

Driving design in Asia

With its escalating global reputation, PolyU's School of Design (SD) is poised to play a key role in driving the design industry in the region. That is also the vision of the Swire Chair Professor of Design and Director of the School **Prof. Lorraine Justice**, who takes pride in the School's recent ranking as one of the world's top 60 design schools in a *BusinessWeek* poll.

The magazine named SD as one of the top 26 design schools in Europe and Asia and one of the 10 best design institutes in Asia. The report, released on 9 October, was based on the recommendations of a 24-person advisory board comprising prominent business figures, faculty and recruiters and 200-plus interviews.



With the project "Plate Tectonics", then final-year design student Miss Monica Tsang Ka-ki (centre in cover photo) has won the international Red Dot Award: Design Concept 2006 for her "high design quality". The Red Dot Award, founded in Germany, ranks among the largest design competitions worldwide. The concept design section of the contest alone drew 478 submissions by professional and budding designers from 40 countries.



Prof. Lorraine Justice

A good name in the region

The School, a pioneer of design education in Hong Kong, has produced professionals working around the world over past four decades. Among its famous graduates are world-renowned fashion designer Ms Vivienne Tam, Oscar-winner and Supervising Animator for *Shrek* Mr Raman Hui, founder of the jewelry brand Qeelin Mr Dennis Chan, and Partner of Kan & Lau Design Consultants Mr Freeman Lau. SD staff and students have also won prestigious awards and accolades for their creativity.

“We have laid the groundwork for becoming probably one of the top design schools in the world,” said Prof. Justice, who has 20 years’ experience in teaching design in the US. “I see ours as being an older, well-respected school in the region with a body of work that could actually start to drive the design industry in the region.” Last year, Prof. Justice herself was named one of the most influential 40 designers in the world by the international *ID* magazine based in New York.

Indeed, SD’s research strengths set the School apart from many of its counterparts in the region. Its major research labs, including the Asian Lifestyle Lab, Asian Ergonomics Research Lab, Interaction Design Lab and User Oriented Design Lab, are attracting growing interest from global companies such as Philips Design, Yahoo!, Nike and Reebok.

Serving the Chinese mainland

“We have top design research faculty here in Hong Kong. We can design better products through design research. We are also evaluating products to find out their problems,” said Prof. Justice.

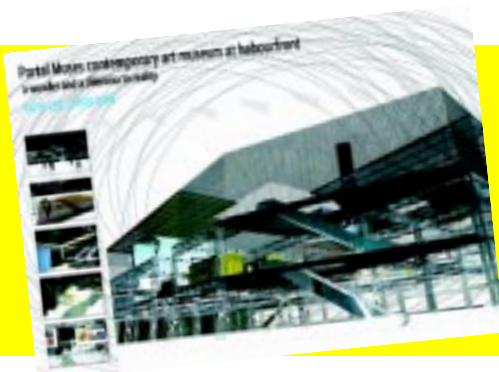
She is now spearheading design research “as fresh as any programme in the US, with multidisciplinary partnerships, sponsorship from global companies, and a focus on ethnographic research”, as reported by *BusinessWeek*.

Commanding much respect in China and building on its advantage as a melting pot of Eastern and Western cultures, the School has offered training for industries in mainland cities including Hangzhou, Wuxi and Changsha. Recently PolyU entered into an agreement with its longtime partner Zhejiang University to set up an international innovative product design centre in Hangzhou, where the School can teach design, engage in joint projects and offer support for industries there.

In collaboration with Yunnan University, SD embarked on a joint “i do” project on cultural sustainability last summer. Under the supervision of faculty from PolyU and partner design schools, four teams of students from Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Korea and Hong Kong spent time in the villages of Yunnan inhabited by ethnic minorities to learn about the traditional craftworks villagers made to earn a living. The students came up with design concepts to help the villagers produce products that can be sold in the West, using their traditional skills of embroidery, weaving and carving.

Furthering design education

Another area on which the School can exert its influence is design education. At present, it runs a Master of Design programme with two different streams: Advanced Practices and Advanced Strategies. In response to emerging market needs, SD is launching two new streams, one in Higher Education Design, targeting design professors from Asia, and one in Interaction Design, intended for companies and professionals specializing in software design.



Creative works by SD graduates of 2006.

BusinessWeek : Top European & Asian Design Schools/Programmes

Design School/Programme	City & Country
Bocconi University	Milan, Italy
Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design	London, UK
Delft University of Technology's Design Institute	Delft, The Netherlands
Design Academy Eindhoven	Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Domus Academy	Milan, Italy
FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences	Graz, Austria
HKU Utrecht's School of the Arts	Utrecht, The Netherlands
Hongik University's School of Design	Seoul, Korea
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University's School of Design	HKSAR, China
Hunan University's School of Design	Changsha, China
Indian Institute of Technology's Industrial Design Centre	Bombay, India
International Design Business Management Programme	Helsinki, Finland
Köln International School of Design	Cologne, Germany
Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology	Daejeon, Korea
Kyoto Institute of Technology	Kyoto, Japan
National Institute of Design	Ahmedabad, India
Northumbria University Design School	Newcastle, UK
Polytechnic University of Milan's Design School	Milan, Italy
Royal College of Art	London, UK
Tama Art University	Tokyo, Japan
Tongji University's School of Design	Shanghai, China
Tsinghua University's Academy of Arts and Design	Beijing, China
UMEA Institute of Design	Umea, Sweden
University of Art & Design Lausanne	Lausanne, Switzerland
University of Oxford Said's School of Business	Oxford, UK
Zollverein's School of Management & Design	Essen, Germany

Source: *BusinessWeek* magazine, 9 October 2006, p.72

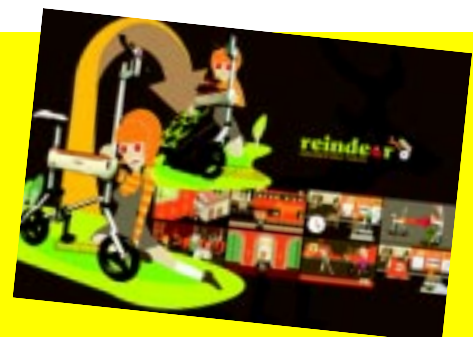
SD has also joined hands with the Faculty of Business in running the popular MBA (Innovation and Design Management) programme. In the pipeline is another programme with a transportation theme focusing on designing automobiles, according to Prof. Justice.

With 1,300 students and more than 100 faculty members and researchers involved in collaboration with other top schools in the world, SD offers studies in key areas highly relevant to the future of Hong Kong and the world economy. These areas are, namely, advertising, visual communication, product design, environment and interior design, and digital media. The list will soon be expanded to cover interaction design and design education as well.

SD's international faculty is another important factor contributing to the School's global outlook. A quarter of its teaching staff are from Europe; another quarter has come from North America, while the rest are Asian.

Hong Kong is the place

"We have such a strong mix of East and West educators that we understand design education very well from different corners of the world," said Prof. Justice, expressing confidence in the School's capability for training new design educators. "We can help mainland and overseas postgraduates to be able to go back to their schools and design courses and subjects, find areas of research and learn how to run design studios."



To cater for the School's expanding roles, a plan to build a design centre on campus as the new home for SD is now underway. Expected to be completed in three years' time, the new centre will provide the much needed hardware to facilitate the School's interdisciplinary teaching and R&D activities as well as its collaboration with industry.

The coming years will certainly see increased ties between SD and industry. For instance, by conducting design audits, Prof. Justice said SD could help companies identify ways to become creative and incorporate them into their business culture.

With its expertise and rich experience, the School has much to offer to businesses striving to survive in the competitive market, especially given the local context of transforming original equipment manufacture (OEM) to original design manufacture (ODM) and eventually to own brand management (OBM).

"We are about the actual strategy as well as the actual product concepts," said Prof. Justice. Specific sectors such as watch, clock and jewelry have already shown a strong demand for design education for their employees, just as in the IT industry, she noted.

At the undergraduate level, the School is enhancing its education through the provision of work experience. In line with the University's emphasis on work-integrated education, Prof. Justice pledged that all students of the School will be able to benefit from work placements before they graduate.

While international exchange will be increased as another significant part of SD's undergraduate education, the presence of non-local students will also serve the purpose of fostering students' international outlook. Being in an international city like Hong Kong and really global, the School, Prof. Justice believes, can appeal to undergraduates and graduate students from around the world. "Students don't have to go to the US or Europe to get a top international design degree. They can come here." ❖

Mr Kinson Ku, account director of a graphic design consultancy, is glad that he has more new ideas to offer to his clients upon completing PolyU's part-time Master of Design programme last year.

"The course certainly stimulated my creativity. I also value very much the friends from different backgrounds I've made during the course," said Kinson. "In helping my clients — mostly listed companies' — design their annual reports, I got more fresh ideas now when brainstorming with them." The knowledge he gained had broadened his mindset, increasing his awareness of cultural issues and global trends, he said.

The final project which Kinson did on branding and investment market also enhanced his understanding of his work. "I come to realize more fully how design helps enhance a company's brand equity, graphical communications and investor relationship in today's globalized market," he explained.



Ms Nicole Shadowitz, a German student pursuing a doctoral degree by research in the School of Design, values the cultural exposure she is getting in Hong Kong. She first came to the territory when she was an exchange student taking design courses at PolyU. The next year, after obtaining her degree in Halle, Germany, she decided to return here.

Nicole said: "The university I went to was very traditional. But here, you can talk to staff at an informal, social level. They give you a lot of feedback and interesting input." With her research interests in cross-cultural collaborative design, she values in particular the chances for interacting with people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds in Hong Kong.

The strong research atmosphere at SD is also inspiring to Nicole. "I can learn about various other research interests at research seminars. There is good support from everyone here."

理大全力推動亞洲設計發展

理大設計學院在國際間的聲譽日隆，早前更於美國《商業周刊》首個有關設計學院及設計課程的調查中，獲評為世界最優秀的六十所設計學院之一，肯定了該院於亞洲區內在設計教育方面的領導地位，而學院院長兼設計學太古講座教授 Lorraine Justice 教授亦正致力引領設計學院成為推動亞洲設計發展的動力。

據去年十月九日出版的《商業周刊》一篇報告顯示，全球設計學院六十強中有二十六所來自歐洲和亞洲，當中理大設計學院在亞洲十佳中穩佔一席。該名單是由《商業周刊》成立的一個二十四人諮詢委員會推薦，再經二百多個訪問後制訂。該委員會由多家著名設計企業的代表、國際頂尖設計及商業學院的教授等組成。

設計學院享譽國際

理大是香港專上設計教育的先驅，設有全港大學中唯一的設計學院，四十年來培育了人才眾多，當中不乏著名設計師，如世界知名時裝設計師譚燕玉小姐、憑《史力加》動畫創作榮獲奧斯卡獎的許誠毅先生、珠寶品牌 Qeelin 的創辦人陳瑞麟先生，及斬與劉設計顧問合夥人劉小康先生等。

曾在美國教授設計二十年並早前獲紐約《ID》雜誌選為全球最佳四十位設計師之一的 Lorraine Justice 教授為是項排名深感鼓舞，她稱：「我深信本院的優質設計教研能引領亞洲區的設計業進一步發展。」誠然，理大的多個設計研究項目，如亞洲生活模式研究室等，已愈來愈吸引跨國企業包括飛利浦設計、雅虎、Nike 及 Reebok 等的注意。

Lorraine Justice 教授稱，該院的设计研究中心一直積極推展設計研究項目。《商業周刊》指其所領導的設計研究「既強調跨學科合作、獲跨國公司贊助，又以文化研



Lorraine Justice 教授喜孜孜地展示一本《商業周刊》。

究為焦點，就像美國的研究一樣，新穎又活潑」。

推展中國內地設計項目

隨着中國內地對設計業日益重視，理大的設計學院亦憑着香港融滙中西方文化的優勢，積極於內地城市，包括杭州、無錫及長沙推展設計培訓工作。最近，理大亦與合作多年的夥伴浙江大學簽署協議，計劃於杭州開設國際創新產品設計中心，讓學院得以在當地進行教研及為業界提供專業的支援服務。

此外，學院又與雲南大學合辦支持當地文化持續發展的計劃，在理大和有關合作院校的教員指導下，來自芬蘭、德國、荷蘭、韓國和香港的四組學生於去年暑假組隊，前赴雲南少數民族聚居村落，體察依賴製作傳統手工藝品維生的村民生活，並協助村民設計可供西方銷售用途的產品。

香港正是孕育設計人才福地

目前，理大設計學院共有一千三百名學生及逾百名教研人員，學院的學士學位課程主要分四個專修範疇：即廣告、視覺傳意、產品設計、環境及室內設計，以及電子媒介設計。學院的設計學碩士除現有的高級應用、高級策略專科外，亦將於新

學年增設互動設計及設計教育兩個專科。而學院近年與理大商學院合辦的工商管理碩士學位（創新與設計管理）課程亦大受歡迎。展望未來，學院已計劃開辦有關汽車設計的新課程。

此外，學院亦積極為工商企業提供顧問服務，以協助企業配合市場發展，特別是透過設計增值，建立良好的品牌，以提升在市場上競爭。

Lorraine Justice 教授對設計學院未來的工作充滿信心。她指出該院擁有半數來自歐美設計背景、另半數為亞洲人士的專業教研隊伍，加上有來自內地和世界各國的學生，都有助於擴闊學生的國際視野。為配合設計學院的發展，理大已計劃於三年內在校園建成新的一幢設計中心，以提供教研設備及促進該院與業界的合作。Lorraine Justice 教授說：「要修讀國際化的專業設計學位，毋須到歐美國家，來我們這裏就行了。」



設計學院畢業生曾嘉琪憑着她的畢業作品 *Plate Tectonics*，贏得國際知名的「紅點設計獎—二零零六年概念設計獎」。該獎項源於德國，是全球最受矚目的產品設計比賽之一。是次單是角逐概念設計獎的參賽作品已達四百七十八份，參賽者是來自四十個國家的專業及新晉設計師。