



上海人民美術出版社

“设计之变”展的历史背景

本文的论点是，当代设计要从历史传统中寻找未来的方向。此次设计展的主题是“设计之变”，观众将一睹令人激动、但又令人费解的创造性活动，见证设计师是如何驾驭最新全球科技并就地取材创造设计奇迹。在参展设计作品中，人们既能看到基因工程的影子，也会联想起人类最原始的迷信，最重要的是，将感受到转变与新生的主旋律贯穿整个展览。此次设计展将激发想象，让观众瞻瞩未来的种种可能性。当然在不同视角下，他们也会见仁见智！

当代设计的关注重点不再是获得答案，而是提出问题，那么我们是如何演进到前卫设计的新阶段的？历史的视角是否有助于厘清这一现状背后的根源？

首先，我们需要提醒自己，“传统的”现代设计展到底呈现何种面貌？正是因为人们潜意识里守护着一种正统观，让“设计之变”这样的展览显得非常前卫。那么这个传统有哪些重要特点？

一般认为，大凡重要的展览都应展示现代科技的风采与魅力，这种理念可以追溯到1851年在约瑟夫·帕克斯顿设计的水晶宫中举办的首次国际博览会（Greenhalgh 1988）。展览的场地非常重要，因为经典展览的另一个重要特点是，参展作品的现代性应该烘托主体标志性建筑物寓含的象征意义，比如1889年巴黎世界博览会的主体建筑埃菲尔铁塔、1939年纽约世博会的主体建筑角尖塔和圆球，以及1958年布鲁塞尔世博会的主体建筑原子塔（Allwood 1977）。

在现代制造企业这种支配性的认识下，各国的参展展品也各不相同，从1851年起，首先按版块陈列展品，然后拥有了自己独具特色的展馆，甚至建造了自己的展览村（如1900年的巴黎世博会）。其潜台词是虽然世界文明的发展殊途同归，但欧洲的本地文化应保持本国特色，而各帝国内的那些所谓“原始”民族则是幸存下来的异族而已。

自上世纪五六十年代以来，世界博览会的帝国主义或社会达尔文主义的意味逐渐减弱，但人们仍然相信展览就应该展示科技进步的魅力。而且，可以实现人们梦想的科技在规模上变得更加国产化。上世纪中期的展览“未来之家”最受欢迎的特色是通过贸易将19世纪和20世纪初盛行的民族复兴概念，转换成了个人对消费生活方式的追求（Horrigan 1986）。

站在21世纪回望上世纪50年代畅想的那种动手按下按钮就能实现完全自动化的未来生活，我们心中不免会有一股怀旧之情油然而生，甚至会觉得有点滑稽可笑。但与此同时，不同国家的人，无论是斯堪的纳维亚人、美国人还是意大利人，他们对现代精神的阐释虽然不同，但无一例外都无法跳脱怀旧的风格。

那么，办展会必言进步的那种毫不动摇的执念哪里去了？现在是什么在推动“当代”设计向前发展？答案之一是所有先锋派文化运动都有辩证复归的趋势。新一代的进步派总是喜欢以老一代的激进主义为抨击目标，以此标立自己的身份。这种摆锤往复运动在上世纪六七十年代蜚声国际的设计中显得尤为明显。60年代的设计充分体现了设计师们对太空竞赛的乐观和他们眼中流行文化的盎然趣味，比如乔·科伦波（1930-1971）的塑料模块化家具。到了70年代，在可持续设计理念先驱维克多·帕帕奈克（1923-1998）的倡导下，设计师们从工艺感性的重新评价中获得灵感，注重针对“实际”问题寻找“实际”解决办法。

当然，设计界的任何策划活动都要受到外部力量支配（尤其是受到新材料和技术或者突发事件的影响，如1973年的世界石油危机），但前卫设计无愧其先锋派地位的盛名，总是与大众市场保持着距离。

这在20世纪初上半叶现代设计达到鼎盛时尤其如此，当时的功能和简约派设计师自诩为大众品位的改革家。到了六七十年代，这种局面似乎开始发生变化，新一代设计师开始崭露头角，他们把大众文化元素、甚至极差的品味都整合到自己的设计中。让设计回归装饰功能是后现代时代的突出特征，然而，这种做法与商业惯例完全不在同一个层面交流。从历史传统、好莱坞文化、50年代的媚俗传统中找灵感是设计师们的战略选择，也是心照不宣的选择。在刚刚踏入后现代主义的那一刻，设计便开始处处抵牾现代主义。



斯蒂芬·海沃德

伦敦艺术大学，中央圣马丁艺术与
设计学院。

这就是意大利的孟菲斯设计小组（1981-1987）成功实施的“休克策略”，该设计组在我们的故事里是设计界的水岭：在创作仅供人们思考、争论和收集的限量版设计过程中，该设计组为类似于本次“设计之变”的展览奠定了基础（Radice 1985）。

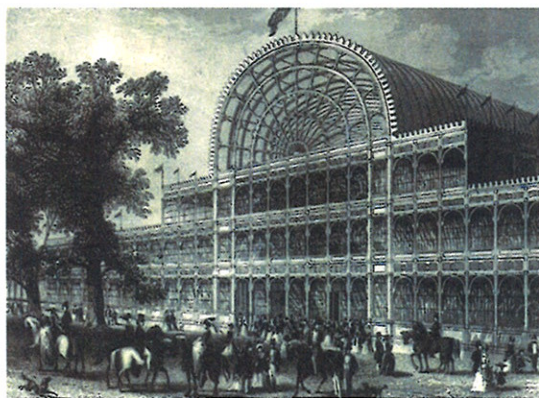
在早前几十年，像荷兰“风格派”（1917-1931）和德国“包豪斯派”（1919-1933）等先锋派运动就创造了很多颇具争议的原型设计，但其初衷仍然是为大规模生产制定蓝图，使其成为通往更加美好未来的媒介。相比之下，孟菲斯设计小组的产品只能说没有脱离社会，因为他们的目标是抨击根深蒂固的品位文化，也就是权威部门所界定的所谓“好的设计”，但他们对于设计的原创性、效率和建设性的怀疑态度损害了“先锋”设计的整个理念。

因此，孟菲斯设计小组乃至整个后现代运动差点将先锋设计运动扼杀在萌芽状态。既然所有风格都一样有存在的合理性，为什么还要展望一个别样的未来？既然设计的好坏判定只因文化不同而异，那我们怎么可能设计出客观上“更好”的产品？

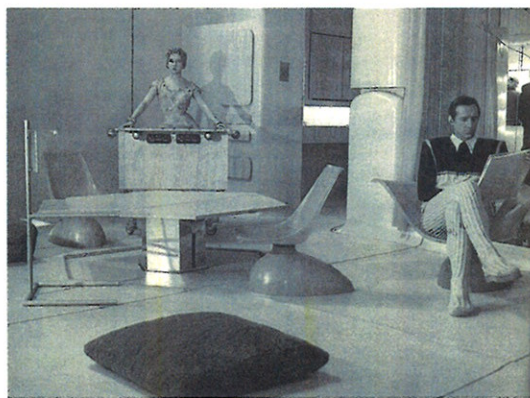
“设计之变”展就是要向人们展示，先锋设计改变了产品与用户的互动关系，深化了与艺术界的浪漫主义甚至非理性主义的联系，从跳脱了相对论的束缚。简言之，当代设计不再纠结于自身的历史传统，而是更多地从与日常生活、用户的情感需求保持统一。自上世纪90年代以来，先锋设计慢慢具备了诗歌艺术气质、场所意识、十足的魅力和孩童般的好奇心（Mulder和Pruyssen 1998）。

这种趋势广泛体现在本次“设计之变”的作品中。为了说清楚历史的来龙去脉，我这里重点介绍本次展览的一件作品——于尔根·贝（Jurgen Bey，1965年生）于1999年设计的《蚕茧双人椅》。

倘若你在别的设计展看到于尔根·贝的作品，你一定会盛赞他创造性地使用了科技成果，也就是聚氯乙烯薄膜，这种材料通常用于收缩胶膜包装，用作飞机和机械部件的表层的保护膜。然而，要放在“设计之变”的主旨下审视，《蚕茧双人椅》首先是一件鬼魅一般的作品或恋物作品。它就像一个谜，也像一件家具，即使放在重新改造过的17世纪多宝阁中，或者放在比利时画家雷内·马格利特（1898-1967）想象的超现实主义房间内，也丝毫不会让人感觉有任何违和感。这是因为《蚕茧双人椅》散发出一股人气，但也符合弗洛伊德所说的“怪异”风格。它瞬间让人们回到心理发育刚刚起步的孩童时期：孩童通常会给静止的物体指定某种性格，当他们看到最平常的材料时，都会联想起某个奇幻王国。因此，《蚕茧双人椅》足以让人怀旧，让人联想起孩童世界的童话，同时也不乏成人世界较为阴暗的一面。坚硬的塑料表面就像是恋物齿轮装置，对于迷恋不正当的性行为的人来说，这张椅子足以引发大量的关注。



The Great Exhibition Building, Hyde Park, London 1851.



Alison and Peter Smithson (architects) The House of the Future. Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition, London 1956.

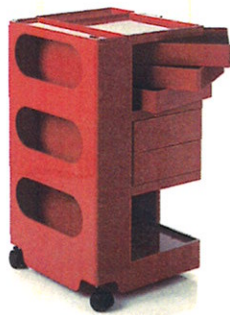
当然，于尔根·贝以极简主义手法进行创作，传达出丰富的寓意。该设计中的所有要素都取自我们集体的潜意识，因此观众很少会觉得这是天才的设计。设计师本人也是策展人或编辑，他让观众自行作为作品授予人格，或共同创作这件作品。

在展厅里展出这件设计似乎是顺理成章的事，因为作品牢牢地根植于现代艺术创作的历史。观众会自然而然地想到马歇尔·杜尚（1887-1968）在100年前创作的模棱两可的现成物品艺术品；约瑟夫·博伊斯（1921-1986）利用含混的日常材料创作的装置作品；或者是于尔根·贝在一件物品上盖上外罩，让人“重新陶醉于”熟悉感带来的喜悦；甚至是克里斯托（1935年出生）创作的包裹起来的建筑物或风景。

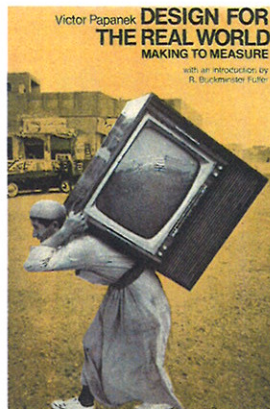
因此，我们实际上看到的是美术与设计创作相融合的产物，但这也引发了另一个问题。在进驻比喻意义上的画廊时，设计的先锋派是否放弃了自己的社会目标（O'Doherty 1986）？

很明显，这次展览中的作品会让人看到不同的生活方式，也对我们传统上与产品及环境的互动方式提出了质疑。但是这些不同的“创见”是否构成了一种统一的替代生活方式？在所谓“激进设计”的早期，意大利的Superstudio设计公司（1966-1978）宣布暂停消费主义，提倡没有国界的未来和一种“没有物品的生活”（Ambasz 1972）。这理念非常坚定，它发轫于上世纪60年代的反正统文化理想主义，在新兴技术所取得巨大成就（如卫星和太空探索）的带动下日益壮大。如今，我们对全球化和进步的理解更加深刻，我们也清楚地认识到，消费文化将不可避免地消除我们对“真实”体验的需求。比如，我们身边无处不在的智能手机就是如此，使用者可以记录、影响、监控、管理自己的个人身份。

本次展览上将展出的作品都是反射性消费主义的产物，有的模棱两可，有的寓意深刻，有的趣味盎然，它们都将吸引观众驻足思考，甚至让他们获得一种心理治疗的体验。当我们都反思自己的生活原则时，我们也就变成了社会变化的推动者。要说这些作品能产生什么更广泛的社会影响，那要取决于其背后体现的概念能否变成社会的“模因”（即文化基因），也取决于它们如何为文化对话带来新思路，并最终变成主流认识。



Joe Colombo (designer) Bobby Trolley. Manufacturer, Bieffeplast S.p.A., Padua, Italy 1969.



Victor Papanek. Design for the Real World. Thames and Hudson, London 1972.



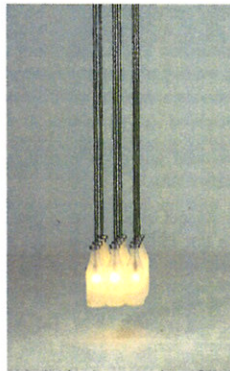
Ettore Sottsass (designer) Tahiti Lamp. Manufacturer, Memphis, Milan, 1981.

参考文献

- Allwood, J (1977) *The Great Exhibitions*. Studio Vista, London.
- Ambasz, E (1972) *Italy: The new domestic landscape. Achievements and problems of Italian Design*. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- Blauvelt, A (2003) *Strangely familiar. Design and everyday life*. Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis.
- Branzi, A (1984) *The Hot House. Italian New Wave Design*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- Greenhalgh, P (1988) *Ephemeral Visions. The expositions universelles, great exhibitions and world's fairs, 1851-1939* Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Hayward, S (2012) 'Writing Contemporary Design into History' in Lees-Maffei, G editor *Writing Design. Words and Objects*. Berg, London.
- Horrigan, B (1986) 'The Home of Tomorrow' in Corn, J.J. *Imagining Tomorrow. History, technology and the American future*. MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Mulder, R & Pruysen, A (1998) *Droog Design. Spirit of the Nineties*. 010 Publishers, Rotterdam.
- Freud, S (1919) *The 'Uncanny'*. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919)*.
- O'Doherty, B (1986) *Inside the white cube. The ideology of the Gallery Space*. University of California Press, London.
- Papanek, V (1972) *Design for the Real World. Making to Measure*. Thames and Hudson. London.
- Radice, B (1985) *Memphis: research, experiences, results, failures and successes of new design*. Thames and Hudson, London.



Tejo Remy (designer) Milk Bottle Lamp, Manufacturer Droog Design, Netherlands 1991



Marcel Breuer (designer) Chair (model B33) Manufacturer, Gebrüder Thonet A.G., Germany 1927-28.



Jurgen Bey (designer) Kokon Double Chair, Manufacturer Droog Design, Netherlands 1999.



Noam Toran (designer) Goebbels's Teapot. The Macguffin Collection, 2008.

The Historical Context of the Trans-Design Exhibition

The following article makes the case for an historically informed approach to contemporary design. The focus is *Trans-Design*, an exhibition that documents a moment in creative endeavour that is both exciting and perplexing. It is a show that combines the promise of the latest global technologies with a celebration of indigenous materials. There are references to genetic engineering, together with objects that trigger primitive superstitions. Above all there is the feeling of transformation and emergence. In *Trans-Design* there is the promise of many futures. A different future for every visitor!

So how have we arrived at a point in which progressive design is more concerned with questions than answers? And how might an historical perspective help to clarify the situation?

To begin with we need to remind ourselves of the 'conventional' modern design exhibition, for it is this underlying sense of an orthodoxy that enables exhibitions like *Trans-Design* to appear avant-garde. So what are the key features of this tradition?

The idea that a significant exhibition should showcase modern technology comes from the first of the international exhibitions, the one held in Joseph Paxton's prefabricated cast iron building in London, in 1851 (Greenhalgh 1988).

The setting is important, for another feature of the classic expo is the idea that the modernity of the exhibits should coalesce around the symbolism of an iconic monument. For instance the Eiffel Tower at the 1889 Paris Universal Expo, the Trylon and Perisphere from the 1939 New York World's Fair, and the Atomium that formed the centrepiece of the 1958 Brussels international Expo (Allwood 1977).

Within this overarching sense of a modern manufacturing enterprise, were the various national exhibits, first arranged in sections (from 1851), and then housed in their own distinctive pavilions and even villages (as first seen at the 1900 Paris Exposition). The subtext was that civilisation was set on a common path of development, with the indigenous cultures of Europe sustaining the national character, while the so-called 'primitive' peoples of the different empires functioned as exotic survivals.

Although the imperial or social Darwinist aspect of the international exhibitions receded in the 1950's and 60's, there was a continuing belief in scientific progress. Moreover the technologies that would realise this dream became more domestic in scale. One of the most popular features of the mid 20th century expo- the 'house of the future'- translated the 19th and early 20th century idea of national prosperity- via trade-into the personal pursuit of a consumer lifestyle (Horrigan 1986).

In the 21st century, the push button, fully automated fantasies of the 1950's are apt to seem nostalgic, or comical; while the different nationalistic interpretations of the modern spirit; the Scandinavian, the American, the Italian etc, have become just so many retro styles.

So what has happened to the unwavering faith in progress and what now provides the driving force in 'contemporary' design? One answer lies in the dialectical tendency of all avant-garde cultural movements. How the progressives of one generation tend to define themselves in opposition to the radicalism of their forebears. This pendulum-like motion is very evident in the sort of design that won international acclaim in the 1960's and 70's. While the former is characterised by the optimism of the space race and the playfulness of Pop culture, think of the plastic modular furniture of Joe Colombo (1930-1971).

The latter takes its cue from a reappraisal of a craft sensibility and the 'real' approach to 'real' problems, that was advocated by the pioneer of sustainable design, Victor Papanek (1923-1998).

Of course the machinations of the design world have always been subject to external forces (most notably the impact of new materials and technology, or unexpected events, like the 1973 oil crisis), but in keeping with its avant-garde position, progressive design has invariably remained aloof from the mass market.

This was especially the case in the heyday of modern design (the first half of the 20th century), when the advocates of function and simplicity saw themselves as the reformers of popular taste. The situation seemed to change from the 1960s and 70's, when a new generation of designers, came to assert their independence, by incorporating references to popular culture and even bad taste. And yet this return to ornament, a distinguishing feature of the Post-modern era (the 1970's and 80's), was of a different order to commercial practice. The references to the past, to Hollywood culture, to 1950's kitsch, were strategic and knowing. In its first flush Post-modern design set out to offend Modernism.

This was the 'shock strategy' brought to fruition by the Italian design group Memphis (1981-1987), an enterprise

Stephen Hayward

Central St. Martins, University of
the Arts, London

that in the context of our story marks a watershed; for in producing limited edition designs that were primarily intended to be contemplated, argued about, and collected, the group paved the way for exhibitions such as *Trans-Design* (Radice 1985).

In earlier decades avant-garde movements like De Stijl (1917-1931) and the Bauhaus (1919-1933) had produced controversial prototypes, but these were intended as blueprints for mass production; they were to become the agents of a better tomorrow.

By contrast, the products of Memphis could only claim to be socially engaged in the sense of attacking an entrenched taste culture- the 'good design' of the establishment- while their scepticism towards originality, efficiency and construction, undermined the whole concept of 'progressive' design.

To this extent Memphis, and the Post-modern movement more generally, might have brought the avant-garde agenda to a juddering halt. What was the point of envisaging an alternative future, when all styles were equally valid? How was it possible to design an objectively 'better' product, when the very notion of performance was culturally specific?

Trans-Design shows how the avant-garde escaped the impasse of relativism by changing its relationship with the user, and deepening its connection with a particular Romantic, or irrational strand in art. In short, contemporary design became less preoccupied with its own history, and more attuned to the everyday life, and emotional needs, of the user. From the 1990's avant-garde design embraced poetry, a sense of place, a feeling of enchantment,*and a childlike curiosity (Mulder and Pruysen 1998).

This tendency is widely represented in the *Trans-Design* show, but in order to clarify the historical parameters I will concentrate on just one of the exhibits, Jurgen Bey's *Kokon Double Chair* from 1999.

In a different sort of design exhibition Jurgen Bey's (born 1965) piece might be praised for its innovative use of technology. Namely the PVC membrane, which is more usually found as a shrink-wrap protective covering for aircraft and machine parts. However in the context of *Trans-Design*, the *Kokon Double Chair* is first and foremost a ghost, or fetish object; a conundrum, a piece of 'furniture' that would not look out of place in an updated version of the 17th century *Wunderkammer*, or a Surrealist interior conceived by the Belgian painter René Magritte (1898-1967). This is because the *Kokon Double Chair* exudes a living presence; it conforms to Freud's idea of the 'uncanny'. It is a throwback to a time in our psychological development when inanimate objects regularly take on a personality, as when a child conjures up a magic kingdom from the most mundane of materials. Hence there is a nostalgic, fairy tale aspect to the *Kokon Double Chair*, as well as a darker, adult dimension. The tight plastic surface is reminiscent of fetish gear. The *KoKokon Double Chair* could be the focus for some perverse sexual ritual.

And of course Jurgen Bey achieves this metaphorical richness with the minimum of means. There is little sense of a presiding genius, when the elements are plucked from the collective unconscious. This is the designer as curator, or editor, and it enables the viewer to personalise, or co-produce the work.

The technique seems entirely at home in the context of a gallery space, because it is so firmly rooted in the history of modern art practice. One thinks of the ambiguous readymades of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), which are now a 100 years old; the use of indeterminate, everyday materials in Joseph Beuys' (1921-1986) installations, or referring to Jurgen Bey's method of shrouding an object in order to 're-enchant' the familiar, the wrapped buildings and landscapes of Christo (born 1935).

So we are effectively witnessing a convergence of fine art and design practice and this leads to another question. In colonising the metaphorical 'white cube' has the avant-garde in design forsaken its social purpose? (O'Doherty 1986).

Clearly, the projects included in *Trans-Design* point to the possibility of different ways of living; they question our conventional interactions with products and environments. But do these 'insights' constitute a coherent alternative? In an earlier phase of so-called 'radical design', the Italian group *Superstudio* (1966-1978) could declare a moratorium on consumerism, and advocate a 'life without objects' in a future without borders (Ambasz 1972). It was a remarkably uncompromising vision, stemming from the idealism of the 1960's counter culture, egged on by the excitement of emerging technologies, such as satellites and the space programme. Today we have developed a far more nuanced understanding of globalisation and progress, and we can appreciate how consumer culture will inevitably appropriate any need we may have for 'authentic' experiences. I am thinking of those omnipresent devices- primarily the smart phone- which enable the user to record, shape, monitor, and

manage a personal identity.

The projects featured in *Trans-Design* operate in this age of reflexive consumerism. They employ ambiguity, metaphor, and playfulness to engage the user in a consciousness raising, even therapeutic experience. For by reflecting on the principles we live by, we become co-agents of change. If such work can be said to have a broader social impact, it lies in the extent to which the concepts become memes, how they inform a cultural conversation and shape a climate of opinion.

References

- Allwood, J (1977) *The Great Exhibitions*. Studio Vista, London.
- Ambasz, E (1972) *Italy: The new domestic landscape. Achievements and problems of Italian Design*. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- Blauvelt, A (2003) *Strangely familiar. Design and everyday life*. Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis.
- Branzi, A (1984) *The Hot House. Italian New Wave Design*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- Greenhalgh, P (1988) *Ephemeral Visions. The expositions universelles, great exhibitions and world's fairs, 1851-1939* Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Hayward, S (2012) 'Writing Contemporary Design into History' in Lees-Maffei, G editor *Writing Design. Words and Objects*. Berg, London.
- Horrigan, B (1986) 'The Home of Tomorrow' in Corn, J.J. *Imagining Tomorrow. History, technology and the American future*. MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Mulder, R & Pruyssen, A (1998) *Droog Design. Spirit of the Nineties*. 010 Publishers, Rotterdam.
- Freud, S (1919) The 'Uncanny'. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919).
- O'Doherty, B (1986) *Inside the white cube. The ideology of the Gallery Space*. University of California Press, London.
- Papanek, V (1972) *Design for the Real World. Making to Measure*. Thames and Hudson. London.
- Radice, B (1985) *Memphis: research, experiences, results, failures and successes of new design*. Thames and Hudson, London.