

Introduction

Over the last two decades there has been a steady increase in the publication of studies on East Asian design and craft, reflecting a current heightened awareness of globalization across the world, and East Asia's rise into a political, economic and creative power. These factors have complemented long standing interests in Chinoiserie and Japonisme. In parallel, design history studies inside East Asia have been developing and maturing at a fast pace while a small number of design historians in Angloamerica have also been continuously working on East Asia.¹ However, little of the achievement of scholars working on and in their local areas for decades, has been recognised and published in English. In this special issue we would like to present a glimpse of this informative work from four authors who are established or working in this region, and who are active participants in this area of research. Although our starting point has been the questions about 'global design history' raised in the three part series 're: focus design—Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia' published by the *Journal of Design History*² it is interesting to trace how the ideas of global and, more recently, transnational have evolved.

'Global', 'World' and 'Transnational' Design History

The historical perspective offered by the notion 'transnational' is a reflection of current developments, concerns and aspirations in historical studies, and has been chosen to facilitate the focus on the inter-connectedness of modernity and contemporary development in East Asia. As portrayed by Akira Iriye, a 'historiographic revolution' occurred in the 1990s when the ideas of 'global' and 'transnation' were introduced.³ 'International' which was originally the domain of diplomatic history or history of foreign affairs, focusing on inter-relation between nations (often meaning powerful western nations), was replaced by global and transnational history, terms which have been flourishing since the 1990s. Although the term 'globalisation' acquired some currency in the 1990s, as Barry Gills and William Thompson conclude, a consensus has not been reached on its definition and a gap has emerged between the newly developed idea of 'global history' and the historical study of 'globalisation'. In respect of the latter, 'globalisation' is by no means a new phenomenon but has been on-going since the sixteenth century at least, when trade enabled the connection between the Americas and Afro-Eurasia. The two camps have much in common, but retain irreconcilable differences.⁴

Christopher Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* demonstrates the inter-connectedness and interdependences between a multi-centred modern world and as such may be regarded as taking a global historical approach.⁵ Although it offers a convincing 'global history' perspective, the scope and methodology are ambitious and the difficulties in connecting microhistories based on specific empirical studies are exposed.

In art and visual culture, there has also been a long running debate on the globalisation of art and visual culture history as typified by the Angloamerican centre's self-critical challenge to Eurocentrism alongside the challenges

posed by 'Other'/'Marginal' non-western art histories such as Kobena Mercer, James Elkins, Shigemi Inaga and Piotr Piotrowski.⁶ In a similar manner to Gills and Thompson, their debate offers a variety of views on 'global' that are backed up by different situations of 'globalisation' and inherent difficulties in the 'global' approach. While Elkins proposes sharing the methods which western art history developed to maintain coherence for building a global/world art history, Piotrowski argues that these methods are already problematic as they are enmeshed with the hierarchy of centre (west) – peripheries (non-west) that was developed with western canons and styles for central investigation. He proposes rejecting the western method in order to see the local production of art which he describes as horizontal and polyphonic.⁷ A significant number of productive outcomes have emerged since, but the interchangeable use of the terms 'global' and 'world' illustrates that confusion exists. Also in Design History, the initially productive study frame for the dynamic between 'national' and 'international' as exemplified in Jeremy Aynsley's work has also been supplanted more recently by the similarly interchangeable idea of 'global' and 'world'.⁸ Indicative of this is the debate between Victor Margolin, Jonathan Woodham and Anna Calvera published in this journal in 2005.⁹ Margolin and Woodham identify disparities between Angloamerica and the rest of the world, and support the idea of 'global/world' as an all-inclusive position that recognizes coexisting parallel histories of development by drawing a 'new outline of the map of design to build upon a world history to allow a global understanding of the subject'.¹⁰ Woodham proposes to uncover 'lost histories' of design in less trodden parts of the world through engaging with activities being carried out by international institutions such as the International Council of Communication Design (ICOGRADA) and the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID). Meanwhile, Margolin proposes a strategy towards inclusiveness by broadening the definition of design into more fundamental human creative activities dating from pre-Industrial Revolution times. His *World History of Design*, currently in press, is the outcome of this line of development.¹¹ Anna Calvera, on the other hand, problematises the central/peripheral approaches as not recognising 'different centres acting and having a dialogue between them', and she goes on to emphasise the incorporation of multiple-centred/national and local histories into the global history of design, thus providing new information to a global audience.

Another stream for example is presented by *Global Design History* edited by Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello and Sarah Teasley which is an ambitious attempt to adopt a global history approach to design history. It takes a position of 'global' forming a 'methodology' for connecting which would be different from a world design history and, furthermore, would not be an attempt at 'mapping the history of design in all its geographical nooks and crannies'.¹² 'Global' is not defined and is open to each contributor's interpretation, and one might question whether the 'global' perspective implies a Euroamerican connection with the other world, or alternatively, the other world's connection with Euroamerica which slightly misses the original intention for global history to decentre Euroamerica. In considering this important contribution, one wonders too about the question of ownership of the *Global Design History* – and of course this is true of much other work in

the area as well. Is it reasonable to contemplate a global vision when there is such little contribution from local experts of non-Euroamerica? More specifically, we lack a sense of locally informed design histories that have not had some form of mediation or representation by the Euroamerican perspective.

Global history is clearly a highly ambitious idea - an ideal perhaps - but it has created vast confusion and the resulting issues have been highly contentious. The editors of this issue would like to adopt the aspirations towards a 'global' sense in the same manner as these two streams did, however, we believe the real gap in our current understanding is along the lines of Calvera's point - that there is a need to bring the multi-centred design histories into the considerations about the global world.

Meanwhile, Arjun Appadurai argues that the transnational flow of culture erodes the idea of the nation-state, and that a cross-fertilised imagination has replaced the centre-periphery model.¹³ This transnational approach has seen productive research outcomes such as Paul Gilroy's 'Black Atlantic' and Shumei Shih's 'Sinophone' cultures.¹⁴ These studies managed to fully recognize the die-hard notions of 'nation' and 'ethnic identity', while they also identify and describe the transnational (border crossing, centreless) and the subjective formation of imagined/creolized cultures. The transnational approach identifies the porousness of national borders and allows us to see different flows of human activities including interactions of people, objects, ideas and art and design movements, otherwise the perspectives are delimited by national borders.

The idea of 'transnational' stands side by side with 'global', but the distinction between 'global' and 'transnational' has been tenuous, as both are historical approaches focusing on connections that transcend the borders of nations. However, as Sven Beckert and Iriye find, transnational doesn't necessarily have to be 'global', but rather a transnational approach can be used as a supplementary tool for capturing national histories, or in providing a 'transnational understanding of national history'.¹⁵ Although Design History has yet to develop much debate on 'transnational', Karen Fiss and Hazel Clark compiled a special issue of *Design Issues* which has been informed by Appadurai, suggesting a possible way forward for transnational design history.¹⁶ We believe this transnational approach to be useful, as it builds on knowledge already accumulated, for example in Japanese design history, while bringing out empirical research which can productively be used to write, for example Korean design history and Taiwan design history - areas in which Design Histories have started to be captured but are underdeveloped. It is particularly useful for dealing with cultural dissemination and appropriation, as well as cross-border designers in the context of a 20th century empire (i.e. Japan).¹⁷ One can also identify some strategic advantages, in that it supports denationalising the subject at a time when we have a contemporary surge of postcolonial nationalism in East Asia which tends to bar fruitful academic engagement.

The editors have observed, through their research in design development in East Asia, the strength of dialectic and material relations with the Euroamerican centres together with certain shared elements in inter-East Asian and inter-non-Euroamerican activities that can be described as 'minor-to-minor' inter-regional/community horizontal interactions.¹⁸ This phenomenon reveals itself as a transnational characteristic of the national self-consciousness of the 'nation' through cross-bordering, multidirectionality and cross-fertilisation. The four articles selected in this issue are convincing not only for the importance that they offer to the writing of local histories in English for a wider audience, but also for the way they present this transnational approach as a promising way forward for the study of modern design development in East Asia.

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Why East Asia is important

'East Asia' is a geographically clustered area which is located in the East in the Euroamerican centred map. If the world map were to be centred in 'East Asia', East would be South America and Far East could be Africa or arguably Europe. Thus geographical 'East Asia' is a relative term, and has no greater significance than denoting a geographical distance from Euroamerican centres. Unlike Europe, East Asia has not been defined as a political region and is a fairly new concept in the 21st century. As the definition of 'Asia' differs as in a simple example in the UK (denoting the Indian continent) and USA (the Pacific Rim countries), East Asia itself has also constantly culturally and politically changed within 'Asia'. Therefore, East Asia is not strictly an officially set region, but is a strategically chosen study frame reflecting the editors' research. It has a similar intention as the recent initiative on Balkan design by Jilly Traganou and Marina Emmanouil, who attempt a collective mapping of parallel and inter-related development.¹⁹ East Asia has great potential for providing case studies for transnational design history from many kinds of interconnections and interdependencies that resulted in the dissemination of knowledge through Chinese characters with the backdrop of shared Confucianism and Buddhism.

The start of modern design in East Asia can be traced back to the 1920s, while design history studies have also developed since as early as in the 1950s (i.e. Japan's case) in parallel with its development in Euroamerican centres. East Asia is also an important area for postcolonial studies. It was an arena for competing imperialism on the parts of Britain, Germany and Russia, followed by Japan itself. Layers of interventions by imperial powers, in particular the colonial legacy (or, more precisely, the recent rewriting of the colonial past to inform the present) and the unsolved problems left by the Japanese empire until its demise in 1945, have rendered the features of design histories in this region complex. Recently this has inspired a series of studies exploring the relationship between colonization and modernities in the inter-East Asian context by adopting the idea of 'colonial modernity' and produced, for example a successful joint project on 'modern girls' in East Asia led by Tani Barlow, Ruri Ito and Hiroko Sakamoto.²⁰ Japan intervened by disseminating Japan's translation/appropriation of Euroamerican and Russian cultures. Therefore, the local 'modernities' in East Asia under Japan have the unique characteristics of double colonization, which has been described

through the term 'refraction',²¹ indicating a transfer of Japanised western modernity. Among the contributions in this issue, Boyoon Her's article directly deals with this 'refraction' and 'colonial modernity' in her study on translation of terminologies. Ju-joan Wong's article also indirectly points to the complex postcolonial situation as a legacy of colonial modernity as seen through some key designers who continued to work seamlessly before and after 1945, as well as Japan's cultural domination in Taiwan which continued through a transitional period of design system changes. Design history studies in East Asia therefore require multiple perspectives in relation to Euroamerican design development. In this entangled context, 'national identity' and indigenous forms of design development emerged. In the postwar period, East Asia becomes the platform for the Cold War (which continues in the Korean peninsula, and also the effect of present-day Taiwan's stateless nation) where design and design history studies have accelerated under the powerful occupation and dominance by the USA.²² East Asia becomes a further politically contested place and design development is inextricably related to the politico-cultural context of the Cold War.

Another important aspect of focusing on East Asia is the writing of histories, including design histories. Although Japan has been writing its own design history for some time, there has been no consensus on a mutually accepted design history among East Asian countries, a factor which is probably equally true for general history studies in the region. Currently local scholars have been working on discovering who could be called the first generation designers in each region, while compiling a record of their work and products. In other words, they are currently writing design histories for the first time, while at the same time trying to incorporate some of the critical approaches taken by Euroamerican design history studies. East Asia presents an important framework for studying transnational movement, colonial modernity, and the writing of local design histories.

Themes and Articles in this Special Issue

This issue has been shaped by a number of interrelated themes, which formed the basis for our initial call for papers in autumn 2012. The themes we have identified were key to understanding inter-East Asian design, but also form a transnational history of *East Asia*. They have been identified from case studies presented at workshops and symposia as part of the joint research networking scheme in which editors have been involved for a decade.²³ We also believe these themes lend themselves to engagement with issues that have been studied in Euroamerican centres. Thus through the following themes we introduce the emerging empirical and critical studies of design in East Asia.

- 1) Transnational interactions of people, objects, ideas and movement;
- 2) Terminology: words used for, and underlying concepts of, 'design', 'art' and 'craft' etc.;
- 3) Translingual design and cultural translation: notions of translatability/untranslatability;
- 4) Colonial modernity (specifically the Japanese empire and its context)

- 5) National identity, question of 'authenticity' and 'tradition';
- 6) Modernity in regional contexts with comparative perspectives;
- 7) Design institutions and design education;
- 8) Consumption of modern design;
- 9) The gender aspect of design.

The four selected papers each focus on, to a greater or lesser extent, the majority of these themes, presenting case studies from different modern periods that roughly span the period from 1920 to 1990 in East Asia. In the four introductions below we offer an indication of how the articles relate to these themes.

All of the articles that are presented here show traits of the developmental stage of writing histories as described in the previous section. Although some parts of the articles may appear fragmentary, and give the impression that some meanings may have been lost in the translation into English, as we discover in Her's account of how mis-translation informs our understanding of modern and contemporary culture, in reality this 'loss' is a characteristic of dealing with non-Euroamerican design histories, and any loss is more than adequately compensated by the new knowledge that underpins the contemplation of a wider cultural context. All the papers were written by authors with native or near native bi-/tri-lingual ability in East Asian languages to a professional level. Therefore, their studies are informed by rich primary sources from local archives and oral histories and interviews.

Boyoon Her's 'The Formation of the Notion of 'Gong-ye' (craft) in the Korean Modern Age' examines the role of translation in the transplanting of ideas from Europe to Japan and from Japan to Korea. Her's article offering the caveat that 'Translated ideas are usually developed in their own ways and ultimately have different meanings from the original ones' explores an excellent example of translanguaging translation that creates the translatable and untranslatable ideas during the process. Her meticulously traces examples of translation of terminology, specifically 'gong-ye' and 'misul gong-ye' (art craft), and links these with subsequent transformations of visual cultural hierarchy in East Asia since the late 19th century. The article extends the case study of Japan, detailed in Satō Dōshin and Kitazawa Noriaki, into the inter-East Asian context with analysis of the formation of meanings in Japan and Korea.²⁴ For example, the English 'craft' has been translated into Japanese using the word 'kō-gei' and then into Korean using 'gong-ye'; and similar trajectories are traced for 'art craft' and 'art'. The terminologies have been translated from English/German into Japanese using Chinese characters, and then into Korean using Chinese characters and Hangeul scripts. Her articulates the ambiguity in the uses and meanings of the terms resulting from this translation process, but also points to productive and creative aspects including the usefulness of Chinese characters in underpinning this complex cultural transfer.

Her's article complements the studies on terminology and concepts of 'gong-ye', by Gong-ho Choj, who diligently traces the changes that evolved since the mid 19th century.²⁵ Where Choj's study examines the use of new words

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and terminology in the context of the Korean encounter with new materials and cultures from the outside (mainly China and Japan, as well as Euroamerica filtered through China/Japan), Her analyses the changing meanings bestowed upon the new terminology. Importantly, Her's article pays special attention to the uneven power relations between imperial Japan and colonial Korea that are involved in this translation and the subsequent effects. It argues that the distinctive meanings attached to 'gong-ye' in Korean craft history and contemporary practice are rooted in this complicated and fractured process of appropriation and transplantation of the term craft as well as in the institutional systems that support its production and consumption. Her's study contributes to the studies of 'colonial modernity' specific to East Asia with a meticulously detailed account. The translation of 'craft' into 'kō-gei'/'gong-ye' appears to have never quite settled down in East Asia since then, and Her's case study exposes untranslatable elements that still resist the Euroamerican visual system, in favour of a persistence of East Asian local values.

Oh Younjung's article 'Shopping for Art: Department Stores and the New Middle Class in Modern Japan' focuses on the role of the Mitsukoshi department store which began its modern department store business in 1905 following the model of Harrods in London. Oh makes a critical connection between Pierre Bourdieu's idea of 'taste' and the cultivation of *shumi* (taste) by the new middle-class in Japan. It discusses aspects of the legitimation of new taste and how it created a sense of 'distinction' in a changing social order in modern Japan. Oh's critical engagement with Bourdieu helps in capturing transnational modernity in the domestic scene, while it also elucidates the fascination with the newly translated notion of 'culture' that consists of indigenous components. She elucidates this through her analysis of the process whereby art and culture became the objects of modern conspicuous consumption. This corresponds with studies on Japan's urban modernity such as by Minami Hiroshi and Jordan Sand²⁶. Department stores have been an exciting research topic in Japan over the last two decades and Oh's article complements studies by Hatsuda Tōru and in particular, the design historical research by Jinno Yuki.²⁷ Setagaya Museum of Art, a major art museum, organised exhibition *Kurashi to Bijutsu to Takashimaya ten* (Art + Living: Takashimaya The Department Store as a Culture Setter), which, with its focus on Takashimaya department store, offers a useful comparison with Oh's study on Mitsukoshi.

Oh focuses on the department store's facilitation of affordable, tasteful art for the emerging middle-class to display in their urban homes. It discusses the modernity resulting from the process of art consumption as driven by the aspiration to acquire modern 'taste' by this emergent urban class. The key display space was the *tokonoma*, the decorative alcoves that form a focal point in a room where traditionally the owner's taste would be shown off through art objects. Oh discusses how the upward mobilizing middle-class took ownership of *tokonoma* away from the upper ruling classes who, in pre-modern Japan, had exclusive rights to the building, owning and decoration of *tokonoma*. The emergent urban classes appropriated it by extending its deployment to the study or guest room, and displaying modern *nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) which were not in the traditional full-size, but in the

half-sizes which the department store had customized for the purpose and sold. Oh brilliantly analyses the modernity of the middle-class consumption of art and the hybridity of the creative ideas that emerged, through a recontextualisation of 'tradition' and 'Japaneseness'.

The article by **Helena Čapková**, 'Transnational networkers - Iwao and Michiko Yamawaki and the Formation of Japanese Modernist Design', is about the elite designer couple Iwao and Michiko Yamawaki who studied in the Bauhaus and how they formulated their original ideas of 'Japanese Bauhaus' in a productive cultural translation. Like Her's article, Čapková's interest is in cultural translation. She studies design development in 1930s Japan, not in the normative frame of single directional 'influence' from western metropolitan centres to the non-western peripheries (e.g. East Asia) or vice versa, but in terms of transnational networks of people. The term 'network' is identified with a transnational perspective, and in her example of the Yamawakis, it is their network with a group of Japanese in Berlin who are involved in all sorts of progressive creative activities with each other - working with people in Paris, Moscow and Mexico, and expats architects from Eastern Europe active in Japan. In this transnational space, ideas and movements were able to interact and circulate in a multi-directional manner in which translation (in Her's sense) plays a key part. And while we can identify streams, one of which feeds into the multiple folds of Japonisme in Europe, and another into the Bauhaus movement itself, Čapková's point is that analysis of the Japan element shows that this global modern movement is circulating transnationally without centre and origin. Her conclusion, that the Japan element is indispensable for any study on the Bauhaus movement is challenging and will, no doubt, invite response.

Equally, Čapková's depiction of a transnational perspective is also a proposition for a new methodology for studying Japanese modern design (which, given Japan's role, is extendable to East Asia) as a transnational design history. This approach is refreshingly new in the context of the current studies on the Japanese students at the Bauhaus, for example, Sezon Museum of Art's exhibition in 1995 and Mikiko Tsunemi's study.²⁸ Čapková's interest is in cultural translation, asking whether it bears productive outcomes that are 'hybrid' in Homi Bhabha's sense,²⁹ rather than whether it is translated correctly or in which way. She argues that the Yamawakis' creative hybrid outcomes in terms of their textile design and architectural work were underpinned by their discovery of Japanese aesthetic elements during their study in Bauhaus and the reconfirmation of familiar elements that had been reorganized in a Bauhaus way of thinking. The point being, these creations could be produced regardless of whether in Berlin or Tokyo, and this all became part of their lifestyles and teaching at the Shinkenchiku Kōgei Gakuin, aka the 'Japanese Bauhaus'.

This article also informs a specific historical and political context that created an ambivalence towards Modernism in Japan. Čapková points to a gender inequality in Bauhaus studies in Japan, and the diminished roles played by talented female Bauhaus-trained designers (Ōno Tamae and Michiko Yamawaki) during the War. This echoes Yasuko Suga's study on the elite

textile designer Kazuko Imai and Sarah Teasley's study on ordinary women's experiences of home building and design.³⁰ Women's participation in design was highly talked about as a modern social contribution by mothers and wives, and in some limited cases one can identify a momentary spark of subjective design creativity, but in most cases women were constrained and suppressed by the male-dominated social systems, and disrupted by the war. When Modernism was used for the ultra-nationalistic purposes of the fascists, it caused a subsequent undermining of both the Yamawakis' careers and the historical evaluation of their contribution. As was the case with research into war painters, any study of Iwao Yamawaki, had been regarded as a taboo subject for academic study until the 1980s, due to his involvement in propaganda art and his cooperation with the governing regime. This reminds us that the writing of design histories of East Asia also involves a task of critical reassessment of Japan's role in the Second World War and its cultural aspect.

Ju-joan Wong's article, 'Design Development in Newly Industrialised Countries under Protectionist Policy: The Case of Taiwan's Household Appliances Industry from the 1960s to the 1980s' traces industrial design in Taiwan during the period of 1960s-80s. It is a valuable study for non-Chinese readers on account of his use of local archives and interviews. Wong's topic is refrigerators, one of the ultimate consumer products of desire in East Asia at that time. In Japan, until the mid 1960s, the possession of a refrigerator, a black and white TV together with a vacuum cleaner were popularly called 'Sanshu no Jingi' (the three sacred imperial regalia – mirror, sword and jewels) as a way of capturing how these desired but impossible-to-obtain goods might as well be mythical.

The two case studies of Taiwanese electric household appliance companies (Tatung and Sampo) show how the ideas and practices of design developed with interesting trajectories. What we learn from Wong's study is a unique pattern found in the then developing NICS (Newly Industrialised Countries), of which Taiwan was a member. As a former colony of Japan, Taiwan's first generation of designers were trained by the first generation of Japanese designers, such as Kappei Toyoguchi, who themselves had been earlier trained by the Germans, French and Americans. These connections remind us of the way Čapková's 'network' brought about productive outcomes. Wong reveals close interactions between Japanese and Taiwanese designers as well as the technological transfer from Japan to Taiwan and Japanese-style design as consumer choice was a key factor in Taiwan's early design development. This offers an illustration of how 'colonial modernity' can persist, as designers continued to work together regardless of the changing political landscape of decolonization in 1945. However, this legacy of colonial relation was supplemented by the USA which was the dominant power in the postwar era, controlling the capitalist bloc of East Asia, so Taiwan received strong investment from the USA in its military, economy and culture during the Cold War. Though American influence is taken for granted in postwar globalisation, what we are reminded of here is that the Cold War heavily determined the course of design development in East Asia. Taiwan was juggling three sets of interests: exporting to the USA, adopting the model after

Japan, and protecting its own economy, while developing design. A three-way balancing act produced a uniquely Taiwanese hybrid refrigerator design which Wong describes as having 'Japanese bone, American skin and made in Taiwan' for the needs of the Taiwanese consumers.

The detail of Wong's analysis reveals some interesting examples of design translation. In one example, the American image of abundance was captured by means of the arc-shaped design of a fridge door (of one particular model), that for local people was reminiscent of the shape of the large jars in which food had been stored formerly. This informs us how contemporary 'authenticity' has been successfully created through cultural translation and boosted consumption. As we have observed in Čapková's study, Wong also illustrates and analyses the hybridity of designers' creation and traces the repositioning of 'tradition' involved in design translation.

Another striking example of cultural translation highlighted by Wong, is that of copying or 'counterfeits'. Counterfeiting is a ubiquitous phenomenon in East Asia even up until the present, but in Taiwan (like in Japan) it became a key factor in modern design development. While the term 'counterfeiting' and the underlying notion, have been translated from Euroamerica in the design context, 'imitation' or learning through copying the model, has had rather more positive value in East Asia. This cognition gap, which became enmeshed with the survival strategy of developing countries in the global world, has created some untranslatable space with respect to this contemporary design specific idea, as can be witnessed in the 'Shanzhai' market. Wong's discussion reminds us of the current debate on this phenomenon which is, in global terms, upsetting international markets, while on the local level, underpinning the innovative creative industry. At the local level, the illegality of copycatting is not accepted because of the non-recognition of intellectual property rights, which points towards a clash of cultures.³¹ Like Japan, Taiwan used the issue of 'counterfeit' almost as a stepping-stone to further develop their own original design. Wong's paper points towards the complexities of translation and hybridization that underpin a positive pragmatism, as being characteristic of design development in Taiwan.

All four articles in this issue represent concrete developments of design history studies in East Asia. On the one hand, they are grounded in solid research of local primary sources and case studies. The authors are writing empirical histories and identifying their own national and local positions while offering their own perspectives. This is a part of uncovering and recognizing people, companies, events and systems that constitute design history and practice in each region, which is an invaluable contribution to expanding and understanding design histories in the wider world beyond Euroamerica.

On the other hand, the articles reflect the progress of design history studies from this region, in that they engage and challenge critical frames and methods taken by Euroamerican scholars. Critical debates on culture, class,

modernity, tradition and nation, which are central to design history study, are presented in the articles featured in this issue: Her's engagement with the semiological approach to words and contents of 'gong-ye'; Oh's interpretation of Bourdieu's distinction and class in Japanese modern consumption of art through Mitsukoshi department store; Čapková's proposition of transnational approaches to the study of Modernism linking Japan and Bauhaus; and Wang's investigation into developing the Taiwanese national design through the production and consumption of refrigerators.

The prominent theme that links all four is the transnational flow of culture circulating in Euroamerica and East Asia as well as within East Asia and beyond, which resulted in hybrid and complex meanings, interpretations and materialisation of design in the region. Perhaps one of the most productive aspects of this issue is the contribution of the inter-regional or inter-East Asian perspective that offers different possibilities for studying design history, which has hitherto developed from a centre (Euroamerica)-to-periphery (non-Euroamerica) model. We propose that the transnational cultural approach to design in East Asia, imbued with often minute but untranslatable differences, will contribute to a more fuller and multivalent understanding of design history in East Asia that not only provides food for thought in contemplating design histories but also challenges the assumption that Euroamerica exists at the centre.

¹ For example, M. Turner, 'Ersatz Design: Interactions between Chinese and Western Design in Hong Kong: 1950's – 1960's', two volumes, PhD thesis, Royal College of Art, 1993; H. Clarke, 'Back to the Future, or Forward? Hong Kong Design, Image, and Branding', *Design Issues*, vol. 25 no. 3, 2009, pp. 11-29; G. Weisenfeld, "'From Baby's First Bath": Kao Soap and Modern Japanese Commercial Design', *The Art Bulletin*, LXXXVI, no. 3, 2004, pp. 573-598; C. M. E. Guth, 'Local and Global: Hokusai's Great Wave in Contemporary Product Design', *Design Issues*, vol. 28 no. 2, 2012, pp. 16-29; S. Teasley, 'Reforming the Inside Out: Kogure Joichi on Furniture and Architecture', *Design History*, no. 2, 2004, pp. 75-114; J. Fraser, S. Heller and S. Chwast, *Japanese Modern: Graphic Design Between the Wars*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1996; S. Minick and J. Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2010 (1990); L. Pan, *Shanghai Style: Art and Design Between the Wars*, Joint Publications, Hong Kong, 2008; Y. Amagai, 'The Kōbu Bijutsu Gakko and the Beginning of Design Education in Modern Japan', *Design Issues*, vol. 19 no. 2, 2003, pp. 35-44; H. Fujita, 'Notomi Kaijiro: An Industrial Art Pioneer and the First Design Educator of Modern Japan', *Design Issues*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 17-31.

² Y. Kikuchi, Y. Lee and W. Wong, 're: focus design—Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 24, no. 3, Part 1 2011, pp. 273-282; vol. 24, no. 4, Part 2, 2011, pp. 359-373 and vol. 25, no. 1, Part 3, 2012, pp. 93-106.

- ³ A. Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York; Houndmills, 2013.
- ⁴ B. K. Gills and W. R. Thompson, 'Globalizations, Global Histories and Historical Globalities', in *Globalization and Global History*, B. K. Gills and W. R. Thompson (eds.), Routledge, London and New York, 2006, pp. 1-17.
- ⁵ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Blackwell, Malden, Mass. and Oxford, 2004.
- ⁶ J. Elkins (ed.), *Is Art History Global?*, Routledge, New York; London, 2007; K. Mercer ed., *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2005; P. Piotrowski, 'On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History', *Umeni/Art*, no. 5, 2008, pp. 378-383; S. Inaga, *Kaiga no Rinkai: Kindai Higashi Ajia Bijutsushi no Shikkoku to Meiun* (Images on the Edge: A Historical Survey of East Asian Cross-Cultural Modernities), Nagoya Daigaku Shuppan, Nagoya, 2014.
- ⁷ Elkins, op. cit.; Piotrowski op. cit.
- ⁸ J. Aynsley, *Nationalism and Internationalism*, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1993.
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