

全球“画” Planet Photoshop

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每一年我都要为许多在美国申请研究学位的学生评估他们的作品集。这些学生来自世界不同地方。不管这种现象是否普遍，我还是要说这些学生的作品看起来竟然会是如此惊人的相似。大部分的学生作品呈现出来相同的画图技术，这些技术描述了相同的景观类型，并且使用了相同的人物形象。

欢迎来到全球“画”。

对这种画图表现方式一致性的担心主要体现在两个方面。第一是学生们缺乏对当代景观美学批判的能力，第二是缺乏独创性和个性。

整体上看来，几乎所有申请作品都在表现相同的大概念：不管所有的种种不成立，现代性在这些学生图里都可以成为一个完美的生态乐园，他们也一定可以让这个成为现实。这种近乎狂热的概念基本上通过健康的、幸福的人们沉浸在原始而自然的景观中的小心刻画来实现，如果这些形象令人信服，那这个世界大多会变成一块湿地和一个鸟类保护区。

请别误会我；把城市从机械系统转变到生态系统绝对是21世纪最具有挑战性的任务，但这并不是说我们可以自动接受一个失去的生态乐园批量生产出来的画面。当然，也有些例子说明了新的景观也能够朝着源于人类学之前的生态形式和功能演变。但是总的来说，我们正工作在一个不可逆向改变的、严重污染的、混乱不堪的都市环境里。在这样的环境里，与广告里或者学生作品里描述的那个生态乐园是似是而非的。

当还停留在表面的时候，生态乐园所呈现出来的画面看起来似乎是那么的无辜，所有包含其中的景观都被塑造得高尚和令人向往。其实，他们没有你想的那么简单。就像最初的那个乐园一样，他们所许诺的幸福和快乐是服务于历史和政治的。通过对他们原有的机械血统的厌恶，向往的都市空间被形形色色重返自然和生态乐园的画面所充满。这样的画面剥夺了我们对美重新诠释的可能性和对一些社会政治议程的积极见解。实际上，对于全球“画”的追随者来说，把这样的画面呈现出来给大家看是一点都不难理解的。就好像是商品的销售借助美女帅哥的性感，现在都市主义也在依赖于“自然”。但是，这样的“自然”好似装饰用的背景音乐对于正统音乐一样，是对艺术的一种侮辱。

在我身处的大学里，尽管浪漫主义依然活跃存在，我们始终鼓励和塑造课程的原创性，或者更通俗的理解为创新。尽管设计师作为一个创新派的艺术师已经被后现代主义所批评，我们仍然很看重设计师尝试和制造新事物的能力。我们希望设计师对案例要有批判性的解读能力，并且能够把它和当代的文化现状联系在一起。换句话说，美学的评判是以原创和复制品之间差异的程度为基准的，而不是逼真的程度。

这就引出了我的第二个担忧：在我所有以往收到的学生作品集里个性和原创性明显缺乏。

在不夸大个性的基础上，设计师需要竭



图片由柯丹绘制
The image is by Dan KE

尽所能的培养出自己的世界观。原因就是为了避免意识形态上毫无创意的模仿，就如历史反复教导的，会带来灾难性的社会和生态后果。

在中国，俞孔坚在这方面就是一个杰出的典范。对于西方案例和中国的农业传统他都有深刻研究。从这些研究中，他发展了自己对现代性的带有批判的方法论以及他个人秉持的景观美学。对于他所提出来的理论的对或错并不重要：重要的是俞孔坚有一个很清晰的理论和实践立场。从这我们可以去讨论这个立场，甚至可以用我们自己的作品来推翻这个立场。比如说，你选择俞孔坚的作品作为你自己作品的一个案例研究，那么你应该很清楚为什么要选用他的。作为一个有思考的设计师，你的责任就是在你简单复制出这个作品之前一定要批判地去理解这个案例作品。在你自己的作品里必须也能够让人看到你如何对案例作品的不同理解、扩展甚至发展。这也会给这门学科、这个职业，或者在大层面上的文化，一些充满智慧和创造性而又不乏批判的贡献。

在提交作品集的同时，每个研究生学习申请者也会附上一份个人陈述信。就像作品集一样，这些陈述信也非常相似。举个例子说，大多数的中国学生都会不约而同地提到他们如何在农村度过他们的童年，中国城市发展如何之快以及这对社会环境的改变等等。然后他们大谈特谈怎么利用风景园林这门课程来解决中国的环境和社会问题。对于正在经历巨大转变的这样一代人来说，我们是可以根据理解的。但是，这些学生（和他们的老师）

需要思考的是怎样才能把这样的巨变放在他们的设计里，以及他们的设计如何才能和那些驱动变化的现代性因素结合在一起。

在我今年收到的所有那些感人肺腑的陈述信中，有2个中国学生脱颖而出。在信的开始，一名学生说到：“我不在乎过去的中国，我也不想做像俞孔坚一样的作品”！另外一个学生在信的开始先批判库哈斯一味地把“类属城市”看作是当代都市主义的一个主导形式，继而陈述另外一种形式。不管这2个学生的观点正确与否，在我心中，这2个学生至少有勇气站出来表达带有自己个性和批判性的立场和观点。毋庸置疑，他们在我的选择名单上是前两位。

全球的风景园林需要设计师们在基于对案例有着批判的理解之上愿意去冒智慧和创新之险。风景园林学需要有能够对一些最基本的似是而非的论点做出谨慎的思考的人。很多时候，这些似是而非的论点是实现我们作品的基石。但同时，我们也需要去抵制和重新定义这些似是而非的论点。风景园林学需要非被动的全球“画”生产者 and 消费者。

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Every year I review many design folios from all over the world by undergraduate landscape architecture students applying for graduate study in the United States. Although it is a generalization and thus not always the case, it is fair to say that the design work by these students looks remarkably similar. The same representational techniques depict the same kinds of landscapes, populated with the same kind of people.

Welcome to ‘planet photoshop’.

My concern with this homogeneity is two-fold. The first is a question of the lack of criticality in contemporary landscape aesthetics, and the second is a question of originality and individuality.

Taken as a whole, the folios typically express the same big idea: namely that modernity - despite all evidence to the contrary- can become an ecological paradise and landscape architects can make this happen. This evangelical notion is expressed primarily through carefully choreographed images of healthy, happy people immersed in pristine, naturalistic landscapes. Indeed, if the images are to be believed much of the world is becoming a wetland and a bird sanctuary.

Don’t get me wrong; the project of converting cities from mechanical to eco-logical systems is surely the primary design challenge for the 21st century but this does not automatically sanction the mass-production of images of a lost

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paradise. Of course, there are instances where new landscapes can and should evolve toward the form and function of pre-anthropogenic ecosystems, but generally speaking we work in irreversibly altered, toxic, chaotic urban conditions where eco-paradise as-advertised is specious.

Whilst on the surface of it, images of eco-paradise seem perfectly innocent and render all those involved in their production virtuous, they are not so simple. The bliss they promise is, like the original paradise itself, ahistorical and apolitical. By disguising their machinic origins and filling up urban space with a return-to-nature, eco-paradisial images foreclose the possibility of aesthetic invention and, by extension, the possibility of any socio-political programs other than passive observation. Indeed, as if to give the whole game away, it is not uncommon for the joyous citizens of planet photoshop to themselves be pictured taking photos of the very landscape they themselves have been flattened into. Just as sex sells objects, nature now sells urbanism but this nature is what muzak is to music, an insult to art.

In my school, however romantic it may be, we still encourage and shape our curriculum around the idea of originality, more commonly expressed as 'innovation'. Although the idea of the designer as a revolutionary artist has been debunked by post-modernism we still place a premium on the designer's ability to try and make something new-ish. We place a premium on a designer's ability to critically interpret precedent and relate it to contemporary cultural conditions. In other words, aesthetic judgment is predicated on the degree of difference between the original and the copy, not the degree of verisimilitude.

Which leads to my second concern: the lack of apparent individuality and originality in the folios I receive.

Without exaggerating individuality, (since there is far more that we have in common than sets us apart), designers need nonetheless to cultivate their own world-view as best they can. The reason for this is to avoid the slavish mass-production of ideology, which as history repeatedly teaches can have disastrous social and ecological consequences.

In China, Kongjian Yu is an outstanding role model in this regard. He has studied both western precedents and Chinese agrarian traditions and from these he has developed his own critical approach to modernity and his own related landscape aesthetic. It matters not whether he is right or wrong; what matters is that Yu has a clear theoretical and practical position and that we can then discuss this position and measure our own work against it. If, for example, you were to choose Yu's work as a precedent for your own, you should then be able to answer why you are making this selection. Your obligation as a thinking designer is to critically understand the original before you simply reproduce it. You must also be able to show and explain how your interpretation alters, extends or in some way develops the precedent. This is what it means to make an intelligent, creative and critical contribution to the discipline, to the profession and, at best, to culture at large.

As well as submitting design folios every applicant for graduate study also writes a personal statement. Like the folios these letters are very similar. Most of the Chinese students for example, refer to their childhood in a village and how rapid development has changed everything. They then

say how they want to solve China's environmental and social problems with landscape architecture. This is understandable for a generation that has experienced traumatic change, but what the students (and their teachers) need to ask is how this trauma translates into their design work and how this design work is then really engaging with the forces of modernity that drive change.

From all the heartfelt letters I received this year, two stood out from the rest. In the first, the student began his letter by saying "I don't care about old China and I don't want to make designs like Kongjian Yu"! The second opened by saying she disagreed with Rem Koolhaas' apparent acceptance of the 'Generic city' as the dominant form of contemporary urbanism and went on to describe an alternative approach. Irrespective of whether we agree or disagree with these two quite different points of view, because these two applicants had the courage to take a first step toward a critical and individual position, they went to the top of my list.

Global landscape architecture desperately needs designers who are willing to take intellectual and creative risks based upon a critical appreciation of precedent. Landscape architecture needs people who can seriously think about the fundamental paradox that our work is made possible by forces that we also need to resist and redirect. Landscape architecture needs people who are not passive consumers and producers of scenery for planet photoshop!

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