Sponsored by

Touchstone
TRUST

Speaking Of
the Spiritual

*Use design to help people be spiritual
with clarity and confidence*

Brief
Design a service, product, environment,
or communications campaign
that addresses spiritual needs in
contemporary contexts.

Scope
For the purposes of illustration only, the
following would all be viable responses:

– a new perspective on spiritual rituals and
practices
– a design solution that helps to make
a positive spiritual practice easier to
practice regularly
– a service, club or network that helps
people to help each other explore and
address their spiritual needs
– a product that invokes or reminds people
of the importance of the spiritual
– a communications campaign that
highlights the value of fresh conceptions
of spirituality
– a new furniture or environmental concept
with spirituality at its core
– a fresh take on established social or
cultural rituals
– a redesigned place of worship
– an innovative application or website that
highlights spirituality's social relevance

Solutions that explicitly promote either
a strongly pro-religious or strongly anti-
religious position are less favourable
responses to this brief.

Award
Touchstone Trust Award of £1500.

Please note that the judging panel may
decide on more than one winner and will
allocate the award accordingly.

Submission requirements
Entries should comprise the following:

– up to four A3 boards (max. four) showing
design development and final designs
– 'The Big Idea' – a short, typewritten text
(max. 250 words, sans serif, 14pt type)
that captures your idea and helps the jury
to quickly understand your solution, the
process by which you reached it and the
benefits you believe it will create
– one sketchbook (photocopied pages
from your sketchbook will be accepted)
illustrating development of your solution
in response to the brief

All work (except sketchbooks) should
be submitted on A3 lightweight card
or foam board and all items (boards,
sketchbook, written statement) should
have an RSA label on the back. Please
do not submit work in plastic sleeves or
in boxes. These requirements are in the
interests of students to ensure the safety
of their work whilst in storage and transit,
and to ensure that it can be displayed for
judging in an efficient manner.

Submissions are due by **Friday,
22 March 2013 at 17:00**. Please see
the **Schedule of Key Dates** for further
information.

Further notes for entrants
You have a maximum of four A3 boards,
a sketchbook, and a written summary not
exceeding 250 words to communicate
your solution to the judges. You have to
distil your weeks or months of work into
a story that is digestible in a short period
of time. Imagine it like an advert and sell
your work to the judges.

Any models or mock-ups should be
submitted as photographs or print-outs
mounted on one of your A3 boards – do
not submit 3D work at this stage. If you
are short-listed for interview, you are

welcome to bring mock-ups and models,
but for ease of judging at the first stage,
only 2D material is accepted.

Judging criteria
There are six judging criteria that your
entry will be measured against:

1 **Social Benefit** How does your design
benefit society?
2 **Research** Where did you go to research
this issue? Whom did you speak to or
interview? What questions did you ask?
What did you learn?
3 **Design thinking** We want to know
about your thought processes and
insights. Your insights might be research-
based or intuitive, or a combination of
both, but the judges want to see you
relate the final concept clearly to these
insights. What journey did you go through
to get to the final result?
4 **Commercial Awareness** Does your
design have the potential to work at scale
and be accessible and relevant to those
without huge amounts of money?
5 **Execution** We are looking for a design
that is elegant and pleasing
6 **Magic** We are looking for a bit of 'magic'
– a surprising or lateral design solution
that delights and inspires

Judging process
Please see the **Entry Pack** for more
information on the judging process,
including key dates you should be aware
of through Spring 2013.

Background
The 21st century will be spiritual or it will
not be.[1] – Andre Malraux (1901–1976)

We are interested in how design
can speak to the spiritual needs of
everybody. We are particularly keen
to speak to the relatively silent and
largely neglected majority who do not
identify with any particular religion,
but do not feel particularly hostile to

RSA Projects
Student Design Awards 2012/13
Website: www.thersa.org/sda
Email: design@rsa.org.uk

Page **15**/20

09.2012

1 In the original French: "Le 21ieme siecle sera
spirituel ou ne sera pas."

How this brief will be judged

1 **Social benefit** 25%
2 **Research** 20%
3 **Design thinking** 15%
4 **Commercial awareness** 10%
5 **Execution** 10%
6 **Magic** 20%
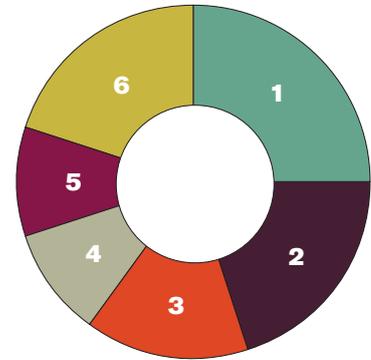
religion in general, and may value certain aspects of different traditions. Attitude surveys suggest people under thirty are particularly likely to have this kind of outlook, often described as 'spiritual but not religious'.

We want to understand how we might address peoples' need for elements of the following: a sense of meaning and purpose, the experience of transcendence, the respect for mystery, the cultivation of peace of mind, the discipline to live the life we want to, aliveness to the present moment, and commitment to something bigger than ourselves.

Recognising that these needs are largely unmet outside of conventional religion, many have argued that the challenges facing contemporary secular society are ultimately 'spiritual' in nature, stemming from pervasive misconceptions about the kinds of beings we are and the consequent difficulties in aligning our beliefs, values and actions.

However, it is important to recognise that the word 'spirituality' carries a certain amount of baggage. It can sound escapist, narcissistic or even hostile to reason. It is attacked 'from both sides' – by religious believers for lacking depth and communal expression, and by new atheists as lacking scientific and rational foundations. It is important therefore to develop and refine what we mean by spiritual.

Our working definition of the spiritual is as follows: a sense of something of significant meaning and value which moves us but which may not be consciously mediated. We believe this sense may be an important motivating and organising force to help us live fuller and better lives. However, this is not a limiting definition, and part of the brief

is to help broaden our appreciation of what it might mean to be spiritual. A central issue that we hope design might inform is how belief or outlook relates to personal and social commitment: To what extent and in what ways do we need to believe the same or similar things to help each other address personal and shared spiritual needs?

Considering all of the above, we would like you to use design to demonstrate how we might begin to develop forms of spirituality that are, for instance, experiential, supportive, democratic, adaptive, inclusive, and socially and politically engaged.

You do not need to address all of the aspects above, all of which have contested meanings, but we hope they are helpful criteria to stimulate your thoughts. The overarching aim of this brief is to use design to help demonstrate how people might begin to speak about the 'spiritual' in public life with more clarity and confidence.

Think about your own design training and design skills and how you approach design problems. Design thinking often demands addressing difficult moral, cultural, environmental and spiritual decisions. Therefore, you might want to consider how an increased understanding and practice of spirituality could help designers and innovators better solve today's problems so that they benefit the common good, the environment and future generations? Part of the work of a designer is to develop products, systems and environments that change people's behaviour and in relation to this brief, you may want to consider the following questions:

– Where is spirituality, and why is it there, and not somewhere else?
– What motivates spiritual ritual and practice and how might such rituals and practices be improved or supported?
– What barriers do people face in valuing spiritual experience or cultivating a spiritual practice?

– How might our imagination about the spiritual be limited, and how might we go beyond those limits?
– How might new expressions of spirituality help people to align their actions and values?

The idea of ritual or habit could figure in your design solution as many of existing spiritual practices are habitual and ritualistic, but it is important that such practices remain vital and meaningful, and do not become lifeless through repetition. Is there a way to make spirituality part of a daily ritual that involves 'doing' something whereby the 'doing' aspect helps people feel that they are growing in a positive direction? You may even approach the brief by thinking about the role of spirituality in design. For instance, how might design practices be informed by incorporating some of the aspects of spirituality outlined above?

Sponsor information
Touchstone Trust is a UK registered charity, established in 2010 and based in central London. It works closely with partner organisations and individuals to develop grant proposals in three areas: International Development, Community and Support, and Arts and Ideas.

This brief is funded under the 'transcendence & ritual' theme of the Arts and Ideas programme, which focusses on how ritual is used in contemporary life to "rise above the everyday, refresh and expand our sense of awareness, and experience a deeper connection with the wider world".

Speaking of the Spiritual
Brief devised in collaboration with Jonathan Rowson, Director of the Social Brain Centre at the RSA

09.2012

RSA

Projects

Student Design Awards 2012/13

Schedule of Key Dates

Key Dates for submission of Entry Forms, Fees and work

Deadline for Entry Form(s) and Fee(s) for all projects

Friday 22 March 2013

Please register by this date using our new online registration system, available from January 2013 at www.thersa.org/sda

If registering by post, please ensure your Entry Form(s) and Fee(s) are postmarked by this date. Entry Form(s) and Fee(s) should be sent under separate cover – **not with your entry** – to:

RSA
Student Design Awards Registrations
8 John Adam Street
LONDON
WC2N 6EZ
UK

Submission period for all project entries

Monday 11 February – Friday 22 March 2013

Regardless if you register online or by post, you must send your entry in by post to Brooks Transport.

Entries will be accepted at Brooks Transport Services Ltd on any weekday within the dates stated above between 09:00–17:00, excluding weekends and bank holidays. Entries arriving after 17:00 on Friday 22 March 2013 may not be accepted.

Please remember that all entries should be sent or delivered to:

Brooks Transport Services Ltd
Unit 2/15
Second Avenue
Bluebridge Industrial Estate
Halstead
ESSEX
CO9 2SU
UK

All entry forms/fees should be sent or delivered to:

RSA
Student Design Awards Registrations
8 John Adam Street
LONDON
WC2N 6EZ
UK

RSA Projects
Student Design Awards 2012/13
Website: www.thersa.org/sda
Email: design@rsa.org.uk

09.2012

Page **4**/20