



chapter 6

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Phase 1 - Collaboration

Stephen Burks

Stephen Burks is an industrial designer that works directly with artisans around the world to create unique, high-end products. In 2005 Burks was invited by Aid to Artisans and Artecnicca to visit South Africa. Since then he has been conducting an ongoing series of collaborations with artisans from Cebu to Senegal, Cape Town to Cuzco (Moreno, 2014).

Burks has been helping craftspeople make a variety of objects, ranging from furniture and lighting to baskets and fashion accessories. This has formed a practical synthesis of hand and industrial making. He has worked in ceramics, macramé, crochet, and topa wood. Burks applies what he learns from artisans in his Manhattan studio, Readymade Projects, to products he designs for European luxury brands (Moreno, 2014).



Figure 6.1 Wire worker at *Feeling African* (Old Mutual Foundation, 2011)

“Using [artisanal] techniques to add value and build brand positioning in the market is what it’s all about. These are ways we can use design to extend craft traditions into the future.” Stephen Burks

High-end brands consult Burks because he creates a contemporary hybrid of artisan and commercial products. He does this by transforming traditional materials, forms, and techniques, or finds new ways of expressing them. He continues to explore both artisanal and industrial production methods (Moreno, 2014).

For the artisans, the work can help drive local economic development, by working with Burks it shows them the possibilities of a wider market. This helps them develop their design skills and understanding of trends. When Burks leaves developing areas, he leaves behind a local organization that will continue to support small-business development (Moreno, 2014).

“The closer designers can get to the process of making,” he says, “the more we can understand and create unique results.” Stephen Burks



Figure 6.2 Wire working workshop *Feeling African* (Old Mutual Foundation, 2011)

Cape Town-based Willard Musarurwa was a street vendor that made wire souvenirs for tourists. He met Burks through a local design institute and together they created TaTu wire outdoor furniture, that was launched by Artecnicca in 2007. Thanks to this collaboration, Musarurwa was able to start his own business, *Feeling African*, and employ nine people (Moreno, 2014).

“I saw the work with the artisans as a collaboration that gave a unique voice to the products I began making, a voice that was less interested in the end result and more interested in the story of getting there.” Stephen Burks

Burks states that the best projects are those that leave space for the imagination of the artisans (Moreno, 2014).

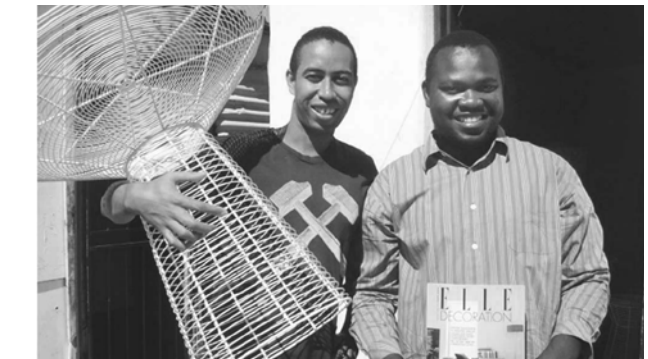


Figure 6.3 Burks and Musarurwa (Moreno, 2014)

Phase 2- Street Upgrade

Hutong Infill, Beijing, China, by Standard Architecture

Micro-Hutong infill is a building experiment by standardarchitecture team on the Yang-Mei-Zhu street in the Dashilar area. The goal of the project was to search for possibilities of creating small scale social housing within the limitations of super-tight traditional hutong spaces of Beijing (ArchDaily, 2015)

The dynamics of the hutong revealed that even with the menacing grip of real estate development, the biggest problem of the hutong was of the continuing exodus of its occupants. Many residents are concerned with the lack of facilities and the absence of quality communal space, and decide to sell and move out to bigger apartments outside of the city centre (ArchDaily, 2015).

The architectural response is an intervention that brings back the courtyard as a generator of program. It activates the building by creating a direct relationship with its urban context, and drawing social activities to its interior.



Figure 6.4 Hutong infill (standardarchitecture, ArchDaily, 2015)

The courtyard acts as a flexible urban living room that forms a transition zone from the private rooms to the street. It serves as a semi-public space to be used by both the inhabitants of the Micro-Hutong and the neighbors of the community (ArchDaily, 2015).

The Micro-Hutong respects the intimate scale of the traditional hutong. This revitalizes its social condensing capabilities, while enhancing it with spatial improvements. By using light-steel structure and plywood panel cladding it allows for low-cost construction, while creating new possible reconfigurations for the future of the Hutong in Beijing (ArchDaily, 2015).

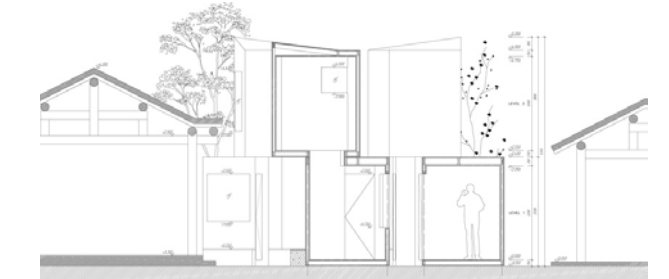


Figure 6.6 Hutong infill section (standardarchitecture, ArchDaily, 2015)



Figure 6.7 Hutong infill section (standardarchitecture, ArchDaily, 2015)



Figure 6.5 Hutong infill model (standardarchitecture, ArchDaily, 2015)



Figure 6.8 Hutong infill model (standardarchitecture, ArchDaily, 2015)

Phase 3- Educational Facility

Meetse-a-Bophelo Primary School, Mamelodi by Geldenhuys and Jooste Architects

In 2009, ArcelorMittal South Africa initiated a ZAR250 million school building project (about 17 mln EUR), through which ten schools are built in underprivileged areas around the country. In 2010, with the building of The Meetse-A-Bophelo Primary School, the Mamelodi Township in Tshwane was the first community to benefit from this multi-million rand project by ArcelorMittal South Africa Foundation and ArcelorMittal Construction (ArcelorMittal South Africa, n.d.).

The remaining nine schools are being built until 2016, with two schools scheduled for the Eastern Cape and one school each for the other provinces. All ten schools are built using light weight steel and Arval panels with the view to promoting the use of steel in domestic buildings (ArcelorMittal South Africa, n.d.).



Figure 6.9 Courtyard between classroom wings (Author, 2016)

Meetse-A-Bophelo Primary School was designed to accommodate 1 200 learners at any given time. The site where the new school was built previously accommodated 1 500 learners in classes made from prefabricated material. The nett area of the buildings constructed is 3 367m² and has 1,400m² of walkways and undercover seating areas (ArcelorMittal South Africa, n.d.).

The architect designed the classrooms in three wings around a central nutrition area in order to group the learning phases together, to maximise the area of north-facing facades to promote natural ventilation, heating and cooling. The gradient over the site is compensated for by the ramps and steps leading from the central core Nutrition centre. The ramps provide access to the different buildings for pupils in wheelchairs (ArcelorMittal South Africa, n.d.).



Figures 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12 Meetse-a-Bophelo Primary School (ArcelorMittal South Africa, n.d.)