



## From the Nest's Body Slimming to the Awaken Consciousness of Design Ethics

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### Abstract

The body slimming scheme of Nest, the dominate venue for the 2008 Olympic Games, has aroused a wide attention in 2004. As a matter of fact, certain designs that do not take the consciousness of ethical care into consideration exist in the design field in China. This paper analyzes these phenomena, pointing out that the thought of design ethics should become the theme of different designs.

**Keywords:** Olympic venues, Art design, Ethical consciousness

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games are coming. The Olympic Games serve as both great opportunities and severe challenges for any host country and city. This point is well illustrated by the dispute on the construction of venues for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. For years ago, the dispute on the design of venues for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games is hot. Especially, the Nest's body slimming has aroused more attentions discussions among people. It reflects the awakening consciousness of design ethics among people, what is significant for today's art design.

### 1. Thoughts brought about by the construction of venues for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

The Nest, the final design for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games' chief venue, will become the largest steel-constructed building in the world. This design is accomplished by Herzog and de Meuron, Swiss architects, and China design & research institute together. It will cost 3.89 billion Yuan. And it will consume 136 thousand tons of steel. It has an open roof, similar to a bird nest. And it gains thousands of praises from the media and the mass. For example, it is praised for "gaining innovative significance in world architecture history" (Yingli Liu, 2004). Its figure and structure are natural and uniform, without any surplus design. And the materials are special and suitable for the climate in Beijing. Besides, its grey steel net and the red stand reflect the implied beauty of the eastern. However, the collapse of the Charles De Gaulle Airport, Paris, in late May, in 2004 inspired a heating discussion on the Nest in China's architecture field. The main body of the Nest, namely the national venue, is composed of a series of radiant steel structures that consume lots of steels. In June and July in 2004, all academicians in the Division of Civil, Hydraulic and Architecture Engineering, and the Division of Architecture in the Chinese Academy of Engineering wrote a letter to the State Council, criticizing the 2008 Olympic venue for its hidden threats and wastes due to its size, novelty, and design. Experts put forward that it is hard to control the movement on the roof of the Nest due to its large areas and weights. Besides, lots of safety and technology issues, such as walking, driving, and braking, need to be thought over and tested (Baoping Lu, 2004). Even some academicians who specialized in architecture point out unreservedly that the best choice is to buy the property right of the original scheme and make a new design. All these voices have aroused special attentions from the top management level. On thirtieth July, the construction of Nest was stopped. In August, a slimming Nest scheme that cancels the open roof and enlarges the top was passed. The slimming Nest merely costs 53 thousand tons of steels. And the budget is decreased from original 3.89 billion Yuan to present 2.3 billion Yuan. At the same time, other Olympic venues, such as the national swim center "Water Meter", are slimming. Although the representative project, the national venue Nest, has unique shape, it has been criticized and has have to be slimmed because of its complicated design, high costs, and hidden threats. The ETFE used in the Nest has to be imported from foreign countries and the price is about 2,000 Yuan per square meter, not mention the hidden threats caused by the numerous use of steels. Olympic Games provide with a super excellent chance for displaying the art of architecture. The Olympic venue should become a symbol of Olympic Games. Therefore, its design must be novel. However, a wonderful appearance should not sacrifice the safety of the Olympic venue. Considering the original style of design, the Nest has been slimmed and optimized, what rightly follows the spirits of "being economical in Olympic Games". In its construction, people successfully overcome challenges from the structure's design, process, and installation. After the construction of Nest and Water Meter, the two representative buildings gains high praises in people. Lots of athletes and sports officials in the world praise highly for their delicate design, unique structure, and splendid construction. As a matter of fact, the two buildings completely reflect the charm of modern Olympic Games, showing the great cohesion of Chinese nationality and the

powerful union of Chinese culture. People are looking forward the wonderful effect generated by the architecture art and the splendid performance in the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

## **2. The lack of ethical consciousness has become a grave issue in design field.**

The Nest's body slimming is worth of thinking indeed. Art design is a practical subject that becomes prosperous along with the social development and progress. In recent years, the art design has already played a vital role in social life, which has affected many fields, such as product wrapping, industrial design, upholster design, architecture design, environmental art design, apparel design, and so on, contributing a lot to the economic development and the improvement of human living. However, because of the negative influences of the society and the economic benefit, many kinds of designs tend to betray from the design ethics. Lots of silk-stocking, wasteful, and ivory-towered design works appear in the art design field. In the architecture and the city planning field, the international collection for designs becomes a regular way of advertising, from the National Grand Theater designed by Paul Andreu to the Nest designed by Herzog and de Meuron, and the new CCTV building designed by Rem Koolhaas, from the new eastern Zhengzhou zone designed by Kisho Kurokawa to the new golden eastern zone in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, designed by Herzog and de Meuron. These world-famous architects have impressed Chinese deeply by their designs. However, not all foreign designs can bring about visual surprise and latest design idea for people. The "extensive internationalization" makes Chinese cities lose their personalities and become hard to be valued. These buildings filled with foreign styles do create a kind of visual impact, but they usually neglect costs, safety, utility, and environment protection. And many architectures and buildings with Chinese features and oriental tastes have been dismantled. The National Grand Theater designed by Paul Andreu is criticized for its too novel shape and neglect over safety. The lack of ethical elements in design works is extremely grave in China's product wrapping design. Enterprises and companies do not focus on products' functions and services but pay too much attention on wrapping. Data show that Beijing produces nearly 3 million tons of waste each year and 830 thousand tons of them are wrap-page. Thereof, 600 thousand tons wrap-page trash may be reduced at the very beginning. In China, the wrap-page waste accounts for 30 percent of total solid waste in cities each year. China can produce 1.2 billion shirts in average each year and the packages will consume 240 thousand tons of paper, which is equal to 1.680 million big trees. Every 10 million boxes of moon-cake with paper packages will consume four hundred or six hundred trees with more than ten centimeter diameter. Excessive wrapping has already threaten the environment and caused grave waste. According to Reuters' report, a public opinion investigation completed by Nielsen Co. in November, 2007, through network in 48 countries shows that the food wrapping waste has already become one of issues that arouse most attentions among customers in the world.

All these issues in art design not only waste the natural and social resources but also destroy the natural environment. As a result, the society and the mass suffer from economic losses. Meanwhile, it causes the formation of bad consumption habit and bad social vogue. In a sense it has already become a grave issue in society. As a matter of fact, lots of factors contribute to the appearance of this phenomenon, including the social environment and the designers who are lack of the consciousness of design ethics. Designers and enterprises should shoulder the responsibilities and obligations of giving consumers rational advices in purchase, persuading them into opposing luxury goods and choosing simple and environment-friendly products. The ethics of design is an attitude and idea rather than a method or style. China design is just at its initial step. It needs to learn or imitate from others. Therefore, it should absorb developed countries' experiences and lessons. Guided by design ethics, designers should seek for effective design tactics in order to design works with not only beauty but also kindness. By this way, all kinds of art design can contribute a lot to human being's sustainable development.

## **3. The design should emphasize the consciousness of design ethics.**

Presently, modern consumers can not be satisfied only by quantities or qualities. They pursue a kind of emotional satisfaction. Modern art design can give consumers a sense of beauty as they obtain certain product or information service. By indicating certain meanings, the design can make consumers generate similar feelings. As a kind of cultural phenomenon, the changes of design can reflect the material production and the scientific and technological level at certain times. And it also shows the social consciousness situation. Besides, it has close connection with social politics, economy, culture, and arts. The value of design can be realized and accomplished by the employing value of product. The fundamental task of design is to combine the use and the beauty and give the product double effects, namely the matter and the spirit. The ethics of design has already appeared in ancient China. In Mozi Economization, it laid stresses on the utility of clothes, rooms, ships, and vehicles in design. Yu Li expressed similar opinions (Yu Li, 1991). In western countries, the modern design in Germany reflects prominent design ethics. "Made in Germany" focuses on not only quality but also function, a sense of beauty, touch feelings, human body engineering, and environment. The considerate and complete design idea makes German products popular in the world because of the simple figure, practical design, concise shape, and pure color. Walter Gropius, the first principal of Bauhaus and famous architect, had said: "My design is to help every German family enjoy six-hour sunlight everyday." Before 1970 in America, entrepreneurs pursued fashionable and new styles for the sake of commercial benefits. Design was to inspire consumption regardless of the life

of products and designs. Until the petrol crisis in 1970, designers were forced to take design ethics into consideration. The core of modern design has gradually become the functionalism, emphasizing that the beauty of product should be determined by the utility, the materials, and the structure. The SIGG bottle is well known in the world because of its high quality. It is one of successful enterprises that make best use of scraps and flotsams. Its success completely reflects the thoughts of choosing recycle materials, cleaning energies, modularized design, returning and reusing, and combined design.

Ethics belongs to the field of social morals. It is a system composed of a series of perfect social morals and regulation. It endows people with standards for making decisions in motives and behaviors. It is a kind of self-restraining mechanism formed in social evolvement. The key of ethical design is to understand the connotation of ethics completely. In China, the reform and open policy, and the market economy have already changed people's moral standards and value inclination. In past times, the ethics was to position people's relationship, such as class ethics. In modern times, people's behaviors permeate into a wide scope. Their relationship with environment, economy, science, and technology is deepening. Ethics exists in all fields. Therefore, it is necessary to reshape the ethics, including the aspects of people, environment, society, economy, science & technology, to restrain the design activities. By this way, the final design may be in accord with the ethical standards as much as possible. The design shoulders the responsibility of consoling people's spirits and emotions. "Arts should not be based on fashion (Desiderlus Orban, 1984)." Art design is similar. Irrational visual stimulation may waste resources and hurt visions. Industrial civilization generates the neglect over ethics, what begins to awaken more and more people. Along with the development of times, human design and green design have become the theme of design in 21st century. New times calls for more art design talents with high competence. And the new times provides with wider stage for these talents. Art design talents should possess not only strong career determination, modern design ideas, learning spirit, professional quality, rich imagination, aesthetic feelings, and creative ability, but also social responsibility and ethical design consciousness. Art design is kind of responsible creative activity. Art design talents are responsible for the society. So they should have noble-minded professional morals, what can insure that they will provide with helpful services and right guidance for the mass objectively and justly. Only when they possess the right consciousness of design ethics, understand the market phenomenon, such as production, circulation, consumption, and fashion, and the economy, culture, and popularization rightly, and make design based on their unique and creative understandings toward things, and lives, can they design works that are in accord with the social development, and give their works eternal vitalities.

"Care for human beings should be the main target of all technologies all the time (Einstein, 1979)." Therefore, the self consciousness of design should include these aspects as follow. Sustain rational visual order. Stop visual pollution. Perfect the coordination between design works and human beings. Emphasize design ethics in all designs. Advocate the spirit of humanism in design behavior. Consider the design from the aspect of humanism values and ethical values. Think over the specialized design from social benefits and scientific design. Cultivate the self-consciousness of design culture. Consider the relationships between the human beings and the nature, between the human beings and the matters, between the human beings and the society. Only when all designs possess their practical functions, respect cultures, emphasize humanism, and follow the aesthetic fashion and taste at the same time, can they meet the development of times. In this meaning, the Nest's slimming is an inevitable result as the human-oriented consciousness of design ethics is awoken in China, what will cause people's deepening thought on the consciousness of design ethics.

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