

PROF LINNEMANN:

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity today to share a couple of ideas on how identity, culture and state is changing and what the role of the creative industries play in that change.

First, I will give you a small introduction to where I come from. I am from Denmark, Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. Denmark is a small monarchy within the European Union, with a population of around 5 million people. It is a monarchy with a King, or a Queen these days. One of the interesting things about Denmark is that we have always had a very strong tradition for architecture and design. It goes hundreds of years back in time, but especially in the post-war period a lot of Danish architects started out with design, especially with furniture design, but also with different kinds of consumer products.

Today one of the driving forces in the Danish economy is these companies like Bang & Olufsen and Lego and other companies. This is just to give you an impression of where I come from and what background I have grown up with.

Being a designer I have personally been through a journey of change in the last 10 years. It is a journey that has resulted in a complete re-branding of central government in Denmark and a journey that was shaped and caused by deep changes in our society in Denmark and the role of the government and institutional identity.

Often I meet corporations, companies, public institutions, governments, that look upon visual identity as a kind of a simple craft, designers being regarded as pure form and surface without content and without meaning. I will try to argue today that design is much more than that. You cannot separate design from its content and meaning just as you cannot separate a mother from the child, or a nation from its flag and its symbols.

Look at these two landscapes. It is the same landscape but they look different. You instantly know that one is winter and one is summer, but how can you tell the difference? Without a visual difference it would be very hard to know the design of the winter is white and cold and the design of the summer is colourful and warm. Asking me to design an identity for a company, a region or a nation without letting me know what the content is and the visions and the goals, is like asking me to design a winter without snow and white.

It is a historical fact that when the political situation in a nation changes, then the symbols change accordingly. I do not know if you can see this map, but the idea is to show you how France has gone through several changes in the modern ages. At least four times the situation in France has been changed dramatically.

At the left, you see the monarchy with Louis the Sixteenth, who claimed that the State, "that's me". He uses the weapons, as you can see the coat of arms and the flag in the bottom.

Later on in Napoleon's time, it was absolute power and the absolute power was demonstrated by, or it was shown by the eagle in the coat of arms, the eagle that still is being used in many other countries like Germany and the United States.

The third one is the republic and suddenly here we see the symbols change from the eagle to the axe and the wheat, symbols of labour. These people let the colour speak for themselves in the flag.

But nowadays France is, you can say, on a journey towards one Europe. Maybe they are not even on a journey any more. Maybe they have actually reached their goals now, because now we see that the flag has been changed, not officially, but we see the new flag, the new European flag creeping in everywhere, even, you can say, the modern coat of arms today, on the licence plates of French cars, here you see the new flag.

I do not think if we go 20 years back that any Frenchmen would ever think that would be possible. But that is at least what we see.

So identity, state and culture go hand in hand and when we talk about branding creative cities, the story is the same: you cannot make a creative region without changing the culture, the content and the symbols.

In the late 80s and 90s, in the start of the 90s, I was personally involved in changing the identity of the Danish State and State institutions. It happened not because we wanted to make the State more modern or fashionable; but it happened because the basic role of the State had changed radically.

From the 50s, the post-war period, the modern state was developed in

Denmark. We built new institutions, introduced welfare programmes, built bridges, infrastructures. We invested heavily in education, research, culture and the like.

The State was the dominant player in building the modern Denmark, but the dark side or the downside of this development was the heavy bureaucratic status of the nation, and on the State. The State removed itself from its people and became an institution in itself.

In just five years this situation has changed completely. Politicians demanded to privatise a number of public institutions and to deregulate the public sector. People demanded to be viewed as customers and not as clients, and citizens and companies demanded the State to open up and to be more direct towards the society.

Before the visual identity of the State was monolithic; that means that the State had one identity. Now we have changed that. We have reinvented the symbol of the Danish State, the Royal Crown and made it available for modern needs. In fact, what we did was to change the content of the symbol of the Crown as a symbol from being the symbol of a monarchy to be a symbol of a democratic state.

The work involved complete redesign of all ministries and institutions and agencies. Suddenly, they developed character and personality. This was expressed through real actions but also in the visual identity of the state itself. I now take you through these, to give you some examples of these identities in the public sector of Denmark.

The first one we did was in 1990, the new identity for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After that came the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Housing and City Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Royal Library, the Royal Theatre, the National Museum, the Police Intelligence Service, the Danish Railways, the Danish Post and overall a website for the whole public Denmark. These are just a few examples of some of these new identities.

These images you now see around in the Danish society. These are the signs for the National Museum, and funny enough this is a neighbour of the Danish Parliament. If you look carefully you can see in the spire of the Danish Parliament there is also the Crown.

Stationery for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signage for the same Ministry; website for the Ministry of Culture; trains; Royal Library; brochures, communication; the Royal Theatre; promotion posters; and the website I was talking about before, the official Danish window, so to speak, where you can get all information on the public sector in Denmark.

the role of design was pure form and art. The hero industries were agriculture, transport and manufacturing.

The next decade from the 80s to the 90s: now the focus has changed from industries to crafters. It was a business period; the business policy was in focus and the concerns here were competitiveness, productivity, quality, competition, diffusion of technology, foreign investments, and so on. The role of design had changed from being pure form and art and now suddenly we are a supplier, or sub-supplier. Services, IT industries, environmental industry were the heroes at that time.

Today, in the 90s, 1995, it has changed again. Now the focus is on knowledge and creativity. The policy is growth and the concerns here are now entrepreneurship, growth, talent, innovation, creativity and so on. Talent building are the key instruments and as a designer we are now key drivers. The hero industries are creative industries, lifestyle industries, bio-tech and so on.

From my own line of business, the design industry, these changes represent an enormous challenge to us as designers. We are no longer artists; now we are a key driver of value creation. We are no longer creative people that are brought in when the strategy and products are done. We are part of the process.

Like the French Revolution, it is not sufficient to change the symbols. We have to change the content and we as designers have to help our clients to fill in the content. That is why my company now hires economists, psychologists, historians and strategists.

So, to sum up, there is always a thought behind things. Whatever the thought, a flag, a new government, business policy, or the future of Hong Kong, to develop the thought might prove to be the toughest of all challenges that Hong Kong is facing. So good luck.