

# Action At The Intersections



2012





# The UnBox Festival

*The UnBox Festival celebrates interdisciplinary processes and experiences that shape contemporary thought and action. The festival is a response to the emergence of a new subculture—one that straddles the spirit of innovation, is fostered by an enterprising spirit, and invites the engagement of all senses.*



*UnBox manifests itself as a blend  
of different events including  
fellowships, conference,  
workshops, exhibitions &  
performances designed in sync  
with one another, to stimulate  
thought, debate and action.*



# UNBOX 2011

## Glimpses from the first edition of The UnBox Festival



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**01 The UnBox Festival Weekend Launch**  
'The Awakening'—Bharatanatyam & New Media Performance by Guru Jayalakshmi Eshwar, Sattyananda and Thiruda.

**02 The UnBox Courtyard**  
At conference venue—The British Council.

**03 Documenting Culture**  
Panel discussion between Parmesh Shahani (Godrej Culture Lab), Rajesh Dahiya (CoDesign), Santosh Desai (Futurebrands), Apala Chavan (Human Factors International)—the process, the challenges & the possibilities of documentation to instigate social and cultural change.

**04 Embedding Design**  
Talk by M.P. Ranjan—the necessity of embedding design education in the contexts of intervention, and what it means for policy, design, and entrepreneurship.

**05 Typocentric Bazaar**  
Workshop with Meena Kadri, Rajesh Dahiya, Abhishek Ghate—create typography from objects and forms available at local markets.

**06 Design in the Social Sector**  
Workshop with D-Impact.

**07 Beat Repeat**  
Live sketching by artist Abhishek Singh at BeatRepeat, an UnBox partner festival bringing interdisciplinary perspectives to the spoken and written word.

**08 Action at the Intersections**  
Exhibition showcasing examples of work done by individuals/collectives/organizations that lies at the intersection of multiple disciplines, sectors and skills.

**09 The UnBox Installation**  
At conference venue—The British Council.



# UNBOX 2012

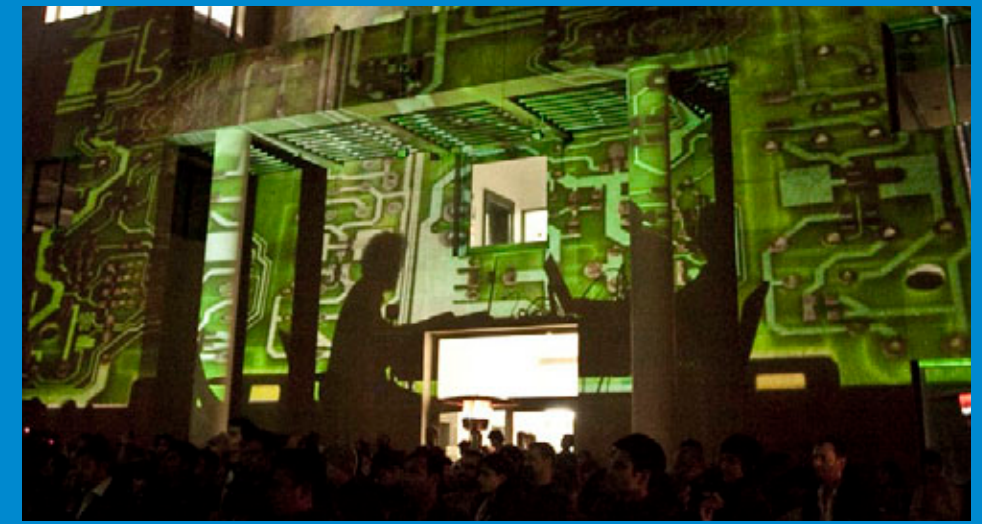
FELLOWSHIPS

CONFERENCE

WORKSHOPS

PARTNER EVENTS

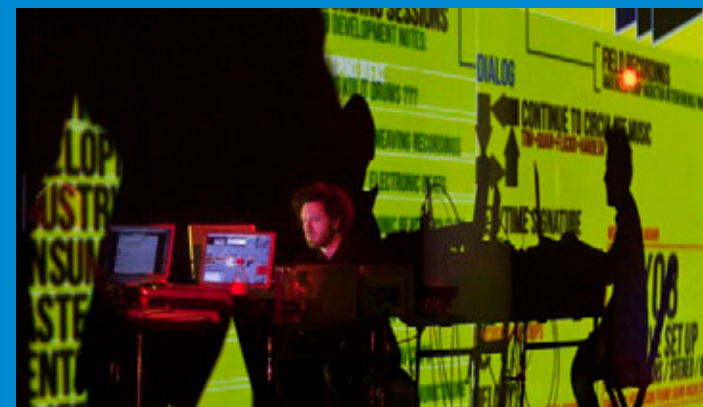
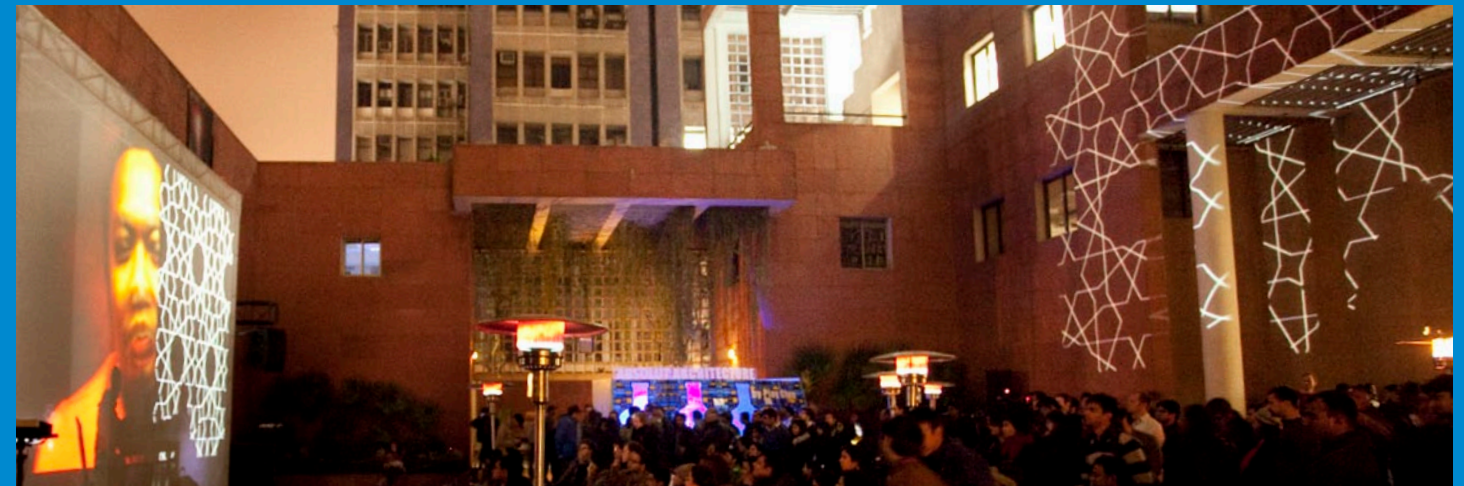
The Light Surgeons came in from London on their first ever tour of India. Starting in Delhi, they went on to tour Bombay and Bangalore as part of the EyeMyth Festival at UnBox. At the opening ceremony, they performed one of their most recent projects—SuperEverything. Through their work, The Light Surgeons combine a heady mix of installation art, motion graphics and print work to create live cinematic experiences that challenge their audience's previous audio-visual experiences in terms of layout, content and the use of design and technology, making them a collective of pioneers in multi-media art.



THE UNBOX FESTIVAL—OPENING

## SUPER EVERYTHING\*

*A live cinema performance project by The Light Surgeons*





# FELLOW SHIPS

*The UnBox Fellowships which unfolded prior to the festival days, created an immersive experience for selected fellows to engage more deeply with the festival themes and to explore critical areas of need in a creative and collaborative spirit. Fellows were selected from a substantial set of applications across India and the UK. The fellowships were an opportunity to gain hands-on experience of how design and development can come together to build sustainable models of habitat, business, craft, entrepreneurship and governance. Each fellowship was anchored by a different organization and domain expert, and was crafted in a way that it allowed new creations and learning at the intersections of multiple disciplines. The UnBox Fellowships were supported by the British Council.*

## BlowUp | Digital Activism

Hacking for Governance | The Green Room

Livelihoods for Children

Sustainable Fashion | Sustainable Lifestyles

The Great WASH Yatra

## BlowUp



### ANCHOR: BLINDBOYS

Inspired by the theme—Six Degrees of Separation—chosen fellows were asked to pick topics of their choice as a starting point for their work. The fellowship encouraged an evolutionary process of approaching one's work, where communication and interaction between the fellows would organically lead to an exchange of ideas. This mix of backgrounds and sensibilities eventually led to a collection of photographs that were covertly and intricately connected—six degrees of separation—but also stood as individual pieces representing each of the photographers. The culmination of the fellowship was a photography exhibit at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.



## Digital Activism



### ANCHOR: BREAKTHROUGH

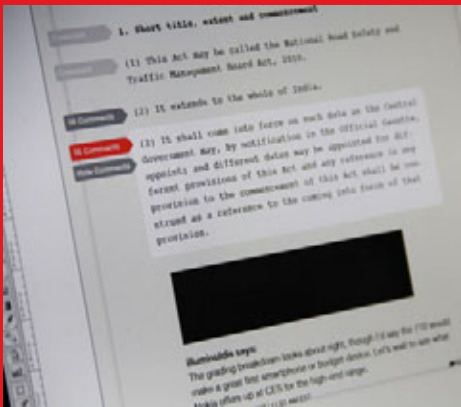
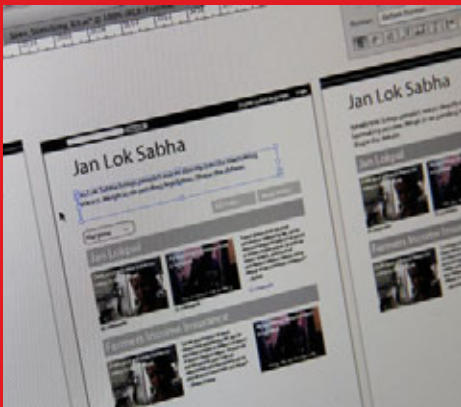
As the access to and the use of new media forms (such as the internet) increase on an everyday basis, while simultaneously extending its reach into the lives of people from different socio-economic backgrounds, a new platform for social awareness and activism has found emergence. Digital Activism, or using technology and digital mediums to engage an audience with relevant development, social and/or environmental issues was the basis on which this fellowship was developed. Chosen fellows were briefed on the host organization's earlier campaign and were asked to develop an extension of it using their own ideas, and skill sets. The fellowship also facilitated stakeholders, including the end audience, to identify the power of media, pop culture and community mobilization in bringing attention to important issues that need to be addressed through mainstream channels of communication and expression.



# Hacking for Governance

**ANCHORS: AZRI SOLUTIONS, PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SOLUTIONS, AND QUICKSAND**

The power of a democratic system stems from the space it creates for its citizens to participate in the process of state governance. This access however, is often either dismissed by groups of people with vested interests or suppressed by politicians who prefer to keep transparency in government functioning minimal. In an attempt to open out governance to citizens, and make law making more accessible and participatory, this fellowship allowed chosen fellows to get their technical and creative hats on to build an online platform that would encourage and initiate collaborative lawmaking.



# Livelihoods for Children

**ANCHOR: DESIGN IMPACT**

Livelihoods for Children worked with selected fellows to develop and design a new working structure for an existing social business. This fellowship used the power of design thinking to help change the model for a program called 'Earn and Learn' run by Manav Sadhna, Ahmedabad that provides holistic education to underprivileged children while training and engaging with them in paper crafts. These crafts are sold to generate income for the project—making the consumers of education also the stakeholders in it. The focus of the fellowship was to create a sustainable model through which the program could expand and continue.



# The Green Room



**ANCHOR: THE HAPPY HANDS FOUNDATION**

Handicrafts and traditional art forms have been a source of livelihood for millions of artisans in rural India for centuries. Unfortunately, many such traditions and lifestyles are slowly dying because of the lack of economic potential in these professions. Many local artisans are turning to alternate means of employment, as their traditional skills have not found sustainable market opportunities.

A major reason for this is the lack of a customer base, particularly in urban India. Fortunately, some organizations and designers have been harnessing the beauty and power of traditional Indian art to create new products

that are better suited for use by consumers in contemporary contexts. Via this fellowship, fellows were encouraged to ideate with local craftsmen to hone and guide their existing skills to create products that appeal to a larger (urban) consumer base. The Green Room is also an ongoing project hosted by the Happy Hands Foundation that, as an interactive program includes workshops, seminars and exhibits to bridge the gap between urban trends and rural art.

# Sustainable Fashion



**ANCHOR: CellDSGN**

The Sustainable Fashion fellowship was conceptualised around the idea of using traditional cloth-making techniques to create raw material for use by urban fashion studios. This fellowship illustrated how, particularly in India, design forms a part and parcel of everyday life—from intricate figures and shapes drawn outside houses in rural India (rangolis) to localized forms of jewellery, clothes and pottery design. Combining the traditional and modern, this fellowship also experimented in mixing inter-cultural forms of craft with one another. For example, the ancient Japanese art of marbling was used for dying cloth in the rural setting of Kutch in Gujarat. This material was later used as part of a contemporary fashion line being developed by the anchors of the fellowship.





# The Great WASH YATRA



**ANCHOR: QUICKSAND**

This fellowship served as a pilot for WASH United’s larger campaign and work around hygiene and sanitation. It was incorporated as a fellowship with a view to use traditional Indian art forms to develop a performance that was not only educative, but equally fun and engaging. The outcome of this fellowship was a puppet show that narrated the importance of hygiene practices, an issue that has been kept out of sanitation development schemes and awareness programs for a long time. The show made its debut at the festival and captivated the young and old alike in its wonderful merging of puppetry, theatre, music, dance and story telling. As a fellowship for UnBox, it exemplified the idea that a powerful message can have a big impact in terms of the number of people it reaches and the meaning it delivers when the methods employed are interactive, creative, and engaging.

## Sustainable Lifestyles



**ANCHOR: CHINTAN JANI IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EXPERTS AT AUROVILLE**

The Sustainable Lifestyles fellowship immersed fellows in a sustainable living community with varied practices. Based in Auroville, the fellows were able to experience and learn from practices already followed and developed by local people in the community. From organic farming, to using environment-friendly technology solutions; from renewable energy use to waste management, this fellowship was able to catalogue the importance and particular urgency, given current environment conditions, on adapting our increasingly consumer driven lifestyles to sustainable and environment-friendly ones.

*The fellowship gave us three main benefits—meeting and interacting with the other fellows, who are great, knowledgeable and inspiring people and new friends; the people, practices and technologies we got to learn about in Auroville; and the sparks for deeper conversation among the fellows that Auroville provided.*

**DAVE FOSTER**  
Fellow, Sustainable Lifestyles

3 FEB-DAY

CONTE  
RENCE

PANELS

Brands—Experience & Enterprise | Activism  
& New Media | Re-Invigorating Crafts

VOICES

Food Design is Shit | Made in Peckham  
The Daily Gorilla | Creativity in Handmade



PANEL

# Activism & New Media

“Can media be used as a voice of reform?”—Stalin



**STALIN K**  
*Documentary Filmmaker, Video Volunteers*  
[www.videovolunteers.org](http://www.videovolunteers.org)

**SONALI KHAN**  
*Country Director, Breakthrough*  
[www.breakthrough.tv](http://www.breakthrough.tv)

“Democracy is the only system that persists in asking the powers that be, whether they are the powers that ought to be.”—Sydney J. Harris.

New age media has allowed for the production, consumption and spread of information to become more democratic than ever before. The opening session at the UnBox Conference, 2012 looked at how an increase in access to information could be used to deconstruct social issues and generate awareness.

The first speaker, Stalin K. addressed the audience with one thought—can media be

used as a voice of reform? While there are many existing forums that strive to foster transparency in governance and delivery, and also provide platforms for dissent, it is important to consider who writes the narratives of these stories. Do the voices of the marginalized have a platform of self-expression or are they only represented through someone else?

According to Stalin, if one must change WHAT is being said, then one must first address WHO is developing the narrative. How does one make the process of media democratization a more inclusive process? Enter—low-cost technology solutions that Stalin’s organization, Video Volunteers, has been able to tap into. By fostering critical thinking around their own lives, arming them with cameras and mics, and teaching them skills of combining both, Video Volunteers are leading a quiet revolution in the margins of mainstream media where those living the stories are also reporting it.



From the ‘what’ and ‘who’ of media generated content, Sonali Khan—the second speaker of this panel—raised the question of ‘how’ issues are being raised. Making the new and “more democratic” form of media a more relevant instrument for reform also means reaching out to as many people about the issues at stake. According to Sonali, there exists a fight for occupying the consumer’s mind space and it is only through learning from mainstream media practices that social issues can be communicated effectively. In a democracy, the weight of the majority usually swings the baton. So while it is crucial to bear in mind, who has the voice, it is just as essential to manage how many people that voice reaches. And once again, technology and new forms of media, through effective campaigning and advertising, can propagate these goals, making media an effective method through which one can, at the very least, initiate reform.

PANEL

# Brands—Experience & Enterprise

“A successful branding exercise should focus on making people believe in the product itself.”—Gerry Hopkinson



**DR. VENKI PADMANABHAN**  
*C.E.O, Royal Enfield*  
[www.royalenfield.com](http://www.royalenfield.com)

**V. SUNIL**  
*Executive Creative Director, W+K Delhi*  
[www.wkdelhiblog.com](http://www.wkdelhiblog.com)

**GERRY HOPKINSON**  
*Co-founder, Unity*  
[www.hellounity.com](http://www.hellounity.com)

V.Padmanabhan, the first speaker for this session, opened the conversation on brands with an eloquent thought—in a consumer driven world, the quantity of brand noise often tends to drown out the quality. The aim of this panel then, was to address the need to help brands find their authentic voice—both as experiences and enterprises.

In true UnBox form of thinking out of the linear modalities of conversation, the second panel catapulted the audience from grassroots pondering to the world of corporate brands and identities. The panel consisted of veterans of brand marketing, who showed through their own distinctive careers and bodies of work, how unique experiences could be created with the end consumer—as V. Sunil put it—when the right attitude and imagination was channelled.

Gerry Hopkinson summarized the essence of this panel in a single sentence—creating a brand wasn’t about making people buy the product.

A successful branding exercise should instead focus on making people believe in the product. Gerry proposed the idea that in trying to approach branding, one shouldn’t be afraid to be honest. The more honesty one’s audience experiences, the more vulnerable it makes the creator. However, that vulnerability only adds to one’s appeal. And when one stands at the intersections of an unpredictable market space, being true to the value of one’s creation is the strongest support system one can have (both for branding, and for UnBox as a larger idea).

Finally, the conversation centred itself around recreating brand experiences, by going back to the community that was the end target, getting feedback, and where possible, involving them in the process of creating the brand itself. More importantly, it is essential to consistently and continuously learn from the audience so as to address their changing needs and preferences. The use of social currency, in other words, is key to creating a sense of community and discourse around a brand.

Fostering a meaningful dialogue isn’t just an activity related to products. The quintessential take away from this discussion laid out the importance of personalizing the experience for those engaging in it through the use of better design practices, interactive processes, honest engagement with the community and a genuine belief in the cause.



PANEL

# Re-invigorating Crafts

Creative industries need revival through effective market-facing interventions that would protect communities.



**CHRISTINE FACELLA**  
*Founder, Beetle & Flor*  
[www.beetleandflor.com](http://www.beetleandflor.com)

**M P RANJAN**  
*Design Thinker & Author*  
[www.designforindia.com](http://www.designforindia.com)

**ADITI RANJAN**  
*Design Educator, National Institute of Design*  
[www.nid.edu](http://www.nid.edu)

**ADARSH KUMAR**  
*Social Entrepreneur, AIACA*  
[www.aiacaonline.org](http://www.aiacaonline.org)

The panel on re-invigorating crafts focused on the importance of repurposing the existing wealth of knowledge in traditional arts & crafts to fit into current market scenarios and consumer preferences. Each panelist presented their body of work to illustrate their unique approach and the progress they have been making on this front, followed by a discussion that invited interaction from the audience on their ideas and experiences of working with these sectors and ways forward.

Adarsh Kumar achieved what few successful moderators do—his opening talk laid a strong

basis for the issues other panelists addressed. Expressing that ‘creative industries’ need to be viewed together as a collective instead of separate fragmented spaces, Adarsh also stressed on the importance of developing talent, business sense, and a market for the existing crafts industry.

His talk was followed by Christine Facella who further emphasized on the strong and immediate need for linking the artisan and designer with the market. Christine highlighted quality control, technology development and lack of accountability systems as gaps that have prevented the traditional crafts industry from becoming competitive with other arts.

In a country like India, where crafts and art lie at every junction, it is our privilege and duty to protect and conserve this knowledge. The high impact of such interventions was demonstrated through the presentations by Aditi Ranjan and M.P. Ranjan. Aditi reiterated the urgency of addressing a re-invigoration of crafts as traditional industries are dying due to lack of market support. M.P. Ranjan on the other hand evinced how simple interventions like recognizing local needs, and building around those requirements served as support structures that created



livelihoods for many communities, while also protecting natural biodiversity.

Reinvigorating crafts, according to M.P. Ranjan isn’t just about having a linear plan or project to implement. It is a holistic graph in which the visible, the invisible, and many other factors can be connected. This is why, it is crucial for spaces like UnBox to provide platforms to address pressing issues like this, and innovate on ways forward. After all, traditional knowledge is the basis for modern discourse on arts.

This panel can be summarized with three succinct points—knowledge and skill are the most important factors in the equation of re-invigorating crafts; the form, medium and product are completely malleable (and can be molded to the taste of a contemporary audience). The main lesson then is preserving what is already a rich plethora of data. Secondly, in order to revive this dwindling industry, it is imperative that we build such enterprises all along the value chain, which includes lessons in creation, distribution, and retail. Finally, creative industries need revival through effective market facing interventions that would protect communities and their livelihoods, and further the cause of design.

VOICES

# Creativity in Handmade

Designers need to become facilitators of collaborations that add value to the crafts industries.



**ADITI RANJAN**  
*Design Educator, National Institute of Design*  
[www.nid.edu](http://www.nid.edu)

Holding up an owl made by craftsmen from Bengal, Aditi Ranjan began her talk by explaining how any form of traditional craftwork is able to embody the form, function, material, and skill of the region and local culture it comes from. The publication ‘Handmade in India’—on which this session was based—contains exhaustive and comprehensive information on crafts and skills and hopes to serve as a rich directory and encyclopedic resource on crafts of India.

The focus of this presentation was on the ingenuity of the Indian craftsman. It made visible the importance of documenting the knowledge

and skills that are embedded deep within oral traditions. More importantly, it also addressed the urgency of making them available for mass consumption and awareness. The ‘collective conscious’ of craftsmen in India is a treasure trove of techniques. This book taps into that repository of knowledge and prevents further loss of information by documenting these techniques. Aditi Ranjan brought to the podium, years of experience as a design educator, textile designer and crafts researcher. She is well known for having introduced the use of culture as a design resource in education. She stressed on her view that one of the most important roles a designer can play is to become a facilitator of collaborations that could add value to traditional crafts industries.

VOICES

# Made in Peckam



**JAN HENDZEL AND OSCAR HUNT**  
*Furniture Designers and Makers, Hendzel + Hunt*  
[www.hendzelandhunt.com](http://www.hendzelandhunt.com)

Hendzel + Hunt are a vibrant, young design studio based in South London. They specialize in manufacturing and designing furniture. What makes their approach to product design different is that all their creations are from reclaimed waste material that is usually sourced from the neighbourhood they are working in. The idea is to use local and environment-friendly material

in innovative and functional ways. These get ‘up-cycled’ (to use a term by them), and are transformed into creative and visually striking furniture. Through their work, they also strive to bridge the gap between imagination and engineering. Hendzel+Hunt’s work is a good example of designing and constructing with sustainability in mind. Since they try to involve the local community in the work they do (as and when possible), the underlying emphasis is also on the power of collaboration. Their work remarks well on what one can achieve with a collective brain.

Hendzel+Hunt brought their ideas to Delhi and dove right into creating a finished product that they left behind as a token of their philosophy and work. Undertaking a snoop trail around the city, the duo collected found materials locally, which included tiles, old police batons, and cycle chains. Working afterhours during festival days, they crafted these eclectic pieces of discarded material to build a dining table with twelve quirky stools.



VOICES

# Food Design is Shit

Few things embody the physical and experiential aspects to being human as entirely as food.



MARIJE VOGELZANG  
Eating Design  
[www.marijevogelzang.nl](http://www.marijevogelzang.nl)

Perhaps the world’s first ‘eating designer’, Marije Vogelzang’s work is inspired by the verb ‘eating’. According to Marije, food is perfectly designed by nature and needs no innovation. The idea is to engage in designing the ephemeral process of eating. Her processes become more fluid as things change, grow, decompose and often take shape of their own.

More often than not, designers who work with food only design the shape of it. Marije on the other hand aims to look at the content and background of the food as well; the shape is just a tool to tell a story. “As a designer, when you design with food, you realize that it is the only material you can put inside your body—making it truly your own,” said Marije. A clichéd phrase, but it couldn’t apply more to Marije’s philosophy—we are what we eat! Indeed, as material and as a medium, few things embody the physical and experiential aspects to being human as entirely as food.

An interesting and important detail that emerged from Marije’s talk was the possibility to explore the creative potential of eating habits—culture, rituals, psychology, society and biology, to name a few. In light of today’s rising awareness of what one eats, and where one’s food comes from, food also serves as an archive of personal histories and a treasure chest of emotions.

Marije’s work questions the otherwise taken for granted act of consumption and in response, attempts to change the meaning and relevance of food through minimal, philosophical, and interactive interventions. Through her curated food experiences, people are encouraged to think about the act more closely and in ways they wouldn’t ordinarily choose.

VOICES

# The Daily Gorilla



PEPIJN ZURBURG &  
RICHARD VAN DER LAKEN  
De Designpolitie  
[www.designpolitie.nl](http://www.designpolitie.nl) | [www.thedailygorilla.nl](http://www.thedailygorilla.nl)

Richard Van der Laken & Pepijn Zurburg co-founded De Designpolitie, a design studio in Amsterdam where they have been working on projects using the power of visual media content, humour and out of the box thinking to create outputs for the work they undertake. One such project, the Daily Gorilla was the basis of their presentation at UnBox, 2012.

The Daily Gorilla is a visual column on the front page of De Volkskrant, one of the leading newspapers in the Netherlands. Both Richard and Pepijn are firm believers in the fact that images can create more meaningful and deep impact messages that go beyond the restrictions of text and language. Keeping their ‘talk’ to a minimum then, the presentation used a lot of examples of their work with The Daily Gorilla to illustrate their approach and philosophy to design.



# 4 FEB – DAY 2

# CONTENT REFERENCE

# PANELS

Habitat & Community | Notion of a Nation  
Curating the New Culture | Future Forms

# VOICES

Form = Behaviour | Let’s talk about sh\*t, baby!  
Full-time Amateurs & All-round Specialists



PANEL

# Habitat & Community

“It is people who give the spaces their real meaning.”—Amardeep Behl



**INDY JOHAR**  
*Co-director, 00:/*  
*Co-director, Hub Westminster*  
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**AMARDEEP BEHL**  
*Director & Chief Designer, Design Habit*  
[www.designhabit.com](http://www.designhabit.com)

**HEDWIG HEINSMAN, HANS VERMEULEN & MARTINE DE WIT**  
*Co-founders, DUS Architects*  
[www.dusarchitects.com](http://www.dusarchitects.com)

**FLORA LYSEN & ERIK RIETVELD**  
*Rietveld Landscapes*  
[www.rietveldlandscape.com](http://www.rietveldlandscape.com)

This carefully chosen panel comprised of architects who have already crossed the borders of conventional architecture. A heady mix of spatial designers and creative entrepreneurs—the discussion that this panel helped facilitate, looked at interdisciplinary approaches to creating a space for communities (to live in, or interact with).

Indy Johar opened the panel by introducing the idea of governance and ownership in architecture. Speaking to the audience about the concept of ‘public value duty’, Indy proposed that an architect

must be inspired to create structures that are not only sensitive to the current needs of a project, but also to its future requirements. He laid stress on using multi-disciplinary teams to approach architecture and planning more holistically.

Amardeep Behl on the other hand probed into the issue of representing a community through the space created for them. Using The Khalsa Project as a storyboard that represented his ideology and work, Amardeep showed how his team had attempted to capture the history of Sikhism, translate its tenets to the approach adopted in construction and creation, and magnify its impact with the powerful use of technology and art. By using a wide range of raw materials and styles, Amardeep created spectacular images, which not only represented the community, but also helped them relate back to the project itself. He encouraged future space designers to keep in mind one crucial aspect of design—it is people who give spaces their real meaning and ultimately, what one creates must help the people who inhabit it, to coexist with it.

Reversing the pyramid of creating a space that represented existing communities, Rietveld Landscapes and DUS Architects from the Netherlands, spoke about creating public spaces which provided people a chance to make the



environment their own by engaging in its ideation and/or creation. Their talk introduced a childlike curiosity evident in their approach to pushing the frontiers of conventional architecture. Simultaneously, their presentation also accentuated the importance of interactive social experiments in building communities and bringing them together.

Rietveld architects referred to their work as ‘precisely chosen and carefully designed spatial interventions’. By crossing emerging sub-cultures with social affordances, they attempt to create ‘trusted familiarity within the strange’. DUS Architects meanwhile, described their work as an amalgamation of programming, process design and architecture, where the motivation behind creating spaces was to bring people together to meet and interact with one another, and their surroundings.

The key points from this panel can be summarized with the following—creating spaces for people to engage with, like brands, must come from the community itself—it must address their most important needs, it must facilitate a personalization of the space, and most importantly, it must reflect the sense of continuity of history and livelihoods of the people it is made for.

PANEL

# Notion of a Nation

CURATED BY FUTUREBRANDS

An overarching sense of nationality can at times be a deterrent to individuality itself.



**SATYANAND NIRUPAM**  
*Writer and Editor*

**ANIRBAN MUKHERJEE**  
*Brand Strategist, Futurebrand*  
[www.futurebrands.co.in](http://www.futurebrands.co.in)

**INDRAJIT HAZRA**  
*Novelist and Journalist*

The idea of India is constantly evolving. Within the numerous changing dimensions, to consider the definition and meaning of identity is important, especially in a context of otherwise mixed groups and socio-cultural hierarchies.

This panel discussion, comprising of a writer, a journalist, and a strategist, exploded in the minds of the audience almost as soon as it began. For one, it probed the difficult question of defining the notion of a nation. In a country where the national, regional and local identities are all relevant and equally important, an overarching sense of nationality can at times be a deterrent to individuality itself. Indrajit Hazra tried to illustrate this by explaining how, in the narrative of nationalism, it is often unacceptable to be critical of the state. But to be critical is to express one’s view on a certain situation—the very premise of a democratic structure (that a sense of ‘contemporary nationalism’ supersedes).

Satyanand Nirupam took the notion of identity a few steps further by asking the audience to think about the factors that contributed to the formation of this identity. For him, the idea of Bharat and the idea of India are developing as two dichotomies—each with a different meaning, reality, and sensibility. His presentation lamented the fact that it has become easier, and more acceptable to import from the west, but sharing and exchange between the four corners within India is relatively less. This divide between regions on one hand, and rural and urban India on the other, also plays on the confidence of Indians vis-à-vis their own culture and traditions. This aspect is especially crucial to identity, in a world where many sustainable practices will come from adopting older ways of approaching nature (and particularly in the context of other discussions at the conference, such as those relating to re-invigorating older arts & craft practices within modern design schemes).

Finally, Anirban Mukherjee took the stage to introduce the idea of ‘Brand India’—the creation of ‘consumerable patriotism’, where what one feels for (or about) the nation is directly proportional to what the nation produces (that an individual can consume). In a world where consumption is fast becoming a reckless train, and sustainable practices are only beginning to find root—such a notion could turn out to be potentially hazardous.



PANEL

# Curating the New Culture

## Do curators play the role of agency, or that of authority in deciding representative trends of emerging art?



**PARMESH SHAHANI**  
Godrej-India Culture Lab

**PEPIJN ZURBURG & RICHARD VAN DER LAKEN**  
De Designpolitie  
What Design Can Do  
[www.designpolitie.nl](http://www.designpolitie.nl) | [whatdesigncando.nl](http://whatdesigncando.nl)

**ARCHANA PRASAD**  
Co-founder & Director, Jaaga  
[www.jaaga.in](http://www.jaaga.in)

That culture is being redefined in a fast-paced, globalizing, urbanizing world is not contested. With information flows becoming shorter and faster than ever, and especially in the context of India—where young people now form the bulk of the population, a new sense of culture is definitely ablaze. But when processes that change and shape this new transformation are organic, is there a role that a curator or curatorial institutions can play? More importantly, do curators play the role of agency, or that of authority in deciding what trends become representative of emerging artistic expression?

The panel on curating the new culture addressed all of the above points and questions, beginning with Parmesh Sahani’s version of how culture can be represented in three ways—One, as ‘Culture with a Big C’ that comprises of larger than life mediums of expression (theatre, film, drama); two, ‘culture with a small c’ that expresses itself through the way we live our everyday lives; and finally, sub-cultural developments that take place in the margins of larger realities. Amongst these three forms, where do different forms of curation place themselves?

Archana Prasad took the stage first by clarifying what she thought her role was—that of a facilitator (more than that of a curator) who helps the community curate its own art and space. For her, the bigger question was—can community create? She described curation and expression as a working experiment—attempting to create something from even that which seems like nothing.

However, ‘curation’ as it were, according to Richard van der Laken and Pepijn Zurburg, was not only the representation of a collection of objects, but also conversations, transformations and relevance to its surroundings. In their work, the real act of curation has been in the creation of a festival, What Design Can Do, that serves as a platform for expression of one’s own sense of identity and being.

In many ways, the panel brought forward the idea that every individual is a curator and curatorial practice today has democratized and gone from mounting art exhibitions and caring for works of art to a personal movement where human filtering through digital data produces personal meaning for individuals and enables them to consciously, and unconsciously, shape the culture around them.

The UnBox conference places itself at the intersection of arts, technology, development, and society, and is therefore uniquely posed to serve as a springboard for curation of emerging trends in all of the above (and more). This panel set the distinction between censoring and distilling in clear terms, laying final emphasis on the import-ance of providing a space for communities and individuals—through the act of curation—to create their own content.

VOICES

# Form = Behaviour

## “Info-graphics are valuable when they also trigger some emotional response.”



**DANIEL GROSS & JORIS MALTHA**  
Catalogtree  
[www.catalogtree.net](http://www.catalogtree.net)

Catalogtree is a Dutch graphic design studio based in Arnhem, The Netherlands. Their work is primarily about finding ways and means to make sense of data and represent information. They claim to be highly inspired by the organisational techniques of Stanley Kubrick on the sets of Spartacus, where the famed director allotted each extra on the set with a number to ease the process of direction. Similarly in their work, each different aspect of the project has a defined role, represented through either a visual or a number.

At UnBox, the duo commented on the role of a designer as a director of information. Their talk touched upon the idea of how things design themselves, if given the right amount of open space. More importantly, as a designer, one can create and define a system in which patterns can

be perceived differently, understood organically and evolve naturally. Self-organization of content is an important tool. Instead of telling each word or data point where to go and what to look like exactly, they devise a set of rules by which content should behave. The effort lies in creating this vocabulary. They believe that by doing this, design can become more than the sum of its parts.

According to Catalogtree, “Info-graphics demand this approach of self-organization because graphic devices such as position, colour and size have a quantitative meaning first.” They believe that graphic design as well as info-graphics are valuable when they also trigger some emotional response.

VOICES

# Let’s Talk about Sh\*T Baby

## “Building toilets doesn’t translate into using toilets.”



**THORSTEN KIEFER**  
Founder, WASH United  
[www.wash-united.org](http://www.wash-united.org)

Given the big issue of sanitation faced by India, Thorsten Kiefer’s talk was well positioned and extremely relevant. It threw light on how to use popular and creative mediums to reach people, provide positive influences and change certain types of habits. “Building toilets doesn’t translate into using toilets,” said Thorsten, while emphasizing that the foundation of encouraging sanitation and hygiene must begin with first understanding what people want from the toilets in their homes—safety, proximity, comfort, water access, etc.

The world currently faces an epic crisis in access to safe drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). The consequences for health, dignity and economic development are severe. This poses an important hurdle for creative problem solvers and change makers to address. WASH United uses the power of sports and role model status of some of the world’s biggest sportsmen to tackle taboos related to sanitation and create demand for sanitation services, as well as advocate for safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right.

(Demanding) Sanitation, especially for women, is still a taboo, making it difficult for people to talk freely about it. It thus makes it all the more necessary to focus strongly on ensuring access to toilets and latrines by the state. For South Asia, WASH United plans on using cricket stars to talk about such issues, especially since there is hardly a societal activity that is as popular or loved by more people. It is cricket stars who are the biggest role models for children and adolescents—making the impact of what they stand for, deeper and wider. This initiative serves as a fine example of what can be achieved by



harnessing positive strong influences of the mass psyche to help even the poorest live a healthier life.



*Innovation stands to gain from cross-fertilisation and face-to-face contact between pioneers from the creative industry, craftsmen, science and technology. After all, innovation often results from considering the same challenges from different perspectives together with other people. It is for this reason that we believe that UnBox, which brings many disciplines together, is an important event. UnBox 2012 showcased a range of 'best practices' in interdisciplinary collaboration for societally relevant interventions. We were thrilled to learn from UnBox and to be part of it.*

ERIK RIETVELD, FLORA LYSEN  
AND RONALD RIETVELD  
Reitveld Landscape

## VOICES

# Full-time Amateurs & All-round Specialists

“To foster creative processes, it is essential to find ways by which one can infuse a sense of freedom & play into work.”



**MEREL SNEL & LOES VERSTAPPEN**  
Graphic Designers, 75B  
[www.75b.nl](http://www.75b.nl)

75B, a design studio based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, has been described to embody the main characteristics of modern Dutch design—‘conceptual, simple, no-nonsense, ironical, and tongue-in-cheek.’ Their talk at UnBox highlighted the ability and the importance of designers striking a balance between independent & client



work. To foster creative processes and continue to enjoy themselves, it is essential to find ways by which one can infuse a sense of freedom and play into work.

75B try and originate an idea from within, but build it for others. Once there is a spark in their minds, they work to translate it into a visible form for others to see and potentially, become a part of. As a design studio, 75B engages with the city they reside in. They draw inspiration from residents,

dwellers, their homes, their workplaces, or how they live, making their work a part of the urban cultural milieu. In doing so they also try and offer urban residents a wealth of engaging images in and around the city.

75B encourages participation in their work by building open platforms where people can interact with them, their work and add to it or use it as a starting point for interesting experiences of their own.

# FUTUREFORMS

*Futureforms was incorporated as a panel at UnBox to provide a platform to young design entrepreneurs, who as they said themselves—“were in the pursuit of translating their thoughts into actions”. Five dynamic individuals, who have started ventures of their own that look at using design within a larger historical and socio-economic context, were invited to present their work and philosophy to the audience, to not only create an awareness of the work they are doing, but also to find potential collaborators for the same.*



**MAYANK MANSINGH KAUL**  
Founder, The Design Project

The Design India Project, founded by Mayank, is a not-for-profit foundation, initiated to support and develop curatorial projects and writing in Indian design. It attempts to fill a huge gap about arts in India that exists because of the lack of a framework that has prevented a historical documentation of the history of design. It is also, as Mayank put it, a culmination of the process of building up a personal archive of Indian design references and writing. The project will focus on developing this framework through which an organised method can be applied to tracing the history of art and design in India, and its influences on designers from other countries as well.

The Design India Project also attempts to reclaim and refocus on a pre-colonial paradigm of what design and art mean. One of the inquiries the foundation is trying to make is to explore these distinct definitions that we have started functioning through, that apply to international contexts but mean little in a fluid culture (as in India) where often, art and design intertwine and mean so many things in everyday life that they cannot be detached from the way of life itself (for example, the rangoli, mehendi, ornaments, etc.) and operate only within defined meanings.

Venkatesh began his presentation by briefly tracing the role that caravans have had in different cultures through history. A nomadic life allowed people to travel and offer their skills to different communities as they moved from place to place. This philosophy, of providing specialized skill sets for problem solving is what Azri Solutions is currently applying to their ongoing projects.

Azri is putting together a travelling lab (that could function like a caravan itself), which will comprise of people from different backgrounds (technical, social, creative), who will travel across

different parts of the country to understand local problems, and work to combine their respective skill sets to innovate on solutions. In a sector where problem solving has become too deconstructed, and the gap between those trying to solve the problem and those suffering because of it is immense, and usually out of context, Azri is attempting to bridge the gap, and create ‘eureka moments’ by taking lessons from the caravan lifestyle. They are currently looking for collaborations, partnerships, and the space to create a larger understanding of grassroots realities, not through secondary sources (like books and reports) but instead, through personal experience.



**VENKATESH GOTETI**  
Co-founder, Azri Solutions  
Project Caravan Labs





**SOMNATH RAY**  
*Co-founder and design director, 'DPlay'*  
[www.dplay.org](http://www.dplay.org)

DPlay was created around the idea of promoting mobility design and urban mobility. Somnath's main idea with DPlay was to collaborate with other like-minded individuals to design electric vehicles that are light weight and low cost, and most importantly, environmentally friendly; to explore what it takes to build extremely structural elements out of light weight material, that can also become 'do it yourself' products so that people (consumers) can become actively engaged in construction of the product. DPlay's approach to designing mobile vehicles is essentially to deconstruct typical conventions of product design, examine, and replay with them.

Through his presentation, Somnath also spoke about the need to develop products that are not monotonic in nature, and have multiple uses that people can build on, use, or take inspiration from. Currently, they are working on (and seeking collaborators for) a prototype of a low cost folding bicycle for use in Delhi.

According to Nitesh, The Root came about from an urge to do something as a creative individual and as an urban inhabitant of a growing, chaotic world. An urge to question and to provoke gave The Root its organizational form. It now operates as a platform to propagate social, environmental, ecological and cultural themes with an urban audience through various means and merchandise. The idea is to create awareness and understanding about issues that demand urgent intervention, and to foster the sharing of thought-provoking stories amongst an urban audience.

worked with include the urban environment, sustainable lifestyles, heritage & conversation, and human rights issues. In a world where the predominant attitude of urban dwellers is moving towards a disconnect with the problems of their immediate surroundings, this organization is working in the opposite direction to create events that will pique the interest of residents and hopefully encourage them to participate and engage more in working towards sustainable and more equal environments. Nitesh firmly believes that one has to focus on creating people initiatives—because it is finally people who inhabit the space that eventually define the socio cultural fabric of the city, not politicians or architects.

Particularly, The Root looks at the relationship of visual communication with politics, culture, and society. Themes that the organization has already



**NITESH MOHANTY**  
*Co-founder, The Root*  
[www.theroot.co.in](http://www.theroot.co.in)

Digital Green's sole focus has been to build its work around helping agricultural officers in the country to increase their impact and efficiency on the field whilst working with farmers, through the use of low cost innovations. According to Abhishek, there are approximately one lakh such officers who belong to public, private and civil society groups, and are currently working with farmers to increase their crop and field productivity. Innovations adopted by Digital Green include getting the appropriate information to farmers before the season starts, and promoting the creation and sharing of content captured by farmers. They currently operate in 6 states in India, reaching out to 75,000 farmers whose work and progress are monitored on a daily basis.

Digital Green also captures this tracking through a web-based analytics system that works both online and offline through a grid that allows any computer to upload data (if it is on the grid) with or without internet access, thereby reaching out to places that do not have online capacities as well. Tracking 75,000 farmers also means zeroing in on their everyday activities and challenges. This has allowed Digital Green to create graphs of agricultural problems that exist at a micro level, and are not being solved through policies that are based on generalizations and assumptions at the macro stage. In a way then, the organization is also helping policy makers to identify gaps and/or address policies that are not effective at grass root levels. Ultimately, the goal of Digital Green is to create entrepreneurs out of farmers, and support technology that will enable this.



**ABHISHEK HEGDE**  
*Program Manager, Strategy and Operations*  
Digital Green  
[www.digitalgreen.org](http://www.digitalgreen.org)

# 3 FEB – DAY 1

# WORKSHOPS

*The aim of conducting workshops within UnBox was to provide a platform for people to delve deeper into some of the themes that cut across the festival. Each workshop encouraged participants to immerse themselves in the format and the topic, and think about ways in which they could adopt some of the ideas that emerged in their own lives, or through the work they did. These workshops were an opportunity to further investigate into one's area of interest—engage with the anchor (an expert on the topic or session), and collaborate with others on how they could shape interdisciplinary processes, given the opportunity. Thematically, the workshops ranged from thinking about sustainable livelihoods to the power of pictures in social messages; from finding ways to democratize voices and opinions to altering ways in which information could be catalogued. In a nutshell, these workshops promoted and linked practice with critical thought, to inspire creative solutions.*

**App Slam | To Scale or Not to Scale | UpCycle**  
**Occupy Media | Guerrilla Gorilla | Food Walk**  
**A Human-centered Approach to Marketing**  
**Experiments in Visual Creation**



# App Slam

**HANNAH REGIER**  
Associate Creative Director, Frog Design  
[www.frogdesign.com](http://www.frogdesign.com)

**GAURAV BHUSHAN**  
Interaction Designer, Frog Design  
[www.frogdesign.com](http://www.frogdesign.com)

Using the simple process of storyboarding, the App Slam workshop conducted a session on how to build a computer/mobile application of one's own. For this workshop, the participants toyed with creating an app that worked as a personal journal for UnBox using pictures and videos. They were asked to streamline these visuals on a single canvas while experimenting with various transitions and animations to make the app more interactive.



# To Scale or Not To Scale



**RAMSEY FORD**  
Co-founder, Design Impact  
[www.d-impact.org](http://www.d-impact.org)

An important aspect of development solutions is to be able to scale up efforts for larger impact. This workshop was designed to prompt rich and meaningful discussions on how to scale operations of NGOs in environmentally, and socially sustainable ways. Each participant was asked to creatively explore the relationships and dynamics of scaling and make themselves aware of all the considerations that should be taken into account, as one is planning this process.

# UpCycle



**JAN HENDZEL & OSCAR HUNT**  
Hendzel + Hunt, UK  
[www.hendzelandhunt.com](http://www.hendzelandhunt.com)

The definition given to the term 'UpCycle' by its creators is to repurpose waste material to create usable and aesthetically appealing products. Using waste and discarded material sourced from local colonies in New Delhi, the anchors of UpCycle and its participants involved themselves in the most hands-on workshop at UnBox.

Participants got to work with the team from Hendzel + Hunt in their week long endeavour to create a large dining table, with 12 stools made out of discarded pieces of wooden furniture, tiles and metal chains. The interplay of design, functionality, and sustainability formed the basis on which this workshop was implemented.

*I understood the importance of process in my work. No matter what the outcome, the process in itself should be the work that one sets out to accomplish. Therein indeed is the learning and the progression. Also, that there is never a 'one-way', and hence, an interdisciplinary approach broadens that mindset.*

**TEESTA DAS**  
Fellow, Livelihoods for Children

# Experiments in Visual Creation

**SIGMA6**  
[www.sigma6.ch](http://www.sigma6.ch)

Following their audio-visual performance during the conference, Sigma6 took participants through various techniques that they used for video mapping on different surfaces and spaces. They presented a history of their work along with a demonstration of various video mapping tools.





# Occupy Media

**STALIN K**  
*Co-founder, Video Volunteers*  
[www.videovolunteers.org](http://www.videovolunteers.org)

Through an open ended, interactive session, participants engaged with the idea, structure and impact of community-owned media forms. By showcasing films made through such processes, the workshop demonstrated the importance of providing local people in low-income communities a means with which they could capture their own stories. This workshop also demonstrated how advancing technology was creating multiple platforms through which more people could express their opinions and thoughts.



# A Human-centered Approach to Marketing

## Building brand campaigns that meet people’s socio-cultural needs



**GERRY HOPKINSON**  
*Co-founder, Unity*  
[www.hellounity.com](http://www.hellounity.com)

This workshop was a direct extension of the panel on branding at the UnBox conference, and it centred on the dynamics involved in creating a brand. Distinctions were drawn between different approaches to brand building, with a special focus on taking human-centered approaches in branding campaigns. The participants were asked to give their own ideas on how to build a campaign from their own belongings. The interactive session helped to develop different flow charts that one could use to involve their audience personally (thereby personalizing the experience and the product).



# Food Memory

**MARIJE VOGELZANG**  
*Founder, Marije Vogelzang Studio*  
[www.marijevogelzang.nl](http://www.marijevogelzang.nl)

During an excursion to a nearby food market, participants in this workshop were asked to try and associate each fruit or vegetable they selected with a personal memory of use or consumption. Upon return to the festival venue, the same ingredients were used as tools for ‘eating design’, where the philosophy regarding food extended beyond just its consumption, encouraging each participant to orchestrate an eating experience where the most basic act of food is associated with multiple other actions, ideas and inspirations. This multi-sensorial experience was used to demonstrate the power of experiences that involve multi-dimensional elements.



# Guerrilla Gorilla



**RICHARD VAN DER LAKEN & PEPIJN ZURBURG**  
*The Gorilla Project*  
[www.thedailygorilla.nl](http://www.thedailygorilla.nl)

This workshop was designed to bring attention to the power of using images in creating impactful social messages. The participants were asked to pick a social or development cause and use sketches, pictures, or photographs in a poster format to express their opinion or develop a larger socio-economic message.





# 1 FEB - DAY 2

# WORKSHOPS

Demystifying Sustainable Habitats  
Let it go | MakeSense Holdup  
Design Research for Service Innovation  
LATCH | Designing Institutions  
New Forms of Story-telling

## Demystifying Sustainable Habitats

**GAURAV SHOREY**

*Assistant Professor*

Sushant School of Art & Architecture, Delhi

Defining shelter as our third skin, this workshop took historical learning to explore the meaning of sustainable habitats. Ancient Indian traditional knowledge states that five elements—language, food, clothing, shelter and music—influence the sustainability of a region. Tracing personal understandings of each, the workshop asked its participants to creatively adapt historical processes and critically analyse how habitat can be made sustainable in current day circumstances of excess demand and shortage of supply (of land and resources).



## Let it Go

**ASHWATH BHATT**

*Theatre Garage Project*

Designed with a strong focus on increasing participant mobility and starting introspective processes on how to lose one's inhibitions, this theatre workshop used red noses as props with which people were made to consider their reactions in different situations. The workshop helped to bring out the importance of overcoming one's fear in professional and personal spaces, especially in non-mainstream avenues of art, design and interdisciplinary collaborations.



## New Forms of Story-telling

**THE LIGHT SURGEONS**

[www.lightsurgeons.com](http://www.lightsurgeons.com)

This workshop gave participants an insight into the processes behind visual story-telling using examples from recent projects by the anchors. It touched upon diverse practices like research, ethnography, film making, sound design and live performance set-ups and how they all converge to create powerful stories and visual art that move and inspire audiences.

It was anchored by Christopher Allen and Tim Cole of the Light Surgeons. The Light Surgeons also performed at the opening ceremony for UnBox, where they presented one of their most recent projects, SuperEverything.





*In a world obsessed with the products of creative pursuit, where the emphasis tends to be more on portfolios than process, being able to pry open the ‘hows’ of doing, making, thinking and working, the UnBox Festival 2012 has been a rewarding opportunity to share our methods with other practitioners and learn from them on an equal platform.*

**RUCHITA MADHOK**  
Fellow, The Great WASH Yatra

# Design Research for Service Innovation

**DR. GEKE VAN DIJK**  
Strategy Director and Co-founder, STBY  
www.stby.eu

**BAS RAIJMAKERS**  
Creative Director, STBY  
www.stby.eu

In order to enhance the quality of services that organizations offer, the foundation must be strengthened through a process of building rigorous research skills. Emerging out of this need, design research has become an important tool for research. Different from traditional forms of market research, design research develops a deep understanding of the issue at hand. The tools of design research were illustrated briefly through a case study, and an interactive session helped participants to learn through each other’s experiences and exchange of ideas.



# MakeSense Holdup



**DANIEL HIRES**  
WASH United  
www.wash-united.org

While the workshop focused on using popular culture mediums to talk about sanitation issues in particular, the larger goal of the workshop was to create a rapid-innovation exercise that would teach participants how to generate innovative ideas and solutions for development issues. A large canvas was used as an ideating platform on which every idea was listed on a different post-it note. In the end, all the ideas and issues were linked to one another to try and develop a cohesive format for formulating the plan—in this case—to add to WASH United’s hygiene and sanitation yatra that will be undertaken by the organization, later in 2012, throughout India.

# LATCH Five Ways to Organize Information

**DANIEL GROSS & JORIS MALTHA**  
Catalogtree  
www.catalogtree.net

LATCH—Location, Alphabet, Time, Category and Hierarchy are five ways in which information can be recorded & categorized. However, in the presentation of that same data, a cross pollination of categories can be used to present different layers of information. The participants were divided into teams and given two out of the five categories to work with. They were asked to illustrate their research methodology using design architecture, which they did by creating abstract webs of information flow with coloured tape (pasted on the ground).



# Designing Institutions



**INDY JOHAR**  
Co-director, oo:/  
Co-director, Hub Westminster  
www.architectureoo.net | hubwestminster.net

This workshop brought out the entrepreneurs, activists, and researchers embedded within the participants at the festival in a discussion around forms of institutional sustainability that support and strengthen livelihoods. From the Occupy movement to political instability in poorer regions of India, the degradation of political institutions was on attendees’ minds. The conversation was free form as the seating was rearranged from the classroom style to a circle, and participants responded not only to the anchor’s provocations but also to one another. Both critical and optimistic, the workshop sought out examples of institutional relationships that build on and strengthen local values, skills, and resource bases as an ethos for more just forms of social organization. The conversations also provided a chance to critique and synthesize cases from panels at the UnBox conference.



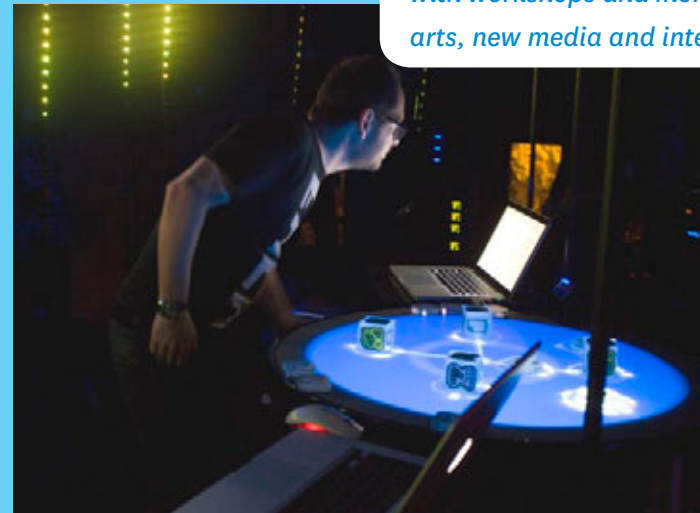
# PARTNER EVENTS

*The Partner Events at UnBox brought together performance evenings, electronic arts, photography, and exhibitions in multi-layered formats to add a deeper dimension to interdisciplinary experiences. They also displayed how UnBox cut across culture, music, art, and design, and attempted to weave them together into plural manifestations.*

**Technodrome | Eyemyth  
BlowUp! | BeatRepeat | Rising  
FoodLAB**

AVINASH KUMAR  
Organizer

*Technodrome, in its 4th edition, brought down one of the powerhouses of the German electronic music scene, Oliver Huntemann and his Reactable—a new interactive technology for electronic music embedded in toy-like building blocks. Touring 3 cities and accompanied by young Indian artists, Huntemann was inspiring in his application of new technologies for live performance, and put on a show that would be rare to see live in India. For Technodrome, it has been important to present the growing boundaries of the electronic arts each year, and while this year featured leaner programming than usual, next year will see Technodrome flex its possibilities with workshops and more collaborative performances, and a new focus on digital arts, new media and interaction.*



A Festival that aspired to open people's perception to the potential of electronic arts in performance and visual collaborations, Technodrome presented itself as a platform where artists and performers experimented with new possibilities in dance, technology, and cultural experiences. Oliver Huntemann, German producer and DJ, brought the Reactable to India in his first ever tour of the country. With Antariksha Yatra, traditional Indian dance styles reinterpreted the rhythm of their form to new age, electronic beats. Led by internationally renowned Bharatanatyam exponent Jayalakshmi Eshwar, this production was themed around different forms of air travel—from science to mythology, spirit to soul. Technodrome also brought on board architects, fashion designers, and music producers to work together and learn from one another's domain.

## Technodrome

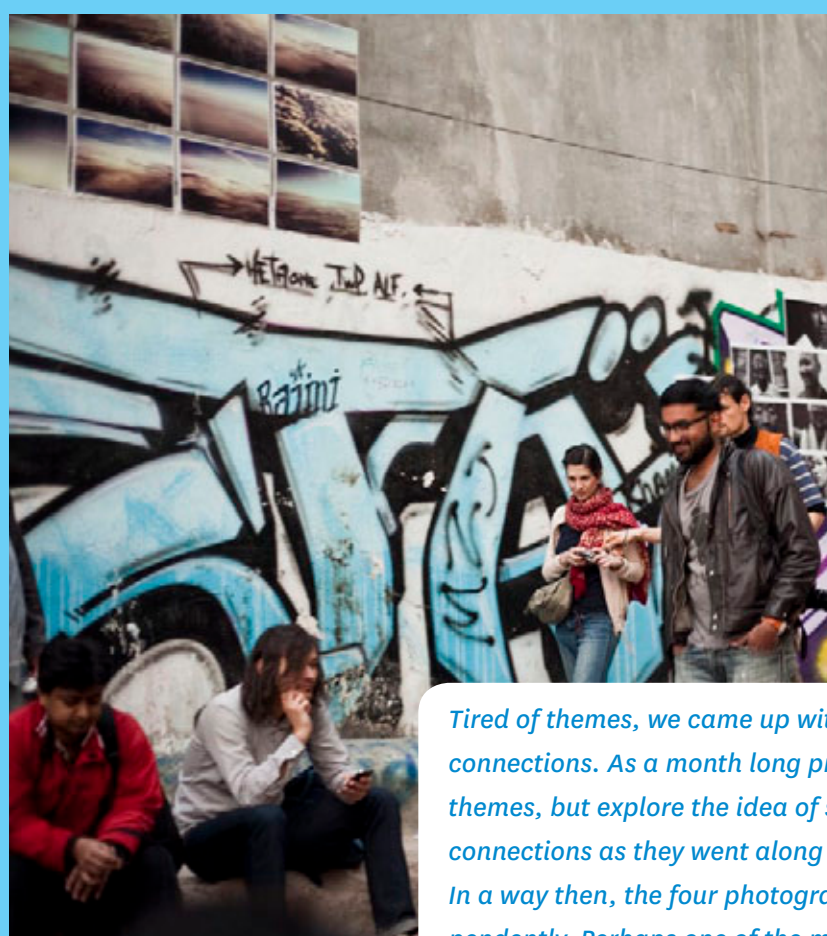






The idea behind BlowUp is to use public spaces as a platform to present work by photographers to a wide audience. It takes 'art' outside restricted access galleries and exhibits it for all as a choice. This year, BlowUp used open spaces in Hauz Khas Village as venues for showcasing the work of photographers to a larger audience. Twelve photographers from seven countries displayed their work. BlowUp also anchored one of the UnBox fellowships. Four fellows were selected from a pool of applicants via the fellowship call for applications. The final work of these fellows, after a three week submersion in the field, culminated in an exhibition at the Experimental Art Gallery in India Habitat Center from February 2nd-5th. The theme for the fellowships was 'Six Degrees', based on the idea that anything can be connected to each other.

# BlowUp!



Tired of themes, we came up with the 6° Project to seek sense by making random connections. As a month long project, 6° allowed fellows to work on separate themes, but explore the idea of showing it all together, so that one could figure connections as they went along broadening the scope of their own original idea. In a way then, the four photographers worked intensely, together and independently. Perhaps one of the main learnings of BlowUp 2012 is that the whole process of selection & time given to the photographs needs a much longer and more drawn out creation period so that the photographers get a chance to interact and work together for a longer time. The festival has the potential to include a lot more people, which is also the idea of BlowUp as an event around public spaces in the city.

**KAPIL DAS**  
Organizer



EyeMyth approached audiovisual content through different techniques. The Film Festival curated works by film-makers and media artists who have used moving images to create sight and sound experiences, all of which were presented in screenings across Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. The festival curated independent artists, organized workshops on visual art, and hosted The Light Surgeons' first tour of India. Pioneers of live cinematic experiences, The Light Surgeons use motion graphics, print and an assortment of installations in their work. EyeMyth also brought Sigma6 from Geneva to Delhi and Pune. Sigma6, a mixed media duo, constantly pushes the frontiers of technology by experimenting with its use in different performance formats.

VISUAL MUSIC FILM FESTIVAL

# Eyemyth



With EyeMyth in its 3rd edition, we really wanted to take it up some notches in terms of curation, new partners, multiple screenings and live performances. The genre of visual music is still pretty nascent in India, but audiences get really immersed into the content because it is often purely sensorial and playful, very experimental and yet accessible. EyeMyth 2012 featured the inspiring Light Surgeons and their live cinema performances 'SuperEverything' and 'LDN-Redux'. Mumbai saw the programme being screened at the iconic Edward Theatre, a century old opera style cinema that saw its first full house in almost three decades with EyeMyth and The Light Surgeons. At CounterCulture in Bangalore, a packed house enjoyed experimental cinema. Future plans for EyeMyth include extending its scope over a whole month of screenings around India, hands-on workshops and discussions on the genre of visual music, a weekend full of performances, and screenings of some classics from the early 20th century.

**AVINASH KUMAR & NEHA SINGH**  
Organizers





# FoodLAByrinth

Taking food beyond linear tastes, the FoodLab prompted people to engage more personally with the process of consumption itself. The idea behind hosting a food festival under the UnBox umbrella was to promote a way of thinking about food beyond just its functionality in our daily lives. Food can be an experience in design, colour, technique and constantly invites a rehashing and reinterpretation of ways to make it. The Food LAB-yrinth illustrated this by bringing

designers, food enthusiasts and chefs to collaborate and craft a gastronomical social space. 'Food for Thought' on the other hand, used conference lunches as a platform to promote traditional and local food items sourced from different specialty restaurants in New Delhi. On the last day of the festival, the FoodLab also curated a food walk through independent restaurants and cafés that swarm the streets of Delhi's Hauz Khas Village.



*Realising the first FoodLab parallel to the UnBox conference at the Max Mueller Bhavan was a unique time and space for The Grey Garden team and friends to stretch out beyond its usual Hauz Khas location. The challenging pop-up nature and scale of this exercise required us all to pitch in with ideation, cooking, coordination & execution. There weren't specific roles for individuals involved, but rather a combination of our best efforts. Themes and concerns ranged far and deep—from the empowering importance of preparing food for yourself, family and friends, to experimenting with creating the chance for people to mix and match and create new blends, as well as experience a simple kind of sensorial happiness through food—the Food LAByrinth encapsulated our beliefs from content to materials used. The aim was to create a modern day ritual feast—gastrojourney—with a community campfire-gathering mood.*

**MIA MORIKAWA**  
Organizer



BeatRepeat used words and text with different mediums to explore the possibilities of meaning and perspective. BeatRepeat's second edition hosted a closed-group workshop. Rukminee Guha Thakurta took participants through design processes in her work on books for artists, photographers and galleries. Sudeep Chaudhuri presented another perspective to design through his work with the magazine, Tehelka. Clyde D'Souza discussed with participants the process of getting a book published in India and Supriya Nayak talked about the journey of the independent publishing house, Yoda Press. The festival also had an evening of interdisciplinary performances that included dramatized book readings, presentations, audio-visual performances and musical interpretations of written work. Artists and writers featured included Samrat, Clyde D'Souza, Veena Venugopal, The New Delhi Guitar Quartet, Astrid Reza & Abmi Handayani, and VJ Thiruda.

CURATED BY QUICKSAND DESIGN STUDIO

# BeatRepeat



*BeatRepeat came to being out of a desire to see more inter-disciplinary approaches to literature, in keeping with the larger intent of UnBox. We were seeking out folks who had interpreted literature through their own practices as well as writers who were open to experimenting and being playful with their own work. Over the course of two years, we've had a wonderful bunch of writers, musicians, dancers, theatre artists and audio-visual artists being part of the BeatRepeat performance evening.*

*In the 2012 edition, we also put together a workshop for a more interested small audience around book design & publishing. This provided a close, intimate setting for young aspiring writers & book designers to engage with a varied set of experts. The most wonderful part of putting this together has been working with the variety of artists willing to let go of set notions and rules, and experiment in collaborating with other practices and art forms. And of course, I would also offer a big up to all the artists who have performed/spoken pro bono and were game for exploration and fun.*

**BABITHA GEORGE**  
Organizer



The RISING exhibition aimed to showcase the role of creative professionals in creating coherent voices of protest and reform, in response to pertinent social, ecological and political issues. Apathy to issues and events that impact our lives in big/small, direct/indirect ways, can often be attributed to lack of information access and clear, compelling communication. Creative professionals, as creators of media and interfaces, are in a unique position to inspire reaction and facilitate constructive dialogue around pertinent issues.



MOHOR RAY DAHIYA  
Organizer



EXHIBITION CURATED BY CODESIGN

# Rising



Curated by Codesign, the exhibition featured four initiatives anchored by design & media practices—The Great Indian Clearance Sale, Gorilla Project, Video Volunteers and Breakthrough, that are stirring things up. Exhibition content comprising of simplified visualizations of complex socio-political issues, visual commentaries on international affairs and films on citizen-led awareness campaigns sparked conversations on the emerging role of design and media as a compelling and inclusive form of activism. Notable amongst the conversations were those revolving around the role of the creative professional not just as a 'stylist' for commissioned communication, but also as a responsible creator of original content. Held at the Queen's Gallery in the British Council from 2–5 February 2012, the exhibition was open to all. The heartening response to the exhibition from festival goers and other attendees, has now inspired a new initiative called Project Rising. Project Rising consists of visual reflections on everyday news and aims to use the power of the image to encourage public response.

# UNBOX CITYWIDE

*UnBox Citywide was an attempt at creating a series of events that took place simultaneously across Delhi in different public spaces and forms. From a series of exhibitions to curated walks & audio-visual performances, the urban spaces that exist for use by the public were utilized, and in many ways, celebrated. Using design as the medium for these events, UnBox broadened its range of audience interaction to enhance the experience of the festival. It illustrated the interactive nature of design, and the spaces it creates for an exchange of information and ideas.*

## 6° Exhibition, BlowUp



6° was a group exhibition that showcased the result of the BlowUp Fellowship. The fellows were open to interpret the theme of 6° as they chose, and produce individual bodies of work, which were exhibited at the Experimental Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre, Delhi from 2–5 Feb.



# Open Village



UnBox brought the spirit of cross-disciplinary cultural experimentation to the city, inviting the public to join Open Studios—a Sunday experience to explore the creative community of Hauz Khas Village. Studios, galleries and stores opened their doors to conversations with people who are inquisitive about art, design and creative practices.

Food Walk saw some inventive and bohemian eateries welcome people to sample signature dishes and savour the diversity of cuisine within Hauz Khas Village. Run by individuals who are passionate about food and creating new gastronomic experiences, the Food Walk also gave them an opportunity to talk about their restaurant's conception and journey thereafter.

## Aesthetics of Cultural Change— A Cultural Walk



Organised by Futurebrands, the walk through Old Faridabad focused on capturing the glory of Indian streets through a perspective of change and dynamism. The participants focused on analyzing things that are new, interesting, out of place, and collide with existing native cultures of the street. The main idea was not just to capture what's interesting but also strike a conversation with people who are either carriers or facilitators of the new and modern elements of the city. During the walk, participants collected visual and oral nuggets about the juxtaposition of old & new. This culminated into a workshop at the British Council facilitated by Futurebrands, where the participants shared and identified patterns of change.

## Bharat Darshan—India is changing



Bharat Darshan was an exhibition and a series of sessions that took place over ten days at the Futurebrands office in Delhi. Their aim was to track the changing New India and to rediscover the spirit of Bharat. For years now, we've all been hearing about a new India; an India fertile with possibilities, pregnant with opportunities, bursting with enthusiasm. The people at Futurebrands set out to answer some questions—where does this New India leave the 'Bharat' we come from? How is the lesser known India reacting to these changes and what is happening there? They ventured out across India—they travelled to towns and to lesser known cities, experienced the local transport, spoke to people on the street, met the local celebrities and the 'aam aadmi', saw the tourist attractions and the lesser known hubs. Everywhere they went, they found a unique spirit and learnt there's a lot more to 'Bharat' than meets the eye, some of which was showcased at the exhibition.



THE UNBOX FESTIVAL—CLOSING

# ANTARIKSHA SANCHAR

*An interdisciplinary collaborative performance, interpreting the history of flight.*



Led by internationally renowned Bharatanatyam exponent Jayalakshmi Eshwar, Antariksha Sanchar, as the closing piece of UnBox 2012 stayed close to the philosophy of UnBox, and brought with it an interaction and collaboration between studios of dance, art, architecture and music. All of these forces combined to experiment with their own styles of expression by finding a space where the amalgamation translated into a power packed multidisciplinary performance that followed the evolution of different forms of air travel—from science to mythology, spirit to soul. This piece brought together B.L.O.T. , Anagram Architects, CellDSGN, Sattyananda (from Audio Ashram) and Mia Morikawa to push boundaries between the old and new in trying to work the traditional with the experimental.



# EXPERIENCE SNAPSHOTS



**M.P. RANJAN**

*Design Thinker & Author*

[www.designforindia.com](http://www.designforindia.com)

“This year the UnBox experience was just as thrilling as the one last year even if I had a lesser role to play in the proceedings, being on one panel discussion as against delivering one of the keynotes in 2011. Perhaps I was able to get involved in many more events that were on the palette this year in early February 2012 in New Delhi at the stimulating venue offered by the Charles Correa built British Council premises on the Kasturbha Gandhi Marg. As the events unfolded I had the occasion to reflect on the development of design communication efforts in India over the years and see how far we have come today with a private initiative from the likes of Codesign, QuickSand, B.L.O.T and Blindboys—all successful Indian creative practices—wishing to stir up the complacency in the Indian design scene with a stimulating offering such as UnBox 2012. What they learned in 2011, they did bigger and better this time around.

UnBox 2012 was in total, very stimulating and left one with a feeling that the youth in design are headed in the right direction and perhaps the field of design is not that badly off as one sees from the ham-handed actions of government and their establishments, particularly in recent times. These private initiatives can show the way, but my take away from UnBox 2012 was that the government of India could take a leaf out of the actions supported by UK, The Netherlands and Germany and see how design in India can be supported and invigorated by some sensitive nurturing and support that the fledgling discipline may need in the days ahead. I do look forward to UnBox 2013 and what it would hold for all of us in the next avatar of this very stimulating conference format with many events and activities across the cusp of art and design, technology and management, governance and living, all needing creative attention here in India today.”



**JOHN THACKARA**

*Design Thinker*

[www.doorsofperception.com](http://www.doorsofperception.com)

Edward Abbey said, “Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell”. The power and momentum of ecocidal ‘development’ seem, in today’s times, unstoppable. Can anything be done to stop this doomsday machine economy? We need to find ways to reconnect with the real world, so that we may understand our utter dependency on the life-support systems that it provides for free. We need to create the contexts and situations in which the death-dealing nature of industrial civilization becomes clear. Change will not come through shouting. Change will come when we re-learn how to look at the world in un-blinkered ways.

This is where next-generation festivals like UnBox come in. Our focus needs to be on ways to see and experience the world differently. The primary activity of a festival, in this context, is starting conversations. These can bring new groups of people together to imagine sustainable alternatives to the way we do things now, and then identify design actions, some of them small, that would bring these alternatives closer. The creation of these new cultural

connections is a powerful form of innovation.

What heartens me about UnBox is that it aspires not to produce spectacles, nor to be a place of entertainment and distraction from reality. Its activities are often spectacular, and fun—but the underlying narrative has a practical focus on real-world outcomes. For future editions, one such desired outcome could be resource efficiency. A priority in the transition to sustainability is to make it easier to share resources such as energy, matter, time, skill, software, space, or food. Resource efficiency is at heart a social process, not a technical one; therefore, the identification of individuals and groups who are already out there, and active, is key.

The search for Net Zero Impact solutions, and the creation of interesting social alternatives, can be as exciting and engaging as the buzz of new technology used to be. By keeping the question open—by conceiving the festival as a place for conversation and creation—energy and commitment can remain positive and productive.



# Speakers & Workshop Anchors

**ADARSH KUMAR**  
Founder, AIACA

“This year, I was impressed by how much the UnBox Festival has grown and the wide range and caliber of speakers. I found the inter-genre dialogue represented in many of the sessions fascinating and thought-provoking. This year, the festival went even further in bringing-together interesting speakers from a wide range of disciplines that one does not get to hear in conversation in other forums—from eating-designers to documentary filmmakers, to design entrepreneurs, to CEOs of large companies.

Globally, knowledge-based industries are being conceptualized and looked at under a unified framework of Creative and Cultural Industries. In India, we continue to have a fragmented approach looking at organically linked fields—for example, crafts, traditional building techniques and architecture—under different pedagogical and policy frameworks.

UnBox’s role in encouraging a more holistic approach, sharing best practices across disciplines and putting practitioners who usually work in silos in dialogue with each other is invaluable for encouraging cross-fertilization and increased vibrancy of the Creative and Cultural Industries in India. Bringing in creative professionals who are global thought leaders in their field—Marie Vogelzang and her work on ‘eating design’, for example—will also play a key role in seeding interest in similar unexplored areas in India.”

**JORIS MALTHA & DANIEL**  
Catalogtree, Netherlands

“Thanks for having us at the UnBox festival, we had a wonderful time! Never having been to India before, the festival was quite an exotic experience to us; and not just because the city of Delhi bewildered us and gave us a sense of regret at having seen so little before returning home. The experience was special because of the

energy we immediately felt when coming to the festival site. We felt at home quickly and amongst colleagues, heard great stories and worked with enthusiastic participants in our workshop. If anything, it was a welcome getaway from our everyday practice, to which we returned refreshed, with new alliances made and with a renewed hunger for making new work. Your organization is inspirational in being independent, tenacious and good humoured. The program you offer is inspirational in being varied, active, dense and well, exotic!”

**GERRY HOPKINSON**  
Co-founder, Unity, UK

“I arrived in Delhi a week ago with some vague ideas about what I might find. Sure, I was excited and interested to see what was going on in other disciplines and other markets, but nothing prepared me for the full on sensual assault of India, of Delhi and most of all of UnBox!

Over the course of the week, I was stimulated by the sights and sounds, by the ideas and projects of like-minded people who shared a vision for creative work that went beyond borders, went beyond cultures and went beyond the prescribed boxes that we have artificially created for ourselves. e.g. architecture, design, social activism, branding, manufacturing etc. I came to realize that we are all striving for the same thing. We all want to do meaningful work, to reach out to people, and to create positive change. I left with a renewed sense of energy, with huge excitement for the possibilities that exist to do work that can make a difference and deliver value for everyone. The festival had a great balance between deep thought and serious discussion, and fun and kicking back. There was time to get to know people and to enjoy others’ company as well as contemplate what was said and shared. Thank you UnBox for giving me a much-needed energy boost in the depths of an English winter. I can’t wait to see you all again soon!”

**KATE HANISIAN & RAMSEY FORD**  
Co-founders, Design Impact

“Eight members of the Design Impact team came to UnBox 2012 from various locations around India. We brought with us our experiences from living and working in India’s social sector, and had multiple opportunities to bounce our ideas off of other designers, entrepreneurs, artists, and non-profit leaders. Although all of the speakers had unique perspectives to offer, each one of us resonated with different panels and topics—which fueled our own internal conversations and growth as a team. The inter-disciplinary nature of the conference helped us see our work and current social movements from multiple lenses, which in turn allows us to think more critically about our own work and its relevance to the broader movements of innovation, social entrepreneurship, and design. To successfully design solutions for the complexities of world’s toughest problems, we must include multi-disciplinary perspectives. After our second year at UnBox, we can safely say that the conference is a road that helps us get there.”

**ERIK RIETVELD, FLORA LYSEN AND RONALD RIETVELD**

**Reitveld Landscape**  
“Affordances for cross-fertilization between disciplines—design and architecture have remained isolated from other disciplines for too long, and science has been living on an island too. Innovation stands to gain from cross-fertilisation and face-to-face contact between pioneers from the creative industry, craftsmen, science and technology. After all, innovation often results from considering the same challenges from different perspectives together with other people. It is for this reason that we believe that UnBox, which brings many disciplines together, is an important event. UnBox 2012 showcased a range of ‘best practices’ in interdisciplinary collaboration for societally relevant interventions. We were thrilled to learn from UnBox and to be part of it.

Given the current complexity of cities, landscape and society, the urgent societal challenges call for an integral and multidisciplinary approach to arrive at novel solutions. That is why we at Rietveld Landscape explicitly call for cross-fertilisation between young creative entrepreneurs (or more generally, initiators of projects) and breakthrough science, because it is at this interface in particular that innovation is to be expected. Online social networks have by no means made face-to-face contact redundant; on the contrary, the two forms of interaction complement one another. By offering young, creative pioneers and scientists joint spaces for work and experiment in temporary vacant buildings, it becomes easier for them to work together and to share their knowledge, creativity and social networks.

Buildings from other epochs often provide unique possibilities for action (or ‘affordances’) due to the way they were constructed or the materials that were used. Often these affordances are non-reproducible, simply because of the material structure and the fact that we do not build in that way anymore (think of palaces, Gothic churches, fortresses or castles). Experiments on site reveal these often surprising possibilities for action. When it comes to temporary use of vacant buildings, fire safety is one of the major obstacles to be overcome. A truly multidisciplinary approach would ideally involve a creative fireman who could challenge designers pro-actively to come up with innovative design solutions and try-out using novel materials. Moreover, the interim and experimental reuse of buildings can offer valuable insights into the longer-term potential of a location, as the interim use of the Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, for instance, has demonstrated. So the interim can be deliberately deployed as an exploratory stage.

We believe that we should redevelop the practice of educating designers—after their initial training, talented designers can benefit from being in a multidisciplinary team of scientists and designers from various disciplines. One of the challenges of such multidisciplinary work is to not only work on pragmatic solutions but also

to keep the standards of aesthetics high. We have developed a program to train specialists in temporary use of vacancy for innovation. Thousands of inspiring, vacant buildings in The Netherlands have the potential to be re-used for creative entrepreneurship and innovation. With the new two-year Master Vacant NL, The Sandberg Institute and Rietveld Landscape realize the ambition to train designers, craftsmen, legal specialists, and scientists to become specialists of temporary use.

The program started in September 2011 and revolves around design research on the potential of vacancy for innovation. Insights and solutions from different fields of knowledge are combined to address the topic in an integrated manner. Several unique buildings are available for experimentation and the making of site-specific design interventions. Without doubt, what Europe needs this decennium is a multidisciplinary team of talented specialists in temporary reuse to design and build the impossible. The challenge posed by enormous amount of vacant buildings from the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries calls for a range of visionary, unorthodox, and appealing interventions.”

**DR. VENKI PADMANABHAN**  
CEO- Royal Enfield

“I was invited to UnBox 2012 to present my views on how a brand casts its narrative to rise above the noise of everyone else’s. Admittedly, taking a couple of days off for what seemed to be a ‘design conference’ was a bit of a stretch. With the attendant ego satisfaction of being a presenter (sad, isn’t it?) and the knowledge that it was going to be in Delhi (our corporate headquarters is there), giving me a chance to share this event with our company’s heads of Public Relations and Marketing got me over the hump.

What I got for the investment of time was an absolutely smashing experience—very committed and articulate speakers from all walks of life vigorously speaking about their causes and creations. I personally gained from this event at two levels. First, at a personal level, to be a kid again and watch with wonder all the crazy but cool things people were spending their lives

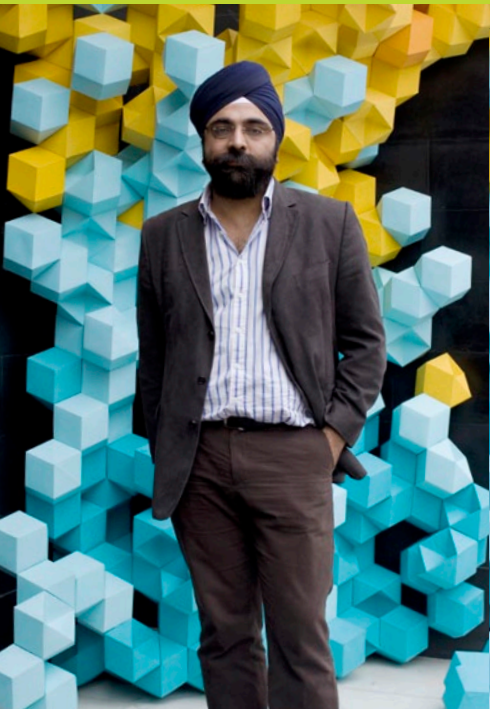
doing—the guys who make beautiful furniture out of wood pallets, the guys who make wordless pictures every night casting vivid political statements in the next day’s papers, the women’s and people’s rights advocates, the architects of new design and museums—simply a torrent of stuff for the brain, eyes and palate to feast on. There were so many things going on in parallel that after a few hours, one simply had to submit to the belief that you were going to miss out on a lot and it was going to be ok!

At a business level, it was quite useful. It is now my job to clarify and sharpen how we shape and express the story of our brand in people’s minds around the world—a bit of a vague and challenging task. It surely has to rise from the collection of diverse thinking that needs to come from outside my limited ‘automotive’ world. So I got to test my mental models and beliefs on what is ‘cool’ and what gets thinking people excited, not just here in India but also in the U.K. and the Netherlands (crazy beautiful people). So it turned out to be a good two days of unstructured immersion in fields of diverse thinking with very interesting and committed people. I got a lot more out than I put in; ergo a good deal! Look forward to participating again.”

**RICHARD VAN DER LAKEN & PEPIJN ZURBURG**  
The Gorilla Project

“The hospitality at UnBox 2012 was very good. We felt very welcome, everything was taken care of in an excellent and very friendly way. The personal approach of the organizers felt really good too. We will always love you. :-)

With regard to the content of the event, we really liked the diversity of subjects at the conference and variety of events in the festival. As European designers it was nice to see and hear more about the Indian context. We liked the fact that Indian speakers dominated the conference. The design elements of the festival were good. Though communication started late, it was thoroughly done. We especially liked the design and content of the program book. The location too was very nice with a great courtyard and excellent food!”





# Participants & Fellows

**ABHIJEET MEHTA**  
**Participant, QUEST**

“In the first year of UnBox, one didn’t know what to expect other than that there would be diverse presenters who shared a common passion for design, form, function with a tilt towards sustainability or the arts. UnBox 2011 was a first for me where ‘networking’ changed from exchanging business cards to exchanging real ideas. I was excited to get a chance to participate in the 2012 event and a ‘thank you’ goes out to my organization QUEST and to Quicksand Design Studio for providing me with this opportunity.

Being from QUEST, our primary interest lies at the intersection of education & technology. However, the importance of design innovation and socio cultural factors in the work we do is equally important. UnBox really underscored the relevance of innovation in form and functionality in any field of work. I came away from the event re-energized as well as with a sense of “Damn if they can do it, so can we!” I think this was for me personally the biggest take away, a chance to meet and interact with people engaged in activities which included recreating urban spaces, citizen journalist initiatives in strife torn regions, raising awareness and access to sanitation, hearing how motorcycles can build cult followings to a classical guitar performance—an incredible buffet of sensory and intellectual offerings. If there was one thing that did create a problem, it was that UnBox 2012 presented a problem of plenty when it came to picking and choosing the events to attend. One did walk away wishing you could have been in two places at once.

Events that really made my UnBox were surprisingly not the ones I expected before the event and that’s another great thing about a festival of this nature. The panel on Habitats & Community opened up several possibilities of action even for the kind of work we do at QUEST with leveraging educational technology for underserved youth. It was exciting to see how innovation in creating versatile urban spaces had applications for the dissemination of technology tools in India. This is just one example of the tangible value I took away from UnBox. There were many such ‘aha!’ moments over the 2 days that I was present for.

The fun element was of course omnipresent with the beer bar in one venue and a funky dining experience with the Food Labyrinth.

One bar counter wasn’t enough though! I will definitely look forward to the next edition of UnBox for an equal dose of inspiration, culture and fun! Thanks again to the UnBox team for a memorable event!”

**DAVE FOSTER**  
**Fellow, Sustainable Lifestyles**

“The UnBox fellowship and festival definitely has relevance and impact on my professional work and personal pursuits. Sustainability (the focus of my fellowship) is key to the designs and solutions I suggest to any challenge or client, no matter what the circumstances. I wouldn’t feel right doing it any other way, and the more I know, the better and better-informed solutions I can present. And the collection of creativity, wisdom, opinions and examples from so many diverse sources at the festival broadened my horizons, sparked new thoughts and new connections with people I plan on keeping in touch with.

Speaking more specifically about the fellowship, I think it gave us three main benefits—meeting and interacting with the other fellows, who are great, knowledgeable and inspiring people and new friends; the people, practices and technologies we got to learn about in Auroville; and the sparks for deeper conversation among the fellows that Auroville provided. We had the opportunity to talk and learn from each other, ask questions and teach in different ways, and in some ways gain more clarity on subjects we explored. I’m very happy to know each of the fellows now and will stay in touch. I’ve already contacted a few of the extraordinary people I met in Auroville, I’ve already made an introduction between one and other friends I know who could possibly collaborate and I plan on making at least a few more introductions soon. I will share what I’ve learned over a number of posts on my blog on design for development and the base of the pyramid. And I imagine that more benefits will unfold, with opportunities to make helpful introductions between people I’ve met and others I come to know in the future. That is important and helpful to myself and the causes I continue to work for professionally and from my own personal interest.

About the festival, I loved the combination of knowledge and creativity from so many sources and in so many forms—from design to art to music to food. The quality of presenters, participants and events was fantastic, and I was so glad to feel that everyone—presenters

and participants alike—were on the same level, approachable, and happy to talk to anyone. I think that created a great atmosphere and a reason to come back. It’s one thing to be presented with a ton of new ideas and inspiration, as if you were watching it on tv, but another to be able to ask questions and have conversations with presenters and panelists throughout the weekend.

What I found most interesting was that at the heart of every presentation and event at UnBox, we were always talking about human interaction and how we foster it through our actions as designers. I saw that too, at the heart of Auroville. Even with our focus on sustainability, the core was about human nature, facilitating and enabling positive interactions in a grand human experiment about society. Design is just another word for that facilitation and enablement with positive intention. I think UnBox understands that and demonstrates it beautifully through who it brings to present and the attention it gives to showcasing great examples of creativity in so many forms. It’s inspiring and energizing to see and experience. That may be another unique element—UnBox makes it feel like we can all do this stuff and shows us it’s all possible, where other conferences may make design feel elite or above the audience in its praise of design and designers. Well done, UnBox.

I’m happy to have gained what I feel like is a lot of new knowledge, inspiration and ideas, thanks to the UnBox fellowship and festival.”

**RUCHITA MADHOK**  
**Fellow, The Great WASH Yatra**

“Performance, by its very nature is a co-creative process; it involves the confluence of many different disciplines, the interweaving of multiple forms of storytelling and the cooperation of individuals, each accomplished in their own specific form of practice. It is a phenomenon that exists at the intersection of ideas.

Performance making however, is a field that is often left out of design debates—it’s as if its art credentials make it a less serious contender to investigate the role of creativity in social, political and economic ecosystems. It has been refreshing therefore, that UnBox has recognised the value of

performance in exploring the nature of inter-disciplinary processes, and also its implications for other fields.

On The Great Wash Yatra fellowship in which I participated, the collaborative techniques we adopted—whether as producers, directors, scriptwriters or designers—were no different from those that would have been used by a team of people constructing a building or engineering a bridge. Each member of the group brought a unique skill set to the table and we integrated seamlessly into the creation of the puppetry performance at large. The resulting synergy ultimately led to a significant outcome in a relatively short period of time.

I don’t believe that our way of working was a deliberate decision on our part; rather we followed our instincts as professionals. In performance making, it is the norm that teams of people who may never have met before come together for a project, make work and disband soon after. This is a model that has lately been adopted by other creative professions, including design and advertising. Umbrellas that provide shelter to creative collaborations are replacing full-service agencies, and as practitioners find leaner ways of doing the work they enjoy and are good at, I think that the work ethic of performance makers will become more relevant to these disciplines as well.

In a world obsessed with the products of creative pursuit, where the emphasis tends to be more on portfolios than process, being able to pry open the ‘hows’ of doing, making, thinking and working, the UnBox Festival 2012 has been a rewarding opportunity to share our methods with other practitioners and learn from them on an equal platform. I look forward to more such interaction next year.”

**TEESTA DAS**  
**Fellow, Livelihoods for Children**

“My institute follows this method of curriculum, where, at the end of the first year of design studies, students have to take a decision as to which disciplines they would like to get into for the rest of their semesters here. So narrow is our perception at that time that I felt it would be the end of life all together, if I took the wrong decision because until a year ago, I had not known what design was, and now that I was beginning to understand, I had to branch-out already! Why did one have to be so specific, I had often wondered?!

I took up Product Design because I thought it provided me the best quality of education, maybe better than what Animation did. But I was only unaware and judgmental at that time. I have always been interested in several things at a given time. I kept questioning myself as to how do I see myself contributing as a product

designer—What will I do with this education received? How? What? When? Where? Why?

Somehow, this fellowship opportunity came at a time when I needed to know the answers to these questions the most, with my final design project looming ahead as well! I had to gain a certain sense of clarity and unknowingly, this fellowship became a medium to understand this for myself.

I understood the importance of process in my work. No matter what the outcome, the process in itself should be the work that one sets out to accomplish. Therein indeed is the learning and the progression. Also, that there is never a ‘one-way’, and hence, an interdisciplinary approach broadens that mindset. Before coming for the fellowship, I had a certain mindset that opened up during the fellowship with first hand interactions, discussions and a responsibility being established thereon. My perspective widened even further with the conference, when I truly felt that there never really is a one-way, but there is a one-mind, and that is of design thinking.

It was a great opportunity to understand how designers think and in retrospect how I think as well. I was fortunate to have a super fellow-anchor, who respected the way each one of us had our own ways of contributing, and the beauty of it was that they were all unique. I think it is also an ability that only few have, which is, to be able to find something productive out of anything and everything. I am definitely going to polish my skills to be able to do so! And of course, learning is a process that I will continue to follow throughout. Thank you once again for the brilliant opportunity and a very warm stay in Delhi as well!”

**ATIKA GUPTA BOSE**  
**Participant, Apeejay Group**

“Centred around creativity, innovation, and putting the user’s perspective as the heart of the problem, UnBox Festival was truly an engagement of the senses.

The workshops focused on hands-on, user-centered design approaches to problem-solving, helping the participants better understand the tools and processes used in thinking out of the box. I particularly enjoyed the talks by The Gorilla Project and Marije Vogelzang and the latter left us brimming with ideas on how we can format food events at The Park Hotels using our key beliefs—innovation, differentiation and creativity—resulting in an overall inspiring experience. I definitely left with a stronger appreciation in the value that design thinking can bring to a usual approach and the way simple things can be made more interesting and attention catching by presenting them in an interactive manner and by adding a pinch of humour.”

**ANISH DASGUPTA**  
**Fellow, Livelihoods for Children**

“The UnBox Festival really is what its name suggests. It opens things up and gets them moving. To start with, the fellowship I received dug deep into my head (and heart) to bring out a larger purpose in the field that I am in, visual communication. Then, at the conference, I was exposed to a substantial amount of creativity and new thought. I met people from different backgrounds, found similar interests and we even discussed collaborating together in the near future. For a design student like myself, that was quite a bonus; I was able to take in a lot in that week. The multidisciplinary line up of presenters and workshops was refreshing; this was also a great way to connect design to many other fields, particularly in the area of social development. The speakers were inspiring, at the same time not intimidating, and there was a general atmosphere of approachability that had everyone up in good spirits. (The pleasant weather and beer helped in that aspect too).

Everything was well organised and lived up to what it promised, with only a few glitches. The food was scrumptious, the goodies were great and all in all the conference was very enjoyable. A big success, in my opinion!

The ‘Livelihoods for Children’ fellowship was an intense eight day experience at the ‘Earn n’ Learn’ programme in the Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad. Along with four other fellows, I worked with Design Impact fellow, Brian Gough, to explore ways to improve the existing system and come up with ideas that might improve the overall development of the underprivileged children that come to the *ashram*. The time we spent at the *ashram*, the people that we talked to, and most of all the interaction that we had with the children, was unique and unforgettable. We even spent a day living with the children’s families in their homes, and the warmth and generosity that they showed us was incredible.

Although we weren’t able to make a significant contribution to the working of the children’s programme, a lot of great ideas came up during that short span of time. As a team, we developed our skills in design thinking and each of us left the ashram with a personal connection to it. I’m very glad to have been a part of UnBox 2012 and I’m eagerly looking forward to the next edition!”





*UnBox is the culmination of efforts of four successful Indian creative practices that have exemplified the value of inter-disciplinary collaborations as the means of driving impact and change. With UnBox, they seek to locate, strengthen, and support a larger community with shared beliefs and optimism about creating social and cultural change in India.*

BLOTTIN.BLOGSPOT.COM

**B.L.O.T.**

B.L.O.T. also known as The Basic Love of Things, is an acclaimed mixed media performance collective that creates memorable experiences by transforming spaces through live performances comprising of sound, light, imagery and art. B.L.O.T. believes in a mixed media culture that has resulted in several music videos and independent films that will find their way into a debut audio-visual DVD album in 2012. Using several techniques touching traditional film making, stop-motion animation, motion graphics and new media technology, the central aim is to create contemporary visual music pieces and independent cinema that breaks traditional approaches to creation and publishing in India.

WWW.BLINDBOYS.ORG

**BLINDBOYS**

Blindboys uses free and open means to share photography. In addition to being a platform for new visual perspectives from the continent, Blindboys also dreams of creating a community for a better synthesis of art, media, and Asian cultures leading to a holistic meaning of new Asian visual identities.

WWW.CODESIGN.IN

**CODESIGN**

Codesign is a brand & communication design practice. With an understanding of what a business or organization needs to say, and learning from what the end-users care about, Codesign bridges the gap with brand communication that it is meaningful and memorable for the end user. In times of change, their efforts at 'what-brands-stand-for' and 'how-you-say-it' are driven by new processes, tools and user behaviour. Codesign does not conform to a style, but to the view that each project is unique in the challenges that it poses and the context that it is situated in. Their approach and design is Indian, because they work in response to the Indian context.

WWW.QUICKSAND.CO.IN

**QUICKSAND**

Quicksand is a multi-disciplinary design and innovation consultancy. They bring expertise in business, design, technology and research to partner organizations in the innovation process. They believe that human-centered design is intrinsic to robust product & service development and is thus the guiding principle for all innovations that emerge from their practice. Quicksand's work spans product and service innovation, design for social impact, technology environments and brand strategy along with thriving independent practices.

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