Design Museums in China: A Research on the Cultural Landscape of Design Museums

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design history, design museum.

Nowadays, design plays an important role in contemporary life. It is significant not only in daily life, but also on societal and cultural innovation, especially in the age that hi-technology develops rapidly and huge amount of inventions are made. In the past two decades many and varied design events and activities, such as exhibitions, biennales, and trade shows proliferate. Along with museums booming and expanding in an international scale, some museums begin putting a close eye on displaying and collecting design works; some new museums are exclusively set up to dedicate to design.

This research intends to investigate the landscape of design museums in China. These museums, either governmental or private, assist to build the cultural identity of a city or an organisation, and to improve the development of local creative culture. I will look into design history internationally, then focus on how design museums develop internationally and domestically, and how they make function to promote design and cultural identity as cultural organisations.

Site visits to some design museums and organisations in Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Shanghai will be carried out. Field trips to counterpart museums in other cities and countries will be considered as well. Multiply resources of museums’ histories, exhibition information, as well as national policy will be studied. Furthermore, interviews of directors and curators of the design museums will be conducted.

The research endeavors to
1. provide a comprehensive understanding of the design culture for museums dedicated to displaying and research on design;
2. be informative and significant for the development of design museums in China.