

KIITO SPECIAL TALK

asatte design Satoshi Kondo × **Kaksi design** Élodie Vichos & Guillaume Granjon

Together with Kobe City, Saint-Etienne in France is one of the design cities within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Two designers from Saint-Etienne who work under the name 'Kaksi' came to visit KIITO and met with Satoshi Kondo, a designer from Kobe. Both sides live and work in different countries but they share 'design' as a common language. This meeting was therefore a great opportunity to exchange information and opinions about the design in their respective cities.

What is the significance of a 'City of Design' to the people living there ?

Kondo : About your name, 'Kaksi Design', did you know that the word 'kaksi' has a meaning in Japanese language?

Élodie : Is that so? I didn't know that. In Finnish, the word 'kaksi' means 'two'. We were looking for a good sounding name and we chose 'kaksi' because there are two of us, and because we are working in both products and graphics.

Kondo : For my name, I too thought about the sound of the word 'Asatte' (the day after tomorrow). This reflects my wish to create design that is one step beyond tomorrow. On the other hand, in Japanese 'asatte no hoko' (the direction towards that day after tomorrow) has a nuance of being a 'blockhead' which I thought would be something fun as well.

Guillaume : Yes, the meaning of 'heading towards the future' is a good one.

Kondo : Thank you very much. So, did both of you study design in France?

Élodie : We were actually classmates at junior high school.

Kondo : I see!

Élodie : Then Guillaume went to England to study design for one year and I decided to go with him. After that, I went to Canada as an exchange student and Guillaume decided to follow me instead. (laughter)

Kondo : So you have always been together. (laughter)

Élodie : We have tried to be together as much as possible. In 2012, we were actually living in Finland but were approached by the secretariat of the Saint-Etienne International Design Biennial. So we decided to return there to work.

Kondo : You have worked in several different countries but I hear that this is your first time in Japan. What is your impression of Kobe?

Guillaume : One strong impression I have here is that space is used vertically. I was surprised to see roads running in the sky. And, because the sea and the mountains are so close, you can change your view according to your mood. I think that's great. By comparison, Saint-Etienne is much more flat.

Kondo : Your viewpoint of capturing the city in three dimensions is interesting. We may be looking at the same thing but the way we feel about it can be different. If I could change my way of seeing, I think there would be many more niches in Kobe for me to get involved in.

Élodie : Saint-Etienne used to be a mining town known as the 'Black City' and people did not have a good image about it at all. It was in order to change this image that Saint-Etienne employed 'design' to fully drive its town planning. Now that the city is recognized as a UNESCO City of Design, I think 'design' has become its identity.

Kondo : How about the point of view of someone working in design? In my case, I was originally working for a design office in Osaka, but when I became independent four years ago, I chose Kobe as my base. That was not because Kobe was a 'City of Design' but because, as it so happened, a friend of mine loaned me a place so I came to live here. And, indeed, my work requests mainly used to come from clients outside Kobe.

Élodie Vichos,
Guillaume Granjon
_ **Kaksi design**

Design studio.

Kaksi design is managed by graphic designer Élodie Vichos, and product designer Guillaume Granjon. Both trained in France, England and Canada. In 2012, the two went to live in Helsinki (then the designated 'World Design Capital'). In 2013, after working for the Saint-Etienne International Design Biennial Secretariat, they set up a studio in Saint-Etienne.
<http://kaksidesign.com/>

→ Relationship with KIITO:

2015: Lecturers for Children's Design Workshop

Satoshi Kondo
_ **Asatte Design Office**

Graphic designer.

Born in Osaka 1976, Satoshi Kondo graduated from the Faculty of Human Development at Kobe University and from IMI (Intermedium Institute) [in Osaka]. He is the representative director at Asatte Design Office where he puts a high value on identifying problems that can be solved by the use of design, and mainly by graphic design. He is also a part time lecturer at Kobe Design University and Kyoto University of Arts and Design.
<http://astt.jp/>

→ Relationship with KIITO:

2012 & 2014: 'Chibikkobe'

Cooperating Creator with the Design Team.

2015: +Creative Seminar

lecturer (with Tatsuya Kuji)

Has designed many print media such as the 'KIITO Artist in Residence' flyers, etc.

Q7

Here are seven questions to get a brief glimpse of what makes these designers tick. How do they differ we wonder?

- Q1. What was your most memorable experience in Kobe?
- Q2. What is your favorite food?
- Q3. What places do you want to go to?
- Q4. What is the thing you habitually do?
- Q5. What person or activity from just recently stands out to you?
- Q6. What do you want to do at KIITO?
- Q7. What's your plan from now on?

Kaksi Design's Responses:

- A1. The workshop
- A2. Chestnuts (G) / Mango (É)
- A3. Africa (currently planning a summer vacation there)
- A4. I like to tidy everything (G) / I'm the opposite (except for materials) (É)
- A5. The other designers I've met at work (G)
- A6. We would like to come and do a workshop again
- A7. To make sure I can do the work that's been decided

Kondo's Responses:

- A1. I became independent and set up an office
- A2. Enoki mushrooms
- A3. Saint-Etienne
- A4. Proofreading
- A5. Lighting design for my home
- A6. Throw a frisbee in the hall
- A7. My schedule is free right now (laugh)

Interpreter : Arisa Nozaki
Moderator : Tatsuya Kuji
(DESIGN MUSEUM LAB)

KIITO NEWSLETTER Vol.009

Published March 2015
Editor: Atsushi Takeuchi / Re:S
Translator : Tim Lemon
Art Direction&Design:
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/Bunpei Ginza
Publisher:
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KIITO:

Guillaume : It is only a year since the two of us opened our office, so we don't have many corporate requests. Our work requests have come mainly from local government for public projects. But while there are more large-sized companies in Lyon - about an hour away from Saint-Etienne - we are now beginning to see some of the designers who went out to Lyon coming back to Saint-Etienne. So it has become recognized as a City of Design by people around the city as well.

Kondo : How far do the people living there recognize that their city is a design city? In Kobe, I think that the majority of people do not know this.

Élodie : I hear that, when the city was authorized as a [UNESCO] City of Design, the city valued its communication with its citizens as very important. There is a facility in Saint-Etienne equivalent to KIITO called 'Cité du Design'. To give you an example, one of their exhibitions chose 'soccer' for its theme as that would be especially familiar to the general public. The Design Biennale held in the city presents many programs for children, and these are all fun events for families to enjoy.

Guillaume : Within the Cité du Design is a professional school of design. Designers from here have been involved in renovations for elementary schools and nursery schools. By making architectural models of the buildings, and learning about the effect of different color schemes, the children can propose the color themselves. The children work on the renovation together with the designer.

Kondo : Undoubtedly that means that the children grow up with a strong sense of design in their lives. It is very important that not only adults, but children also, have opportunities and personal life experiences involving design from childhood. I would like Kobe to follow that.

Are Workshops a Time of Play or Design?

Kondo : You held a workshop with children at KIITO. It was very interesting how you combined the landmarks of both Kobe and Saint-Etienne cities to make a picture. Do you hold workshops with children often?

Élodie : Yes. We participate in the city's public projects and seem to be holding about ten workshops per year. When we first went back to

Saint-Etienne we didn't have so many but we have increasingly gained more trust.

Kondo : Were the reactions of Japanese children different to French children?

Guillaume : Maybe the Japanese children were scared of us at first. (laughter) They were quiet and extremely polite. In France children are far noisier. So getting down to the actual task at hand went very smoothly here.

Élodie : That's right. The children showed great concentration and all made an effort to create good work with great care. Japanese children are very skillful with their hands. We used cutter knives in the workshop whereas in France that would be dangerous - we only use scissors there. (laugh)

Kondo : What do you think ? Are the children conscious that what they are doing is 'designing'? Or do you think they are just enjoying it as play?

Élodie : When we run a workshop, we talk to the participants first. We explain what the job of a designer is and what we are about to experience in the workshop. We do this to make sure that the children can understand.

Kondo : I think that is so important.

Guillaume : In reality, I'm not sure if the children do understand the design aspect so well during the workshop time. But someday, when they grow up, I believe they can understand.

Élodie : How do you manage workshops, Mr. Kondo?

Kondo : I have never planned a workshop from an initiative of my own but I have had requests and opportunities to visit junior high schools. When I am given the opportunity to do something with children, I try to tell them that 'design is not something that is so special'.

Élodie : We also treasure the bonds that form between people at the workshops. We want the children to notice and value those relationships, not to be constantly thinking about being in front of a computer or game machine.

Guillaume : By having the experience of making something, I will be pleased if they can appreciate that even the simple objects around us in our everyday lives have been made by somebody.