

Viessmann Art & Design Exhibition

“Embedded Creation” – Exploring the dialogue between corporate design and art

In cooperation with the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) and Zcontemporary, the Chinese subsidiary of German heating technology manufacturer Viessmann initiated a pioneering art project to explore the dialogue between corporate design and art in China. The results will be on exhibition in Beijing's 798 district at UCCA from 28th April to 6th May 2012. “Embedded Creation” brings together the individual artists Miika Benedetti, Ingo Bulla, Chen Kun, Feng Lianghong, Wendy Hack, Hu Qinwu, Hu Shenping, Li Gang, Jeffrey Stephen Miller & Thomas Schmidt and Yang Liming, who are specialized and acknowledged in various fields as ceramics, photography, video art, painting, sculpture and installation – and Viessmann heating systems. Cultural antipodes between West and East influence this endeavor and cast a new light on the metamorphosis of a technical product into an abstract piece of art and an original artistic idea into corporate design.

A synthesis on a sustainable level

The intercultural context reveals that values like quality, sustainability and reliability may be represented by a multitude of symbols, icons and forms of expression – varying due to divergent embedding in local cultural environments – but nevertheless understood in their underlying meaning as universal after all. Defining identity in all its occurrences is a perpetual subject of actuality and significance. China's cultural tradition inhabits one of the world's oldest holistic systems of classifying and categorizing phenomena of all types. This is known as the “Five Elements System” or ‘wu xing’, where shapes relate to colours and the elements wood, fire, earth, metal and water. The roots lie in the heritage, which may be experienced in the process of re-traditionalization.

The dialogue between corporate design and art exposes a synthesis on a sustainable level: the creation of unique and distinguished awareness. Thus, specifically and strategically planned corporate design not only contributes to forming identity, it is pivotal for its strength. How you depict yourself determines how you are seen and experienced.

Pioneering corporate design

The corporate design at Viessmann originated in the 1960s, when conceptual artist Anton Stankowski laid the foundation: “Concentration through omission”, which was and still remains an essential guideline. Viessmann has continued its close exchange with reputable designers – Hans Gugelot, Karl Duschek and Andreas Haug to name but a few – ever since. As a result Viessmann heating systems were the first to introduce “design” and “colour” into the boiler room in the form of the new standard colour “Vitorange” – an entrepreneurial and avant-garde achievement regarding the fact that prior to that boilers were gray or industrial green. Today, the defining colours of the Viessmann product range are silver and orange. The first one reflecting clarity, quality and innovation, the second symbolizing warmth – uniting innovation and tradition.

Corporate design and art permeate and complement each other being both source and essence. The pioneer undertaking “Embedded Creation” may be understood as an inspiration to follow, a dialogue started whose continuation lives in its ongoing exploration.

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- 1 Chen Kun with painted vacuum solar tubes.
- 2 Painter Yang Liming at work in his studio.
- 3 Painter Feng Lianghong transforming a cast iron boiler into art.
- 4 Artist Li Gang with a solar collector header transformed into a traditional Chinese musical instrument.

