

2006—2009
中国最美的书

The Beauty of Books
in China

2006—2009

上海市新闻出版局「中国最美的书」评委会 编
中国出版集团东方出版中心

图书在版编目 (C I P) 数据

中国最美的书 : 2006—2009 /上海市新闻出版局,

“中国最美的书”评委会编. -- 上海 : 东方出版中心, 2010.11

ISBN 978-7-5473-0267-5

I. ①中…①中…Ⅲ. ①书籍装帧-设计-作品

集-中国-现代 IV. ①TS881

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2010)第203985号

责任编辑: 张芝佳

特约编辑: 谭宝全

书籍设计: 张国樑 / 一步设计

中国最美的书 2006 - 2009

上海市新闻出版局 “中国最美的书”评委会 编

翻 译: 王聪聪 樊 荣 旭 子 迟若冰

出版发行: 东方出版中心

地 址: 上海市仙霞路345号

电 话: 021-62417400

邮政编码: 200336

经 销: 全国新华书店

印 刷: 上海雅昌彩色印刷有限公司

开 本: 889×1194毫米1/16

字 数: 100千

印 张: 15.25

插 页: 6

版 次: 2010年11月第1版第1次印刷

ISBN 978-7-5473-0267-5

定 价: 150.00元

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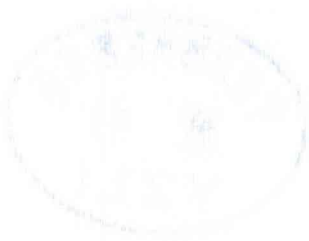
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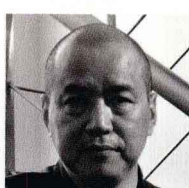
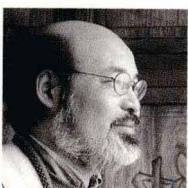
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序一

书籍是人类最古老的记录历史、传递信息的载体。在现代数字媒体诞生之前，人类的科技、历史、艺术无一不依赖书籍得以交流和传承。中国的书籍出版有着悠久的历史，书籍的装帧形式也随着材料和印刷工艺的发展而不断演变。从竹简、木牍成为真正意义上的书，再到纸张以及印刷术的发明，中华民族对书籍形式的探索极大地促进了思想文化的传播，同时传统的书籍设计作为艺术的一个方面，也自立于世界民族之林。

近代以来，西方文明传入中国，促进了中国出版与印刷的现代化，中国的书籍设计随之展现了传统与现代结合的时代风格，涌现了一大批优秀设计家和作品。

从历史上看，上海是中国现代出版业的发源地，海纳百川，中西合璧，使上海形成了比较重要的文化现象，产生了两方面的出版功能。一方面，它作为原创地，向全国提供丰富的图书；另一方面，各地的出版家和设计家也在上海这个舞台展现自己的才华。

改革开放，使中国以及上海的出版业出现了新气象，涌现了大批新的设计家和作品，书籍的设计理念也得到更新，焕发出东方魅力。这就使加强国际间的出版交流成为历史的必然。有鉴于此，2003年秋天起，上海市新闻出版局和德国图书艺术基金会合作并在乌塔·施奈德主席的支持下，举办“中国最美的书”评选活动，引导中国书籍设计家走向国际设计舞台，参评“世界最美的书”。

七年来，“中国最美的书”评选活动受到广大设计家的欢迎，对中国书籍设计水平的提高起了积极的推动作用。现在，全国每年有各出版机构推选的几百种图书送到上海参评“中国最美的书”，当选的作品还将亮相德国莱比锡，与全球设计家的作品共同角逐代表当今书籍设计最高水准的“世界最美的书”之桂冠。2004年以来，我国共有8种图书荣获了“世界最美的书”称号。这些获奖图书除了在当年度的莱比锡书展和法兰克福书展两大国际著名书展展示外，还被德国国家图书馆永久收藏，海外读者也得以借此对中国书籍设计艺术有了更深的了解。近年获奖的书籍设计趋向于简约、流畅、轻盈，强调文化价值和商业价值的统一，反映了中华文化的特质与精髓。从这个意义上说，“中国最美的书”已然成为中国图书走出国门、走向世界的平台和桥梁。

2010年，恰逢世博会在上海召开，上海又成了中国与世界文化交流的窗口。在此背景下，我们将近年入选“中国最美的书”之作品汇集成册，从书籍设计的角度，向各国设计家、出版家呈现一本有价值、有意义的作品集。本集共收入2006至2009年四年间评出的中国最美的书88种，反映了中国书籍装帧设计风格的变化和设计家的进步及成果。书中还收录了各位评委的文章以及他们对每件获奖作品的点评，相信这些文字将对大家有启迪作用。

我欣喜地看到，“中国最美的书”对于中国设计界、出版界已经产生了积极的影响。我们还将进一步推进这个平台的建设。为此，我们热忱地欢迎国内外的设计家继续关心和关注“中国最美的书”，共同来推进这一有意义的文化项目。

Foreword I

Books are humans' oldest carrier of history and information. Before the birth of the modern digital media, books were the only vehicle to pass on people's science and technology, history and art. Chinese book publishing boasts a long history, which has seen the ongoing changes of book binding methods along with the evolvement of materials and printing techniques. From bamboo slip and inscribed wooden tablet that served as books in their real sense, to the invention of paper and printing, the Chinese nation's exploration into forms of books significantly boosted the dissemination of thoughts and culture. At the same time, as an element of art, traditional Chinese book design is recognized as a distinctive component of the world culture.

Since the modern times, when the western civilization was transmitted into China, driving the modernization of Chinese publishing and printing, Chinese book design has presented time styles characterized by combination of traditional and modern elements, and a large number of excellent designers and works have made their presence.

Historically, Shanghai was the origin of Chinese modern publishing industry, which let in various cultures, both eastern and western, rendering Shanghai an important cultural phenomenon which generated its two kinds of publishing functions. On one hand, as the origin of book production, Shanghai supplied abundant books to rest of the country; on the other hand, it serves as a stage where publishers and designers from rest of China displayed their talents.

China's reform and opening-up has fostered new atmosphere in Chinese publishing industry including Shanghai's. With the emergence of numerous new designers and works, the concepts of book design have been updated, demonstrating its oriental glamour. As a result, to strengthen international exchanges on publishing has become an imperative in history. In view of this, Shanghai Municipal Press and Publication Bureau and German Book Art Foundation have worked together to hold "The Beauty of Books in China" competition since 2003, with the support of Uta Schneider, the executive manager of the foundation, leading Chinese book designers to the international design stage by sending their works to the "Best Book Design from all over the World" competition.

For seven years, "The Beauty of Books in China" competition has been very well-received among designers,

making great contributions to the progress of Chinese book design. Up to now, hundreds of books selected by various publishing organizations from rest of the country are sent to Shanghai every year to participate in "The Beauty of Books in China" competition, and the award-winning works will make their debut in Leipzig, Germany, to compete with works by designers from other countries for the crown of "Best Book Design from all over the World", an international award that represents the highest standard of today's world book design. Since 2004, eight books from China have been awarded the honor of "Best Book Design from all over the World". The award-winning books will not only be displayed at the two famous international book fairs of that year – the Leipzig Book Fair and the Frankfurt Book Fair, but will be collected on a permanent basis by the National Library of Germany, so that readers overseas can gain a better understanding of the Chinese book design art. Prize-winning books in recent years tend to feature designs of simplicity, smoothness and grace, stressing the integrity of cultural values and business values, and reflecting the unique qualities and quintessence of the Chinese culture. In this sense, "The Beauty of Books in China" serves as a bridge and a platform through which Chinese books go global.

The year 2010 marks the convening of the Shanghai World Expo, and Shanghai as the host has once again become China's window served as international cultural exchanges. Against this background, we have compiled all the books chosen as "The Beauty of Books in China" in recent years, presenting to designers and publishers of various countries a valuable, significant collection of works from the perspective of the book design. The collection includes 88 categories of prize-winning books at the competition between 2006 and 2009, which reflects the changes in the styles of Chinese book design and the designers' achievements and progress. It also includes articles by the judges and their reviews on all the works. It is believed that these remarks will be very much enlightening.

To my delight, "The Beauty of Books in China" has played a positive role in Chinese design community and publishing industry. We are committed to further facilitating its development. For this, we warmly welcome designers at home and abroad to pay attention to and care about "The Beauty of Books in China" as usual, contributing jointly to the advancement of this significant cultural event.



乌塔·施奈德

德国设计家

“世界最美的书”评选主办单位
——德国图书艺术基金会主席

Uta Schneider

German Designer
Executive manager of the “Stiftung Buchkunst”
(German Book Art Foundation)
— organizer of the competition “Best Book Design
from all over the World”

序二

书籍垒起我们的文化身份。它们体现了幻想、创造、知识和直觉；这些特性没有在岁月变迁中被数字化的潮流所磨灭，甚至愈加明显。书这一传媒形式正在历经变化。数字书籍涌入市场，从根本上改变了我们的阅读方式和知识传播途径。数字出版物的接受和使用与传统方式天差地别，纸质书今后也将化作众多媒体形式的一种，等待读者的挑选。同时，读者对“传统”、对纸质书也提出了新的期望。对此，不仅出版社要奋起应对挑战，且我们的书籍设计师也得处理一般问题：纸质书的设计理念与电子书的数字内容有何不同？书媒体以及多媒体阅读方式的特质和特性究竟是什么？如何才能根据书媒体的特性最好地发挥其优点？相对于下载方便且可随时删除的电子书，纸质书实在且经久耐用，也更方便阅读。它的存在不需要依赖其他媒介。在媒体不断细分、竞争加剧的情况下，传统纸质书完全可以发掘其媒体特性而获得新生。这些特性需要通过未来新的书籍设计理念和实践得到更好地发挥。传统书较数字化阅读的优势在于其感性的表现方式：实物感和现实感。毕竟纸张本身就是一种信息载体。有人摒弃网络下载而选择购买图书，就是特别珍视书本持握在手的感受，实在且耐

久。于是读者对设计、装帧与质量的要求较以往更为苛刻。优秀的版式设计今后也是纸质书的一大重要特征。长篇文章在纸质书中排版更科学，读者仔细阅读时不会像在数字媒体中那样容易产生乏味感。

一个社会或一种文化如果没有文字和承载文字的印刷形式是无法想象的。文字作为语言的视觉形式，是我们日常生活的一部分。我们阅读，观察，写作，再阅读。阅读以视觉过程为基础。在阅读过程中，读者首先辨识出文字或字母，继而解析其含义，理解内容。眼睛附着也感知到文字的视觉形式。尽管这种感知不明显，但图形特征也确实起了作用。这些特征的可读性就是阅读的前提条件。版式设计者的任务就在于此：梳理文章内容与各个层次的结构，采用各种设计方法将文字展现在读者面前，使文章更易理解。数字化浪潮导致的变化一方面给传统纸质书带来巨大挑战，另一方面也为优秀的版式和设计创造了机遇。

如果传媒业的变迁伴随而来的是书籍设计和制作质量的竞争，那就为出版业的发展创造了巨大的生机。每次设计比赛都会有优秀、成功的设计作品从众多参赛作品中脱颖而出。

“中国最美的书”评选活动也如同其他图书比赛一样，不仅为出版机构、书籍设计师和印刷技术企业，还为读者树立了重要的标杆。竞赛为读者在愈加纷繁的图书产品中指明了方向，为理想的印刷材质、吸引感官的设计和图书质量设定了基准。书籍设计比赛总会突显出优胜设计与优秀装帧的特点——无论比赛在中国、德国还是其他国家进行。获奖作品向人们证明，传统书媒体能达到何种境界。

法兰克福与莱比锡图书艺术基金会是德国年度图书比赛的主办机构。该基金会主办“德国最美的书”赛事，自1991年起还承办始于1963年的“世界最美的书”国际比赛。竞赛的核心意义在于交流与信息，涉及的内容有书籍设计、理想的版式标准、符合图书内容的设计构思、装帧与制作质量以及书籍设计与制作中遇到的现实挑战等。上述两项赛事吸引着各种目标群体：首先是出版界，包括书籍设计师、出版社、印刷和装订企业等；另外还有作为公众的购书人和阅读爱好者

Foreword II

Books build our cultural identity. They embody imagination, creativity, knowledge and intuition – even or especially in times of transition and the increasing digitalization of text. The medium book is undergoing a change. The digital (book) form is pushing onto the market and is fundamentally transforming our handling of book content and knowledge transfer. Reception and use of the digital form of publishing is fundamentally different, and in the future the printed book will be one media option of many from which the reader can make a deliberate choice, changing also his or her expectations of the “traditional”, the printed book. This is a challenge not only publishers need to take on. Book designers will increasingly have to deal with the medial question, how the design concept of the printed book differs from the e-book’s digital content, what the specifics, the typical of the medium book or a multi-media use are and how these can be realized best according to the medium. In contrast to the digital, anytime deletable and thus ephemeral download, the book is durable and definitive. Furthermore, it is easier to handle. It is autonomous. Because of increasing medial differentiation and growing competition, the print book and its medial attributes could experience a renaissance. Making these attributes more visible should be the aim for conceptual and book design in the future. The book’s strengths lie in its sensual manifestation as opposed to the digital availability of book-approximate content: in its materiality and concreteness. After all: the paper itself is already an information-carrier. And whoever decides to buy a printed book, as opposed to a download, will consciously appreciate its convenience, the tangibility and the relative durability. Therefore, readers are now more demanding than ever about the design, binding and quality of books. A well executed readable typography will become a more important attribute of print books. Long texts can be processed better in a print book, are not as tiring to read with concentration as is the case with the digital counterpart.

Society and culture cannot be imagined without writing and its typographic form. Writing, the visualization of language, is part of our everyday life. We read, see, write, read. Reading is based upon visual processes. In the reading process ideograms or letters are recognized and the content’s meaning is understood. Additionally, the eye takes in the writings visual form. Maybe not ostensibly, but the graphic elements do play a part. Their legibility is the prerequisite for reading. This is where the typographer’s task sets in: to

them with all means of design to facilitate the approach to the text. For the book the change processes due to the rapid digitalization mean a great challenge on the one hand, and an opportunity for excellent typography and design on the other.

If this transformation is accompanied by competitions concerning themselves with the quality of book design and products, this is a great gain for the publishing industry. With each design competition excellent, successful design is made visual and distinguished from the huge mass market. And so the competition of “The Beauty of Books in China” is – like all other book competitions – an important guide not only for the producing publishers, book designers and manufacturers, but also for the readers. It offers orientation in the ever larger range of products and sets benchmarks for the good choice of materials, appealing-sensual design and for quality standards. Book design competitions distinguish the features of convincing design and good presentation – in China as well as in Germany and in other countries that carry out such competitions. The honored books show examples of what the traditional medium book can accomplish.

In Germany it is the Stiftung Buchkunst Frankfurt am Main & Leipzig which carries out the annual book competitions. It is in charge of the competition “Die schönsten deutschen Bücher / The Best German Book Design” and, since 1991, the international competition “Schönste Bücher aus aller Welt / Best Book Design from all over the World”, in existence since 1963. The focus is mainly on exchange and information: about book design, about criteria of well readable typography, about design conception to suit the book’s contents, about attributes and manufacturing quality, and also about the current challenges in book design and book production. Different target groups are addressed in both competitions: first of all the book and publishing industry (designers, manufacturers, printers, bookbinders, etc.), but also, as publicity events, the book buyers, the reading audience.

The jury’s main focus is on the assessment of the books’ visual organization and design in image and text: conception, typography, illustration or photo quality, cover design and legibility are discussed, as are presentation and technical realization, also quality of typeset, layout, lithography, printing, paper and binding, all significantly

评委会的工作重点在于评判图书中文字与图片的视觉组织与设计，具体包括设计构思、版式、插图及图片质量、封面设计和易读性，还包括装帧及其技术，如排字、排版、数码图像编辑、印刷、纸张和装订的质量等显著影响图书功能的因素。内部设计方面的评判内容是宏观版式、微观版式、图片设计和素材选择。而在外部设计方面，评委注重的是构图、简约性以及与书本内容的关联性。内容与形式是密不可分的。不同类型的书籍，样式也迥然相异。艺术书的图形结构就不同于入门知识手册；文学作品的版式也不同于按教学目标细分结构的中小学教科书。无论是纯文字书还是图画书，书籍设计师都要通过其本人对内容的理解，确定设计方案，运用颜色，图文结合，规划布局，同时考虑纸张和装帧材料的触感，以此对书本内容的阐释方式施加重要影响。

被冠以“中国最美的书”称号的各个作品不仅仅在中国得到认可，还意味着要去莱比锡参加一年一度的“世界最美的书”的国际比赛。在上海市新闻出版局与图书艺术基金会的合作下，从2004年起被选为“中国最美的书”的作品登上了国际竞技舞台。有30至35个举办国家级赛事的组织向基金会选送该国“最美的书”参加国际评比。每年都有600到800本“最美的书”参赛——它们都是各国的“精粹”。一个由七名国际专家组成的评审委员会从中评出14个奖项：最高奖为“金字符奖”，依次设一个金奖、两个银奖、五个铜奖和五个荣誉奖。

此项国际赛事尝试跨越国界的限制，对技术水平、美学水平以及书籍设计的适宜性和艺术性进行评判，是全世界独一无二的。全球设计师的作品汇聚在此，接受鉴定、评估和比较。自然，评委们讨论的焦点一次又一次地落在文化类同性和各国设计传统的差别上，还有作品跨国乃至跨洲的影响力。评审工作需要书与书的对比，权衡优劣，讲求特色。有些书单独看来非常优秀，但在竞争者的行列中可能就显得平淡无奇了。最终评委们评价的是每本书给人的整体印象。

中国获奖作品参加“世界最美的书”比赛为该项赛事增光添彩。这些参赛作品中渗透了中国独到、极富感染力且内容广博的图书文化。因此中国作品在历届国际比赛中表现上佳，自2004年以来每年均有作品获奖。它们是2004年的《梅

兰芳（藏）戏曲史料图画集》、2005年的《朱叶青杂说系列·昏晕哲学/平淡映月/抬头看天/古董主义/清汤白水》和《土地》、2006年的《曹雪芹风筝艺术》、2007年的《不裁》、2008年的《之后》、2009年的《中国记忆——五千年文明瑰宝》以及2010年的《诗经》。

一项注重传统纸质图书的设计、装帧与质量的竞赛对于图书文化进一步发展的意义远在一个畅销书排行榜之上。因为评委会的工作反过来会对出版业施加影响，让人们更清楚地看到书作为媒体的独特之处，并激励所有日复一日与书打交道、设计或制作图书的人。我们所追求的不是为艺术而艺术，而在于书所应带来的阅读的惬意。

contributing to the function of a book. In presentation the sectors macro and micro typography, image design and material selection are judged. In outer design the jury appraises composition, memorability and reference to the book's interior. Contents and form cannot be separated. These are, depending on the book genre, very different. Art books demand a different graphic structure than how-to manuals, fiction a different typography than school books which are structured according to didactic requirements. Pure textbooks or picture books: the book designers significantly influence the contents' interpretation with the chosen conceptual means, with the use of color, text-image combinations, proportion and material texture.

Honored as one of "The Most Beautiful Chinese Books": This means not only recognition within China, but, furthermore, the participation in the international competition "Schönste Bücher aus aller Welt / Best Book Design from all over the World", carried out annually in Leipzig. Thanks to the cooperation between Shanghai Municipal Press and Publication Bureau and Stiftung Buchkunst the selection of "The Beauty of Books in China" has been taking part in the international competition since 2004. 30 to 35 organizations of country competitions submit their "Most Beautiful" to the Stiftung Buchkunst for an international comparison. Thus between 600 and 800 "Most beautiful Books", the "Country Best", are put before an international jury of seven experts awarding 14 prizes. The "Goldene Letter" is the highest award, followed by a gold medal, two silver medals, five bronze medals and five honorary appreciations.

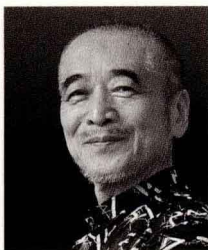
This international competition is the unique, worldwide attempt to assess the technical and aesthetic level as well as the appropriate and artistic design of books beyond national borders. The work of book creators around the globe is appraised, evaluated and compared. That the jury will touch the issues of culturally related similarities and differences of national design traditions, of influences across the borders of countries and whole continents, is a matter of course. The jury's work is based upon the comparing of books to each other, on weighing of better and worse, on differentiating. Sometimes a book may convince on its own, yet within the group of co-applicants it pales in comparison. Ultimately the jury's work is about each and every book's overall impression.

For "Schönste Bücher aus aller Welt / Best Book Design from all over the World" the participation of the Chinese award-winning books is an asset. The books from China that

participate in the international competition are shaped by an unique, vigorous and rich book culture. And so the Chinese entries in the international comparison have performed excellently – every year since 2004 there are Chinese books among the winners: *Historical Materials of Mei Lanfang's Theatrical Performances* in 2004, *Zhu Yeqing – Series The Philosophy of Mist / The Sensation of Wateriness / Look up at the Sky / The Ism of Antique / Consommé and Water and Land* in 2005, *Cao Xueqin's Art of Kite* in 2006, *Stitching up* in 2007, *The After Concept & Works Book* in 2008, *The Chinese Memory: Treasures of the 5000-year Civilization* in 2009, and *The Book of Songs – Shi Jing* in 2010.

For the further development of a book culture, a competition which sees the subject design, features and quality of print books as its core task is more essential than yet another bestseller list. The juries' work has profound influence back on the industry, heightens awareness for the special features of the medium, and motivates all those who work with books day after day, design or produce them. Inasmuch as it is not just about l'art pour l'art, art for art's sake, but about the ease of readability a book has to offer.

(Translation into English: © Karin Nedela)



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为未来的书籍提案的平台

Kindle、iPad等电子阅读器的出现，令书籍的制作方式、销售方式发生了翻天覆地的变革。那用磁性粒子和集成电路组合成的薄板在悄无声息间就能吞下数百种文本。文字在电子纸和液晶屏幕上安然而居，文本的行列在“隐隐闪烁的画面对面”向我们快步走来。

但是，当读者迫不及待地对着这个“局部”蜂拥窥视时，却发现那膨胀拥挤的文本总量、厚重的信息，让人一眼难以望到尽头，烦躁之感也油然而生。这是因为，书的全貌隐藏在电子纸和液晶屏幕的“那一侧”，存在于一个虚拟的空间里。

而当我们把目光移向书桌上放着的一册精装本的书籍时，作为一个有重量感的object（物体），一本有着实体的书，它在“这一侧”的空间里占据着一个实实在在的位置。手的触感、纸的质感、印刷的文字，还有版面设计那震撼人心的力量……这一切的相辅相成，形成了眼花缭乱的存在感。

隐藏在“那一侧”的虚拟的书（电子书）和突显在“这一侧”的立体的书（精装本）——如果是经过精雕细琢、倾心

制作而成的优美的书，两者之间的差别是不言而喻的。

让我强烈、切实地感受到这种差别的是近年来开展得生气勃勃而令人瞩目的中国书籍设计，尤其是凝聚着设计人心血、极尽手工之精粹的珍藏本、精装本的蓬勃发展。

以吕敬人先生为中心所延续的、由年轻设计师们所引发的传统制书技术的再生和新的展开，被这个动向所刺激的中国出版人的主题探索和编辑能力，还有以纸张为起点的新材质的研制和被激发的读者的购买力……这一切都紧密地融汇在一起，于是，那些有着充分养眼魅力的“这一侧”的书籍大量地诞生了。大型艺术图书《怀袖雅物》（吕敬人书籍设计；上海书画出版社出版）就是新近杰出的一例。

约翰尼斯·古腾堡这位西方活字印刷术的发明者，掀起印刷技术革命已有近六百年了。现今，在曾经发明了造纸术、创造了书籍原型的中国这个地方，“这一侧”的立体书籍，正在一边用自古有之的表达方式去创作，一边努力夺回“书的精神”。这使得善于敏锐捕捉机会的西欧出版界，也把惊讶的目光投向了这源自中国的精装本的兴盛和东方制书业的“文艺复兴”。

可以超越经济发展的是文化的传播力量。我相信，东方制书业的“文艺复兴”将带给今后电子书的发展以强有力的启示。在上海拉开序幕并持续举办的“中国最美的书”评选活动，应该成为一个思考未来书籍现实状况、提出独特建议的平台。

A Platform of Proposal for Books in the Future

The emergence of e-book readers, such as Kindle and iPad, has brought about an earth-shaking revolution in the way books are produced and sold. It is only surprising that these thin boards made up of magnetic particles and integrated circuits can accommodate hundreds of text without any difficulty. Words are delightfully displayed on e-paper and LCD screens, where lines of text move easily and rapidly towards us from “the opposite side of the faintly glimmering picture”.

However, when readers are too impatient to wait to start peeping at the “local” screens, they often end up with the fidgets at the overwhelming volume of text, and are bored with the endless information. This is because they are unable to see the whole picture of the book, hidden on “the other side” of the e-paper and LCD screens, an abstract, intangible existence.

Yet as we turn our eyes onto a hardback book on the desk, an object that we can touch and weigh in our hands, we find it has a position on “this side” of the space. The feel in the hands, the texture of the paper, the printed text, and the impressive charm of the cover design...all these combine to form a fabulous and sensational existence.

The gap between the two – a virtual book (an e-book) hidden on “the other side”, and a solid book (a hardback) standing out on “this side” which is beautifully made with exquisite designs and arduous efforts – is glaringly apparent.

The Chinese book design which has developed vividly and compellingly in recent years – particularly the flourishing development of collections and hardbacks made with ingenious designs and sublime workmanship has brought about my strong sense of the gap.

The rebirth and new development of the traditional book production techniques promoted by a team with Mr. Lu Jingren as the core and initiated by young designers, the Chinese publishers’ ability to explore the themes and edit the books inspired by the foregoing trend, as well as the research and production of new materials starting from paper, and the stimulated purchasing power of the

readers...the interconnected turn of all the events has given rise to the emergence of numerous beautiful books of “this side”. One of the typical examples is the large-scale art book, *Culture of Fans* (designed by Lu Jingren, published by Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Publishing House).

It has been around 600 years since Johannes Gutenberg brought about a revolution in printing techniques by inventing the Western movable type printing. In today’s China, where paper-making was invented and the prototype of books was created, solid books on “this side” are regaining “the spirit of books” while the creation of books continues the time-honored way of expression. This has caught the attention of the sharp-witted Western-European publishing community, who has turned their amazed eyes on the prosperity of hardback books originated from China and the “renaissance” of the Eastern book production industry.

It is the power of cultural transmission that weighs even more than the economic development. I believe that the “renaissance” of the Eastern book production industry will provide great inspiration and enlightenment for the future development of e-books. The competition of “The Beauty of Books in China”, which proved a prologue in Shanghai and has been held continuously, should serve as a platform for us to ponder over the realities of books in the future and to put forward insightful proposals.



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年度“中国最美的书”竞选

我从2003年以来担任“中国最美的书”评选活动的评委，至此少有缺席。我们每年要从大量选送的图书中找出“最美的书”并颁发奖状。获奖图书随后将参与国际竞赛，与来自世界各地的作品一起争夺“世界最美的书”之称号。该项比赛于每年年初在德国莱比锡市举行。几年前我也曾是评委会成员之一。

虽然每年获得“世界最美的书”称号的作品可谓凤毛麟角（全球每年仅14本书可获此殊荣），但自2003年起，总有来自中国的图书获奖。这决非巧合，其中必有奥秘！

我知道这些中国获奖书背后的奥秘。在上海每年举办的“中国最美的书”的评选中，这些作品已经给我留下了深刻的印象。这些获奖图书自然有其与众不同之处，令其他参赛作品难以望其项背：其文字和图片的设计新颖、独到，从版面布局来看，文字数量与图片的比例恰到好处；内页以及封面材料精挑细选，其材质往往保留自然的风韵，不花哨，手感好，与设计师对文字和图片的设计意图相得益彰；有些书还有封套，其设计也是别具一格。

最初我在上海担任评委时还曾有所顾虑，生怕由于自己不懂中文或者可能对于书籍设计的观念不同而分辨不出书中字体的艺术风格，或无法理解书中设计的表达方式；其实这个担忧一开始就是没必要的。很快我就发现：精心设计的版面本身就能给人以视觉的冲击，哪怕读者不懂其中的语言。

每一次竞赛我都为中国图书的外包装——包括封面以及很多书的封套（在德国很少给书加封套）感到惊喜不已。设计师的想象力真是无穷无尽。那些封套非常漂亮，往往用织物或某种人造材料制作包装。有的书甚至设计在造型奇特的盒子里，外面附加扣环或小锁，阅读前还需开锁。

对我们这些欧洲人来说，这项比赛是每年一次的美好体验：在各种创意和制作中寻觅最美的书。我不愿错过这样的机会。

The Annual Competition of “The Beauty of Books in China”

I have been a judge for the competition of “The Beauty of Books in China” since 2003, and I have attended most of the competitions up to now. Every year we select “the best book design” from numerous titles and honor them with an award. The awarded books will later participate in the international competition, competing with works of other countries for the honor of “Best Book Design from all over the World”. This is an annual event held in Leipzig, Germany, and I was part on the judging panel some years ago.

Despite the fact that works honored as the “Best Book Design from all over the World” are very rare (every year only 14 books from all over the world can receive the award), every competition since 2003 has seen winners from China. This is by no means a coincidence and there must be some secrets!

I know the secrets behind the Chinese winning books. I have been impressed by them in the annual competition of “The Beauty of Books in China” held in Shanghai. They are indeed outstanding, by far outdoing the rest of the entries with many details: their original, novel designs of texts and pictures; perfect proportion of texts and pictures in terms of layout; quality materials for the inner pages and the cover, which look natural rather than fancy, with delightful texture and in perfect harmony with text and picture designs; and creative jacket designs, which some books feature.

When I was first invited to be a judge in Shanghai, I was concerned that a presumable different view on book design, the new and unknown language for me would possibly create difficulties for me in judging the artistic style of the fonts and the presentation of design in the books. But soon I was relieved as I discovered that well-designed, exquisite typography in itself has an overpowering visual effect, even for readers of a different language.

At every competition I have been amazed at the exterior design of Chinese books, including the covers and many slipcases (slipcasses are very rare in Germany), the representation of powerful imagination of the designers. These are very beautiful slipcases, some packed with textiles or materials of certain formation. Some books are

even designed to be placed in curious-shaped boxes with snap rings or small locks on the outside, which are intended to be unlocked before reading.

For us Europeans, the competitions are a wonderful annual experience to seek the most beautiful books among numerous creative works. I personally will never miss an opportunity like this.



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Tao Xuehua

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Designer of Shanghai, China
Director of the Book Design Committee, Shanghai
Artists Association

书籍设计不仅要有功能性，还要有审美性。当我们要求美感与功能同等重要的那一刻起，仅仅从功能中发展美是远远不够的。事实上美本身也是一种功能，美是由一个物体与生俱来的各个组成部分的和谐统一构成的，任何添加、削减或更改都会降低其美感。因此，从长久来看，狭义的纯粹实用性将不能满足人们的需求。美的观念经历着不断的变化，使美更加难以达到，但是人们依然在渴求“书籍之美”。

“最美的书”最终给予读者的是阅读之美，阅读是一场与心灵契合的无声对话，它浸润到生命深处，最终能与每个人的生活相融为一体。我们需要做的是吸引读者阅读，不阻碍阅读，让读者在阅读中一次次享受集色、香、声、味、触五感于一体的阅读之乐，并展现作为独立的书籍艺术形式的无穷魅力。

“最美的书”是在设计者高度敬业和追求完美之下雕琢而成的，它富有生命力，在纸本与时光交融中薪火相传！

新的契机

在一切艺术与设计活动中，“观念”始终是重要问题。

“世界最美的书”的设计理念，提示了书籍设计基本结构的审美界限，并提升到文化审美的高度。

2003年春天与“世界最美的书”的一次邂逅，为中国书籍设计界带来了最具挑战性的“观念”嬗变。

随着《梅兰芳（藏）戏曲史料图画集》、《朱叶青杂说系列》、《土地》、《不裁》等作品荣获“世界最美的书”的称号，中国的书籍设计理念步入了一个全新境界。

人类进行周而复始的读、看、写、读。书是用来阅读的，这是它的最终功能。阅读以视觉过程为基础。易读性则是其重要的先决条件。作为书籍设计者的任务是：将内容和不同级的文本层进行结构化，并将其与各种设计元素协调组合，以实现易读。为此我们需要将设计元素与设计构思不断试验、组合，寻找具有说服力的材质，并尝试革新的印刷技术和工艺。

书籍构成了我们文化的等同体。它承载了人类的文明、记忆、知识和直觉，它具有随时间而变迁的特殊性。当前，传统的书籍形式正经历着变革，电子书的出现从根本上改变了我们的阅读习惯和信息传播方式。与此同时，读者对于“传统”书籍即纸质书籍的期望也随之改变，对书籍的形态和质量比以往有更高的要求。因此，书籍设计者必须研究和思考这两者之间不同的设计方式和运用方式。电子书籍与传统书籍有着太多的差别，由此也带来了日益激烈的竞争。然而，传统书籍可以给读者带来电子书籍无法提供的温和亲切的阅读享受，纸质书籍或许因为具有这个灵性特质将经历一场书籍的“文艺复兴”。

无疑，这是提高纸质书籍整体设计水平的一次新的契机！

A New Opportunity

Amidst all art and design activities, “concepts” has all along been a most important factor.

The design concept of “Best Book Design from all over the World” demonstrates the aesthetic standards of the basic structure of book designs, and raises it to a cultural aesthetic level.

The most challenging change in the “concepts” of Chinese book design community started from the first encounter with “Best Book Design from all over the World” in the spring of 2003.

Chinese book design concepts have reached a brand-new stage, evidenced by the fact that quite a few books have been awarded the honor of “Best Book Design from all over the World”, including *Historical Materials of Mei Lanfang's Theatrical Performances*, *Zhu Yeqing Series*, *Land*, *Stitching up*, etc.

Humans read, see, write, and read. Books are for reading, which is their ultimate function. Reading is based on a visual process, so legibility is an important prerequisite. The mission of book designers is to organize the content and texts of different levels, and match them with various design elements in a harmonious manner, so as to make reading easier. For this, we need to constantly try out the combinations of design elements and concepts, seek ideal materials, and try innovative printing techniques and craft.

Book designs should meanwhile fulfill aesthetic needs in addition to the functional needs. The moment we begin to attach equal importance to both needs, we know it is far from enough to merely develop beauty from functions. In fact, beauty in itself is a kind of function, since beauty is based on the innate harmony and unity of an object's components, and any addition, deduction or changes to it will take the edge off its beauty sense. Therefore in the long run, pure utility does not suffice to meet people's demands. Concepts of beauty are undergoing constant changes, making beauty even more difficult to attain, but people never stop longing for “the beauty of books”.

Ultimately, “the Best Book Design” offers readers the beauty of reading, a silent dialogue within their hearts that touches the very depth of life and eventually becomes part of

everyone's life. What we need to do is to appeal to readers, eliminate obstacles to reading and enable readers to enjoy the fun of reading that delights all five senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch from time to time. In this way, we are also able to demonstrate the infinite glamour of books as an independent art form.

“The Best Book Design” was forged with designers' devoted efforts and persistent pursuit for perfection. It is full of vitality and will always pass on the charm of books as time goes by.

Books constitute the equivalent of our culture. They carry humans' civilization, memory, knowledge and intuition and are characterized by constant changes with time. At present, traditional book forms are undergoing changes, for the emergence of e-books has fundamentally changed our reading habits and the way of information spreading. Meanwhile, readers have different expectations for “traditional” books, i.e. paper books, as they now expect more out of the forms and qualities of paper books. Therefore, book designers have to study and consider the differences between the two categories of books in terms of design methods and application methods. The distinct differences between them have brought about increasingly fierce competition. However, traditional books can offer a warm, pleasant feeling while reading, which e-books cannot. Probably a “renaissance” of books can be expected to arise thanks to this unique quality of paper books.

No doubt this will be a new opportunity to raise overall paper book designs to a new level!