

الام عليهم

0400

"Give people a product that follows the long-term, not short-term goal and satisfies deeper emotional desire."

Desire is not always superficial and fashionable; The highest end of desire is HUMANITY.

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ERIC CHAN OF ECCO DESIGN... SPEAKS!

\*\*\*\*\* INTERVIEW BY MEREDITH GOODWIN

Have you ever been shown an amazing perspective, and in the blink of an eye, your life takes on a whole new meaning? My entire design philosophy was completely re-invented after sitting down with Eric Chan, President of Ecco Design, in Manhattan. Mr. Chan is deeply rooted in his design purpose, and this wavelength connects the masses.

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Going into 2004 Ecco Design focuses on satisfying the human desire for lasting happiness and joy.

"Designing products that make people feel good about themselves does a lot for the world. Your products should provoke emotion and connect with people's everyday

experiences. Wanting to feel good is a long-lasting, universal human desire."

Ecco Design paired with Herman Miller to re-invent the office space. Mr. Chan explained to me that when envisioning an office of the future, you have to ask,

"What aspects of working together in an office environment are constructive?"

The idea is to make the work-style more like your life-style so that people will enjoy their work and their work environment. People will live to work, versus, work to live.

One example of this "work to live" phenomenon involves farm life before the Industrial Revolution. People lived and worked on farms in the rural countryside; it was their occupation as well as their livelihood. During the Industrial Revolution, workers were forced to leave their homes and go to the factories to work. Mr. Chan

describes the unattractiveness of this experience as,

"Leaving your baby crying at home while you go off to the factory".

This was the beginning of work-style being separate and distinct from life-style.

Now, in the Information Age, we have the freedom to work anywhere.

"We work at Starbucks, on the subway, and on the train, instead of in our offices. The optimal workspace of the future will be one in which people's work-style directly stems from their lifestyles. An environment will be created where people can still feel utilized, contribute, and push one another to optimal performance in a flexible and adaptable work environment."

In the future, technology companies will have a more comfortable and personable brand identity that will offer us a friendlier interface for technology in our daily and working lives.

"Computer brands have no strong personality, consumer electronics need to forge brand connections with the human emotion of the user. One company that emotionally connects is Apple, who has designed a moving experience (for interfacing with the computer). The iPod is a great example of how Apple reacted to a surge in the market for a portable music device and then added some personality to its product; it is not just hard drive technology."

In Chan's words,

"We must help people to enjoy technology in a more natural way."

Mr. Chan reminds us that as designers, we are challenged to incorporate higher-level ideals into the products we design every day. How might one accomplish this? There are three different levels that exist in his paradigm: the Physical, the Macro and the Mega. The Physical Level involves form, function, performance and manufacturing. The Macro Level involves day-to-day market interactions, such as society, economics, politics, technology, and market/brand identity. The third and ideal section, is the Mega Level.

"The Mega Level involves culture, spirituality and ecology; this section is less changing and more universal in scope. In the Mega Level, you are dealing with soulful and long lasting connections: how people feel about themselves."

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The essence of Mr. Chan's message resonates at this Mega Level, prompting us as designers, to take the challenge of designing long-lasting happiness. How will we connect souls of the world? How, as designers, will we be able to bring people up to this level? Search deep within you: the answer is there. Next time you pick up a pen or start a new sketch, ask yourself, "what makes me happy, and how will I share that with everyone who comes in contact with my product?"

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