Design for InterCultural Innovation

Cumulus Regional Seminar **China** 2024 **Dutch** Workshop Days

Day Themes
Design for Intercultural Innovation

Introduction

The Department of Industrial Design, together with the School of Cultural Technologies of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), invite Cumulus members to join us at the Cumulus Regional Seminar on "Inter-Cultural Innovation" for design education and professional practice. The event aims to gather Cumulus members China to discuss the ongoing challenges and opportunities in design education related to the rapid development of the AI and other emerging technologies. Esteemed speakers from design, education, and local industry will share insights, fostering dialogue and collaboration. Moreover, the two-days seminar will welcome design leaders from the Netherlands as part of the Dutch-Chinese collaboration on culture, innovation, and education. Hosted by XJTLU, a Sino-British university with a British curriculum and international faculty, this seminar aims to bridge cultures and shape innovative approaches to design education.

As the title *Design for Intercultural Innovation* suggests, this seminar is broadly defined to seek opinion and to generate debate about our collective responsibility to maintain an intercultural dialogue about the role of creatives in fostering change in our world. It is our duty therefore to bring to bear the specificities of our differentiated experiences and educations to expose innovation which is truly 'across cultures'. To this end, the symposium asks the following questions: how can we better exchange our respective creative ideas to bring novel solutions to older problems; what do we expect from inter-culturalism? How do we measure intercultural innovation?

Beyond these central questions there are some premises from which this seminar emerges, notably the pressing debate about emergent technologies as they correspond to more traditional ways of doing things. Since the location for this event is a university, and since we can't do everything here, it follows that we should limit ourselves to those debates which embrace developing best educational practices at this pivotal moment in history.

Day 1
Theme: Old Norms: Tradition at the Intersection of New Technology
How does the preservation of tradition encourage intercultural innovation? On this day we invite speakers to describe /explore their practice or the practices of others, from the perspective of 'tradition'. A tradition may be simply construed as a norm, or a historic practice. It can simultaneously refer to manual, analogue, pre-mechanical, pre-digital, craft or artisanal skills and practices. Since tradition and the preservation of 'heritage' are often bound up with museums, we also invite those who work at the intersection of museums and education to this strand. We might additionally consider the role of museums in the preservation of craft; the formation of Museum 3.0; craft revival and craft as opposition. How can craft, which is often characterized as 'local', also be intercultural? And, since craft is inevitably 'making', then it is crucial to discuss what value 'making' brings in the class-room. How important is it for students to draw, to make models, to know about materials? What human characteristics does making sustain?

Importantly, how are these norms shifting? What novel practices are evolving? What kinds of hybrid results are they producing? How does the changing face of tradition serve economic ends?

Keywords
Outsider / Borderless/ Unlocated/ Regional
Post-Craft/ New Craft/ Hybrid Crafts
Making / Co-creation / Co-production/ Community
Skilling /De-skilling/Re-skilling
Museums 3.0 / New Museology / People Museums
New Ludditism/ Making in opposition
Craft economy /hybrid economies

Day 2
Theme: New Norms: True innovation, across borders, in the age of AI.
There has been enough discussion already of how new and so-called 'artificial intelligences' challenge and enhance the education and practice of design? Since the focus of this symposium is the extent of interculturalism, we should therefore extend the debate by asking, how can our differentiated and local experiences of AI and emergent technologies be shared in the pursuit of innovative outcomes?

It is widely known that China's investment in AI and emergent technologies is strategically prioritized. For this strand we invite practitioners for whom this is becoming a norm. We welcome their views and anecdotes about the up-take of new practices. We solicit their perception of the merits and pit-falls of such novel approaches. We are especially keen to learn about how educational norms can be revised and whether such revisions be radical or incremental. And, critically, we ask whether AI leads to homogenization or depletion of creative outputs and if so, how can we avoid such a state?

Furthermore, regarding the future(s) of design education, what has China learnt that could be useful elsewhere? Since AI is fundamentally bound up with "prompts", how should educators address this? Should contextual studies now include the practice of prompting? Are students able to prompt without knowing design history and theory?

And back to *Intercultural Innovation*. Since our markets are increasingly global, and our communications eternally disrupted and polluted, how do we maintain the health of the global dialogue about design activity for human well-being? How do we ensure the normal ethics of design practice do not diminish in the face of new imperatives?

Keywords:
AI and Design Education
Radical Education
Homogenisation / Differentiation
Teaching Prompting / Prompting the Prompters
Speculating about the Design Profession 2050

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