

Discussion on the Essence and Future of Design Based on the “Wild Design”

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Abstract—The social development enhances the status of design in daily life. However, visual elements designed by laypeople take a great proportion among basic-level audiences. Designed by nonprofessional designers, the visual form is called as “Wild Design” that can only transfer basic information. This paper states design aesthetics and design thoughts according to “Wild Design”, elicits the thinking and enlightenment on design as well as discusses the essence and future of design.

Keywords—wild design; design aesthetics; design thoughts; essence and future

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary society with soaring development, design categories receive development and attentions. Because the introduction of design discipline to China starts late, visual elements designed by laypeople are seen everywhere, especially in low-end commercial districts. “Wild Design” is produced to meet tremendous social needs. Low-end design market is chaotic. Most merchants just ask print shop to design elements, neglecting even ignoring virtual aesthetics. When accepting orders, most manufacturing companies don’t charge design fees if they design and produce finished products. Therefore, the design is very casual and only expresses the most basic knowledge. However, “professional design” often caters to high-end products and market, resembling “highbrow art and literature”, while “Wild Design” is more similar to “popular literature and art”. Serious popularization appears and will exist in the design market for a long time.

II. DESIGN AESTHETICS AND “WILD DESIGN”

Born in western society in the 1920s, design aesthetics is a burgeoning discipline and makes the traditional philosophical aesthetics closer to our life. The most essential difference between design aesthetics and aesthetics is that the former bases on design, puts the core of aesthetics into design activities of human and designs through aesthetic concept. It includes all phenomenon related to design thinking of human and guides design activities. Its aesthetic judgment establishes on physical forms and bases on in-depth philosophical aesthetics to have aesthetic significance in practice.

“The design in real life has two vital objectives: practicality and aesthetics.”^① “Wild Design” conveys basic information most directly, abandons all decorative elements and applies the most original and rough way, so it is only practical. Aesthetic design should make people have visual aesthetics and relaxed and pleasant psychology. Importantly, design aesthetics pursues spiritual freedom and pleasure. On the contrary, “Wild Design” refers to unpleasant aesthetic activity which conveys information ponderously instead of considering the spiritual aesthetic feelings of audiences. Therefore, “Wild Design” can’t be regarded as aesthetic design but information transfer, even far from design.

III. DESIGN THINKING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Design appears along with human being, referring to a technology produced when people carry out creative activities and a means to improve living quality. The creation of tools is the life instinct of primitive people to meet practical requirements in daily life, laying foundation for design aesthetics. The book of *Human Design Thought* defines “design through ‘human’ and ‘thought’ and divides it into four stages including ‘design of revering survival, fitting for survival, optimizing survival and surviving leisurely’”.^② In the first period, design activities of human come from the reverence for nature and aim at survival. Artistic works embody reproduction worship. Most products are designed for sacrifice and deities. In feudalistic society, the design dominated by culture of Mohist School in China is called the design of fitting for survival. Most are manual design to meet people’s requirements in life and make their life convenient. Products are designed for human. The progress of design is closely linked to the rapid development of science and technology. In the industrial society, the design has characteristics of rational analysis and functionalism and aims at machine production, becoming the mechanical and standardized “design of optimizing survival”. At the meantime, influenced by the design thought of Bauhaus, design and art are separated from each other. Design of optimizing survival is the design direction of future design that integrates scientific and technological innovation and advocates harmonious

^① Xing Qinghua: *Design Aesthetics*, page 415, Southeast University Press, 2011

^② Zhai Mo: *Design Thought of Human*, page 2, Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007

design with sustainable development to benefit mankind. Compared with traditional design, the design methods will alter tremendously. Design thought and design aesthetics will become mature.

“Design and art are two performance objects with different properties. Design pays attention to creation of things and functions. The design process becomes important content in design expression; essentially, art tends to be the object for people to appreciate.”^③ First, the separation of rationality and non-rationality separates design from art. Philosophical thoughts with rationalistic scientific spirit in the west address only proved phenomenon is certain. The design system highly strengthens rational and scientific design activities. Non-rationality opposes and denies rational scientism, regards intuition as an important way of people to understand the world. It pursues spiritual world and regards spiritual principle superior to scientific principle, drawing forth numerous modern schools of art. Second, the separation of form and function is the separation of design. Some schools of design highly praise function but another school advocates form supreme. Since the appearance of art and design, people have debated on forms and functions. Many schools of design and design works appear but they follow the same principle, namely the aesthetic principle. Therefore, they are beautiful and excellent without difference. Although design is not pure art, artistry and aesthetics have become inseparable parts of design. In modern society, design is divided into: the first is mass design to meet requirements of audiences and transfer information; the second is artistic design.

“Wild Design” belongs to mass design and refers to the most basic design. It fails to consider people’s aesthetic needs and sense of spiritual pleasure, becoming popular in today’s society. To figure out why, first, merchants are irresponsible for their industries and distrust beautiful design and good visual display can improve the potential value of products. They pursue cheap design instead of investment of soft power. In the design of visual images, they meet personal aesthetic needs and let designers follow their opinions. Most will not take advice and suggestions of designers. It is the leading cause that “Wild Design” gluts the market. Second, designers in low-end market are incompetent. Most attend short-term training, so they shouldn’t be called designers but technicians of design. Meanwhile, an inevitable national condition of China is that most students take design discipline in universities but they don’t like it. In high school period, they choose it as a shortcut to attend university under enrollment pressure. These can be improved through social development and hard-working by practice. Failing to meet aesthetic needs and provide spiritual pleasure, the design will be eliminated by the society.

In modern design after Bauhaus, although rational design separates from emotional art, they cannot separate thoroughly. Good design is the integration of sensibility and rationality, the unification of technology and art, referring to aesthetic enjoyment that brings people aesthetic and spiritual pleasure, such as the “Red Blue Chair” designed by Dutch designer

Rietveld. The supreme art gets rid of utilitarianism and doesn’t cater to others’ opinions and thoughts. Instead, it dialogues with thoughts and explores aesthetics, so it will become classics that show unique style.

Design resembles pyramid structure. Classical artistic design is rare and precious on the top. Mass design serves as the foundation. Mass design is an inseparable part in society. It is worthy to be confirmed that many of them conform to design aesthetics and have aesthetic value and meaning. Artistic design is the objective pursued by each designer, because artistic design is art. Philosophers Benjamin and Adorn divide language into: the language of God, the language of human and the language of things. Art language belongs to human language and keeps imitative and expressive in the primitive language of people. Therefore, in explanation of art language, we should understand the truth and implications of human language to prevent it from becoming tools and being materialized. Artistic beauty is the best interpretation and translation of natural beauty. Each designer should pursue art.

IV. ESSENCE AND FUTURE OF DESIGN

The word “design” originates from western industrial civilization and produces through industrial production. “Design refers to the activity that visually conveys design, planning, imagine and methods in problem solving.”^④ Historically, design is an activity when primitive people make tools, a behavior of taking material carrier as spiritual ballast, a typical cultural phenomenon. Design aesthetics refers to the aesthetic context on the basis of the typical cultural phenomenon. From another perspective, design cannot be treated as the conception or creation of a figure or activity. When the figure or activity fails to meet demands, it is a kind of design to eliminate or terminate it. Therefore, “design is a concept and thinking of people’s life style”.^⑤ We cannot only regard design as creation of matters but observe through history, culture and geography. “From the perspective of cultural development, design is divided into three systems: the first is the cultural design system that bases on Islamic civilization with deities orientation; the second is the cultural design system that bases on western civilization with personal orientation and advocacy of science; the third is the cultural design system that bases on the culture of Confucianism and Taoism and collectivity with pursuit of ethics.”^⑥ The three cultural systems constitute the design system in contemporary society and have far-reaching significance on the design in the current world.

“Wild Design” has design essence and belongs to design activities of human. More specifically, without theoretical and aesthetic basis and only with forms, it cannot be regarded as design. Therefore, it has the essence instead of the future of design. The most well-known example is the logo design of Coca Cola and Pepsi. The logo design of Coca Cola depends

^④ Wang Shouzhi: *History of World Contemporary Design*, page 12, China Youth Publishing House, 2002

^⑤ (Japan) Ikko Tanaka, translated by Zhu E: *Awakening of Design*, page 172, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2009

^⑥ Zhai Mo: *Design Thought of Human*, page 33, Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007

^③ Xing Qinghua: *Design Aesthetics*, page 425, Southeast University Press, 2011

on supreme aesthetics to give people the aesthetic feeling that will not fade or disappear with the passage of time. It is everlasting and provides the aesthetic enjoyment. By contrast, as time goes by, the logo of Pepsi is ever-changing. We are not saying it is not good enough, instead, it fails to depend on theoretical and aesthetic basis, so that the design meets aesthetic needs temporarily. The example is not to prove the logo design of Pepsi belongs to “Wild Design” but to prove the design that can only meet aesthetic needs temporarily has no future. With the development of times, it will be eliminated and replaced. Only design works that conform to everlasting aesthetics will provide aesthetic enjoyment with the passage of time. Pepsi cannot meet the demand, let alone “Wild Design” that fails to meet aesthetic needs. Therefore, “Wild Design” only contains few essence of design and has no future and will step down from the stage of history in the end.

Obviously, the development trend of design also belongs to the development trend of culture. The humanism with close integration of science and art drives design development. People-oriented design is the tendency of future design. Good design follows aesthetic principles and depends on theoretical basis and has artistic nature meanwhile cultivate our aesthetic taste. It is another important essence of design different from its inherent nature. “In the 21st century, we are in more diversified environment with higher science and technology. Meanwhile, we should review values and standards of human.”^⑦In future design, we should take more aspects into consideration and try harder in scheme and actions for the future of design according to the essence of design. The design based on cultural background also should develop through this way. Future design perfectly integrates three design systems, mainly characterized by the principal nature of human and the collection and communication of information. Technically, future design will not be confined to small classification but integrate multiple disciplines. New design that meets people’s development demand produces in the intersection point of disciplines. Future design develops with the development of science and becomes opener and more virtual, referring to the liberation of human brain. According to the development prospect of digital internet and VR holographic technique, the forms of design activities are more tremendously different from that of the traditional design activities. With the integration and innovation of cultures, future design will become more diversified cultural activity.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the development history of human culture, “Wild Design” will step down from the stage of history because of it fails to conform to the aesthetics of audiences, but it will take a long time. At present, wild design still occupies the most proportion of domestic design. How should we change? Many designers will blindly learn foreign design to change the status quo of domestic design, get into vicious cycle of design and lose characteristics by imitating mechanically. Blind imitation of foreign design cannot produce good design works, and it is just a “westernization

movement” in design. Chinese design must closely integrate with emotion, nature and ration under the guidance of Chinese philosophy and aesthetics. At the meantime, designers should consider cultural background and the pursuit of humanistic care and ideal morality. In order to design good works, they must have critical consciousness and consciousness of responsibility to transform human mind and promote social progress. Excellent designers have aesthetic insight, learn and improve spiritual realm. Independent thinking produces independent personality, which endows design works with unique artistic charm.

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