



PARTNER COUNTRY 2014



Sweden
Sverige

LIVING DESIGN

hk c
Hong Kong Design Centre
香港設計中心



bodw

HIGHLIGHTS FROM
BUSINESS OF DESIGN WEEK 2014

/ Content

/ Foreword

Message from Dr. Edmund Lee 3

/ Speakers

Irma Boom 4
Margareta van den Bosch 8
Marcus Engman 12
Don Norman 16
Paul Priestman 20
Martin Roth 24

/ Students' Sharing 28

/ Designing solutions to meet the challenges of our times

Organised by Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC), Business of Design Week (BODW) is a platform for dialogue and the exchange of ideas, allowing executives and designers to go beyond the standard scope of the everyday business of design, to look at fundamental issues and concerns, both within the industry and that the world as a whole is facing.

Technology is everywhere and design is a part of our culture and economy. In a rapidly-changing and inter-connected world, the rules of engagement keep shifting – and it's this kind of "open minded" exposure that BODW would like to prime its audience.

With Sweden as country partner of BODW 2014, the week-long programme has inspired, challenged and impressed us with disruptive business innovations. Moreover, it has enlightened us on how design, when deployed strategically, creates endearing user experience and meaning.

We've put together this book for those who missed the finer moments of inspirational and insightful exchange – and for those who want something to keep as a memento.

Discover how award-winning designer **Paul Priestman** thinks transport can change our world, how book designer **Irma Boom** approaches problems, why **Don Norman** knows that design thinking matters so much, how **Marcus Engman** describes Ikea's living

design attitude, why museums and directors like **Martin Roth** promote education and the co-creation of new ideas across diverse fields and culture, and why **Margareta van den Bosch** thinks team play is vital when working in fashion for sustainability.

We hope this magazine helps you recapture the excitement of those six days of impassioned insights. To avoid missing out this year, please join us and our next partner city Barcelona in December 2015.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Edmund Lee
Executive Director of
Hong Kong Design Centre





IRMA BOOM

Book Designer
Irma Boom Office
The Netherlands

**BUSINESS OF
DESIGN WEEK**
— 2014 —
BODW

Problem solver does not judge a book by its cover

"I feel like I'm juggling plates in the air. I work day and night," says Irma Boom, book designer and founder of Irma Boom Office, in Amsterdam. Attending Business of Design Week for the second time, Boom gives as many lectures and talks as she can, as a mechanism to get her away from her desk.

Despite her current work, Boom first attended painting school. "I think as an artist there is a necessity to create. I don't have that; I need the starting spark to come from someone else. I'm always working because I make very individual books, which is time-consuming," says Boom, who calls herself a designer.

The spark that Boom needs is found in the content. "I always start with doubt, so I read – that helps me to collaborate with the person commissioning the project," she explains. Referring to the relationship as collaboration,

Boom requires freedom when she works. "Even at school, the most important thing is freedom – for that, you need trust. That creates a lot of responsibility. If I don't have that, I don't do the project because it won't work," she admits. Boom says that students must remain true to themselves.

To find such convictions, students and designers alike need a good argument for what they do. "To express yourself, you need to know why you are proposing the idea, then there is no question," Boom says. She doesn't discuss things like colour, because she believes that the content is more important. And she has thought deeply about the notion of a book. "I hate PDFs," she says. "Books are physical objects. The architecture of a book is about size and proportion and the distribution of text," she theorises.



photo by Irma Boom

If design is about solving problems, then Boom goes about things differently. “People come to me with an idea and think I will solve it, but really, I create a problem that I want to solve – that is really interesting, because finding a new question is more important than the answer,” she says.

The maker of extraordinary books – some of which don’t use ink or which fit in the palm of your hand – Boom says that patrons usually have a thought or idea they want to create with her. “I read all the books I make. Most designers don’t read and that’s a problem. I stay close to the projects I do. My books look different because of their content; it’s not the style. What I make is very specific,” she says, adding that she can never use an idea twice.

Boom recently produced a book for artist Olafur Eliasson. Already familiar with his work, she had met the artist a few times and felt that there was mutual admiration and trust between them. “We both respected each other’s work – that’s the highest level of collaboration,” she says.

Another book, titled *James Jennifer Georgina* (*The Yellow Book*), took some persuading by the Jennifer in the title for Boom to create – but even books can change things. After Jennifer had given birth to her daughter Georgina, James, her husband, started drinking. However, Jennifer discovered that if she travelled, leaving him with Georgina, he did not drink. So she stayed away as much as she could, sending thousands of postcards to Georgina, which became the basis of the book.

After nearly two years of asking, Boom finally agreed to meet Jennifer. “I had said no before, because I read some of the postcards and felt like the family psychiatrist,” she confesses. But a personal meeting gave Boom the spark she needed for the book. “I learned that the three of them never spoke, so I said that part of the book had to be 21 conversations between them, which are in the book. I made something else out of it because I felt there was more about this problem than just producing a book,” she explains.

For Boom, the methods of designing books are limitless. “There is always another way to make a chair – it’s all about sitting. I create books – what are the limits?” She asks. In 2013, Boom created the book *No. 5 Culture Chanel*. “You can’t see Chanel No. 5, but you can smell it, so I wanted to interpret this idea of not being visually present,” she explains. For Boom, it’s the ultimate book because there is no ink – which is usually necessary for communication within a book. Instead, it’s embossed, so the reader has to look carefully and touch the pages.

And she’s not afraid to admit her mistakes, either.

During the production of *Sheila Hicks: Weaving as Metaphor*, Boom had so many concerns that she forgot to put a title on the front. While the spine has the author’s name in bold, the title can only be found inside – which makes you think about not judging a book by its cover.

Her approach allows for the most unique of contents and Boom says each book starts differently. “I think so much about the content that I use two typefaces – one sans serif, which is customised to me, and one serif – to limit what I have to think about. But the book itself is always different,” she concludes.

On Twitter



@HKChantown

“I think as an artist there is a necessity to create” - you’ve got me thinking about my future work

Live Report

Communication & Design - Irma Boom, Book Designer,
Irma Boom Office (Netherlands)

December 5, 2014
14:55

Books do make changes. After giving birth, a mother found that her husband started to drink. But if she travelled, leaving their child with the father, he did not drink. Years later, the mother asked Boom to make a book of all the postcards that she had sent her daughter over the years. Unconvinced, Boom hesitated for two years. Eventually, as she considered it more, Boom discovered that the mother and daughter don’t speak to one another. So she said that they must, how could she make the book if the two don’t even speak?



Teamwork is the key to fashionable ideas

Collaborating with top designers from the lavish Roberto Cavalli to the avant-garde Viktor and Rolf, Swedish retailers H&M have redefined the distinction between high street and designer fashion. They've made affordable what was once exclusive – and it's all thanks to Margareta van den Bosch.

"We are celebrating our 10th anniversary of designer collaborations this year," says van den Bosch, Creative Advisor, H&M (Sweden). "We've worked with Stella McCartney, Karl Lagerfeld, Jimmy Choo, and more. H&M have a huge variety of shoppers, and collaborating with all of these different designers helps us appeal to that diverse range of styles."

H&M's collaborations challenge renowned designers to reinterpret their fashion prowess into clothing that's available – both stylistically and economically – to the masses. "We want someone unique each year," explains van den Bosch. "Most recently, we chose to work with Alexander Wang because H&M had never done a collaborative collection with a sportswear designer."

van den Bosch studied fashion at Beckman's School of Design in Stockholm, before working for fashion houses in Italy and Sweden and eventually coming back to Beckman's as an instructor. After joining H&M in 1986, van den Bosch acted as the brand's first head of design.



Now H&M's creative advisor at the helm of cut-price designer collaborations, it's no surprise van den Bosch thinks teamwork is key in fashion design education. "At H&M everyone works in a team. Students need discussions and group projects in order to learn design thinking because when it comes to designing clothes or using design to solve problems, it's essential to work in a team," she says.

Collaboration in the fashion design industry can occur at both the micro and macro levels, and van den Bosch stresses that teamwork is just as important to print artists and pattern makers as it is to managing producers. Van den Bosch says that new technology is also forcing designers

to work together in new ways – and that's something design education must address.

"Design education is always changing, and at the moment design students are especially interested in new technology," van den Bosch says. "Technology is more and more important in fashion design." According to van den Bosch, designers used to be tied to sketchpads and a lengthy production process but, thanks to the technological age, they can now work more quickly and change sketches more easily. The time that's saved this way allows for more creative input into the design. "Today you can make a digital sketch that allows another designer, or a clothing producer, to create

the item along with the original artist," van den Bosch says.

However, while emphasising collaboration in design education, van den Bosch is also careful to add that students should still be encouraged to express individuality and creativity. "To educate the next generation of fashion designers, they must be creative and able to express themselves. But we have to prepare them to work within a company, too," she says. To this end, H&M supports new design talent. "Along with offering in-house jobs to young designers, we also

have the H&M Award for students," van den Bosch says.

Winners of the H&M Award receive €50,000, along with the opportunity to show a collection at Stockholm Fashion Week. "H&M produces some of the pieces in that winning collection," van den Bosch explains. "And we also offer a fashion studio internship to the People's Prize winner, who is chosen by an audience vote. That's another way we're supporting young designers."

On Twitter



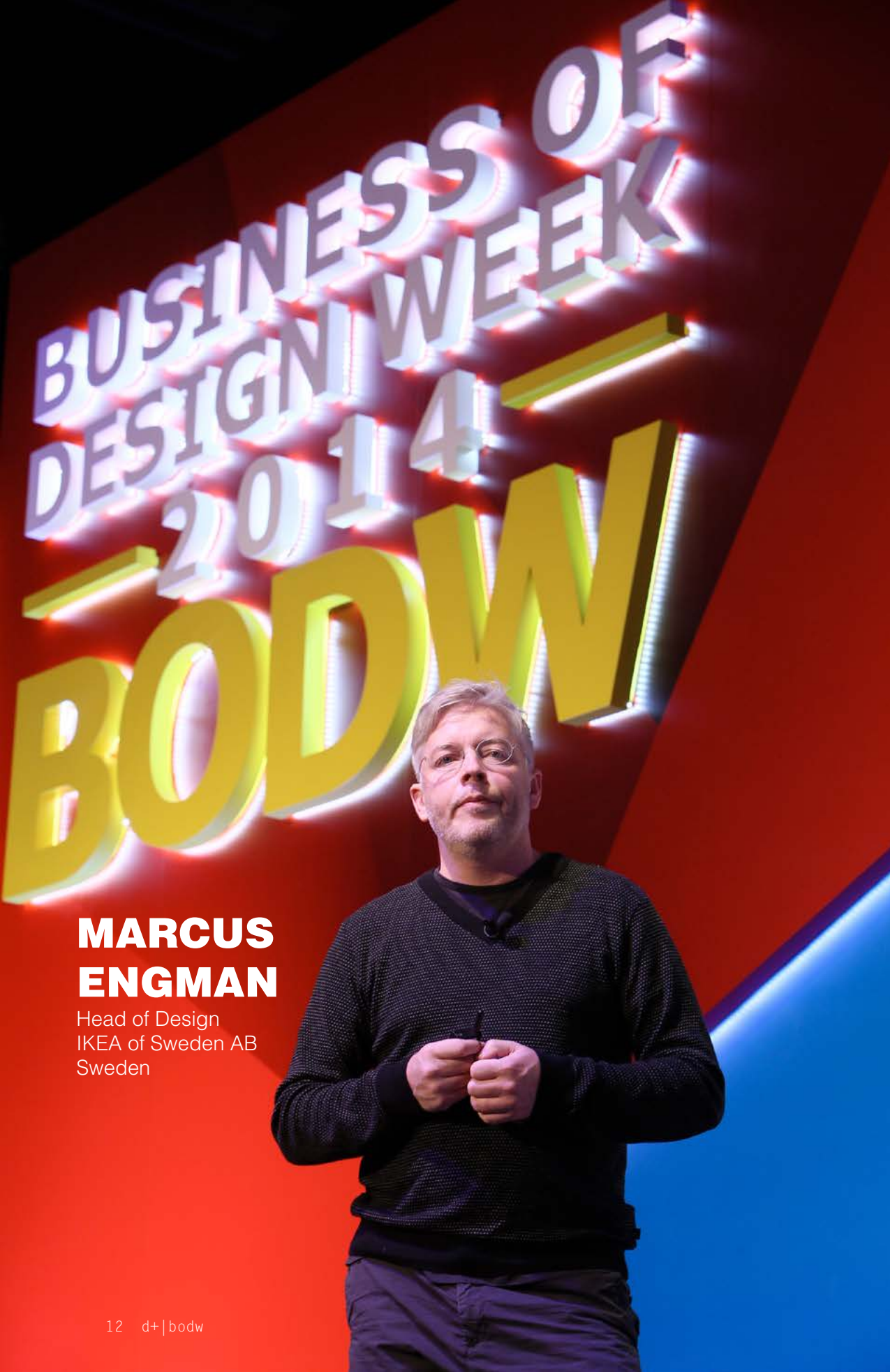
@daamsaarc

Margareta van den Bosch and Catarina Midby talking about H&M and sustainability

Live Report

December 4, 2014
17.00

Collaboration and variety are key to the excitement and innovation of H&M's designer collaborations (which include Stella McCartney, Roberto Cavalli, Karl Lagerfeld, Jimmy Choo and more), explains Margareta van den Bosch, Creative Adviser, H&M (Sweden). "We've worked with a lot of different artists and agencies to make the films that accompany our designer collaborations, including Sophia Coppola. When we worked with Karl Lagerfeld we did an exhibition instead of a runway show, with Solange Azagury we also had a line of jewellery and Viktor & Rolf wanted to do something new, so we made a wedding dress which was totally new for H&M."



MARCUS ENGMAN

Head of Design
IKEA of Sweden AB
Sweden

Swedish design on the cusp of smart sustainability

With Sweden as a country partner for Business of Design Week (BODW) this year, it makes sense that one of the country's most well-known brands is in attendance. Speaking as Head of Design for IKEA, Marcus Engman is lively, bright, interesting and entertaining to listen to.

Meeting in person, he points out that he is not a designer, but Head of Design, with a background in home furnishing and marketing communications. So, what makes him perfect for his role? "I am an extremely curious person, looking for new things and investigating all the time. And I am quite social," he says.

According to Engman, it's his past that makes him feel grounded in what he does and he argues that is necessary for true creativity and innovation. "You have to feel that you're on safe ground – it's one of the reasons why Sweden is a creative country. We have a welfare system and we live in quite a safe society. You feel safe to explore. That is typically Swedish," he explains.

Discussing the idea that design thinking is about solving everyday problems, Engman says: "We always start with that in mind, it's natural. We are all curiosity-driven problem solvers, curious about needs and new techniques in production. All designers should be – if you aren't curious, how can you learn? When learning stops, nothing interesting can be produced. A curious person will have good dinner conversation because they are interested in you. It's the same for a company." During his speech, Engman tells the BODW audience that IKEA has a rich culture, built up over 70 years. "When in doubt, begin," he advises them.

As an international company offering cost-effective options, IKEA has always looked for similarities among countries and cultures, and worked in high volumes. "To solve the problems of the majority, you have to look for the big problems – that's nothing new to us. On the other hand, you have to look at the majority as many individuals," Engman explains.



The consumer has changed a lot in the last 70 years. Globalisation, the development of affordable travel, and how visually savvy people now has changed the market. "Tastes are more dynamic and more similar. Urbanisation is the biggest trend – cities are more influential and the people living in them are becoming more alike, with the same problems, such as density," Engman says. "I travel a lot and it's sad that everywhere you go, you see the same things – but individuals are looking for uniqueness." While appealing to different cultural backgrounds may affect style, function remains untouched.

But mass production has limitations and sustainability cannot be taken for granted. "A big thing for us to solve is how to make mass production work for individualisation," Engman says. "We also ask: how can we help people live sustainably? That is a major worldwide

change, so we have to be innovative. We are reinforcing the idea of products aging gracefully and lasting longer."

Engman is shifting back to what he calls honesty in materials – getting rid of damaging lacquer and laminates on wood or coating metals with plastic. Other items might reference IKEA's past "half-baked designs", where the customer can add their own unique finish, such as paint. And in the next couple of years, IKEA will introduce an individualised print-on-demand option. "Sustainability is top of our agenda," Engman says. "Not just in production but in our selling and logistics. More than that, there is the question of how we design things to enable people to lead more sustainable lives? That is real change."

As a large company, education is another

responsibility that IKEA bears in mind. "We drive change, so we have a responsibility to work with universities to share our knowledge. This is happening more and more in Sweden – we have also been at the forefront of the IT revolution and I think we see the results from sharing," Engman says.

Young designers often graduate lacking production knowledge and, according to Engman, this is because they lack the time to learn about it in a fast-developing world. It also

means they don't have a good handle on what's possible. "I sit on the board in some schools in Sweden and IKEA co-operate with universities like Lund University, as an ongoing project. It is something we can do more of in the future, it keeps things fresh – I believe in using the collective brain," he says.

With two billion people passing through IKEA each year, Engman feels his responsibility – to the customers, to students, and to the planet itself.

On Twitter



@daamsaarc

Marcus Engman speaking about Ikea's new social gaming app Lattjo, and some other impressive new examples of in

Live Report

Plenary II (Cutting-Edge Innovations) - Paul Priestman, Design & Co-founding Director, PriestmanGoode (UK)

December 5, 2014
12:15

Since Monday, three designers have talked about Lego® and creativity. In fact, in relation to innate creativity both Marcus Engman, Head of Design, Ikea and Paul Priestman, Designer and Co-founding Director, PriestmanGoode (UK) said, "have you ever watched kids play with Lego?"

And it makes sense, when we talk about creating a future, we use terms like 'building blocks' which is exactly what Lego is.



DON NORMAN

Director/ Co-founder & Principal
Design Lab, University of California, San Diego/ Nielsen Norman Group
United States

Getting down to the nitty-gritty of design snags

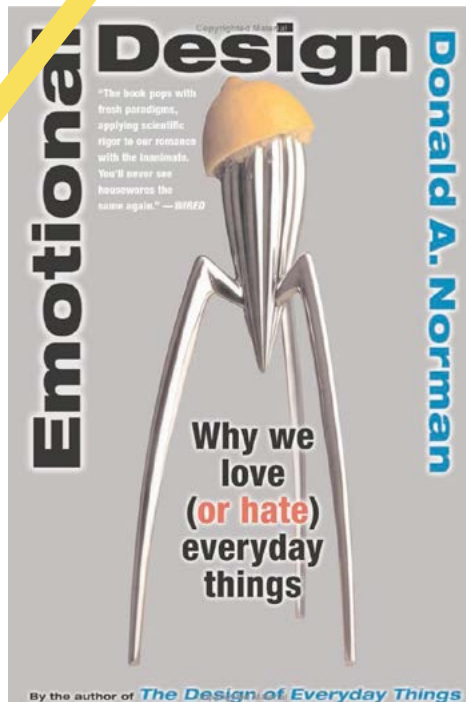
A champion of design thinking and an innovator on user-focused design, Don Norman, Director of The Design Lab at the University of California, San Diego, wants designers to ask what the real problem is.

"You don't need a pencil – you need something that allows people to write," he says. "As designers, we are not problem solvers but rather problem definers. My rule is: don't solve the problem you were hired to solve. That's almost never the real problem. Find the real problem, and the initial one often goes away," he says. According to Norman, design education needs to stop telling students that problems are problems – instead, students should be taught that a problem is a tool to help you learn.

"The worst way to teach is in lectures", Norman explains. "We need to excite students by giving

them problems and saying: go out and solve them. Solve the problem before you even understand it!" By examining problems, students experience design theory and education first hand. According to Norman, design thinking should be human-centred. "We need to watch and observe to understand the perspective of the user, and that's why design students need to solve problems and get stuck. That's when you learn the most and when the theory starts to make sense."

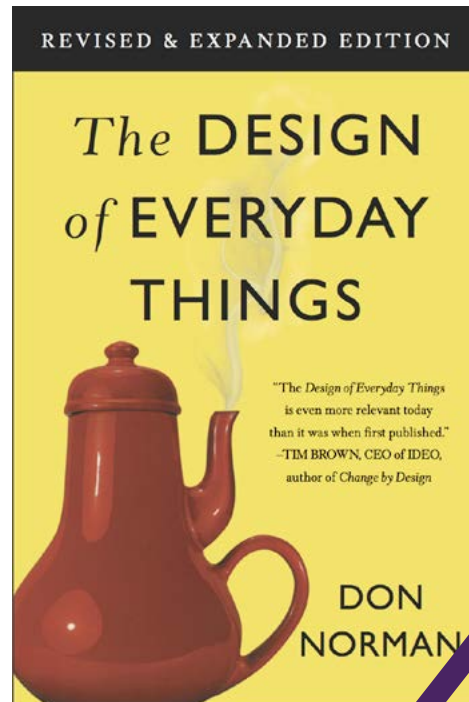
Norman's book, *The Design of Everyday Things*, is famous for its examples of where design thinking fails. Doors with no hardware or visible pillars so you don't know how to open them; a newly minted coin the same size and weight as a differently-valued one that's already in circulation; kitchen hobs arranged in a rectangle while the control buttons are arranged in a line –



all of these, Norman says, are instances where the designer didn't put ease-of-use first.

And there's another piece of poor design Norman's just seen in Hong Kong. "The elevators at the Polytechnic University's (PolyU) brand new building have two buttons – an up button and a down one. Doesn't it make sense to have the up button on top and the down button on the bottom? At PolyU these buttons are next to each other. Which is up? Which is down? I don't know who made those buttons but they failed design thinking," he says.

The Design of Everyday Things was first published in 1986 and revised in 2002, and again in 2013. Technology and design have come a long way since 1986 – in the original Norman says he is waiting for the day when portable computers become small enough for him to keep one with him at all times – but errors in design thinking still exist.



"How do we better educate the next generation of designers? Learning a craft is not enough. I want to see design education moved from trade schools. Trade can become obsolete but general knowledge doesn't. The Luddites weren't against technology – they were against losing their jobs. If all you have is the craft of weaving, there's nothing left to do when a machine comes along," Norman says.

Norman's passion for design education becomes apparent in conversation when he declares: "My two most important projects are the books I've written and the students I've taught." To this end, he has worked with various universities including Northwestern, the University of California San Diego and the Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology. Norman instructs students in user-centred design and other principles essential for young designers, such as teamwork.

"It's important to teach collaboration. The best work instance of this I've seen was at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), which is an art-based design school. On one course every project had to include input from an MIT business student, an MIT engineer and an RISD design student. At first they had trouble working together but once they did it was brilliant. Together they created products that were wonderful to look at, functioned well and would be affordable to manufacture," he explains.

Norman says educational institutions can and should teach teamwork – and that any designers unwilling to study the skill of collaboration should consider another profession. "I think everyone can learn collaboration, but some people are thick-headed," he says. "If you can't get along, get out. Single-minded people who can't work together with others have no place in design. Just following your own instincts makes you an artist. Art is important, but not when I'm trying to design a product that's useful."

On Twitter



@missdesignsays

Don Norman: "We need to learn what kind of problems to solve in the future+know about human behaviour, regulations, politics etc"

Live Report

Closing Plenary (Design, Innovation & Brands) –
Don Norman, director, Nielsen Norman Group (USA)

December 6, 2014
14:40

"Stupid questions aren't stupid – they're brilliant," says Don Norman, director, Nielsen Norman Group. Norman is famous for his love of so-called stupid questions, because according to Norman we can only solve design problems by asking questions and understanding complex systems – not just by learning technical skills. "In design school we spend four years learning how to draw and construct and we may become a better craftsman in design school – but then we're asked to design a health system, an education system or a finance system. Does design school give us the right background to do these things? No. In traditional design school, you don't learn anything about the world."

A photograph of Paul Priestman, a middle-aged man with a bald head, wearing a dark suit jacket over a patterned shirt. He is standing behind a podium, speaking into a microphone. The podium has a blue and white design with the text 'BUSINESS OF DESIGN WEEK — 2014 — BODW' in yellow and orange. The background is a large, abstract wall with geometric shapes in shades of orange, red, and blue.

PAUL PRIESTMAN

Designer and Co-founding Director
PriestmanGoode
UK

BUSINESS OF
DESIGN WEEK
— 2014 —
BODW

Wheels of progress can set our planet in motion

Whatever the vehicle, Paul Priestman, designer and Co-founding Director of PriestmanGoode, is passionate about transportation design. Speaking at Business of Design Week, Priestman shows images of interesting designs for aeroplane seats for the disabled, among others. It's no surprise that the thoughtful, award-winning designer was voted one of London's 1,000 most influential people by the *Evening Standard* newspaper – he wants to make a change.

When it comes to problem solving and creativity, Priestman looks back to playschool. "Have you ever seen a child play with Lego? When you're four or five, you're an artist or designer. But what happens? Where does it go?" he asks. He believes that everyone can draw – which is true, if you take judgment out of the picture – and you can link creativity with ideas that can be taught. "Anyone can try it. I used pencils as a child, but now, four-year-olds use devices to play

3D modelling games. Kids also mature earlier because of the information they're fed, through the media and the internet. I wonder if we'll look back at this time and think it was crazy?"

And then there's another effect of the modern tech world that concerns Priestman. "I worry that people don't think enough without being interrupted by a click on the phone. Or that 'research' is just page one of a Google search. I think that can affect design," he says. At PriestmanGoode, brainstorming sessions mean being locked away without interruption – even from e-mail. This dedication to thought is important to him. "If more people were trained as designers, the world would be a better place, because designers think about other people all the time – we're always looking and learning," Priestman argues.

Priestman observes that nowadays design is recognised as a real profession and is



considered a good job that can carry a comfortable salary. His company sponsors a number of design awards, particularly in transportation, and also aids the (John) Sorrel Foundation which runs the Saturday Club. "John used to go to a Saturday class on design, and loved it, so he asked designers like us to give up some time to teach students, to give them an idea of professional design," Priestman explains. Each class is a day project, such as a large plan of an aeroplane which students team up to design a portion of each. "This club has changed people's decisions on their future professions," he says.

Workshops are another way for Priestman to use design as an option for a solution. "Design has absolutely everything to do with solving some of the biggest problems in the world," he declares. As a transport specialist, he is aware that world issues like a growing population affect living standards and communities, and he has to plan far ahead. "Getting more people onto trains is important due to the population rise,"

he explains. An existing system, such as the London Underground, needs costly work in order to make it function better. By 2020, the Tube will be using new trains that are 60 percent more efficient than now.

So why upgrade a system that is over 150 years old in some parts? "You need sustainability, especially with a growing population. Trains can be electric – the new ones store electricity locally, and can pass their energy to a passing train or another train on same track," Priestman says.

A good train line can also change the wealth of towns along the route. "Is a rail line for going from A to B or is it for developing? A new train line might see businesses and housing develop along it. They create high-speed transport in corridors, where you can run electricity and water too. It takes less space than a motorway," Priestman says. In London's East End, where train services were made more regular and efficient in time for the 2012 Olympics, locals

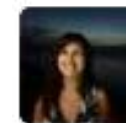
have seen a rise in living standards – and house prices.

The downside to rail development projects is that they take up to 20 years to complete, and that politics sometimes becomes an issue. Any government that agrees to such a project is not likely to see its fruition during their term in office – which can affect decisions and lead to rejection, even of a strong proposal.

For Priestman, a great city is one where public transport makes private cars unnecessary. "Hong Kong is a great example of public transport. In cities with population growth, rail

use should be a priority," he says. He has a strong vision for what public transport should be like in the future and it includes sustainable transport such as cycling and walking. "We want to make train travel as good as flying. We need to re-imagine train systems, so that moving from long distance to local transport is a seamless experience. Cities need to think about above-ground walkways and bikeways which allow you to move whatever the weather, without the risk of getting run over. It's a way to take back the streets and it can reduce public transport congestion. We can encourage people to walk, instead of riding the train for one or two stops."

On Twitter



@HKChantown

Great talk at today. Favourite quote on plane design "This is what we have to do to get people off their private jets."

Live Report

Plenary II (Cutting-Edge Innovations) - Paul Priestman, Design & Co-founding Director, PriestmanGoode (UK)

December 5, 2014
10:25

"If you're in a wheelchair then you have to wait to be lifted into your seat and after, be lifted out again when everyone has got off. There are civil issues here and it's awful. We're designing a seat that anyone can use, but one that moves out so that people who need a wheelchair usually, can use it, even to go to the bathroom," says Priestman. And it's not just disabled people, it's the elderly too as the world has an ageing population. "The airlines and the industry won't take responsibility on this so the designers should," he adds.



**MARTIN
ROTH**

Director
Victoria and Albert Museum
UK

**Museums can open
a window on a rich
cultural mix**

The dictionary definition of a museum describes “an institution that cares for (conserves) a collection of artifacts and other objects... and makes them available for public viewing through exhibits that may be permanent or temporary”. So, in terms of education and the development of the design industry, how can museums make an impact? Martin Roth, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), explains.

Originally known as the Museum of Manufactures (and then, South Kensington Museum), what is now known as the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) was founded partly in response to working class needs in 19th century Britain. “They faced major issues in society like educating the public. The V&A was a response to that, giving people access to what would usually be kept for the privileged,” Roth says.

The museum’s restaurant, designed by William

Morris – a well-known designer and social activist who was an important part of the Arts and Crafts movement at that time – is a good example. “Those without servants could have an affordable meal in a beautiful surrounding,” says Roth, adding that this showed an accessibility that could lead to learning. “And I once heard that the old auditorium windows could open and people would listen to the lectures through the windows. From making to creating, the values of design and ecology to serving the people – that is what the V&A has always been about.”

Design education itself has changed a lot in London. Today 80 percent of Britain’s creative economy is based in the city and it’s now known as an international design centre – a reputation that has grown since the 1970s. Before that, there was no government support for the industry, Roth says. “It’s bolstered by the rise in university attendance. While government



support helped the industry, the development and growth of schools like the Royal Academy of Arts and Central St Martins, now part of the University of the Arts, London, also made a difference." And, let's not forget, access to national collections held in museums in the city helped put it on the map.

Internationally, ease and affordability of travel results in more global travellers, and people increasingly study overseas. The V&A has always received volume numbers of students, many of whom stay for hours, studying or copying items on display. On top of this, exhibitions tour the world – and then there's the option of viewing exhibitions or artefacts online. The V&A Collections archives are available online, with free access. "It's vital for youngsters and students. When the question of charging came up, I said: over my dead body – it's a valuable resource," Roth says with conviction. "Our aim should be to give young students every possibility in a changing world. We can

influence tastes and young people's perception of the creative arts, and what they mean," he adds.

For Roth, these are inherent daily considerations. When it comes to projects and collaborations, he prefers long-term co-operations, like that with the Shekou Design Museum, of Guangdong, which will have a V&A gallery. "It will have the same mission – creating a space for the public to engage in a constructive dialogue," Roth says. "It's an experiment, working with other institutions in China and our international colleagues there. The team's diversity develops a productive relationship; we all have different systems of working and are learning a lot, sharing knowledge," he adds.

In the spirit of educating visitors, the V&A recently surveyed a range of academics, designers, institutions and managers about the future of design in China. The response asked for more international input. They want to be able to see

collections of things from around the world, to find a new way of interpreting objects, as well as how things are displayed and curated – which can trigger other ideas, inspiring communities or creating a platform for exchange.

"A museum is not a container of objects but an interface between the audience and the objects. The presence of the V&A in China is not just about bringing items over but finding a different way of helping society at large to flower," Roth explains. And he has his own motto: "What happens outside the museum has to happen inside the museum too."

Tension is a necessary ingredient. According to Roth, museums are great platforms for friction – by way of debates or intellectual fights – and that's where the excitement is, where things start to happen. "I love the idea of two civilisations coming together and looking at the same problems, and see how they turn out. Dictatorship is a good example", laughs Roth, who was born in a divided, postwar Germany. "I like this kind of think-tank. It's like a stage where we meet. China is a brilliant example, there is a lot of tradition in their design. We aren't starting at zero. But it's about context and how to look at things."

On Twitter



@ambermatthews

Access is so crucial to art and a museum like the V&A that Martin Roth said "only over my dead body will we have an entrance fee".

Live Report

December 4, 2014
15:50

Alexander McQueen spent a lot of time in museums, being inspired by what he saw there. Meanwhile his tailoring skills in traditional methods were learned in Saville Row. Roth is concerned that today's students are losing out because they aren't taught (what should be core) subjects, like the history of art, in the UK.



Students learn from each other in global village of ideas

As part of Business of Design Week (BODW), students from Sweden – this year's partner country – and Hong Kong took part in various workshops, seminars and activities. During the Design for Asia (DFA) awards, executive director of Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC), Dr. Edmund Lee, defined "design thinking" as having a creative mindset in designing better solutions for tomorrow and the future. Coming from two such different places – both with a strong design industry – what did the students learn about design thinking – and did they have different experiences?

Cyril Lee studies at the University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and has a background in engineering, which he says that design focuses on problem solving, even for the smallest detail. "This week I realised that a designer doesn't always have the answer – but we have to clarify

the 'what' questions we're asking. For my next project, I'll start by asking what the real problem is," he says.

Swedish student Shahyan Khan is studying at Handelshögskolan University and is impressed that despite the oceans between them, both places share the same concerns. Kristin Asker, of Malmö University, notes that when a project is started with the presentation of a problem, the question "Can we do this better?" quickly arises. "It makes us ask questions about the world around us," she explains.

Among the workshops, Lego® Serious Play® quickly comes up as a way for the students to explain what they learned. And it's no surprise. During BODW, more than one speaker asked: "Have you ever watched a child play with Lego?" when talking about creativity. "We learned a lot

about thinking with our hands," says Lee. "In the last couple of years I've learned about creative ideas and sketches. But now I'm considering 'don't think', but make with my hands – totally unexpected things might surface. At the moment, my creativity is limited by my brain," he laughs. Asker agrees. "It's interesting to explain your thoughts to a group that way, it's effective communication. I'll take that idea home with me."

"It's amazing how much we can be constrained by thinking," says Khan. Physical forms have allowed her to create things her mind might not have otherwise considered. Andreas Nilsson, from HDK Steneby, notes the differences when working in a group. "Sometimes you hold back your ideas. I've learned to be consistent, say



school-aged children do the best – trying over and over, essentially creating prototypes – until they find a solution. "They all worked together, there was no hierarchy, like there is between adults," she notes. Chung stresses that not all teams started the physical work immediately. And the physicality of the project was noted by Nilsson, who has a background in crafts. "It was great to see this craft thinking spreading to fields like design. You can add the craft process to every field," he says.

In comparing the differences in approach between Sweden and Hong Kong, Lee mentions BODW speaker and furniture designer, Fredrik Färg, who said that for the first few years he had no income. This impressed Lee who notes: "In Hong Kong, design culture is about speed



and do what I want, and enjoy the freedom."

Meanwhile, Disney workshops also made an impact. Based around ideas of an attraction park and user-oriented games, Yiu Chau Chung, from PolyU, had an opportunity to think more about user-centred design. "We had to think about how a user behaves, instead of just thinking about our own opinions," he says. And more teamwork also taught the students a few ideas about processes.

One workshop set the task of building the highest tower out of spaghetti and marshmallows – with the necessity of placing a marshmallow at the top. Working as a group, dynamics are important. A video showed Asker that business-minded people tend to place the marshmallow last – which usually leads to a collapse. Primary



and low cost – we rarely have time to work on a project and refine it again and again." Khan is impressed that Lee has so quickly learned what design is really about, in Sweden.

Asker notes that Hong Kong creates smart, effective design and looks towards things like technology, to create a smarter home, for instance. "I have 41 square metres and my Hong Kong friend has 28 – yet she lives in a much smarter way than I do." She is now inspired to focus on how to make smart, effective designs. "In Sweden you can get stuck in your own field – many of the speakers were talking about their problems as well as how to contribute to wider issues, like sustainability. Design is about managing all of these things together – even if we're from different disciplines, we contribute to the same thing. Now that is design thinking."

HONG KONG DESIGN CENTRE INSPIRES..... DESIGN FOR FUTURE!



(SEE YOU IN BODW 2015)

EDUCATION POST 教育網

SET YOUR COURSE FOR LIFE