

# POST BOX FOR THE OPEN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 3 AUGUST 2014

Het Nieuwe Instituut has launched 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) and in particular his ideas for the open society.

Each month we send out a newsletter with a compilation of submissions to the Post Box. This is the third issue, which also includes a preview of the article by Michelle Provoost in a series of reflections on the subject of the open society.

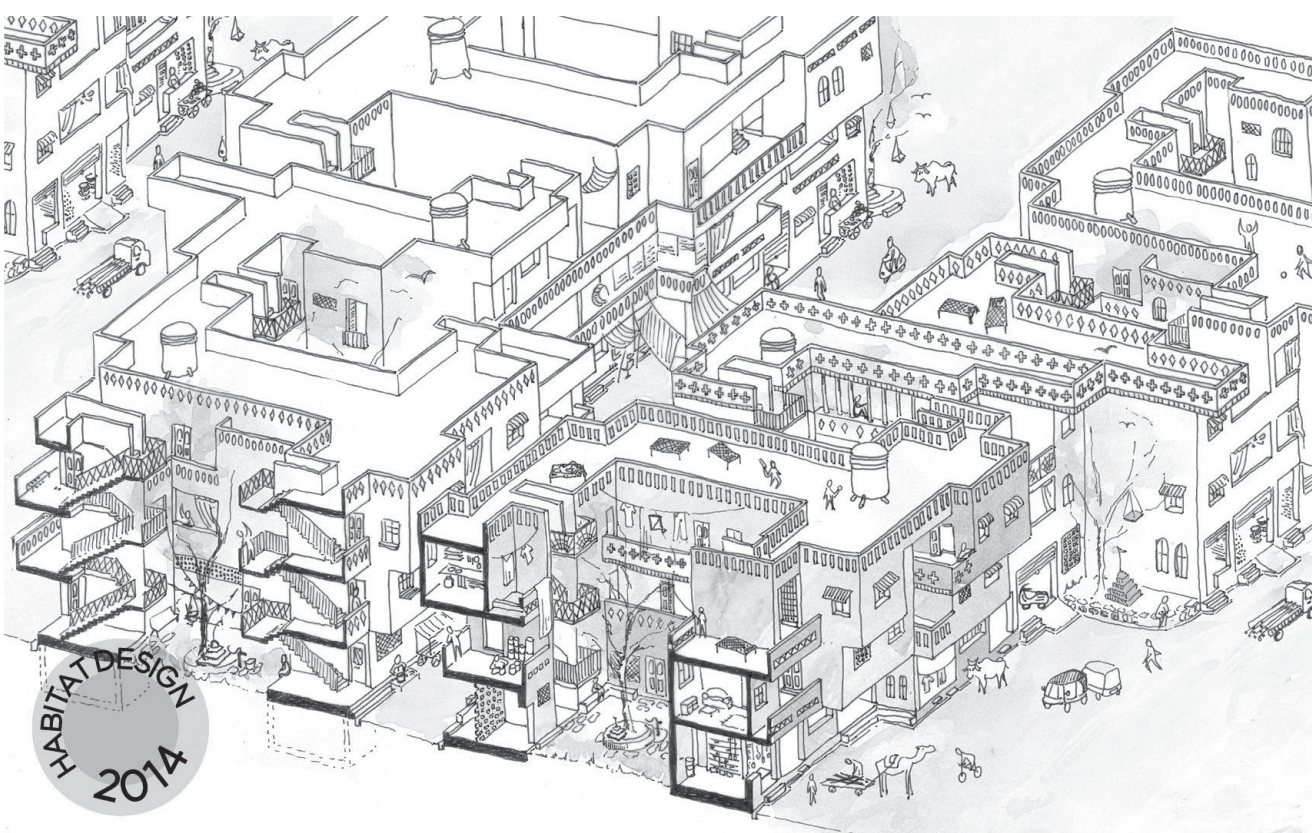
Visit the Post Box at [open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl)

## NEW: SUBMISSIONS

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18. **AnG Akademie einer neuen Gropiusstadt (1).** CUD Chair for Urban Design and Urbanization TU Berlin.
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22. **Loaded – Editorial to Volume 40.** Arjen Oosterman.

## FEATURED: PROJECTS

**Stage 0: the Urban Frame.** Matteo Biella, Piyush Verma, Sophie Stoebe, Viola Liedervald.



The first thing you notice when you arrive in India is that everything is more messy, more crowded, more polluted, faster. This is because your plane is probably landing in New Delhi or Mumbai.

Fortunately India doesn't always show this face, as we realised upon arrival in Ahmedabad for the Habitat design studio 2014. Although it's home to more than 6 million people, Ahmedabad has another feeling, another flow, even more so in its suburbs such as Gota, our project site for affordable housing.

As a design group we agreed that understanding the local needs was our first aim and that this could lead to a key design input, so we organised interviews with local people and as a result we discovered that the people we were going to design for are really humble: simplicity, everyday nature, flexibility were common keywords.

Our proposal envisions the architect as designer of an "urban frame" and related basic facilities (water and electricity supply) based on which future inhabitants can customise the organisation of the spaces of their future houses. In doing so, the dwellings will have a well-thought and consistent starting point (the ground floor) on which future extension will be safely and respectfully organised by the tenants themselves.

Our project strives for simplicity and clarity, both on unit and urban scales, while believing that this approach can still preserve the inner complexity of Indian culture.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/stage-0-urban-frame](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/stage-0-urban-frame)

**Habitat Design India, Water and Treasure.** Ami Gokani, Lukas Mahlendorf, Morgane Goffin, Lex te Loo.



Water and Treasure, the two recurring elements in India's informal dwellings. This was the basis of our design for affordable housing in a three month studio in Ahmedabad, India. Our bottom-up approach found its roots in what we called the treasure box, the heart of the home, with shelter and holy combined with the water box. The system was given a base in the community treasure around which the simple boxes were stacked, sheltering the courtyard growing over time. More communities would join in a fractal based evolutionary pattern, leaving all the scales intact and creating a solid social network for the new arrivals, the migrants.

A series of interviews were conducted with arrivals to the city of Ahmedabad who could afford approximately one third of a house. Soon we found out that the arrivals need to build up a new network based on many layers of collective being. This should be the heart of the plan. Secondly we composed the basic urban grammar of the context. Continuity and discontinuity, ground and sky, diversity of event, fixed and flowing, and the tree as enabler of event.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/habitat-design-india-water-and-treasure](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/habitat-design-india-water-and-treasure)

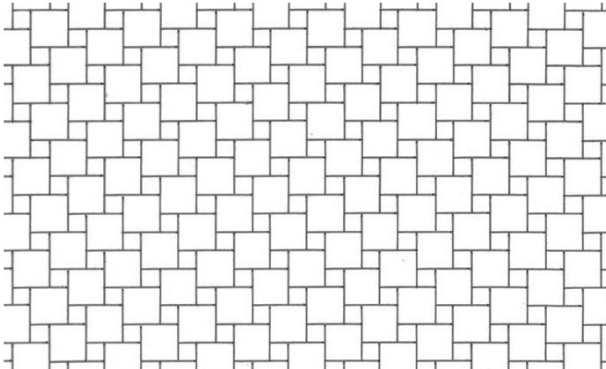
**AnG Akademie einer neuen Gropiusstadt.** CUD Chair for Urban Design and Urbanization TU Berlin.



The Akademie einer neuen Gropiusstadt provides a platform to investigate and produce Gropiusstadt's common ground. How do the inhabitants relate to the project that is the city? How can they become the co-producers of the city? What has to be provided and what can be generated via cooperation? [www.cud.tu-berlin.de](http://www.cud.tu-berlin.de)

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/ang-akademie-einer-neuen-gropiusstadt](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/ang-akademie-einer-neuen-gropiusstadt)

**Contested Spaces of the Open Society.** Dirk van den Heuvel.



This essay highlights some of the inherent contradictions that architects have to face when trying to build towards an Open Society. The claims by architects, in particular the post-war Team 10 group, which disbanded the famous CIAM organisation of modern architecture, are confronted with a rereading of Karl Popper's seminal book.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/contested-spaces-open-society](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/contested-spaces-open-society)

**The Other Market.** Pablo Calderón Salazar.



The Other Market is a platform, materialised in a series of carts and stalls, to trade products and services without money, using dialogue as a currency. The carts and stalls are made, embracing the aesthetics of informality, aiming to create a contrast with over-planned and over-designed societies. This is also the main way to trigger dialogues on the streets. The Other Market affirms the public space as a place for participation and contestation, in contrast with the de-politicised public space that people in power want our cities to have.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/other-market](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/other-market)

## 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 second newsletter that Jaap Bakema wrote in 1960, including a list of the new submissions to the Post Box.

**Post Box for the Development of the Habitat, Newsletter 2, by Jaap Bakema**  
Wednesday, May 4, 1960

BPH/21741/Ba/d0

To those who participated in Otterlo.

We got letters or informations:

from:	country:	about:
1. Blomstedt	Finland	le Carré Bleu
2. Candilis-Josic-Woods	France	team X-meeting 1960
3. Giancarlo de Carlo	Italy	report-statement
4. van Eesteren	Holland	sympathising letter
5. Erskine	Sweden	new contact
6. Friedman	Israel-France	l'architecture mobile
7. Hoffmann	Germany-Austria	report Otterlo
8. Institut des bâtiments ...	Czechoslovakia	ask informations about former work C.I.A.M.
9. Jaramillo	Colombia	Medellin university
10. Lehmbruck	Germany	the regeneration of towns
11. Miquel	Algerie	the building of free space
12. Polonyi	Hungary	letter Sekler
13. Rausch and Stein	Germany	contribution Otterlo
14. R.I.B.A.	Great Britain	congress U.I.A. 1961
15. Santosh Chosh	India	support to their work
16. Sekler	Austria-U.S.A.	disagreement about Otterlo
17. Smithson	England	report Otterlo / a publication of personal ideas
18. Tange	Japan	concerning spirit of organization
19. Voelcker	England	Otterlo report
20. Wogenscky	France	representation in Unesco

Please will you give me your opinion about:  
/ do you like to meet again in 1961 in a kind of conference as Otterlo 1959;  
/ which subjects you like to introduce in such a meeting;  
/ where and by whom could it be organized;  
/ whom do you propose to be invited.

The documents about the Otterlo conference 1959 will be arranged in sketchform in June 1960.

Salutations cordiales,  
J.B. Bakema / Posthoornstraat 12B / Rotterdam-Holland

## 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 Openness State: from an (en)closed society to an open society in Cape Town – Michelle Provoost.** [www.archined.nl/en/forum/2014/eng/the-openness-state/](http://www.archined.nl/en/forum/2014/eng/the-openness-state/)

The urban design principles that shaped Western Europe's open society had a huge impact on the twentieth century. In a variety of constellations they can be found in each country, under every political system, and in every urban design that was fashionable in its day. But there is no other country where these principles have been adopted and perversely transformed as in South Africa.

In South Africa these design principles were not used to build an open society, but to build a closed society of townships, with as their main and only goal the segregation of coloured and white people. It is hard to imagine another country in which urban design had such a direct and huge impact on society. Where social engineering was so successfully executed by the Apartheid regime through urban design, and where urban design proved its power as a social engineering tool. In Cape Town apartheid is set in concrete. With the apartheid inheritance still very visible in every neighbourhood, and on every street corner, the most urgent question in contemporary Cape Town is, how urban design can help reverse the situation that it created itself. How to open the closed, and separated town, and make it into a city that connects physically and mentally. Is it possible to wipe away the spatial traces of apartheid? The Density Syndicate, a project by the African Centre for Cities and International New Town Institute, deals with these questions.

Michelle Provoost is director of INTI (International New Town Institute), and founding partner of Crimson Architectural Historians.

## OPEN: POST BOX

The **Post Box for the Open Society** and **Open: A Bakema Celebration** both originated as a collaboration between Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, TU Delft and their shared research initiative the Jaap Bakema Study Centre. The Post Box is supported by ArchiNed, NWO and Mecanoo Architecten.



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