

WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

PRESS RELEASE

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Four renowned designers speak out on design's responsibility to radically redesign the world we live in

What Design Can Do launches a new video campaign for the Make it Circular Challenge – featuring Arthur Huang, Bas van Abel, Carla Fernandez and Poonam Bir Kasturi.

Amsterdam, 13 Jan 2023 – **“We are constantly producing loads of sh*t,” declares visionary engineer Arthur Huang. “I hate that people are still talking about the circular economy and not doing anything.” Huang’s sentiment is echoed by three other brilliant designers who are speaking out about the importance of circular design, in What Design Can Do’s bold new video campaign for the Make it Circular Challenge.**

The world can be a pretty frustrating place to live in. Never before have humankind produced, consumed – or thrown away – so much stuff. That’s why What Design Can Do (WDCD) in partnership with the IKEA Foundation launched the global Make it Circular Challenge in October last year, inviting innovators everywhere to radically redesign a fairer and more sustainable world. In a series of videos published this week, four renowned designers – [Arthur Huang](#) (MINIWIZ), [Bas van Abel](#) (Fairphone), [Carla Fernandez](#) (Carla Fernandez fashion house), and [Poonam Bir Kasturi](#) (Daily Dump) – weigh in on the state of the world and the designer’s responsibility to make our processes and products more circular.

Our phone breaks? We get a new one. We buy food? It’s covered in plastic packaging. You get the gist. It’s no wonder that 45% of all global emissions today come from the production of everyday goods and services. Changing this – and building a circular society that restores resources rather than depletes them – is one of the greatest challenges facing our generation. “When I started making fashion, I didn’t have any other choice than doing it the right way. It shouldn’t be an option to make it fast. It shouldn’t be an option to be designed to be thrown away. It shouldn’t be an option to be designed to be disposable”, says **Carla Fernandez**, a renowned fashion designer working closely with artisans based in Mexico.

DESIGNERS, GET IN THE LOOP

It can be hard to reimagine the world in which we want to live. But some of the most innovative designs around the world were born out of frustration with the way things work – or don’t work! Speaking about the conception of Fairphone – a repairable and sustainable smartphone – founder **Bas van Abel** says: “One day my son came to me with a broken Nintendo. They use special screws to make it difficult for people to open it...And that made me really pissed to throw away something I knew I could still fix.”

Besides making better, more long-lasting products, circular design is also about learning to live within our planetary boundaries. This means finding ways to create new value out of old things – and to dream up second lives for existing materials and resources. For **Arthur Huang**: “We see trash as a possibility. It isn’t trash, it’s just misplaced resources. We find it very exciting to turn [trash] into something unimaginable”.

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For our societies to become fully circular, we need to change the way we design: from quick fixes to long-term solutions, from exploiting the Earth to collaborating with it, from creating new materials to using what we already have. All four designers are unanimously clear: It's time to take action and create a world that works for everyone. As **Poonam Bir Kasturi** says: "Why should we all be thinking circular? This is a no brainer".

"Creatives and designers often create out of frustration about how things work, or don't. This campaign encourages creatives to turn their outrage into action. We want designers to think about what frustrates them and encourage them to redesign a fairer, more sustainable world that works for people and planet," says WDCD's co-founder and creative director **Richard van der Laken**. "Hate something? Then change it; and whatever you do, Make it Circular."

That's where creatives come in.

What Design Can Do invites innovators everywhere to contribute imaginative ideas that prevent waste and radically rethink our way of life: from what we eat and wear, to why we buy and how we build. The Make it Circular Challenge calls on designers to support the creation of a circular society that respects both people and nature. **You can submit your biggest and boldest ideas to the challenge up until 31 Jan 2023.**

JOIN THE MAKE IT CIRCULAR CHALLENGE

The Make it Circular Challenge provides in-depth design briefs presenting original research on circularity and highlighting opportunities for designers and entrepreneurs alike. Participants will submit projects across themes: what we eat, what we wear, what we buy, how we package and how we build. Check the Challenge website and follow What Design Can Do on social media for future updates about events in the open call, such as workshops, webinars and tutorials with tips on applying.

At the beginning of 2023, a jury of leading experts in design, social impact and climate action will select a minimum of 10 winners. Winning ideas are turned into reality with €10.000 in funding and a global development programme co-created with Impact Hub Amsterdam, which includes online training, mentoring sessions and a bootcamp. This programme will support the winning teams in further strengthening their projects, and propelling them through 2023 and beyond.

For more information, visit the Make it Circular platform: <https://makeitcircular.whatdesigncando.com/>

FOR THE EDITORS

For all videos, thumbnails, and social media copy, view our [press kit](#). More information about past Challenges and What Design Can Do is available at our [press webpage](#). For any press enquiries or more information regarding the Make it Circular Challenge, please contact louise@whatdesigncando.com

ABOUT WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

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What Design Can Do (WDCD) is an international platform that advocates for design as a tool for social change. Since 2011, we have undertaken numerous activities to promote the role of designers in addressing the world's most pressing societal and environmental issues. To date, WDCD has hosted 15 successful conferences in Amsterdam, São Paulo, and México City. In 2016 WDCD launched an ambitious design challenge programme that engages the creative community with urgent societal issues such as the wellbeing of refugees and climate change. So far, the programme has resulted in €10m in funds raised by initiatives post programme.

The Make it Circular Challenge is active in six cities around the world: Nairobi (with partner **Kenya Climate Innovation Center**), Tokyo (with partner **Shibaura House**), São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (with partner **Mandacaru Design**), Delhi (with partner **Quicksand**), Mexico City, and Amsterdam.

To see previous Challenge winners, visit <https://www.whatdesigncando.com/projects/>
For more information, visit www.whatdesigncando.com

ABOUT THE IKEA FOUNDATION

The IKEA Foundation is a strategic philanthropy that focuses its grant making efforts on tackling the two biggest threats to children's futures: poverty and climate change. It currently grants more than €200 million per year to help improve family incomes and protect the planet from climate change. Since 2009, the IKEA Foundation has granted more than €1.5 billion to create a better future for children and their families.

In 2021 the Foundation decided to make an additional €1 billion over the next five years to accelerate the reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions. Learn more at: www.ikeafoundation.org