

# East Meets West on New Terms

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1980

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Back in the 1980s Asian industry met Western design consultancies for very different reasons than they do today. Back in the days when seymourpowell was founded they would come looking for individuality, experience and know-how. They still do - but instead of applying this knowledge to crafting beautiful products, the requests now tend to refer to the what, why and how of design.

(Michael Erlhoff) 가

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World class product design is no longer black magic only practised by a small band of gurus in Milan, London and Palo Alto. Asian countries have rapidly established strong home-grown design cultures. When I recently asked a Michael Erlhoff, prominent German professor of design, where the best post-graduate design school was, he replied Shih Chien University in Taiwan.

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... ,  
1992

The result is that design as 'styling' has become commoditised. There are now thousands of competent products designers around the world able to 'give good form.' China has become the workshop of the world and as a result it will become harder for western designers to stay abreast of new manufacturing technologies being developed, honed and perfected the other side of the world.

3D CAD

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There are also global forces acting on design consultancy. The rise of the in-house design department is the most striking - Apple, Philips, Samsung and Sony spring immediately to mind. When Jonathan Ive joined Apple in

1992 it nailed the myth that all the best design talent was to be found in consultancies. Also a new generation of 3D CAD literate designers are able to set-up business and compete with established players on smaller projects on price, if not quality.

### Where does that leave the Western product design consultancy?

East now meets west on more equal terms. Asian designers can match western designers in traditional design skills and often excel in technical ability. So Asian companies now look to use western consultancies in more intelligent ways - they are looking for new thinking.

The qualities Asian clients are now looking for include:

**1. Signature designers:** designers like Jasper Morrison, Sam Hecht and Mark Newson are increasingly being used for their 'designer brand' cache; and most operate out of western cultural capitals.

1. (Signature Designer):



Mark Newson

Jasper Morrison

Sam Hecht

2. :

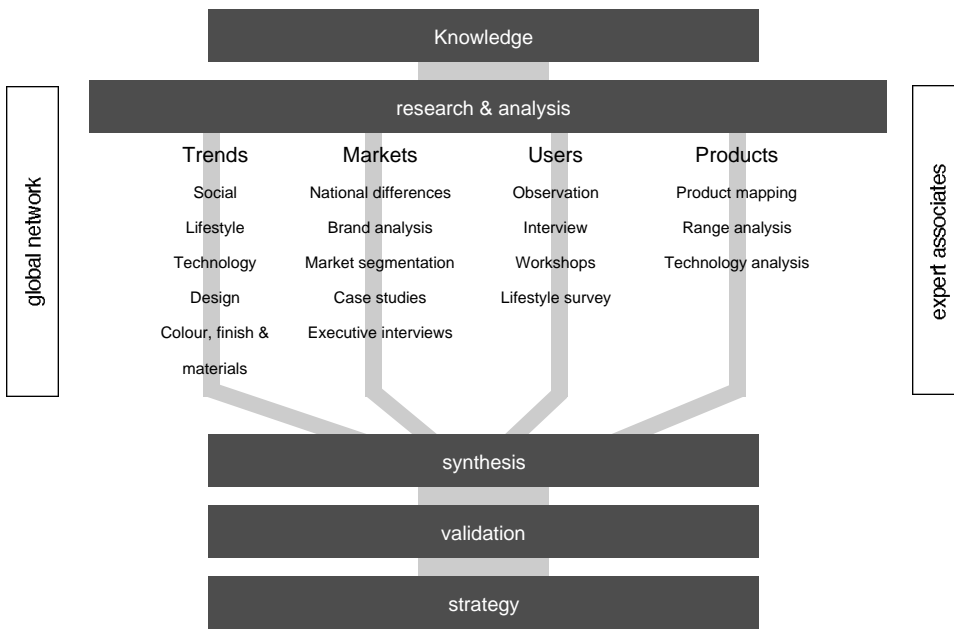
**2. Innovative spark:** an energetic outsiders point of view, knowledge transfer from other industries and conceptual thinking



Knowledge transfer

3. :

**3. Processes:** design software, not hardware



- 4. 가
- 5. 150
- 6.

- 4. **To think different:** opinionated mavericks do not tend to work in-house and if they do they do not survive very long
- 5. **Cultural intelligence:** Europe's design culture is 150 years old and global cities like London offer insights in rapidly shifting tastes

1.
2.
3.
4. 가

6. <b>Redefine premium:</b> Europe is the home of luxury: where intangible ideas and stories now count more than tangible quality
<b>Premium</b>
1st aristocratic
· 'old money'
· high-quality craftsmanship
2nd Hollywood
· 20th century 'new money'
· inspired by the of Hollywood lifestyles stars
· ostentatious display (jewelry and cars)
3rd designer
· 1980s
· status = designer labels
4th value for life
· post-industrial, post-material 21st century
· luxury is becoming a state of mind
· a search for inner happiness, not wealth display
· how you spend time is the new luxury

- 7.

- 7. **Strategy :** Joined up thinking about people, technology, brand and market trends



# **East meets west on new terms**

World Design Forum

3 December 2003, Seoul, Korea

Kevin McCullagh, Director of Foresight

**seymourpowell**

seymourpowell

**Founded in 1984**



Europe

**More ambivalent about technology**



Europe

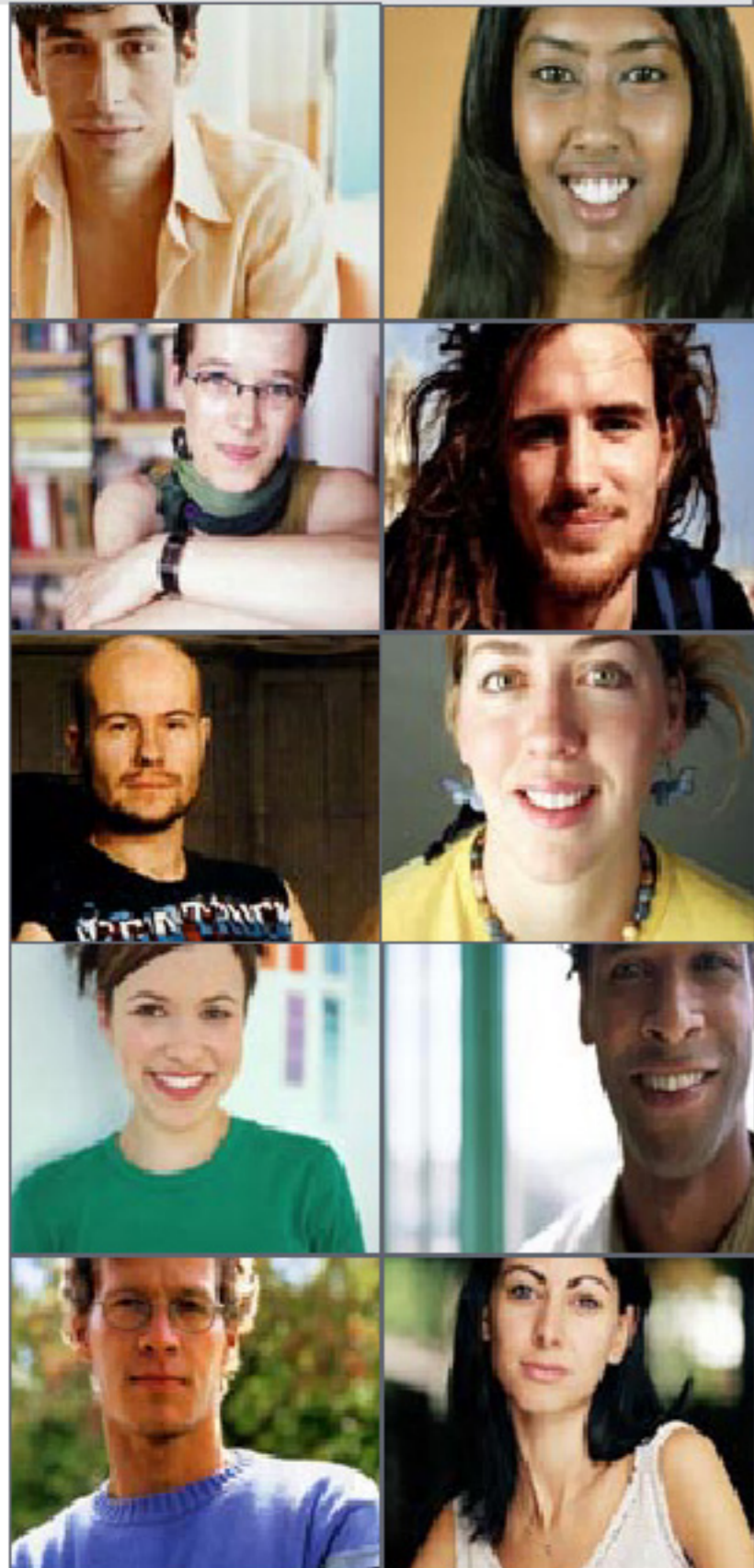
**Style and ease of use, over technology**





Europe

# Celebrates diversity and difference



## South Korean handsets



## European handsets



Global

## Rise of the in-house design

**Apple**

**Philips**

**Samsung**



Signature designers

**Mark Newson** | **Jasper Morrison** | **Sam Hecht**



Outsider's view

**Casio** Baby-G



Innovative spark

# Knowledge transfer



Knowledge transfer | Consumers



Austin Texas, US 2001



Tokyo, Japan 2001



Austin Texas, US 2001



Tokyo, Japan 2001



Austin Texas, US 2001



Taipai, Taiwan 2001



Taipai, Taiwan 2001



Taipai, Taiwan 2001



Taipai, Taiwan 2001



Tokyo, Japan 2001



Bath, UK 2001



Austin Texas, US 2001



Bath, UK 2001



London, UK 2001



Tokyo, Japan 2001

Innovative spark

**Thinking differently**



Thinking differently

**The problem** Sedan interior









DEEP WELL® POCKET

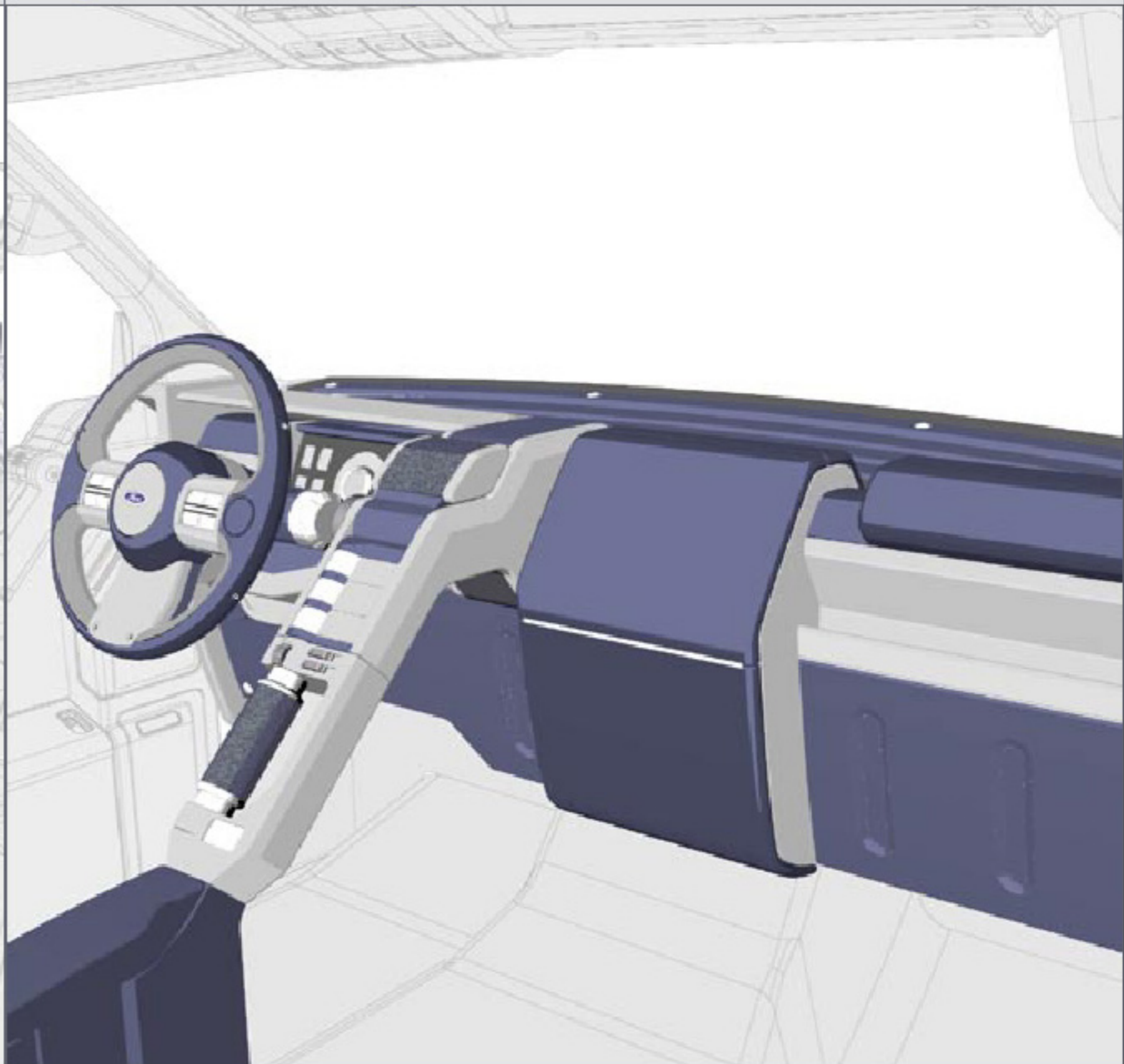
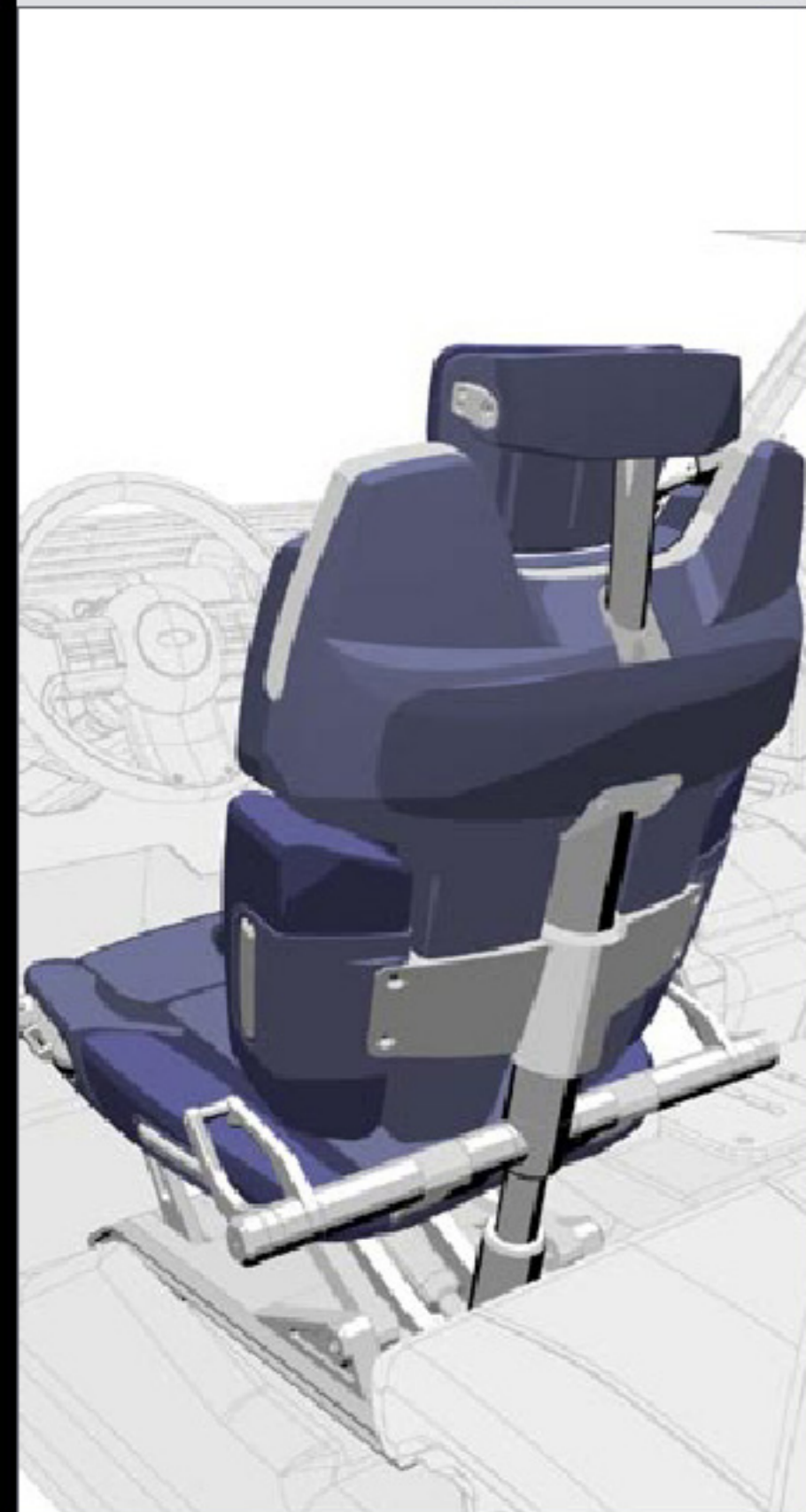
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Tough Luxury

**Digital modelling**



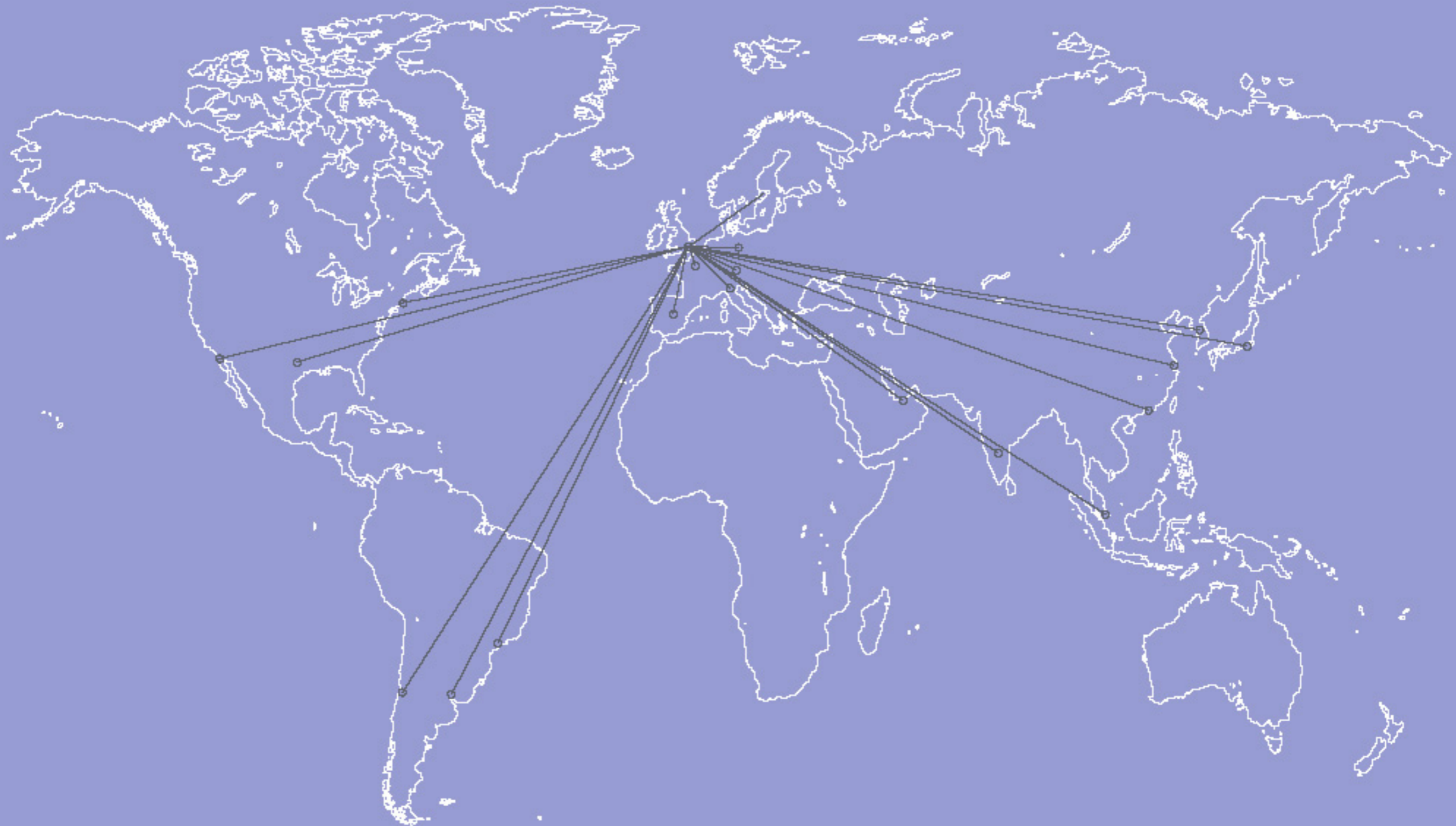
Tough Luxury

**Detroit truck show vehicle interior**



Cultural intelligence

**Global network**



Germany  
New Directions



Human touch



Italy  
Cultural Basement

Speed and Style





## Hong Kong/Shanghai

## Society and culture



Chen Yifei, an ex-propaganda artist in the Cultural Revolution, is energetically building China's first home-grown Chinese luxury brand - Layefe. Established three years ago it has grown to 200 stores in 35 cities, always situated in the most fashionable areas and often alongside Gucci and Louis Vuitton. Layefe's flagship store in the fashionable Xintiandi neighbourhood, sells classic international tailoring with hints of Chinese style as well as serving cocktails.

He has also just launched a lifestyle magazine, Vision, based on hip English publication Wallpaper. Yifei's target market is China's new wealthy elite, which a recent China National Research Survey estimates represents about 1% of the Chinese population. Its members earn more than 4,000 renminbi a month and mainly work for multinational companies in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou.

Hong Kong and Shanghai, capture the spirit of China's current state of transition.

Since 'The hand-over' Hong Kong's role as middleman between western business and China has diminished as many corporations have moved their headquarters to Shanghai or Beijing. Manufacturing in Hong Kong has been eclipsed by China which has confirmed itself as the new workshop of the world.

This has forced a period of reflection on its position as just one of China's big cities. As well as playing a major capital-raising role for the Chinese economy, the Government is also promoting Hong Kong as a creative 'Centre of Excellence'. Guangdong was the traditional capital of Cantonese culture, Hong Kong's Canto Pop stars and movies now define Cantonese style.

Nowhere captures the vitality of the New China as well as Shanghai. A bustling city of more than 13 million people has rapidly become the economic and cultural heart of the country. It already boasts an impressive highway network and public transportation system. New skyscrapers, shopping malls and apartment complexes continue to spring up to support the massive migration of people into the city. A new international air hangs over the city, which is well on the way to becoming the 'New York of the east'.



Premium projects

**Cathay Pacific | Linn | Mercury**



## **Summing up**

- **Asian and European designers are now equal at the skills level**
- **Asian companies are technology and manufacturing leaders**

## **Western consultancies offer:**

- cultural capital**
- synthesis**
- speed**
- informed creativity**
- new processes**

**and**

- how change direction**

[www.seymourpowell.com/foresight](http://www.seymourpowell.com/foresight)

clarity at the front end

**seymourpowellforesight**