Proposal for 'Empowering Communication/Graphic Design Education' in India

Submitted on behalf of 'Communication/Graphic Design
Educational Institutes' in India
by
Industrial Design Centre
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay

September 2008

List of Contents on this proposal:

Introduction:

Institutions to teach Communication/Graphic Design as a discipline came in the 1850's as part of different art schools. Communication or graphic design is also known by other names such as commercial art, applied arts, graphic arts, etc.

At present, Communication/graphic design is being tought by art institutes (numbering around 40) and design institutions (numbering around 15) in India. In all, around 2,500 undergraduate students and around 100 graduate students graduate in the country.

The communication/graphic design as a creative profession has been the backbone of several of these industries : print and publishing, advertising, media, packaging, exhibition, web and signage industry. They also take care of several of these functions ; Identity, branding, retail strategy, advertising, promotion through the use of typography, photography, illustrations, representations and animation. Developments in digital technology has played significant role in the practice of this profession.

It is expected that with the growth of the industry the need for professionals in this field will increase exponentially. The number that India educates at present is quite small in comparison to many other countries. It is essential that there is a need for starting of several new institutions as well as upgrading the facilities and infrastructure and enhancing the quality of education in the existing institutions.

It is with this aim that two sets of discussions were held by inviting faculty heads and senior faculty from communication/graphic design schools around the country. During the meet, discussions were held on the following issues in order to address a few central issues in Design Education:
. Curriculum
. Faculty Needs
. Facilities and Infrastructure
. Networking; Design education Opportunities for the masses
. Learning of design in schools.

Background:

On 5 and 6 Feb 2007, IDC played host to guests from various parts of India and representatives of Icograda from Australia, Canada, Korea, Qatar, Brazil and South Africa. These participants followed the Design Week's invitation to attend the National Graphic Design Education Meet at IDC, IIT; in order to address a few central issues in Design Education: Curriculum; Faculty Needs; Facilities and Infrastructure; Networking; Design education Opportunities for the masses; and education of design in schools. This meet took on from the Education pre-meet, which took place at the same venue on 15 and 16 Jan 2007.

It is one of its kind meet; and a gesture put forward to facilitate education of Design in India.

The seminar saw invitees from all over India; around 50 delegates, principals of colleges, senior professors and professional grandmasters who not only shared their thoughts and experiences, but also actively participated in deliberations and dialogues to stimulate thought and opportunities. They represented a broad range of institutions and industry – a valuable mix of experiences and wide perspectives. The seminar was rounded off by several events, talks, presentations, group deliberations and open discussions.

The outcome of this seminar is identification of base level areas, gaps and issues that were addressed. This will bring the foundation of design education in Indian institutes at one level, much open, comprehensive and at par with the emerging times. Further, way of imparting education innovatively in specializations in each institute could make them unique and self-sufficient. Networking amongst the institutes and the educators could highly impact the learning environments in design education.

Pre-meet:

The seminar took off from where it had left in the pre-meet:
Outcomes of the three groups as Presentations: Curriculum,
faculty Needs, Facilities/Infrastructure and Networking.
After each presentation, a round of discussions emerged.

Group A: Curriculum – new challenges - Discussions

- It is important that we see how to impart the curriculum, how to ensure quality learning
- A proper user-study should be done to revisit the curriculum
- It was pointed out that History of Art is taught only up till the foundation, which is very little design history. It should be spread at the entire specialization also.
- Design and Art should be convergent in the foundation years.
- Students should be encouraged to write-investigate-analyze-present design heritage projects.
- In the curriculum designing in the Indian scenario is important
- We need to give local-practical design problems to students instead of the hypothetical problems.
- It is important that the design schools address the local problems and be socially responsible and relevant
- Peer education is important (formal+informal)
- The socio-cultural aspect in design should not be ignored
- Students should be exposed to the history and cultural heritage to evoke curiosity, learning and responsibility. This will generate interest in restoration and documentation.

Group B: Faculty Needs - Discussions

- To attract good educators in the field of design, there should be proper facilities and incentives for the faculty
- Role of a teacher is Facilitator, Mentor, Moderator, Educator
- There is no text-book teaching in design, teachers should spend more time with the students, off and on the projects
- Industry should be made a partner and should work with the faculty to create projects
- Professional faculty can be a role-model for the students, on how they manage time, keep up with their appointments and work, and meet duties. This creates professionals out of teachers.

Group C: Facilities/Infrastructure and networking - Discussions

- Archiving is necessary
- There should be a common understanding of the policies and its implementation
- There should be collective; collaborative Learning
- Students should be taught to question, to analyze and to implement
- We need to build minds, visions
- New models should be introduced, old models should be revisited
- Learning should be elevated one step ahead
- How others, the masses can embrace this field and get knowledge as well as earn their living.
- Different and new ways and means to learn design

Related issues:

There were numerous other issues discussed in the open dialogue/discussion session.

Visual Communication vs. Communication Design
- It was emphasized that we need to work towards designing for communication with strong visual languages.
- Designing has multi-sensory use, its not limited to only being visual in the present scenario

Current Educational concerns
- Self Evaluation for students
- School education refinement can help raise information and aptitude level of students at an early stage
- Open source can be used for Learning
- We have a risk of losing the great art heritage and influences if we do not document.

Faculty Development
- Teacher is a facilitator
- We need better qualified teachers for Design, better incentives
- There is a need to orient teachers
- Present -day students are far ahead of their teachers in information, teachers should keep upgrading themselves
- There should be respect for the art of teaching
- Quality of teaching should be questioned.
- They should be accountability for what teachers profess
- There should be training, orientation as well as assessment of teaching and teaching methods
- Clear objectives should be made at the teacher's end, before teaching and it should be seen that the goals are clear and met with.

Design Community

- There should be respect and recognition for the Designer community
- A design body is needed
- We need to look at empowering each Design Institute

Educational Technologies and Networking

- Networking should be amongst schools of the world.
- Dialogue should be encouraged
- Exchanges and workshops should happen for the students and the faculty
- Shareable Libraries

Curriculum:

A new group was formed to continue the deliberations of design curriculum which was fostered during the pre design meet on January 2007.

The group started of with the focus of the discussion – recognizing the pattern of entry and exit. What is our model of education? In four years, changes happen drastically which makes entry and exit problematic. The design should have a broader base bringing everyone in one fold. The under graduates should be broad based and post graduates has to be specialized.

Verbal, linear thinkers – move them to visual medium through curriculum. In design education we have to do way with books and exams? The examination system suit or benefit the graphic design education. Evaluation has to be based on projects, assignments with regular assessment and not memory based. And also there are no prescribed books for design to refer and study. Design has to be seen as a visual where the word is an important communication element.

It should also enable students to become an entrepreneurs after the complete the graduation. Critical thinking should be a fundamental requirement. Students should not be segregated based on their academic ability. In the making of curriculum design students should also be involved, as they are on the threshold of becoming professionals, yet being apprentices.

The new curriculum should accommodate the old school of thought vis-à-vis the emergent of new school of thought which is technology driven. There is need to have a curriculum which has a balance between the three design curriculum models namely –
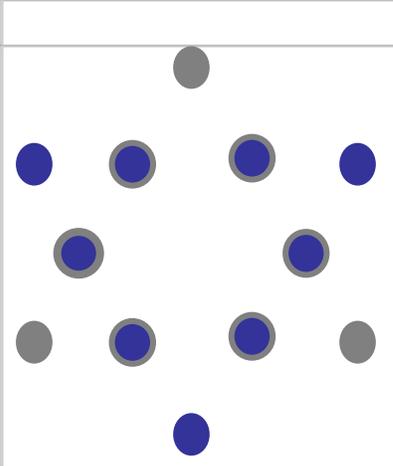
Art and Aesthetics
Technology and
Interdisciplinary studies
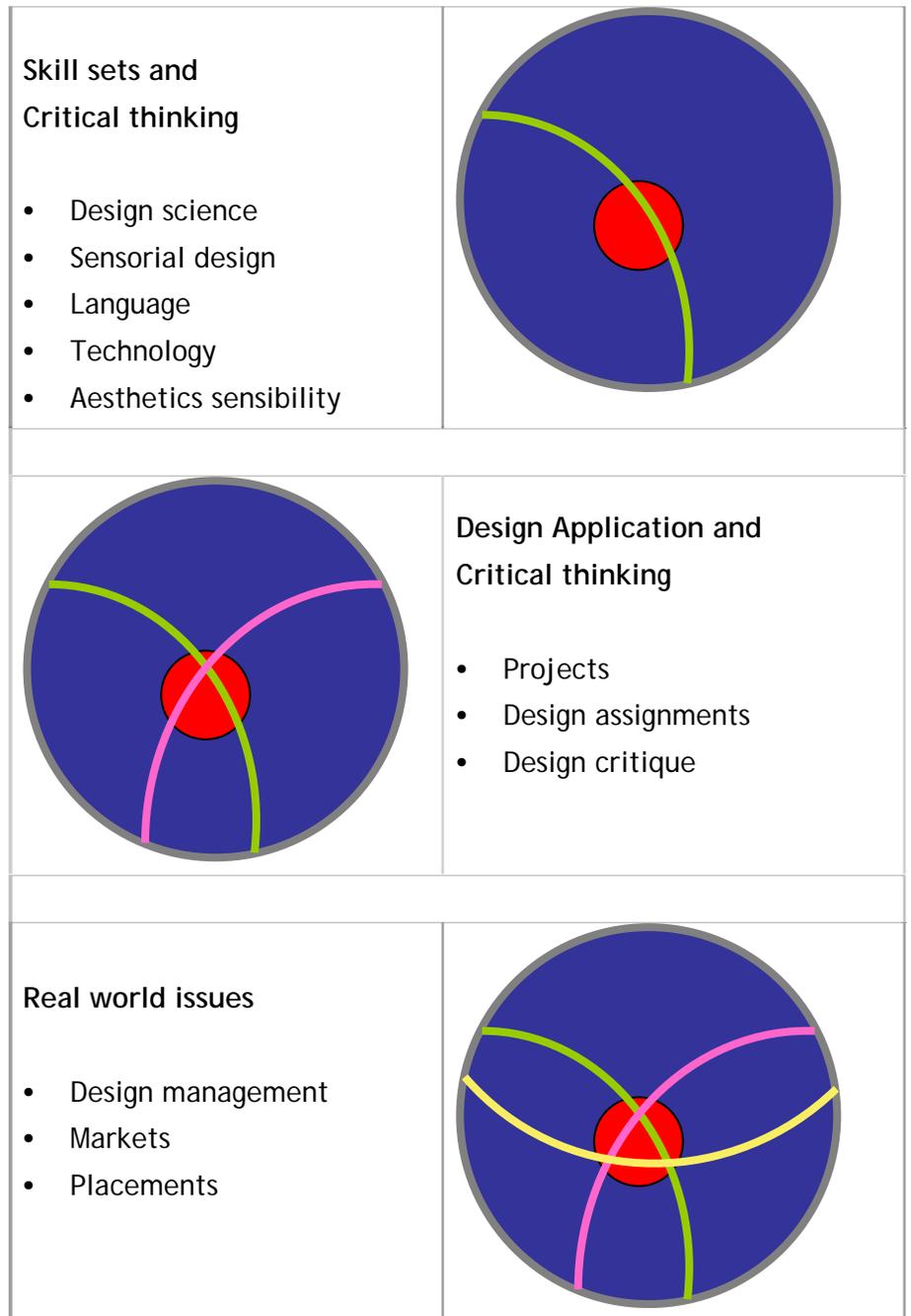
Recommendations:

Curriculum revisited

- Revisited the proposal put up during the Pre-Meet.
- It highlighted the present status of art and design education curriculum presently in practice.
- Focus of discussion
- What has changed?
- The need to revisit the curriculum?
- Deliberation pointers
- How do you accommodate the old school of thought vis-à-vis the emergent of new school of thought which is technology driven.
- Bringing closer proximity in fact merger of technology into the domain of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- The need to have design curriculum models which balance above parameters based on individual priorities for different models of curriculum.
  – Technology driven
  – Art and Aesthetics driven
  – Interdisciplinary driven
- The need to have a curriculum that has a balance between
  – Technology
  – Art and Aesthetics and
  – Interdisciplinary studies.
- Generic categories of inputs
  – Literacy
  – Graphicacy
  – Numericacy

Curriculum revisited
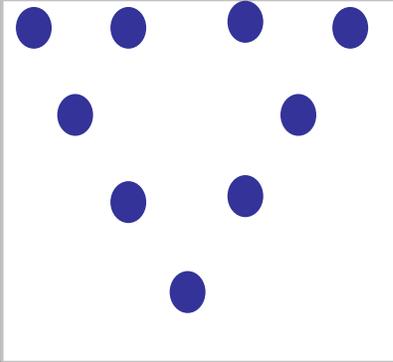
- **Skill sets**
  - I year
  - II year
  - III year
  - I year

- **Critical thinking**
  - I year
  - II year
  - III year
  - I year

More of skill inputs in the beginning years and more of inputs toward critical thinking in the later years would go towards a well-rounded learning for a designer.

Curriculum revisited

Skill sets and Critical thinking • Design science • Sensorial design • Language • Technology • Aesthetics sensibility	
	Design Application and Critical thinking • Projects • Design assignments • Design critique
Real world issues • Design management • Markets • Placements	

-To increase intake, and make up for achieving critical mass of designers.

Faculty Needs:

This group deliberated towards the educator's goals and facilities for him to reach for those goals. The team was coordinated by Prof. Saynekar, Sir JJ School of Applied Arts. The group stressed that there should be fluidity and transparency in the system, where a faculty can move in seminars and workshops. The teacher needs to spend more time with the students for a teaching a subject like design. A teacher should constantly strive to be a learner. System should give enough freedom and facilities to keep his passion and updation in the education field alive.

Recommendations:

- Building Capabilities

- Extending and Sharing Capabilities

- Project and Practical Experiences

- Institution Building

- Others

Building Capabilities

- Training Programme
- Enhancing the expertise of faculty in allied fields and related fields that include new technologies
- Exposure to teaching methodologies through different case studies and auditing other faculty
- Industry exposure in the field of individual expertise
- Exploring design opportunities in new fields
- Workshops for understanding and exploring learners' psychology
- Project management, Time management, budgeting or financial management.
- Communication and presentation skills

Extending and Sharing Capabilities

- Paper Presentations in conferences and seminars, workshops, etc.
- Conducting and initiating seminars, workshops within your institute and outside.
- Documenting ones own projects and teaching experiences.
- Student exchange programs.
- Organizing inter-institutional projects, activities, design festivals and design competitions.
- Sharing course material and experiences within and outside institutes.
- Exposure to other colleges in India and abroad.

Project and Practical Experiences

- Real-time projects should be undertaken in the field of ones own expertise
- Documentation of projects in terms of design process and should be shared with other faculties and students
- Should be used as future references in the classroom
- Real-time projects should be taken to the classroom
- Other professional expertise or service require to be sourced from the industry
- Involvement of design and fine arts faculty in each other's program

Institution Building

- Faculty exchange
- Sharing library services
- Sharing course material
- Student exchange programs by recognizing credits
- Sharing technological know-how
- Relating graphic design with fine arts and performing arts
- Building relationships between design schools and art schools
- Regular interaction of the faculty at the national level to upgrade the existing design educational courses

Others

- Identifying subject experts from other institutions
- Identifying specific course contributions from other colleges
- Identifying case studies of successful projects from industry
- Identifying individual subject experts or talents from the industry
- Identifying subject experts from other institutions
- Identifying specific course contributions from other colleges
- Identifying case studies of successful projects from industry
- Identifying individual subject experts or talents from the industry
- Identifying subject experts from other institutions
- Identifying specific course contributions from other colleges
- Identifying case studies of successful projects from industry
- Identifying individual subject experts or talents from the industry

Facilities:

Infrastructure and Networking

- Every institute needs to have basic amenities, facilities and equipment for healthy education system, if not then it needs to be addressed to the concerned authorities related with education.

Classroom Facilities
- The classrooms are considered to be working studios
- Students need a place of their own (working space)
- Area that they can work jointly on a larger surface
- Space needs good lighting and ventilation
- Studios could have A/V facilities – projector, sound system
- Proper equipments For discussions; presentation and display
- Since the students work in class, proper storage is essential for both - students and faculty
- Internet facility, where different schools could be connected
- The faculty needs space of their own with computer, net facility, storage and discussion facilities
- Inter-connectivity between different disciplines and multi-disciplinary activities
- Common exhibition space
- Presentation space
- Conference room
- Guest room
- Institute information needs to be made available as a common facility

Common Facilities

Necessary equipment should be made available to conduct multi-disciplinary activities

Library Facilities

- Library software and computer terminals
- Books, Periodicals, Annuals, CDs and VCDs
- Documentation of projects, Archives (for faculty and students)
- Access to inter-collegiate libraries

Office and Administration

- Computer, printer and related software
- Telephone , fax

Orientation of Faculties

- Requirements and placements
- Profile – staff, visiting professionals
- Faculty directory
- Joint workshops and group exhibitions
- Art fests
- QIP, refresher program
- Biyearly conference on Design Education
- Keeping rapport with design offices

Networking

Information of design institute and procedure should be put on net

Discussion issues

Though ethical issues should not be ignored, there should be balance and in a novel way that institutes could work for industry as part of curriculum for benefit of students and the faculty.

It was also figured that if clients commission institutions to execute work, they should be compensated professional fees

and that includes faculty and students, as if we work on a competition basis, then we perpetuate exploitation of designers, and will never be taken seriously.

Some were of the opinion that best practices should be initiated early in the courses. Charitable work, for NGOs or organizations that come with social issues can be connected to the projects. The faculty can research and produce in collaboration either with the government or the industry and involve students in design research and developing applications. This way they not only be committed professionals, but also educators, researchers, and contributors to the society and masses.

Introduction of 'Art, Culture and Design' at school level:

This group stated that School education is a vast field to cover; making the school children aware and interested in design field is a wholesome task. Just adding another subject to their syllabus is not a solution. Student's interests should be kept alive with their complete involvement in projects and visits. Teachers should play am important role in developing a poor student to bright student. They should see the capability of the student and nurture that ability to develop or enrich his/her literacy.

- Sensitivity, awareness and observation in children should be preserved
- Instead of they being told what to do, experiential learning will help them construct their own solutions and develop sensitivity towards the subject.
- Up till the 7th class, a new curriculum has been introduced already.
- 8th std. becomes the bottle-neck

Introduction
This group deliberated on the above subject and came up with
      the following three faced approach:-
   - For the policymakers
      - For the learning environment
      - For the facilitators (teachers/parent)

Proposed Objectives
- Human centric education methods
- A conscious effort to orient students towards art and culture

- Art & culture to be introduced as another career option for + 2 courses

Policy makers Level wise deliberations

1. **Nursery Pre-primary & Primary**
   - It is observed that some newer (informal) schools who follows inter-disciplinary method of   teaching.
   - Whereas majority of the schools are following conventional approach of teaching.
   - Therefore it is strongly recommended that the conventional school should change their   approach to a newer dimension.

2. **Secondary**
   The VIII, IX & X standards must include 'Art & Culture' as a subject along with other
   main subject

3. **Higher Secondary (11 & 12)**
   Like existing streams of Art, Commerce & Science a new stream namely 'Art & Culture' should be introduced with effect that the student becomes more eligible for all Art & Design disciplines.

Environment

- Physical Infrastructure: This should be thought about in the context of the above suggestions
- Psychological Environment: Stimulating observation, exploration, experience, expression, articulation and contextualization.
- Learning Environment: Educational aids, Books, relevant reference materials etc.

Teachers/ facilitators and parents

- Include subjects like Design sensibilities and sensitivities and Indian aesthetics within the B Ed. & M. Ed syllabi.
- Teachers should be minimum Bachelor or Diploma in Art & Design for qualify as a teacher for 'Art & culture'

Open India to Design:

During the open discussions everyone felt the need to create a new group that discussed how design can reach to the masses and what it can give them? People who can't reach design institutions but can use education in this field in various areas to enhance their quality of living or become entrepreneurs.
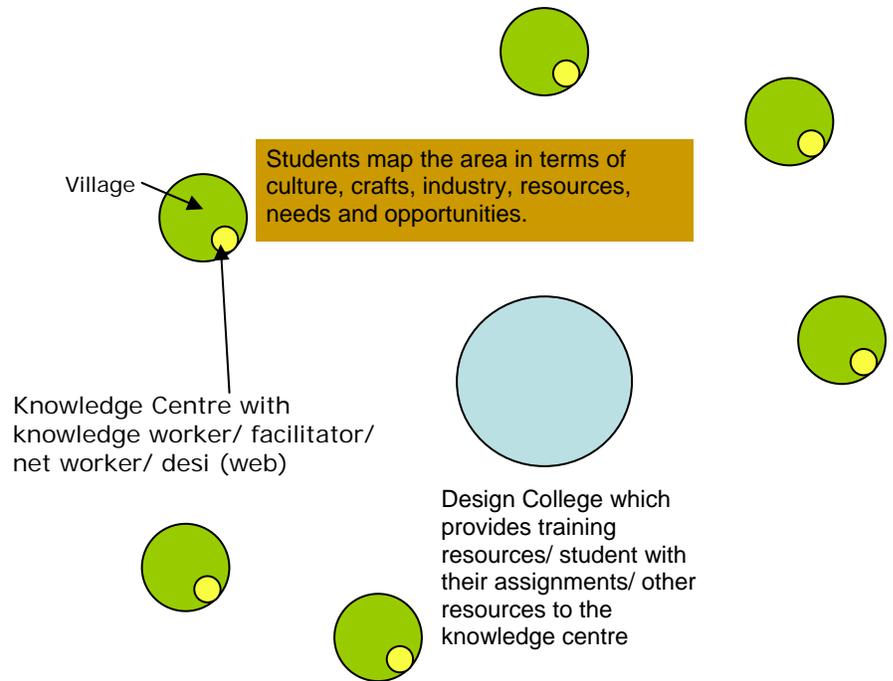This group felt that:

- Courses should be offered as components
- Capsules of experience, any age, any group can avail the education
- Empowering villagers and making them into entrepreneurs
- A design group that can connect various places
- Jhola-chap or desi-designers connect
- Reaching out to the unprivileged, and rural areas

Open India to Design

Objectives of this initiative:
- Create a basic design awareness across society
- To improve quality of life
- To incorporate unique needs of small groups, local and specific in nature
- Connect craft history to design history
- Non-infrastructure intensive, using existing facilities as much as possible
- Place value on problem solving rather than acquiring assets
- Sharing of resources, experiences, networking, jointly solving problems

To be launched with a meet of design schools, design bodies (e.g. InDeAs) and individuals committed to these goals.

Village

Students map the area in terms of culture, crafts, industry, resources, needs and opportunities.

Knowledge Centre with knowledge worker/ facilitator/ net worker/ desi (web)

Design College which provides training resources/ student with their assignments/ other resources to the knowledge centre

- There should be a Knowledge Centre with knowledge worker/ facilitator/ net worker/ desi (web) designer in the village
- The Design College in locality should provide training resources/ student with their assignments/ other resources to the knowledge centre
- Students map the area in terms of culture, crafts, industry, resources, needs and opportunities.
- **Support**
  Government
  NGOs
  Internet service providers
  Petrol pumps
  Local artisanal businesses and service providers
  Mandap walas
  Blacksmiths and welders
  Potters
  Nukkad chai walas
  Halwais
  Barber shops...

Participants list:

1. Prof. G. G. Waghmare, Dean, Sir J J School of Applied Art, Mumbai
2. Prof. Santosh B Kshirsagar, Faculty, Sir J J School of Applied Art, Mumbai
3. Prof. Vinay Krishnaji Saynekar, Faculty, Sir J J School of Applied Art, Mumbai
4. Prof Mahendra Patel, The Leaf Design, 411 Abhishek, Off New link rd, Mumbai
5. Prof. Meenal Ajay Joshi, Faculty, Department of Art and Design, Sophia Polytechnik, Mumbai
6. Prof. Vidya Ranjan Joshi, Faculty, Sir J J School of Applied Art, Mumbai
7. Prof. Madhuri M Naik, Principal, Department of Art and Design, Sophia, Mumbai
8. Prof. Vinay M Mundada, Director, Symbiosis Institute of design, Pune
9. Prof. Subhash Kotwal, Faculty, Symbiosis Institute of design, Pune
10. Prof. Amit Ray, Faculty, IIT Kanpur
11. Profe. Sumita Sarkar, Faculty, Pearl Academy of Fashion,Delhi
12. Prof. Malti Gaikwad, Faculty, Applied Art Dept, Faculty of Fine Art, MSU Baroda
13. Prof. Sanjay Jain, Director, MIT's Institute of Design, Pune
14. Prof. Dhimant Panchal, Faculty, Institute of Design, Pune
15. Prof Ravi Mokashi, Head, Department of Design, IIT Guwahati
16. Prof. Immaneul Suresh, Head, Communication Design, NID, Ahmedabad
17. Prof. Anil Sinha,Chief Co-ordinator, Design Foundation Programme, NID, Ahmedabad
18. Prof Papiha Saha, Faculty, IILM School of Design, Delhi
19. Prof. Saligram N Vikas, Department of Art, University of Hyderabad

20   Dr. Ajanta Sen, Director, Solar Project, Mumbai

21   Prof. A G Rao, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

22   Prof. Uday Athavankar, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

23   Prof. G V Sreekumar, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

24   Prof. Anirudha Joshi, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

25   Prof. Chakravarti, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

26   Prof. Nina Sabnani, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

27   Prof. Raja Mohanty, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

28   Prof. V.P. Bapat, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

29   Prof. R. Sandesh, Faculty, IDC, IIT Bombay

30   Prof. Ravi Poovaiah, Head, IDC, IIT Bombay

31   Sherline Pimenta, Ph D Student, IDC, IIT Bombay

32   Sachin Dutt, Ph D Student, IDC, IIT Bombay

33   Prasad P Bokil, Ph D Student, IDC, IIT Bombay

34   Chandita Mukherjee, Director, Comet Media Foundation, Mumbai

35   Prof. Vikas Satwalekar(erstwhile Director NID), Mumbai

36   Sudarshan Dheer, Graphic Communication Concepts, Mu

37   Prof Mandar Rane, Faculty, Department of Design, IIT Guwahati

38   Prof. Kumkum Nadig, Faculty, Sristi School odf Design, Bangalore

39   Prof. Geetanjali Sachdev, Faculty, Sristi School odf Design, Bangalore

40   Prof. Ajey Dalvi, Faculty, Dalvi's Art Institute Kolhapur

41   Massimo and Lella Vignelli, Vignelli Associates, New York, USA

42   Jacques Lange, president, Icograda

43   Prof. Russell Kennedy, Board member, Icograda, Faculty, Monash University, Australia

44   Prof. Halim Choueiry, Board member, Icograda, Faculty, School of the Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar

45   Prof. Don Ryun Chang, Board member, Icograda, Chair, Visual Communication Design, Hongik University, Seoul

46   Ruth Klotzel, Board member, Icograda, head of the design office Estudio Infinito,Brazil

47   Lise Vejse Klint, Board member, Icograda, President of Danish Designers, Board Member of the Danish Art Foundation and Board Member of the Danish Design School.

48   Omar Vulpinari, Board member, Icograda, Director, Visual Communication Department at Fabrica, the Benetton research center

49   Brenda Sanderson, Managing Director, Icograda

Thank You:

Please make your
comment/suggestions/remarks/recommendations and send to:

Ravi Poovaiah
Professor
Industrial Design Centre
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
Powai
Mumbai
400076

022-25767801/7820
office@idc.iitb.ac.in or ravi@iitb.ac.in