

PERSPECTIVE

透視

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星級設計師新一年訂下綠色大計

From the Green School in Bali, parks in Hong Kong and a ski resort in Niseko to the Mandarin Oriental Las Vegas, the concept of 'upcycling' and a hotel on top of the world in Tibet, it's all about eco

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綠色透視

The Green Issue

"Civilisations leave marks on the Earth by which they are known and judged. In large measure, the nature of their immortality is gauged by how well their builders made peace with the environment"

– Nathaniel Owings

創意末路

Imagination under fire

Caught in an open war between art and commerce, capitalist Hong Kong is the enemy of creativity, writes Carl Gouw

藝術與商業又再開戰，Carl Gouw指出資本主義香港正是創意的最大敵人

PHOTOGRAPHY 攝影: TIM KWONG / DESIGN TOO MUCH

Hong Kong's economic success is unquestionable. As we grew, we learnt the skills of analysis and problem solving. As a Chinese student at an English boarding school, I knew that we were influenced by our rote learning education; we excelled in mathematics. When I went into my first art lesson at age 14, however, I was surprised that the teacher had nothing to 'teach' and that many English classmates, some dyslexic, just grabbed paint brushes and created beautiful works of art. As Picasso said, "Art is not the application of a canon of beauty, but what the instinct and the brain can conceive beyond any canon. When we love a woman, we don't start measuring her limbs".

Hong Kong has great infrastructure and skyscrapers which demonstrate engineering excellence. However, economic growth also meant many of our architects have sacrificed their creativity. They have become little more than functional elements in the process of urbanisation, wherein developers want the least risk, coupled with maximised returns at the fastest rate possible. Many have built commercially successful practices that deliver efficient services, but do not embrace the artistic value of architecture.

Apart from functionality and economic and sociopolitical dimensions, architecture fundamentally involves aesthetics. Architecture, which feeds the mind and soul, is the most public of the arts. Sadly, we also believe in specialisation which creates narrow-mindedness, losing grand narratives, imagery and poetry. "An architect knows something about everything. An engineer knows everything about one thing. An architect is a generalist, not a specialist – the conductor of a symphony," wrote Matthew Frederick.

When I read Frederick's coffee-table book *101 Things I Learnt in Architecture School*, I realised that our architects have been brain-washed to forget that architecture is "process-driven, not product-driven... a building grows naturally, logically and poetically" and that "no design is or should be perfect". Our businessmen have been trying too hard to prove we have the best solutions and turn down ideas for the sake of practicality and profitability, choosing instead the sweeteners of capitalism.

Architects graduating from the most prestigious architectural schools, with alumnus like Zaha Hadid and Rem Koolhaas, often feel like they are entering another world when they start their profession here. They struggle between creativity and commercial reality, only to end up being mere technical specialists and building-code administrators, asked to provide only economical designs.

In the midst of the war between art and commerce, once-inquisitive minds are yielding to the norms of the market, which will eventually erode the desire to encounter the 'creative place' – which is where no one has been, the wilderness of our intuition, the discovery of wonders and ourselves, and the humble realisation that everything in the world remains to be done over, including the greatest art and the most exact science.



香港無庸置疑在經濟上相當成功。當我們經濟上羽翼漸豐，我們學到分析及解決問題的技巧。身為英國寄宿學校華裔生的我明瞭到我們都深受填鴨式教學制度影響，我們非常擅長數學算術。十四歲第一次上美術課時，老師沒講課，許多英國同學包括一些有誦讀困難的都隨意執起畫筆，然後繪出美麗的畫作，這實在令我感到詫異。一如畢加索所言：「藝術並非一套美學準則，而是直覺及頭腦超越框架所構想的事物。我們去愛一個女人，也不會先去量度她四肢的長度吧！」

香港卓越的基礎建設及摩天大樓，都展現了高超的工程技術，可是不少建築師都在經濟發展中犧牲了他們的創意。地產發展商不願冒絲毫風險，希望以最快速度獲得最大回報，建築師在此都市化進程中差不多已淪為一件機器。很多建築師事務所都準時交貨快捷妥當、生意上獲得很大成功，可惜他們卻放棄了建築的藝術價值。

建築除了考慮功能、經濟、社會政治層面，美學也是重要基礎。建築滿足人們的思想與心靈，是眾多藝術中最親近大眾的一種。可惜，我們堅信專業化，思想變得狹隘，失去了述說動聽故事的能力，亦失掉無限的想像與詩意。馬修·佛德烈克曾寫道：「建築師對所有範疇都略懂一二，工程師則通曉單一領域。因此建築師是通才，不是專才，可謂交響樂中的指揮家。」

讀到佛德烈克的著作《101 Things I Learnt in Architecture School》，我赫然了解到建築師已被洗腦，忘掉建築是由過程而非由結果主導。建築應該是順著邏輯，一步步如詩般自然建構而成，所以沒有設計會或應該是完美的。商家太著力證明我們會有所謂完美方案，為了實用性及利益而推翻設計概念，只顧一嚐資本主義中所得的甜頭。

世界知名建築學院曾培育出不少建築名人，如雷姆·庫哈斯及扎哈·哈迪德。這些著名學院出身的明星建築師在香港開展事業時，總感到置身另一個世界。他們在創意及商業現實中掙扎不斷，最終僅剩下軀殼，淪為技術專家及建築條例處理專員，只是為經濟效益服務。

這場藝術與商業之間的抗爭，使曾經充滿好奇的頭腦漸受市場規範，最終蠶食我們對踏足「創意國度」的渴望——一個無人踏足過的境地。無拘束的思維，探索新趣味、自我認知發現、領悟世上事物，甚至最偉大的藝術及最精確的科學，通通都要推倒重來。E



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