



China/HK
India
Indonesia
Laos
Lebanon/Middle East
Malaysia
Singapore
South Korea
Taiwan
Thailand
Vietnam

The Design Alliance™



The Design Alliance™

设计连 ⇨ 設計連

क्रियाकुल सहयोग

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အလီယံဒီဇို

ພັນທະພາບອອກແບບ

gabungan rekabentuk

디자인 연합

ดีไซน์ออลายแอนซ์

Hien minh thiết kế

A collaborative network of
Asian designers and design thinkers

THE DESIGN ALLIANCE™

is currently represented in eleven Asian countries.

CHINA / HK . INDIA . INDONESIA . LAOS . LEBANON / MIDDLE EAST . MALAYSIA .
SINGAPORE . SOUTH KOREA . TAIWAN . THAILAND . VIETNAM

The Design Alliance (tDA) is a collaborative network of Asian design consultancies and individuals who have contributed much to the design industry. Each of our associates is among the country's top designers, and all have sprung from the roots of their own national culture. Tapping each other's strength, vision and geographical location, we work with organisations in the fields of design, research, education, publishing and art/cultural exchange with a focus on Asia and the changing lifestyles of people in Asia.

The Design Alliance works with multinationals operating across Asia, with Asian corporations going regional, with international brand strategy consultancies, cultural institutions, and with Asian and foreign governments and their agencies.

For clients we offer:

- regionwide design solutions
- localised variants—based on an intimate knowledge of local language, culture, cultural sensibilities and regulations
- comprehensive service and consistent quality across the region
- regionwide sourcing of specialised skills—interior architects, signage fabricators, researchers, master craftsmen, photographers, printers, etc.
- lower production and distribution costs (depending on country and logistics)
- a single point of contact for the whole region

Vientiane, Laos
NOV 2001



1st Design Alliance Group Operations Review with tda associates from China/Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam

{ education }

community

The art of helping Laos

WAYS in which design can assist Laos was one topic of discussion at a recent meeting in Vientiane hosted by BlueGrass Design Group.

BlueGrass hosted the first Annual General Meeting of The Design Alliance on 10-11 November. The Alliance is a network of design companies from Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China as well as Laos. This grouping brings together designers and studios from all over the region, in the name of artistic and cultural exchange. "At the meeting we talked at length about ways in which design can help Laos," said Praseuth Banchongphakdy, the Director of BlueGrass Design Group. "For instance, designing distinctive and beautiful packaging for Lao products can help promote them overseas and can help promote tourism."

The delegates included William Harold Wong, the Vice-President of Icofrada (the International Council of Graphic Design Associations) from Malaysia, Freeman Lau of Kan & Lau Design Consultants from Hong Kong, Theresa Yong of Immortal Design Station from Singapore, Irvan Noe'man of BD+A Design from Indonesia, Punlarp Punnotok and



Group of designers at the meeting: (Standing from left) Freeman Lau, Pius Eugene, William Harold Wong, Theresa Yong (Seated from left) Nantarat Watchara-ach, Punlarp Punnotok, Irvan Noe'man, Praseuth Banchongphakdy.

Nantarat Watchara-ach of Pink Blue Black & Orange Co (the Color Party) from Thailand and Pius Eugene of the studio of Pius from Vietnam.

At the meeting, the designers commented that many Lao products were not only beautiful but also natural, an important selling point in many foreign markets. They said that proper marketing and packaging could help sell these goods successfully.

The Design Alliance aims to make

an educational contribution in Laos, through setting up an exchange for design students or recent graduates.

Foreign designers will be given the chance to come to Laos to help teach Lao students, and Lao students will have the chance to work in other Alliance studios. One Lao student or young designer will be selected to attend a workshop on design, organized by the International Design Center Nagoya in Japan next year.

Rencontre internationale

Promouvoir la RDP Lao à développer et à soutenir l'exportation en associant des marques à des produits d'origine laotienne et en développant le design des emballages afin de faire ressortir l'image, la culture et le tourisme du Laos, tel est le but de cette rencontre.

Les participants de niveau international étaient nombreux : Mr Irvan Noe'man de la société BD + A Design, Jakarta de l'Indonésie; Mlle Theresa Yong de Immortal Design Station, Singapour; Mr William Harold Wong de WHW + A, Kuala Lumpur, Malaisie; Mr Punlarp Punnotok et Mlle Nantarat Watchara-ach de Colour Party, Bangkok, Thaïlande; Mr Pins Eugene, Mme Kimchi de Pacific Advert-



DE GAUCHE À DROITE, 1

A lively discussion was held with host, tda Laos associate Praseuth Banchongphakdy, on how design can be of value to an emerging country like Laos

professional

The Design Alliance 1st Annual General Meeting
 November 10-11, 2001, Vientiane Lao PDR

Vientiane, Laos
NOV 2001

{ education }



Lots of donors support art school library

The Blue Grass Design Group company recently presented a batch of design books to the School of Fine Arts on August 28. The 74 books worth over US\$ 3,000 will be used in the school library, named the Design Alliance Library.

The books have been provided by a long list of companies and individual donors from abroad including WHW & Associates (Malaysia), Kan & Lau Design Consultants (Hong Kong-China), Color Party (Thailand), Immortal Design, Shean F Chan and Ray Yeh (Singapore), Byung Don Kang/KECD (South Korea), Ken Cato, John Frostell AGDA and Miriam Potts (Australia), Tania Wolk (Canada) and Blue Grass Design Group (Laos).

One of the initiatives coming from the Vientiane meeting was an appeal to designers from around the world (through www.icograda.org) to donate art and design books and magazines to the School of Fine Arts (Ecole des Beaux Arts) in Laos

{ art & cultural exchange }



TOP Signboards in Vientiane **LEFT** Label of the popular Lau-lao (Lao alcohol) made from fermented sticky rice **ABOVE** Classroom of Ecole des Beaux Arts—Hot, clammy and insect-ridden, the school despairs for better facilities

Hong Kong
Oct 2002

Penang / Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
Jun 2003

{community}
{art & cultural exchange}

AN INSTALLATION EXHIBITION BY THE DESIGN ALLIANCE

TastingAsia opened on 27 October 2002 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre as part of the *New Vision Arts Festival*, followed by an opening at the Dewan Sri Pinang, Malaysia, on 2 June 2003 for the *Penang YTL Arts Festival*.

Tasting Asia is an experimental collaboration between fine artists, graphic designers, photographers, and Prof. Leung Ping-kwan, a renowned Hong Kong poet, reflecting on Asian attitudes to food. A typical national dish has been selected for each country, from South Korea's *bibimbap* (vegetable rice) to Vietnam's *oc hap la gung* (stuffed snails in ginger leaves). The foods inspired the three-dimensional conceptual pieces by the artists, and make-believe packaging (cum-exhibition information panels) by the graphic designers.

All members of The Design Alliance, working from their home bases in Jakarta, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Vientiane, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong and Seoul, participated in the exhibition.



Do I have the best recipe
to cook chicken in steaming water
remake tenderness in a foreign land
console parents who drifted over the oceans?

EXCERPT FROM PROF. LEUNG'S POEM
FOR SINGAPORE'S CHICKEN RICE

Singapore Aug 2003

{professional}



2nd Design Alliance Group Operations Review with tda associates from Indonesia, India, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam

An interview with The Design Alliance appeared in the Business Times Singapore, on helping organisations communicate across Asia.

THE BUSINESS TIMES

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2003

EXECUTIVE Lifestyle

Designed to taste

Local taste, that is, Asia Design Alliance, a network of Asian design houses, can do just that with its intimate knowledge of local cultures and one-stop service. **SENTRY** looks at how the network makes it easier for companies to get things done right. See Page 28

With names like Standard Chartered Bank, Motorola, Four Seasons Hotels and Air France under the alliance's belt, founding member William Hwang-Wong says being part of a network means that companies need to make only one stop to generate multiple markets. The design director of Kuala Lumpur-based design consultancy W&W & Associates was convinced that working in tandem with like-minded design firms would be mutually beneficial in combining the demands of global branding with the sensitivity needed to work within Asian cultures. "We sourced 100 per cent local-owned design houses that were commercially successful, had good connections and specialised in brand and corporate identity, and also those that



The Business Times, Friday, September 5, 2003

COVER STORY/ARTS

Designed to taste



Recognition: State-owned Lao Airlines last first of Elephant, a Design Alliance member

WHEN a Vietnamese graphic design company was asked to produce a bilingual brochure to commemorate a British Embassy event in Hanoi, it was just the kind of business that a small firm in a fledgling industry was trying to get. Except — it was not so much about the ease of what happens when something gets lost in the translation.

Thanks to a tiny error in the way a certain Vietnamese word was written, an "existing" fashion show suddenly became a "heroin" one. The proposed brochure by a design company was "an introduction by His Majesty's Embassy". Fortunately, the blunders were discovered in the proof-reading stage — although, non-Vietnamese readers would never have known the difference.

Sophistication

The greater sophistication of Asian agencies today means a lower possibility of such linguistic Asian jinx, which is perhaps why a growing number of both local and foreign institutions in countries throughout Asia are turning to home-grown design consultancies to capture the true character of a country. Where previously the multinationalists relied on big-name western ad agencies — who were not necessarily able to fully grasp the cultural nuances that defined certain markets — Asian agencies had the advantage of being homegrown and thus more attuned to local cultures, therefore helping to better execute the regional marketing goals of the multinationalists.

It's not an easy job, Asian

trades differ within Asia, even within many Asian countries themselves — Indonesia, for one, comprises some 17,000 islands and a population that speaks 170 different languages — the special challenge for design firms is to come up with brand and corporate identity programmes that transcend the obvious cultural barriers.

The Design Alliance — a collaborative network of Asian design houses with a strong commitment to preserving Asian culture and its relevance in the modern world — was founded in 2001 with the hope of easing the way in which companies can create cross-regional Asian design solutions. Several members met in Singapore recently to discuss potential projects and a joint presentation at an upcoming design seminar.

With names like Standard Chartered Bank, Motorola, Four Seasons Hotels and Air France under the alliance's belt, founding member William Hwang-Wong says being part of a network means that companies need to make only one stop to generate multiple markets. The design director of Kuala Lumpur-based design consultancy W&W & Associates was convinced that working in tandem with like-minded design firms would be mutually beneficial in combining the demands of global branding with the sensitivity needed to work within Asian cultures. "We sourced 100 per cent local-owned design houses that were commercially successful, had good connections and specialised in brand and corporate identity, and also those that

can provide depth, insight and a philosophical perspective when dealing with local cultures," says Mr Hwang-Wong.

The Alliance now comprises companies from several countries, including India, Laos, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan. "We crossed paths at design conferences so it was relatively easy to put the initial group together," says Mr Hwang-Wong. "As long as they are open-minded and can work together, we will consider including them as members. It's a matter of incorporating a sense of pride within each country."

Mr Hwang-Wong estimates that not all the members in the Design Alliance are equal when it comes to quality. "Some associates haven't reached a certain standard because of the environment they are operating in, but given the exposure, they will achieve that level," he says.

Former-trained French designer Hwang-Wong returned to his native Laos nine years ago and founded his company Elephant because he wanted to help develop the country's non-existent graphic design industry. "The industry in Laos is primitive," he says. "For the first few years, we had to fight with the government because it was not familiar with the concept of advertising and design."

Nowadays, Elephant is still the only qualified design firm in Laos, with just a handful of associates — but they include most of the major state-owned companies like Lao Airlines and Lao Telecom.

Mr Hwang-Wong's role as a devotee to educating local students and promoting the concept of design.

Head-based Pham Huynh Kim of design firm (tda) identifies with the difficulties faced by the designers in Laos. "We are not adopted a more open policy 10 years ago, the situation has improved."

Mr Kim, who also works on many state-owned accounts, laments that graphic design is still a new concept and designers in Vietnam are required to do everything from A to Z. "When people don't recognise the importance of design in business and social life, they won't pay for it."

According to Ruchir Sharma, a director of Elephant Design, the largest design practice in India: "Design as a professional service is a Western concept, with influences from Western design. Asian design, with strong cultural influences, has a stronger of its own but is not well recognised." The most successful design, he says, is one that is culturally relevant, the one a case where he introduced warm south tones ("Let's have Indian colours") to a bank's corporate colours, where previously only blues and greys reigned. "To be able to do justice to design which appeals to your own people, you need to understand your own culture."

Looking East

Pamela Goh, a film director at Elephant Design, says: "Clients understand profits, not design, so you need to differentiate yourself. You need to connect with the culture." Adds Mr Sharma: "After getting to know your client well, he's not asking you anymore — he's asking us what to do. We've always been looking West, but the East is where the potential is now."

Last October, the Design Alliance was invited by the Hong Kong government to collaborate in "Tasting Asia", a food-as-art installation created by artists, designers and photographers to show differing perspectives towards well-known Asian dishes. The exhibition, which features conceptual pieces and rubber-belt packaging of national dishes like chicken rice, no

Global sounds of Womad turn audience on

By Jeyne Koh

DON'T write off this year's Womad because of talk that the festival has become more commercial. The World of Music and Dance (Womad) event, which has been running since 1992, is still the only qualified design firm in Laos, with just a handful of associates — but they include most of the major state-owned companies like Lao Airlines and Lao Telecom.



Bangkok, Thailand
Sept 2003

{professional}



New Challenges for Identity Seminar, 26 September 2004.
Organised by Antalis (THAILAND) Ltd. and Product Development Centre,
Department of Export Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

Mr. Narong Jiwangkrun, a well-known personality who hosts a popular
programme on branding on Thai television introduced the theme of the seminar.

The speakers were:

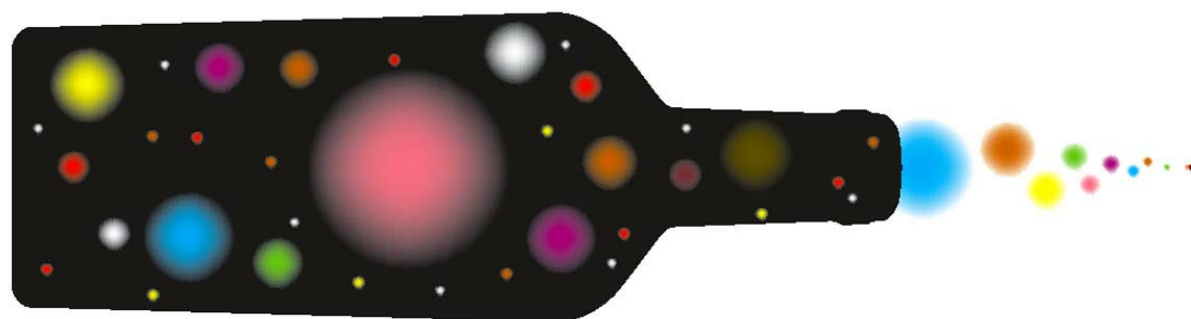
- Freeman Lau (tda China/ Hong Kong)
- Theresa Yong (tda Singapore)
- Vichean Tow (tda Thailand)
- William Harald-Wong (tda Malaysia)



Every tda meeting is an opportunity to experience and understand
the host country's cultural uniqueness and its influence and impact
on design trends and lifestyles.



An exhibition of speakers' works was held at the
Dept of Export Promotion, Ministry of Commerce



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Nagoya, Japan
Oct 2003

The Design Alliance at *Visualogue*,
Icograda International Design Congress in Nagoya



Nagoya, Japan
Oct 2003

{professional}



The Design Alliance (10 countries) gave a 3 1/2 hour presentation at *Visualogue*, the Icofrada International Design Congress in Nagoya, 11 October 2003.



{education}



Title of Presentation: *AsiaBeat—A Clash of Signs and Symbols*

What makes Asia's heartlands hum? An evolving rhythm composed of the vernacular, the global, the push and pull of East and West. The presentation aims to uncover the visual manifestation of the search for national, cultural and personal identities across ten Asian nations, covering Southeast Asia, Indo-China, North Asia (not including the host country, Japan) and India.

Many were ancient kingdoms, their people had privy to great esoteric and spiritual knowledge; some wielded considerable political, economic and cultural influence, others absorbed

foreign ways, living under the yoke of colonisation. All have a distinct tradition of aesthetics that are now being re-examined, revitalised, and celebrated, or often bastardised, in contemporary visual expression.

The presentation is divided into three discussion sessions focusing on contemporary issues that affect graphic designers across the region, interspersed with four quick-paced presentation of images that attempt to distil the visual vocabulary of each country through a documentation of ideas, scripts, symbols, signs and print.



TOP Chairs were removed from the hall in favour of tatami mats on which were placed gift tokens from ten different Asian countries, each gift reflecting the unique visual language and symbolism of the country. **CENTRE** Simultaneous presentations by Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia **TOP LEFT** Working together as a multi-national team gave each of us valuable insights into many aspects of Asia. **TOP RIGHT** Q&A session moderated by Katherine McCoy (Illinois Institute of Technology, USA), Louise Sandhaus (CalArts, USA) and Julia Chiu Leimei (International Design Center Nagoya).

Nagoya, Japan
Oct 2003

{education}
professional

Designer woos foreign interest

SEVERAL countries have expressed an interest in furthering their involvement in contributing resources toward the development of the design industry in Laos, after hearing a presentation from the head of a local design group.

Praseuth Banchongphakdy, Managing Director of BlueGrass Design Group in Vientiane, represented Laos as a member of the Design Alliance and was one of the conference speakers at the Icograda congress held in Nagoya, Japan from October 8-11.

Praseuth presented over 100 slides depicting the natural, unspoiled beauty of Laos as a way of promoting the ASEAN Tourism Forum being held in Vientiane in 2004. He also addressed the need to expand the learning opportunities for Lao graphic designers and spoke of past success in helping establish the Design Library at the School of Arts.

The Design Alliance is a collaborative network of 10 Asian design firms from Hong Kong, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore,



Praseuth Banchongphakdy (far right, middle row) and other Design Alliance delegates at the Icograda conference.

South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Each member is among the countries top designers, all having sprung from the roots of their own culture.

Visualogue - a word coined from "visual and dialogue" - was the theme of this year's conference, which was attended by 4,000 delegates from around the world. The conference explored the quality and benefits of information generated by the

visual communication industry.

The International Council of Graphic Design Associations (Icograda) is a worldwide body providing graphic design information, resources and news from the design world. Founded in 1963 in London, Icograda is a global community promoting graphic designers vital role in society and commerce. The Icograda Education Network connects design schools worldwide.

Techno for

Keolaka Soisaya
in Luang Prabang

THE revolution of technology that recent decades accelerated the economic development was important nations to make it issue, Minister's Office of the Science, Environment and Technology yesterday.

Dr Bountiem Phitthay, addressing the Ministerial Meeting and Technology being held in Luang Prabang province.

Prime Minister Vorachit, the Luang Prabang ambassadors and representatives of ASEAN countries attending the meeting.

"Three years of ASEAN Minister



Kaohsiung, Taiwan NOV 2003

{education}



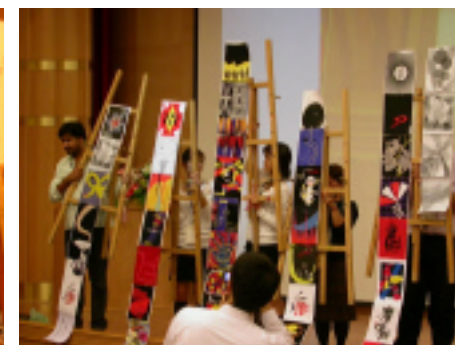
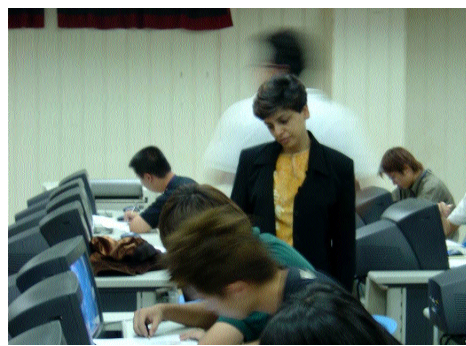
{community}



FAR LEFT tDA associates in front of the Shadow Puppet Museum in Kaohsiung
LEFT Opening of poster exhibition *Discovering New Design in Chinese*

Discovering New Designs in Chinese—International Chinese Design Education Seminar and Workshop, 18 November. With participating tDA associates from India, Laos, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam.

The Seminar and Workshops were held at the Tung Fung Institute of Technology in Kaohsiung. More than 500 students from seven schools throughout Taiwan attended the workshops.



Kaohsiung, Taiwan
Nov 2003

{community}
{art & cultural exchange}



Each associate contributed an image which reflected his/her views or perceptions on Chinese Culture. These images were installed in the park surrounding the Kaohsiung Cultural Centre.



20 Page November 28 - December 1, 2003

ARTS & CULTURE

VIENTIANE TIMES

Design exhibition planned for ASEAN Summit

PRASEUTH Banchongpakdy (Blue Grass Design Group, Vientiane) participated as an instructor at a workshop sponsored by Tung Fang Institute of Technology in Kaohsiung Taiwan 18 November to 23 November. The Institute invited the Design Alliance to conduct the workshop. Over 500 students took part.

The Design Alliance program included presentations by each Alliance member, a show of Chinese character posters and ended with an exhibit of Alliance members' work at the Cultural Center. Shigeru Fukuda of Japan and Yang Ching-Tien of China also participated in the exhibition. As the first time artwork from Laos was exhibited in Taiwan, Praseuth's contribution was a poster entitled "Friendship" that incorporated graphics depicting the Naga, Thai Luang and Lao script.

Praseuth, always on the lookout to expand the learning opportunities for Lao graphic designers, discussed the shortage of computers and other course material at the School of Arts with Professor Apex Lin Pang-Soeng. Professor Lin agreed to donate computers to the school and sponsor a poster exhibit along with Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and Singapore during the ASEAN Summit in December 2004. Praseuth and Professor Lin also discussed setting up a scholarship for the school in



The Design Alliance team

Vientiane.

Praseuth is also working to bring the Design Alliance exhibition "Facing Asia" to Laos in time for the ASEAN Summit. The exhibition has toured Hong Kong, China, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and travels to London next.

Professor Lin is with the Department of Fine Arts, National Taiwan Normal University, a consultant for several design associations, President of the Taiwan Poster Design

Association and a jury member of the Beijing Olympic Games 2008 Symbol Design Competition.

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Savannakhet festival buzzes with colour and tradition

Hanoi, Vietnam May 2004

{professional}



Branding Across Asia Seminar 9–10 May 2004

Organised/supported by Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency, Ministry of Trade, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, The Design Alliance and Haki Group.

3rd Design Alliance Group Operations Review

with tda associates from India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam.



FAR LEFT At the 3rd tda meeting the associates discussed

region-wide projects particularly in the fields of research and publishing
LEFT Opening speech by Mr Do Thang Hai, Deputy Director-General of Vietrade, Ministry of Trade



The tda event appeared on prime-time news on national television and newspapers in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.



Vietnam appears to be promoting itself as a fashion capital with many up-and-coming fashion designers and stylish fashion / lifestyles stores.



{art & cultural exchange}