

International conference promotes 'design beyond desire'

International Design Conference encourages governments and businesses to use design to build a life-centered future

MANILA, PHILIPPINES, September 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Can design solve the real-world challenges we face around the world today? Two international experts who visited Metro Manila for the Department of Trade and Industry-Design Center of the Philippines' International Design Conference think so.

At a media preview for the global design meet, Lhatu, Executive Director of the Gross National Happiness Centre of Bhutan, shared the secret to attaining the title of the "world's happiest country" with a unique approach to progress.

"Everybody actually in one way or the other wants to be happy. In pursuing this happiness, we are also thinking about maximizing or accumulating wealth. One main thing that business leaders think about is how to maximize profit and the usage of the employees' efforts. So these things actually affect the well-being and happiness of the employees. What we actually emphasize is also thinking about the social and emotional well-being of employees," he said. As early as the 70s, the small country had institutionalized the metric of the Gross National Happiness Index.

The annual flagship event, held in celebration of Design Consciousness Week and as a co-branded event of the Philippine Creative Industries Month, served as the country's premier platform for design innovation and global knowledge exchange. Themed "Design Beyond Desire," this year's meet explored the role of design in building life-centered systems.



Bhutan Gross National Happiness Centre Executive Director Lhatu, Sustainability and Circular Economy Provocateur Dr. Leyla Acaroglu, Design Advisory Council co-chair Mylene Abiva, Menarco Development Corporation CEO Carmen Jimenez-Ong, and Architect Royal

“Bhutan is a very small country. While we do not negate economic development or any development activities over gross national happiness, we only provide it as an alternative paradigm to pursue. It is a kind of a people-centric approach to development.”

Meanwhile, Dr. Leyla Acaroglu, an award-winning designer from Australia advocating for sustainability and a circular economy, touched on how even urban issues such as traffic and proximity to nature also affect happiness. These systemic issues, she says, can all be shaped by design thinking.

“The concept is that we build sponges into our infrastructure so there is space for the water to flow back to where it wants to go. We physiologically need to see green and brown for us to feel better. There is incredible scientific justification for us to redesign our cities based on nature-based principles,” she said in arguing that a principle called “Biophilic design” could solve flood control woes in megacities like Metro Manila.

Design Advisory Council co-chair Mylene Abiva, Menarco Development Corporation CEO Carmen Jimenez-Ong, and Architect Royal Pineda joined the conversation as panelists in the International Design Conference.

“The International Design Conference is more than just a conference; it’s a catalyst for transformative action,” said Rhea Matute, Executive Director of the DTI-Design Center of the Philippines. “We believe that design has the power to shape a better future, and this year’s conference will provide a platform for new thinking, innovative ideas, and radical collaborations to thrive in this brave new world.”

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