

The anatomy of design

Jupiter Drawing Room stalwart, Ross Chowles, opened the last day of Design Indaba 9 this year (DI9) and shared know-how from his forthcoming book, due for release later this year, on how to start and run a successful design agency.

 By [Terry Levin](#) 5 Mar 2006

Step one, advises Chowles, is to pin down your unique objectives and manifesto. He lists picking the right partner, drawing up contracts before you open the doors, identifying clients who need your help and establishing an agency culture, as critical to success. Also covered in the book will be the topics of selling work, pitches, research, awards and how to 'go the distance'. Promising to be a handy resource for the future, as more designers follow their own truths... I bet you can't wait to see the art direction!

Dissecting design

Japanese designer Taku Satoh has definitely found his niche. His presentation called 'Anatomy of Design' reveals a process that goes something like this: first they blow up a chewing gum pack, complete with contents, in exact proportion, to derive a 2m long scale model of a chewing gum pack; then after analysing, dissecting, photographing and recording the minutiae of every element of the of the chewing gum product process, they proceed to mount vast supermarket exhibitions - consisting of glass box displays of the oversized sculptural bits, together with information posters. (Supermarket exhibitions?!? What a brilliant idea!) Anyway they also produce a book of the whole 'gedoente', featuring Japanese graphic design, typography and photography at their most refined. The purpose of the book - in the words of Satoh - "in 20 or 300 years time... somebody will be able to find out how we used to make chewing gum".

The same surgical approach has been applied to the disposable camera; the Japanese Barbie (in case you were wondering, she has shorter legs, a bigger head and thus looks a bit cuter); and Issey Miyake's latest frayless computerised self-knitting knitwear technology. Imagine Barbie enlarged 10 times - apparently even the hair thickness was enlarged in proportion - lying naked on a pristine white display plinth, or a reconstruction of what her skull would look like (if she wasn't a doll and actually had a skull) - and you start to get the picture.

The culmination of all this, is a collaboration with Miyake and Japanese architect Tadao Ando that will see Satoh's work housed in the spectacular new Gallery Roppongi, due to open in April 2007. Go figure at www.tsdo.jp.

Quality-time design

Talking of individuality, although Paul Priestman, founding Director of UK consultancy Priestman Goode, www.priestmangoode.com - who is responsible for collaborating on such monumental projects as the design of a whole new era of train travel for Virgin and interiors for the gigantic new A380 airbuses (each customised to embody the different Nationalistic feel required by different airline brands) - he is inspired by driftwood and lists deep thinking and quality time as vital to great design.

Bottom line seems that to be really true to yourself, there are as many models for design now, as there are designers: designers work alone, designers collaborate, they employ 100's of people, analyse, dissect

reduce, reformat, collect, discard, put together, take apart, reflect and rethink. As Ross Chowles put it... the web is amazing, but we also need to experience the textures of life.

Oh and don't rely on the computer, you'll need to know how to use a flip chart and a pen if the globe on your Litepro goes, just before a presentation... or there's a powercut!

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