

Meaningful Conceptual Design

—— Explore the conceptual design of the design process

Ma Jun

School of Fine Art,
Nanjing Normal University,
China

I. Nature of design

1. What is design

If the design can break the boring concept design, it will easily draw the nature of design, it can be divided into "set" and "plan", the "set" means imagine, which refers that people generate an idea to change the world because they are dissatisfied with real life. If this discontent is merely a complaint, it can be a very cynical and, at best, a cynical character, while a designer can change the face of life. With the cooperation with apple, a clear idea of the company is: "create friendly tool for transforming social people", the "transforming social people" is refers to the qualified people who are dissatisfied with life but they put forward the improvement of this situation, this group of people are not only engaged in the design industry but also can be a mature art industry, including art, music, and education workers. These people are more or less transforming the real world.

A "plan" is a plan that will determine whether or not there is a solution. After the reinvention of reality, there are steps and methodical plans to be formed, since the plan will determine whether or not it can be put into reality and implemented. So the process from envisioning into a plan is a collaborative deliberation, a plan form a project. Any design that changes the face of the world needs to be done by design participants, so the process of envisioning a project is a process of building cooperation and forming a solution. Some ideas are subversive to global solutions, and when ideas are formed, professional designers in all fields will be involved and plan to achieve tacit cooperation in implementation.

2. The functional and emotional function of the design

Therefore, the essence of design is to the life of a kind of improvement, reconstruction or reform, thus let the life tools in use function become more convenient and comfortable, in the emotional aspects more and more pleasant and happy. Bauhaus established the focus of design that is the use of functions in the early stage of the development, and the use of all fancy forms of the function to be guarded against. But for modern design, in addition to the use of products, it also emphasizes the adjustment of the product to the mood, which is the function of product emotional communication. When many modern virtual tool appeared in our mobile terminal, you will find that the emotional function of the software does not meet the user, which will be unloaded in an instant, because inventors ignore the affection of the user. So it seems that the security of emotional function has become a very critical design thinking today.

II. Design process

The design process is another way to help us understand the nature of design. The design process itself is like the relationship between a machine and its parts. In order to understand the nature of the design, the invention of washing machine, for example, lazy people invented the washing machine, so to speak, not wanting to wash the clothes is an initial desire, but the vast majority of the lazy will become more aggressive - the clothes even smell bad, which did not directly cause the birth of the washing machine, the inventor of the washing machine -- Americans Hamilton Smith think how to liberate people's labor, this idea is more and more concrete, so that combine the key action of washing clothes with the machine, which constantly reinvent forming in the practice step by step.

The process of design can be divided into four stages: conceptual design, design expression, design implementation and design reflection. The initial stage of having the original idea and asking the question is actually called the conceptual design stage, which is an examination and exchange of our human life and nature. Once the idea of inventing the washing machine was invented, the idea of the brain was communicated to others to carry out and form plan, which entered into the design stage. Use images and words to convey the intention of the idea accurately and directly. The first function of the plan is to get the partners to know each other and to reach a goal in the leak. All the precious creative ideas in the design performance stage are decided well in the conceptual design stage, even though some thought did not appear in the previous stage, it is just the supplement of the conceptual design. Without the conceptual design stage, the design performance will change into directionless and chaotic, which directly cause rework. At the beginning of the design showing its appearance, it tends to enter the design implementation stage when it begins to experience the use of features, design implementation stage is a review and evaluation at the stage of conceptual design, so that to find the hole in the links of design. The final design feedback is the reflection and review of the whole design process.

III. Stop working overtime and you will become a real designer

1. Why do designers work overtime

Designers can't really respect the pleasures of life, and they are "broken sources". The general impression that the advertising companies give people is endless overtime and overdraft physical and mental work. The reason is that the conceptual design stage is neglected. The author in the thirteenth year managed 15 companies from the eleven industries, the way and chance of management was based on that the advertising company or design planning institutions were in the service of my customers, that is their party -- the more difficult enterprise decision-makers. I have asked entrepreneurs such a question: have you done such a thing for designers, when a designer come up with a solution and you think that this is a deviation from you want, you will feel that they can supply several more solutions, for example, can you give five or more solutions, in which you can choose one, and you will think that the more the better. The answer to this question is almost 100% yes. The following series of questions: isn't the real value of the money you spent on a professional person to help you with your professional work? Are designers merely visualizing their customers' ideas, rather than providing creative thinking and working with a group of customers who are working to impress entrepreneurs? Shouldn't we use creative thinkers to produce persuasive designs? But when entrepreneurs want designers to provide excess design scheme, they neglected the first, the constructive thought with the real marketing value ideas, just because the entrepreneurs are individually fond of, simply because of pleasing to the eye and the design of the pay, ignore the fundamental value of core -- design concepts and ideas. Most entrepreneurs only buy one hand, but the idea is his, to buy his own ideas with his own money, it is ridiculous. Advertising companies have generally entered a cycle that mainly stems from the western concept that customers are the food and clothing parents, and the advice from their customers can be regarded as a cult. At the strategic level it is mostly right, the client will think for the benefit of his company, and they are familiar with the industry relatively, but the confidence is easy to form the idea of ego, which causes most of them are in the wrong way at the tactical level. Be firm in your thoughts on the basis of respecting their advice.

2. Quality of the designer

So, how can a designer put a stable and constructive thought on tactics? First, it is necessary to rethink whether it is too early for us to start the specific design content. When a job starts, immediately review your experience, and then quickly click the mouse to open the professional software. This is the main reason to pay attention to the inefficiencies of designers. When you open the professional software, the appeal of these professional software and the attraction of your inertia will directly lead you to design performance. How terrible is the design performance without the conceptual phase? It's going to give you an endless array of permutations, this seems to work, and that works too, it is about the arrangement of forms. Second, making marketing sense must find release object, in the process of communication with Party A, you must design a problem that you could ask the real purpose, these can help customers to give the answer you want. It' likes you want to ask

someone about his personality, but his answer is not necessarily true. You can explore the behavior patterns and ideas of this person by designing a series of different questions, or you can read the answers by inquiring eight words and astrolabes, instead of pointing the problem straight to the customer.

Mr. Buffett chose his assistant to adhere the six-word maxim: emotional stability, independent thinking, insight into human nature and proficient in professional. Emotional stability is a means of making healthy and credible information guided by rational thinking. Allow yourself to have enough independent thought elements to handle all kinds of tricky problems. Judgment on the customer will also be built on the basis of insight into human nature, different from the traditional sense of empathy, everyone's different personality, the ability of emotional control also determines the character of a remarkable feature, the last is proficient in professional. To be proficient in a major, it's more important to learn how to ask "why" than just only know design performance.

2. Ask enough questions

Because when you ask the questions that seem to be no unnecessary, you can tell the customer what you know too much in the last, and it is not important, that is very important for consumer audience, one thing in this world is impossible, that is to know something but to pretend that I don't know, which means that it is a secret that lets the others think you don't know, but here refers to know one thing but not to know the status of the thinking, you can't cheat yourself, which is a person who knows about it but like he doesn't know this matter so that concludes the correct judgment, or to form a correct thinking is almost impossible, letting the others think you don't know is possible, while letting yourself believe that you don't know is out of the question, the main reason for the designers to work overtime is that they may not value the impact of the design stage. The real meaning of conceptual design is to look for phenomena and problems that ordinary people see. The designer has professional training and rich tools, and rigorous questions can be asked to plan the transformation. What is enough? It's the customer who feels a little annoyed, and it is the time. Its significance is to let the customer value the problem that is ignored in the information rich situation, and these problems are extremely important to the consumer and the audience. There is one thing in this world that is impossible, that is to pretend not to know. This state of affairs is usually kept as a secret, pretending that the others think you don't know, while that is said to get the correct understanding in the condition of unknown.

The effective communication with customers in the conceptual design stage includes the information that the clients know but the consumers do not know. You need to emphasize those information which consumers don't know but always exists in you AD design. Or the consumer has a correct understanding of what you're going to say without knowing what's going on. This is something that no formal professional training can do, and only a designer can do. Designers need to spend more time not only expressing what party a needs to say, but also expressing what even party a can't expect to impress the consumers.

Ask enough questions. It could be, why do we need to design this sample? Was it because your competitor made a sample? Does your sample have a clear short board? Is there any clear material that does not meet the market change needs to be updated? What needs to be updated? Are you just trying to promote yourself but not to provide a good plan? For example, a customer want to change the original style of high cold of the brochure design into a kind of friendly style, why making the paper brochures but not to build an interconnection media plan? All the stereotypes are clear on the screen, and the idea directly leads the designer's future creations from paper to the fluorescent screens. This is the conceptual design, which not only decides how to give your mission to the client, but also to subvert the idea that the client is using the form. Of course, it's hard for the average designer to have this state, and they tend to just go for the printed price difference.

IV. Marketing in the Conceptual Design

For instance, the filming is on CCTV's commercial, the advertising company mostly tend to consider: how much is the funding, what kind of star we should ask, which type of the camera, whether needs the post-production, whether to synthesis and so on, a series of strategy, but the final effect is not satisfied, even if the advertising company paid, the customers usually don't accept that because the output is not directly proportional to getting it, the problem is that the adhesion of enterprises is not taken into account in advance, if only appeared on CCTV in a short time, the consumers remember you just because you have enough funding, or just keep in mind the gorgeous picture, these are not enough, in today's age of the Internet, the more important is adhesion, what is the relationship between the beauty of the picture and the life of the customer? Then the advertisement on CCTV is more of a guide, leading them to pay attention. While WeChat marketing, network marketing, Weibo and so on in the Internet environment can let the designer do it in the true sense of creativity, and which can be copied to share out, thus a new era of word-of-mouth marketing is different from any marking, the past marking of the word-of-mouth is similar to "Good wine needs no alley", and today's social software for the spread of word of mouth on the speed and accuracy are far greater than TV marketing. So if these thinking, communication, discussion cannot entered the kernel of the conceptual stage, even your design perform well, the party a will also feel like buying lottery tickets, so all these problems should be considered in the conceptual stage, the thinking points of design performance to serve can be very clear, then set a good design talent: 3D Designer, Copywriter, Retoucher. You can do a lot of work, and you don't have to work overtime

V. The Relationship between Conceptual Design and Consumers

Sketches have already become presentation of the conceptual design, and QIAN will ask countless questions during the sketch stage. Should that be the design? This is a future feature, and if it's worth it, it's going to happen. When the time is ripe, valuable and reasonable design will be realized. Range Rover of the Land Rover continues to inherit Land Rover's ethos while subverting the shape of most its SUV, which directly points to the evolution of cars today, all of this comes from the

deep enough imagination in the conceptual design stage, the more important thing is that this radical thinking has been implemented as an entity that we can enjoy today. It shows that the emphasis on conceptual design of this era, which proves that the acceptance of consumers is of greater energy. The future is getting closer and closer to our reality. More and more excellent designers show the innovative influence of the world in the conceptual design stage, and the consumers' awareness is constantly updated, which requires more energy from designers. A new report from the McKinsey: "meeting" 2020 Chinese consumers' data analysis shows that with the rapid development of economy, consumers' economic conditions, emotional factors, requirements, standards are constantly changing (figure 1, figure 2).

图1 新主流消费群和大众消费群的比较

		新主流消费群	对比	大众消费群
他们是谁 ?	家庭收入	10.6万到22.9万元		3.7万到10.6万元
	年龄在35岁以下人口的比例	45%		37%
他们住哪里 ?	住在一二线城市的人口比例	74%		43%
	住在内陆城市群的人口比例	17%		36%
他们需要什么 ?	耐用 ¹	36%		61%
	情感因素 ²	23%		15%
他们怎样花钱 ?	支付溢价 ³	49%		39%
	提高消费档次 ⁴	39%		21%

1 将“耐用”列为购买智能手机前五大关键购买要素的受访者百分比

2 将情感因素（例如，彰显我的品味）作为购买手机时重要因素的受访者百分比

3 表示在可支付的范围内，愿意为最好的消费电子产品支付溢价的受访者百分比

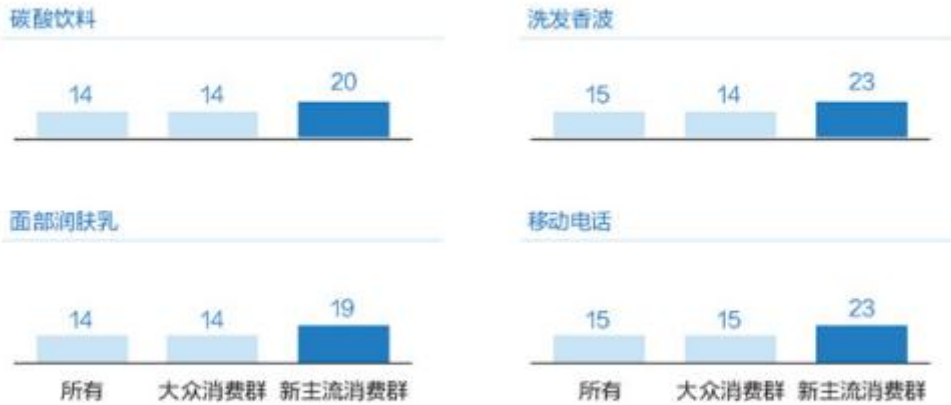
4 通过提高消费档次（而不是通货膨胀）而支付更多的受访者百分比

资料来源：麦肯锡2012年消费者调查

原文 Chinese	English
图 1 新主流消费群和大众消费群的比较	Figure 1 Compare between the new mainstream consumer groups and mass consumer groups
新主流消费群	New mainstream consumer groups
对比	compare
大众消费群	Mass consumer groups
他们是谁 家庭收入 10.6 万到 22.9 万元 3.7 万到 10.6 万元 年龄在 35 岁以下人口的比例	Who are they Household income 106,000 Yuan to 229,000 Yuan 37,000 Yuan to 106,000 Yuan The proportion of people under 35 years of age
他们住哪里 住在一二线城市的人口比例 住在内陆城市群的人口比例	Where do they live The proportion of people living in a second-tier city The proportion of the population living in inland urban agglomeration
他们需要什么 耐用 情感因素	What do they need Durable Emotional elements
他们怎样花钱 支付溢价 提高消费档次	How they spend their money Pay a premium Upgrade the consumption level
1. 将耐用列为购买智能手机前五大关键购买要素的受访者百分比 2. 将情感因素（例如，彰显我的品味）作为购买手机时重要因素的受访者百分比 3. 表示在可支付的范围内，愿意为最好的消费电子产品支付溢价的受访者百分比 4. 通过提高消费档次（而不是通货膨胀）而支付更多的受访者百分比 资料来源：麦肯锡 2012 年消费者调查	1. The percentage of respondents who make durability as one factor of the top five key purchasing factors 2. The percentage of respondents who make the emotional element (such as, show my taste) as an important factor during purchasing the phones. 3. The percentage of respondents who are willing to pay premium for the best electronic products within the scope of the payment. 4. The percentage of respondents who pay more money by upgrading the consumption level (not the inflation). Date source: McKinsey 2012 consumer survey

图2 情感因素¹对主流消费群的购买决策产生很大的影响

认可产品的情感因素是重要购买因素的受访者百分比



¹包括“彰显我的品味”，“彰显我的地位”，“让我的生活更加舒适”，“让我感到家人生活得更好”，“充满活力”，“显示我很时尚”，“让我感到很合群”。

资料来源：麦肯锡2012年消费者调查

原文 Chinese	译文 English
图 2 情感因素对主流消费群的购买决策产生很大的影响	Figure 2 The emotional element has a great influence for the purchase decision of the mainstream consumer groups
认可产品的情感因素是重要购买因素的受访者百分比	The percentage of respondents who agree that the emotional factor is an important purchasing factor
碳酸饮料	Carbonated drinks
洗发香波	Liquid shampoo
面部润肤乳	Facial lotion
移动电话	The mobile phone
所有	All
大众消费群	Mass consumers groups
新主流消费群	New mainstream consumers groups
所有	All
大众消费群	Mass consumers groups
新主流消费群	New mainstream consumers groups
1 包括“彰显我的品味”，“彰显我的地位”，“让我的生活更加舒适”，“让我感到家人生活得更好”，“充满活力”，“显示我很时尚”，让我感到很合群”。	1. Including “show my taste”, “show my status”, “make my life more comfortable”, “let me feel my family is living well”, “full of energy”, “show my fashionable taste”, “let m feel very sociable”
资料来源：麦肯锡 2012 消费者调查	Data source: McKinsey 2012 consumer survey

The message is very extensive and updated very quickly today. It needs more revolutionary products to wake up the consumer's awareness, such as apple's mobile phone model.

Conceptual design not only influence the positioning of the products, the improved conceptual design can also avoid a long time to work overtime, the conceptual design is not designed to achieve a delegated goal, jumping out of the surface in the form of design also requires designer not only to have professional design but must have the broad knowledge reserve, the reserve behind the designer, what kind of friends the designers make, including how to make money, money is the by-product of the designer, designer can influence and help the others with their brilliance, only in such a mind can you keep your pockets bulging. Consumption is also design, and when you are consuming, you are experiencing the experience of being helped, served, and infected. This experience will help you understand how important consumer psychology is in the future design process, which is the most intuitive feeling that a quick answer market research report cannot give. "We don't do surveys, consumers don't know what they need, and apple tells them what's going on," Steve jobs said. Designers can lead consumers by changing the world from the heart, helping consumers to free themselves from their physical and mental energy and to benefit from a powerful group of them.