

***GDN 2016 Keynote and Roundtable Proceeding***

**TITLE: INTER-DISCIPLINARY “RESEARCH + BUSINESS” COLLABORATION AS  
A NEW DESIGN PRACTICE**

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With the emergence of the more design disciplines working in Social Innovation, Research and Social Entrepreneurship, there is a growing demand on the understanding of design in the business realm. Aside from traditional aesthetic values and experiences, design now emerges as a part of social process to generate more democratic, more human-oriented, more sustainable and more economical contributions to our world. The notion of design for tomorrow needs to generate a new ‘design dialectic’ that can epitomize a two-way exchange process, embracing and enhancing the design knowledge to improve our human, social, cultural and environmental well-being. Contemporary design can no longer be generated from a vacuum whereby design intellects operate in a singular linear trajectory. Rather, designers collaborate with multiple disciplines and business partners. The multi-disciplinary nature in contemporary practice makes design one of the most dynamic and evolving fields of professions. Through communication and active dialogues between various partners and community stakeholders, design practice takes on a new life and becomes engaging. This engagement provides a platform to exchange expertise which was not in previous formal design education and is able to give added-value to a holistic thinking approach. One benefit in an interdisciplinary “research + business” practice is an added attention to human interaction in a participatory approach where stakeholders, academia, professionals and relevant business partners can collaborate responsibly in the discourse, formulating new design approaches. This approach advocates a multi-disciplinary collaboration and can be a catalyst in achieving sustainable social, economic and cultural development in the fields of design. The inherent ‘multidisciplinary nature’ of a design “research + business” practice can be a model for a metropolitan like Hong Kong with leading talents in the fields of design and business, utilizing existing technology such as Parametric Design, Building Information Modeling (BIM) and System Design. The high degree of automation, accuracy and efficient productivity can

assist design fabrication and expedite processes of generating and managing data, encouraging more research and business collaborations to be formulated in a global network. The multidisciplinary collaborations can motivate cultural exchange by establishing more connectivity between designers and academia in all disciplines to generate specific improvements to health care and the built environment which share great synergies with the design disciplines. As a result, new categories of practices can emerge and more community stakeholders can take part in the design process. This proposed “research + business” design practice in its turn can rouse more interest and debates around broader notions of how the work of design industries go beyond traditional practice structures, challenging the nature of the designers and the profession’s education, canon, dialect and potentials. This new theory also diversifies ways of thinking about business and research, expanding institutional capacity to co-ordinate. It is pertinent for this concept to answer how design can emerge with a new design dialectic. How do designers structure the most effective model of practice in order to make new discovery? How can designers reclaim the role of innovators for our tomorrow? Such quests remain central to the future of the design profession, which urgently need the address from the comparative agencies of design and educational institutions in order to think outside of traditional mode and adapt a more speculative or unusual modes of designing our communities by embracing an interdisciplinary “research + business” practice.

**(547 words)**