Design moves people, that’s the power of beauty

Daan Roosegaarde

"Creating historic scenes and landscapes for a better world. This is the title of the very first article I wrote for AXIS magazine. In 2010, what restored me to my craving for creativity was whether it was only air pollution or climate change. I often wonder whether those are the most vital threats to our future. Our generation isn’t very excited about the sun protection, and we’re even tempted to buy some for the consequences of the actions of our generation... The project led me to paying attention to the world as a ‘smart highway’. The power of design is to transform something that’s inscrutable and turn it into something exciting. Why do we now focus on what we think is a better place?"

Daan Roosegaarde (1963), the son of Dutch artist, is the founder of Studio Roosegaarde, a Dutch design studio that explores the relationship between technology and the natural world. He is known for his innovative projects that combine design, technology, and art, such as Waterlicht, a light installation that illuminates waterways to enhance their beauty and ecological value. Roosegaarde has received numerous awards for his work, including the Dutch Design Award. His most recent project, Smog Free Tower, is a tower designed to filter out pollutants from the air, turning the city into a cleaner, healthier environment. Roosegaarde combines his desire to make the world a better place with his passion for creativity and innovation, creating projects that challenge conventional ideas and inspire people to think differently about the world we live in.
Looking at history to inform us of the future
Neri & Hu

Memory is not an instrument for surveying the past but the theatre in which we experience, just as the earth is the theatre in which life flourishes. No simple alchemy approach has ever turned past pain and nightmare into the foundation for a future of healing.

This quote by Neri&Hu captures our obsession with historical nostalgia, many of our projects are based on the premise that nostalgia, rather than being nostalgic, offers a proactive means to engage with issues of heritage, collective memory, displacement, and urban renewal. Nevertheless, nostalgic attempts to erect historical reconstructions of the past home in aesthetic nostalgia, which is the nostalgia of the authenticity of human living and the beauty of life. The result is a debate about the contradictions of modernity. In a sense, the definition coined by Soumae, a Harvard professor of architecture, work with us, especially with us in dialogue with renovation and projects.

Hence, each project comes with its own set of unique stories related to how one engages a harmonious conversation—on the heritage, evidence in the social, ties between formal beauty and the social intervention in the different times and periods. It is important to design in a way that we can delineate the delicate balance between the external context of new and old, smooth and textured, refined and raw. Many of our projects, past and new ideas upon existing space and home, take a poetic approach evident in many of our works. The surgical nature of our projects speaks to an anthropological approach sculpturing the layers, working with definition as much as additions. Ultimately, our aim is not to restore an image of the past but to innovate the future, but to create a dialogue between an imagined past and the present moment, such that their coexistence can produce new, organic meaning and vitality, and the process opens new meaning and possibilities for the future.

Neri&Hu: We/fsome project started as a dialogue with the historical narrative of design. For the city of Shanghai, Neri&Hu Architects offered a new narrative of the city’s past and present. A poetic approach that reimagines the city’s history, its layers, and its future. The project creates a new meaning and possibilities for the future, opening new thinking and possibilities for the future.

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