

DEFINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GLOBAL DESIGN.

JANUARY 2009

droog lab

DURING 2007, THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES PRODUCED OVER 52% OF GLOBAL GROWTH, COMPARED TO 37% DURING THE LATE 1990S. CHINA ALONE PRODUCED 17.8% OF GLOBAL GDP GROWTH LAST YEAR, COMPARED TO 14.6% FOR THE U.S. ECONOMY. THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' SHARE OF TOTAL WORLD OUTPUT HAS RISEN TO 29% THIS YEAR FROM 18% IN 1995. THE WORLD BANK IS FORECASTING THAT THE ECONOMIES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WILL GROW 7.4% THIS YEAR, COMPARED TO 2.2% IN THE OLD INDUSTRIAL NATIONS.

WALL STREET JOURNAL

a shift

THE DROOG LAB IS AN INITIATIVE OF RENNY RAMAKERS, ART HISTORIAN, CRITIC AND CO-FOUNDER OF DROOG DESIGN.

IN 1993 RENNY RAMAKERS AND GIJS BAKKER STARTED DROOG AS AN ANTI-STATEMENT; A NON-SENSIBLE, DOWN TO EARTH DESIGN MENTALITY THAT OPPOSED THE HIGH STYLE AND FORM BASED WORLD OF DESIGN. IN CONTRAST, IT PROPOSED A HIGHLY CONCEPTUAL APPROACH, ONE CAPTURED BY THE DUTCH WORD 'DROOG,' MEANING 'DRY' OR 'WRY'.

THIS MENTALITY HAS DEFINED DROOG AS A CONCEPTUAL DESIGN COMPANY OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS, AND TO A LARGE EXTENT, HAS DEFINED DUTCH DESIGN WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT.

THE CONTEMPORARY CONDITION IS GLOBAL. THE DROOG LAB WAS DEVELOPED TO DIRECT DROOG'S WAY OF THINKING TOWARDS GLOBALLY RELEVANT ENDS, BREEDING IT WITH THE ATTITUDES AND AMBITIONS OF DESIGNERS FROM VERY DIFFERENT CONTEXTS.

DROOG IS RESTATING ITSELF WITHIN TODAY'S GLOBAL CONTEXT BY ENGAGING IN GLOBALLY RELEVANT CONTENT AND DISPARATE CULTURES. THIS WILL BECOME THE NEXT GENERATION OF DROOG, AND, AMBITIOUSLY STATED, THE NEXT GENERATION OF GLOBAL DESIGN.

methodology

THE CORE OF THE DROOG LAB IS TO IDENTIFY URGENCIES GLOBALLY AND INVESTIGATE THEIR IMPACT LOCALLY. AS SUCH, PARTICIPANTS NEED TO THINK BOTH GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY, AND THE PROJECT STRUCTURE IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THIS SHIFT.

TOGETHER WITH THE CONTENT MANAGER, DROOG INTERNS IDENTIFY, RESEARCH AND PHRASE GLOBAL URGENCIES. A BRAINSTORM IS ORGANIZED WITH INVITED EXPERTS AND A LOCAL PARTNER TO INFORM THE DISCUSSION ON A GLOBAL AND LOCAL LEVEL. LED BY A RENOWNED DESIGNER, A DESIGN WORKSHOP IS HELD ON LOCATION, CONFRONTING PARTICIPANTS DIRECTLY WITH THE CONTEXT, AND ASKING THEM TO RESPOND. FOLLOWING A PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL RESPONSES ARE THEN PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL URGENCY.

THE PROJECT STRUCTURE NOT ONLY JUXTAPOSES THE GLOBAL WITH THE LOCAL, BUT ALSO THE EXPERT WITH THE YOUNG DESIGNER, THE SPECIALIST WITH THE GENERALIST, THE INSIDER WITH THE OUTSIDER. THE DROOG LAB WILL GIVE EQUAL ATTENTION TO AN INSIDER'S OPINION AS TO THE FOREIGN IMPRESSION. THE DROOG LAB WILL USE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN DISPARATE PEOPLE AND CONTEXTS TO YIELD FRUITFUL RESULTS.

THE DROOG LAB BELIEVES THE NEXT GENERATION OF GLOBAL DESIGN WILL RESPOND TO CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ISSUES BY INVESTIGATING THEM ON A LOCAL LEVEL. IT FORESEES THAT LOCALLY RELEVANT RESPONSES WILL HAVE GLOBAL RESONANCE. THE NEXT GENERATION WILL NOT BE AFRAID OF MIXING; IT WILL BE STIMULATED BY—IF NOT ALREADY HABITUATED TO—CULTURAL CONTRAST AND INTEGRATION.

THE GLOBAL CONDITION DEMANDS CULTURALLY, POLITICALLY, SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS DESIGN—IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT THE LAB CONSIDERS RELEVANT DESIGN. INCLUDED WITHIN THIS, IS THE HUMAN DIMENSION, WITH ALL ITS SUBJECTIVITY, NOTIONS OF BEAUTY AND MEANING, AND DESIRE FOR HIGH QUALITY EXPERIENCES. THROUGH ITS CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY, THE DROOG LAB WILL AIM TO PRODUCE GLOBALLY RELEVANT DESIGN.

**focus
question**

**THE DROOG LAB IS FREE,
UNRESTRICTED AND
EXPLORATORY, YET HAS A
VERY AMBITIOUS MISSION:
TO DEFINE THE NEXT
GENERATION OF GLOBAL
DESIGN.**

**IT SEEKS TO ANSWER:
WHAT IS URGENT IN AN
INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT
AND HOW CAN LOCAL
CONTEXTS CONTRIBUTE?**

**terms
defined**

URGENT ISSUES

WITHIN THE LAB, TOPICS EMERGE FROM A GLOBAL ORIENTATION. URGENCIES ARE IDENTIFIED BY INVESTIGATING A RANGE OF INDICATORS SUCH AS GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC SHIFTS, LATEST SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS, CHANGING SOCIETAL ATTITUDES AND EMERGING LIFESTYLES.

ATTITUDE

THE LAB WILL NOT TREAT URGENCIES AS PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED, IT WILL NOT ADOPT ANTI- OR A PRO- ATTITUDES, BUT RATHER, WILL ACCEPT THEM AS FACTS, AS EMERGING REALITIES FULL OF POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES AND POSSIBILITIES. NEW REALITIES MAKE SPACE FOR NEW DIRECTIONS, BEGGING THE DESIGNER'S CONCEPTUAL RIGOUR AND IMAGINATION.

RESPONSES

PROPOSALS CAN RANGE FROM THE VISIONARY TO THE PRACTICAL, FROM THE CONCRETE TO THE ABSTRACT. THEY WILL BE FORWARD LOOKING YET DOWN TO EARTH, FUTURE ORIENTED YET NEVER INTENTIONALLY FICTIONAL. THEY MAY COME FROM ANY DESIGN DISCIPLINE, WHETHER COMMUNICATION, PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE, ARCHITECTURE OR CITY DESIGN.

**pilot year
2009**

**2009 IS THE DROOG LAB'S
PILOT YEAR. THE FIRST
URGENCY IS IDENTITY AND
IT WILL BE INVESTIGATED IN
DUBAI, WITH OUR LOCAL
PARTNER, TRAFFIC DUBAI.**

URGENCY 2009: IDENTITY

Droog al Arab

PLACE: DUBAI

PARTNER: TRAFFIC DUBAI

ALL OVER THE WORLD WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH EMERGING CITIES THAT REFLECT A LACK OF LOCAL IDENTITY. ALL THESE CITIES SEEM TO FOLLOW THE SAME RECIPE. WHETHER IN SHANGHAI, KUALA LUMPUR OR IN DUBAI, WE SEE AN ALMOST INTERCHANGEABLE MODERNITY.

**THE QUESTION IS:
HOW CAN WE MAKE A CONNECTION BETWEEN GLOBAL AMBITIONS AND THE LOCAL CONTEXT?**

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WILL BE DEVELOPED IN THE DROOG LAB TO CHALLENGE DUBAI'S MODERNITY BY INTEGRATING DUBAI'S HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL RESOURCES, LIKE RELIGION, RITUALS, RAW MATERIALS AND CLIMATE.

THE RESULT WILL BE A WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS THAT WILL BE SOLD IN A GEURRILLA STORE IN DUBAI.

- 1. BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE BY INVENTING POSSIBILITIES RATHER THAN TACKLING PROBLEMS.**
- 2. ASK WHO CARES? AS A WAY OF FINDING POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS.**
- 3. MAKE FICTIONAL PROPOSALS FOR POTENTIAL CLIENTS.**
- 5. WORK WITH EXISTING EXPERTISE AND THE WORK OF OTHERS.**
- 6. IF IT IS IMPORTANT, QUANTIFY AND VISUALIZE IT.**
- 7. SHIFT SCALES FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL AND BACK TO GLOBAL AGAIN.**
- 8. AIM FOR SPECIFICITY: THE MORE SPECIFIC THE RESPONSE, THE MORE GENERAL THE APPEAL.**