
Design Appreciation at IDAS - an multi-dimensional approach

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● Technical dimension, Human dimension, & Cultural dimension

1. Design appreciation at IDAS

Design appreciation is a once a week 16 week course . Primarily it is a series of presentation and discussion about product design, aiming at increasing the awareness of design among students, and stimulating their own work. It also aims to foster their knowledge and ability to differentiate and judge between good and poor design in different context such as technical performance, business concerns, and cultural and social issues.

Discussion focuses on why some products have fantastic appearance but little practical value, some products impress consumers but have short commercial life, some products seems to extend people experience but can also create social problems. some products are commercially successful globally while others are noncompetitive in the market, and there are many products that are unsafe, unsatisfying and even dangerous to use, or simply a wasteful of resource.

Design Appreciation also touches on individual designers? philosophy and their work, and how their attitude and commitment give birth to strong personalised style which influence younger generation of designers

Meeting topics includes:

- Design and society
- From making sense to making money and vice versa
- Exclusive and handmade objects
- Material instinct
- Communication through design 1: image
- Communication through design 2: object
- Underground culture
- The human dimension
- The meaning of time and new technology
- Eternally yours: product aging and obsolescence
- Jewelry and fashion design
- Appreciation and depreciation: quality of objects
- Corporate identity: Alessi
- Hidden Design reference
- Milano Fair 1999
- Imagining Design

2. Design appreciation : an multi-dimensional approach

Increasingly good design is difficult to define or quantify. Simply because the field of design has become so vast. It varies from life-saving medical devices to fast moving consumer goods that satisfy no basis need of human but nevertheless contributed to our total living experience; and from the cyberworld of electronic commerce to monumental architecture and urban planning. Today design goes far beyond function and form and explored into contents and how they interact with people, and thought process ultimately governing most of our behaviour and habits.

Perhaps logically good industrial design is design that can successfully reflect a whole range of factors and value, the more the better so to speak. These factors includes scientific and technical performance and analyses; manufacturing intelligent, innovation and cost benefits; ergonomics or human factors including cognitive science; aesthetic as well as social cultural values, and also, increasingly, business and commercial concerns.

Undoubtedly only some of these factors can be measured successfully, and only up to a certain degree. Traditional analytical methods simply becomes a blunt tool when confronted with measuring achievement created by design originated by emotional urge and subjective personal needs. We need language we do not have, and it is for this reason searching for language is almost as important as design creation itself. Education and design practice in the meantime has also progressed rapidly. In the past few years, boundaries between design disciplines are blurred, and new possibilities and fields of study in design emerge.

To appreciate design not as it is but design to come, we need to borrow language from the frontier of a wide range of studies or disciplines, from anthropology to cognitive science, from marketing to multimedia. They can come from the trend setting culturally dominating countries, or paradoxically, from authentic, somewhat under developed local culture that have not been explored. Design is inventing its own vastly complex language.

As designers themselves, appreciate design can also be done from the design process point of view. How he handles the linear and non-linear thought process, the speed and richness of his developmental skills, the mindware he uses. His freshness of ideas. The more traditional methods of problem solving in hardware term in design is rapidly replaced by the search of understanding of Human nature and human desire, and to implement this compelling quality and characteristics to new generations of products.

3. The key issues

The following are the key issues we discuss in the course in IDAS and will be presented in the KSDS conference.

The technical dimension

- scientific and technical extreme
- the features game
- construction with intelligence
- simplicity vs complexity
- new material application
- creativity in conceptual thinking
- elegant solutions

The human dimension

- common sense
- objective data vs real life observation
creating desirable experience
- design for sharing
- distinctive thoughts
- basic instinct

The cultural dimension

- regional taste vs global requirement
- bottom up vs top down culture
- content and expression
- hidden meanings
- art in design