

IDEAS COMPETITION

**TURN YOUR SMALL CHANGE  
INTO BIG MONEY**

THE ROYAL FINE ART  
COMMISSION TRUST

We're looking for simple practical design changes in any of the three fields of urban design, architecture and highways/traffic management that would measurably improve quality of life. What small interventions could relatively easily be adopted and have a beneficial effect on daily life?

Recent examples might be the selective removal of road markings and traffic lights to improve safety – a measure at once simple and counterintuitive. Or 3D pedestrian crossings, designed to slow traffic speeds and reduce accidents by the simple expedient of painting lines differently<sup>1</sup>. Or the embedding of traffic lights in pavements at pedestrian crossings, for the benefit of downward-looking smartphone users. Or roundabouts, a simple British invention but one of our most successful design exports, not least because they control traffic flow without dependence on a power supply.

You might want to take your inspiration from marginal gains philosophy – urban existence is made up of a multitude of minute daily transactions that lend themselves, in theory, to incremental performance analysis. Alternatively, you might wish to reflect on the design implications of likely social and demographic change: by 2050, the number of centenarians will have increased by 1,000% globally and for the first time there will be more people over sixty-five than under fifteen. 70% of them will be urbanised<sup>2</sup>. Or consider the fact that the UK has the smallest average home sizes in Europe – 800sq. ft. for those built since 2003. What small changes could be introduced to mitigate the impact of shrinking living space?

If those examples help spark your imagination then great, but please don't be constrained by them. We're far more interested in what happens when you independently question how something is designed and come up with a small adjustment that allows it to be designed better. We hope to tease out some powerful ideas, ideally even a Eureka moment: the sort of simple game-changer that is obvious and compelling once identified but until then slips below the radar.

Entries will be assessed by our world-class panel of intellectuals and design practitioners who straddle the two cultures of art and science. Our guiding principles in assessing entries will be Occam's Razor (the simplest solution is the best – in other words application should not be overcomplex) and Bentham's utility principle (the greatest happiness of the greatest number – in other words it should have the potential for general social benefit and be capable of application in the public sphere, which may include, for example, social housing or public transport). As for the definition of 'small', we are not too prescriptive about that but essentially we are looking for a design idea that, although widely replicable, could be demonstrated by single, one-off use. The four most promising entries will be awarded a cash prize. The first prize winner will be offered a mentoring/design development session in London with the judges.

<sup>1</sup>'3D "zebra crossings" stop drivers in their tracks', [www.archpaper.com](http://www.archpaper.com) 21 April 2016

<sup>2</sup>World Population Prospects: Key Findings and Advance Tables, 2015 Revision United Nations 2015; 'How City Design is Adapting to Older Populations', *The Guardian* 25 April 2016

# WE'RE USED TO THINKING BIG, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SMALL CHANGES THAT COULD HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WAY WE LIVE?

## HOW TO ENTER

Entries should be submitted digitally (by Dropbox to [director@rfact.uk](mailto:director@rfact.uk)) and should describe your idea in words and pictures (for which any medium - drawing, video, photographic etc - is acceptable). Please show the detailed design and include an imaginary example of how your idea might be applied in practice.

Entries must be received by 5pm on Wednesday 1st March 2017. It is free to enter.

Entries are accepted on the understanding that ideas are original and free of third party copyright or other restrictions. Entrants are responsible for protecting their own intellectual property. It is a condition of entry that winning entries will be publicised.

The decision of the judges is final.

Further information: Robert Bargery,  
Executive Director, RFAC Trust,  
[director@rfact.uk](mailto:director@rfact.uk)

## JUDGING PANEL

Lord Palumbo

Stephen Bayley

Sir Terence Conran  
FRIBA, RDI

Sir Christopher Frayling

Lord Rees  
OM, FRS, HonFREng

**FIRST PRIZE : £4,000**

**SECOND PRIZE : £1,000**

**THIRD PRIZE : £500** (*two prizes*)

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES

**1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2017**

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

**29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2017**

## ABOUT

The Royal Fine Art Commission Art and Architecture Education Trust (registered charity 298201) was set up in 1987 as a complement to the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Government's independent adviser on matters affecting public amenity and aesthetics in England and Wales. Over the past thirty years, the Trust has sought to promote visual awareness and public appreciation of high-quality design, for example through educational initiatives and an architecture award. Today it continues to advance its charitable objectives through commentary on design matters, by undertaking or commissioning relevant research and by partnering projects where its involvement can add value.

[www.rfact.uk](http://www.rfact.uk)