Ahran Won

      Designing a project as a group isn't so different from what we as designers do individually for a project. We want every aspect of a project to work like a puzzle. The most crucial thing to consider is how to bring all of the different elements of each designer together. We, the design team of 10 East Lake, need to consider each one of us as assembling parts of a clock, acknowledging that all pieces must be functioning together but no two pieces can be doing the work of the other to show the correct time. In other words, being authentic is the key to a good project and the first question we should ask ourselves is 'Why us?' instead of 'Why our design?'.

      Richard Watson, the author of *Future Minds*, writes, "Ideas don't come out of nowhere. All of them are weakly connected to existing ideas. Therefore, it's about cross-pollination, creating new combinations, new connections and new neural pathways. So if you're interested in giving birth to new ideas, you first need to connect with other ideas through indiscriminate relationships with people, places and things. Your ideas need to start having casual sex. It is from this frenzied coupling that new ideas will be conceived". In order to engender closer and deeper answers to our project, I've decided to look into ideas and concepts that we can easily find in everyday life, which can also be considered elements of good design.

      An interesting article "How Successful People Make Themselves Luckier" written by corporate director Craig Forman recently caught my attention. In the article Forman shares a few comments about how the "luckiest people" behave. He suggests the luckiest people, "Don't simply 'communicate' with others, but find ways

to authentically connect with others" Communication and authenticity are crucial factors in being successful in our professional and daily lives. Respectable communication, harmony, unity, understanding, and collaboration are the elements we are looking for when there is a group, society in a bigger sense, and so it is in a good design.

From my perspective, in order for things to be interwoven and function correctly while not overriding one another, we should comprehend the differences and keep questioning, accepting the ongoing flow of different opinions. Lebbius Woods writes, "My idea of utopia, or an ideal state of conditions for humans is not based on a harmonious melting of conflicting conditions, but rather on the free dialogue or open interaction with them.... the utopian condition is one of conflict, achieving a dynamic balance of opposing ideas, actions, forces, through continuous struggle to assert difference of every kind. This idea is based on the belief that the ultimate state of harmony is death. For living things and systems, harmony means the resolution of conflicts and the achievement of a final, 'peaceful' state". Therefore, the idea of being in harmony is not necessarily melting into what is proven to be the best, but following what is best for us as individuals and creating "rhythm" among those differences, allowing us to eventually arrive again at another best answer.

All individuals are authentic and original. We should bring our individual authenticity into our design. We are an exclusive team of creative designers. When a group of people gathers, no two groups can produce the same outcome, as no individual can be the same as another. Yet, it is very easy to lose track. Coming up with helpful solutions is important. We should remember not to be so obsessed as to

avoid manipulating every single element. We should look for serendipitous opportunities. I am not suggesting that we should recklessly produce what comes up in our minds, but talk about the crucial aspect of deep individual thinking as a pre-design process. As long as we have genuine intentions, those serendipitous moments will finally meet a resolution.

The danger of inauthentic design, by that I mean designs that lack meaningful insight and well formulated thesis, is the loss of Functionality and purpose. Toyo Ito stated in a conversation session at the Art Institute of Chicago about beauty. "There are no ugly projects but there are projects that are not beautiful. A Not beautiful project would either lack deep thoughts or enough research." I believe the "not beautiful" project that Ito mentioned happens when a project is constructed on a mixed order of values.

For instance, the numerous projects from the Spontaneous Interventions exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center a while ago seemed to show the potential of the design intervention in the city context. On the other hand, similar projects with similar solutions, and similar purposes all seemed a bit too obvious. Are we supposed to adapt effective ideas from similar designs all over the world and combine them to come up with the best answer that everyone will once again follow? Is that our final destination? Then at what level do we consider a project a success or a failure? Is there an answer to the hubris of creating the "right" thing for people?

Also, if we are producing the same ideas over and over, society will lose its chance to advance because conformity will prevent curiosity and creativity. As an

example, if you show a newborn child the same things constantly you will get to see through their eyes that they are losing concentration, whereas if you show them new things their gaze focuses, intensifies. As simple as that, we should not limit our research within architecture, urban planning and public art. According to Richard Watson, "Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner says that high achievers can often be identified early by their love of topics, tasks, and issues that are not core or essential. The link here is with curiosity or, more specifically a love of serendipitous experiences. There is plenty of evidence to show that within organizations the best ideas come from people who have the most contacts outside their immediate division or department". In order to create the potential for serendipitous moments, we first need to look deep into ourselves as individual designers. In that sense, our group is a powerful machine. As long as we apply decent rules at every corner, the spatial outcome will have distinguishing moods and use.