

Education and Manpower Bureau, Government of Hong Kong S.A.R.

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TO DESIGN IS TO BE HUMAN

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Design

The ability to create forms to serve our needs and give meaning to our lives is a fundamental human ability. It is as important as other abilities such as language or music in defining us as human beings.

The Evolution of the Genus *Homo*

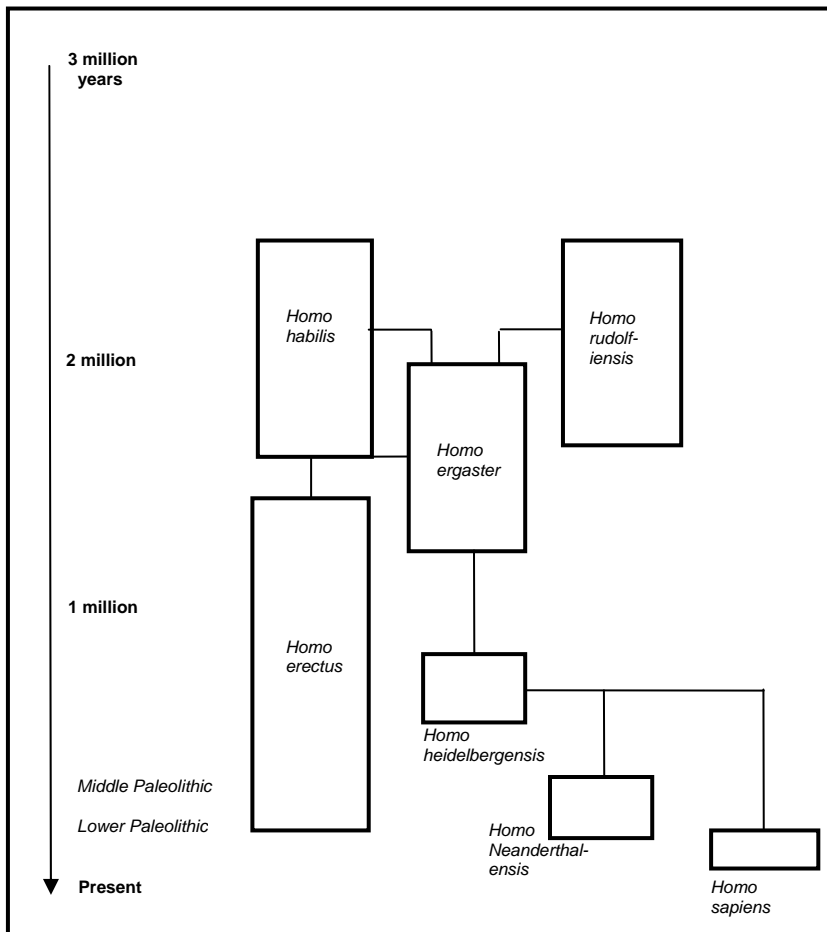


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North Africa, c.200,000 BC,
pear-shaped stone hand axes.
Tropenmuseen Brussels.

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South Africa, c.77,000 BC,
incised ochre stone found at
the Blombos caves near Cape
Town. The South African
Museum, Cape Town.

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What qualities in objects do
you think would be of greatest
importance in a nomadic
existence?

Can you think of any group of people in modern society for
whom an understanding of the qualities of nomadic life in design
would be an advantage?

From Hunting to Production c.8000 BC.

- Settlement
- Planting
- Cultivation
- Storage
- Processing
- Cooking

With the growth of settlement, what change in design
characteristics would you expect to find?

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China. 3,000-4,000BC. Cooking
stove and cauldron. About 14"
square and 10" high. Why this size
and these shapes of stove and
cauldron for cooking?

Design is about change, but it is also about continuity. Traditions in design represent an
accumulation of understanding and skill about what helps people survive.

Every design of whatever kind, therefore, embodies some kind of knowledge. New designs
embody new knowledge.

Innovation and Transformation **New materials: Ceramics**

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Japan, early Jomon culture, hand-
built vessel 10,000-7,000 BC.

From examining the form, what
purpose can be attributed to this
object?

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Egypt, Dynasty 5, Old Kingdom, c.2477 BC, statuette of a potter using a tournette, limestone and pigment, from the tomb of Ny-kau-Inpu, Giza. The Oriental Institute, Chicago.

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Potter using continuously rotating wheel
Jingdezhen Museum, 2007

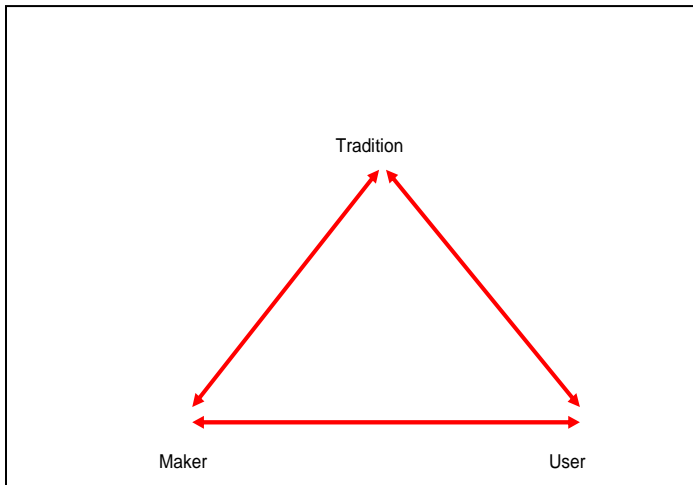
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Mould-shaped earthenware bowls from the Uruk period, c.3500-3100 BC BC, found across northern Mesopotamia from Syria to Iran. The Louvre Museum, Paris.

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Mesopotamia, c.2000BC, Ur, carpenter at work. The Louvre Museum, Paris.

Craft Specialisation



Trade and Transportation

People living in one place found there were things they needed that were not available locally. Trade developed to supply these needs and forms of transport were an integral part of this process.

Warfare

With the growth of powerful states attempting to control territory and trade resources, warfare and organized armies became a standard feature of political life.

Innovation and Transformation

New materials: Metals and glass

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China, Henan Province, Anyang,
Shang dynasty (c. 1300-1250 BC),
ritual container (*fang yi*), bronze
with cast decoration, inscribed.
Shanghai Museum.

Why did the shape of many Shang bronze vessels become rectangular?

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Rome, c.200AD. Ten six-sided bottles
with a large round bottle packed in one
hamper. Museum Het Valkhof,
Nijmegen.

Greece – the status of craftspeople

Aristotle

“... any human being that by nature belongs not to himself but to another is by nature a slave ... “

The Politics

“... the skilled mechanic is in a restricted sense in a condition of slavery.”

The Politics

Discussion Point

Why should making things be regarded as a lesser activity in society?

Nomads and settlers

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Iran, early 13th C, bowl, composite body
painted over glaze. Freer Gallery of Art,
Washington D.C.

The Rise of Islam

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Egypt, c.1350 AD, carved ivory box.
The British Museum, London.

Trade and Cultural Exchange

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Macao, c.1635, façade of the Church of St. Paul,
carving of a *Nau*. This ship was used by the
Portuguese for their first voyages to Japan,
where they converted some of the population to
Christianity.

When the Portuguese were expelled from Japan,
some converts came with them to Macao, and it
was Japanese craftsmen who carved this plaque
on the church façade.

錯誤!

Function and status

錯誤!

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Italian, c.1425-50, barbute, steel.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

錯誤!Image

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Italian, Milan, 1543, burgonet, steel,
embossed and damascened with gold.
Signed by Filippo Negroli. The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York.

Image and economic policy

Images without copyright

Louis XIV of France: the Sun King image, Palace of Versailles.

European Porcelain

Image
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Germany, c. 1710. Meissen, undecorated
chocolate cup in Böttger red stoneware,
Kunstgewerbemuseum, Hamburg.

Commerce and Early Industrialization in Europe

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English, c.1785-90, Josiah Wedgwood.
Flower vase and pedestal, jasper, green dip.
The figures were originally modelled by John
Flaxman. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New
York.

The Age of Steam

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Spain, 1864, locomotive #1903,
constructed by the John Jones company,
England, for the Compania de Zaragoza a
Pamplona.
Museo del Ferrocarril, Madrid.

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USA, 1858, 4-4-0 wood-burning
locomotive, built by Rogers Locomotive
Works, Paterson, NJ, for the Atlantic &
Gulf Railroad. Henry Ford Museum,
Dearborn, Michigan.

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Why is the shape of the American locomotive so different from the British example?

Styling

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USA, 1925, Chevrolet Superior.

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USA, Ford Model T, 1919.

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USA, 1934, Chrysler De Soto Airflow

The Present and Future?

- Super-mass = globalization
(China - mass production + low cost)
- Information technology
- Flexible manufacturing
- Infinite localization
- Market niches and customization
- Digital craftsmanship
- High value