

# POST BOX FOR THE OPEN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 5 OCTOBER 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.

Each month we send out a newsletter with a compilation of submissions to the Post Box. This is the fifth issue, which also includes a preview of the article by Simon Kretz and Christian Salewskin a series of reflections on the subject of the open society.

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

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## FEATURED: PROJECTS

**Rehabilitation in Site: An alternative and inclusive response to the issue of relocating the urban poor.** Juan Camilo Arboleda, Nadia El Hakim, Dominik.

'Rehabilitation in Site' is part of the 'Charging Chandigarh! Studio', which is a collaboration between the Chair of Dwellings and the Chair of Methods & Analysis at TU Delft, Faculty of Architecture.



This project is based on field research on both housing figures of "unauthorized colonies" (slums) and related social housing. Studying these figures provided an overview of the rehabilitation policy held by Chandigarh Administration towards the slums in question. In fact, the 'Slum-Free City' goal described in Chandigarh Masterplan 2013 report has to be understood along with the ambition of preserving Chandigarh's initial identity as 'The City Beautiful'. However, the methods of achieving these goals appear to be questionable on many respects – through the example of Dhanas Rehabilitation Colony outside the Corbusier sectorial grid.

Our intention of intervening 'In Site' was based upon an analysis of current density conditions. The implementation of new housing units is proposed in the existing pattern as the basis of a design strategy that aims to reconfigure the urban system of the Dhanas Rehabilitation Colony, and to offer open space as a resource for the most defavorised.

As a matter of fact, the Indian cultural context and the constraint of designing for the poorest urged us to think beyond the dwelling unit itself as the space of living. Open space in our vision stands as an extension of the house.

Moreover, the basic house was designed in order to fit Indian poor family requirements, but offers an adaptive layout that predicts the transformation of the family pattern or changes in their social status. With a minimum of intervention, the design attempts to bring forward and anticipate a wide range of possible modifications.

Various forms of information communication technology are increasingly integrated in our public environments. At the same time, challenges arise to render such technologies locally relevant and meaningful. While electronic public displays can be found in various urban environments, still much is unknown in regards to their social and societal integration within the fabric of the city or a neighbourhood.

In an attempt to uncover the impact of deploying public displays in residential neighbourhoods, as well as expand the typical design space of public displays, we have involved individual households in the design, deployment and maintenance of a set of situated public displays. As a result, StreetTalk has indicated the potential of neighbourhood communication concepts that do not necessarily apply the traditional screen-based characteristics of public displays. In particular, as the cityscape is currently changing and qualities such as neighbourhood cohesion and communication are perceived to be under threat, StreetTalk proved successful in triggering social interaction in and around the neighbourhood where they have been deployed.

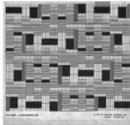
In most cases, citizens are unable to participate in the design, maintenance and control of content on electronic public displays. However, they are promised to address 'everyone' and enhance people's experience of the city and its services. While StreetTalk aimed to develop public displays, the study started with a critical reflection on neighbourhoods, with the help of

participating households. It helped uncover the latent needs and qualities for communication, which helped inform the design of three contextually relevant and personally meaningful alternative public displays. As such, we feel encouraged to promote such participative design process, also in the context of public displays that are aimed to address urban dwellers.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/rehabilitation-site-alternative-and-inclusive-response-issue-relocating-urban-poor-dhanas](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/rehabilitation-site-alternative-and-inclusive-response-issue-relocating-urban-poor-dhanas)

**Structuralism.** Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Structuralism is a double exhibition. The first part, 'Making Space, Leaving Space', presents the work and ideas of Herman Hertzberger through his design sketches, notebooks, drawings and photographs. Visitors, young and old, undertake a journey of discovery through the architect's designs and way of thinking. In the second part, 'An Installation in Four Acts', the Jaap Bakema Study Centre explores the development and current importance of Dutch Structuralism by means of four consecutive presentations centred on the themes of education, ideals, construction, and the city. The installation was designed by Bureau LADA. Both exhibitions bring together a wealth of unique archival material never previously presented to the public.



Structuralism constitutes the most important contribution from the Netherlands to modern architecture during the second half of the twentieth century. In the late 1950s it presented a poetic alternative to the technocratic architecture of the post-war reconstruction period, before flourishing in the 1970s. The ideal was to create a new social space where people could realise their full potential and that facilitated interaction, imagination and experimentation.

[www.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en/structuralism](http://www.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en/structuralism)  
[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/structuralism](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/structuralism)

**Connected. Things about Future, Cities and People.** Connected.

We hear more and more about the smart city: car-sharing, high-performance public transportation, alternative energy networks permanently monitored, green buildings, streets connected directly to the internet and so on. Maybe you would expect to see an exhibition about the cities of the future cut from science-fiction movies. Well, 'Connected' will tell you a different story: you will learn about ideas and people who are smarter than smart systems and who know how to build better cities and communities. Technology is just one step from this chain; beyond there are ideals, aspirations to be together and the need for efficient and rapid actions. Smart cities are the one inhabited by smart societies that have initiatives, learn by themselves what they have to do and know how to fix their own boat when it breaks.



'Connected' tells stories of this new and intelligent society from four different cities, overlapping experiences and finding out common features – a new social contract between European citizen. In Amsterdam, a community builds itself a floating neighborhood, regenerating a polluted and abandoned part of the city in the process. 'Stockholm on the move' is an example of democratic planning, that also proves profitable. From Bergen we hear about edible cities or parks for over 60 communities. Romania is represented by organizations that start from almost nothing but innovate through hi-tech bricolage, build-up public space, educate future urban citizens, save a built heritage, build-up art, communities and international networks.

[www.citiesandpeople.eu](http://www.citiesandpeople.eu)  
[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/connected-things-about-future-cities-and-people](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/connected-things-about-future-cities-and-people)

**Les Salons Structuralistes.** Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

A series of weekly interviews sessions by Dirk van den Heuvel, held in the Structuralism exhibition, between contemporaries, architects, critics, researchers, building occupants and building clients. Programme updates, invited guests and recorded sessions will be made available through the website of Het Nieuwe Instituut.



Structuralism takes the form of a dual exhibition: one part, 'Making Space, Leaving Space', is curated by architect Herman Hertzberger, while the other part, 'An Installation in Four Acts: Education, Ideals, Building, the City' is the starting-point of a long-term scientific research project by the Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/les-salons-structuralistes-0](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/les-salons-structuralistes-0)

**Conference Open: A Bakema Celebration.** Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

The Jaap Bakema Study Centre organizes a special conference on the work of Jaap Bakema (1914–1981) and his idea to build towards an open society. The conference concludes the Dutch presentation for this year's Venice Biennale 'Open: A Bakema Celebration', which can be visited until 23 November at the Rietveld pavilion in the Giardini di the Biennale.

During the conference, the many aspects in the work of Jaap Bakema and his office Van den Broek and Bakema will be highlighted. Researchers are invited to take a fresh look on his ideas about the open society, but also about his concept of total space, his interest in an architecture that enables a new, modern identity and emancipation of the masses, and his fascination for systems, transitions and interrelations. Another key issue in Bakema's narrative concerns the transformation of the Dutch landscape and its cities due to an all-pervasive modernization process against the background of the Cold War. Bakema's role in the international post-war avant-gardes (CIAM, Team 10, Dutch Forum), his teachings in among others Delft, St. Louis, Salzburg and Hamburg and his practice of using competitions as a tool for experiment, provocation and innovation also deserve more attention.

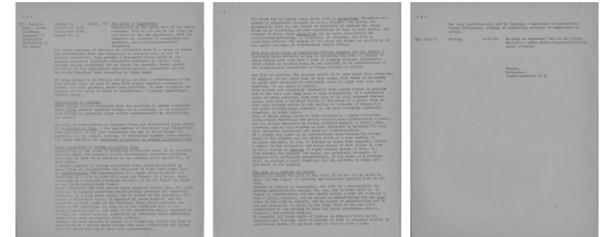
[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/open/events](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/open/events)

## OPEN: ARCHIVE

In every newsletter from the **Post Box for the Open Society**, we refer to Jaap Bakema's historic **Post Box for the Development of the Habitat**.

One of the contributors to the Post Box was the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki. In 1961 he submitted his report 'Thoughts on Collective Form with an introduction to Group-form'. One year later, he submitted a second report on collective form: 'Linkage in Collective Form'.

Jaap Bakema printed a summary of the report in the ninth newsletter of the Post Box for the Development of the Habitat:



[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/post-box-development-habitat-fumihiko-maki](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl/content/post-box-development-habitat-fumihiko-maki)

## NOW: ARCHINED

During the Biennale, ArchiNed is taking the discussion about the open society out of the Dutch pavilion and into the present 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. See also [www.archined.nl](http://www.archined.nl)

**Urbanity of Things**, by Simon Kretz and Christian Salewski, is a chapter from the forthcoming book 'The City as Resource: Texts and Projects 2005–2014', edited by Professor Kees Christiaanse, with Tim Flieniets, Nicolas Kretschmann and Myriam Perret (ETH Zürich/Jovis 2014). The book centres on the idea of the city as a valuable resource that everybody can use in deciding how to live, and that society can draw from in making cultural and economic progress. Salewski and Kretz discuss the central issue of urbanity. Drawing on previous works by the Spanish urbanist Manuel de Solà-Morales, they argue that relationship wealth and relationship potential are the core qualities of urbanity. It is only when urban space comes from relationships and activities, while also shaping these relationships and activities in turn, that the city can be considered a resource, claim Kretz and Salewski.

The precise design of urban space, they argue, is fundamental for urbanity. Salewski and Kretz explore three fundamental urban design connection techniques that can be used to shape physical space in such a way that relationship wealth and relationship potential, bringing together people, animals, plants and things, are exploited and urbanity is made possible. Essentially, it is the urban project that can enable an open society and a freedom of choice. Dr Christian Salewski is Senior Assistant and Lecturer in Urban Design at ETH Zurich, University of Zurich, University of Liechtenstein and University of St. Gallen. Simon Kretz is Senior Assistant and Lecturer in Urban Design at ETH Zurich and University of Zurich. Both are practising architects, urbanists and researchers. Their office is called Christian Salewski & Simon Kretz Architects.

[www.archined.nl/en/forum/2014/eng/urbanity-of-things/](http://www.archined.nl/en/forum/2014/eng/urbanity-of-things/)

## 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**.  
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For subscriptions, more information and questions, please visit the website:  
[open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl](http://open.jaapbakemastudycentre.nl)