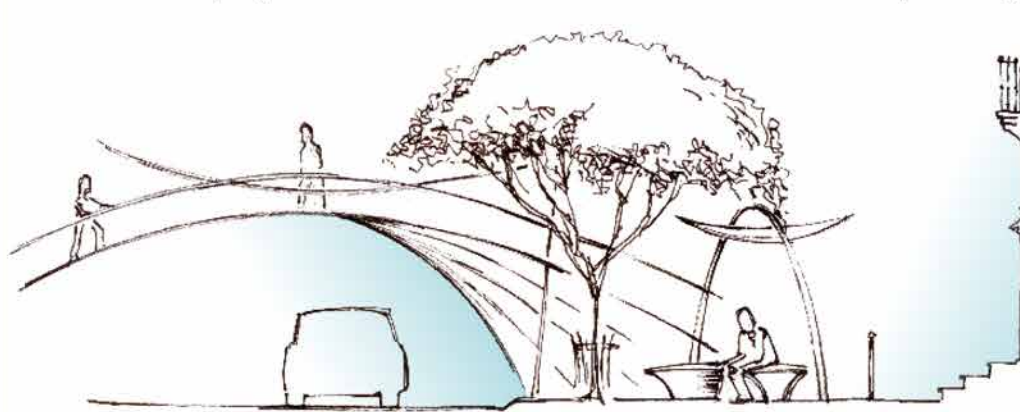


# MAKING DESIGN WORK

Through specialisation and attention to detail for a rich design ecology



## MICHAEL FOLEY

is Founder of Foley Design Studio\* that focuses on product design, graphics, packaging, space & environment design, and lifestyle product design. He is actively involved in market research, and believes design should satisfy desires, solve complex problems and create new experiences.

**M**y journey as a practising designer was entirely exploratory. It opened my mind to the innate complexity of design, its amazing network of far reaching influences and finally the beauty of its intrinsic simplicity. Every object needs to be intuitive, else it will fail in today's multidimensional world. It's an age that spells the demise of the conventional user manual and the birth of self learning; devices thrive on our intuitive capability to explore, learn and perform.

Has India seen an explosion in design? I would say it hasn't yet reached its critical mass as yet, but waiting to explode. It's this delicate balance between our openness to change, the versatility of technology, and market dynamics that will encourage entrepreneurship and innovation.

This brings me to the next question, why has this explosion in design not happened as yet? Acceptability towards indigenous design is a challenge. We're historically known for our art and culture, we're not as well known for our inherent object-making prowess. A lingering part of this object culture is sadly dying as a 'commoditised' manifestation of products created using age-old craft techniques. What's great about our profession is that every time you pick a pencil you are given a chance to challenge what already exists.

What about our sensibilities in design as a community? Why is it that our cities are so non-descript today? Why don't we see our cities being romanticised with public design, enhanced systems in towns for waste disposal, cleanliness, and the sheer

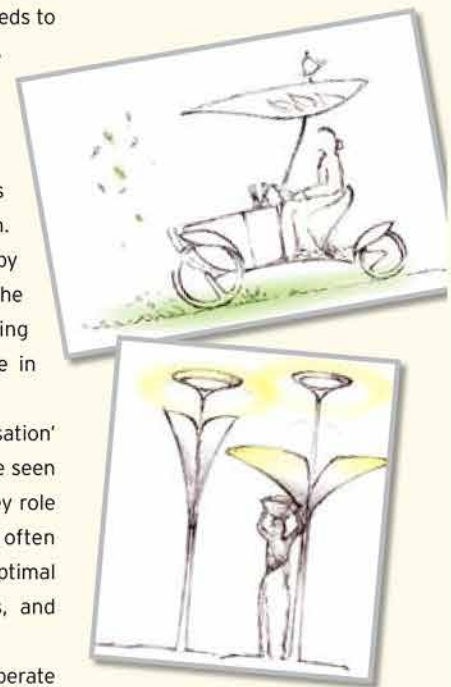
need for beauty. Design is in our homes and needs to go beyond, to be known as a society that lives and breathes design.

There exists 'makeshift' innovation from 'lassi' making washing machines to using pumps to create low-cost mobility devices, but this has nominally transitioned into 'real' innovation. Designers can play a role in this transition, by being the 'ideator' and the 'entrepreneur'. The design fraternity needs to move from being reactive to current needs, to being proactive in anticipating tomorrow's needs.

A big challenge, I believe, we face is 'optimisation' in design. Solutions in the real world need to be seen through several lenses. Optimisation plays a key role in the convergence of design solutions; often misinterpreted as 'compromise' leading to sub-optimal solutions. This is a challenge for designers, and perseverance is the only way out.

What makes design thrive? Design cannot operate in isolation. It relies heavily on an eco-system of interdependencies such as research, prototyping, concept testing, manufacturing simulations and most critically understanding the user of design. For design to flourish, India needs a much greater focus on building this design eco-system; a greater focus on specialisation and attention to every little detail in the process of design.

We need to embrace a new way of looking at design, one that's exploratory, collaborative and inventive. It's time for design to come alive in India!



**WHY DON'T WE SEE OUR CITIES BEING ROMANTICISED WITH PUBLIC DESIGN, ENHANCED SYSTEMS IN TOWNS FOR WASTE DISPOSAL, CLEANLINESS, AND THE SHEER NEED FOR BEAUTY. WE NEED TO MOVE FROM BEING REACTIVE TO CURRENT NEEDS TO BEING PROACTIVE IN ANTICIPATING TOMORROW'S NEEDS**