, we were immediately given important responsibilities in the society, such as teaching positions in the universities. Our generation took a lot of resources. The next generation is actually quite disadvantaged since our generation took most of it.”

Chen Dung-Sheng believes, for a better talent circulation, public institutions such as TDRI should brake away from the traditional bureaucratic structure and play the role of an “liquid organization”, which remains open to all stakeholders and adopt a horizontal, task-oriented, inter-departmental and cross-sectoral participatory mode of collaboration. Only when the institutional design keeps positions open for talent flow could we expose those talented people to different training continuously, as well as to bring their insight and creativity to every corner of the organization.

Kung Shu-chang, using another metaphor, claimed that the design circle should enhance its mechanism of “metabolism”— the public sector projects should aimed to create more space for young designers to try their talents, while the senior, more experienced designers should explore new and better stages. He explained: “The method for recruiting talent should be fluid and rotating. Instead of having everyone compete in the same place, we need to push those who have already been given opportunities to try to move to other experimental fields.”

The talent flow enables crossing-over, revealing visions of integration.

DESIGN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Another institutional force driving the cross-domain integration of design is the “ design implementation in public sector” policy promoted by some government agencies in recent years. The industrial investment in design in Taiwan has long been constrained by the specialized product lines of individual firms; there is rarely any larger-scale, multi-domain project of design. Consequently, the government must play a leading role in driving the cross-domain integration of design.

The Summer Universiade in 2017, the Taichung World Flora Exposition and the Taiwan Lantern Festival in Pingtung in 2018, and the Creative Expo Taiwan and Taiwan Design Expo in recent years have all facilitated the communication and integration across many professional domains. Take the installation art *The Sound of Blooming* created by Luxury Logico, a focal attraction of the 2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition, as an example; it successfully integrated the technologies in truss system, motorized canvas, light art, sound system, and environmental monitoring, and facilitated collaboration and exchanges across the wide range of professional expertises that demonstrated the competence of the precision manufacturing industry in central Taiwan.

The planning for the Forest Park Area where the artwork was installed also brought about a cross-domain collaboration between landscape architect Wu Shu-yuan (吳書原) and National



↑ *The Sound of Blooming / Luxury Logi Co.*

Museum of Natural Science researchers Yen Shin-fu (嚴新富) and Hu Wei-Hsin (胡維新) , who recreated the diverse floras at the different altitudes of Taiwan’s mountainous are within the 15.18-hectare Forest Park Area.

In addition to the curated mega events, the various public services provided by the government have further rooms for design implementation. The renowned designer Aaron Nieh (聶永真) once pointed out that “the public sector has many connections to people’s lives. But when you walk in a district office, you won’t find any well-thought-out signage system. Compared to private institutions such as banks or travel agencies that have invested in brand construction, the perceptual gap is quite obvious.” Therefore, if the public sector can take the initiative to integrate design into the various aspects of life—such as visual identification, signage system, spatial planning, service design, etc.— there would be effective and obvious improvement in Taiwan’s quality of life.



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—— Aaron Nieh (聶永真)





In 2020, TDRI also carried out a study of “innovating public sector with design” based on six critical cases—including Taitung Design Center’s urban and rural landscapes redesign, Hsinchu City’s renovation of urban spaces in recent years, the “TRA (Taiwan Rail Authority) Aesthetic Renaissance” (台鐵美學復興) project and the new “Taipei-to-Hualien Shuttle Bus” led by Ministry of Transportation and Communication (MOTC), the “Design Movement on Campus” (學美・美學) Project jointly implemented by the Ministry of Education and TDRI, and the “Public Digital Innovation Space (PDIS 公共數位創新空間)” project headed by “Digital Minister” Audrey Tang (唐鳳).

To give an example, the Hsinchu City Government has resolutely carried out the renovation of several urban spaces in recent years—including the redesign of the space around the Hsinchu Train Station, the renovation of Hsinchu Park and Hsinchu Zoo, the remediation of the Hsinchu Moat and the nearby walking space and green belt, the reopening of the Shinchiku Prefecture Library which had been deserted for 36 years, and the renovation and opening of the historical buildings “SJ House, Da-tung 108, and Image Museum”.

The series of widely acclaimed urban space renovation projects was driven by the weekly Monday “Major Construction Meeting” headed by Hsinchu City mayor Lin Chih-Chien. The meeting brought together

the various bureaus heads of the municipal government and external design consultants and effectively facilitated inter-office and cross-domain communication and integration. The renovated and reopened cultural venues have further contributed to the flourishing of local cultural and creative groups in Hsinchu.

At the central ministerial level, the TRA Aesthetic Renaissance project of the MOTC is also worth discussion.

The initiative started with a public relation disaster. In February 2019, the TRA organized a press conference to introduce the newly renovated Formosa Express passenger tour carriages. The newly unveiled train, unexpectedly, attracted widespread criticism and mockery online and in the media, calling it an “unsurprising TRA aesthetic tragedy.” Frustrated, the TRA decided to organize an emergency “TRA aesthetic design consultancy and review panel” and “invited the most vehement critics to participate in its redesign.”

The panel formulated a new design strategy after intensive discussions with all parties involved, and commissioned the Taiwanese design firm J.C. Architecture (柏成設計) to take the challenge of the redesign project. The design team combines traditional elements with modern design concepts and takes a subtractive design approach to remove superfluous visual clutter. In December 2019, the redesigned passenger tour carriages were officially unveiled in the *Future-Renaissance* special exhibit TRA held in the main concourse of Taipei Main Station; it turned out to be a great success.

The redesigned Taipei-Hualien Shuttle Bus was another eye-catching case of public transportation design. This project saw the first inter-ministerial collaboration between the MOTC and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and was one of the pilot projects of the TDRI since its upgrading from TDC. The TDRI invited 247Visualart (日目視覺藝術) and U10 Design (大衍國際設計) to collaborate with shuttle



service operators, bus body builders, and automotive parts manufacturers to remodel eleven buses over a period of five months. Through its brand repositioning, the design team was able to get rid of the convention of painting bus with chaotic and meaningless colors, and chose light beige as the base color for incorporating the visual elements representing Hualien—the oceanic colors and the shape of pebbles at the Chihsingtan Beach (七星潭). Lastly, naming the new shuttle bus with *Huei-you* (回游, literally “traveling back”) signifies that this is not only a shuttle service for tourists, but also a homecoming way for Hualien people.

REDESIGN OF INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The aforementioned cases seem extraordinary in their own right. But Han Wu, the design director of the 2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition and a member of the TRA aesthetic panel, reminded that “for most people, these extraordinary cases are actually ‘anomalies’; they attracted attention exactly because of their abnormality.” Wu believes that the next step is to think about how to “normalize these anomalies.”

Chen Dung-Sheng further questioned whether those “design implementations” the public sector were zealous about, apart from changing the “outlook, hardware and aesthetics,” had actually cast any impact on the “deep-water problems”—such as the social and institutional structure, resource allocation, or problems of the bureaucratic system, etc “One must know the limitations for the effectiveness of implementing design, and what other professions and methodologies you still need to connect after mobilizing this mode [of strategy], so you can subsequently address the various complex problems in organization.”

In this respect, the PDIS project headed by “Digital Minister” Audrey Tang is especially worth noting.

The PDIS, as its full name suggests, was defined to be a “space” instead of a “office”. Tang explained that this represents PDIS “is not driven by individual will of one minister, but propelled by the synthesized will of all civil servants temporarily assigned to this project.”

The PDIS project maintains a stable number of roughly 20 participants, of which half are participation officers (POs) assigned from various Ex-



ecutive Yuan ministries, and the other half are external experts. Every summer vacation, additional 30 university interns interested in the optimization of public policies also join on a temporary basis.

The PDIS deals with two types of proposals: the first being the miscellaneous problems brought to the platform by the POs from different ministries; and the second being the proposals with 5000+ petitions submitted on the “Public Policy Online Participation Platform” (join.gov.tw) developed by National Development Council.

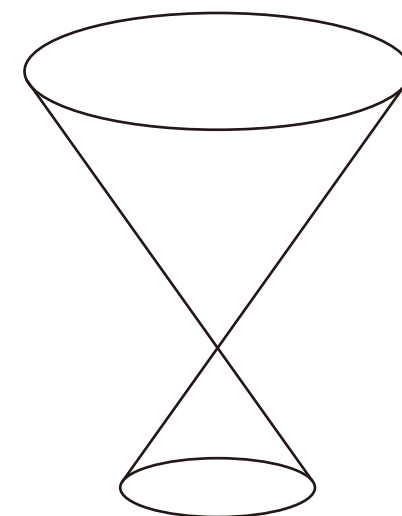
Notable cases that the PDIS dealt with include the optimization of the online tax filing system, the conflict resolution between anglers and fishermen, the development of an open platform for disclosing prices of agricultural products, a disaster prevention information system, and a one-stop mountaineering permit application system.

These cases usually involve coordinating across different ministries or offices, constructing digital interfaces, and redesigning conventional SOPs. PDIS represents an attempt to improve government operations by employing digital technologies and design methodologies.

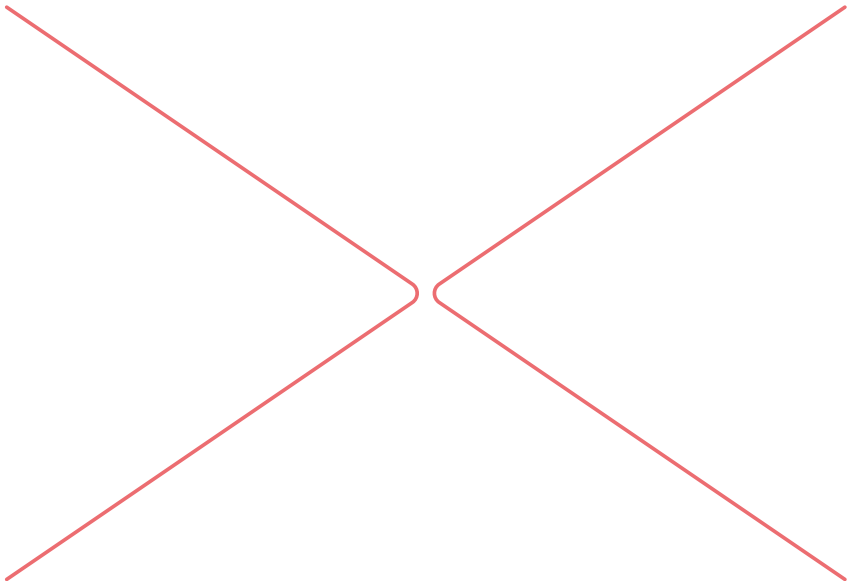
The *Taiwan’s Design Blueprint* report published by TDRI in 2020 adopt idea of “design ecosystem” developed by Anna Whicher, now head of Design Policy at PDR, Cardiff Metropolitan University, and designated eight analytic aspects according to the circumstances in Taiwan—design policy, design funding, design support, designers, design users, design education, design research, and design promotion. The TDRI organized a series of workshops in 2020, inviting experts from the public, private, academic, and institutional sectors to participate and provide comments on Taiwan’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in these eight aspects. The aim is to come up with adequate strategies and action plans.



The conceiving and compiling of that report can be seen as an attempt at the redesign of the design ecosystem using design methodologies, which manifested the amusing reflexivity of design circles. In a sense, the emergence of the *Blueprint* itself is a testimony of the omnipresence of design power in the contemporary world.



AFTERWORD



Conclusion

Toward an Era of "Designed in Taiwan"

Taiwan entered an era of surging design power in recent years.

Government-convened mega events like the Universiade, International Flora Exposition, Taiwan Lantern Festival, Creative Expo Taiwan, and Taiwan Design Expo all successfully facilitated cross-domain collaborations of design talents. The urban space redesign in Hsinchu, Keelung and Chiayi cities showcased the promising power of design in shaping our public life. So did various ministry-level flagship projects such as the “Design Movement on Campus,” “TRA Aesthetic Renaissance” and the redesigned “Taipei-Hualien Shuttle Bus”. There emerged more and more business owners who care about aesthetics and understand the value of design for corporate and product branding, and many schools started to offer an array of courses related to design thinking.

The establishment of Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI) in 2020 marked an important milestone for this trend. Whether TDRI can lead the society to adopt design thinking, influence national policies related to design, and facilitate the broader crossover integration of design will decide how the history of design unfolds.

Moreover, the Golden Pin Design Award organized by TDRI, which just celebrated its 40th anniversary, became the most critical platform for leading Taiwan’s design vision and defining the core values of “Designed in Taiwan”(DIT).

PERSPECTIVE:
A DISCOURSE
ABOUT DIT

The publication of *Perspective: Why DIT Matters* provides a chance to review Taiwan’s design trends and highlights, as well as to forecast its advantages and prospects.

The first two introductory chapters discussed the conceptual history of “design” and the strategic position of Taiwan to provide an outlook of DIT’s vision. The first chapter reviewed how the idea of “design” has been repeatedly reappropriated throughout history—from early graphic and craft design, product design of the industrial era, architectural and space design, UX/UI design, to rapidly-developing fields of integrated design, social design, service design, policy design, etc. The criteria for good designs also expanded gradually from “aesthetics, functionality, and economy” to including various sustainable development goals. The chapter advocated that, as a leading benchmark of DIT, the Golden Pin Design Award should actively reflect the changing “ideascape” about design in its solicitation and selections.

The second chapter took the broader perspective of the global design ecosystem to explore Taiwan’s advantages and strategic position. The chapter characterized four niche advantages that grants Taiwan the potential to become a “pivotal center of design in East Asia”— its location at the junction of four major “cultural plate” (Chinese, Japanese, Southeast Asia, and the West) in East Asia, its ecological diversity and environmental sensitivity, its solid strength in technologies and flexible industrial supply chain, and its vibrant democracy embedded in one of the most liberal and open society in Asia.

The rest seven chapters sketched the current state and prospect of design development in Taiwan based on the interview with 27 professionals and industrial leaders, along with a survey of the Golden Pin Design Award record. The chapters were organized along the three conceptual axes *Shan* (善), *Chuang* (創), *Hsiang* (享).

SHAN,
THE VALUE AND
VISION OF DESIGN

Shan (literally “good”) has long been juxtaposed with “truth” and “beauty” as three basic, transcendental values (i.e. principles that transcend specific situations) since the early Greek period. Of the three, “truth” became the criterion for logic and science; “goodness” the focus of ethics and some religious teaching; and “beauty” the pursuit of art and aesthetics.

Conventionally, designers focused primarily on “beauty”, with functionality and economic benefits considered too. To talk about “goodness” of design instantly establishes a distinctive conceptual dimension that expands the discussion about design’s value from functional aesthetics to ethical debate.

What is goodness? This is one of the most basic questions in philosophy. While the professional designers may not be good at philosophical and dialectical thinking, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promoted by the United Nations in 2015 came as a set of handy tools for design thinking. Any designer can easily employ UN SDGs as a checklist to reflect upon the ethical aspect of their works.

Three chapters in this book were dedicated to *Shan*, which took “social design”, “circular design” and “place-making” as keywords and explored how Taiwanese designers helped to address various social issues, to enhance environmental sustainability and to tackle the challenges of urban-rural developmental gaps.

The third chapter first traced the origin of “social design” in Taiwan back to its earliest academic discussion and actual practices, and explained why the rise of social design represented a value re-orientation of design “from consumerism back to the social well-being” and “from product-centric to humanistic”. It also surveyed the recent Golden Pin Design Award winner lists and identified representative works that demonstrated an awareness or care of certain social issues. The majority of these awarded works, however, still belonged to the category “product/space design with social awareness or social function”. Design of social institutions/mechanisms is still rare. The chapter further extended its discussion to include various social innovation projects that emerged in Taiwan recently, including the “Parks and Playground for Children and by Children” Alliance, “Teach for Taiwan”project, the civil-tech community “g0v”, and Sedai Zone Co. at Dadaocheng, etc. It is suggested that the social innovations of this sort should also be included in the Golden Pin’s horizon in the future.

The fourth chapter started with the unsustainability of the current economic production mode, including the excessive consumption of natural resources and various environmental costs neglected in the past. Proposed as a solution, the “circular design” initiative begins with the recycling and reuse of waste, and urges to take “low energy consumption, low waste and low environmental impact” into consideration at the initial stage of product design. Moreover, the value of circularity can be further integrated into the re-design of business models or the entire social system. From developing circular design products to constructing a circular economic system, the critical steps are the collecting and sharing of relevant information, the invention of innovative business models, and the making or modification of laws and regulations. There is still much room for future efforts.

The fifth chapter discussed the role of design in “place-making” as a way to alleviate the disproportionate concentration of economic activities in big cities brought by the capitalist system. Taiwan has implemented several waves of policies to bridge the urban-rural developmental gaps, including the “community development movement” in the 1990s, the promotion of “cultural creative industries” in the 2000s, and the recent buzz about “regional revitalization”. Sponsored by these policy initiatives, many design teams participated in the digging and compiling of local knowledge, building and promoting local brands, reshaping the cultural landscape and activities, and enlivening the local economy and the living circle. These efforts helped to shape the place’s identity and to attract the young generation to return home, as well as to promote local charms and to boost tourism.

CHUANG,
THE CRAFTSMANSHIP
AND DYNAMIC OF
DESIGN

Chuang, a word used in the Chinese phrases for creativity, creation, and innovation, is the core of designing. No matter how grandiose a vision is, its actualization still relies on the designers’ skills and creativity. The two chapters included in the *Chuang* section explore the creative dynamic of Taiwanese design through the vantage points of, first at the micro-scale, “the pursuits of designers,” and then at the macro-scale, “the industrial transition of Taiwan”.

Humanity is the basis of design. Design not just exists for humans, it also manifests the human agency. Hence the cultivation of designers, aside from the learning of professional skills such as drawing and modeling, must go back to the humanistic basis to sharpen the inherent human capacities for thinking and feeling.

The sixth chapter, based on the introspection of numerous Taiwanese designers, showed that they all took the profession of design due to some sort of aspiration to transcend their original life, and they all experienced certain struggles between ideals and reality on their career path.

On the other hand, they all witnessed how the ecological and cultural diversity of Taiwan provide a fertile soil for cultivating designer’s sensitivity, and how the vibrant and open civil society constantly elicits dialectical discussion about designers’ power and ethics and sparks new ideas for social innovation and design.

Design requires meaning and imagination, but it also needs to be carried out in our living world, employing various human technologies developed for manipulating the physical reality. Taiwan has the legacy of various exquisite hand-craftsmanship that deliver the beauty of many natural materials (i.e. wood, bamboo, bulrush, rocks, etc) available in Taiwan. Taiwan’s manufacturing sector also has acquired state-of-the-art technologies and expertise in processing and precision machining of many materials. Taiwan further hosts world-renowned technology industrial clusters. All the above-mentioned crafts and technology foundations serve as stages for Taiwanese designers to exert their talents, while the design-driven branding and industrial integration may provide a new wave of developmental power for these grounding crafts and technologies.

Following the industrial structural transition in Taiwan, the target of design has gradually extended from “object-centric” products to more abstract social mechanisms and processes. One emerging field is “service design”. In the fields of dining, shopping, living and moving, designers gradually shifted their focus from physical environment and object to the psychological experiences and behavior of people and the structural needs of the society. It is precisely at this point that the innovation of design must incorporate more insights from psychology and sociology, and more imaginations on the possibilities of life.

HSIANG,
THE CROSSOVER
INTEGRATION OF
DESIGN

Throughout history, the bursting out of many creative ideas came from the convergence of different thoughts, expertises, disciplines or cultures. The recent surge of the design power in Taiwan likewise began with a series of government-organized large-scale events, which facilitated the collaboration among designers with different expertises and achieved synergy. Meanwhile, the founding of TDRI was intended to provide a critical catalyst for uncovering and converging a wider variety of talents hidden in different corners of Taiwan’s industries and society, in order to generate more creative power of design.

This brings us to the theme of the last section— *hsiang*, a word used in Chinese phrases for “sharing” and “enjoyment”. This section explores how the Taiwanese society’s conviction of “sharing” helped to break the communication barriers between different domains and expertises, between the public and private institutions, and even between different cultures, so that the design power can become a more powerful facilitator of social improvement.

The first keyword for cross-boundary communication in Taiwan is “curating,” a buzzword in the design circle in the past decade. The eighth chapter first sketched a brief history of curating in Taiwan and explained why “curating power” has become critical in the era of social media. It also discussed mega curated-events as “invitations to a series of dialogues” —which include dialogue and collaboration between different expertises during the process of curating, the public dialogue stimulated by the events, and at a more abstract level, the dialogue the curating discourse attempt to engage with the *zeitgeist*.

This chapter further extended its discussion to the “post-curating” stage, exploring how these curated events can leave a more lasting influence on Taiwanese society and culture. On one hand, curating casts its influence not just through the curated events; sometimes more importantly, the process of curating itself leaves the legacies of empowering designers, facilitating cross-domain communication, and establishing collaborative networks among participating professionals. On the other hand, many ideas from the “curating discourse” last beyond the short-term curated events and become integrated in the reshaping of mid/long-term cultural landscapes.

Except curating, more institutional reform is required to deepen cross-domain integration. For instance, more interdisciplinary, practice-oriented projects must be introduced into education curriculum to enhance the capacity of cultivating transdisciplinary design talents; also, many institutional regulations should be redesigned to allow more flexibility and to facilitate the flow of talents and ideas. The biggest challenge to meet is the gap between the “outcome-oriented” professional design circle and the “procedure correctness-oriented” government. Some recent design projects of public space and services at both the municipal and ministerial levels are of methodological significance for this regard.

At the last, whether in a cross-domain design project or in the collaboration between government and professional designers, “crossover communication” always means more than just putting the representatives of all parties together. The key lies in whether the convenor of such a project can really align the languages of all participating parties, clarify the stances underlying their logics, and help to interpret and keep focus on important issues. Also, whether the participants can listen patiently, accumulate trust in each other, and construct a shared imagination together is also critical to the success of such a project.

TAIWAN DESIGN AND
HUMAN CIVILIZATION

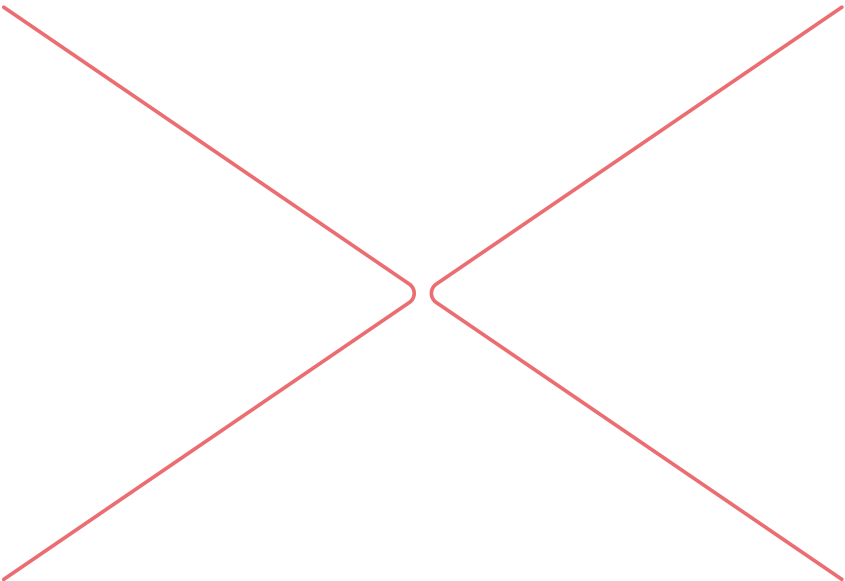
In 2013, Anthony Dunne (Royal College of Art, London) and Fiona Raby (University of Applied Arts, Vienna) published *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming*. The authors continued their past advocacy of “critical design”and argued: design is not just applicable to making objects, but is also relevant to the creation of concepts; and designers do not just solve problems, but also raise questions to the world. They believed that designers should stretch their imagination to envision all possible futures, and design for the preferable forecast. For this, design must have pluralism “not of style, but of ideology and value.

The Chinese edition of the book was published in Taiwan in 2019 and sparked some discussion. However, a quick review of Taiwanese design showed that there have already been ample idealism-guided, value-oriented design cases in the past, and their influence continues even today.

Taiwanese designs demonstrated an impressive variety of elements and a wide range of attitudes, many of which showed the characteristic of cultural hybridity. This reflected the location of Taiwan at the junction of four major East Asian cultural plates. The second chapter of this book discussed the prospect of Taiwan design and pointed out its four advantages: location as a cultural pivot in East Asia, island ecosystem, technology industries, and a free and open society. The following chapters discussed values and visions (*Shan*), creative dynamics (*Chuang*), and cross-domain integration (*Hsiang*) of Taiwanese design, and we repeatedly observed how the aforementioned four advantages intertwined and shaped the contour of design in Taiwan:

Taiwan’s culturally diverse, free, and open society, plus a sensitive ecosystem, have bred a variety of design initiatives aimed to address social issues, to enhance ecological sustainability, and to alleviate urban-rural developmental gaps. The legacies of traditional craftsmanship, the strengths in technological industries, the stimulating collisions between different cultures, as well as the dynamic society all become fertile soil nurturing the creativity of Taiwanese designers. The recent surge of curated events, dialogues, and a series of institutional reforms further facilitated the sharing of ideas, expertises and resources, creating a momentum of cross-domain integration of design. All together granted Taiwanese designers the vision and capacities to bridge the neighboring cultures and beyond, for the common good of mankind.

This is the opportunity where Design in Taiwan (DIT) may, and is obligated to, make a contribution to human civilization.



Insight providers

In order of reference	
Chen Dung-Sheng	Professor of Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University
Agua Chou *	Founder of Agua Design
Han Wu	Co-founder of Career for Change
Wang Yao-Pang	Director of InFormat Design Curating
Justin Yu	Co-founder of Plan b
Kung Shu-Chang	Professor of the Institute of Architecture National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University curator of Hsinchu 300 Expo
Huang Shu-Wei	Contract assistant professor at the National Taiwan University D-School
Jackie Wang	Founder of REnato Lab
Arthur Huang *	Founder of Miniwiz
Hsieh Jung-Ya	Chairman and founder of GIXIA Group
Tammy Liu	Head designer of BIAS Architects & Associates, curator of DaxiDaxi
Yang Chia-chang *	Creative director of The Hwat's Graphic, director of BISDA
Takeshi Lin	CEO of HAYASHI Office
Yu Chih-Wei *	Founder of JOIN Cultural Integration, founding director of DTTA
Chan Wei-Hsiung	Founder of BusinessNext
Hsiao Yu-Chih	Professor of Department of Architecture, Shih Chien University
Chang Kuang-Min	Chief consultant of TDRI
Lo Yu-Fen	Creative director of Pinyen Creative
Oliver Lin *	Vice president of TDRI
Wei Wan-li #	Professor of Department of Product Design, Ming Chuan University
Liou Shuenn-ren #	Professor of Department of Architecture, National Cheng Kung University
Fan Chen-Hao	Assistant professor of Department of Crafts and Design, National Taiwan University of Arts
Erik Chu *	General manager of Grand Vision Co., Ltd.
Kevin Yang *	CEO of 5% Design Action, CEO of DreamVok Design
Ozzie Su *	Founder of Ozzie Curating and Design
Liu Shyh-nan #	Head of Institute of Creative Industries Design, National Cheng Kung University
Audrey Tang #	Minister of State of the Executive Yuan

Physical interview or Phone interview * / Data from other TDRI projects #

AWARD
INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1981 in Taiwan, the Golden Pin Design Award is an authoritative and influential professional design award in the global Huaren market, for which the planning and handling of the awards, the award ceremony, and all other related events are currently organized by Taiwan Design Research Institute (TDRI). Since 2014, the Golden Pin Design Award has begun to move towards the new positioning of “the most prestigious design award in the global Huaren market” in order to become the leading voice for the Huaren design industry. Since 2015, three major awards, the “Golden Pin Design Award”, the “Golden Pin Concept Design Award”, and the “Young Pin Design Award” have been established to target different demographics for the purpose of commending outstanding innovative product designs and works.

By providing professional recognition, Golden Pin Design Award hopes to encourage businesses to invest in product design and R&D to increase the added value of brands through the power of design. At the same time, the Award provides consumers and the market with the certification of high-quality design, thereby enhancing the public’s awareness of design value and design aesthetics and creating a better quality of life together with the people.

HISTORY OF
THE GOLDEN PIN
DESIGN AWARD

GOOD PRODUCT SELECTION SYSTEM ¹ **1981-2001**
Established a system to reward outstanding product designs with the goal of promoting a nation-wide emphasis on “good product design”.

GOOD DESIGN PRODUCT EVALUATION SYSTEM ² **2002-2008**
The original annual “selection” of excellent products was restructured into on-demand “evaluation” carried out throughout the year, resulting in the establishment of the “good design product evaluation system (GD-Mark)”.

TAIWAN DESIGN AWARD ³ **2005-2008**
To recognize Taiwan’s excellent design products and commend outstanding designer talents, the first “Taiwan Design Award” was held in 2005. All of those who were granted the right to use the GD-Mark were eligible to apply.



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GOLDEN PIN DESIGN AWARD **2009-2013**



The “National Design Award” underwent a renaming process, with the new name chosen through means such as public selection by popular vote, expert discussions, and gathering opinions from all walks of life. In the end, the name was officially changed to “Golden Pin Design Award” in line with the major directions of simplicity, ease of understanding, memorability, and internationalization.

GOLDEN PIN DESIGN AWARD **2014-PRESENT**



In line with the new positioning of “Golden Pin Design, the design honor of the Huaren world”, the Award promoted high-quality design products and commended the outstanding performances of designers and businesses to display to the global market the contributions and influences of Huaren design.

GOLDEN PIN CONCEPT DESIGN AWARD **2015**
YOUNG PIN DESIGN AWARD LOGO

Established three major awards, the “Golden Pin Design Award”, the “Golden Pin Concept Design Award”, and the “Young Pin Design Award”, to target different demographics.

SPECIAL ANNUAL AWARD LOGO **2016**

Taipei was selected as the 2016 World Design Capital (WDC), becoming the design capital of the Huaren world for the first time, and also built a forward-looking city with a design vision under the theme “constantly improving cities”. In accordance with its new designation as WDC, the Golden Pin Design Award adopted the WDC’s philosophy of “building a better society through design” to establish the first Golden Pin Award Special Annual Award for Social Design.

2018

The Golden Pin Design Award began to expand its definition of “design” with each passing year; for instance, social design was added into the Award’s range of selection, elevating the level of design from a user-centered orientation to the very interrelationships between people that led to the construction of society. The 2018 award ceremony based on the theme “Nature Knows” used the sub-topic “Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?” to attempt to probe the questions of what is the essence of design, and how humans and the environment can coexist. In the same year, the “Golden Pin Design Award Special Annual Award for Green Design” was awarded.

2019

In extension of the environmental sustainability ideals put forth by “Nature Knows”, The Award used the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals as its focus in hopes of inspiring a positive sense of vocation in designers. In the same year, the “Golden Pin Design Award Special Annual Award for Circular Design” was awarded.

2020

The 2020 Golden Pin Design award ceremony used “2020” as its theme to symbolize how although the sudden COVID-19 pandemic brought many impacts and challenges, it also allowed people to break away from the norm and rethink the meaning of life. Through this theme, the Award hoped to encourage designers and businesses to work together to explore more sustainable development paths for the future. In addition, the special award “Golden Pin Design Award Honorary Award” was awarded to commend those who are representative of the Taiwanese design industry, those with outstanding achievements, and those with special contributions in the industry, with the special award ultimately going to Tony K.M. Chang (張光民), the current World Design Organization (WDO) regional consultant.

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