

Cover Story: How to Build a Museum

The Birth Story

- **Could you please share with us one or two stories in the preparation, constructions and opening of the Design Society in Shen Zhen?**

I arrived in Shenzhen early 2013 to take up the role of Creative Director of the 5th UABB, which was supposed to take place at a new location, after three installments at OCT Loft, in Nanshan. They were discussing possible venues with the main sponsor China Merchants, and one of the options was the old Guangdong Glass Factory, situated at the western part of Shekou Industry Zone. When I saw this industrial plant for the first time, I was overwhelmed by its spatial qualities and immediately convinced it would become a great venue. Not only wandering around through majestic silo's and machine halls, but also by climbing on top of the buildings and overlooking the entire area with the Pearl River in the West, the mountain in the North, Hong Kong in the South and the skyline of Shenzhen in the East. I realized this was a place of historical importance, not only for its industrious past, having produced millions of tons float glass to be used by the cars and buildings of modern Shenzhen, not only for its architectural quality, but also by its central location in arguably one of the most important spots of the recent history of China, overlooking the factories, harbor facilities and container terminals that came to be symbols of Shenzhen as factory of the world. Even more, I understood that here the SEZ experiment had begun, that turned out to become a defining moment for the country. So, as a statement, rather than using the venue as the romantic stage for a stand-alone exhibition, it was the first part of the actual transformation of the building to a cultural place, that became the exhibition. The idea of the UABB as an urban catalyst was put into direct practice by repositioning this factory as a symbol of a rich past and a beacon of what could become. To summarize this perception, I wrote a text on the wall of the entrance space, the former over of the glass factory that goes:

“Welcome to the Special Culture Zone. Not so very long ago, at this very place-in the heart of the Shekou Industry Zone-thousands of tons of glass were produced each year which helped shape the image of the modern Chinese city. It was here that the ovens stood, in which all the materials-after storage in other buildings at this factory-came together to become product. Behind the wall you are facing, these products started their Journey to the market that has brought Shenzhen its miraculous economic growth.”

This past now wants a future-and this future has a chance to unfold once again in this factory. A factory where ideas are born, designs are made. It is here that human drive creates values. Welcome to the Value Factory.”

Ole Bouman, Creative Director of 5th Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture(Shenzhen)

Ever since I became more aware of the exceptional role this area has played in the history of Shenzhen, China, the region and, indeed, the world. So, I was very inspired when I was invited to work with China Merchants again to prepare for a new design museum, slightly more towards main Shenzhen, to be located at the waterfront of Sea World neighborhood, an area that, despite its strange stylistic hybridity, had served me well during many work meetings and design sessions, preparing for the UABB. The knowledge of Shekou's history and the potential of its future had grown under my skin. I see it as a great privilege to continue the work that began with a short-term gesture by a biennale, to a lasting institution to further develop the pioneering spirit that marked Shekou since the eighties.

Another unforgettable element in the preparation of Design Society was the recruitment of the team. It's one of the most rewarding aspects of the job to establish a new institution. Being commissioned to carve out a mission, to develop a brand, and to develop a comprehensive strategy is great. I'm grateful for that opportunity. But to implement and materialize these things in a real program, requires many talented, courageous and persevering people. We are blessed to have found them, and actually, to test the vision through the prolonged faith and the hard work of the team. All members share this common ground, meanwhile representing a wide array of skills, expertise and background. They come from all over China, many of them also having spent years pursuing foreign education. They combine a strong love for the arts, design and culture, while showing a keen interest in innovation and self-sustained operations. I am very curious to see how their careers will further develop.

Let me share one more particular memory from the preparatory phase.

In the two years ahead of the Grand Opening of Design Society, we were not only working behind the scenes, but actively sought exposure of ideas, topics and event formats. For instance, we hosted a substantial Community Festival for Shekou, relying not only on carefully prepared content from the Design Society team, but also on the participation of many other parties, including schools, makerspaces and local small businesses. We participated in a number of academic events to introduce the Design Society discourse, in a few cases already leading to concrete partnerships. We took part in the first Shenzhen Design Week, with an exhibition titles *Wayfinding Creative Shenzhen*, indicating for the first time our aspiration to become a mediator and hopefully match maker in the creative eco-system of the city which is increasingly identified as unique by a global audience. Obviously, these programs were framed by the Design Society brand campaign, to mark out our mission to become a platform facilitating the cross fertilization between international and

Chinese design, between design talent and opportunities and challenges, between entrepreneurial and cultural work...

We are happy to have found Bruce Mau Design as our brand designer. They won the pitch by clearly stating they wanted to brand most of all the mission to *Design Society*. Hence the name. Graphically, this was resonated by the elegant Hanzi grid reference to the inclusive platform idea we want to convey. But BMD is also an office that allowed us to participate in the creative process from the client point of view. Having been a magazine editor before, I know how important it is to brief design teams with a clear message about the desired effect of an exhibition, feature, issue, etc. BMD called the process being led by a co-creative direction, and that's a good description of the process as it unfolded.

- **How is the overall preparatory work divided between the two co-founders, V&A and the China Merchants Shekou Holdings?**

The V&A component was originally conceived in three major parts: 1. the V&A Gallery – a space curated and programmed by the V&A, and the V&A's first international gallery. Additionally, two more traveling exhibitions will be shared with Design Society in 2019 and 2020; 2. training and consultancy – in which the V&A shared its expertise to develop a professional young team at Design Society; 3. audience outreach, where the V&A helped build engagement with a city of makers, designers, schools, universities and young families, condensed in a contribution to the Learning & Interpretation department. Obviously, this contingent, originally seen as a contribution to the Shekou Design Museum, proposed before I came on board, became increasingly embedded into the unfolding of the project that came to be known as Design Society, a hybrid program of a broad design platform for China.

- **Are there any interesting stories from the collaboration between the V&A and the China Merchants Shekou Holdings that you would like to share?**

In itself the agreement between a Chinese state-owned enterprise with its corporate strategies, and a national museum in Great Britain, is already a first timer. These are not natural partners in terms of commerce, mutual brand support, nor joint content development. But although strangers for each other in some respects, they also share a common history of being the first in pursuing a societal agenda for design and the cultivation of creative industries as its vehicle.

For the V&A it was clear they didn't just want to present itself in China with what everyone already knows about the V&A. On the contrary, they wanted a different approach from the "satellite" strategy which some other major museums have done in recent years. They opted for relevance first, which translated into project management, research, narrative building and exhibition display. This was all geared to appealing to a Shenzhen audience. For this to happen, mutual communication was key, rather than telling us what to do. Collaboration, rather than parachuting. Co-creation, rather than culture export.

That this ambition went beyond mere words is proven by the fact that the V&A, strongly supported by China Merchants, put together a substantial team to prepare for its contribution, comprising not only a semi-permanent and two touring exhibitions, but also a learning & event program, and several training sessions of the newly recruited staff of what came to be known as Design Society. Maybe the strongest sign of its commitment was dispatching senior curator and sinologist Luisa Mengoni whose commitment was proven by her three-year secondment, living in Shenzhen and immersed in the design community.

This strategy by the V&A of course came into being strongly supported and even stimulated by China Merchants, which equally was not interested in just presenting a British first-class museum as a goal in itself, but in fact its exposure to Chinese conditions and opportunities. First of all, by recruiting its own staff and experienced international director, but also by staging carefully sign off moments at which the research and curatorial development of the V&A was meticulously discussed against the backdrop of expected visitor expectations, the Chinese design discourse and best Chinese museum practices. China Merchants supported the V&A in its local research adventures, which became the basis of not only the main storyline, the exhibition interpretation, but also some new acquisitions for the V&A collection itself. Hence, with the *Values of Design* exhibition, Design Society is not only able to show a remarkable slice of the V&A design collection, but also to embed this collection in a context of major geo-political proportions.

- **What kind of practical challenges have you been working on?**

There have obviously been many challenges, and the lessons we learned from them are so precious that it might be wise to do something special with their dissemination. These lessons, we believe, have value to do more with, given the fact of the rapidly developing cultural exchanges between China and other countries. There is a lot to share, and we hope to find interesting formats to do so.

- Let's face it: We had to bring the ideas and interests of a major western museum in line with those of a state-owned company in China. What does that take? We had to match the sophistication of a museum management that developed over more than 160 years, with the inexperience of a very young team that is working in another cultural and social paradigm, and work culture. What does that take? We had to embed a V&A component, completely focused on a cultural endeavor, with the hybrid program of an innovative creative business model to make Design Society sustainable in the long run. What does that take? We had to establish an energetic new brand for a new kind of institution, while relying and respecting a very old and strong museum brand that required its own exposure as well. What does that take? We had to reconcile the urge of the V&A to use the collaboration to set new standards of research and curatorial relevance, with the knowledge that for many visitors just the visit to the cross section of the old V&A is already an exciting cultural event. To combine innovation with dissemination, what does that take? And there are more questions like these, which we solved along the road. Now we know

that a refined cultural diplomacy is key, and I think this knowledge will help us to position ourselves as a very strong partner for other institutions and international companies which China aspirations. We even believe that the expertise to deal with all the practicalities to run international exhibitions in China with its own legal and bureaucratic protocols, will be a precious asset for the future.

- **For what reason(s) the Design Society is indispensable in this area?**

Let me mention a couple of reasons why we may indeed call it “indispensable”.

1. Interface between China and the world

I have been working before as director of the Netherlands Architecture institute, which dealt with many different kinds of international collaborations. For many years I paid particular interest to Sino-Dutch design exchanges, but found it sometimes difficult to go beyond the coincidental and also ephemeral opportunities. We always wanted to present work within a relevant Chinese context, or even responding to real market demands, but it turned out to be complicated to find the partners to do so. Although certain individuals could persist in their ambition to cultivate the international dialogue, on the level of companies or governments it was not always easy to get to real results. I remember from that time that the same could be said about certain innovative companies and design studios who found it difficult to find the proper collaborative settings, or who were looking for the proper protection of intellectual property. Their efforts were frequently reduced to culture export and marketing campaigns, not necessarily leading to new innovative, let alone co-creative productions.

Now, with Design Society, I believe we have the institutional gravity, the professional stability and the corporate long-term strategy, to develop a position as a logical counterpart to many international initiatives, looking for a foothold and/or partnerships in China.

2. Broad concept of design

There is another reason to believe we can bring something special to Chinese design. As far as we learnt during the years of preparation, the design discourse in China is, like elsewhere, still predominantly based on the traditional disciplines. As we are starting from scratch, we are able to identify ourselves directly with a very broad concept of design. The building design by Maki is itself full of examples already. As a piece of landscape, it shows the power of environmental and topological embedding; as a piece of urbanism it shows how public domain permeates the entire program; as a piece of architecture it finds the balance between iconic form and enabling space; as a set of spaces it reveals the power of programmatic mixing; in its circulation it demonstrates how spatial experiences can be designed; as a universe of details, it makes clear that all the above can only happen if the execution is under control.

As it comes to our design exhibitions, this vast mandate of design to realize quality in our life world, comes back in curatorial concepts that demonstrate the power of design to accommodate major social and technological revolutions. It's not just shaping what we already know into new form or new materials. It's about the role of design to capture meaning we don't yet know, we haven't achieved yet. It's about creating value across all human endeavors. It's about achieving quality in our experiences, not just in the objects around us. I happen to believe that we are only beginning to understand how strong design can support a highly desired quality shift in the life of people. Not only the happy few who can afford to buy expensive items, but also in the pursuit of many people to create their living.

3. Reflect incredible social economical dynamics

Design Society might also be indispensable as a platform in the midst of an incredible social-economic transformation. In Shenzhen, there are so many historical dynamics interacting with each other, that an institution that maps it, exposes it, and provides a platform to translate it into new concepts, products, collaborations, formats, pilots, prototypes and models, is extremely useful. Either the energy and cultural tolerance that comes from the status of Shenzhen as a migrant and arrival city, or the collective ingenuity that comes with its reputation as maker city, or its rapidly developing cultural infrastructure and government support program that comes with its name as *City of Design*, as all providing tremendous conditions for experimentation and new ideas. But above all that, there is the historical force of transforming an industrial society into a new one. There is a widespread belief that this should be a "creative society", but how exactly that should happen, how exactly that translates into real actions, how exactly that will improve lives, needs to be tested and demonstrated. Design is a perfect medium for that.

Shenzhen for a long time has been a special test place where design and history are closely linked. Shenzhen was conceived as a forefront of reform. Different from a few decades ago, now we have to consider design as a social catalyst rather than as just an artistic discipline.

So, in a way, we are launching an agenda for innovation with Shenzhen as its optimum. We are telling a story of design that pioneers rather than consolidates. So, at the core of any visit, we hope to literally open views to horizons. And the architecture is there to support this effect, by opening connections to the timeless values of the land, the bustling newness of the city, and the promise of fresh ideas from overseas.

- **Could you please introduce to us one or two museum programs that best reflect the museum's mission to connect design and society, design and everyday life, and design and industries?**
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As this threefold way to be a connector belongs to the core mission of Design Society, obviously I should mention our inaugural program that we launched on

December 2 and 3 last year. This program has been conceived as a manifesto of this mission from the outset.

Of course, I should mention the opening exhibition in the Main Gallery which by its sheer scale of 1200 sqm, can only be a statement in itself. We presented an exhibition titled “Minding the Digital”, designed by the Dutch office of MVRDV together with Thonik.

Why did we start by *Minding the Digital*? I believe that in Design Society’s ambition to be a comprehensive institution, incorporating a museum, experience center, and professional hub all in one, there is no subject more relevant than the digital landscape in which our life is unfolding at an ever-increasing degree. This digital transformation demands our fullest attention and requires our strongest imagination. *Minding the Digital* allows the visitor to evaluate the evolution of contemporary design through this lens. It highlights some of contemporary design’s most important modes of operation. It encourages visitors to consider the role of design beyond the aesthetics of an object, such as in materials, production technologies, human interactions and societal organizations. *Minding the Digital* aims to show how we literally design society in the early 21st century, and how human imagination makes the difference between an autonomous technology push and the genuine needs of society and human imagination. Design can bridge the distance between the mind and the algorithm.

The exhibition also invites visitors to design themselves. Contemporaneous design is an inclusive discipline that allows everyone to become a practitioner. Individuals are enabled to define their skills, public language and profile, and their own mode of operation. Design is the common denominator for a highly diverse culture of making, coding, assembling, combining, and disseminating. The exhibition underscores how design has departed the enclave of the professional field, and instead become an attitude and way of working.

Minding the Digital therefore underscores that design can never be about imposing a narrative. The exhibition is open ended, just like this city is. It encourages the visitor to find, test, and confront themselves. It tries to be a platform for making and sharing.

Accordingly, the exhibition has been curated as an experiment. First in the structure of its storyline: leading people from a reaffirmation of design’s original role to give form, to a consideration of design’s growing mandate to define our relations, to an analysis of its looming role as medium to define ourselves and the society we live in.

Secondly, the exhibition is an experimental platform for visitor’s own reflections and action. We have tried to present design as an act of empowerment as much as a showcase of quality. Situated in the biggest space of the entire building, lit from above and structured by a single column in the grandiose space, the exhibition

embodies a spirit of synergy that resonates with the entire Design Society agenda, providing a civic experience beyond aesthetic pleasure only, and rallying all contributors' efforts into a statement on how to design society.

Alongside the exhibitions, at the Grand Opening we also presented an intense two-day public program, representing the mission of Design Society.

To immediately contribute to the global design discourse, a one-day conference on 'How Creative Practices Design Society' was held on December 2nd, featuring international speakers, John Sorrell (Chairman of London Design Week), Fumihiko Maki, Hunter Tura (CEO of Bruce Mau Design), Sam Jacob (Architect & Designer), Michael Young and Pascale Fung, among and many others, addressing the global impact of creative industries today.

Besides cultivating brain power, there were many hands-on activities as well, resonating Design Society's role to play in the maker city Shenzhen. Visitors had the opportunity to produce three-dimensional paper art light bulbs together with Stickyline, and join interactive artist Eric Siu in designing communication devices; visitors could also join a handcraft workshop after exploring the V&A gallery, and gain first-hand experience as a fashion designer.

Collaborative pop-up stores and a study lab provided opportunities to connect with local design initiatives and learn more about a featured item's background, creating not just a dynamic consumer experience, but a journey of discovery. Design Society own store's featured its first Pop Up section, collaborating with MakerNet to present Maywa Denki's latest electronic instrument series.

Both levels of activity, discursive and hands-on, were already part of our extensive pre-opening program, building networks across the city and collaborating with some major international partners to exemplify from the very beginning Design Society's ambition to build a bridge between different worlds by the power of design.

Museum Architecture

The Design Society stunning architecture has drawn the world's attention. What is the secret or unseen beauty of the museum architecture?

Fumihiko's architecture has revealed its beauty and even more its performativity only over time to me. And I think this is a staged appreciation that more people will share. At first, I was most focused on the monumental scale, the sculptural effect of its shape, the neutrality of its color. Later I began to understand the landscape qualities, situated at the end of the coastal park, continuing the green route up to the very roof, providing glorious views. The building, being accessible to the top, postpones the moment of distinguishing between inside and outside, between public

and private. Also, by making it a hill to be climbed, the routing becomes a corporeal effort and hence the experience is extended to other senses. Then, it became clear that these are not just any great views, but views full of meaning, connecting the building with the mountain, the city skyline, and the sea. The windows of the pavilions on top of the building frame those views intensely, triggering stories to be told. Stories about relationships, history, change and interaction.

Then, consequently, the experience of the architecture shifts from form, symbols and rhetoric to a public performance, by dedicating more than a third of the building to public space, making it a very accessible place for all. It's not only the amount of public space, but also the complex meandering of it throughout the building, that allow people to wander many unexpected corners and running into many delicate details. Some of these spots are clearly meant for casual encounter, and seeing each other. Others like the patio sunken in the roof top, are, on the contrary, to instill silence and quiet. Hence, also on the level of spatial experience and, eventually, space programming, it becomes clear that the building, most of all, is a social condenser. Where in the original floor plan, with two rectangular boxes representing the programs of culture and enterprise only slightly converging towards each other, it is the public space that overlaps both that makes these elements dimensions of the one and the same story. Potential antagonisms become opportunities. And programmatic statements become real actions. This is the complexity that we have started to charge with meaning, to animate with form, and to justify with trade. We have started, but it's clear that the building will continue to reveal its power by every step towards a more intense program.

Among all the architectural proposals that you did not choose, are there any interesting cases that worth mentioning?

- I entered this project when the choice for the architect was made. But given the current qualities that I just described, I believe that this building has little of the flaws we see so often in museum buildings today: that they are at their best at opening. Ready for the picture. Our building, so I believe, is a world in the waiting, and it's up to us and the public to keep discovering its richness.

Workforce

- **May we hear the voices of curators and their experiences in organizing Value of Design and Minding the Digital exhibitions for the new museum?**

Carrie Chan, curator of *Minding the Digital*, working in close collaboration with programme director Rong Zhao and assistant curators, pointed out that “digitalisation is a phenomenon taking our lives by storm since China entered into the mobile internet era in 2009”. The ubiquitous network has become the all – powerful facilitator for everything to take place digitally from creation, to communication to expression. We experience an incredible infiltration of mobile

phones, smart wearables and responsive environments which are widening our senses and capabilities. Our daily experiences are moulded by meticulous design processes behind these products. “

She continues by saying “if the digital integration is indispensable for our future, we are interested in design’s important role in shaping it. Reflecting the history of technological development, design has played a vital role in determining how we embrace new technologies. As digital technologies and the Internet are becoming more ubiquitous, how will design shape our daily experiences, thinking, relationships and value systems?”

Brendan Cormier, the curator of the *Values of Design* exhibition at the V&A Gallery, has a comparable take on the responsibility of design to address bigger issues. But also how design, by having done so, created value over time.

“More than 150 years since its inception, over two million objects now sit in the V&A’s permanent collection. Over the decades hundreds of curators across different departments have diligently surveyed our material world, acquiring objects of great historical, educational and artistic importance. For this very reason, the V&A has become a great repository not only of things, but also of ideas – including ideas of value, and the value of design. Every object collected acts as its own value statement. We see value, therefore we collect. But with over 80 curators, the museum does not speak with one united voice; rather, it is a battleground of ideas over what constitutes value.

The exhibition *Values of Design* presents a perfect opportunity to lay bare this cultural debate, to examine the different value statements being made, through the objects collected, through statements made by designers and design critics over the past century, and to situate these ideas as an open forum of discussion. Precisely because there is so much energy in China at the moment to invest in design, an understanding of the values driving design and the values in which we invest is crucial in shaping China’s design future.

These are two of our best voices, representing a combined capacity of reflection and engagement. But I must say, again, how much I am impressed with the ubiquity of these virtues across the team. To share this potential, we decided to publish the voices of the entire team in the book *Design Society: The Making of a New Creative Platform*, which came out on the occasion of the opening. I highly recommend to read it, to follow the journey of an idea to completion.

Collection

- **What would be the strength of your museum’s collection?**

Relying on two major collections to underscore our initial program, there is no pressing need for Design Society to start building its collection immediately. We have some time to ponder the right approach, that reflects the mission of Design Society to Design Society. What can a collection be, or be about, or embody, which does not begin with consolidating and acquiring what is already canonized by history, resonating academic consensus or at least professional expertise, but which begins with the assumption that also pieces in a collection can be cornerstones of the new. What does the notion of “pieces” mean anyways. These questions become even more pertinent, considering the fact Design Society is a design platform, and hence has an “applied” character by definition. My response to this question hopefully is intriguing enough to start a discussion about a collection that can stand the test of time, relevance and digital culture.

Museum operation and management

- **As the founding director of your museum, what are some difficult decisions you have to make?**

As founding director, taking decisions is not the most difficult thing. Enforcing them is the real challenge. Taking a decision about a mission, a program and a brand development, has been a consequence of certain intuitions about what could be relevant, what could be effective, and what would be impressive. Taking decisions about recruitments, partnerships, topics for shows and talks, feel more like privilege than tough moments. The real work only begins afterwards, to embed those decisions in larger strategies, in existing procedures, and certainly also in a cultural context which partly remains unfamiliar to me. Sometime as suggestion is taken as a decision. Sometimes, a decision turns out to be only the beginning of a real discussion. These years, I learn that decisiveness and patience can be two sides of the same coin. Maybe the most difficult and at the same time most productive decision is the decision to remain patient. I hope one day I can write book about this. Deep down I feel I’m privileged to be forced out of my comfort zone at tis later stage of my career.

- **Would you mind sharing with us some unresolved issues and regrets?**

Considering the fact that only three years ago there were only some contracts signed, but no facts on the ground such as a mission, a building, a program, a team and a brand, it’s hard to speak about things unresolved. Short term regrets there aren’t, and long-term regrets, have not arisen yet. But since I’m quite aware of the potential of the Design Society project beyond what has been realized so far, of course I could mention some challenges of the future. To build a collection relevant for the 21st century. To prove Design Society can build a sustainable business case. To cement really productive partnerships. To develop the managerial flexibility to allow truly creative ideas to be materialized. If we want to become an example of ingenuity and a powerful idea machine, we need to conceive of a creative management.

- **What is your museum's top priority?**

First of all, we happen to avoid calling ourselves museum, but are inclined to call it a platform. We indeed do the work of any museum. We present culture by way of exhibitions, and further disseminate ideas through books, website and social media. We do research to facilitate innovative curation, and hope to further develop formats to even contribute to new forms of cultural production. Hence, cultural dissemination and culture innovation are already in our portfolio. For the third pillar of culture, preservation, for the time being we rely on contributing collections such as V&A's, Guanfu and some loans from other museums. Alongside these, we offer a cultural experience, from the excitement of world class architecture, to the enjoyable moment of ordering a good cup of coffee. So, one big priority is to become really good at this and make the quality completely stable.

Another big priority is to develop a cultural entrepreneurial practice that proves to become self-sustainable. This the experimental part. We have some clear ideas about how to capitalize our material assets, how to do marketing, how to do sales, etcetera. But given the scale of the project, this might need several additional, and much more innovative formats for raising funds. Formats, that create content and substantiate the role of platform in the meantime.

A third big priority is to prove this platform is really useful for the Shenzhen and Chinese creative industries. We have to come up with projects, concepts, partners, forms of exposure, network power etcetera, that shows how Design Society designs society, so to speak. Altogether, one can say, is to prove we can become a true magnet for creative life in this country.

Towards the future

- **Looking forward, what is the Design Society's strategy and goals for museum education, the application of new technology and museum management?**

These are very distinct questions, but they refer to a certain innovative mindset to implement program and run the institution.

As for Learning, we believe in a dual approach in which we both take care of learning programs at our venue, customized to different age groups, as well as activities at schools, supporting creative teachers with the program development. In the future, we also want to connect these two fronts with a sophisticated online learning program, where participants can continue their learning after a visit, or vice versa, kids can prepare a visit of Design Society by programs online.

The latter topic also alludes us to believe in certain new media to convey creative learning. We already have developed some apps to support our inaugural exhibition

program. Both the Main Gallery and the V&A Gallery run visitor engagement games, to let people think in a playful way about their value system and self-image with regards to design. Shortly, we will launch audio guides including some interesting features. To be released soon.

In the longer run, Design Society also means developing a complete immaterial layer to accompany the program located in Shekou. I happen to believe we could build a virtual Shekou, which resonates the Shekou spirit as we know it for 4 years now, providing an instrumentation for innovation in many fields. We will present the concrete steps to achieve this in due time.

Whatever innovative ambition, nothing will succeed, if not we ourselves will be able to think again and again and again. Routines, protocols, fixed positioning, theorizing without practical testing, are contrarian to a creative organization. We have adopted a strange activating name for this cultural institution, Design Society, reflecting an alternative methodology. Now, it's time to substantiate this idea with a real platform approach, in which we don't know the final result as we will be dependent of ideas by others. What will come out if we curate as team rather than by genius curators. What will come out if we rely on project-based thinking, rather than job titles. What will happen if we cultivate a work culture which is able to seize opportunities what they pass by. It's this mindset that may give the hope that becoming this magnet of culture, is a realistic one.