

Modular phones, bioprinting and touching strangers

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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There's one slot at Design Indaba I implore you never to miss, and that's the Pecha Kucha presentations. Seven top graduates from around the world presented their projects at this year's event, but three stood out - particularly in the simulcast auditorium where they all received a rousing applause.

Building a modular phone

Meet Dave Hakken - some of you may already be familiar with him after his [original Phonebloks video](#) went viral last year (1m views in first 24hrs). After a month he unleashed the social reach of 979,000+ supporters he'd garnered via Thunderclap and the world took notice.

His idea stemmed from a growing world problem, the accumulation of e-waste. According to Hakken, our phones are one of the biggest causes. Hakken's concept is a mobile phone that consists of detachable blocks - you replace components when you need an upgrade rather than the whole phone. Brilliant, right?!

The project is currently partnered with Motorola, and believe it or not, it's all open-source, it's all community-driven, all stemming from a desire to "try to make the world better by making things".

For more info, go to www.phonebloks.com.

Bioprinting hybrid organs

It's somewhat unsettling when fantasy becomes reality - I still can't wrap my brain around printing a cup or an actual pair of shoes, so bioprinting just about makes my fathom-sphere.

Agatha Haines is taking creation to the next level - she's designed realistic-looking alternate organs that could save your life. Bet you didn't learn about these in med school - the 'tremomucosa expulsum' organ, 'cerebrothrombal dilutes' organ and 'electrostabilis cardium' organ - each is supposed to help with the effects of cystic fibrosis, prevent strokes and heart attacks, respectively.

The bizarre part is that creating these organs requires combining cells from your own body parts and those of other species, namely the electric eel, leech and rattlesnake.

Haines' work focuses on how people might respond to these hybrid organs. I imagine, initially, many a cry of blasphemy!

For more info, go to www.agihaines.com.

Touching strangers

What would you do if a stranger walked up to you and touched you on your face? What if you were that stranger? Awkward...

Joy McKinney, a self-proclaimed introvert, was that stranger - she walked up to random people minding their own business out and about in New York and touched them. But wait, there's more! She captured it all in photographs and video.

Sounds almost as crazy as hybrid organs...Surprisingly, there aren't a lot of expletives in this video - most of the reactions reflect calm confusion.

As part of her project titled The Guardian, McKinney explores contemporary social and cultural attitudes towards gender and race.

For more info, go to www.jmckinneyphoto.com.

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