

Summary

3. Discussion in Kyoto, 28 - 30 November 2019

The third hearing of the iF Design Foundation was held in cooperation with the Kyoto Institute of Technology (KIT). The 30 participants from Japan, Singapore and Europe represented a broad spectrum of the various facets of design practice: smaller studios and large companies (e.g. Sony, Canon, Yamaha, Hitachi), universities and research institutions, management positions and self-employed individuals, experienced and young professionals, as well as various disciplines besides the traditional fields of design (business and engineering, fashion, art, ethnology).

The discussions covered significantly different topics compared to the first two hearings in Gmund, Bavaria and Pasadena, California.

One part focused on the practice of design as an aesthetic field of expression for what is needed today. This also included the moral dimension of dealing appropriately with cultural tradition and acting responsibly for future generations. The position of design was defined as the field of tension between art, craft, industry and post-industrial, digital production of devices and messages. At the centre of this debate was the Japanese term „Kogei“, which could only be inadequately translated as arts and crafts or folk art. The aim of design is to carefully transfer the experiences and „wisdom“ of generations, which are stored in traditional goods of daily use, into the future.

Another part of the discussions concerned itself with the different contexts with which design is interwoven. These contexts are simultaneously subject to changes at different speeds and intensities. This applies, for example, to the stakeholders in business, culture and society. It also applies at a local dimension (local, national and international contexts). Last but not least, it affects the roles that designers are externally ascribed and that they create for themselves: as specialists or generalists, as avant-garde visionaries or pragmatic translators in the development of meaningful and valuable solutions.

The final hearing in this series will take place from 23 to 25 February 2020 in Johannesburg. The iF Design Foundation is organising this hearing in cooperation with the Greenside Design Center College of Design (GDC). Participants from India and many African countries will be attending, and are expected to enrich the debate with new perspectives.