Announcing the UnBox LABS 2014

The UnBox LABS 2014 is an exciting project that brings together creative practitioners, artists and researchers from the UK & India for a 10-day lab experience that explores the theme of 'FUTURE CITIES'. The project is a collaboration between UnBox, British Council, the AHRC, Science & Innovation Network, supported by the REACT Creative Economy Hub and the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, India. It is a continuation and adaptation of the fellowship program associated with UnBox, a multi-disciplinary festival in Delhi, India, which has happened every year since 2011. For glimpses from the 2013 Fellowships, please visit- [https://vimeo.com/63890524](https://vimeo.com/63890524) and [http://fellowships.unboxfestival.com/](http://fellowships.unboxfestival.com/)

The UnBox LABS 2014 will seek to catalyze cross-disciplinary projects that are built on collaborations and dialogue, through an immersive, hands-on lab experience over 10 days. We are seeking 8 creative practitioners & 8 researchers from the UK along with 20 creative practitioners & researchers from India, to collaborate on and initiate exciting projects that respond to the challenges of our urban futures. The projects will centre around the broad theme of 'FUTURE CITIES', with participants exploring ideas and developing responses to the challenges of our futures cities.

From 1991 to 2011, the urban population in India has increased from 100 million to 200 million. By 2041, 50-percent of India’s population is expected to live in cities. On average, the population of India’s six major metropolises nearly doubled between 1981 to 2001. The issue is not only limited to India; UN estimates say that by 2050, 70 per cent of the world’s population will live in cities. The UK faces its own challenges of delivering effective and sustainable services within the context of rapid growth in urban centres, along with an explosion of personal digital technologies.

While this puts increasing pressure on the infrastructure that makes them work, it can also be an opportunity to reimagine what future cities can be like. Infrastructure development can become a starting point for the growth of cities; however cities are
also complex systems that need more qualitative & subjective interventions that can enable more sustainable and inclusive growth.

We would like to explore how design, research and digital technologies can build communities of engaged responsible citizens. How can design principles be applied to delivery of innovation and public services in the urban environment? How can these elements be brought together to transform our cities into more engaging spaces, actively addressing issues around governance, identity, safety, sustainability and mobility? UnBox LABS 2014 will provide a space for cross cultural dialogue and exchange of ideas to help channel existing knowledge and develop new prototypes for future cities.

During the 10-day lab from 24 Feb-7 March 2014, the group will work together in small teams, along with local mentors and advisors, on-site in India at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad (www.nid.edu). The lab will allow for collaboration, prototyping, reflection and experimentation. There will be:

- Mentor sessions and workshops, along with showcases of interesting projects
- Facilitated team ideation, co-creation and prototyping
- Discussions and continuous feedback
- Self-initiated explorations into local city contexts and projects
- Group meals with experiences around the city and with select guests

At the end of the lab, participants will present their work to a group of mentors and advisors and interested organizations. The lab will provide the opportunity and space to pursue a creative project that builds on your own skills while also leveraging complementary skills and attitudes provided by the team as well as the mentor group.

Researchers

We're looking for open-minded, creative-thinking Arts & Humanities researchers from the UK and from India, who have experience of working within a non-academic environment and/or cross-cultural settings. You could also be someone who is new to these types of challenges and is keen to broaden your horizons and enrich your research experience. Applicants from the UK for the position of researcher must be from a Higher Education Institution (HEI) that is directly funded for research by Higher Education Funding Council for England, Department for Employment and Learning,
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales or the Scottish Funding Council. They must also be of postdoctoral standing or equivalent and adhere to standard AHRC eligibility guidelines as outlined on p.58 of the Research Funding Guide: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/guides/research-funding-guide/

Across all profiles, we are specifically seeking open, entrepreneurial individuals with a strong desire and capacity to make meaning and adapt learnings in new, multi-disciplinary contexts. We want self-starting individuals who will use the lab as an opportunity to test and explore their creative ideas collaboratively and have the drive to further push these ideas to potential solutions through their own networks and connections, as well as through those opened up by the lab. We expect all participants to actively participate in the lab outputs- apart from the project ideas and prototypes, the lab will also culminate in a publication of ideas around 'Future Cities'. All participants will be expected to contribute in various manners, through the course of the lab, towards content for the publication as well as an online blog that captures experiences of each participant through the course of the lab.

There are 8 positions for creative practitioners from the UK, 8 researchers from the UK and 20 positions for applicants from India (across creative practitioners & researchers). All participants will be responsible for their own projects and lab outputs. One of the goals of the lab is to create and catalyze ideas that are powerful enough to elicit future funding for projects, based on the merit of the ideas and the strength of the teams that are formed. As a participant you will be expected to take full charge of your own learnings and collaborations, in order to ensure robust deliverables as a result of your own experiences in the lab.

**What’s on offer?**

- Opportunity to focus on developing your idea
- Space and materials to develop prototypes
- Access to various mentors & networks to get insights and feedback
- Peer community
- Travel & accommodation provided
- A small production budget to develop prototypes
- Creative mentoring and facilitation from mentors
- Access to funding opportunities to develop your project idea

**Timelines:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 5th</td>
<td>Application goes live for both UK and India based creative practitioners and academics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 6th</td>
<td>Applications close at 5 pm (local time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 16th</td>
<td>Selected participants announced (post interviews where necessary)</td>
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<td>Dec 13th-20th</td>
<td>All flights and visa processes underway</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 24th</td>
<td>Pre-departure meet-up event in London for UK partners &amp; participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 24th- Mar 7th</td>
<td>Ideation lab week (10 days)</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>REACT producer-led support to teams, with inputs from UnBox</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Submission of the teams’ funding proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Potential showcase opportunity at Alchemy, Southbank Centre, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct/Nov 2014</td>
<td>Showcase opportunity at UnBox Festival in India</td>
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Please use the accompanying form to send in your application.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

> Track record - a demonstrated history of high quality, innovative creative practice and how this is relevant to the key aims of the call for applications.

> An original and compelling articulation of the theme and its potential

> A clear articulation of the value of the opportunity (in terms of both the lab and the possible ongoing collaborations) and how it offers value to your current practice or research, as well as your ability to develop your skills, work in teams and engage with new sectors and audiences
Applications from the UK for the position of researcher will be assessed by AHRC Peer Review College members. We will let all participants know if they have been successful by December 20th 2013.

Form for researchers

The UnBox LABS 2014 is seeking 8 UK researchers. The 10-day lab from Feb 24th-Mar 7th 2014 at the National Institute of Design Ahmedabad, will bring together creative practitioners with researchers to work on multi-disciplinary projects that address various challenges around the theme of ‘FUTURE CITIES’. The lab seeks to foster and catalyze collaborations and dialogue, through an immersive, hands-on experience.

Post the lab, participants are encouraged to pitch project ideas to funders, which include AHRC as well as others who will be confirmed later, to further develop and work on ideas that will get showcased at various forums- like the UnBox Festival in India in Oct/Nov 2014, the Alchemy Festival at the Southbank Centre, London in May 2014 etc.

Participants should be able to travel to India for the duration of the lab (Feb 24th-Mar 7th 2014). They should also have the ability to work on project ideas (on site and virtually) post the lab, during the period between March & October 2014.

If you are selected to participate in the lab, you will be expected to:

- Work collaboratively with artists and researchers from other disciplines on project ideas
- Participate in critical discussions and brainstorms around your ideas and work
- Interact and engage with local mentors who will give critical feedback and context-specific insights
- Participate in field visits and workshops, which will help to further develop your ideas
- Be a part of public events that offer opportunities for presentation and discussion of your work with peers and mentors

Please return completed applications via email only to AHRCcreativeandperformingarts@ahrc.ac.uk

Please write ‘Application –UnBox Labs 2014’ in the subject line.

Applications due: 5 pm(local time) on 6th December 2013
Acceptance notifications: 20\textsuperscript{th} December 2013

Applications will be sought separately by the British Council for UK creative practitioners and by UnBox for Indian creative practitioners/organisations. Please contact them separately about their calls.

Detailed information about logistics and procedures will follow upon acceptance. Please note that you are eligible to apply only if you have a valid passport and you do not foresee any problems with getting a visa, or with being in India for this length of time.

Thank you so much for your interest.