

International designers Network Magazine Interview with Sanjeev Shankar

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<http://idnworld.com/creators/?id=SanjeevShankar>



· IdN: Do you think design and designers can play an active role in creating value for self/ environment/ mother earth? If so, how?

· SS: Yes, design and designers can contribute decisively to make the world a better place in a spirited, creative, holistic and inspired manner. In my opinion design combined with a real purpose could become a powerful tool and make a positive impact for our society. A designer has to look within his context and respond to it with sensitivity and without any preconceptions. Every opportunity demands an authentic response, which is informed by the place, its people and their needs all of which forms the context. Creating value must involve engaging every stakeholder in a lasting, resonant and memorable manner. Celebrating local resources and past processes of change in a contemporary and innovative manner is important.

· IdN: The nature of design somehow contradicts with being sustainable, how could you keep the balance between being creative and eco-friendly?

· SS: I do not think that the nature of design contradicts with being sustainable. Design and creativity as a way of life and source of thought needs to take up real challenges and this has to be drafted into our system of education. It has to respond to a process of change and explore the fusion of contradictions and conflicting realities in a clever manner. Once 'we' accept, that respect for the environment and ensuring its protection is everyone's responsibility and a reality, which we cannot ignore, it will lead to rethinking the framework of design. It would be a seamless part of our method and approach.

· IdN: What have you learnt about Eco-design as designer?

· SS: We must have faith in the process of creation and allow it to become a fluid, organic journey. An inclusive, participatory method liberates the process from singular, linear definitions and creates an appropriate response, one that is resilient and resonant amongst all.

· IdN: What would be your vision towards future eco / sustainable design?

· SS: Sustainable design has to step out from intellectual discourses and conference rooms onto the streets. Engaging everyone is important and our focus should be on the acuity, dispersal, endurance and resonance of designs.

· IdN: Could you give couple examples how to be more eco-graphics / environmental?

· SS: Our project on fusing modern and traditional footwear to create culture specific footwear is a good example here. The project explores transmission of past traditions and their systematic and deliberate transformation as a response to contemporary needs. Such an act of inclusion echoes the context of the place and the shared memory of its people. The project over the last five years has moved from footwear design to critically documenting the process of traditional leather footwear. Now, we are discussing the possibility of using this knowledge for a hand crafted leather footwear school and museum in South India. The other project, which is being developed, further is *Jugaad*. We are exploring the integration of solar cells with the oil can pavilion to create a community gathering space in different Indian villages. This will be owned and maintained by the village community.