Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Design Thinking in Exhibition Design: a Boundary-Pushing Approach

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• Abstract (300 words):
Design thinking, by nature, is a mindset of seeking innovations “outside the box.” In a growing and competitive business world, it has been increasingly adopted as a strategic method of finding innovations through with boundary-pushing methods for developing new and unique products and services that provide customers better experiences. Despite its recent reputation accrued in the commercial and information technology sectors, design thinking, with its core approach of boundary-breaking and pushing, has not been well received in academic design teaching and practices. In this paper, the concept of “design thinking” refers not to an attempt of thinking differently, but to a pedagogy that expands design boundaries, calling for an inclusive, hybrid, and cross-field method in our academic design practices. The paper explores this method in an exhibition design project, introducing a case study linking exhibition design with a work of fiction, identifying and experimenting with an innovative possibility beyond traditional design-exhibition principles. As a school studio project, it also encourages students to
understand design thinking, take risks, and develop a wider and more relative vision for design practices by exploring the possibilities existing outside the traditional design scope.

In the professional field, a seemingly distant, irrelevant subject is often creatively associated with a real-world design project, by a creative practitioner who can see and translate its unique value to the problem-solving in this current design project. The key assumption in the paper is to utilize a visual map developed from a work of fiction to help manage the content of exhibition, providing designers guidelines the controls to create rhythmic and dynamic management in the exhibition design. This “artistic treatment” can also improve the visitors’ experiences, bringing them compelling journeys through the exhibition.

The paper will describe and demonstrate this design process in an advanced studio class in the design department at a state university. The goal of this experiential report is not only to explore an innovative approach in exhibition design, but also to invite more hybrid design experiments from the higher design-education arena.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Wujun Wang is an Associate Professor teaching graphic design, information design, and 3D. His research areas are typography, design methodology, and information design.