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Design@ND showcases Notre Dame’s graphic and industrial design programs, illustrates the caliber of both students and graduates, and builds the University’s reputation within the professional design community.

Creative Director: Robert Sedlack ’89
Designer/Editor: Maureen Wilkland ’12

Design@ND
A newsletter from the University of Notre Dame's Graphic and Industrial Design Programs

Fall '11/Winter '12 ISSUE NUMBER 13
Brian returned to the Alumni Design Conference as the keynote speaker and, as he put it, the “token representative of the older generations.” Instead of giving advice to the current design students, Brian gave a humorous and insightful account of his own path to a design career, which started long before Notre Dame at the Blue Whale Car Wash around the corner from his childhood home in Buffalo. The subtle story of the clean car exiting through the whale’s backside struck with Brian over the decades, and looking back now, he credits the ingenuity of the design for his understanding of the importance of clever content in good design.

“If I have learned anything in the ‘second ten years since graduation,’ it’s that the instincts that have guided my career—my life in general—were likely formed long before I arrived in South Bend in 1988. And that, in a sense, our career paths choose us. But I hope that by sharing my experiences it might open some minds to possibilities that hadn’t been recognized.”

His humble account of the second decade of his design career, which includes five Grammy nominations, a 2004 Grammy Award for an album package design of Alanis Morissette’s Everybody Hates Me, and the opening of his own studio, When Bicycle, was certainly inspiring to both the current students and the alumni in attendance.

“I really haven’t come up with anything as majestic as the whale.” — Brian Grunert
Each spring the MFA/BFA thesis exhibition displays the culmination of year-long student projects at the Sibs Museum on Notre Dame’s campus. These projects, each directed by a faculty member, are completed as part of the requirements for graduation. In the first semester of their final year of study, MFA and BFA students present their thesis proposals to the faculty, who then share a close working relationship with candidates. For MFA candidates, a thesis director and a graduate committee, both selected by the student, guide the student’s progress during the final year. After a juried review of the work, both MFA and BFA students present their theses in the annual exhibition. The spring show includes both graphic and industrial design; this past spring there were two MFA candidates, one in industrial and one in graphic design, and two BFA students, including one graphic designer and four industrial designers.

STUDENT EXHIBITIONS

Aaron Huffman (MFA, Graphic Design) recognized the potential that a coherent visual communication strategy could have for improving volunteer recruitment and retention in non-profit organizations. Through research, he determined that a strategy aimed at key individuals within contemporary social networks and connected to multiple networks could be more effective than the traditional method of broad advertising. “These influential individuals then become advocates for the organization and stronger, long-lasting connections between the organization and its volunteers. By making this method accessible to non-profit organizations, this graphic design strategy has the potential to transform volunteer recruitment, which in turn will help non-profits continue to improve our world.” —Aaron Huffman

Kirsten Blazic (BFA, Graphic Design) knew that Pennsylvania is home to the nation’s highest concentration of puppy mills. Puppy mills are large-scale breeding facilities that operate on one principle: maximize profit by minimizing living standards. Dogs kept by these breeders are denied adequate food and veterinary care. They are forced to spend their entire lives in cramped cages with wire floors. Many dogs escape these conditions only at the end of their lives when they are dead. Kirsten created End the Cruelty in order to give a voice to the suffering dogs. Her campaign centered around two goals: to inform Pennsylvania citizens of Lancaster County, a place notorious for its puppy mills, of the animal cruelty taking place in their backyard and to then empower the public to take a stand against the abuse. To reach her target audience, cases of Puppy Mill Chow were distributed in public, dog walks, and pet store parking lots. Every can was labeled with a photograph of a puppy mill dog, accompanied by a fact about the cruel practices at these breeding facilities. To Pennsylvania politicians, including the governor and state senators, Kirsten sent six cases of Puppy Mill Chow and a letter urging them to support stricter breeding laws. The End the Cruelty campaign is not an easy fight, but through thoughtful and focused activism Kirsten hopes to make a difference for the suffering animals.

“By making this method accessible to non-profit organizations, this graphic design strategy has the potential to transform volunteer recruitment, which in turn will help non-profits continue to improve our world.” —Aaron Huffman

Kathleen Brazil (BFA, Graphic Design) knew that mammograms are the nation’s highest concentration of mammograms. Mammograms are the standard for breast cancer detection, an important factor in the fight against breast cancer. Kathleen was introduced to mammograms as a child, when her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Kathleen was determined to design a mammogram experience that would be more comfortable for patients by designing a digital imaging mechanism that inherently improved patient mammogram experience while simultaneously incorporating the needs of a lab technician and doctor. Her thoughtful analysis of both a machine and the overall environment has the potential to change the patient experience more comfortable.

Charlotte Lox (MFA, Industrial Design) concentrated on improving the breast examination experience for patients by designing a digital imaging mechanism that inherently improved patient mammogram experience while simultaneously incorporating the needs of a lab technician and doctor. Her thoughtful analysis of both a machine and the overall environment has the potential to change the patient experience more comfortable.

John Traub (BFA, Industrial Design) completely redesigned the transit stop of major cities to become “a sculptural sidewalk piece that captures future society’s expressions through the social media cloud and projects it to the surrounding environment, augmenting the experience of waiting in urban areas. To solve developing technology in a new way that would connect the people of a modern society, I wanted to explore the intersection of the digital and the physical. What does the modern landscape look like when infused with these elements?” John found an answer to this question in a glass public transportation stop that allowed people waiting there to interact with technology and with each other. His project requires people to throw away existing expectations for the public domain and look towards a brighter, even more inventive future. “The pulse of a city is captured and visualized through the cloud networking of its inhabitants and reflected through a transit space for future cities, inspiring new ways to explore and discover.”

As a result, hand-me-downs and donated track shoes become the only option. These athletes will use the wrong shoe for their respective events and learn improper mechanics putting themselves at risk of injury. My concept seeks to provide student athletes with an affordable, safe, and proper way of approaching their track and field experience.” —John Traub

After a juried review of the work, MFA and BFA students present their thesis proposals to the faculty, who then share a close working relationship with candidates. For MFA candidates, a thesis director and a graduate committee, both selected by the student, guide the student’s progress during the final year. After a juried review of the work, both MFA and BFA students present their theses in the annual exhibition. The spring show includes both graphic and industrial design; this past spring there were two MFA candidates, one in industrial and one in graphic design, and two BFA students, including one graphic designer and four industrial designers.
IN LOVING MEMORY OF FRED BECKMAN

Fred Beckman, a young faculty member in the mid-1950s, found opportunity to establish a legacy that continues today. Virgil Exner Jr., a student of Professor Beckman’s in the 1950s, was the son of Virgil Exner Sr., Chrysler’s former President of Styling and the innovative “Forward Look” stylist that kindled Exner’s interest in design. Beckman quickly established a friendship with his students in the O’Shaughnessy loft.

Around 1955, the ensuing relationship between Beckman and Exner turned their collective vision into a reality. Summers found Beckman immersing in virtually all of Chrysler’s Detroit-based product development studios. During school semesters, some of Chrysler’s professional designers traveled to South Bend, working with Beckman and his students at puritanizing a transportation design studio program that would compete with the best in the nation. Soon, the unused loft above O’Shaughnessy was covered to become Notre Dame’s elegant new Design Center, fully equipped with air conditioning, provided courtesy of the Chrysler Corporation. Year-end student presentations often resulted in 100% of his class being immediately hired by Chrysler’s Styling Group. The influence of seeds planted by Beckman and Exner grew through the 1960s as Ford also took notice and employed Notre Dame alumni from this important academic and design resource.

The overwhelming response to the vision that he shared and resourcefully implemented with Exner was powerful evidence of the ingenuity of Beckman’s leadership. In the early 1970s, Beckman recognized the importance of diversifying into the broader field of industrial design. Notre Dame’s design focus shifted from its opening career opportunities in the automotive industry to placing students in positions designing consumer products ranging from toys and games to cars and aircraft interiors. Recognition and subsequent accreditation from the Industrial Designers Society of America added to the Industrial Design program’s visibility in national magazine coverage of student projects, numerous industry sponsorships, and national awards.

In the early 1980s, Beckman served as Chair of the Department of Art, Art History & Design. Recognizing the Department’s degradated facility in the Old Field House, he promptly set his sights on renovating a vacated science building that was allegedly slated for demolition. Again, Beckman’s vision and perseverance served the subsequent generations of students and faculty.

From the time of his arrival on campus, as the first faculty hire, Beckman quickly established a friendship

In Loving Memory of Fred Beckman

for the blind developed in 2007 was the feature of a successful NBC news story. Maloney McCormick’s ‘Off the Wall’ won the 2007-08 MacMill Design Challenge for her vision and presentation of the 2018 MacMill, placing first out of over 4,000 submissions from students and professionals. Core77 recently covered the program’s ongoing social design initiative in Nepal. Led by Assistant Professor Ann-Marie Consorce, Industrial Design students and faculty traveled to Kathmandu and Pokhara to help local craftsmen design products that appeal to the market; perhaps you’ve seen the commercial that airs on NBC during Notre Dame football games. With this abundance of accolades, it is exciting to look towards the future of the University’s Industrial Design program. However, we would be remiss not to take a moment to remember an inspirational figure in the original program who passed away last fall. Frederic S. Beckman began an Art Department Chair in 1944, shortly after World War II and declared victory in Japan. According to his daughter, Frances Beckman, her father had retired in the mid-1990s. Teaching for twenty years and past his 80th birthday, he returned to campus in the fall of 2001 to teach an undergraduate industrial design course for a colleague who was on sabbatical. In this transforming retrospective, Professor Paul Down pays tribute to the man who led the foundation to make all the current success possible.

2010s

When it came to deciding on a major at Notre Dame, Noel Canon ’07 chose both graphic design and marketing. Through careful planning from an early point in his undergraduate studies, Noel was able to complete both majors and still go abroad to Australia during his senior year. Noel worked with the happening of the 2011 iteration, which was then distributed to more than 3,300 recipients.

When looking at what he has been able to accomplish in his time at Hickok Cole, Noel sees the product of a work ethic that was molded from many late nights in Riley Hall. “The work ethic I developed in Riley has helped me to succeed. Around 1955, the ensuing relationship between Beckman and Exner turned their collective vision into a reality. Summers found Beckman immersing in virtually all of Chrysler’s Detroit-based product development studios. During school semesters, some of Chrysler’s professional designers traveled to South Bend, working with Beckman and his students at puritanizing a transportation design studio program that would compete with the best in the nation. Soon, the unused loft above O’Shaughnessy was covered to become Notre Dame’s elegant new Design Center, fully equipped with air conditioning, provided courtesy of the Chrysler Corporation. Year-end student presentations often resulted in 100% of his class being immediately hired by Chrysler’s Styling Group. The influence of seeds planted by Beckman and Exner grew through the 1960s as Ford also took notice and employed Notre Dame alumni from this important academic and design resource. The overwhelming response to the vision that he shared and resourcefully implemented with Exner was powerful evidence of the ingenuity of Beckman’s leadership. In the early 1970s, Beckman recognized the importance of diversifying into the broader field of industrial design. Notre Dame’s design focus shifted from its opening career opportunities in the automotive industry to placing students in positions designing consumer products ranging from toys and games to cars and aircraft interiors. Recognition and subsequent accreditation from the Industrial Designers Society of America added to the Industrial Design program’s visibility in national magazine coverage of student projects, numerous industry sponsorships, and national awards. In the early 1980s, Beckman served as Chair of the Department of Art, Art History & Design. Recognizing the Department’s degradated facility in the Old Field House, he promptly set his sights on renovating a vacated science building that was allegedly slated for demolition. Again, Beckman’s vision and perseverance served the subsequent

Ballroom with the students in the O'Shaughnessy loft in 2008. Business/Week magazine named the Industrial Design program at Notre Dame as one of the five international programs. Swimming technology.
in this issue...

- Design alumni gatherings in Southern California, New York, Washington, D.C., and Minneapolis