PART 1
NEXT
CITY

An Experiment in Interdisciplinary Education

未来城市
THE NEXT

The future city is often imagined as an ideal city, a utopia, or a human paradise. Philosophers, poets, architects, social reformers, and artists have projected countless visions of a better human society that were driven by hope - dreams of a distant future, but without an explanation as to how to actually get there. The word 'next' originates from the old English word nēhsta and means nearest. To envision a next city, a nearest city, is not a passive fantasy, but a direct responsibility to create and innovate the city of the immediate future. The next city is driven by principles of responsibility, rather than principles of hope.

The invention of the next city is an ever-evolving design project. It must start with the existing city - its mistakes and imperfections - and bring together many disciplines in an interactive collective rooted not in idealism but in a shared productive mission.

Tihamér Salij
The Why Factory
Coordinator Next City Joint Studio

未来

未来城市被想象成一座理想之城，一个乌托邦，或者说是一个人类的天堂。学者、诗人、建筑师、社会改革者、艺术家已经规划出无数个由希望推动的更好的人类社会愿景，梦想一个遥远的未来，却并没有阐明如何抵达这一理想之地。

"next"这个词来自古老的英文单词 nēhsta，意味着最近。为了勾勒一个未来城市，一个近在眼前的城市，这不是被动的幻象，而是肩负起直接的责任创造和改革一个就在不远处的未来城市。未来城市，它更多的是由责任感而并非仅限于希望的推动而形成的。

创造未来城市是一个持续发展的项目。必须以当下的城市为起点，正视它的错误和不完善，将很多学科带到一个互动的合作集体中，它并非植根于理想主义，而是必须要有共同肩负的有创造力的责任感才能形成。

Tihamér Salij
未来城市合作工作室协调人
As the world – and with it the production of human space – becomes more complex, it is impossible for designers to contribute effectively without incorporating knowledge and insights from other disciplines. Everything is interrelated in this maelstrom; everything is contingent of the existing and conceive alternatives for the future – the ‘next’.

A focus on human needs is integral to any contribution to innovative design and to the creation of alternative political, technological, social, or economic constellations of artefacts, identities, places, infrastructure and buildings, apparel, interfaces, signs. ... No ‘species’ is better equipped than the designer to combine function, technology, comfort, necessity, desire, and beauty into a single object.

Multidisciplinary and intercultural design collaboration enables exposure, across the globe, to different research-by-design and design-by-research methodologies. The success of multidisciplinary collaboration is rounded out through continuous motivation for self-reflection, making it possible to sharpen and enlarge the role of each participating discipline. Learning from other disciplines enlarges one’s own scope of references, enriches argumentation, and challenges innovative ability.

Introduction to the Next City Project

In the context of multidisciplinary and intercultural design collaboration, the motive of the Next City project was to foster cooperation between China and the Netherlands by bringing together renowned research and design institutions in the fields of fashion, product design, graphic design, and architecture. The project aimed to promote a cross-cultural exchange on the different qualitative as well as quantitative approaches towards research-by-design and design-by-research methodologies.

Challenge

The challenge of the studio was to explore and identify significant research and design directions within fashion, product design, graphic design, and architecture, and to bring together different interpretations, visions and scales within the context of future city life. This studio aimed, on the one hand, to investigate the roles that various design disciplines can play within the context of future urban living and lifestyles. On the other hand, it challenged the innovative ability and design capacity of fashion design, product design, graphic design, and architecture.

What was the source of inspiration for each design discipline? Through which frame of reference did each discipline explore its design potential?

Research and Design Focus

Because of its multidisciplinary approach, this studio was a collaborative think-tank that extended its scope to a broader perspective including both content-driven design and analytical research. Students as well as teachers approached the theme of ‘Future Living and Lifestyles’ with an intense commitment to reality by taking two cities as practical case studies to boost imagination and with it our designs into the future.

Participants discussed and put forward ideas and agendas that dealt with the following questions, using Rotterdam and Beijing as case studies:

- What will be the source of inspiration for each design discipline?
- What will be the frame of reference through which each discipline explores its potential?
- How can each discipline contribute to the Next (future) City?
- Where can the different disciplines interfere and innovate?
- How can each discipline contribute to the improvement of city life?
- What are each discipline’s responsibilities?
- What improvements are to be undertaken and/or what problems need to be solved in order to achieve a higher quality of life and thus better living standards?
- What possible forces and trends could shape the future city and the living and lifestyles within the scope of each discipline?
- What concepts, functions, products, characteristics, styles, designs, and symbolism will dominate change and thus brand the future city?
The collaboration was organized as a one-semester endeavor that gave the participants of each discipline time to conduct research within the specific scope and scale of its own expertise on a universal/global as well as a specific/local level. Participants looked at design from a research perspective and research from a design perspective. The two masterclasses functioned as a pressure cooker; they physically brought together all participants in two locations: The Why Factory at TU Delft and the Central University of Fine Arts in Beijing.

As interdisciplinarity was an important and challenging feature, participants were asked to mix up in smaller groups and work with students from other schools. The masterclasses were team-taught in order to support interdisciplinary discussion among the tutors and to distribute the range of expertise and critical voices.

Participants theoretically and physically explored and analysed both cities on issues such as identity, mobility, recreation, dwelling, community life, symbolic meaning, and other aspects of living and lifestyle. Participants collaborated in a practical exercise designed to reveal issues that had increasing impact upon the design of the products, services, and environments that will characterize the city of the near future.

The masterclasses sought to identify the challenges that designers and technologists will have to address as they shape the Next City’s landscape, and how they can contribute to future city living and lifestyles. The aim was for participants to gain a multifaceted collection of ‘mappings’ that would support and sharpen the creative process of the final phase: the design of elements, products, and architecture for the next Rotterdam and Beijing – a palette of concrete visions reflecting, as only designers can, not on life as it is, but as it could be in the future.
参与者的合作，侧重于未来城市相关的产品、服务和环境设计有影响的议题。

在项目中，设计师和艺术家们将探讨如何在设计未来城市过程中所面临的问题。参与者的目标是创作一个多层次的“未来规划”，强化创作过程的原创新意。这些有关未来的城市和建筑元素的设计成果，它是一个有具体构想的“城市”，如其所能地展现未来城市的生活面貌。