

# Sustainable Eco-Design Based on Victor Papanek's Ecological Aesthetics

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## **I. Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to recognize main environmental issues that we are facing, and to identify the values of design based on Vitor Papanek's ecological aesthetics, that is, the values of design improving human and his/her living environment. For this purpose, the definition of eco-design and its historical background were reviewed, and cases embodying sustainable eco-design, a modern version of eco-design, were analyzed. The main findings of this study were as follows.

## **II. Theoretical Background of Eco-design**

### **1. Ecology**

The term 'ecology' was first introduced by German biologist Ernst Haeckel in 1866. This term was not generally used at that time, but biologists around that time made contributions to research in this area. In early days, ecology was used in natural science, with 'eco' originating from Greek word 'Oikos,' which means 'a house' or 'a place of living.' Ecology refers to research on living creatures against the background of their place of living, or relationships between creatures or groups of creatures and environment. It is science that defines the inter-relationships between living creatures and environment.

### **2. Eco-design**

Eco-design trends in modern design history are represented by organic design; cognitive behavioral approach; design movements that are aimed to overcome unnatural and inhuman characteristics of tools, products, buildings and cities in modern society; shift in design value to energy-efficient design; and Green Design, which promotes environmental-friendly practices. Kwon Young-gull defines eco-design as two-prong approach aimed at improving and preserving environment and achieving 'quality of life' and public good at the same time under the concept of social-ecological balance. In particular, every product and building must not be judged by its appearance, but by whether the design can promote 'health of humans and environment,' according to Kwon.

### **3. Victor Papanek's Ecological Aesthetics**

Victor Papanek sets the boundary in pursuit for beauty by separating beauty and aesthetics (Victor Papanek, 1983), while suggesting design integrates materials and mind into one. According Papanek, beauty has a limited lifespan, so its value fades away as time goes by. He sees beauty as consumable, which is always replaced by another. Therefore, designers must seek aesthetics that is sustainable, he argues. Aesthetics refers to integration of materialistic and mental beauty. The reason Victor Papanek stresses the need for aesthetics is because it is directly related to existence of living creatures including humans. Here, 'sustainable' is based on standards used to evaluate aesthetic value of a subject, and this concept is defined as green aesthetics. Designers can utilize environmental elements to make design decisions as long as they understand and adopt various principles of eco-design correctly.

### **III. Sustainable Slow Design**

At the 'DYD 2002' held in Bangalor, India in 2002, Alastair Fuad-Luck introduced his thesis on concept of slow design. Slow design examines long history of design as a tool for humanistic advancement, and deals with 'the continuous present' instead of forecasting the future. Slow design creates literary 'graphic interface' and '3-D interface' to promote slowness, reflection and serenity so as to put focus on slowing down the speed. Sustainable design aims to present a solution to the task of preserving and passing down environment of today to following generations by developing recycling materials; designing products easily transformable and interoperable with various parts so as to prevent extinction of the existing products due to introduction of new high-tech products; and developing timeless style that does not pursue contemporary trends.

### **IV. Conclusion**

The so-called sustainable slow design of the 21st century that can be viewed to follow "green design" of the 1980s has three factors: timelessness, that is, independence of contemporary styles; renewability by the use of renewable materials; and multi-functionality coming from flexible modification of products and replaceability of their parts. Also, in the context of sustainable slow design, the following changes in the pattern of consumption are emphasized. First, the life of product should be extended. Secondly, the frequency of use of product should be increased. Lastly, owning products should be replaced by leasing them.

## References

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