

MARCH 2011

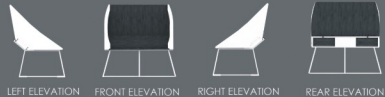
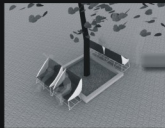
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Leaf boat

Interpretation of the brief

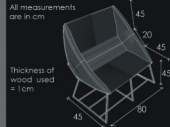
The brief states that the product to be designed should portray a person's encounter. It should be of use to the masses in their day to day lives. Also at the same time it should encapsulate the spirit of the city that it dwells in.

A leaf, fallen from a tree onto a water body, floats on the water surface and goes willingly with the flow of water. The curved faces of the seat remind us of the folds of a leaf floating in water. Also the seat functions as a floating rescue device that is useful in natural calamities. It is from this idea that the name "Leaf boat" is has been derived.



Conversion of the seat into a boat

All measurements are in cm



It is a LIFEBOUY for people from flood prone areas.

The design is SIMPLE yet its DUAL FUNCTIONALITY makes the product exceptional.

The WORKABILITY of the Leaf boat BLENDS WITH THE SURROUNDINGS.

NO EFFORT is required to switch its function from a bench to a boat.

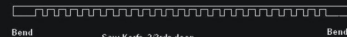
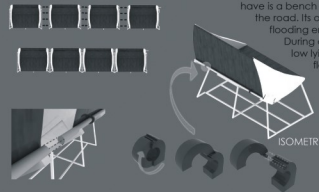
The product is placed in such a manner that it is EASILY LOCATABLE.



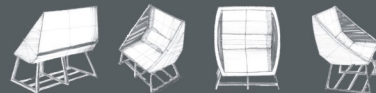
The contrast in function of the leaf boat is that the user uses it when on a journey whereas when the user is at rest the product is in motion. Also it fuses with the environment that it is in without overshadowing other elements of the landscape. The leaf boat portrays a journey of a person on the street and in a natural calamity.

The only function that the Leaf may seem to have is a bench placed at regular intervals on the road. Its other function is seen during flooding emergencies.

During a flood the water level of a low lying area rises and the Leaf floats on it since wood has its mass is less than that of the water it displaces total density of the boat is less than that of the water. Although it has a capacity of 2 persons, it will be placed at regular intervals and hence there will not be a shortage.



Kerf-cut bending is done by using a saw to cut slots across the stock. This will allow the stock to bend because the kerfs can compress together. The kerfs are usually only used on the inside of the bend.



industrial design 2010

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A R C H O H M E T E R

After the fantastic response to the last two issues of our newsletter, I am finding it far easier to put pen to paper for this article. (Midu - before you ask - Yes - Nine letters / facts / emails / telepathic messages - at a - from our readers is to be termed as "fantastic", since it is more than the response we got in the ENTIRE year before that!)

It does seem to me that maybe I have done a bit of traveling, what with a trip to the hills so that our kids could see snow - which we did by driving up to Shimla and Kufri. Thankfully, the weather gods obliged and a snowman was made, a snowball fight transpired, all part of a wonderful stay at the century old Clarke's Hotel, Shimla.

Hill Stations are such a quintessentially English legacy to India, be it Shimla 'the Queen of the Hills', India's summer capital till independence, done-to-death Mussoorie, the small relatively untouched - Lansdowne and of course that jewel in the Kumaon - Nainital.

There are other getaways that still thrive - Matheran, Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar near Mumbai; Darjeeling in the Eastern Himalayas, Ooty, Yercaud and Kodakkanal in the South. Even the hot, dry and desert state of Rajasthan has its own hill-station, Mt. Abu; while Central India has Pachmarhi (known as the "Queen of the Satpuras").

As an architect, these places are a virtual treasure trove of forgotten and disused colonial buildings - Churches, residences, schools and colleges. At Shimla we got a chance to see the finely restored Gaiety Theatre, once the cultural hub of the town. At Nainital it is worth trekking up to see the Raj Bhawan, St. Joseph's Seminary and Sherwood.



As a town planner, one feels alternate feelings of happiness - at the pedestrian nature of the malls, the human scale, the overall respect accorded to natural contours - and a suicidal despairing feeling - at the monumental environmental tragedy that is still being wrought on these quaint outposts of civilization. To see a 10 storey building in Shimla - with window ACs sticking out of it - no matter how noble the purpose of the building - is disturbing to say the least!

I could of course go on endlessly, but its time to get back to this journal. Congrats, Midu, for the rich and varied content - including the wonderful article by Isha Talsania on the archontention, Rajat Tuli's monograph on products and of course Sourabh's end piece.

Thank you all, until next month - Arrividerci!

FEEDBACK: please write in to Midu Sahai at archohm[at]archohm.com and feel free to point out all typos, factual errors and the like!

editorial

in focus

The creative design archontention.

The idea was simple, to share the architect experience with the students - excite and inspire them. Exhibition in NASA (National Association of Students of Architecture) convention was the first step. Through discussions, arguments, back and forth - we decided that floating a product design competition in NASA was a good way to initiate the idea. The brief was interesting and straightforward - to create a functional product with a cubic foot of wood! The brief was sent out to all schools of architecture participating in NASA - 120 in all. The competition evoked a lot of curiosity, and even though it was introduced for the first time, we received a whopping 72 entries!

On the eve of the 53rd convention of NASA - christened Utopia 2010, we landed in Hubli, Karnataka. Sprawled across 52 acres of land, the BVB College of Technology has an impressive campus, but what blew our minds was the maddening number of participants at the convention - more than 5000 people had convened for three days in a quest for Utopia in Architecture!

Setting up the exhibition was an adventure - the car that was to bring all the exhibition panels was running late, and arrived close to midnight. Utter mayhem broke out as we scurried about to put up the panels as free standing columns, insert lights inside so that the columns would glow at night, put together the giant box, paste the introductory sheets on it etc. At last, close to dawn the exhibition was set up and ready for display looking absolutely marvelous and unique - it was worth the effort!

Judging the product design entries was a daunting task. There were so many great ideas - some still at the conceptual level, some worked out in great detail, and some even accompanied by actual models! The Judges - Sourabh Gupta and Rajat Tuli spent close to half a day in the midst of all the entries, examining and understanding each idea in depth, before short-listing the best 12. These 12 were so unique and profoundly creative that it was difficult to narrow down on one. Therefore they were summoned and we had a short interaction with them. In the end, a proposal for street furniture - a roadside seat that would unhide on its own when the water level rose, and become a boat - keeping the seated afloat and safe till help arrived, was decided to be the best entry. The winner will be joining the Archohm family for the next Archoutour to UK, his whole trip sponsored by Archohm and the British Council.

Kudos to Archohm for this initiative!

Isha Talsania - A true super spirited archomite. We welcome her to the architectural fraternity as she convoked last week and wish her a long and promising tenure with us. Hard working and dedicated, Isha is a great asset.



When we started Happily Unmarried we could not even in our wildest dreams imagine that one day we will be asked about its design ethos or philosophy. To Rahul (the other co-founder) and me most of the knowledge about design has come when people have asked us questions and we have had to google to find out the meaning. Based on the hours spent on the net I can say with a lot of confidence that we are not Gothic, kitsch, retro or in your face.

Happily Unmarried started with a simple premise. We are in the business of fun and everything that we do should make the life of our customers fun. That perhaps is the only guiding principle we follow. Every product that we do needs to have a fun quotient. We can compromise on the pureness of design but we do not compromise on the joy that every product that we make needs to provide to the Happily Unmarrieds the world over. Our entire focus is on making the customer have fun, today it is through products tomorrow it may be through happily unmarried radio or movies or even our own Beer.

The other bit that we try to do is make sure we have as much fun as we can while making the products or thinking of crazy ideas. Unless you yourself are having fun and loving what you do there is no way in the world that you can make it appear in your output. This is why I really admire Archohm. They seem to be a bunch of crazy people who are so charged about what they do, it reflects in every blue print, elevation plan or service drawing that emerges out of that wooden facade, red brick building with very confusing doors.

The little interaction I had with the team while on mission NASA was demo enough of their enthusiasm. If that is the way they handle projects than I am sure a lot of buildings, toll plazas, universities and other things which involves any kind of architectural input will show Archohm's name in the place where one is supposed to write the name of the architect. And if they keep having as much fun maybe we at happily unmarried will be happy to carry a "designed by Archohm" tag on our products too.

Please notice the fun products by Happily Unmarried on this page. The coconut cut pouch, the rockstar toothpick holder, the mosquito repellent stand, sandass ashtray and funky glasses. All make a bold statement in themselves.

Rajat Tuli - A new find for Archohm. He resonates the same energy on design and attitude like us. Let's take life less seriously, have fun and work hard. Rajat is an entrepreneur who is the co-founder of the extremely popular brand - "happily unmarried", which offers a variety of ordinary household goods, which usually make a bold fun statement.



designs

The top five entries of the creative design archontention:

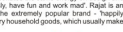
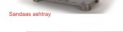
The winning entry - the LEAF BOAT, as the name suggests, is inspired by a fallen leaf. The Leaf boat is a piece of outdoor street seating that turns into a boat when there are floods. The USP of this simple yet clever design is that the object switches states all by itself circumstantially - from a seat to a boat, when the water level rises. The design team comprising of - Akshay kore, Kunal Angane, Jinal Sheth and Priyanka Menon stated that they aim to design for the masses. And since they have been victims of the catastrophic floods in Mumbai, this product is an outcome of their personal experience.

Portability with comfort is a challenging concept; the FLUX CHAIR celebrates this effectively. The beauty of the flexible design of this mat cum chair lies in the simplicity of its mechanism. This product is designed by Alex Thomas.

PORTOPURI addresses the need of a very interesting target market - the pani-puri walas on the street. It is a compact stand which opens up to form a complete pani puri stand with specific niches for various ingredients/utensils etc. This product is designed by Sebastian Joseph.

The LOCOFICKLE is a sleek accessory for the urban traveler. This multifunctional product offers a variety of uses without compromising on the overall aesthetic. Designed by Midhun Kumar and Hamid.

A neat laptop kit made of wood. The LAPPY CASE RY (designed by Roshan John) is aimed at business professionals who travel extensively. It has been designed with cool features like an inbuilt cooler.



News:

A striking picture of the JD H street Mall at Ranchi on Republic Day. A proud moment for Archohm. No fee can beat this.

The Stockholm furniture fair - the Archohm team travelled to Scandinavia for this furniture fair to get design updates, on the latest design innovations. Temperatures were below freezing point.

After waiting patiently for 99 days (exactly), Sourabh finally moved into his personal dream space on Valentine's Day! His office is a marvel in itself. I shall refrain from disclosing details for the time being, to keep you interested in the forthcoming issues of the archometer.

Sourabh was also invited to give a talk in the Entrepreneurship Summit 2011, organized at Delhi Technological University (formerly Delhi College of Engineering) on Feb 16, where he received an overwhelming response from the students, to such an extent that when he left the auditorium, they followed him for an informal Q&A session. And just to put things in perspective, the other speakers called for this event included the Delhi chief minister and the father of the Pentium processor.

Spotlight - TANUSHREE LAKHOTIA MATHUR

A vibrant senior interior designer at Archohm. "I have been with Archohm for a long time and in this period we have grown significantly as an organization. It has been an action packed 6 years in which I have always been given the chance to take up new challenges and responsibilities every time there was a need. I am very proud to have been a part of Archohm's achievements along this tremendous journey and at the same time am also very excited to be a part of Archohm's bright future. I have had a fabulous and fun time at work, thanks to its very dynamic and fun loving workforce."

"The fact that our dear client - Mr. Sanjeev Agarwal gifted her an iPad, as a token of appreciation, speaks for itself of the sheer effort and time that she puts into any project that she handles. Tanushree has leadership skills and her congenial nature has earned her many friends (even the coffee machine would agree to that).

I as a colleague have seen her grow from a fresher out of college who joined our organization and is now one of the longest 'surviving' (six years already in the firm and going strong) interior designers in our firm. She is an essential mix of calm and aggression, former when she is interacting with seniors/clients and the latter in front of contractors and subordinates when work needs to be executed at site.

I wish her the very best for her future and hope she keeps growing with Archohm."

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH:
Anil Sharma - First Gopender - Twenty Ninth

NEW JOINEES:
Saniya Sharad Gupta - Interior Designer

sourabh's desk



'beg borrow steal kill, get the job done' has come to prominence in my life this week.

one, it's the attitude I work with, no alibis and whatever it takes is the only way to move on; and this is cast in concrete on my new office room wall. I finally shifted into my own room after four months of a nomadic office status. It's the last space to be handed over in the new studio, it felt really great, really complete, to mark the celebration of the office completion, the four stalwarts anindya, shivdutt, girihar and amit das were applauded for their insane support and work to put in this office together, ending with a 'valentine cake'.

two, this was the message best received by students of engineering and mba on my talk on entrepreneurship this week at the delhi technological university's innovation seminar.

this was one of my finest experiences, to talk on design, to defend ones concept, to explain a creative thought were all manageable exercises and imaginable experiences. But to excite graduates on 'entrepreneurial skills' was a different high, a fairly unprepared talk, some scribbled notes on my stockholm helsinki brayers pasta of a day before, some last minute slide organization by midu and gopi and a few prancing later (yours truly has acute stage fright) the talk was delivered. It went quite well or so I thought, I warmed up to the questions thrown at me and it was a revelation of sorts how I had innocently slipped into these entrepreneurial shoes from simply being a designer.

I was introduced to engineering innovations on campus as a guest, one team designed a car that managed 300 kilometres per litre of petrol, the other had just come back from preloria, south africa winning accolades on their all terrain vehicle and yet another combined house chores by operating a washing machine with a bicycle so you conserve energy and keep fit as your clothes get washed. It was an eye opener, these were projects students did as their part time study beyond their regular work, to have that faith in themselves and work that hard at that age, I felt an incredible content...and hope on our creative young indian talent.

let us beg for work ethics, borrow more time, steal all shows, kill every ego and get the job done.

Why do designers come up with similar products at the same time?



When I thought of this question, there were so many possibilities which came into my mind, designers come up with similar stuff because they analyze and have similar problems to solve. Also because of the popular visual style around us at a given time and addressing similar concerns like sustainability, minimalism with similar solutions available in terms of material and technology. And undoubtedly, "Uncle Google" which gives you similar results worldwide (just for taking the first reference point like we all say, but end up with similar permutations and combinations of those referred things).

Another angle could also be that designers don't want to experiment or are not allowed to experiment, so next time don't go to buy a touch screen phone just because your friend has it (i know you will).

- Siddharth Babha IIT KANPUR 2010



In the creative industry, there is an on-going concern that no matter how clever your ideas is, chances are that someone has come up with something very similar. We're always left wondering why and how this happens. Let's face it, due to globalization we're all surrounded by the same influences and exposed to the same visual culture of shapes, forms, and patterns. When thousands of designers address similar problems, it is obvious that ideas will, from time to time, look almost identical. However, to cope with all this, I feel that we should at every step of the design process remind ourselves that someone has undoubtedly already thought of this idea and what can we do to really set it apart. Because of these reasons, it is only the virtuous designers who can continue to stand out in the page please find images of strikingly similar logo designs of credible companies belonging to very different industries.



Will you call these plagiarisms or evidence that great minds think alike?

* THE WALL is a platform where a design issue is raised and people give their opinions on it. If you wish to be a part of future discussions please contact midu[at]archohm.com

the wall