



BRITISH COUNCIL THINKS PUBLIC

thinkpublic, the UK's leading social innovation design agency, walked away with the prestigious British Council's UK Young Design Entrepreneur (UKYDE08) Award on Friday evening. Deborah Szebeko, 28, the founder of *thinkpublic*, collected the award from Sebastian Conran at the 100% Design exhibition in London's Earls Court.

The award is a new addition to the British Council's annual awards that began in 2004. UKYDE highlights the contribution that entrepreneurs in the sector make to the development of the UK's design industry through their work and understanding of the market. The award, a specially designed blue glass bowl, is accompanied by a visit to India in January 2009 to meet with leading industry figures to enable *thinkpublic* to understand the market and infrastructure in India.

thinkpublic, formed in 2004 by Szebeko, has gone from strength to strength in providing a unique service to the public and third sector including The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, The Department Of Health, Timebank, The Alzheimer's Society and Barnet Council. The company uses design, film and workshops to bring clients, their staff and service users together to help improve the services offered.

Following the presentation Szebeko was clearly delighted with the recognition: "Winning The British Council's UK Young Design Entrepreneur award is fantastic news for *thinkpublic*. To receive recognition for the design work we do in the public sector is something we have worked very hard to achieve. We hope that the award can increase awareness of what design can add to solving social challenges in the UK and allow *thinkpublic* to work with additional public service organisations in the future."

Sebastian Conran, Managing Director of Studio Conran, added "Deborah gave an impressive, compelling and prodigiously clear-sighted presentation on how to integrate design with the public realm. Tenacious about translating design to a wider range of clients, she has succeeded in combining both enthusiasm and common sense to gain the confidence of people who are usually sceptical about design. The judges commend her unique achievements in marrying design with the public sector in a tremendously valuable, straightforward and no-nonsense way."

The award follows a remarkable year for the young company after a visit to 10 Downing Street and a Top 10 entry in Courvoisier Future 500 - Public Life.

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