

## 中国当代景观设计 Contemporary Landscape Design in China



吴欣 Xin WU

美国威廉-玛丽学院艺术与艺术史助理教授，《景观启示录——吴欣当代设计师访谈》作者，“当代景观评论”和“山水百家言”专栏主持人（2009-2011）

Assistant Professor of Art and Art History, College of William & Mary; Author of *The New Art of Landscape — Conversations between Xin WU and Contemporary Designers*; Column Host of “Contemporary Landscape Criticism” and “Flora of Landscape Thought” (2009-2011)

采访 Interviewed by / 田乐 Tina TIAN, 涂先明 Xianming TU  
整理 Edited by / 涂先明 Xianming TU

### 摘要

“跨界”是一种思维模式。跨界，须认识到学科的特有体系以及其内在的局限性，并要走出藩篱，了解不同的领域。设计的重点不在于符合某个领域的既有逻辑，而是要从问题出发，针对问题寻找解决方式。一个好的设计师应具备好奇心、开放的态度和广博的视野，以及能将从不同领域得到的灵感综合运用到设计中的能力。

### 关键词

中国当代景观设计；跨界；好奇心；创意；博雅教育

### Abstract

Being interdisciplinary is a way of thinking, and need to realize the specificity of the discipline and its limits; need to jump the fence in order to engage other disciplines. The central concern of design is not to match up the logic or expectation of a particular discipline, but to be based on the issues and to search for possibilities. A good designer should have curiosity, openness and broadness as well as the capability of synthesizing his / her knowledge and experience into design.

### Key words

Contemporary Landscape Design in China; Interdiscipline; Curiosity; Creativity; Liberal Arts Education

### 您怎样理解学科中的“边界”，以及“跨界”的含义？您认为如何才能能够实现“跨界”？

吴欣（以下简称吴）：每个学科都有一套自己的、确定的基本原则，以及系统的方法论。这些概念是由该领域内的专家们共同认可，并通过系统的、专门化的教育和训练来传承和维持。这也就是我们常说的专业。毋庸置疑，专家很重要，但不是人人都必须言必称多学科。“跨界”是一种思维方式，不是一种时髦。一个跨界的人首先要认识到其学科的特有体系，以及这种体系内在的局限性；然后，要敢于与既成的体系保持一点距离，并有意识地从设定的行为模式中脱离出来。这是一个思考和探索的过程。这些人往往具有两个非常重要的特点。其一，他们对各种事物都非常好奇；好奇心能使你对这个世界的态度开放起来。第二，他们在面对设计或是研究项目时，思考的重点总是放在问题上，而不去担心是否符合某个特定学科的要求和范畴。

至于如何才能实现“跨界”，我想是因人而异的。当然，教育在其中发挥了很大作用。高度专业化的教育其实是现

代社会的产物，而世界历史上的很多著名人物都是通才，比如说欧洲所称的“文艺复兴人”（Renaissance Man）和中国古代的鸿儒。我现在任教的美国威廉-玛丽学院创建于1693年，是美国久负盛名的博雅教育（Liberal Arts Education，也称为人文教育、通才教育或素质教育）学院，许多有成就的校友将他们的日后的成功归功于在威廉-玛丽学院求学时所接受的教育。好的老师不仅仅在于传授专业知识，更重要的是教给学生独立思考的方法和发现问题的能力。我自己有幸遇到两位博学的导师——同济建筑与城市规划学院的李德华教授和英国著名艺术和文化史学家史蒂文·班教授。作为他们的关门弟子，我在这方面受益匪浅。很多人看到我的研究穿梭于设计和艺术史、中国和西方、当代和古代之间，问我是不是刻意要跨界？实际上我没有任何预先的计划，而是“跟着问题走”。因为我自己有设计背景，一直特别感兴趣的是：创意是怎么来的？这就是创造性思维的过程问题。这个问题把我的注意力引向了两个方面：当代设计评论和景观文化史。有人可能觉得它们风马牛不相及，但从创造性思维的过程来看，分析设计和研究历史毫不矛盾——前者有助于破解创作的形成和发展，后者有助于破解

**How do you define the “boundaries” between different disciplines or professionals, and what is your understanding of “crossing boundaries”?**

**Xin WU (WU hereafter):** Every discipline has its own established principles and a system of methods. Such notions are agreed by the specialists of the field, and maintained and transmitted through disciplinary education and training. This is also the specialization. No doubt, specialists are important; not everyone has to be interdisciplinary. Being interdisciplinary is a way of thinking, not a fashion. An interdisciplinary person needs first to realize the specificity of the discipline, and its limits. Then one needs to be willing to keep a little distance from the existing system, and consciously break away from the established models and patterns. This is a process of thinking and searching. Such people often share two important features. First, they are curious to many things. Curiosity keeps one open-minded. Second, they concentrate on issues, instead of whether what they do fit the requirements and scope of the field, when working on a project.

As for the question of how one can cross the boundaries, I think it varies individually. Education plays a big role, of course. Highly specialized education was a product of the modern era. Many well-known figures in history are generalist, such as the Renaissance men in European terms and the literati in ancient China. College of William & Mary, established in 1693, where I teach is the oldest liberal arts college in America. Many of the accomplished alumni attribute their success to their liberal arts education at William & Mary. A good mentor not only teaches disciplinary knowledge, but also, more significantly, trains the students’ capability of discovering and critical thinking. Myself personally was fortunate to study under two great scholars — Professor LI Dehua at School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University and the renowned British culture and art historian, Professor Stephen Bann — and benefited greatly. Many saw my research shuttles between design and art history, between China and the west, between the contemporary and history, and wondered whether I deliberately crossed the boundaries. In fact, there was no plan, but following the questions. Because I was a designer before, in research I am most interested in how creativity comes about and in the process of creative thinking. This

question leads me to two aspects: contemporary design criticism and the history of landscape culture. Some may feel they are unrelated. But from the viewpoint of creative thinking, analyzing design and studying history is not contradictory at all — the former helps to decode the formation and development of design process, the latter helps to decode the profound conceptual influence such as cultural identity. And these research in return deepens my understanding to design. In summary, the drive to cross disciplinary boundaries comes from questions. A person without questions would have no such desire. And the need of questioning springs out of curiosity and thinking.

**How do you define the domain of contemporary landscape?**

**WU:** A Chinese saying says “the mountain and water of a place nourish its people”. To understand landscape first and foremost is to acknowledge its tie to culture, history and the region. No serious discussion about landscape can ignore these aspects. In Chinese tradition, human and nature are different but not separated, while the separation of human and nature has a deep root in western tradition. Not long ago, scientists have coined an informal geologic chronological term — anthropocene — to mark the evidence and extent of human activities that have had a significant global

**The drive to cross disciplinary boundaries comes from questions.**

impact on the earth's ecosystems. Human is part of nature, while our environment is resulted from human activity. Seeing from this perspective, the role of landscape design is to change the environment consciously in order to establish new harmony between human and non-humans. As the citizen’s awareness towards environment grows in China, contemporary landscape education has developed rapidly in the recent decades. Disciplinary training in design, plants, engineering, science and practice are certainly indispensable. Meanwhile, one must expand the knowledge of humanities, history, art, aesthetics and society. Contemporary landscape is not only a design issue, but also a cultural issue. Ignorance of culture leads to misunderstanding of landscape. And

文化识别性等深层的理念对创意的影响。简而言之，跨界其实是由问题引起的。问题来源于好奇和思考，一个没有问题的人不会有跨界的需要。

### 您如何定义当代景观的范畴？

吴：一方水土养一方人。对景观的理解首先是文化性、历史性和地域性的；任何对景观的严肃讨论都不可能忽视这些因素。中国传统中人与自然是分不开的——人物、动物、植物、事物，万物有灵；但在西方，人和自然的分离却是一个根深蒂固的概念。科学家们新近非正式地命名了一个新的地质时代——人类纪（Anthropogene）——来指明，地球生态发展到今天，人与自然之间的互动已密不可分，人是自然的一部分，而环境的形成处处反映了人类的活动。从这个角度而言，景观设计即是人有意识地来改变环境，在人（Human）与非人（Nonhuman）的存在之间建立起新的共处关系。随着人们环境意识的增长，中国的当代景观教育近十年来突飞猛进。对于设计、植物、工程、科学和实践等的教育和培训是不可或缺的。同时也必须加强有关历史、人文、艺术、审美和社会的教育。因为当代景观不仅是设计的问题，更是一个文化的问题。对文化的无知会导致对景观的误解。而当代景观的范畴恰恰是由这诸多因素所定义的一个动态的场。

### 在您的著作《景观启示录——吴欣当代设计师访谈录》中，您提出了“乡土与现代”、“城市化与自然”、“形式与功能”等多组看似对立的词语，是否能理解为设计旨在调和这些对立面，以达到平衡？

吴：我编著《景观启示录》的主要目的是希望这些访谈能为中国读者（特别是设计学院的学生们）提供一些新的思考维度。这本书的出发点很平实，就是想实实在在地从当代设计师的角度，向读者揭示他们关于设计的具体想法以及创作过程；也就是“设计是怎么来的”。我则是本着作为一个研究者的态度，力图跟随他们的思路去了解他们的经历，引导他们详述思维的过程。最后通过名为《复原景观设计的艺术性》的前言，总结出4条当代景观设计发展的新动向。

书中7篇访谈涉及到诸多概念：“乡土景观与现代化”、“城市景观与自然美”、“视觉艺术与景观诗意”、“公共艺术与环境基础设施”、“当代美学与欧洲造园传统”、“艺术创作与形式”、“景观设计与创造性的诠释”。访谈时没有预

先计划要他们强调任何一个方面，所提出的这些观念是从被采访的设计师们的思想中提炼出来的，而不是我先入为主强加的。正如你所说，这些概念只是看似对立而已。但为什么有人会觉得它们之间有不可逾越的界线呢？原因往往在于想当然的常识和成见。从这些设计师的角度看，这些对立的观念完全能够衔接在一起，成为他们灵感的源泉。不是刻意地去平衡，而是运用对立面的元素来帮助思考。关键的一点是，将这些概念关联起来，并不是说在设计成果中把对立的事物混排在一起，或者是在文本中将词语罗列一番即可；而是在设计的过程中不断碰撞产生出新的思想，这样的新思想是一个有机的完整的整体。两极相通，有无相生。

当代景观不仅是设计的问题，更是一个文化的问题。  
对文化的无知会导致对景观的误解。

### 在您的这本书中，您选择访谈的设计师各自都有着非常多样的背景，他们自身就代表了一种跨界。您在最初编排时是否是出于一种“跨界”的考虑？

吴：刚刚提到过，这些访谈的根本出发点在于了解优秀的设计背后的思考。书中访谈了7位非常优秀的国际设计师，他们都是很有思想的人，也是很好奇的人。如果把他们所涉及的领域都列出来，那会很长：从平面设计到音乐和舞蹈……他们的作品引起我的兴趣，一方面是其创作的灵气，另一方面是其思想的厚度。他们每个人都有自己关注的问题。他们的设计重点不在于符合某个领域的既有逻辑，而是从问题出发，针对问题寻找解决方式，敢于去探求看似不可能的可能性。

这些设计师带给我们的最明显的启示在于他们的好奇心、他们的开放和广博、他们的兼容并蓄，特别是将从不同领域得到的灵感综合地运用到设计中的能力。对年轻的中国设计师来说，首先要走出藩篱，去了解不同的领域。

### 正如您所说，这些优秀的设计师不仅具备非常与众不同的背景，而且对景观的思维方式也不一样。如果学科是需要通过教育来传递一种思维模式的话，是否可以认为景观教育并不具备某种固定的模式？

吴：你是说这其中似乎存在着一个矛盾，一方面学科需要依

the domain of contemporary landscape will remain a dynamic field defined by such diverse aspects.

In your book *The New Art of Landscape — Conversations between Xin WU and Contemporary Designers*, you referred to several phrases which seem with opposite meanings, such as “locality vs. modernity”, “urbanism vs. nature”, “form vs. function”, can it be seen that design is a work to balance these antithesis?

**WU:** I published the book with the hope that these interviews will provide new horizons to Chinese readers, in particular college students. The starting point of my book was very simple; that is, from the viewpoint of practicing designers, to address the process of creative thinking — how did a good design come about? As the interviewer I approached the task as a researcher, striving to follow their thoughts, understanding their experience and stimulating them to explain the process of thinking in detail, and finally summarized four new directions of contemporary landscape design in the preface titled “*Restoring Landscape Design as An Art*”.

The seven interviews concerned many concepts — “vernacular landscape and modernity”, “urban landscape and natural beauty”, “visual arts and landscape poetics”, “public art and environmental infrastructure”, “contemporary aesthetics and garden tradition”, “art creation and form”, “design and creative interpretation”. There is no plan beforehand to highlight any aspects in their work. The chapter titles were added afterwards. That is to say, the concepts mentioned in the titles were distilled from the interviews, instead of pre-set directions. As you have mentioned, they are seemingly opposites. But why should people believe there are impassable divide? The reason lays in taken-for-granted conventions and attitudes. When we study truthfully the process of creation of these top designers, from their point of view we realize that such so-called opposite are totally linked to become their sources of inspiration. So, it was not a deliberate balance between the opposites, but to think across the opposites. A key point is that, to make connection of opposites do not mean to simply juxtapose them in design or to list the terms in the presentation. Instead these opposites collide in the process to generate new ideas; such new ideas are an organic whole, just like the Taoist notion that the two extremes are linked and the solid and the emptiness give rise to one another.

Each of the designers, whom you had conversation with in the book, has various background and the practice by themselves can be considered as representative works of “crossing boundaries”. Was there a thinking of “crossing boundaries” throughout the choreographing of this book?

**WU:** we have just mentioned that the start point of the interviews was to penetrate the thoughts behind design. These seven outstanding international designers are all very thoughtful individuals, and very curious. If we list the domains they have engaged, the list is long, from graphic design to music and dance, etc. Their works interested me because on one hand their creativity, on the other hand their depth. Each of them has his / her focus. And the central concern of their design was not to match up the logic or expectation of a particular discipline, but to based on the issues and to search for possibilities among the seemingly impossible.

A main inspiration we may gain from these designers is their curiosity, their openness and broadness, their eclecticism, and most importantly their capability of synthesizing in design. For young Chinese designers, there are great opportunities for practicing. To become an interdisciplinary person need to first jump over the fence in order to engage other disciplines.

As you said, excellent designer does not only have a distinctive background, but also a unique way of thinking about landscape. If the way of thinking to a specific discipline is conveyed through education, can it be understood that the education of landscape does not have a certain fixed way of thinking?

**WU:** You mean there seems to be a contradiction: on one side the discipline needs to depend on a system; on the other side the good designers we discussed produced creative works precisely due to their will of breaking away from the disciplinary limits. I must first emphasize the distinction between practice and teaching — the goal of practicing is to produce good projects; the goal of teaching is to transmit a comprehensive knowledge system (so that students can be able to produce good project later on). What have been mentioned before are mainly about design. So the question to landscape education is whether it is sufficient to teach established theory and models only. Disciplinary basic training of course is very

靠一套系统去维持，但从另一方面来看，我们现在所讨论的这些杰出的设计师，恰恰是因为他们跳出了学科的界限，才产生了非常有创意的设计。首先我要指出实践和教学的目的不同的。设计实践的目的是产生好作品，而一个教师的首要任务是传授给学生尽量全面的知识（使他们以后自己可以做出好作品来）。景观教育中的问题是，是不是传授给学生一套设定的理论或模式就够了？专业基础知识的训练当然很重要。同时景观是一个综合性很强的学科，教育中很重要的一点是探讨景观到底是什么、设计是为什么。景观是社会和文化发展的一部分，不同时代、不同传统、不同地区对景观的理解是不一样的。在景观教育中应引导学生将自己的专业知识与文化、社会联系起来，学会从整体来分析问题。其次，教育要激发学生的创意，创意并不仅指形式上的训练，而是一种思维的训练。要引导学生的发展，让他们能够自己开始思考，形成自己的一套语汇。最后，人文与艺术的教育非常重要；这一点对中国这样一个历史悠久的文明古国尤其关键。这也是我们刚刚谈到的设计的创意和灵感的源泉之间的关系。新一代的景观设计师们如果能做到中西合璧、古为今用，而不是条块分割、作茧自缚，他们可以利用的灵感的源泉是令西方人望尘莫及的。因此，中国当代景观完全应该有自信。

#### 面对国际上诸多流行和先锋的理念，例如“景观都市主义”、“生态都市主义”，这些理念如何在中国“落地生根”？

吴：现在到中国做工程、访问的外国设计师很多，随之而来的有各种宣言、学说、流派。但对于流行和先锋，要谨慎。在20世纪的设计界和艺术界，各种“主义”层出不穷。从历史的眼光来看，许多西方最新的理念在中国并不新鲜，反之亦然。中国设计师需要了解学科中的新理念，但仅仅了解还不够，必须理解。要弄清楚概念的本质是什么？它是在怎样的语境下提出来的？这些观念对中国来说，具体意味着什么？盲从往往是与思想乏力并存的。中国当代景观应该更多地从全球化的角度看问题，各个文化都是世界大家庭中的一员，平等对话，而不是妄自菲薄，认为国际的就是先进的。

这归根到底还是自信的问题、思考的问题。LAF

important. Meanwhile, landscape is a highly comprehensive domain. In education it is crucial to explore what is a landscape and what is design for. Landscape is part of our culture and society. And the understanding to landscapes varies by time, traditions and regions. So it is important to teach students how to link their specialty to socio-cultural issues and how to analyze problems in a holistic way. Next, education is to inspire students' creativity. This does not limit to formal design training; it is a training of thinking. Students need to be guided to think independently in order to develop their own design language. And finally, humanities and arts education are extremely important, especially for an ancient civilization like China. We have discussed the relationship between creativity and sources of inspiration. If only we make the connection between the east and the west, the ancient and the contemporary, the vernacular and the elite, the richness of the sources of inspiration available to Chinese designers will be unrivalled. In the end, Chinese contemporary landscape should be fully confident about its potentials.

#### How do you think of the advanced international theories or concepts, such as “landscape urbanism” and “ecological urbanism”, can they root in China?

WU: Nowadays there are many western designers visit China and do projects. With them come ample manifestos, concepts and schools. It is wise to be cautious about the fashionable and the avant-garde. Since the beginning of the 20th century, there have been numerous -ism in the fields of design and art. From a historical point of view, many of the new ideas in the west were not necessarily new in China; vice versa. Chinese designer needs to keep abreast of new developments in the field. Not only be aware, but also truly understand: what is the essence of the new idea? Under what context did it come into being? What do these ideas really mean in Chinese context? Blindly following a doctrine often parallels with weakness in thinking. Chinese contemporary landscape should approach issues from the view point of globalism; that is all cultures are equal to communicate on the same level, instead of taking for granted the international as the advanced.

It eventually comes down to the issue of self-confidence and thoughtfulness. LAF