

# Re-thinking Local: A Cross-regional Dialogue about Strategies for Local Practice in Cities

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ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION WITH VO TRONG NGHIA, MARINA TABASSUM, AND MICHAEL MURPHY  
MODERATED BY RAHUL MEHROTRA

Monday, February 22, 2016, 6:30 pm  
Tsai Auditorium, Center for Governmental and International Studies  
Harvard University, 1737 Cambridge Street

*Reception with speakers at 6:00 pm in CGIS South Concourse*

LUNCHTIME LECTURE WITH VO TRONG NGHIA

Tuesday, February 23, 2016, 1:00 pm  
Portico 124, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 48 Quincy Street

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“Re-thinking Local” will examine how architects are developing new models of locally-based design practice given the changing realities of urbanization around the world, with a particular focus on South and Southeast Asia.

These two public events feature Vo Trong Nghia, the most prolific contemporary architect in Vietnam, and Marina Tabassum, the leading female architect in Bangladesh – both speaking at Harvard for the first time.

In addition, Nghia and Tabassum will be joined in a round-table discussion by Michael Murphy, Executive Director of MASS Design Group, and Rahul Mehrotra, Professor of Urban Design and Planning at Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

This public discussion program will thematically explore how architects are responding to new patterns of urbanization, creating models for construction and fabrication that support sustainable development, and catalyzing local institutions to promote dialogue about the role of design in improving cities. Together, the work of these architects gives new meaning to the model of practicing locally.

*These events are supported by the Boston Society of Architects Foundation, Harvard Asia Center, Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative, and Harvard South Asia Institute.*

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## Presenter Biographies

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**VO TRONG NGHIA**  
PRINCIPAL, VO TRONG NGHIA ARCHITECTS, HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Vo Trong Nghia is Principal of Vo Trong Nghia Architects and founder of Wind and Water House, a construction company specializing in green buildings to realize designs of high quality in Vietnam.

Through a series of the award winning projects, Nghia has developed sustainable architectural design in Vietnam by integrating inexpensive, local materials and traditional skills with contemporary aesthetics and modern methodologies. In 2012, he was selected as the Architect of the Year in Vietnam, and in 2014, he was selected as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.



**MARINA TABASSUM**  
PRINCIPAL, MARINA TABASSUM ARCHITECTS, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

Marina Tabassum is Principal of Marina Tabassum Architects and Academic Director of the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscape, and Settlements. She is currently Visiting Professor of Architecture at University of Texas Arlington.

Marina Tabassum Architects' philosophy, work, and culture stands against the global pressure of industrial materials that are easy and quick, out of place and context. Their pledge is to root architecture to the place, and their material palette is the climate, the location, the culture of the people, and the history of the land.

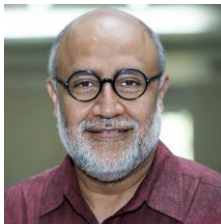


**MICHAEL MURPHY**  
CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
MASS DESIGN GROUP, BOSTON, MA

Michael Murphy is the Executive Director of MASS Design Group, which he founded in 2010.

Michael leads design and research programs at MASS and has overseen the expansion of MASS into ten countries and three continents. He regularly speaks on architecture and health care, and sits on the boards of the Clinton Global Initiative Advisory Committee, the Harvard Graduate School of Design Alumni Board, and the Center for Healthcare Design. In 2015, MASS Design Group launched the “Lo Fab” campaign to promote the role of local innovation and ideas, local labor, and local materials in architecture.

Michael holds a Master in Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.



**RAHUL MEHROTRA**  
PROFESSOR OF URBAN DESIGN AND PLANNING  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Rahul Mehrotra is Professor of Urban Design and Planning. He is a practicing architect, urban designer, and educator. His firm, RMA Architects, was founded in 1990 in Mumbai and has designed and executed projects for clients that include government and non-governmental agencies, corporate as well as private individuals and institutions.

His current research involves looking at India’s medium size cities and the broader emergent patterns of urbanism in India. Mehrotra’s ongoing research is focused on evolving a theoretical framework for designing in conditions of informal growth – what he refers to as the ‘Kinetic City’. He has run several studios looking at various aspects of planning questions in the city of Mumbai, under the rubric of “Extreme Urbanism.”

Mehrotra is a member of the steering committee of the South Asia Initiative at Harvard, and curates their series on Urbanization. He currently is leading a university wide research project with Professor Diana Eck, called The Kumbh Mela – Mapping the Ephemeral City.

