

# POST BOX FOR THE OPEN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 2 JULY 2014

Het Nieuwe Instituut launches the online and interactive **Post Box for the Open Society**, an invitation to the international community of architects, designers, thinkers and researchers to submit ideas and designs for an open society.

The Post Box is part of the Dutch entry to the Biennale di Architettura in Venice, entitled **Open: A Bakema Celebration**. It presents a critical reflection on the work and research of Jaap Bakema (1914–1981), in particular his ideas for the open society.

From the submissions to the Post Box a monthly newsletter will be compiled by Het Nieuwe Instituut. This is the second issue with an overview of new submissions and a preview of the essay by Inge Goudsmit and Adrienne Simons in a series of reflections on the subject of the open society.

Visit the Post Box at [open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl)

## NEW: SUBMISSIONS

1. **Battleground Gota** (TU Delft – Global Housing Studio / Vastu-Shilpa Foundation, Ahmedabad). Team Gunday – Hemant Pawar, Francesca Agresti, Zhen Zhang, Hugo Corbett, Thomas Ponds
2. **The Transparency Grenade**. Julian Oliver.
3. **Radicalizing the Local**. Jeanne van Heeswijk, Afrikaanderwijk Cooperative.
4. **Integrating Informality: A Case for an Informal Settlement in Mumbai**. Rohan Varma.
5. **Opening Speech Open: A Bakema Celebration**. Jet Bussemaker.
6. **The Golden Heart Pavilion**. Malkit Shoshan.
7. **HABITAT. Inhabited**. Laura Katharina Straehle, Ellen Rouwendal, Rohit Raj, Marlen Beckedahl.
8. **3D Print Canal House**. DUS architects.
9. **BIM is beautiful**. NL Architects.
10. **The Good Life**. The Berlage Center of Advanced Studies in Architecture and Urban Design.
11. **House and Contradiction. Quaderns 265**. Ethel Baraona Pohl.

## FEATURED: PROJECTS

**The Golden Heart Pavilion**. Malkit Shoshan.

The **Golden Heart Pavilion** was the first community structure in Ein Hawd. It was created to support a series of cultural and international events in a Palestinian village of 'Internally Displaced Persons' in Israel.



The **Golden Heart Pavilion** was an alternative solution that provided the village with an extra 100 m<sup>2</sup> of public space. The structure inside was divided into two connected halls and programmes, with a 5.5m-high gathering space and a 6.5m-high exhibition space. The asymmetric structure, which is composed of frenetically distorted and multiplied golden domes, was inspired by Temple Mount in Jerusalem and by the arches and domes of the old Ein Hawd.

The mere existence of this pavilion, although ephemeral, triggered a discussion on the necessity for a community centre in Ein Hawd.

The pavilion was a part of a long term project with a community of Palestinian IDPs, which aimed at combining activism, architecture and politics to improve the living conditions in the village, as well as, to highlight segregation and human rights violation through the use of spatial planning in Israel.

The project started in 2004. The story of the village and of the project are documented in the book **Village** by Malkit Shoshan and Maurizio Borolotti that is published this summer, 10 years later.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/golden-heart-pavilion](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/golden-heart-pavilion)

**The Good Life**. The Berlage Center of Advanced Studies in Architecture and Urban Design.



The Berlage Center of Advanced Studies in Architecture and Urban Design is pleased to announce **The Good Life**, a three-year multifaceted program exploring the relationship of the built environment to collective pursuits, personal aspirations, and the contemporary world. Following in the footsteps of Bakema's notion of the open society, this program of design-research projects, seminars, and public events aims to explore how on different scales and in different cultural contexts architects and urban designers can contribute and enrich social vitality and livelihood.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/good-life](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/good-life)

**Battleground Gota**. TU Delft – Global Housing Studio / Vastu-Shilpa Foundation, Ahmedabad. Team Gunday – Hemant Pawar, Francesca Agresti, Zhen Zhang, Hugo Corbett, Thomas Ponds.

Team Gunday seeks to explore the changing role of the architect in Ahmedabad as the city expands, rejecting nostalgia for the traditional Indian village, embracing the contradictions of contemporary Indian culture and acknowledging a new urban paradigm characterised by strange adjacencies, rapid expansion, form following finance, a paradigm which is unreflecting, contested, flexible and irrational.



On the edge of Ahmedabad, one of Asia's fastest growing cities in one of India's wealthiest states, Modi and friends welcome large housing developers at the expense of local democratic processes, informal settlements, ecologies and 'Architecture' (in the city of Kahn, Corbusier, Correa and Doshi). Within this context, the Battleground Gota project proposes other modes of engagement for architects within participatory community organisations which can disrupt, deflect and exploit 'bigger' forces.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/battleground-gota-tu-delft-global-housing-studio-vastu-shilpa-foundation-ahmedabad](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/battleground-gota-tu-delft-global-housing-studio-vastu-shilpa-foundation-ahmedabad)

**HABITAT. Inhabited**. Laura Katharina Straehle, Ellen Rouwendal, Rohit Raj, Marlen Beckedahl.



To inhabit is to make a place yours. As part of the International Habitat Design Studio led by Prof. Balkrishna Doshi at Vastu Shilpa Foundation (India), **HABITAT. Inhabited** has been developed within a group of international students. The workshop served as a creative pool of ideas and inspiring discussions about social housing strategies. Social housing in the Indian context asks for inclusive solutions in fast-growing cities facing issues of modern housing and deeply held traditions. The project deals with the question of 'How to create a flexible social habitat that enables the lower class to create its open society and encourages interactions within the environment' – through the means of a sensitive and culture-related architecture that benefits the society and the needs of the place.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/habitat-inhabited](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/habitat-inhabited)

**Integrating Informality: A Case for an Informal Settlement in Mumbai**. Rohan Varma.



Mumbai, as many are aware, is home to an estimated 10 million squatters – about 60 percent of its population giving it the unceremonious title of being the global capital of slumming. Its vast informal settlements have grown in pockets throughout the city with little access to adequate housing, infrastructure and urban resources. In fact, even though these informal settlements account for over half of the city's population they reside in just a little under 10 percent of the land – resulting in incredibly high densities with little precedent found anywhere else in the world.

This has in turn prompted several responses in recent years from both the government as well as from civil society, that largely rely on solely increasing the supply of affordable housing. The current model for slum rehabilitation in the city enables private developers to re-house slums in vertical tenements on existing plots in exchange for land and construction rights that can be sold in the open market for enormous profits. In other words, this scheme suggests to further increase the densities found in Mumbai's slums by effectively forcing them to reside in just 5 percent of the land – half the area they live in now!

What many of these policies crucially ignore is that the issue is simply not only about supplying 'X' number of affordable units, but one of exclusion – which is a process we must reverse. In order to do that, we must begin to recognize informal settlements not as isolated islands of poverty – but as valid parts of the city that need to be integrated within their larger contexts. Through research and analysis of an informal settlement in the city's financial district, the project attempts to use a series of design tools and strategies that not only rehabilitates the existing slum dwellers, but helps integrate them with the cities that lie beyond their borders.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/integrating-informality-case-informal-settlement-mumbai](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/integrating-informality-case-informal-settlement-mumbai)

## OPEN: ARCHIVE

In every newsletter of the **Post Box for the Open Society**, we will refer to the historic **Post Box for the Development of the Habitat** of Jaap Bakema. This is the first newsletter that Jaap Bakema wrote in 1959, as an open call for submissions for the post box.

**Post Box for the Development of the Habitat, Newsletter 1, by Jaap Bakema Sunday, September 20, 1959**

The work presented at Otterlo September 1959, made clear that the interest of the participants was no more only directed at the development of modern architecture, but more at the development of total human Habitat [...] Therefore it is also decided that the name of C.I.A.M. could no more be used by the participants, and that the international contact should be developed towards a more intensified working method for individuals and groups on the subject Habitat.

For that purpose there will be available the secretary address: Posthoornstraat 12B / Rotterdam / Holland J.B. Bakema



Now, I make the next propositions:

1. If you are confronted with problems concerning Habitat and you like to confrontate them with other colleagues, who are working in research spirit, you send me plans, text and photos concerning this problems.
2. I shall prepare a folded illustrated communication paper with summaries of this information.
3. After a period there will be a meeting of those who gave information, organized by themselves.
4. The name of this exchange centre will be: Post Box for the development of the Habitat (B.P.H.) Boîte Postale pour le développement de l'Habitat (B.P.H.) Briefkasten für die Entwicklung von Habitat (B.P.H.)
5. The aim will be to develop architecture and townplanning towards a language which can communicate about human behaviour.

**B.P.H.** / 20th of September  
Rotterdam, Posthoornstraat 12B  
J.B. Bakema

## NOW: ARCHINED

During the Biennale, **ArchiNed** is taking the discussion about the open society out of the Dutch pavilion and into the world of today on the World Wide Web. In six articles, designers and academics will critically reflect on the idea of the open society. Readers are expressly invited to take part in this debate.

**The Dull City Creates Social Distance – Inge Goudsmit and Adrienne Simons**  
[www.archined.nl/en/forum/2014/eng/the-dull-city-creates-social-distance](http://www.archined.nl/en/forum/2014/eng/the-dull-city-creates-social-distance)

Housing estates in Hong Kong are compact and densely populated residential zones about the size of a small European city, made up not only of homes but also of countless other functions. More than 60% of the inhabitants of Hong Kong live on estates. Right after the Second World War these housing estates stood at the basis of a relative open society that offered plenty of opportunity for social mobility. More than fifty years later, in a society dominated by the market, such estates form an obstacle to the emancipation of population groups. They have become masterpieces of efficiency, tailored precisely to the needs of residents, automatically encouraging like-minded people to live close to one another. That has turned Hong Kong into a city of islands, with little interaction or exchange between them. Hong Kong seems to prove Richard Sennet's theory that people who do not develop their stranger skills are incapable of responding to complex situations, and ultimately will no longer show any empathy or interest in 'the other'. A radically different approach to the housing question is essential if the city is once again to become inhabitable for everybody and to serve as a forum for sharing ideas.

*Inge Goudsmit is a project architect at OMA Hong Kong. Adrienne Simons is a journalist and owner of Studio Refill. Both of them live and work in Hong Kong.*

## OPEN: POST BOX

The **Post Box for the Open Society** and **Open: A Bakema Celebration** both originated as a collaboration between Het Nieuwe Instituut, TU Delft and their shared research initiative the Jaap Bakema Study Centre. Dutch website ArchiNed is project partner for the Post Box.



The newsletter is distributed by Het Nieuwe Instituut. Editors: Dirk van den Heuvel and Katja Truijen. For subscriptions, more info and questions, please visit the website: [open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl)