

# News & views



**So, what's our idea  
of a great idea?**

Intuition and great thinking  
count for a lot in today's  
spreadsheet world

[www.designbridge.com](http://www.designbridge.com)



**DesignBridge™**





**Clockwise from left**

**Tiger**  
Asia Pacific breweries  
A fifteen year relationship

**Mark Budden**  
Design Bridge Singapore  
Managing Director

**Dutch Lady**  
Friesland Campina  
Asia Pacific  
Identity design for  
regional portfolio

**Kapiti**  
Fonterra  
Premium Ice cream  
for New Zealand

**Still travelling!**



# Love at first flight

## Putting down routes in the Asian region

We have been working in SE Asia since Design Bridge started back in 1986 and there were times when we felt we were constantly on an aeroplane! In 2003, we opened our Singapore Office.

From the start we knew that being local could never be an excuse for not delivering the very highest standards. We didn't want to be just another design agency that churned out work at a moment's notice. Our clients expected and deserved the very best in terms of brand thinking and creativity. They wanted no less from us than they would from our London or Amsterdam studio. So imagine how chuffed we were when a client recently remarked on how similar it was to work with us as it was to work with our London office.

A great team is clearly the key to great work. We are over 50 strong, a diverse mix of cultures, nationalities and backgrounds, all of whom believe that great ideas are at the heart of all great brands.

Right now we are working in India, Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, New Zealand, Cambodia, The Philippines and Hong Kong... so no getting away from those aeroplanes.





## Why an old tram shed is really going places: The story of our office in Amsterdam.

We've always worked in international markets, but when we found ourselves working with more and more people in the Netherlands, it made sense to open up an office in Amsterdam.

Of course, making sure the same spirit runs through another office whilst allowing its own personality to flourish takes hard work and skilful management. The Amsterdam office has proved to be worth every bit of effort. Completely at home in one of the most creative of cities, it now boasts a 50 strong team – headed up by Frank Nas – who are united by a common passion for great ideas. It is living proof that expanding the mix of different cultures and experiences has huge creative benefits.

Over the years, we have regularly created bespoke, cross-company teams to get the best people together for a particular job. Amsterdam is the home of our corporate and service branding experts. Like all 3 of our offices it tackles a diverse range of international challenges across Europe, America, Africa and the Middle East, creating everything from identities for major multinationals and transport networks to a new pasta brand for the Sudan.

Transport identities incidentally are becoming a bit of a speciality. Perhaps we find inspiration from our home being in an old tram shed!

**Clockwise from top**  
**Connexxion** Joined up transport  
**Bama** Loving your shoes  
**Frank Nas** Design Bridge  
 Amsterdam Managing Director  
**Hoogesteger** Just juice  
**Swinckels'** Freshly chilled

# 3D branding. From the exceptional to the essentials.

Touch an object and you get an instant bond with it. That's why so many museums let kids pick things up nowadays. Back in the early 90s you had graphic design companies and product design companies. Quite early on, we realised that the power of brands was magnified when 3Dimensional design was combined with graphics. So we became the first to offer a truly integrated structural and graphic design approach; building a team of talented 3D brand designers to work side by side with the strategists and graphic designers.

If there's one thing we've learned along the way, it's that there are plenty of people who can create a shape, but that the real skill is holding on to that idea as it goes through the manufacturing process. Of not allowing it to be diluted or making compromises that shouldn't be made.

If you've heard the words 'it's great, but it can't be made' – and we bet you have – you'll know exactly what we're talking about. We pride ourselves on having a really sound knowledge of manufacturing. The sort of knowledge that will get your suppliers creating the things they said they couldn't. (Can't promise they won't hate us for it, but then breakthrough design was never going to be an easy pursuit.)

We've got lots of stories of where we've done this: from pushing the boundaries of glass mould technology and creating a unique embossing technique with PET suppliers to sourcing micro chilling technology.

Of course, 3D branding is about so much more than just packaging and should you wish to discuss anything from getting the best out of a branded environment to the dispense of your product to getting more out of less material then Phil (London), James (Amsterdam) or Craig (Singapore) would love to hear from you.



**1 Beefeater 24** Pernod Ricard  
Getting the most from glass, daring London glamour elegantly created for a new super premium gin.

**2 Domestos** Unilever  
Keeping a watchful eye on germs. Rim blocks have been largely untouched since the 1980's our new product design for the Domestos Rim block is more than a new shape it cleverly builds in the added benefits of touch free re-filling.



# London. Where it all began.

We started Design Bridge in 1986, setting up home in a converted warehouse above a Victorian Debtor's prison on the alleged site of Oliver Cromwell's house in Clerkenwell. Back then, despite being in the centre of London, you were quite hard pushed to find a cheese and pickle sandwich around here. But times have changed and Clerkenwell is now at the buzzing heart of London's creative community.

Of course, the world has changed a lot along the way too. Back in 1986 we were just getting used to CD's instead of records and 'online' wasn't part of the vocabulary. Twenty years ago, we were known as a packaging company and whilst we're still very good at packaging – last year we won the coveted Pentawards Packaging Design Agency of the Year award – we're now a leading International branding agency who do everything from strategic brand architecture to creating Brandworlds and communications.

Clients often tell us we 'just get' their brand, showing that intuition and great thinking count for a lot in today's super-spreadsheet world. Great ideas do not come out of a computer! They do however come out of a great team of people. Ours is over 100 strong – a mix of youth and experience and diverse influences (12 different nationalities for one). However everyone here from the most junior designer to John Morris our MD is passionate about great ideas.



**Clockwise from top left**

**KFC**  
Menu boards  
Winner of a DBA Design Effectiveness gold award 2011. One of our tougher challenges, to simplify and enhance the experience of this key selling tool.

**Bohemia**  
Mexico  
Identity and Brandworld creation for premium Mexican beer.

**John Morris**  
Design Bridge London  
Managing Director

**BGCI**  
Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International  
Winner of a DBA Design Effectiveness silver award 2011. If you had to choose, which would you save? Plant or animals? An impossible debate. Voice your choice, our big idea to help teachers engage children with plant conservation.

## Our Feelosophy

**If you've been to any of our offices, you'll have noticed that we like the reception area to give you a feel of what we're about.**

This year we took the 'feel' part rather literally and created a sensorial map of Clerkenwell. It was part of the London Design Festival. Now, you'd be forgiven for thinking 'well that's all very nice and arty but what's it got to do with brand design?' Well, in our opinion, quite a lot. You see brands are all about building an emotional connection with the consumer and many aren't maximising the way they do this. We humans have 5 senses, 5 different ways we can interact with the world or objects. Yet most brands rely on sight with some using touch, taste and smell and precious few sound.

We set ourselves the challenge of taking a small area of London – our very own patch – and exploring it with all our senses. We decided to call it Feelosophy (of course!). We had people writing poetry, drawing, even taking rubbings. A highlight was the soundscape. We worked with Martin Ware (remember The Human League?) to create a unique 3D sound installation that captures the very soul of Clerkenwell.

We're about to take Feelosophy down now. The stuffed squirrel who was there as a homage to the 'stunt' squirrel who lives in the park opposite our offices is now being retired. We'll put another display up soon. Something that feels right.



## What have we been up to lately?



# Grow Great kids

What do you do when you've got lots of regional and local brands, each of which are successful in their own right yet with different identities, and you're briefed to create one identity behind a single positioning? Our answer was to come up with a strong, simple visual idea. An idea that conveyed sunny optimism and 'spoke' to mums about their healthy, growing kids. Whether they were mums in Brazil or mums in Germany.



### From top left

#### Swinkels

From the street into the bar. Setting new standards in beer signage with its unique vertical format derived from our original bottle design.

#### Karhu

Did you know that in Finland there are more than 35 different words used to describe smoke? Now there is a new one, for Karhu's speciality smoked beer.

#### Wenjun Tian Xian

Stunning new Ultra premium baiju spirit for the China local market from Moët Hennessy Asia Pacific.

#### Graham's torso

Group creative director Graham has shut the laptop and is going back to basics. Armed with just a hammer and chisel he is trying his hand at stone carving... 3 weeks in!

#### Overtoom

Feelosophy comes to Amsterdam capturing the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures that make up the Overtoom.

#### Dutch Lady

Breaking away from the typical milk splash of the category another of our big ideas is in the process of rolling out across Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia.

#### Charity breakfast

Held in the crypt St James church opposite the office in Clerkenwell, this years big charity Breakfast organised by our team of volunteer cooks raised over £300 for the homeless charity Crisis.



# Not a whooshy line in sight!

Ever noticed that almost every railway identity seems to be about whooshy lines and speed? Well, we don't like doing the same as everyone else so, when we set to work on VR trains, our angle was the sustainable benefits of train travel illustrated as a journey through the Finnish landscape. The results are quirky, eye-catching and most importantly unique.