

المنظمة العالمية لجمعيات التصميم التخطيطي

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國際グラフィックデザイン協会協議会

세계그래픽디자인단체협의회

انجمن بین المللی جامع طراحی گرافیک

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# Board Message

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## Crumbling Walls, New Dawn

BY ROBERT L. PETERS, PRESIDENT ICOGRADA, 2001-2003

In September, the Icograda board made an eventful three-week visit to China and Taiwan. China's citizenry of 1.3 billion, its rapid emergence in the global market economy and its burgeoning growth in the design field provided compelling reasons to sojourn, observe and share with our colleagues there.

**First stop, Beijing.** We began our eye-opening junket with a multi-day Board Meeting and Icograda *Design Perspectives Seminar* in bustling Beijing. We toured schools and design studios, and participated in the opening of the Red Cross International Poster Exhibition. Capital highlights included the warm fellowship and a wonderful day of sightseeing provided by our gracious hosts – including the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square.

**Next, Shanghai.** The Jinmao Tower (third highest building in the world) in sky-scraping Shanghai was the venue for the 'logo2002 Identity and Communication Conference' in which Icograda board members took part. A variety of lively receptions and show openings afforded the opportunity to meet designers from across China and to see different facets of this rapidly growing city. The Shanghai Graphic Designers Association helped convene a first meeting among Chinese Icograda members and provisional members, from Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Suzhou and Shanxi. A special treat for the hard-working board was a guided bus tour to the ancient canal town of Tong Li and the Humble Administrator's Garden in Suzhou.

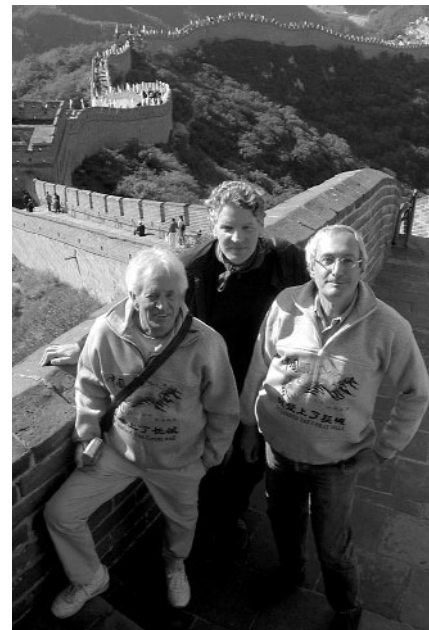
**Across to Taipei.** A day's flight took us to Taipei for presentations by board members in the well attended 'Branding and Innovalue' Seminar. This was followed by a two-day Icograda Regional Meeting (with 40 participants from 18 countries) at the facilities of the China External Trade Development Council.

In addition, we toured schools, attended the opening of the 'Discover Taiwan' poster exhibition and spent time socialising with our warm-hearted hosts and colleagues. It was a treat to also participate in a special *Friends of Icograda* dinner.

**Then, Kaohsiung (or) Nagoya.** Following Taipei's events, some board members flew south to Kaohsiung for an Icograda Design Education Symposium and a three-day Chinese Graphic Design Student Workshop. Others of us headed to Nagoya, Japan, for organisational meetings and advance promotion of the 'VISUALOGUE' Icograda 2003 Nagoya Congress and 20th General Assembly, which will take place from 8 to 13 October 2003.

**Share and share alike.** A half century ago, Mao Tsetung wisely stated: "Exchange information – this is of great importance in achieving a common language." While this truism is relevant everywhere, its significance in today's rapidly developing Chinese design community cannot be overstated. The dawn of a new era is apparent in China, with opportunities for all who are willing to connect, to share and to exchange information – the old with the young and those in central locations with those in remote regions.

**Ideas know no borders.** Clearly, we live on a shrinking planet. The most distant locations are now within a day's reach. Orbiting satellites instantaneously bounce information everywhere. Communication media allow worldwide idea exchange as never before – both empowering and threatening local cultures. And, the unfettered flow of information is good for the oppressed, but bad for would-be oppressors. Pondering the Icograda board's recent experiences in Asia as well as current global issues, I can't help but concur with Elbert Hubbard's prophetic statement of a century ago: "Fences are for those who cannot fly."



Icograda President Elect Mervyn Kurlanksy, President Robert L. Peters and Past President David Grossman atop the Great Wall of China

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