

HEL

LO

Let's
Talk

Owen Pritchard reports on a joint venture between **Blueprint** and the **Finnish Institute** that will forge a creative dialogue between London and Helsinki, celebrating the latter's role as **World Design Capital 2012**

'It's good to talk,' Bob Hoskins said in an advert for British Telecom, and Blueprint agrees. As Helsinki celebrates its role as World Design Capital 2012, and as part of the global agenda of satellite events, Blueprint has teamed up with the Finnish Institute in London for a series of events called HEL/LO – Let's Talk, aimed at bringing together the architecture and design communities in each city for a lively exchange of ideas. Curated by Hanna Harris, programme director for arts and culture at the Finnish Institute in London, and Blueprint, HEL/LO aims to promote dialogue and collaboration between the two cities through an exploration of their design cultures and of the issues faced by creatives.

Helsinki has often been cited as one of the world's most liveable and loveable cities. Over the past few years, the city has experienced an injection of energy. Large-scale development is shaping the city's waterfronts and a new wave of social activism is shaking up Helsinki's cultural life. London remains one of the most dynamic and diverse creative cities in the world, with one of the largest concentrations of architects and designers in Europe based in and around East London.

Four HEL/LO events will take place during the year, kicking off in late May and with two further events

in London during the London Festival of Architecture and London Design Festival. HEL/LO will also travel to Helsinki during Helsinki Design Week in September as the city and its people engage in a year-long exploration of design's potential.

At its heart, HEL/LO is about promoting dialogue and forging connections. Each event will be participatory and the audience will be invited to contribute their thoughts on postcards designed by Studio Emmi. These responses will be collated and published online at the HEL/LO blog as a record of each event, creating an evolving archive of ideas from and for the cities that shape our daily lives and creative futures.

Over the past few years the Finnish Institute has been forging links between the Helsinki and London design communities. 'At the London Design Festival 2010, Londoners were wooed by pop-up restaurant HEL YES!, while in 2011 they dreamed and listened to performances in the hems of a massive REDDRESS. These have been spaces to share and meet in. They were design-led projects with fresh takes on what the designer's role is and where design happens,' says Harris. 'With HEL/LO, we wish to nurture those ideas and multiply the links. Let's talk.'

The website of HEL/LO, helloletstalk.fi, will be launched on 12 April

Above: The logo for HEL/LO uses a classic British font and a classic Finnish font

Right: Participants will be urged to comment on postcards like these, designed by consultancy Studio Emmi



Emmi Salonen
Graphic Designer
Studio EMMI
London via Finland



Chrissie Macdonald
Illustrator
Peepshow Collective
London via England

In the spirit of HEL/LO, the logo, website and supporting media have been designed by London-based Finnish designer Emmi Salonen, of Studio Emmi. Founded in 2005, Studio Emmi has worked with clients from the worlds of art, culture, commerce and academia. 'At the core of the HEL/LO concept lies a dialogue between Helsinki and London. My aim for the identity design is to bring this across by emphasising communication between two elements,' says Salonen. 'The logo consists of two

circles, hinting towards speech bubbles. By using two typefaces for the logo, English Gill Sans by Eric Gill and Finnish Cider by Tomi Haaparanta, we get the conversation going.'

Salonen will also be working on a spatial design for events with Chrissie Macdonald of the Peepshow collective to create an installation that will provide the event with character. 'Me being a Finn and Chrissie being English will further emphasis the exchange of ideas,' says Salonen. emmi.co.uk; peepshow.org.uk