

Creative Roughness—Contemporary Israel Design Exhibition

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TAIPEI --(ASIA TODAY)-- Taiwan and Israel are both situated at the forefront of Asia. Located in the East and the West tips of the continent, they are far in distance but close in similarity— both limited by geographic conditions and restricted natural resources. However, Israel— where rain, water, and oil are scarce— overcame water and energy issues and the technologies are now exported to the world. For World Design Capital Taipei 2016 (WDC Taipei 2016), the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government, has invited renowned Israeli designer Alon Razgour to curate the second international exchange exhibition “Creative Roughness: Contemporary Israeli Design”, where 300 brilliant creations by 45 designers from Israel will tell the story of how this small country of 8 million people transformed desert lands into nourishing grounds for a design start-up nation, a successful reference for Taiwan.

“Make Do” Philosophy Gets Design Out of the Box! Design Triggers Transformation and Delivers the Good from Bad

Israel, given the difficult environmental conditions, has never been out of water despite the fact that it is in the desert. At the birth of the nation, Israel realized “water resource is the life line”, and one of the causes behind the Six-Day War in 1967 was a dispute with neighboring countries over the water resources from Sea of Galilee. Not only does the government strictly manage water resources, design also helps them to develop new sources and recycle better. The Green IQ Smart Garden Hub from LINDENBERG INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, a high-tech design house for telecommunication, healthcare, military service and lifestyle goods, provides smart control for outdoor irrigation systems on the basis of real-time weather report, saving as much as 50% of water. Real-time monitor and control is delivered via Wifi or 3G connection from apps in smartphones, tablets, or desktops.

People admire Israel for its advanced technologies, which have helped accelerate the creation of good designs in various industries, including healthcare, security, and so on. Jonathan Bar-Or, an Israeli designer, created “Smart wearable belt-like hip protector device” to protect hip bones of senior people who are prone to bone fractures when they stumble due to lower bone mass density. There are other assistive devices specifically designed for foot drop patients, who might not be able to tie shoelaces well or climb stairs by themselves in daily lives. These assistive devices can help train dysfunctional muscles, delay possible muscular dystrophy and stimulate local blood circulation.

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Design is Learning by Doing! Sculpt with Culture, Fostering Cultural and Creative Opportunities

In terms of education, Israel has had “10 Nobel Prize laureates in 20 years”, an achievement that Taiwan looks forward to as well. In Jewish culture, argument is a way of thinking which cultivates the ability to find problems and solutions. It thus leads to the valued principle of learning by doing in design education. In this exhibition, David Alexander, President of WIZO Haifa Academy of Design and Education, the best design school in Israel, will share the latest trends in design education in Israel. For example, education workshops allow students to break away from textbook knowledge and experience with their own senses to promote transformation in real life through the power of design.

In his project to make a fixed-gear bicycle, Atar Brosh, a maker and designer, integrates ordinary life materials such as rubber bands and jeans into the making of bike frames. On his personal website, he has publicized how to make a light-weight, hand-crafted, high-tech and customized bicycle bit by bit, from components to end products. It's a reflection of the learning by doing spirit and has thus attracted many bike lovers.

One of the most important features in design doctrines in Israel is to make do with whatever is available at present and to be inspired by the environment. With the plant Syrian thistle, or *Notobasis syriaca*, our curator poetically explains how colorfully vibrant yet simply rough Israeli designs could be when it comes to the balance between design and material. One of the best examples would be COZI Studio, which won 3rd Place at Franz Award, International Porcelain Design Competition 2015, with their project “Elanor Sphere”. The complex precise shape of “Elanor Sphere” was achieved by combining traditional wicker basketry techniques with advanced computer-based technologies into porcelain moulding. Thanks to modern technology, the exchange between traditional rattan wicker and porcelain casting is now possible, as the wicker effect radiates a warm sunny glow when the porcelain skin is illuminated.

Design in the Start-up Nation: Making the Most Out of Limited Resources

The adverse geographic situations and political conditions are blessings in disguise for Israel. Originated from its Jewish diasporic history, the aspiration to settle down and lead a stable and beautiful life has driven the urge for innovation. After World War II, Jewish people returned to Israel and started to foster a design language of compassion and diversity. Danit Peleg, a fabric designer, expands the boundary of fabric making from hand stitches to 3D printing. Her work proves that designers can create fabulous fashion thanks to the support of modern computing. From the works of Yaacov Kaufman, the highly acclaimed Israeli designer, we can see traditional weaving patterns alive on furniture pieces, showing off delicate details in vibrant colors. During the exhibition, there will be seven designers from Israel to share with Taiwanese people their ideas. So mark your calendar!

On the other hand, as we discuss and discover how Israel leveraged design to succeed as the Start-up Nation, in Taiwan, where medical technologies are ranked third best in the world, we can further consider how to introduce “design thinking” into urban design and overcome development challenges of limited resources, creating an ever-regenerative urban governance. Being the 5th World Design Capital, Taipei in 2016 dwells upon the core appeal of “Adaptive City – Design in Motion”, calling for the power of design to transform challenges into opportunities on the basis of solid culture and high expectations of beautiful life, building a truly livable city.

Exhibition Information

Free Entry

Date: July 9th to August 14th

Time: 10:00-18:00

Venue: Songshan Cultural and Creative Park

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