

Porosity Kabari

Works by

Trent Jansen
Richard Goodwin
Ishan Khosla

'Porosity Kabari' is the result of an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, collaborative project between Trent Jansen, Richard Goodwin, and Ishan Khosla. The project challenged the trio to produce furniture and object pieces made from materials and craftsmanship sourced solely from the 'Chor Bazaar' (thieves market) and 'Kabari Bazaars' (junk markets) in Mumbai, India.

10 June → 9 July
Nishi Gallery

NISHI GALLERY
17 Kendall Lane
Canberra ACT 2601

Gallery Hours
Wed to Sun 11am–3pm

HOTEL HOTEL
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India is a place where resourcefulness is part of the everyday. The market neighbourhoods where this project took place are where many of India’s useful objects end up. It is also where they are often given a second life – car panels are transformed into ad hoc cookers and old clothing is quilted into rugs for snake charmers.

The setting and parametres of this project challenged the designers to make do with what was at hand and in doing so ‘Porosity Kabari’ presents an alternative model for sustainable design that is relevant to all of us, living anywhere. It investigates the cycle of use, reuse (and further reuse)—and how we can, quite simply, use one thing to make another thing.

The exhibition explores cultural conditions and social structures specific to India but perhaps familiar to many developing nations. The idealised notion of “progress” is put into question, as is the cycle of consumerism and desire in globalised India. ‘Porosity Kabari’ celebrates craft but highlights how craftspeople are undervalued in contemporary Indian society.

The objects produced for ‘Porosity Kabari’ were made outside the industrialised system. Improvisation was the applied technique for making. Ideas were generated and design decisions were made on the fly, shaped by the daily observations and moods of the designers. ‘Porosity Kabari’ champions the ad hoc and builds appreciation of the makeshift. It reminds us to look to and learn from those countries where, for many, resources are scare and resourcefulness is a necessity.

‘Porosity Kabari’ is presented by Hotel Hotel.

Works by Trent Jansen

For this project Trent Jansen explored the Indian notion of jugaad - doing just enough with what you have on hand and figuring it out as you go. At first it made him nervous. In contrast to his usual thoroughly researched projects, this jugaad process was a free fall.

This new process was based on observations and reactions - generating ideas by improvising forms and using only the techniques and materials that were readily available.

The making process was also improvised – options and workarounds were decided upon as solutions came to mind and were dependent on current mood and state of mind. These reflexive decisions determined the destiny of each object.

Jansen made a stool, side table and crockery from terracotta, ‘Jugaad with Pottery’, with potter Abbas Galwani; and stools from metal with a small metal workshop, reshaping a car bonnet, copper panels and copper rivets, ‘Jugaad with Car Parts’.

For ‘Dropping a Kumbhar Wala Matka’ Jansen pays homage to Ai Wei Wei’s controversial work, ‘Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn’, 1995. In this work, Abbas Galwani, a kumbhar wala (potter) living and working in Dharavi, drops a traditional Indian Matka. With this act, Abbas denounces the cultural structures that restrict his social mobility, impede his ability to gain recognition and respect for his unquestionable skill, and hinder his capacity to provide for his family. The piece is a critique of the traditions and history that underpin Indian social conventions. In India, the kumbhar wala is among the lower castes, meaning that these craftspeople, who make functional objects serving millions of people on a daily basis, do not earn the respect that they deserve for their role within Indian society.

9 Jugaad with Pottery Stool, 2016

50 × 55 x 47 cm
Terracotta
\$2,160

11 Jugaad with Pottery Bowl, 2016

12 × 40 × 40 cm
Terracotta
\$550

12 Jugaad with Pottery Vessel, 2016

29 × 22 × 22 cm
Terracotta
\$550

13 Jugaad with Pottery Low Tray, 2016

6 × 40 × 40 cm
Terracotta
\$550

14 Jugaad with Pottery High Tray, 2016-2017

Repaired by Guy Keulemans and
Kyoko Hashimoto
12 × 40 × 40 cm
Terracotta and sterling silver staples
\$1,600

This Jugaad tray broke en route to Australia.

It is repaired with hand made sterling silver staples cut from a late Georgian serving spoon. The spoon fragment was annealed and pulled through a half-round draw plate several times until it achieved the right shape and gauge recommended by C.S.M Parsons and F.H Curl, the authors of China Mending and Restoration (1963). This book, perhaps the most comprehensive text on traditional ceramic stapling, was written on the eve of the technique’s almost complete disappearance. It has been made obsolete by the widespread use of petrochemical synthetic glues and, in the West at least, the decline of repair industries and the rise of hyperconsumerist mentalities of ‘break and buy again’.

19 Jugaad with Pottery Side Table, 2016

45 × 40 × 40 cm
Terracotta
\$2,130

22 Jugaad with Car Parts × 5, 2016

45 × 35 × 35 cm
Used car panel and copper
\$1,100

24 Dropping a Kumbhar Wala Matka Vessel, 2016

Framed photographs × 3
35 × 50 cm
Vessel × 7
30 × 45 × 30 cm
Terracotta
\$1,815

Works by Richard Goodwin

Goodwin’s practice as an artist/architect, explores Duchamp’s revelation of the “Readymade”, as fundamental to his post functionalist theory and practice. How can something be something else? His work does not invent new shapes but instead appropriates objects from differing functions, combining them at different scales to enliven and rethink design or art problems.

Where does the body end and architecture begin, he asks? In this light the car or bicycle become “Exoskeletons”.

This process applied to an architectural scale, with buildings becoming the bodies, he calls “Parasitic”. He keeps the old building in order to protect carbon storage and adds new technologies or bridges between buildings, with parasitic shapes and objects from other functional zones. By way of an analogy, attaching an aeroplane to a building to form a nightclub, is a radical new way of designing architecture. “Function follows form” replaces “form follows function” as the way forward. At the scale of the city Goodwin calls new urbanism “porosity”. He extols that, the connection between buildings, above and below the existing ground plane, is the only way to further three dimensionalise public space – as a network of spaces. This in turn reinforces the public spaces of streets and brings their structures above ground to reform corridors, or as bridges and new ground planes. To this end Goodwin has, through his ARC funded research, invented mapped and named a new type of public space that he calls “Chiastic Space”. This typology of spaces exists between public and private. The designer artist architect can respond to this porosity analysis with transformative structures. Mapped across cities, porosity can become a powerful driver for a new form of urban design. Goodwin calls this analysis, “What a Building Desires”.

For the exhibition 'Porosity Kabari' Goodwin is playing with the idea of exoskeleton and parasite, in order to facilitate a porous linkage. Street junk from the Mumbai markets combine to question the body, architecture and ritual. 'Twin Charpai Exoskeleton for Mumbai' combines two authentic Indian beds with a scooter to form a prosthetic home.

1 Klein Chair, 2016
90 x 40 x 50 cm
chair and synthetic textile
\$5,000

2 1:√2 Independent , 2016
Installation
70 x 60 x 90 cm
Various artifacts
\$3,000

10 1:√2 Cabinet, 2016
160 x 60 x 60 cm
Timber cabinet with various artifacts
\$9,000

20 Computer Chair, 2016
50 x 35 x 35 cm
Computer and timber folding chair
\$1,800

21 Exoskeleton Shrine, 2016
Installation
75 x 50 x 60 cm
Various artifacts
\$4,500

23 Twin Charpai Exoskeleton for Mumbai , 2016
105 x 210 x 180 cm
Scooter and twin charpai beds
\$18500

Works by Ishan Khosla

‘Partition of the Mind’ is about the fracture of values and traditions between an India that was once more about the “we” and contemporary India that seems more focussed on the “me”. This work is not only related to the underlying idea central to 'Porosity Kabari' — that of giving a second life to formerly useful objects — but it is a work that relates to Ishan’s childhood when he remembers eating food with his larger family in such utensils, some of which he still has as part of his inheritance. By taking away their function as utensils — by cutting them in half and reforming them — Khosla is deliberately drawing attention to their obsolescence in the context of today’s India. This fracture is representative of the collapse of traditional Indian norms and social structures that have been in place for centuries. These utensils have today been replaced with cheap plastics and “take-out” food boxes that are used once and then thrown and hence something which is not handed down to the next generation except as mounds of trash in a landfill. This work implies that there are certain things that are going wrong in Indian society today — the fact that we don’t eat dinner together as families — and instead more and more people tend to eat alone due to their busy lives is an indication of how our priorities have changed. The fact that these utensils were bought at a junk market rather than an antique shop, further highlights the change in social structures and how these once prized objects have no value today.

‘Construct-Deconstruct-Construct’ refers to the cycle of reusing materials from previously functional furniture to construct new pieces of furniture, which eventually are deconstructed or even reconstructed, to make new pieces. Metaphorically it addresses the notion of the process of the design intervention: observation/collection of objects, deconstructing those objects, and then making the design intervention. This collection of furniture is based on found objects from the streets of Mumbai, that are made from scavenged pieces of wood — which have been put together in an ad hoc manner. These naive objects, which don’t follow the principles of design, are on the margins on functionality. There is a ‘typical’ aesthetic that comes out of this ‘do first think later’ action, which is related to the idea of improvisation, where time and material are scarce, as survival is at stake. Each of them are totally unique. These vernacular pieces of furniture are gestural in nature — which is also imparted to the posture of the sitter due to the structure of the object. They induce behaviours and gestures (such a rocking and sitting sideways).

3 Partition of the Mind 3, 2016
23 x 22 x 26 cm
Brass and aluminium
\$650

4 Partition of the Mind 2, 2016
23 x 23 x 21 cm
Brass and aluminium
\$650

5 Partition of the Mind 5, 2016
23 x 23 x 23 cm
Brass and aluminium
\$650

6 Partition of the Mind 4, 2016
23 x 23 x 19 cm
Brass and aluminium
\$650

7 Partition of the Mind 6, 2016
23 x 13 x 20 cm
Brass and aluminium
\$650

8 Partition of the Mind 1, 2016
27 x 36 x 20 cm
Brass and aluminium
\$650

15 Construct-Deconstruct-Construct 4, 2016
73 x 46 x 45 cm
Various types of wood
\$1,100

16 Construct-Deconstruct-Construct 2, 2016
69 x 25 x 45 cm
Various types of wood
\$1,100

17 Construct-Deconstruct-Construct 1, 2016
82 x 39 x 42 cm
Various types of wood
\$1,100

18 Construct-Deconstruct-Construct 3, 2016
52 x 32 x 33 cm
Various types of wood
\$1,100