AIGA GEO/GRAPHICS, EDITORIAL
ANNE BUSH AND STUART MCKEE, FEBRUARY 14, 2014

A boundary is not that at which something stops, but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing. – Martin Heidegger

Designers are 'geographic beings.' We are concerned with objects, messages and ideas, and their relationship in space, whether material or virtual. We recognize the importance of borders as well as their limits and acknowledge that they exist only when people find them to be meaningful. This contingent aspect of borders is complicated by their paradoxical identity. Every border is at once an extent and a threshold; it simultaneously activates the space that it defines and the area that lies beyond it. On a global scale such liminal zones are varied and numerous. Transnational rather than international, they are relational and dynamic spaces that resist the familiar identifications and investments that are defined exclusively through nationality. Although some thinkers conceive of transnational spaces as neutral and transcendent regions, where economic capital, political power and cultural ideologies flow unrestricted, such spaces are increasingly understood to be reflexive, provisional and plural zones that comprise a wide global network where goods and knowledge are not merely transferred, but analysed, questioned and transformed in the act of encounter.

This special issue of Iridescent considers design and design education through the varied contexts of this transnational terrain. The authors included within this special issue first conceived of their papers as presentations for the conference Geographics: Design, Education and the Transnational Terrain that took place at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa in December of 2012. That conference examined the ways in which contemporary designers dispel the notion of locations as discrete entities that, in ancient times, could be distinguished typologically – and in modern times, distanced politically – from their neighbours and conquering nations. The design disciplines have become increasingly fluid, and today's designers, their concepts and their practices connect distant regions of the world with unprecedented constancy and complexity. The Geographics conference featured 78 design professors, authors and practitioners working from 15 countries who presented papers within thematic strands titled "Projects," "Ideas" and "Institutions," allowing some to share examples of projects and programs that they had implemented within transnational contexts, while allowing others to present theoretical positions about what it has meant, historically or in the present, to design within such contexts. Many of the presenters analysed the design process as a strategy for surmounting geographic or cultural obstacles, while for some the activity of boundary crossing itself, whether professionally or recreationally, provided them with experiences that later invigorated their design practices.

Central to the convictions that speakers presented throughout the conference was the belief, gained through experience, that communities unfamiliar with one another can share design information, resources and sensibilities across divides. The variety of entities described included study-abroad programs, indigenous peoples, multinational corporations and international expositions. Some of the exchanges were tangible encounters while others were printed or virtual; some designers presented provisional research, some presented finished projects, and others pondered indefinite conclusions. The conference revealed that a conceptual structure, a manner of working or a teaching practice that has functioned successfully for one designer and his or her recipient community might not translate lucidly for others. Yet that designer's insights may still offer value as a methodology for designing across difficult boundaries within untried contexts. Once any designer begins to settle into a transient or cooperative working experience, be it across regions, cultures, or identity groups, she may also find herself countering forces of ideological or political difference. It is the examination of the objects, messages, or ideas that transpired through a process that positioned collaboration and integration against constraints of opposition that distinguishes the four papers that we have selected for publication within this volume.

Ariyuki Kondo describes the life and contributions of the design historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner by demonstrating the facility with which Pevsner encountered and crossed cultural barriers throughout his life and within his writing, despite the difficulties of doing so as a German-born Jew during the 1930s. Within the article 'Pevsner on Graphic Design: Transnationality and the Historiography of Design,' Kondo conceives of Pevsner's scholarship as a product of his unique transnational influences, and recognizes Pevsner as a historian who accordingly developed his most influential work outside of the European Modernist mainstream. Kondo reveals the complex ways in which Pevsner's own movement across Europe's pre-war political boundaries, and his ability to distance himself from patriotic affiliations, paradoxically reinforced his recognition of the national sensibility, or 'Englishness,' that characterized English art and design.

If the international students arriving in Oaxaca, Mexico to attend Raul Cabra's Oax-i-fornia studio-abroad program were not conversant in Spanish, they would need to explore creative ways of exchanging knowledge across language boundaries upon being paired with local artisans as collaborators and housemates. The cooperative working relationships that Cabra presents in 'Oax-i-fornia: Generative Intersections and the Design of Craft' reveal that transnational ways of making have been continuously evolving within a tradition of cultural exchanges that Cabra calls 'generative intersections.' These intersections not only allowed the students and their hosts to craft innovative objects together; they also transformed their understanding of travel, material culture and the creative process.

When Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl travelled overseas to begin teaching Masters-level design students at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, she found herself working against cultural constraints that she did not experience when teaching Chinese expatriates at institutions within the United States. In 'Hubris, Humility & Confucius,' Poggenpohl describes the ways in which her engagement with the Western theories of hybridity and the habitus and a deep reading of the philosophies of Confucius enabled her to teach beyond the familiar behaviours that have dominated within many Western classrooms since the time of the European Enlightenment.

Nicholas Zimmermann examines the diverse group of multinational investors and architects who have been partnering with Shanghai's urban leaders to reinvent the city's Pudong District skyline. As Zimmermann develops in 'Better City, Better Kitsch: Marketing Faux-Modernity in Contemporary Shanghai,' these collaborators have been striving to represent the city as a global centre of affluence and innovation but rather have designed their buildings to duplicate an early-Modern futurist sensibility that denies local cultural difference. Zimmermann reveals that these transnational affiliations have failed the city because they ignore the possibility of an aesthetic that would allow the municipality's residents to confront Shanghai's timely and potentially oppressive realities.

In offering these samples of transnational collaboration in design, our goal has not been to present a comprehensive overview of such collaboration or to suggest that the contributors assembled have articulated the only ways to approach the subject. As recent research on globalization has shown and the conference itself has demonstrated, the transnational context of design is, at best, complex and often contradictory terrain. What we do hope to achieve with this special issue of Iridescent is to showcase the expanding geography of design education and practice and encourage thinking about how and why design crosses borders as well as the opportunities and problems that such transit inherently presents.

We are grateful to the institutions and people who helped to bring the conference and this special issue of Iridescent to life. Support from the AIGA and Adobe Systems was fundamental to the conference as were the unflagging efforts of our colleagues on the conference committee: Chae Ho Lee, Lucille Tenazas and Karen Zimmerman. We also thank everyone who participated in the conference. Although a fuller documentation of the rich debates that took place over the three days of the event was impossible in the limited space of this issue, we hope that many will recognize aspects of their conversations in the sampling provided here. We are profoundly grateful to Raul Cabra, Ariyuki Kondo, Sharon Poggenpohl and Nicholas Zimmermann for developing their papers into essays for this special issue. We thank Teal Triggs for offering Iridescent as a space to disseminate these essays and Jovana Milovic for keeping us on track.

OAX-I-FORNIA: GENERATIVE INTERSECTIONS AND THE DESIGN OF CRAFT

RAUL CABRA, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

ABSTRACT

Oax-i-fornia is an interdisciplinary academic project that, since 2005, has brought design and art students together with artisans in Oaxaca, Mexico. The project's goal has been to create a transnational collaborative space fuelled by the notion of play as a generative force, allowing the collaborators to produce meaningful cross-cultural connections not commonly associated with brief encounters between visitors and locals. The project has been based upon the concept that craft, and tradition itself, are in constant evolution through historical interventions called "generative intersections", and that tourism also functions as an important experience within studio-abroad programs. The outcomes of the project have been measured by the quality of the shared experience, and the ways in which that experience has changed notions of difference among the participants, rather than solely through the objects resulting from the collaborations. Today, Oax-i-fornia proposes a model for transnational design education in which the collaborators' culture and language differences become not obstacles but rather catalysts for the creative process. These differences push participants to forge common ground through the act and language of "making to–gether," a physical and emotional process that bridges differences and awakens a kindred spirit shared by all makers.

Key Words: play, craft, design, Oaxaca

FULL PAPER

Imagining Oax-i-fornia

In the summer of 2005, my partner and co-teacher Michael Sledge and I embarked on an adventure that would drastically change the course of our lives. We had settled on spending three months in the city of Oaxaca in southern Mexico, where I had proposed a multidisciplinary summer design studio through the California College of the Arts (CCA) in San Francisco. We rented our house, packed up the car, and, accompanied by our dog Walter, took off for a momentous drive from California to Oaxaca.

I believed that Oaxaca would be a perfect site for this endeavour because of its strong craft production. The course was planned to be a simple creative exchange between artists, designers and artisans, where knowledge could be shared within a beautiful setting. I originally imagined the experience as a compact experi–ment in making that might yield interesting objects as a result. I also hoped that the course would, in some way, continue the ideals of my own design practice, having spent

15 years consid–ering design as a tool for social impact and cultural interaction.

At the time, I did not foresee the complexity held within this seemingly simple proposition. Personally, the project created a new path for my own understanding of transnational collaborations and their connection to tourism, design education, and locality. Yet I did not imagine that the project would become a model for collaborative projects in Mexico and abroad, which it did, as indicated by Oax-i-fornia's inclusion in the upcoming show at the Museum of Art and Design in New York, New Territories: Design, Craft and Art from Latin America, 2000-2013. Nor did I imagine that it would forge strong local partnerships that would improve the livelihoods of over 45 artisan families throughout the state, as it also did.

This paper introduces Oax-i-fornia as a collaborative project that, today, is based upon almost nine years of hands-on experience, a theoretical framework that takes advantage of the creative opportunities implicit in travel, and a keen observation of the ways in which collaboration can create a hybrid space for interaction, especially within a culturally complex place such as the state of Oaxaca.

I have now conducted the Oax-i-fornia project almost every summer since 2005, and the project is currently expanding to include a number of different academic Institutions. It has become my operating principle to constantly revise and reinvent the program based upon recent experiences, defining a dynamic approach to both teaching and to the design of the course strategy. Looking back on field notes, results, and most importantly, the feedback from participants, I added new exercises, lectures and procedures while altering or discarding old ones to help me understand the best way to design an encouraging, respectful, and enjoyable creative environment. Through my later studies within a MA in Design Program at the University of California Berkeley, I also brought theories pertaining to cultural anthropology, popular education, tourism studies and design into the course. One important result was my understanding of the ways in which a studio abroad program became connected to everyday tourism, and my realization that this connection can be a fruitful lens for understanding the significance of the academic experience for students and teachers working within a transnational setting.

The notion of traveling, especially to foreign places, can be tightly bound to the traveller's creative impulse. The ethnologist Orvar Löfgren has pointed out that the tourist feels a profound need to document his or her travel experiences, in response to a social pressure that demands the creation of personal interpretations of the places visited and the documentation of an experience that becomes "one's own" (Löfgren, 1999). Yet Löfgren adds that this experience must be framed within a unique and personal perspective that cannot be acquired through premade documents such as postcards, travel albums or travel books. What seems to be prized and rewarded most, according to Löfgren, is not the experience of travel itself, but rather the personal, custom-made interpretation of the travel experience, which in turn operates as a social marker of the taste and individual identity of the maker. Viewed from

this perspective, traveling becomes an opportunity for creative output, its frame limited only by the abilities of the traveller to meditate his or her experience through those technologies of representation that are within reach, and in concert with his or her own past experiences, professional background, and life history.

This creative aspect of travel is a potentially attractive one for the professor of any studio-abroad program within art and design education, as it presents a ready-made opportunity to channel the students' more familiar creative output into a unique learning experience. It is important for me to distinguish between a study-abroad program, within which the student sees and experiences the difference of foreign–ness and culture, and a studio-abroad program, within which the student actively and creatively contributes to the local culture. Each of these options presents, in their design, very different ways of structuring interaction within the destination, and provides unique points of entry for students to engage both their own knowledge and that offered by the host country. From this perspective, it becomes impossible to disassociate the tourist from the art and design student; the student's academic training constantly encourages critical thinking and the search for meaning in one's surroundings, as well as the critical expression of one's personal views of life and, in this case in particular, difference.

For me, the studio abroad program becomes the favoured alternative, as it becomes an opportunity to shift the students' creative energy away from individual and personal expressions and to redirect it toward the Oax-i-fornia model, a collaborative and transnational learning experience that benefits both the foreign hosts and the students who visit them.

Guiding concepts for Oax-i-fornia

Two other operating frameworks, working in unison, have also guided the conceptual premise for the development of Oax-i-fornia—the dynamic character of tradition and the effects of what I call "generative intersections". First is the idea that, within the world of material production, traditional forms of making are neither static nor fixed propositions, but hold at their core the notion of change. Tradition, when viewed from this perspective, becomes adaptable and evolu–tionary because it must keep pace with new and ever-changing contexts. In an attempt to insure the survival of their tradition, a given society adapts or abandons its techniques to match the needs, likes and dislikes of new gen-erations (Shils,1981).

It is this openness to change that creates fertile ground for a society's active engagement with the second theory, one that I call "generative intersections." These intersections are historical moments in which conditions become optimal for changes to take place in traditional forms of making. One instance of such an intersection was that created soon after the Conquest of Mexico through the Spanish commercial routes between Asia and Europe. Every year, starting in 1565, the ship known as "La Nao de China," or the Manila galleon, would arrive from Asia in the port of Acapulco. The arrival of this ship, loaded with 1,100 ton cargo of the richest, most sophisticated Asian goods, radically changed the panorama of material culture in Mexico. Before being transported

overland to the Atlantic coast, and from there to Cadiz or Seville, the luxury objects and textiles were shown in a two-month fair held in Acapulco. Here, artisans and makers from all over Mexico encountered for the first time a multitude of exquisite objects of Asian tradition and manufacture, and could even meet with the makers themselves who on occasion travelled the route (Almazin, 1971).

This contact turned out to be greatly generative, as it forever influenced Mexican material culture, including craft, food and dress. Japanese lacquer technique was adopted and ingeniously applied to the ornamentation of gourds, transforming them from utilitarian vessels into objects of luxury. Likewise, the "rebozo"—the quintessentially Mexican scarf worn today by many indigenous women—is actually thought to be a hybrid of the Spanish Manton de Manila, the Indian sari, and the sun cloth worn by Mexica women at the time of Cortez's arrival in the Aztec capitol Tenochtitlan. In this way, traditions changed through a point of intersection, giving way to hybrid or novel objects that embodied a new moment in time. Oax-i-fornia seeks to harness a similar creative encounter between two cultures and approaches to making in order to encourage new hybridities of form. Oax-i-fornia also seeks a more egalitarian distribution of creative power, moving beyond appropriation of artisanal technique and forming an actual collaboration between artisan and student.

Oax-i-fornia is firmly grounded in a concept of the hybrid as a space of creative force, a dynamic and lively domain in which differences and oppositions can be negotiated—even if not resolved— through the making of something new. The anthropologist Nestor Garcia Canclini envisions the formation of the hybrid as a deeply creative act, a form of making that is able to entertain a multiplicity of origins within a single suspended space by creating new connections between them. For Garcia Canclini, fusion is the placid melding of disparate traits, whereas hybridization implies a dynamic of inclusion and rejection, an active struggle between entities that culminates in the emergence of a new and power–ful identity (Garcia Canclini, 1995:XXV).

In the context of Oax-i-fornia, this hybridization takes place through both the participants' creative process and the objects that they produce. The members of each group of participants integrate their potentially conflicting realities—that of the visitor/student and the local/artisan—into a collaborative space with the common goal of creating something new, a culturally synthetic partnership. The disparities between the two groups become apparent as visual tensions within the objects that they create, with the objects oscillating between the two groups' different ways of understanding making, design, and by extension, the interaction itself.

As an example, the motivation of an artisan to exploit natural resources for his own survival and that of his craft becomes a crusade for ecology and conservation for that artisan's working partner, as their collaboration engenders strategies that stem from personal principles, but harmoniously coexist to create a unified solution. This became evident in the wooden "asemblijes", a set of puzzle-like toys (Figure 1) for which the participants re-utilized broken pieces and discarded bits of the wood from traditional carvings. The trees that produced this wood are now endangered, and the recycling solution therefore highlighted

conservation as well as showcased the ingenuity and creativity of the traditional artisan carver. In another example, a silk cocoon family of necklaces (Figure 2), the tension between the aesthetic merits of decoration versus the modernist appeal of minimalism found a balance in the creation of natural or referential forms within a frame of abstract structures.

Figure 1: Asemblijes

Figure 2: Silk cocoon necklace

For a successful, integrated collaboration to take place it is essential that there be a common link and mutual interest between the participants. This has made Oaxaca an ideal place to locate the studio because of the many artisans who live and work there. For the purposes of this project, the English term "craft" refers to what the locals call trabajo artesanal: those utilitarian objects that have been and continue to be produced by hand locally, using local materials, and fol–lowing traditional techniques that hold strong historical and social links to the communities that pro–duce them. The governing notion here is that of the "handmade," a way of producing objects that—regardless of their

aesthetic accomplishments—are charged with deep emotive qualities for both makers and re–ceivers because they make evident the history that informs the process of their creation. Oaxaca, known as the state with the greatest bio-diversity in the country and one of the greatest in the world, also has an extensive ethnic diversity, resulting in a very lively, varied and strong production of high-quality hand-made objects.

Figure 3: Oaxaca's history and diversity
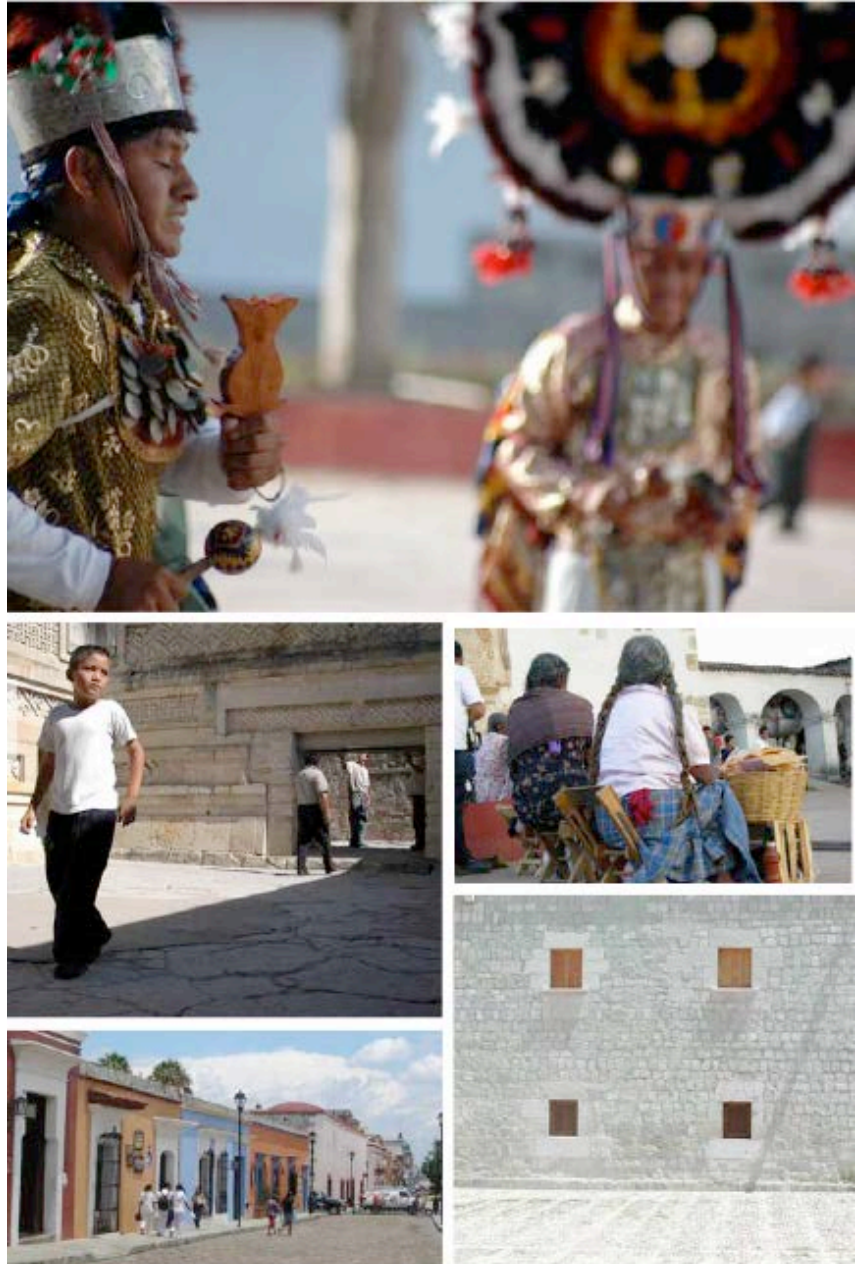
Oaxaca becomes fertile ground for creating transnational dialogues centered around the production of new forms that could fit well within the contemporary global marketplace. Viewed from this perspective, the Oax-i-fornia creative exchange is certainly not unique, as it is one of many collaborative academic or professional efforts taking place around the world today that support transnational relationships as part

of a production process. One example, the Los Angeles-based design company Artecnica's Design with Conscience collection, brings together well-known designers and artisans to produce contemporary objects for international sale (Artecnica, 2013). Another group, Aid to Artisans, a non-profit organization based in Washington DC, supports many similar projects that result in great returns for the organization and its makers (Aid to Artisans, 2013). These interventions, like many others, are taking place in the developing world, where a perceived need has risen for the use of design as a vehicle to reinvigorate craft. Yet there is a compelling difference between Oax-i-fornia and many of these projects. It is a program goal to create an egalitarian experience in which all of the collaborators share benefits, though at times these benefits may differ. Also, the production of an object is not the ultimate goal in this collaboration but rather a memory of the experience itself. Our project does not set up a strict designer-producer relationship in which the designers "design" and the artisans "make," with contact mediated through messengers and intermediaries, because such a process brings about an unequal distribution of power and knowledge. Instead, Oax-i-fornia seeks to establish a shared space of interac–tion that provides practical and theoretical knowledge to all participants, who, with goals established collaboratively, can actively determine the rate and nature of their own learning.

The studio

Oax-i-fornia brings together between twelve and sixteen students from a partner school in the United States, two local art students, and five local artisan families each year. The students range in discipline and can come from graduate or under–graduate programs. Each student must sub–mit a portfolio in advance and go through an interview and selection process. We select new artisans each year, who we interview and provide with an orientation before the final selection takes place. The artisans are compensated for their time, and they are given ownership of the pieces that emerge as a result, provided that they also give credit to the students who collaborated with them. The administration and support team includes myself as the project director and head instructor; Michael Sledge, a writer who oversees a creative writing workshop; an an–thropologist; and a facilities support staff. Each member of this team is fully bilingual and participates in all aspects of the process as needed.

Figure 4: Ex Hacienda de Guadalupe, the project site
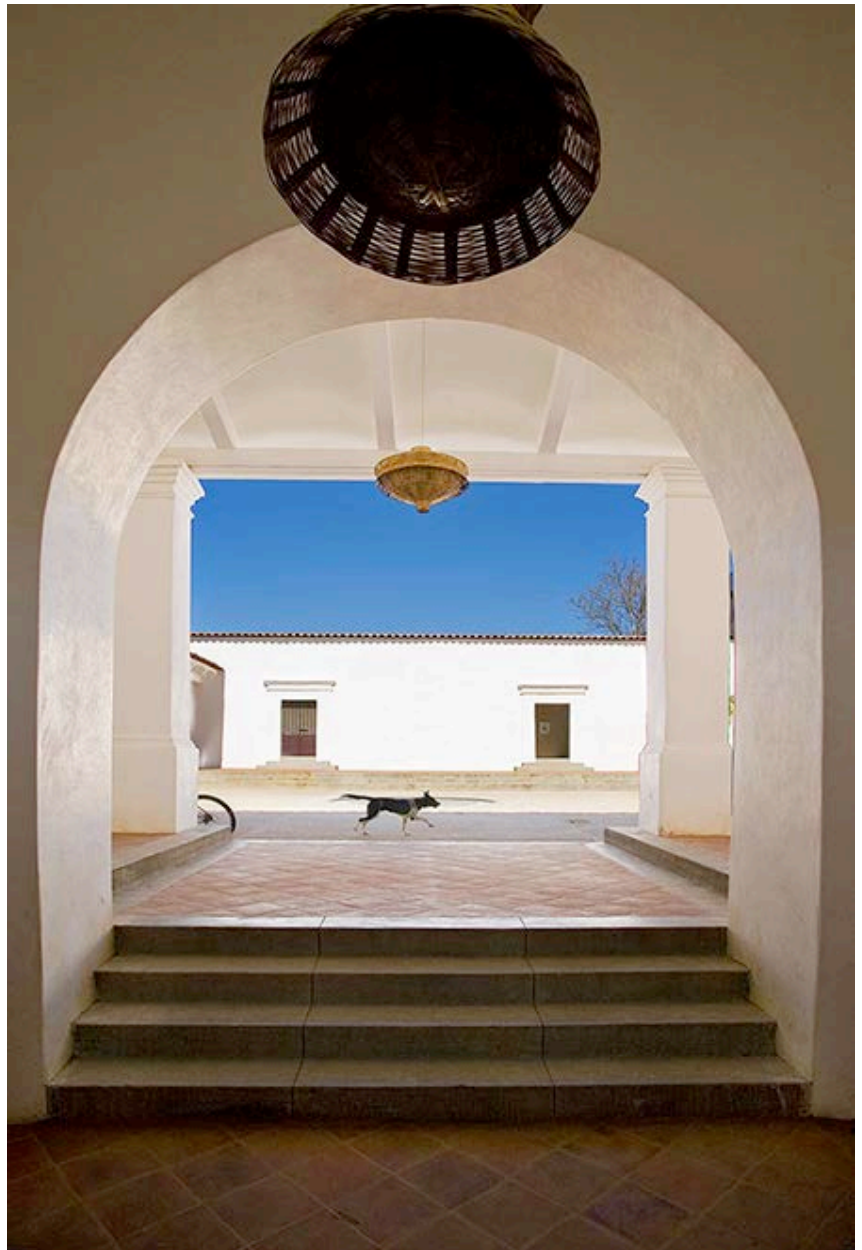
Regarding the global food problem, Foster (1992) and subsequently Leathers and Foster (2009) focus their attention on under-nutrition in the third world. However, the problem with global food today has another side: excess consumption – in particular the high calorie, low nutrition junk food made increasingly accessible – because it leads to obesity and related health problems. As the United States Department of Health and Human Services notes, obesity is linked to a multitude of health problems including diabetes, cancer, and heart disease (2013); and, according to WHO, there are more than 1 billion overweight adults globally and at least 300 million of them are obese (2003). The global food problem now includes both over-consumption among the wealthy, as well as lack of access to good nutrition among the poor.

Phase 1: Immersion + documentation

The Oax-i-fornia project lasts three weeks and includes three distinct phases. The first phase, lasting about a week, brings the students into close contact with the host culture and provides them with an opportunity to acquire basic visual, cultural and historical knowledge of the city and its surround–ings. During this phase, all of the project's participants are introduced to one another by sharing examples of their visual work and by telling personal stories, which helps to make the members' cultural similarities and differences explicit as a first step towards collabo–ration. This phase also includes guided tours, field trips, and opportunities for socializing with fellow travellers and local artists outside the program, ending with each student experiencing a three-day immersion in their collaborating artisan's village, where they share in the day-to-day experience of family life. At this point, the artisans receive reinforcement in their role as "masters" as they begin to teach their processes to the students within a mentor-apprentice environment.

Figure 5: Apprentice to artisan working with cane
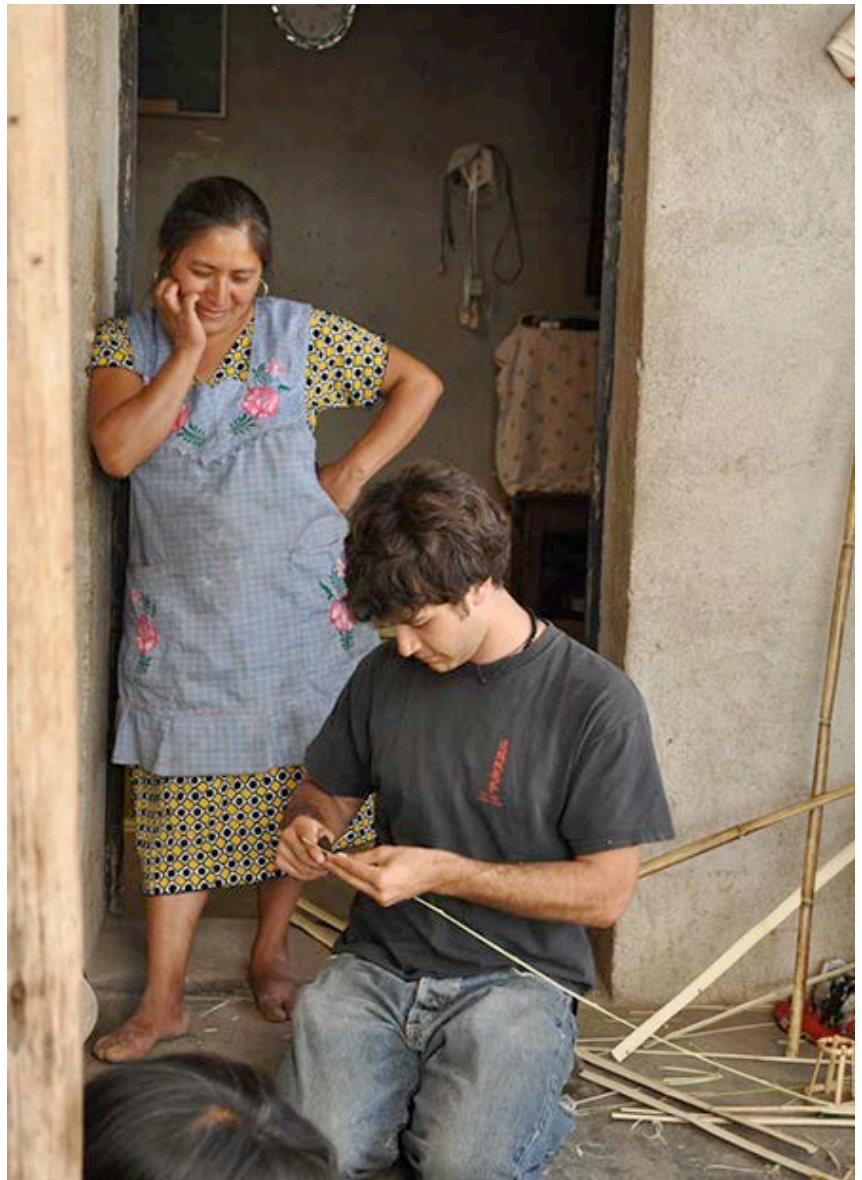
Phase 2: Experimentation

The second phase, which also lasts about a week, is centred on an experimen–tal workshop that introduces the premise of "play" as a generative practice. In this workshop, the artisans and students work together to explore materials and novel forms of making within a supervised academic context. This phase helps to create a level of professional connection that complements the personal encounter of the immersion experience. An introductory lecture on play, the "playful" and the "creative hand," provides background and grounding for the workshop. The participants then begin to manipulate a variety of found materials, in unexpected ways, with the intent of moving beyond their entrenched ways of working while creating a common ground for the exploration of innovative forms and techniques.

Figure 6: Play as a generative practice

Figure 7: Experimenting with back-strap loom

Figure 8: Collaboration between artisans and students

Phase 3: Production and exhibition

In the third and final phase, each group of collaborators works to bring the results of their experimen-tation into finished objects, a process that engages students, artisans and even extended members of the artisans' families. At the end of this phase, we schedule an exhibition of the project's results with a local museum, one that often provides both the artisans and students with their first exhibition in a major public venue.

Figure 9: Some of the objects produced in the workshop (photos: Emily Jan)

Figure 10: The end-of-class show at Biblioteca Henestrosa in Oaxaca (photo: Emily Jan)

Throughout the project's three-week duration, the visiting and local stu–dents are asked to reflect upon their project experience through creative writing and the creation of additional site-specific and site-generated work. These concluding projects often become powerful expressions of individual experience that not only reflect each student's talent and interests, but also serve as complex and sophisticated accounts of the student's encounter with difference, otherness, and the self.

Figure 11: Portrait of accordion player on location, (photo: Tomo Saito)

Figure 12: Personal project by student Raphael Noz

Modulating the transnational dialogue

Oax-i-fornia's aim has been to carefully nurture a new kind of transnational "generative intersection," one that allows tradition to evolve and remain rel–evant in the contemporary world. I have found that it is difficult to identify measurable outcomes from Oax-i-fornia that can serve as indices for the success of other, likeminded endeavours. What I can offer is that others can examine both the external (that is, tangible) and the internal (that is, personal) results of their projects in an attempt to understand the key forces that might generate their own results and that might make them replicable in similar situations within different geographies.

What can be measured is the program's economic impact. Each year more than 70 of the Oax-i-fornia projects become produced as prototypes, and approximately 40% of these prototypes go into production and become available for sale within various commercial venues throughout Mexico and abroad, creating tangible economic benefits for the artisans. That said, the objects themselves cannot reflect the depth of an interaction that enables participants to collapse perceived differences into kinship. In my opinion, the primary outcomes for Oax-i-fornia are the internal ones: the deeply personal experiences that melt away fears, assumptions and prejudices for both the students and the artisans. As described by Rie Hirai, a student originally from Japan who enrolled in the California College of Art's MFA program:

> The bond that I share with this family was created by this working relationship. And now that I think about the beginning of the two weeks of working, I realized that the family was just as scared as I was. I think we grew together. I also figured out who I want to be and what is important in my life.... I want to use my creativity to bring people together and help bridge gaps that are created by language, culture and class. I see that under all of these cultural labels there [are] people who are just like me. These skills I can take anywhere I go. These are skills that I didn't realize I had. I had been afraid of working like this or challenging my self in this way, but when I did I realized how capable I am, how capable we all are. ... I will never forget.

It is this possibility for discovery and change on both sides that a properly structured transnational collaboration can provide, which is difficult in three weeks within a classroom situation. For the artisans, Oax-i-fornia provides them with an opportunity to think independently and to realize that they can reinvent their work and continue to do so as time passes. Recently, two of our younger artisan graduates were bestowed the Fondo Nacional de Apoyo para las Empresas en Solidaridad National Award (FONAES) for young artisan entrepreneurs—an important distinction personally awarded by the president of Mexico—for projects that emerged from the Oax-i-fornia collaboration and that they have continued to refine and expand, opening new doors and opportunities for themselves and their families.

Figure 13: Garcia family, huarache makers, receiving the Oax-i-fornia diploma

Figure 14: Alexander Juarez, winner of the FONAES award

Figure 15: Button and buttonhole scarf for which Alexander won the FONAES award

The most important effect that our project can have, in my opinion, is the creation of a connection between participants that leads to their personal growth as individuals and that propels a change in the way they look at the world and their own opportunities within it. Such an experience cannot simply be taught, but must be experienced within a well-structured academic framework that allows for three key elements to occur. To begin, the project must allow for a constant cycling through the host/guest relationship that shifts the positions of control throughout the process. The Oax-i-fornia visitors receive the opportunity to act as apprentices living with the artisan families, but then the relation is flipped, and the students in turn host the artisans within their "home"; in this case, the hacienda where the final making takes place. Next, the project should permit all participants to share a common ground with the intention to set aside some of the differences between participants while encouraging others. In Oax-i-fornia, this occurs mostly through the collaborations, within which class, language and cultural differences become secondary to the challenge of creating something new together within an unfamiliar relationship. The course lectures have the same effect and intention as the collaborations, as they introduce information that is new to most participants, creating a shared visual/theoretical language that is beyond the expertise of any individual. Finally, the project should introduce a centralizing component that will create cohesion between the group members. In the case of Oax-i-fornia, "play" has been used as a tool for connection, as it introduces a definitive break from the participants' traditional ways of working. The emphasis on play with random materials frees the makers, especially the artisans, from cultural and political notions of tradition while providing a supportive space for experimentation. The ambiguity of play, when directed into a creative exercise, can create a healthy level of apprehension for all participants, who must surrender to a shared uncertainty that comes to unify the group. Play is also used as a form of dialogue that prepares both artisans and students for the reality of working together: it allows for roles to be newly defined, for expectations to be made explicit, and for power structures to be redefined, and for the participants to experience a deeper sense of trust (Lieberman, 1977).

In conclusion, I propose Oax-i-fornia as a model for design education in transnational contexts, showing that the confluence of craft, art and design, when engaged through a serious collaborative process of "making" between culturally diverse individuals, can serve not only as a powerful generative force for innovation, but more importantly, can create deep and meaningful cross-cultural connections not commonly associated with brief encounters. In this context, culture and language differences should not be seen as obstacles to be overcome, but rather as catalysts for the creative process because they push participants to forge common ground through the act and language of "making to–gether", a physical and emotional process that bridges differences and awakens a kindred spirit shared by makers everywhere.

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PEVSNER ON GRAPHIC DESIGN: TRANSNATIONALITY AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF DESIGN
ARIYUKI KONDO, FEBRUARY 13, 2014

ABSTRACT

This article explores the impact of art historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's transnational background—as a German-born Russian Jew who was exiled in Britain—on his interest in and appreciation of graphic design in England. It argues that the uneasy fascistic-nationalistic atmosphere of German society under the reign of terror by the Nazis during the early 1930s galvanized Pevsner, a 'transnational' historian, into believing that it is the designer's social responsibility to pursue functional design for the good of society. In other words, Pevsner believed that design could be instrumental both in developing artistic faculties within the individual and in imparting instructive meaning through the work to a general populace, whose aesthetic sense and political awareness may have been limited. As for the role of the art historian, Pevsner was thoroughly convinced that art historians, through their use of historical knowledge, could and should make accessible to both designers and lay people the knowledge of how past artists and designers confronted contemporary needs and courageously worked for the good of society. The question of the aesthetically educational, socially instrumental function of design, according to Pevsner, was one that could be explored through study of important works in the English tradition of graphic design. The present study will focus on Pevsner's interest in the history of English graphic design as a thread of educational and functional art for a mass audience, from eighteenth-century engravings of didactic subjects by William Hogarth to posters for the London Underground and the London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB) designed by such twentieth-century graphic designers as Fred Taylor and Edward McKnight Kauffer.

Key Words: Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, the Third Reich, William Hogarth, posters for London Passenger Transport Board, The Englishness of English Art

FULL PAPER

Pevsner's transnational identity

A German-born Russian Jew who was baptized in the Lutheran church and later exiled in Britain during World War II, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (Figure 1), one of the leading architectural, art and design historians of the twentieth century, was naturally, if not completely, transnational. Pevsner's academic life, in its early stages in particular, was affected by the nationalistic, political and social preferences of the society to which he then belonged. From the winter of 1929–30 he had been a "Privatdozent" at Göttingen University, and it is said that his reputation

as a young academic had contributed to Göttingen's institutional reputation for art history. But Pevsner lost his academic position at Göttingen as a result of the newly passed Civil Servants' law that was aimed at non-Aryans, officially known as the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service". Not being allowed to pursue a career in academia in his native land, Pevsner departed for Britain.

Exiled in Britain, Pevsner was highly conscious of and insecure about being an "outsider". During the spring of 1934, when he decided to apply for a newly vacant chair in the history of art and architecture at the University of Edinburgh, Pevsner felt that he would likely encounter prejudice against foreigners. Susie Harries, the author of the latest and most comprehensive Pevsner biography, quotes Pevsner's words at that time, presupposing a possible question that he would be asked in the interview: "If a GermanÐwhy this one?" (Harries, 2011:150). Although Pevsner's application for the position was unsuccessful, and such a question was never asked of him during his interview, his anxiety expressed the insecurity he felt at that time. In 1939, when Pevsner was preparing an article for The Architectural Review, he was feeling even more uncomfortable about being an "alien" inside Britain. J. M. Richards, then Assistant Editor of the magazine, wrote to reassure him on 9 October of that year: "The other point you [Pevsner] mentioned in your [previous] letter was your position as an alien, but I need hardly say that that does not affect us in the least. I only hope that by now you are not being made too uncomfortable by it" [1]. Before long, however, Pevsner was proved to have good reason for feeling insecure: he was detained as an enemy alien in mid-1940.

Back in Germany, Pevsner's former supervisor, Wilhelm Pinder, who in 1927 had suggested to Pevsner that he take up the position at Göttingen, was lately perceived to be a Nazi supporter. It must have been quite a shock for Pevsner to realise that his one-time supervisor had become a pro-Nazi academic who had made radio broadcasts for the anti-humane nationalist regime, and who, on the occasion of Hitler's 50th birthday in 1939, deliberately maintained that "the departure of Jewish art historians from Germany had got rid of 'over-theoretical thinking'" (Harries, 2011:258). Pevsner must have had, therefore, mixed feelings when he dedicated his Academies of Art, published by Cambridge University Press in both Britain and the United States in May 1940, to his former teacher with the plaintive words: "To W.P. in grateful and faithful remembrance of the past."

Having had both his academic career and his personal life affected by perfidious politics, racism and ostracism, Pevsner, as a transnational art historian, was naturally directed, if not compelled, to the question of whether his subject of study—the history of art, architecture and design—could have an instrumental function in the reformation of society and the defeat of a nationalistic autocracy.

Figure 1

The transnationality of design for the good of society

Pevsner maintained that one of the merits of history was that it revealed to people the ways in which great men have acted under certain circumstances in the past. Pevsner never minimized the role that knowledge of the past could play in developments within contemporary society. The history of art was no exception for Pevsner, who never underestimated the capability and power of art history to connect and to engender a profound understanding of both the past and present.

When Pevsner referred to "the designer", he meant "a man who invents and draws objects for use" (Pevsner, 1948:91); and the purpose behind the use of these objects was, in one way or another, to fulfil contemporary needs. From the time that he was a student in Germany, Pevsner had always resisted the creed of "art for art's sake" that motivated many of his contemporaries. Pevsner believed that art should be functional, imparting meaning to the people for whom it had been created, just as it had during the Middle Ages when art had conveyed religious ideas and norms.

In Pevsner's view, the historian should always be aware of contemporary needs and developments in society, and should connect scholarship with contemporary needs (Naylor, 2004:179). The same was true of the art historian. Pevsner was convinced that, while designers are expected to engage in solving contemporary stylistic/artistic problems, art historians, through their studies of "the visual expression of the history of man's mind" (Pevsner, 2003:162) [2], should make accessible to designers and contemporary society at large the knowledge of how past artists and designers confronted their contemporary needs and courageously worked for the good of society. Pevsner believed that the art historians who were merely looking at masterpieces in the history of art and design and examining and describing their significance in historical and aesthetic contexts were not doing enough. By tracing intellectual, ideological and functional threads through the history of art and design, the better art historian took on the obligation to play an active part in the development or reformation of society. Pevsner continued to assert this position even during post-war times.

Interested in traces of intellectual, ideological and functional threads within the history of art and design, Pevsner was undeterred by boundaries between nations. Pevsner's conception of design historiography showed that the compass of an ideological movement in art could not always be solely defined geographically. Undisturbed by national boundaries, Pevsner came to see a strongly transnational connection between the art and design of different nations. Based on this perception, his first major publication about modern design was Pioneers of the Modern Movement (1936). Within this volume, by focusing on the minds of artists and designers within a consumer society, Pevsner was able to perceive a chain of strong moral beliefs that pervaded the spirit of the age, challenging the contemporary utilitarian aspiration for secular fame and honour. This chain stretched from the early nineteenth century into the twentieth century, and included J.F. Overbeck and Franz Pforr of the Nazarenes, a religious-oriented, anti-academic group of German, Swiss and Austrian painters who dedicated their works to the Christian

faith; William Morris, the utopian socialist who led the Arts and Crafts Movement; and Walter Gropius of the Bauhaus school, the high priest, as it were, of the Modernist movement. Whether they were artists or designers, these individuals were all working for the good of society rather than towards their own secular self-interests. Specifically, Pevsner identified the link between the German-speaking Nazarenes, who were based in Rome, and the contemporary design and education movement led by Gropius, a German-born Jew who was later based in the U.S., as a transnational conduit.

English graphic design as functional art

Pevsner believed that designers must be critical of the ways in which art and design could be employed to satisfy a political preference or a national policy in order to invoke patriotism and thereby mould the spirit of the age. During the 1930s, Pevsner himself witnessed the seemingly immutable, monumental, yet trite architecture that the Third Reich erected to stir and satisfy popular sentiment through the invocation of national and racial pride. For Pevsner, these supra-monumental Nazi designs were visual proof of a grave error, for the fascist regime demonstrated that design had come to be a mere tool that could be disgracefully employed to lead a naïve and unaware majority astray.

The educational, instrumental function of art and design, according to Pevsner, found its best representation within the English tradition of the graphic arts, and it was William Hogarth who interested Pevsner most. Hogarth was arguably a graphic designer in his own time because of his masterful handling of text and image and his ability to present and communicate ideas and information, some from a moral perspective, to an aesthetically and ethically naïve audience. During the 1720s, Hogarth is said to have been very enthusiastic about selling his copperplate engravings to booksellers and print-sellers (Paulson, 1989:17). Indeed, throughout his whole career, he was busily engaged in various print-based projects, including the design of book illustrations, a headpiece for a journal, or publication frontispieces. As a graphic artist, Hogarth's purpose was to tell stories and convey messages convincingly to ordinary people through a depiction of everyday incidents using common iconography. Pevsner explained the essence of Hogarth's art by writing: "...to him the story mattered more than the art. The purpose of painting is not painting, but the telling of stories with all the incidents which any observant eye can discover any day" (Pevsner, 1964:35).

Hogarth wanted his prints to be readily and widely distributed, hoping to educate the masses by suggesting moral improvement. "Printmaking of the kind practiced by Hogarth was...the quintessential bourgeois art form", and was "by definition urban and commercial, depending upon the creation of a repeatable commodity which could attract a public to itself" (Bindman, 1997:29).

What captured Pevsner's attention about Hogarth was the fact that this "brilliant painter, [one of the] naturally most highly endowed painters of eighteenth-century England" (Pevsner, 1964:35) attached the greatest importance to the educational, socially instrumental function of his work

as a means of moral teaching to improve the minds of ordinary people through subjects which could easily be observed during their daily lives. Hogarth himself stressed this: "In these compositions, those subjects that will both entertain and improve the mind, bid fair to be of the greatest public utility, and must therefore be entitled to rank in the highest class" (Nichols & Steevens, 1817:xiv).

The simple yet didactic series of prints Industry and Idleness (1747), Four Stages of Cruelty (1751) and many others show that, for Hogarth, art was a "medium for preaching". Hogarth was well aware of the effectiveness of "the recounting of what the observant eye sees around" it in order to achieve his object. Four Stages of Cruelty, a set of four prints (Figures 2-5) taken up by Pevsner as an example of Hogarth's art of moral storytelling in his famed book, The Englishness of English Art, is one of the best known of Hogarth's engravings of modern morality subjects. It tells, as a good visual guidance of how not to behave, the story of how cruelty is diabolically strengthened through the torturing of animals, a daily affair in ruthless Georgian London, until it leads to a calamitous murder.

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

The intention to speak directly to people in this way through the arts by telling stories was something Pevsner viewed as an entirely English tendency. It was not only Hogarth who was keen to exhibit this tendency through graphic expression. Pevsner observed a similar manifestation in the political caricatures of James Gillray, many of which were published circa 1800. This was followed in turn by crucial contributions to English poster and lettering design such as those by William Morris and the English illustrator Emery Walker, who worked within the Arts and Crafts Movement, and the Scottish graphic designer James Pryde and his kindred spirit, the Englishman William Nicholson, who, working together, are better known today as "the Beggarstaff Brothers".

English story-telling posters

Smitten by this particular English tendency in graphic art, that is, the art of storytelling, Pevsner turned his attention to the striking development of the English poster during the first half of the twentieth century. Pevsner was especially interested in Frank Pick, who worked as a Traffic Development Officer of Underground Electric Railways from 1909, later became the first Chief Executive of London Transport, and also commissioned many of the more notable examples within the genre.

In 1942, Pevsner wrote an article for The Architectural Review about Pick (Pevsner, 1942:31-48) [3], whom Pevsner knew personally. The two men were close friends: it was Pick who spared no trouble in urging the Ministry of Labour and the Home Office to give Pevsner a permit to work in Britain and, a few years later, even helped him to find a place to live in Hampstead. When Pevsner was placed in the Huyton internment camp in 1940, it was Pick who made efforts to obtain his release, along with Josiah Wedgwood of Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd. and Kenneth Clark, then Director of the National Gallery, among others. The personal correspondence between Pevsner and Pick, now held by the Pevsner archive in the special collections at the Getty Research Institute, suggests that the two men were in continual contact with one another and exchanged views on art-related issues. Pick commissioned posters for the London Underground from such designers as Fred Taylor, Gregory Brown, and Edward McKnight Kauffer. Pevsner emphasised the impact of the work of these graphic designers on the daily lives of working Londoners and saw Frank Pick, with his extended knowledge of art history and refined taste, as a great secular patron of the fine arts; a "modern Medici" (Green, 2008:39), so to speak.

Writing about the London Transport, Pevsner believed that it had become "a powerhouse of 'civilised urbanity and humane common sense... the most efficacious centre of visual education in England'" (Green, 2008:40). By the mid-1910s, according to Pevsner, "the English poster as well as English lettering had achieved a remarkably high level" (Pevsner, 1942:32). Interest in publishing periodicals, books and tracts was widely shared among Victorians with an academic interest in art, and this interest helped to elevate the standards for press-related graphic art; that is, for lettering design and poster design. Pevsner stated:

> "Since the Beggarstaff brothers had created their style of bold, flat surfaces and simple clear colours in the mid-nineties, and since Morris's Kelmscott Press and Emery Walker's Doves Press, the posters and presswork of England had been accepted as leading by the other European nations." (Pevsner, 1942:32)

Discussing the distinguished artists who made posters for the London Underground Electric Railways during the decade leading up to World War I, Pevsner mentioned in particular Fred Taylor and Gregory Brown:

> "Among the artists who designed posters for the Underground between 1908 and World War I, Fred Taylor and Gregory Brown are

the most notable. Their work, especially that illustrating the London countryside, is of an excellent standard, sound, forcibly telling its story, and no doubt convincing to the man in the street." (Pevsner, 1968:193)

Among the many posters that illustrated the beauty and tranquillity of the London countryside and suburban lives were Gregory Brown's Hatfield (1916) (Figure 6) and Fred Taylor's Your Next Move and Your Best is on to Underground (1914) (Figure 7). The latter poster, with its straightforward slogan "Houses to suit all classes", was designed to promote the idea of relocating to the suburbs by suggesting that the price of housing along Underground lines was perfectly affordable for everyone.
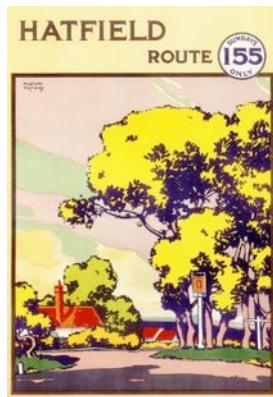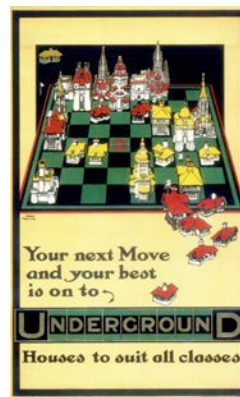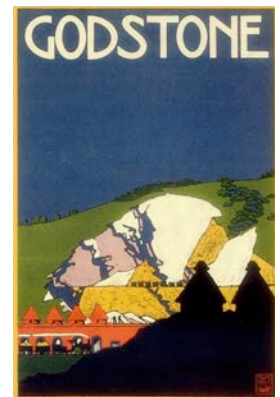

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Even after the arrival of American graphic designer Edward McKnight Kauffer on the London art scene in 1915, and his introduction of bolder, sweeping stylization and abstract forms, the art of storytelling that Pevsner had observed in Hogarth remained constant. Between 1915 and 1916, Kauffer produced a set of such posters for the London Underground, including North Downs (1915) and Godstone (1916) (Figure 8). In the 1920s, Kauffer designed an even more distinctively narrative poster, Edgware and Hampstead Extension of London Electric Railway (1923) (Figure 9). This poster presented a photographic panel that publicly proclaimed steady progress in the extension of railway lines, a visual expression that reminded the knowledgeable viewer of the men working in Ford Madox Brown's famous painting The Works (1852-63) (Figure 10), a pictorial celebration of the Puritan work ethic.

Figure 9

Figure 10

What Pevsner repeatedly stressed was that art should be functional and that it should have a wide effect on popular taste, imparting instructive meaning to the people for whom it was created. For Pevsner, the posters produced for the London public transportation system, the Underground in particular, were strong examples of such functional and invaluable art. Pevsner also rated highly the aesthetic value of these London transportation posters, which were accessible every day to ordinary people who seldom or never went to art museums. Looking back from the year 1942, Pevsner recognized the contributions that the posters designed in the 1930s for the London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB), the public supervising body of the London tram, bus and underground network formed in 1933, made to the aesthetic education of the public:

> "... it can safely be said that no exhibition of modern painting, no lecturing, no school teaching can have had anything like so wide an effect on the educatable masses as the unceasing production and display of L.P.T.B. posters over the years 1930–1940." (Pevsner, 1968:193)

Pevsner's transnational identity and the national character of design

Although Pevsner seems to have detached himself intentionally from any specific ethnic identification, choosing instead to live as a transnational citizen, when he took up the narrative and educational function of the English graphic art tradition for one of his BBC Reith Lectures, broadcast in November 1955, he explained his view that this tradition evinces a national character, an "Englishness of English art".

While such an observation seemingly complicates Pevsner's position regarding transnationality, it was in fact the transnational nature of Pevsner's formative years that brought about his belief in the "Englishness of English art". While adapting diversified approaches throughout his academic life, Pevsner was always interested in the idea of national character in art, starting in Leipzig in the 1920s when he was an art history student and continuing until 1983 as a British national and renowned historian of Western architecture, art and design. By the time Pevsner began his studies in art history, the idea of the national character of a given country's art had already been well established in Germany, where it was being studied exhaustively. Various mentors had introduced

Pevsner to this idea during his formative years, and one of these teachers was Wilhelm Pinder. However, in Germany, the interest in the national character of art throughout history had already been spurred by racialist pride long before his student days. Witnessing how art and design had come to be disparaged and employed by the nationalist autocracy as a tool of propaganda to whip up the nation's racial spirit, and, out of dismay at what his homeland's personality had become, Pevsner directed his attention to, and became very sensitive about, national character as disclosed in works of art, whether in the form of painting, industrial products, architecture or graphic design.

In fact, in Pevsner's view, it was his own transnational identity and his own transnational historiography of design, detached from national prejudice, that made him such a keen and qualified observer of the national character of art. As he himself claimed in the foreword to The Englishness of English Art, first published in 1956:

> "...my antecedents might be accepted as specially useful for the task. For one thing the very fact of having come into a country with fresh eyes at some stage, and then of having settled down gradually to become part of it, may constitute a great advantage." (Pevsner, 1964:9)

Pevsner never felt a strong sense of being an Englishman. He undoubtedly desired a transnational existence, free of political oppression, so that he could devote himself whole-heartedly to the history of art and architecture. He was compelled to become an outsider in a foreign nation, a "stranger in a strange land", a status which led him to the question of what in fact constituted the national character of any art, whatever the nation.

Contents Notes

[1] Letter from J. M. Richards to Pevsner on 9 October 1939, now held in the special collections at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, USA.

[2] Pevsner defined the art historian's subject of interest as "the visual expression of the history of man's mind" in one of his radio talks, "Reflections on not teaching art history", broadcast on 19 October 1952 by the Third Programme, a BBC radio station launched in 1946.

[3] This article on Frank Pick is reprinted in the second volume of Pevsner's Studies in Art, Architecture and Design, published in 1968.

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About the author
Ariyuki Kondo, born in Tokyo, Japan in 1971, read architectural design at the School of Art and Design of the University of Tsukuba, Japan, before pursuing a postgraduate study in architectural history at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy in 2001, and after taking up several academic posts in Japan, he has, since 2012, been Professor of History of British Art and Architecture at Ferris University, Yokohama, Japan, where he teaches the history of eighteenth- to twentieth-century British art, architecture and design. He is the author of several books on the subjects of 1) the interrelation between eighteenth- to twentieth-century British architecture and the Zeitgeist; 2) contemporary church architecture; and 3) the images of Christ as depicted by the members of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and contemporary British painters. His recent publications in English include Robert and James Adam, Architects of the Age of Enlightenment (2012), which came out as part of the series The Enlightenment World, published by Pickering & Chatto in London. His recent research mainly focuses on the principles of Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's histories of art and culture, from Pevsner's emphasis on the role of the Zeitgeist in the development of Western art and design to the impact of his multi-cultural, transnational upbringing and education on the extensively diversified approaches he employed in his study of the history of Western, mainly British, art, architecture and design.

GEOGRAPHICS: DESIGN, EDUCATION AND THE TRANSNATIONAL TERRAIN

HUBRIS, HUMILITY & CONFUCIUS
SHARON HELMER POGGENPOHL FEBRUARY 11, 2013

ABSTRACT

Using insights from an anthropologist, a sociologist, a psychologist, and a philosopher, this article explores differences in cultural experience, in behaviours, and in expectations concerning the teaching of design by a foreign teacher working with students in their homeland. The author argues that it is substantially different to teach foreign students in the United States than it is to teach them in their own country. The article focuses on the cultural difference between an American teacher and her Chinese Master's-level students in Hong Kong working within the context of a design seminar course that required original research. While the university conducts classes in English and the students' language skills are diverse, other cultural obstacles, including contrasting teaching and learning styles, present a larger challenge. The deeply established Confucian values held by the students contrast with and sometimes support the teaching and learning experience in terms of interactive communication, and inform different approaches to thinking about the research process, and project execution. Human- or user-centred approaches to design present in design processes as taught, also underscore the development of an adaptive and responsive teaching attitude. The author concludes the article by offering some suggestions for others engaged in similar learning exchanges.

Key Words: cross-cultural communication, Chinese and American cultural difference, teaching design abroad

FULL PAPER

Introduction

For twenty-five years I have taught in graduate design programs, working with Master students and Ph.D. students in three programs with different participants and orientations. My first experience was at the Rhode Island School of Design, where in those days the students were largely Western; I then moved to the Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design, where a large number of students were international; and I finally concluded my intensive teaching years at Hong Kong Polytechnic University's School of Design, where most students were from Hong Kong or mainland China, and where a few Europeans and other Asians entered the mix. In the early years, I could look at a class roster and know who was American and who was foreign simply by reading their names. Today that would be impossible. While at the Institute of Design and working with the many foreign students there, I started to wonder whether the design ideas that I was teaching would translate to the students' home cultures, based upon what they learned

and experienced in the United States within that specific program. This led me to consider a complex question: How was design situated in terms of aesthetics, process, responsibilities, and cultural heritage within a given student's native land? I was surprised one day to overhear a student refer to me as European-American; clearly the students had observed the variety of Americans. While the various mixes of students within each institution created one challenge, another rose from the philosophical positioning of each program: from the first, which was more art-oriented; to the second, which was a more pragmatic functional/business-oriented program; to the third, with its strong cultural base. Together these differences caused me to reflect upon how design itself as well as teaching and learning were positioned within a global and local context. Such musing led me to question my own presumptions about design and its cultural foundations.

The question above influenced my decision to live and teach in Hong Kong for two-and-a-half years, to experience teaching design within another culture.

I argue that Chinese students studying in the United States have made a conscious choice to study and explore that culture. Those students expect to learn in a different way and under different circumstances than those that are familiar and comfortable to them. This is a different experience than that of a Chinese student in Hong Kong, learning within a congenial local environment, and being taught by an American. Within the United States Chinese students adapt to the professors and students within that context. American students are not always kind or accepting of their Chinese counterparts' potential problems with language, their reticence, or their ways of thinking. To be effective teaching in Hong Kong, it was essential that I attend to cultural differences and reconsider my expectations and the ways in which I typically had been teaching. I became caught between the local culture, my own culture, and a desire to prepare students to be competitive globally.

A quick visual flavour of location and culture follows.

Figure 1   Figure 2   Figure 3   Figure 4

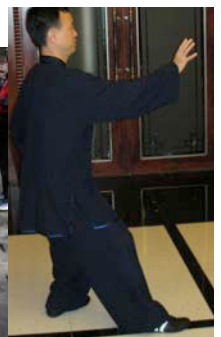Hong Kong is bilingual in Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) and English (figure 1). It is densely populated, largely in high-rise towers (figure 2). The Chinese respect their traditions of calligraphy and physical culture. A calligrapher in a Beijing park writes with water on the pavement (figure 3). My Tai Chi master quietly demonstrates a position for me to imitate (figure 4). Remnants of Hong Kong's colonial past

persist, such as orderly queues at bus stops, but this international city is under pressure from mainland China to conform to the larger culture.

Theory and experience

In contrast to what I experienced, I begin with theory. In order to deepen my understanding of cultural differences and to frame my experience, I examined theoretical insights from anthropological, sociological, psychological, and philosophical perspectives. My use of these theories, however, did not predate the teaching experience. It was the experience that stimulated the search for theory: the experience is alive, while the theory is a distillation, an abstraction of ideas. The nature of lived experience is that it unfolds unexpectedly, through reflection, returning to experience with interpretation. It is often cumulative, repetitive, and sometimes frustratingly unstable. The lived anecdotes contained within this article have the qualities just mentioned, but theory allowed me to understand each experience as more than simply a passing event.

Global theory

The experience of moving beyond one's own culture suggests a variety of ideas, institutions, techniques, and expectations. A theoretical perspective from the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai provides a quick look at the global context in which our lives play out today. Appadurai identifies some outstanding features of modern subjectivity that include media and migration, the ways in which they meet unpredictably, and ideas about the ways in which media, as it crosses borders, supports human agency and change. The contemporary speed and scale of such transfer is commonplace today, forming a dynamic, global conception of the world and conceiving new possibilities from this world. Using a landscape metaphor, Appadurai introduces five global flows: ethnoscapes, financescapes, technoscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes (1997:33). For Appadurai, ethnoscapes are the diasporas motivated by safety, opportunity, and/or other issues in countries that welcome them or try to exclude them. They evolve into hybrid identities that are an amalgam of past and present cultural expectations. Financescapes include those contexts that support global capital, the connections and movement between them, the dynamic opportunities they engender, as well as the financial crises that may result. Technoscapes represent the uneven, illogical distribution of technology, with cell phone ubiquity nearly everywhere while the lack of sanitation or clean water exists side-by-side. Mediascapes are the worldwide distribution outlets for information; they can be embraced for their alternative perspectives or blocked because they challenge the statis quo, and their products can be overwhelming in scope and quantity. Ideoscapes, which include media-transmitted images, are the forums for complex ideas like freedom, rights, and representation, among other things. These five cross-cultural flows do not always function independently of one another, but interact and can clash. As an example of how the mediascape and the ideoscape come together, I can cite the example of my residence in Hong Kong, where I could access via

cable TV the British Broadcasting Corporation, Al Jazerra, evening news from the United States, local Hong Kong news, and the English-language broadcast from Beijing, providing me with the opportunity to receive a British, Arab, American, Hong Kong, and Mainland Chinese perspective on the same event. I could have gotten even more. Space, time, and cultural perspective were compressed.

What Appadurai's ideas teach the contemporary design professor and student is that there is much to learn from perspectives beyond the local or personal experience, even when that experience is already a transnational one. Many Hong Kong students have no desire to leave home and many mainland students also plan to return to their cities of origin. Yet as China becomes more sophisticated about designing and exporting its own products, these students may be called upon to design for another culture within the global context or even to address one of the many specific cultural contexts within China. In addition to my desire to help my students interact with a larger world, I brought a human- or user-centred perspective into the design process. This approach requires students to pay attention to those for whom they design by observing them, understanding their habits, and recognizing the meanings that they attach to the details of what is designed. This moves the designer beyond their own individual understanding and desire, and places them beyond their comfort zone, opening the design process to new ideas and understandings. This is fundamental to crossing cultural borders and is a primary take-away process and experience for the students regardless of whether their project addresses their neighbour, a Tibetan or Uigur, or a European.

Automatic behavior theory

In contrast to the global view that reveals the interconnected differences among us and that I have introduced as a way to explore the importance of a human-centred design process, Pierre Bourdieu, a sociologist, has theorised what he calls the 'habitus', an out-of-awareness realm of reproducible practices and dispositions. The habitus consists of that human behaviour which is done automatically, as opposed to that which is open for conscious choice or representation. My personal interest in the habitus concerns the ways in which the practices of learning and teaching are coloured by cultural difference. As Bourdieu describes it, "The habitus is this kind of practical sense for what is to be done in a given situation—what is called in sport a 'feel' for the game, that is, the art of anticipating the future of the game, which is inscribed in the present state of play" (Bourdieu, 1998:25). Habitus, or out-of-awareness dispositions, have featured in the learning behaviour of my Chinese and American students. It is the product of how they were taught—the ethos and expectations of the game of learning and its various processes.

Behavioural style, Bourdieu's habitus, is quite different between a given Chinese and a given American student. While teaching in Chicago, I discussed with my students the importance of cultural difference. Two students offered a demonstration of Chinese and American differences, with each demonstrating the other's behaviour, which made their performances more compelling. The Chinese student portrayed the American slouching in a chair, talking loudly, interacting off-topic with

another student, waving a hand to answer, and answering confidently, even aggressively. The American student portrayed the Chinese sitting up straight, attention-focused, silent, taking notes. Such different behaviours are not trivial in a teaching situation. Could the American become more restrained and the Chinese become more forthcoming? How do they learn to work together on a team? Such behavioural differences were everyday teaching/learning concerns, but in an American context.

Part of what influences the habitus within the Hong Kong/Chinese context is the deep cultural reverence for Confucius (552-479 B.C.E.), a moral philosopher known for the Way of Humanity that today integrates love and reason with the family as the foundation. It would be a mistake to underestimate the influence of Confucius, just as it would be a mistake to ignore Judeo-Christian influence within the West. The values of Confucianism are significantly different from the Enlightenment values of the modern West (Tu, 2000:264).

Table 1: Comparison of Enlightenment and Confucian values

Enlightenment values	Confucian values
- instrumental rationality	-sympathy
- liberty	- ritual
- rights consciousness	- duty consciousness
- due process of law	- due process of law
- privacy	- public spiritedness
- individualism	- group orientation

Among these values, those most apparent in teaching were the conflict between liberty and ritual and the conflict between individualism and group orientation. Within the former, liberty implied process exploration and the freedom to create, and with my own Western background I expected this. In contrast, the Chinese students wanted a set menu for their process and sought the 'right' answer. If I offered a general diagram of the design process we were engaged with, and if students found the actual process to deviate from that previously given, they became concerned. Contingency, unexpected ideas, and the ambiguity of the design process made for discomfort. The individualism and group orientation conflict caused critiques to be challenging. Students were reluctant to be critical of their peers even when I stressed the need for constructive ideas. Face-saving demands the right ritual behaviour to preserve self-esteem, and group orientation provides a focus to avoid confrontation among peers. The traditional education system that the Chinese students have experienced has largely been passive and has been based upon rote learning. Adding in other differences between our values, made for a challenging teaching situation. Somewhere between individualism and group orientation is a sympathetic place, where one can be unique, respectful of others, supportive of their needs, and speak one's mind. Some Americans and some Chinese go too far to the cultural extremes.

While in Hong Kong, I sought to learn about and experience Chinese culture from the inside, and not as a simple observer. I chose to live in Kowloon rather than the fashionable Hong Kong Island; I avoided the

ex-patriot community and became friends with the Chinese. In order to better understand Chinese culture, I took Tai Chi lessons from a Chinese master. These lessons brought into high relief some differences between Chinese and American teaching strategies. Tai Chi is a physical culture that is demonstrated by the master and imitated by the novice, much like the way that I learned to ski. There was little talk; I made a move and the master corrected my movement by adjusting whatever body position was incorrect. He never said that I was improving or that I performed a movement well. We progressed through subsequent forms; I learned more movements, but I never felt a sense of accomplishment. It felt, rather, like I was learning within a void whose structure only the master understood. In contrast to the master's system of demonstration, imitation, and correction, I teach by suggestion, critical comment, the application of analysis and alternatives, and sometimes by demonstration. I offer positive reinforcement for effective independent thinking, including design alternatives that might advance a project. I also encourage risk-taking and provide supportive feedback when warranted. My experience with the Tai Chi master demonstrated the habitus of teaching/learning, Chinese style.

Theory of East-West thinking

So far I have paired global theory with human-centred design approaches to support an understanding and use of processes that acknowledge difference, and the notion of habitus in relation to behavioural approaches and their underlying values. Difference in thinking style also figures in the teaching/learning paradigm in a cross-cultural context.

Richard Nisbett, a psychologist, has written about the ways in which Western people and Asians think differently (2003). That noted, Nisbett's analysis does not advance one way of thinking as superior to another. According to Nisbett, Americans are analytical, and they pull problems apart to better uncover possibilities, relationships, contradiction, and the principles and rules that are at play within a given situation. They like to categorize and build a synthesis from deconstructed parts. In contrast to this, Nisbett finds that Chinese are holistic, seeing relationships everywhere, and recognizing change as a dynamic flux that cannot be stabilized or controlled. Further, the Chinese are not given to rhetoric or debate; they are not concerned with contradiction or counterargument. Rhetoric, debate, and contradiction are essential thinking tools for Americans. But for Chinese, dialectical reasoning based upon principles of change, holism, and the connectedness of contradiction (that is, opposites on a continuum) brings them to the Middle Way, a balance or harmony among the elements of a situation.

Research

In a graduate design program at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University's School of Design, students had to conduct original research as a final step to completing their degree. This model for conducting research was organized on the American model, which requires

background information, a research question, a literature search, methodology, analysis, synthesis, findings, discussion, and a conclusion. This model is common worldwide; there is logic to its development. It develops a rhetoric or argument to support the work, and it runs counter to the way most Chinese think. Is there a complementary Chinese approach to research? If so, then I don't know of it. Even if I did, I doubt that I could in turn teach it, captive as I am inside my own culture of thinking.

The Chinese students whom I encountered had no personal experience with research-based practices and little experience reading research reports. This state of affairs is also common in many U.S. graduate design programs. Knowing this to be a new experience with a different cognitive flavour, I work step-by-step through the research process with the students who are beginners. Those students are successful in the stages of literature review and data gathering, yet problems arise with analysis and synthesis. As holistic thinkers, analysis does not come easy. Typically, a first draft of a research report reveals much thought, but also a confusing array of mixed data and outcomes, with all possible connections presented whether strong and useful or weak and inconsequential. While the research is present, I am personally unable to enter the holistic mindset because for me it lacks structure and clear relationships. After making comments on how to present the work and argue for it more logically, a student replied "I understand what you mean, but I need the time to digest and fix myself to it since [this] is totally different from my working habit." Unpacking the experience reveals the following differences in ways of thinking.

Table 2: Comparison of some differences in thinking between American and Chinese

American	Chinese
- analytic tradition	- holistic tradition
- logical reason	- dialectical reason
- rhetorical presentation	- middle way or balance

In this example, the context of learning is Chinese, but the research process is an accepted Western tradition. This brings differences in thinking into high relief. My adaptation to the students is to work with them at each stage of the research process, helping them through the analysis, helping them to understand the limits of their research findings, and helping them to argue for their research's significance. At some point during their careers they may find themselves working with people from other disciplines who share research findings for discussion and application. This may be further complicated by work with people from other cultures. Graduate school is a fine incubator in which to explore such experience.

This is where my desire to help students become competitive within the larger world resides. It is about crossing borders cognitively, behaviourally, and culturally. I brought a border to them: the relevance of research, different learning behaviours and a human-centred design process, and I worked to understand their difficulty and sometimes their resistance in crossing it.

Interactive communication values

I now turn to two experiences I found troubling while teaching in Hong Kong. The interactive communication values that occured during a seminar and a critique each revealed the nexus of the problem of teaching effectively within another culture. In each difference in habitus was at play. The philosopher Confucius and his teachings provide a counterpoint to both experiences.

Interactive values: The seminar

The first context was a design seminar with fourteen Master students sitting around a table within a quiet room. Previous to the seminar, I handed out readings with questions for discussion. While the university conducts classes in English, the students within the seminar room were speaking Chinese, both Cantonese and Mandarin. As I entered, the room went silent. I began our discussion with my brief preamble: why it was that we read the selection, and that divergent opinions would be welcome. I encountered silence. I asked the first question. The silence continued. I rephrased the question hoping for a response, yet received silence with rapt attention. My impatience brought me to provide the answer myself.

Master: "The man of humanity speaks with hesitation." (Confucius, 1997:126)

I continued with another question. A brave soul who had once studied in the West volunteered to answer. Save for this student, the respectful silence would continue.

Master: "...do you understand what I have taught you? If you understand it, say you understand it. If you do not understand it, say you do not understand it. This is wisdom." (Confucius, 1997:55)

Apparently this aspect of Confucius' teaching is weak in Hong Kong. The students' desire to be 'correct' prevented them from speaking. Perhaps they did this to save face, or perhaps it reflected their language use. I listened to them carefully and accepted their English. Time was yet another factor, given that the students were not spontaneous and wanted time to think and consider their responses. Questions with the reading helped them to focus and gave them time to think. I became impatient but I tried to slow down, giving them the gift of time during the seminar.

Interactive values: The critique

The second context, a Hong Kong critique, was also marked by silence. My preamble invited divergent perspectives on the project work being discussed, stressed that the criticism should be constructively directed to the work, and suggested that the presenter might need to justify decisions and argue for their solution.

A disciple: "Is there one single word that one can practice throughout one's life?"

Master: "It is perhaps 'like-hearted considerateness.' What you do not wish for yourself, do not impose on others." (Confucius, 1997:156)

This Confucian teaching was taken very seriously during the critique. At play here was group orientation with its interactive value of fitting-in and the creation of a harmonious relationship with peers. Students perceive such actions to be virtuous ones. The students were reluctant to criticize each other's work, leaving this to the teacher, who had power and distance from them—and who was rarely challenged.

Master: "The gentleman deems it shameful if his speech exceeds his actions." (Confucius, 1997:146)

If the work is criticized, how could it be defended? This would be 'shameful.'

Unpacking these two teaching situations reveals fundamental cultural differences regarding interaction.

Table 3: Comparison of American and Chinese difference in selected cultural dimensions

American	Chinese
- individual orientation	- group orientation
- equality (little power difference)	- hierarchy (teacher knows best)
- fairness (everyone has opportunity)	- harmony (adjust and don't challenge)
- personal merit (achievement)	- group goal (everyone wins)

It is difficult to engage students when they respect such a strong hierarchy between themselves and their teacher. While voicing an opinion contrary to the teacher's would be unthinkable for many students, it can certainly be stated in private after class among peers. The desire to fit in and to favour harmony sometimes reduces discussion to a low common denominator. As a teacher it takes much energy and determination to raise the level of the students' discussion and to use it as an exploratory tool. It takes the creation of a context of acceptance: that of having an opinion, seeing things from a different perspective, and having the confidence to be out of the mainstream or to risk being wrong.

Conclusion

Hong Kong was a daily immersion in border crossing for me. It was a kind of culturally complementary situation to the students' cross-border experience with me. I made mistakes and embarrassed myself, but I didn't have the issue of face-saving to contend with. What began with typical American hubris, evolved into humility and an appreciation of Chinese culture—even an appreciation of Confucius. For me, border crossing was about my willingness to engage with others and to adapt to find a common ground that was mutually satisfying.

The question behind this paper is: How do we teach design within another culture? Using my experience coupled with some theoretical understanding, my answer is that we do it carefully, interactively, and by paying attention to cultural differences in nuanced ways. Just as learning

a foreign language allows us to discover more clearly the structure of our own native languages, teaching in Hong Kong brought me to a deeper understanding of the cultural roots of American education and design.

As mentioned, the teaching strategy applied a human-centred approach that was curious and respectful of others. I paid attention to my students, listened carefully, observed their behaviour, and adapted my teaching style accordingly. My teaching skills became more responsive. I learned that it would be all too easy to simply teach as I would have at home, while expressing dismay at the result and projecting the shortcomings on to the students.

I can offer a few practical suggestions, but whether they will be useful beyond the American-Chinese context I cannot predict. Begin by discussing cultural differences and assign a design project using human-centred processes. Make that project one that opens awareness and that provides an experiential base for the student to enrich his or her understanding. Remember that differences of habitus (behaviour and expectation) between teacher and students require reflection and adaptation. As mentioned, teaching in a foreign country will be different from teaching foreign students in one's own country. The differences in habitus can lead to practical ideas about how to adjust the ethos of the classroom or studio. This will take patience, reflection, and time. Finally, be clear about your role as coach or guide when teaching a new process (for example, research or human-centred design). The hierarchical system in which faculty are positioned in Hong Kong makes them less accessible, with students reluctant to ask questions that may betray a lack of understanding and loss of face. This is another situation in which the ethos of relationship and habitus needs attention. Remember that, despite these suggestions, there can be no single prescription for teaching effectively across borders. Allow yourself a deep dive into the culture. Pay attention to unexpected results, develop adaptive teaching strategies and humility, these attitudes will likely smooth the way.

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Besides a long teaching career, for twenty-six years Sharon was editor and publisher of an international, interdisciplinary, scholarly journal, Visible Language. The journal published papers almost evenly divided between foreign and American scholars. Now, editor emeritus, the journal is published by the University of Cincinnati. Sharon recently worked with a small committee organized by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), the American accrediting body, to revise its standards for graphic design. Among the new standards is research throughout all levels of design programs within the university, from bachelor through PhD. Long a proponent of design research, Sharon has championed the idea that design needs to build its own body of knowledge.

BETTER CITY, BETTER KITSCH:
MARKETING FAUX-MODERNITY IN CONTEMPORARY SHANGHAI
NICHOLAS ZIMMERMANN, FEBRUARY 10, 2014

ABSTRACT

"The debate about the relationship between social, political,
economic, cultural and artistic modernity is still far from resolved"
– Gabriele Bryant (Hvattum & Hermansen, 2004:68)

In the aftermath of Mao, and in transition to a socialist market-economy,
Shanghai became a key site for the People's Republic of China to engage
the world economy. Since the early 1990s, the city has aggressively
pursued a new, global identity by assembling a collage of international
projects, meant to symbolize modernity and to attract foreign investment.
This article examines the ways in which Shanghai has attempted to
re-brand itself as the state balances social plurality and a modernizing
economy with its demand for absolute political power (Shambaugh,
2007:25). As a metaphor for the inherent conflicts that arise while
running a city under socialist capitalism, the author introduces kitsch as
a way to raise questions regarding cultural deception: How do symbols
of international culture define, disrupt, or invert the logic of how kitsch
becomes stylized? The article will explore the ways in which kitsch
is both based upon, and vulnerable to, transnational flows of cultural
aesthetics to support the argument that constructed modernity is always
kitsch.

Key Words: Shanghai, modernity, propaganda, aesthetics, kitsch, urban

FULL PAPER

The re-emergence of Shanghai as China's foremost international
city has come to be associated with its spectacular skyline (Gandelsonas,
2002: 38). Leading the economic powerhouse of China, government
officials in Shanghai have negotiated between market-based politics and
authoritarian governance by promoting public narratives. The image of a
"new" Shanghai, projected through displays of technical innovation and
economic prosperity, has been formulated to appeal to foreign investors.
At the same time, these officials have promoted the city's cultural
prosperity to placate the domestic tensions that threaten their political
security. In addressing these and other expressions of state control,
social identity and global marketing, I will employ the concept of kitsch
to broadly identify deceptive signals in the experience and appearance
of Shanghai's urban landscape. In the context of contemporary China,
Shanghai kitsch plays multiple roles as an instrument of propaganda, a
tool of commercial marketing, and a barometer of social perceptions and
self-identity. Given that transnational influences today modify people's
conceptions of Shanghai's culture, I will question how "official" flows

of ideology disrupt, enhance, or invert the logic of how kitsch becomes stylized within the city.

The term kitsch, as it originated in Germany, was used to describe the cheap, showy art that developed commercial popularity in late nineteenth-century Europe. Connoting bad taste and ranging from sentimental nostalgia to lowbrow eroticism, critics originally used the term kitsch to distinguish between the "high art" object and the counterfeit art-commodity. It is fitting that the word kitsch emerged on the heels of German idealist aesthetic theory, which related aesthetics to socio-political change (Hvattum & Hermansen, 2004:71). However, the "faux" essence of kitsch itself; that is, the reduction of cultural expression to a set of stylized aesthetics that mimic sophistication, provides a direct critique of the "aesthetic utopia" that German idealist philosophers imagined. Contemporary Romanian literary critic Matei CĐlinescu adopted kitsch as a critical lens within his broader discussion of modernity, expanding the meaning of "kitsch" to emphasize "a specifically aesthetic form of lying" (1987:228). Within this extended scope, CĐlinescu divides kitsch into the two categories of propaganda and entertainment. Despite these categories' differing agendas, he acknowledges that telling them apart is not always easy: "propaganda can masquerade as 'cultural' entertainment and, conversely, entertainment can be directed toward subtle manipulative goals" (1987:236). Giovanni Maciocco and Silvano Tagliabambe, Italian architects at the University of Sassari, adopt a similar, abstracted definition of kitsch. Maciocco and Tagliabambe posit "the landscape" as a "desired product," wherein kitsch serves as "an aesthetic category that well represents the contemporary city" (2009:31). When disguised as entertainment, they believe that kitsch can serve the role of social propaganda, as a distraction to "placate... anguish" during the turbulence of cultural transition (2009:33). The bland inoffensiveness of kitsch conceals potentially sinister circumstances of the urban environment. It substitutes harsh reality with whimsical ornamentation, inducing a kind of cultural "dreaminess" through the "aesthetics of deception and self-deception" (CĐlinescu, 1987:228). In the spirit of these more subtle, diffuse applications, kitsch becomes an expressive, usually aesthetic type of cultural deception. In the context of Shanghai, kitsch figures as a mechanism by which cultural associations and transnational symbols transmit expressions of status and identity. In the case of Shanghai, the central theme has been the association of the city with international modernity, and even futurity, and thus the suggested emergence of a new China.

Before beginning a discussion of the relationship between contemporary Shanghai and the rest of the world, a brief discussion of the city's recent history is important to provide some context. During the nineteenth century, following treaties that originated during the 1840s, the heart of Shanghai became populated by foreign settlements, called "concessions," which were established as international zones. The first influences of European architecture emerged from within the international atmosphere of the foreign settlements. Visible today in Shanghai's Bund district, these buildings from the late nineteenth century were transplantations, and paid no attention to the Chinese context. By the early twentieth century, however, some North American

architects, and several American-educated Chinese architects, including Lu Yanzhi and Yang Tingbao, had begun to blend local and foreign design vernaculars, forging new combinations of traditional and modern (McNeil, 2009:129). The vibrant economic and cultural conditions of this period abruptly halted, as war with Japan, followed by the rise of Communism in 1949, would put an end to Shanghai development. Nearly three decades later, Deng Xiaoping led the 1978 transition toward open foreign markets, and took the first steps toward new urban development. Shanghai became a focal point within a larger redevelopment strategy through the 1986 Urban Master Plan for Shanghai Municipality. Harvard University professor Peter Rowe writes that this plan called for "a socialist, modern city with openness to the world, incorporating multiple functions and advanced science and technology...as an attraction for international economic resources" (2011:47). The Pudong New Area plan was officially sanctioned in 1990 to become the nerve centre of Shanghai trade, high-tech industry and commercial activities (Rowe, 2011:48).

Shanghai Mayor Zhu Ronghi began to conceive of the new district through a trip to Paris. Possible explanations for this may have been his appreciation for the strong use of state power in French urban projects, as well as the quality of the historical French Concession, as Rowe suggests (2011:48). Impressed by the strict plan of the Paris business district La Défense, the Shanghai government entered a series of partnerships with French planning and design experts (Pridmore, 2008:21). Heading the main joint planning committee was Joseph Belmont, a major backer of the Parisian architecture initiative the Grands Projets that resulted in large-scale expressions of nationalism that were designed to symbolize the free eminence of French politics and society (Rowe, 2011:48). The dramatic presentation of Lujiazui, the financial center of Shanghai, with its broad, Parisian-style axial boulevard, suggests Belmont's guidance. In what may have been a publicity stunt, Shanghai's mayor invited high-profile, foreign designers for a "consultation," which attracted international attention, and by the mid-1990s a flood of real estate investors and developers were pouring into Pudong.

Figure 1: The Oriental Pearl Television Tower, Shanghai Modern Architectural Design Company (SMADC), 1995.

During this period one can see some of the first and most flamboyant examples of kitsch in contemporary Shanghai architecture. Mayor Zhu believed that the then-sluggish Shanghai needed architecture that was "new" and that would awaken the city (Pridmore, 2008:61). One of the first towers in Pudong was the Oriental Pearl Television Tower, designed by the Shanghai Modern Architectural Design Company during the early 1990s (Figure 1). Imagined to be futuristic, it has been most frequently described as "kitsch'" (Pridmore, 2008:21). In the continuing pursuit of the new, the boom of architecture in Pudong that followed conflated jolting with modern, quite directly. International architects submitted designs to competition juries for selection and later approval by developers. The outlandish, eye-catching designs of these competitions catered to the developers' taste for unique forms, as exemplified by the China Insurance Building. Overall, this period of development embodied contemporary Chinese architecture, as characterized by Tonji University Professor Li Xiangning: "Novelty, Monumentality, Bigness, Swiftness, Cheapness" (Hee, Boontharm & Viray, 2012: 9). The kitsch productions that resulted from the resulting attempts to create modernity were symptomatic of non-continuous cultural history. As I will develop later, this first spike in Shanghai kitsch was a cultural by-product of a sudden engagement with global markets that followed the city's extended

isolation and repression.

If emergence from isolation inspired Pudong's grand display of modern, the "new towns" that lie outside of Shanghai's urban core suggest a parallel transformation from introversion to mimesis. Bianca Bosker, a writer and senior editor at the Huffington Post, has brilliantly documented how these "simulacra-building projects" meticulously recreate the appearance of historic European villages, recasting them as middle- and upper-middle-class residential communities (Bosker, 2013: 38). Although other examples of these "architectural mimicry" towns are located across China, greater Shanghai is home to a high concentration of these residential developments, including Blue Cambridge, Canadian Maple Town, Holland Village, San Carlos, and Thames Town (Figure 2), among others (Bosker, 2013). As Bosker correctly notes, to dismiss these Disneyland-like developments as simply inauthentic or fake would be a simplistic evaluation. In addition to suggesting divergence between Western and Chinese attitudes regarding authenticity, Bosker argues that "the engineering of a flawless simulacrum represents an advance of culture above nature" (2013:24). Taking that logic further, such developments, it can be argued, represent an expression of Chinese supremacy, or dominance, over the Western cultures that they represent. This explains the perception of an anachronistic Dutch village as a "sophisticated" entity within modern Shanghai, with that sophistication derived from the symbolic presence of European wealth, culture and empire, and not from its physical presence, or formal design, per se. The resulting representation suggests a kind of sovereignty through subversion, analogous to the way in which the Roman Empire demonstrated the extent of its influence by parading captive animals from distant lands inside the Roman Colosseum. The use of these spaces by Chinese residents is complex, driven by both their desire to experience civility and upper-class society and a pride that arises through an appreciation of the development's technology and resources, especially its scale and precision.

Figure 2: Thames Town, Songjiang, a suburban district of Shanghai. (photo: 2006 Huai-Chun Hsu)

The appeal of these towns to the Shanghai resident is articulated through architecture as cultural self-deception, albeit with more profound implications than simply a "pleasurable escape from the drabness of quotidian life" (CĐlinescu, 1987:228). As social spaces, they are not kitsch in the narrow sense of being "cheap," lowbrow reproductions. As Bosker has shown, such dwellings, despite being faithful "copies" aesthetically, both inside and out, are also spatially programmed to suit modern Chinese society, for example, by providing adequate space for multiple generations to cohabit (2013:45). At the same time, the precise replication of a given history is largely superficial. The internal construction of these residences is stylistically modern and technologically advanced, incorporating features including "energy efficient facades, and other 'green' building practices" (2013:80).

Luciana Melchert Saguas Presas, a research associate at Wageningen University & Research Center (Wageningen UR), makes a distinction between "transnational buildings" and transnational influence. Transnational buildings, she writes, "are still 'global products' too often designed by the same global architects, and occupied by the same global economic agents" (2005:30). Transnational influence, by comparison, emerges only through local deformation, after global identity has been fractured and grafted onto local conditions. As opposed to generic global products, simulacrum towns are tailored to serve tastes and conceptions totally foreign to their origin, and thus have become transnational in their essense. According to Presas, the trend of postmodern architecture, with its aesthetic of individualized embellishment, was a reaction to the aesthetic homogeneity of these non-specific "global products" (Presas, 2005). Ironically, in its rush to be new, architecture in Pudong first emerged as postmodern eccentricity, before retreating to sleeker, more conservative forms. As Shanghai's citywide style matured somewhat, no doubt through consistent exposure to architects and design, a variety of more accepted flavours began replacing blatant pastiche. Because the kitsch aesthetic plays on misconception and cultural naiveté, progressive cultural exposure naturally leads to greater sensitivity to "crude" design. As awareness develops, kitsch adapts to accommodate sophistication. By deliberately cultivating a "global" urban landscape, Shanghai evolved from a few towers that symbolized "globalness" into a highly interconnected city, according to Xuefei Ren, a professor of urban studies. In her examination of intercity connections, Ren examined how Chinese cities were connected to the "global network" of architecture (2011:24). By tracking the location of branch offices of the largest architecture firms, she compared and ranked world cities based on how many other cities each was connected to through a common architectural firm. Shanghai ranked highest, and, as host to 24 international branch offices, it is "linked" in to 329 other cities around the world (Ren, 2011:30).

The zeal with which Shanghai administrative agencies worked to cultivate an image of modernity (embodied by Mayor Zhu's expressed desire for newness) is the critical ingredient that distinguishes the city's kitsch from generic homogeneity. Belief that one can conjure the "modern" as a commodity; that is, to mistake process for product, serves the very essence of kitsch logic. Twenty years after the Shanghai skyline began to take form, the city organized a massive world event to publicly

announce its arrival as a modern, global economy.

Figure 3: The massive "Cultural Pavilion" at Expo 2010 (photo: 2010 N.Zimmermann)

With the Shanghai skyline cluttered with modern symbolism, poised to create the future, the city hosted the "Better City, Better Life" campaign of Shanghai World Expo 2010.

The Administrators of World's Fairs and other global expositions have always oriented their content toward representations of the future. But the scale of Expo 2010, with an operating budget equivalent to $45 billion in United States currency, underscores its political significance. Nicholas Dynon, a doctoral candidate at Macquarie University, has suggested that the engineered space of the Expo 2010 heralded a new technique of projecting transcultural and transnational ideologies. "This powerful dimension of the Expo site reflects a broader evolution from the use of 'visual' to 'experiential' propaganda by the...Chinese state" (2011:190). In this way, Expo 2010 offers strong ideological and aesthetic parallels with the Chicago World's Fair of 1933 and its thematic representation of a "Century of Progress". The Chicago World's Fair was among the first large-scale attempts to integrate coloured lighting into architecture, and, as illuminated by "gas-filled tubes", was deemed "a festival of color," (Evans, 1933:21). Nearly 80 years later, the colourful lights and massive forms of Shanghai World Expo 2010 offered a similar kind of futurism. The Shanghai-sponsored Cultural Pavilion, hulking and elliptical, with its massive, elevated pedestrian passage, and huge, curving funnel-like forms, appeared to be consciously advanced, if not futuristic (Figure 3), employing a visual vocabulary akin to the work of Antonio Sant'Elia, the Italian Futurist architect (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Expo 2010: Pedestrian walkway. (photo: 2010 N.Zimmermann)

For an insightful perspective on the dynamic use of multi-coloured lighting, one can examine the seminal study of Las Vegas by the architects Robert Venturi, Steven Izenour and Denise Scott Brown. According to Venturi, Izenour and Scott Brown, the futuristic aesthetic of a lighting scheme follows from the dynamic qualities inherent in light, which can be increased in brightness, colour and velocity, as required, to indicate the pace of life as a display of technological prowess (Venturi, Brown & Izenour, 1977:116). Following from this, as Venturi, Izenour and Brown have shown, such lighting has been a popular component within the visual rhetoric of commerce and advertising (1977). In this way, Shanghai's lit buildings sometimes appear to be Western-style casinos. The Lupu Bridge is a striking example of this tendency, as the structure flaunts glittering lights that are reminiscent of the Las Vegas Strip. Apart from associations with advertising, the ability of light to distort spatial bearings can induce a surreal feeling of disorientation (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Time-lapse series of a tower with multi-coloured lighting (photo: 2010 N.Zimmermann)

The effect resembles the suspended nature of "hyper-reality" that Nicholas Perry, a sociologist at the University of Auckland, attributes to globalized culture. Perry, echoing the theories of Jean Baudrillard, finds a physical example of this kind of imaginary reality in Disneyland, which he calls "an imaginary place which feeds reality and reality energy into that 'endless unreal...immense script'" (Perry, 1998:70).

The surreal feeling that many engineered, immersive environments provoke, such as those encountered at expositions and theme parks may, in Shanghai, be an unintentional effect of the large scale and reach of its municipal urban feature (Figure 5). To someone unfamiliar with the

city, Shanghai's overpasses, highways and bridges collectively provoke a feeling of alien "hyper-reality," especially when illuminated.

Figure 5: Infrastructure: Underside of North-South Elevated Road, Shanghai (photo: 2010 N. Zimmermann)

Paradoxically, the source of Shanghai's expansive, immersive infrastructure is far removed from globalized culture, and actually represents a legacy of isolation. Shanghai's abundance of municipal and semi-private "design institutes" and the resulting civic infrastructural development that these institutes design and implement is the institutional aftermath of Communist era policies. During the Maoist period, the dismantling of design institutions and architecture schools nearly extinguished the job opportunities that skilled experts and designers had once relied on for work. Many Shanghai architects left China during this period, if their personal finances allowed it (Rowe, 2011:44). The subsequent transfer of commissions for the city's towers and other prominent buildings to international firms such as Kohn Pedersen Fox; Skidmore, Owings and Merrill; Nikken Sekkei; and Arte Charpentier; to name a few, while boosting Shanghai's international image also conceals the absence of a competitive native architectural culture. Today, there are many more native architects working in Shanghai. In a recent article, Peter Rowe and Harye Kan introduce a nascent "new stream" of Chinese architects who have been influenced by a transcultural, trans-Pacific exposure to travel, education, and distant designers (2011:13). Rowe and Kan take note of a few such architects working independently across China, including Wu Yue, of Shanghai, who founded the Design Future Studio after leaving a position as a key municipal planner in Pudong (2011:14). Rowe and Kan characterize the style of Wu's practice by his ability to work across multiple disciplines, including urban design and planning, landscape architecture and interior design, among others. As they point out, this degree of design flexibility is common within small Chinese offices, often, out of necessity, due to a lack of human resources (2011:14). Rowe and Kahn also cite the example of a small, multi-modal design firm known as MADA s.p.a.m., with s.p.a.m standing for "Strategy, Planning, Architecture, Media". Ma Qingyun, who

founded MADA in 1999, was born in Xi'an, and studied at Beijing and the University of Pennsylvania. Aside from the firm's flexibility in design across different media, MADA's work is notable for its cultural satire, "not at all ashamed to exploit high socialist camp in branding its identity" (Luna & Tsang, 2006:185). In designing MADA's Shanghai-based studio, Ma converted an abandoned "Red Star" kindergarten facility, a vestige of the public school system in pre-reform Shanghai, into a "unique type of socialist modern hybrid" (Luna & Tsang, 2006:195).

By and large, attempts to conjure the future at Expo 2010 and throughout Shanghai have fallen flat because the ethos of "futurism" relies upon a complex synthesis. Theorist Joshua La Bare claims that a connection to the past is what endows the futurist aesthetic with credibility. As he suggests, "the Japanese reverence for the past, may, in fact, be one of our main psychological reasons for projecting their 'futurity'...by entering the future present intact, by carrying with them 'the past' in the form of our present" (2000:43). This notion implies that city and state officials, in their rush to embrace modernity and futurism, have undermined their agenda by excluding local history. The political landscape is crucial in this scenario. During the past decade, there has been growing concern in China about the Westernization of design and its potential threat to traditional culture (McNeill, 2009:129). Although the fusion of Chinese and Western forms during the early twentieth century offers a history of hybrid modernism, Communist officials are unlikely to endorse a period such as the 1920s that was marked by free-market capitalism and a strong private sector. Rowe and Kan have called attention to recent historical conservation projects in China and Shanghai, but their historical thrust remains limited to a "recognition of industrial heritage of the Maoist era" (2011:13). Aside from the political undertones, the schism between modern and historic is reinforced by a rapid physical transformation of the landscape: more than 80% of post-1952 building construction has occurred since the mid-1980s (Rowe, 2011:74). Perhaps a tendency to over-simply narratives through kitsch symbolism reflects a necessary expediency for branding self-identity amid rapid transition.

Kitsch is not persuasive for describing the future; its flimsy outer skin betrays a hollow timeline. The difference between a modern society and its faux-modern representations becomes the historical scope and experience that remains absent from the latter. As Gabriele Bryant puts it, "being modern implies not just a distinction from the past, but also an open attitude towards the future" (Hvattum & Hermansen, 2004:69). Shanghai emerged from the Maoist period and its influences onto a global stage, and, determined to convince both the nation and the world of its modernity, assembled a range of global symbols and its own transnational copies. No matter how well concealed or integrated kitsch may become, it will always be evident under disciplinary forces that censor history to frame the present. As design becomes more established in academic and private-sector circles, defined and expressed through a diversity of democratic, participatory channels, incidents of experimentation and innovation are likely to increase. However, as the case of Shanghai illustrates, efforts by state and city governments to simulate such a vibrant culture will inevitably be undermined by the clichés of kitsch styling.

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