

# THE DESIGN PARADOX

As the role of design is expanding, important questions have to be raised. Why do we design, how do we design and what do we design? These questions are so fundamental, so complex, that paradoxes arise when we try to answer them. These paradoxes are the basis of a trilogy of exhibitions Design Academy Eindhoven has held at the Van Abbemuseum.

The current exhibition 'Thing Nothing' is a research into the meaning, value and future of things. It addresses the relation between form and counter-form, between the real and the virtual, and between technological possibilities and moral issues. The exhibition shows work from acknowledged designers as well as young talents from Design Academy Eindhoven.

Design Academy Eindhoven has always encouraged students to look beyond the material properties of things, to search for a presence in the space in and around an object. Even while embracing technology, social change, and nonmaterial value, we strive for a kind of material poetry, where thing and nothing, presence and absence, are linked.

'Thing Nothing' concludes the trilogy, which began with 'Self Unself' (2013) – a research into the unselfish inclination of present-day designers, and 'Sense Nonsense' (2014), which explored how the path to innovation is not always rational. Together these three chapters of research into the Design Paradox forecast how the next generation of designers are positioning themselves in the evolving field of design.

To delve deeper into this issue of the design paradox, we will stage a symposium on the 29th of October at the academy where we will expand on the various narratives of these exhibitions in a full day programme. We will reflect and work with various internationally acknowledged designers, artists and theorists including, amongst others, Marko Ahtisaari, Director's Fellow, MIT Media Lab, Feng Boyi, Chinese art curator and critic, Lucas Maassen, designer and Liu Gang, executive director PIN projects who guided the project 'Self Unself' in China.

The day starts at 10am with a tour of the museum and after a lunch we will start lectures and Master-classes with the invited experts. Around 5pm we conclude with drinks.

Date: 29 October 2015  
Location: Design Academy Eindhoven, de Witte Dame, 2nd Floor  
Time: 12:00 – 17:00, including free lunch

Entrance free, please register at [info@designacademy.nl](mailto:info@designacademy.nl)  
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## PROGRAMME

10:00 – 12:00 — Guided tour  
Exhibition 'Thing Nothing' Van Abbemuseum

12:15 – 13:00 — Lunch  
Design Academy Eindhoven, 2nd Floor

13:00 — Keynote  
**THOMAS WIDDERSHOVEN**, Creative Director  
Design Academy Eindhoven  
Topic: exhibitions as part of the DAE research process

13:15 — Keynote  
**MARKO AHTISAARI**, Director's Fellow,  
MIT Media Lab  
Topic: Leading the Creative Self

13:30  
**FENG BOYI**, art curator and critic in China  
about political paradoxes and  
**LIU GANG**, executive director PIN projects  
who guided the project 'Self Unself' in China  
Topic: controversial art exhibitions in China

13:45 — Interviews  
**LUCAS MAASSEN**, the man who seeks about  
conceiving objects;  
**NADYA PEEK**, PHD student MIT about  
bits and atoms ([infosyncratic.nl](http://infosyncratic.nl)) and [Making  
Machines that Make](#))

14:00 — Talk  
**FRANCESCO CARA**, regenerative economy  
on the generational mindset

14:30 — Master classes: 5 parallel tracks  
– Master class design and the political: Feng Boyi  
– Design and curating: Liu Gang  
– Design and perception: Lucas Maassen  
– Design and technology: Marko Ahtisaari  
and Nadya Peek  
– Design and regenerative economy:  
Francesco Cara

16:00 — Plenary feedback  
Closing notes gathered by student-reporters  
will be the input for a round table discussion  
with all speakers

16:30 — Drinks

