World Design Capital Taipei 2016 International Design House Exhibition

Helsinki Exhibit Proposal

Exhibit theme: **Helsinki smart learning – good life for kids**
In Finland, design has always belonged to everyone. The roots of socially aware design lie deep in post-war Finland. At the time of rebuilding the nation after World War II, designers and architects were at the forefront of developing Finland into a modern society. Architect Alvar Aalto designed municipal buildings while fellow designer Kaj Franck created affordable tableware for modest houses and their small cupboards, just to name a few.

The City of Helsinki's current commitment to design is a continuation of this tradition. We believe that design helps us to develop a human-centric city. Design is a good tool for making smart decisions for the future for all of us. Understanding the needs and expectations of people helps renew the city and to produce better solutions.

Today design is embedded in life in Helsinki - as said in the theme for Helsinki's year as World Design Capital in 2012. Helsinki's exhibit theme for Design House Exhibition at World Design Capital Taipei 2016 takes a look at smart learning and good life for kids. How design is embedded child's life in all different ways? How Finnish design and Finnish educational culture grow from the same legacy of creative thinking and problem solving?

The grand story of Finnish design has always been one of making the everyday life better for the ordinary people. The exhibit will show examples starting from 80 years of a Finnish invention of maternity packages to the latest innovations of indoor air quality systems in schools and digital learning environments.

Curatorial Content
The curatorial content will be exhibited around several themes looking at Helsinki smart learning - a good life for kids from various perspectives. The exhibition themes will have multidisciplinary approach and exhibit design which offers an engaging experience for the visitors. One of the key goals for the curatorial content as well as for the exhibit design is to active audience, communicate and let them play along.

The framework for the exhibition is the 10 years journey Helsinki has taken with embedding design in public sector and its link to Finnish design legacy. The exhibition will highlight some real stories about how to build design-driven cities varying from open data to public engagement and solving wicked problems with series of fast experiments. Design thinking has given Helsinki tools to empathise and co-create, also when it comes to education.

The exhibition will take a more specific look at smart learning and kids. The prenatal and early childhood health care system in Finland is world renowned and is based on services and products that make the life of a new family as easy and carefree as possible.

The trend continues in schools. The educational environment, not just the school, is designed to let the child be a child but at the same time immerse him/her in learning. The exhibit will take a look at user-driven learning environments. It will show examples of the Finnish school and learning environments, from architecture, furniture design, digital and virtual learning to how children can be taught using playing and games and outdoors activities.

Teaching in Helsinki schools is phenomenon-based learning: kids learn to solve problems by using multidisciplinary approaches: the school buildings, school yards, multiple-use furniture inside and outside of schools and the environment close by is all used to teach children. Newest learning technologies (including digital learning environments, augmented and virtual reality or games) are integrated into the curriculum in seamless ways.

Design is a simultaneous process of thinking and doing. The two can't be separated. A lot of things are impossible to know – and plan – before you actually start doing them. This is also one of the key elements in Finnish schools. Kids learn to think, discover and do simultaneously.

The concept of "Open Helsinki" is literal – a city where information, ideas, thoughts and people can move freely without unnecessary creativity-hampering obstacles. This idea is brought to learning as well. Phenomenon-based learning means that teachers are respected individuals and the whole city serves as a learning environment.

Open Helsinki means also open data. Helsinki fosters openness by making information concerning the Helsinki region available to everyone effortlessly and quickly. Making public information available will increase citizens' understanding of the development of their living environments. This data resource allows for designers and developers to use the data to create new kind of services that meet the users' needs better. Transparency also improves citizen involvement as the people have access to the city decisions and data resources concerning their everyday environments.

Design has the potential to forecast, envision and make futures and education is more than anything about creating a future. Developing design education further in comprehensive schools and kindergartens is one of Helsinki's goals for the future as a UNESCO City of Design. The exhibition will showcase some examples on Finnish Design and Architecture education.

There's a huge need for the perspectives that design can bring to cities. In public schemes that demand structural change, in fast-paced service development that demands carefully targeted solutions that are guaranteed to work and in designing spaces and their functions simultaneously. The biggest gain from involving design in these things is that we can predict the future more accurately, so the solutions we come up with will be more likely to actually work.

Exhibit Design & Presentation
Please see attached document.

Brief Description of the Exhibitor

Basics and history

Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is a municipality of 620 000 residents and is situated. Helsinki alongside its neighboring municipalities forms a metropolitan area of 1,4 million inhabitants. Finland altogether has 5,4 million inhabitants.

Helsinki is situated in the Northern Europe on the Baltic Sea. Helsinki was founded by King Gustav Vasa of Sweden in 1550, when Finland was ruled by Sweden. As a consequence of the Russian conquest, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire in 1809. In 1812 Helsinki was elevated to capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland. Helsinki remained the capital after Finland gained its independence in 1917.

Great place to live

Greater Helsinki is a wonderful region for working, playing, studying and living. It is clean, stable and secure, with a very high standard of living and welfare. According to the World Happiness Report, Finns are the second most happiest people in the world.

Thanks to its compact size, structure and status, services are plentiful and easily accessible. The entire city is served by a mass transit network that includes buses, commuter trains and a metro system. This is a green city with an abundance of natural public spaces, parks, playgrounds and other recreational spaces.

In Finland, maximizing shared value has translated into doing well by doing good. Caring for the common good is an important part of being Finnish. Combined with a strong will to get things done, doing well by doing good is ingrained in the culture and history of Finns.
Helsinki itself is a good example. Recently ranked the most livable city in the world – Helsinki is a growing, yet affluent city, because it cares for its residents, its neighbors and the environment

Helsinki and design

Finland's design competence stretches from individual products to public services and the development of society as a whole. It is also evident in the high-quality urban environments. Based on this background Helsinki has a clear vision: in an open and inclusive city, design is a key driver for the society and an important source of well-being and competitiveness.

Facing a major renewal era, the City of Helsinki has systematically, since 10 years now, built up the competence to use design as a tool for transformation and openness. This process is conscious of the needs of users, environmental notions and a boldness to develop the city through experimentation and together with the citizens.

Helsinki was the World Design Capital 2012 and in 2014 Helsinki was designated as City of Design by UNESCO. Both nominations have further enforced the development of design as one of the strategic tools for the transformation of the city. World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 theme was "Open Helsinki – Embedding design in life". With over 550 projects and 2,800 events Helsinki focused on creating a better and more open city with the help of design.

Helsinki has gradually evolved from merely using design in the build environment or as a service development method towards using design thinking in a more strategic and holistic way. Helsinki is setting up Helsinki Lab, a developer community whose objective is to ensure that the future planning of Helsinki is characterised by an even increasing degree of user orientation. Helsinki Lab will be lead by Chief Design Officer starting 09/2016.

Experience of the Curator
Please see attached document.

Other Side events and promotion
Helsinki envisions to create an exhibition that communicates city's commitment to design both in visual and interactive way. Connected to the theme Smart learning - good life for kids there will be organized side events such as workshops, panel discussion, designer talks and other encounters.

In addition to the exhibition team there will be Finnish delegation including several city executives, Helsinki's Chief Design Officer, design professionals, academics from Aalto University, Helsinki Design Week Founder and Director, WDC Helsinki 2012 Executive Director, etc.

Helsinki's Smart learning - good life for kids exhibition will also serve as a platform for connecting Finnish companies in learning technologies and environments (digital learning environments, augmented and virtual reality or games and indoor and outdoor facilities), design and other business to local Taiwanese potential partners.

Helsinki's exhibition and side events as part of Design House Exhibition in Taipei will be supported by international communications. Focus for the PR activities will be exhibition highlights, newly appointed CDO and Finnish education system and its link our design heritage.