



2011

## Sketch

Diamond, Sara

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Fall 2011  
The magazine of OCAD University

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# SKETCH

**OCAD University**  
**at 135 years**  
A glimpse into our past,  
present and future



**A MOMENT AT OCAD UNIVERSITY**  
Roly Murphy's drawing class, circa 1935/36

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## SKETCH

OCAD University (ocad.ca) is Canada's "University of the Imagination," dedicated to art and design education, practice and research, and to knowledge and invention across a wide range of disciplines.

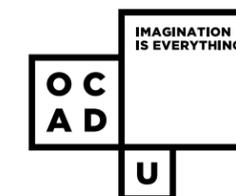
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On the Cover InfoViz for Social Media by Gabe Sawhney. A map of the people he follows on Twitter, and the people they follow.

# President's Message



Photo by Tom Sandler

Who would have thought that when it opened its doors in 1876 that the Ontario School of Art, located at 14 King Street West and home to 25 students, would become OCAD University with more than 4,000 students in a mixture of undergraduate and boutique graduate programs. In recognition of this evolving mission, OCAD University adopted the moniker "University of the Imagination" five years ago. Our goal was to capture the compelling, calculated risks that artists, designers and media-makers take at every turn. We wanted to encapsulate the vibrant passion and energy that have resounded in the school's studios, classrooms and laboratories for parts of three centuries.

Our institution strove to stay ahead of changing times, as reflected in a series of name changes: the Toronto Art School (1886-1890), the Central Ontario School of Art and Industrial Design (1890-1912), then the Ontario College of Art (OCA) (1912-1996), Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) (1997-2010), and now OCAD University. Emerging nation-states are transfixed with the challenge of establishing cultural expres-

sions and brand identities that speak to their geophysical and social conditions. OCA, Canada's first independent art and design school, housed leading members of the Group of Seven and Canada's homegrown breed of industrial and graphic designers whose authoritative imagery captured the popular imagination as Canada came of age. While continuing a passionate allegiance to Canada, OCAD U has internationalized—our student population, faculty, curriculum and partnerships represent more than 50 countries.

Fearless and well-founded ideas lead to economic and social gains. OCAD University's alumni and faculty have contributed to prosperity at home and abroad—carrying a significant portion of the more than \$9 billion per year of cultural sector GDP in Toronto alone and some \$12 billion in Ontario. Beyond art and design, our alumni are everywhere—in financial services, law, medicine, biology, government and information and communications technologies. OCAD U gave them the tools to succeed whatever their career choice, and we celebrate them as we turn 135!

OCAD University upholds the traditions of studio-based experiential learning—we are flexible, critically informed and intimately engaged with the world around us. Our strategic plan, *Leading in the Age of Imagination*, offers the *New Ecology of Learning*: a call to excellence that places the lens of art, design and media on burning issues such as sustainability, health and wellness, cultural diversity and globalization, contemporary ethics and the invention of technologies in our ubiquitous digital future.

It is an honour to be joining Canada's "University of the Imagination" as it celebrates its 135th anniversary. Since its founding in 1876, OCAD University has been a hub of cultural and economic activity in Toronto, connecting the city and the nation to leading-edge thinking in art and design.

Strongly rooted in its rich history, OCAD U is going through an exciting transformation of creative adventure, academic exploration and unprecedented entrepreneurialism.

Evidence of such tremendous change is reflected in the numerous new partnerships we have created with industry leaders, technology innovators, government and investors, as well as the building of a business accelerator to ensure that our graduating

# There are No Limits to Imagination

As a specialized institution, OCAD U has widened its arms to nurture individual talent while enabling unprecedented collaborative experiences and partnerships with industrial and not-for-profit partners, along with top-tier researchers. The Aboriginal Visual Culture Program: Art, Design and Media celebrates and accelerates practice and scholarship in an alliance with Aboriginal communities across Canada. The application of our specialized knowledge to broad interdisciplinary collaborations has catapulted OCAD U into a research and innovation leader in fields such as strategic foresight, Aboriginal visual culture, data visualization, wearable technologies, health and design, sustainability, new media art history, inclusive design and mobile technology.

Throughout its 135 years, OCAD University has been a city builder, whether through the creation of the Grange at the north end of Grange Park that was designed by George Reid to be the first building in Canada for the sole purpose of art education, or the de facto creation of an OCAD U district that became Queen Street West. The Sharp Centre for Design created by British architect Will Alsop has become a symbol of the combined power of art and design and OCAD University—gorgeous and smart.

Enjoy the pages that follow as we celebrate our history, our present and look towards the future.

— DR. SARA DIAMOND

students and faculty contribute to jobs, prosperity and social enterprise.

OCAD U's mission is to provide its students with the resources, skills and opportunities to succeed in their academic, professional and personal pursuits. The achievements of our students over the past 135 years are testaments to OCAD U's reputation as one of Canada's premier art and design institutions—a solid distinction we aim to build upon well into the 21st century and beyond.

— CATHERINE (KIKI) DELANEY

# Chancellor's Message



Photo by Bruce Zinger



# Governor General's Message



The mind develops at an early age. As a child, we are given the basic tools of reading, writing and speaking; as we grow older, we add those of math, science and history. Through this journey, we learn how to work together and how to shape our own opinions and views.

All over the country, youth are taught in various ways by different teachers covering a host of topics. The one constant, however, is the support of an excellent school with its dedicated teachers and staff members, such as OCAD University, which is celebrating its 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I am delighted to congratulate all the students, faculty and alumni who are celebrating this milestone.

Through the years, OCAD University has produced many outstanding members of society who have contributed greatly to the richness of this country. We can be proud of the history and accomplishments not only of the school, but also of all those who have worked towards creating a bright future for Canada's youth.

May this anniversary be yet another occasion to celebrate the value of education in our society.

*David Johnston*  
David Johnston



THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO  
LE LIEUTENANT GOUVERNEUR DE L'ONTARIO

It is a distinct pleasure to extend greetings to OCAD University as you celebrate your 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Since 1876, established as the Ontario School of Art, you have been an important centre for applied and formal arts education in the province. Your students have contributed greatly over the years to the arts and design worlds, making a strong impact internationally. In 2002, you started to confer degrees of Bachelor of Fine Arts, and Bachelor of Design, and in 2010, your name was officially changed to OCAD University, reflecting the status befitting this remarkable educational institution.

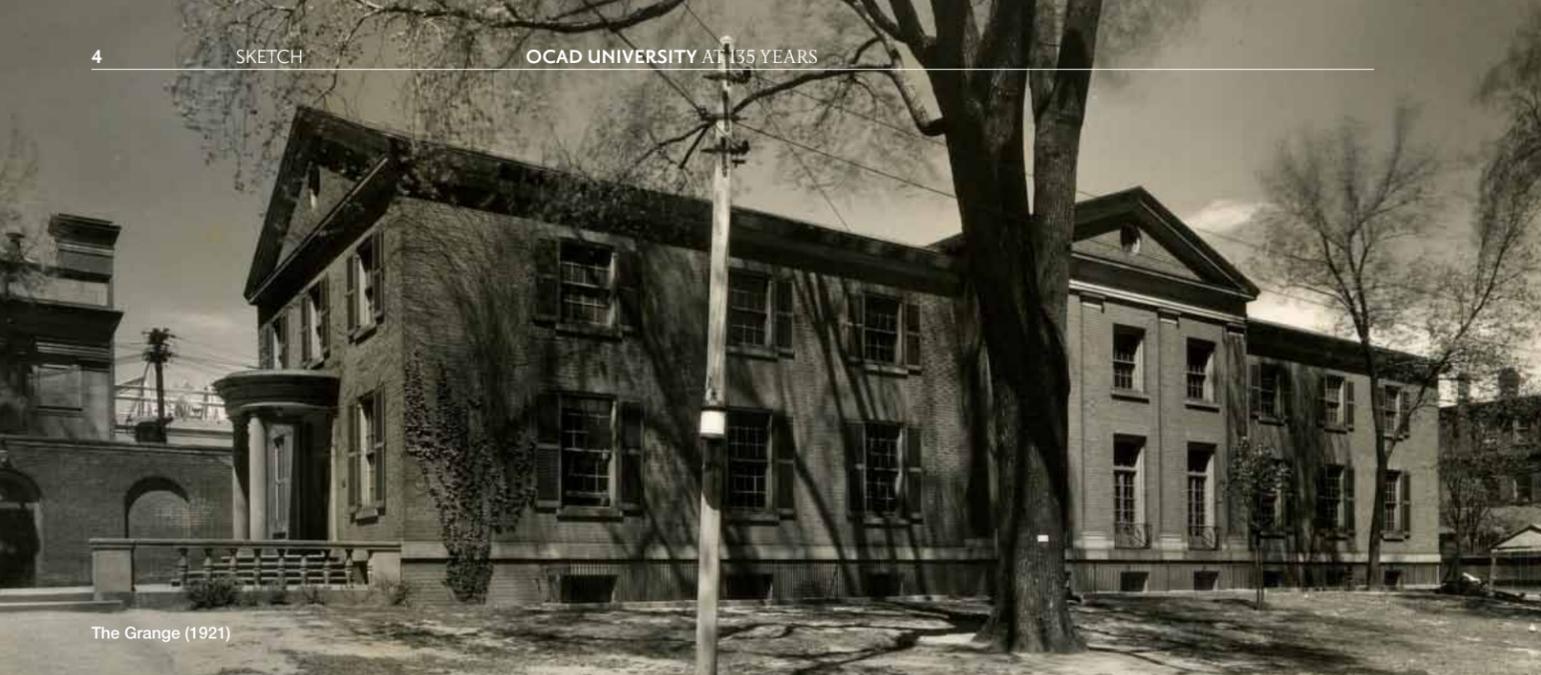
Students thrive in the downtown core of Toronto in an environment that encourages creativity, interaction between disciplines, and an understanding of business practices, all leading to a well-rounded graduate.

As The Queen's representative in Ontario, I applaud OCAD University for all that you have contributed to the arts over the years, commend the administration, past and present, and send my best wishes on this milestone anniversary.

*David C. Onley*  
David C. Onley



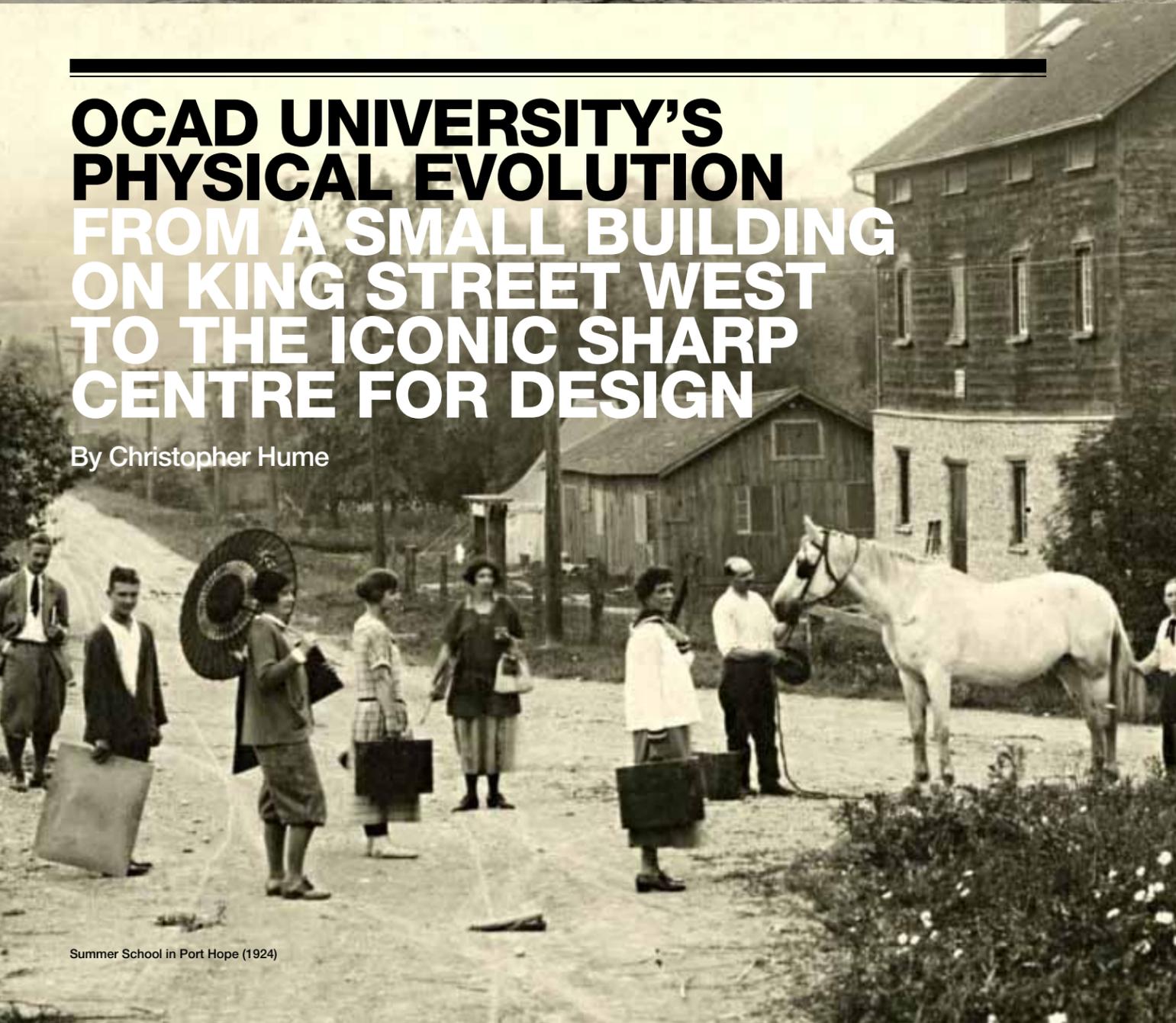
# Lieutenant Governor's Message



The Grange (1921)

# OCAD UNIVERSITY'S PHYSICAL EVOLUTION FROM A SMALL BUILDING ON KING STREET WEST TO THE ICONIC SHARP CENTRE FOR DESIGN

By Christopher Hume



Summer School in Port Hope (1924)



Normal School (1912)



McCaul Street loop at Grange Park (1929)



Only a tiny handful of buildings have the power to change a city, or at least the way it is perceived. In Toronto, the Sharp Centre for Design at OCAD University is one of them. Designed by award-winning British architect Will Alsop, this unique structure is known around the world. Since it opened in 2004, pictures of this remarkable facility have circulated widely. In the process, they have raised awareness of the school and created a new image of Toronto as a city willing to be bold, take risks and think outside the grid—if not the box.

Sitting on a series of 12 brightly coloured steel “stilts” 11 storeys (26 metres) above street level, the Sharp Centre redefined OCAD U and with it, art school architecture. Though controversial at the time, Alsop’s “flying tabletop,” as it’s known locally, has quickly become a Toronto icon. Not everyone loves it, but no one denies it has had a tremendously positive influence on the city and has helped bring a notoriously conservative community into the 21st century.

Of course, the Sharp Centre is just one of a number of architectural episodes that comprise the history of the school. Indeed, OCAD U’s story is one that mirrors not just changing attitudes to the city, but also to art and art education.

When the institution was founded in 1876, as the Ontario School of Art, it was housed in a building at 14 King Street West that has long since disappeared. Needless to say, back then the city was a much smaller place and residents’ ability to get around it was limited. In other words, things had to be close or they were inaccessible.

By 1882, the faculty had become part of the Department of Education and moved to the Normal School complex, now incorporated by Ryerson University. It too was situated well within the heart of the city, an indication both of the city’s inherent understanding of the importance of art and also of art education.

After that, the school seems to have changed locations and names every few years. It spent time (1886 to 1890) at the corner of Queen and Yonge Streets, before going back to King Street West where it shared premises with the Art Museum of Toronto at the Princess Theatre from 1890 to 1910. At this point, it was known as the Central Ontario School of Art and Industrial Design.

When the theatre was torn down to make way for the expanding street grid, the school had to search for a new home once again. But it was also during this period that the Provincial Legislature passed the “Act Incorporating the Ontario College of Art.” Queen’s Park voted for OCA to receive an annual grant of \$3,000 in addition to giving the college a free room back at the Normal School that it had vacated almost 30 years earlier.

Not until the 1920s did the institution construct its own building. Situated at the north end of Grange Park, the new premises were designed in the

same Georgian style as the original Grange, which dates from 1817. When it opened on September 30, 1921, it was the first purpose-built art school in Canada.

Its appearance is a testament to the pioneering role played by George Reid, who had been appointed principal of OCA in 1920. A farm boy born in Wingham, Ontario, in 1860, he himself had been a student at the Ontario School of Art before travelling to Philadelphia and then Paris to study painting. A tireless champion of the visual arts, Reid was a pivotal figure in the history of Toronto. Best known for his murals (Old City Hall, Jarvis Collegiate and others), as well as genre paintings such as *The Foreclosure of the Mortgage* (1893), Reid was a tireless activist who helped to lay the foundations of Toronto’s cultural infrastructure.

His struggles to have the visual arts accepted as part of the provincial education system kept him busy for decades. As he wrote in the OCA Student Manual in 1927: “Art education has been begging for a long time for its proper place in the scheme of Education as a whole, and is only now coming into its own.”

Interestingly, Reid argued that OCA should be affiliated with the University of Toronto so students could graduate with a degree. That dream wouldn’t be realized until decades later when OCAD (Ontario College of Art & Design) became OCAD University.

“There is hope,” Reid wrote in that same manual, “that through making Art a subject for matriculation and eventually by creating a degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts in the University that higher Art Education in Ontario may receive full recognition and go freely on its way with the development of the aesthetic side of our life.”



100 McCaul (1950s)



100 McCaul Street (1960s)



100 McCaul Street (1957)



Construction of Sharp Centre for Design Photo by David Richardson



Sharp Centre for Design Photo by Richard Johnson

Copyright Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

For an idea of how different Toronto was a century ago and what Reid was up against, consider that in 1921 the college had all of 330 students and a staff of 13 teachers, three assistants, a principal and vice-president. The school's funding consisted of an annual stipend of \$400 from the Department of Education and about \$300 from the city. In 1910, OCA's entire budget added up to a grand total of \$3,377.

When Reid departed in 1929, he was succeeded by J.E.H. MacDonald, best known as one of Canada's finest painters and a member of the legendary Group of Seven. After him, in 1933, came Fred Haines, also a painter. Haines occupied the position until 1952, by which time the college was set to enter another period of growth. It was operating summer courses in Port Hope, Ontario, and had taken over William Houston Public School in downtown Toronto in what is now York University's Glendon College. Located at Lawrence and Bayview Avenues, it was a bit further afield.

Finally, on January 27, 1957, OCA opened its new consolidated campus at 100 McCaul Street, where it remains to this day. The building unveiled back then was a well-intentioned exercise in modernism. Restrained rather than exuberant, the complex consisted of a set of glass-and-brick boxes that faced onto the street. Though it must have seemed the last word in architecture at the time, it has since become one of those semi-heritage structures not yet old enough to be considered historical. That will happen in time, no question. Even now, the building speaks of a moment of extraordinary optimism in Toronto. Planning for Viljo Revell's New City Hall had begun as it had for Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's

Toronto-Dominion Centre, two projects that helped bring the city into the modern age.

Though more modest in scope and budget, 100 McCaul reflected changes that were unfolding not just in architecture but in the arts in general. The new school looked to the future, not—as was the case with the 1927 Grange addition—to the past. In Toronto, the 1950s and early 1960s was the era of Painters Eleven, a pioneering group of abstract artists—many graduates of OCA—who introduced non-figurative painting to the city.

By the time British architect Will Alsop was selected to design the Sharp Centre in 2000, the McCaul premises were showing their age. OCAD was starting to look like a late-model high school, a bit rundown and verging on shabby. When the federal/provincial infrastructure funding program SuperBuild was launched in the 1990s, many cultural and educational organizations recognized it for what it was—a chance to get their hands on some desperately needed cash.

Alsop, who by his own admission was barely aware of Toronto, heard about the project from a Canadian colleague. Despite the fact that his bid submission didn't include a design, he made the shortlist and travelled hurriedly to the city. "I was back in London by Monday," Alsop recalls, "and they called on Tuesday and said we'd like you to do it. I had made it clear in the interview that I didn't know what I was going to do. I wanted the design to be an inclusive process. I wanted to include everyone in the conversation."

Some architects might be leery of such openness, but not Alsop. Indeed, his willingness to engage with students, staff and neighbours was almost as unusual as the building he produced. "Through those conversations," he

says, "it emerged that no one wanted a building on the south parking lot. I tended to agree with them. So I asked the question: 'Where do you put the building?' The idea of putting the building on legs emerged from talking to people—including the neighbours. The truth is that I did not know I was going to do that. But it solved a huge number of problems. And despite what people might think, we got the building permit in just 12 days."

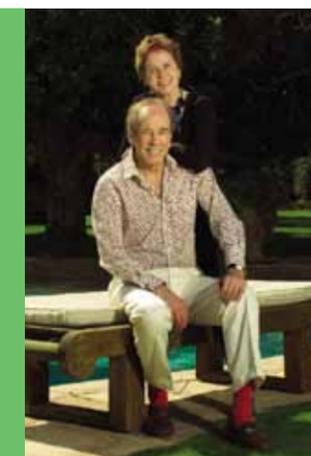
For one thing, Alsop's scheme meant that the building did not have to be closed down for two or three years while construction took place. Once the steel skeleton had been constructed—a job that took place during summer holidays and attracted large crowds—the rest of the work was relatively straightforward.

Another major advantage of Alsop's approach was that it allowed for the creation of an open space beneath the "tabletop" connecting Grange Park on the west with McCaul on the east. That plan made a lot of sense. The impulse to fuse these various components into a single multi-faceted urban entity is appropriate in a city that has only recently started to value itself as a city. As Alsop pointed out when he won the commission, the public realm on McCaul needed attention; what better way to provide that than by "dragging" the park through to the sidewalk. "Apart from the legs, it's a very simple form," he explains. "You don't have to carve it up into strange shapes to make it interesting, or make something people enjoy."

Though the initial reaction was mixed—architects, especially, disapproved of the Sharp Centre—it has become one of those buildings that define Toronto. Given that it's an art school, a place to experiment and take risks, Alsop's over-the-top architecture sets just the right tone. It's okay to be different and look beyond the conventional.

From OCAD U's point of view, the building sums up the mix of beauty and practicality that lies at the heart of creative excellence. You don't have to be an art student, or even a Torontonian, to appreciate that.

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Christopher Hume is the architecture critic and urban issues columnist for the *Toronto Star*. Since the 1980s, he has won a National Newspaper Award and been nominated five times. He has been recognized by the Royal Architectural Institution of Canada and the Ontario Association of Architects. His book, *William James' Toronto Views*, won a Toronto Heritage Award in 2000.



**DONOR PROFILE:  
ROSALIE AND ISADORE SHARP**

The Sharps' relationship with OCAD University dates back to the late 1960s when Rosalie attended OCA as a Material Art & Design student. "I was 29 years old with four sons so it was a privilege," says Rosalie while listing off the names of her favourite professors and classes. Since graduating in 1969, Rosalie and her husband, Isadore, Founder and Chairman of the Four Seasons Hotel, have been actively involved in annual fundraisers and were a big reason why the Sharp Centre of Design progressed from a brilliant plan into reality. In addition to their generosity, Rosalie has served on both OCAD U's Council and Foundation and was appointed as the university's first Chancellor in 2004. "OCAD changed my life in many ways," says Rosalie. "I believe that creativity can enrich Canada, and that art and culture dignify our lives."



# From the Archives



Group of Seven member Arthur Lismer, who served as OCA's Vice-Principal from 1920 to 1927, shares his thoughts on art education in the 1930 student issue of *Tangent*.



LINO CUT  
Saturday Class

ALFRED MITCHELL  
Art Gallery of Toronto

## The Beginning of Art Education

ARTHUR LISMER

It was not so very long ago that Art Students commenced their training by making detailed and wearisome studies of plaster casts of ornamental forms and acanthus leaves, cones, cylinders, prisms, and cubes. The proof of ability in the Arts Student of 35 years ago, under the old tightly bound systems, was estimated (to his profession and fellow students) as to how long he could sustain the performance of producing a masterpiece of imitation of the cast in front of him. With pointed rubber, paper stumps and powdered chalk, the prize student would hold the other members of the class breathless with anxiety and admiration while he demonstrated his amazing uselessness, his skill in walking off with the academic medals and his position as pet pupil of the instructor. In the public schools and high schools, the teachers, trained under this system, handed on the tyranny to young charges and compressed their years of study into potted courses in tedium and dullness and handed it out in "homo-pathetic" doses to the poor little victims. Consequently, school children were made to do the Art Lesson as a child is made to take medicine, compulsory but not enjoyable.

It produced a fine crop of people who, in our day, may be classed as the middle-aged, respectability class. They are nice people who go to

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shows, talkies, popular revues—read "old master" gossip in the Art News—all the comic strips, and never express views on politics until they read the morning papers.

Art Education nowadays is much better. The children in schools do have a chance to express something of the life around them, and, when, and if, they reach the Art School with some imagination left, they have a little better chance of preserving their souls alive.

But Art appreciation begins early and it is in the early ages, from 8 years to 13 years of age, that the artist is born and made, or whatever spark of desire and genius for the arts is carried along on the wings of these junior years to make some sort of illumination later in life. It is not realized sufficiently that Art is the language of childhood, as well as an adult expression. Without dropping into sentimental error by assuring that all the drawing, design and colour work done by children is Art, yet it is just as much an Art expression in proportion to the ages of youth as it is in adult age.

The beginnings of encouragement should not be delayed. If we believe that character is forming—not fixed—from the cradle days onward, it is not the less true of Art. As it is, an art student usually arrives at an Art School after having gone through preliminary and valuable years between entrance and matriculation, with no Art experience other than a little in the first year of High School. It is just these years that are valuable in the gaining of momentum and experience, for it is about 13 years of age—it varies a little, of course—that the artist is born, the one whose job it is to carry the torch forward.

It is in the period prior to that age that the need of sympathetic understanding of the child is essential to the future welfare. In the Ontario College of Art there is a Junior Course doing valuable work, in that it is the means of enabling those with some talent to commence their art education and to run it concurrently with their high school or public school training. If the records were traced, and they are available, the early commencement of these young art students could be shown to have been of great value to their future success. This brief article could not begin to go into the history of movements or the experience at home and abroad with child art and early training. The Art Gallery of Toronto enters the field with an idea that has taken hold and has its spectacular side which must appear marvellous to the uninitiated, especially those who think that Art belongs only to the professional artist, and to a very exclusive few having special gifts. But there is really nothing wonderful about it. It is so easy and natural for the child to draw and to draw well. It is one of the signs of healthy childhood that they take a genuine interest in their environment, and what they see they want to draw, or put down in some way. Feed them with the opportunity and the materials, try and keep out of it as an instructor propounding principles and practice, and the rest takes care of itself.

The children who come to the Art Gallery are specially selected—they may be described as "talented" children. Not all will be artists, but all, from 12 upward, have established their claim to recognition of their desire to become artists, in their interpretation of the world. There are young children from 8 to 10 years of age who are formed into the younger group. They are introduced, by pleasant and graded means, into the matter of

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picture making. Everything they are fed with is sustaining, and they copy voraciously anything in sight, re-interpreting the forms and colours of the pictures into their own language. The older ones, from 11 to 13, are given the same, with the added experience of making pictures, murals, posters, modelling, illustrations, line cuts, etc., of their own creation. Guidance, rather than instruction, is the rule of the class, and their energy in the various forms of art expression is amazing. Their work is kept and carefully graded, and progress noted. Those who are old enough, and are selected, will be handed over to the College of Art, to commence their further experience in the Junior Course. I have no doubt that in a few years they will be going through the courses, and getting a sense of direction, according to their particular talents. The Art Gallery will see them again when their pictures and sculpture and illustrations appear on the walls with the annual Canadian exhibitions. In the Ontario Society of Artists' exhibition last year, there were, hanging on the walls as exhibitors, the pictures or sculpture of about 15 young artists who, seven or eight years ago, were students in the Junior Course of the Ontario College of Art, apart from those who had been rejected and whose work was in the cellar.

Early experience and training is important, and, if parents will insist on matriculation as a preparation for university and for life, then the best they can do is to see that their children get some art training along with their regular school work. This is where the Art Gallery fits in.

ARTHUR LISMER,  
Educational Supervisor,  
Art Gallery of Toronto.



Decoration by Leonard Brooks

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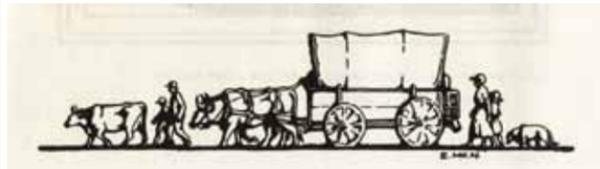
# From the Archives

For more than 100 years, students have shown off their works in a variety of student publications and exhibitions. Here are a few pieces from the archives.



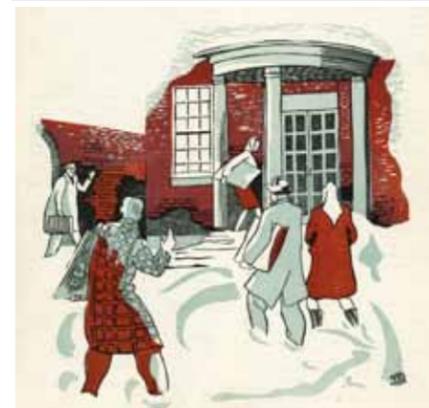
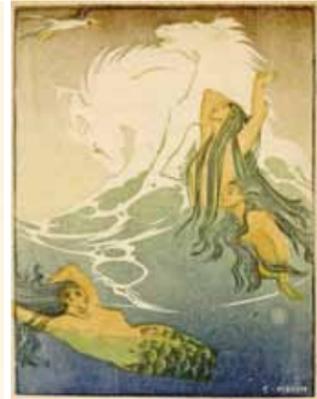
L to R:  
W.E. Noffke  
Doris McCarthy  
Betty McNaught

1920s



L to R:  
Cleeve Horne  
Zelda Hurmitz  
Betty Livingston  
Sylvia Hahn

1930s



L to R:  
Sidney Goldsmith  
Dave Anderson  
Sidney Goldsmith

1940s



1950s



L to R:  
Alexandra Hunter  
Gerry Richards  
Bill Hart  
Douglas Ball

1990s



L to R:  
Margie Hunter Hoffman  
Stephanie Bak  
Candice King-Stewart  
Stephen Hossbach



1960s

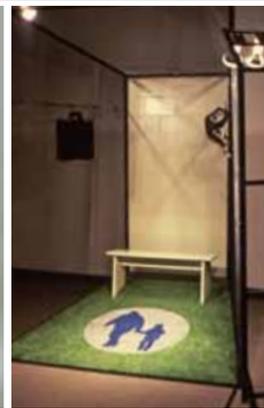


L to R:  
Christopher Rendell  
Nola Farman  
David Blake  
Greg Gabourie



1970s

L to R:  
Lyn Carter  
Wendy Cain  
Doug Back



L to R:  
Wendy Coburn  
Scot Laughton with Tom Deacon  
Caroline Langill  
b.h. Yael

1980s

Archival photos courtesy of OCAD University's Dorothy H. Hoover Library and Archives

# Icons and Innovators: OCAD U's Impact on Canadian Design

By Earl Miller



Courtesy Loblaw Companies Limited

Design's humble introduction at OCAD University belies the institution's future as a Canadian leader in the field. When the Ontario College of Art (OCA), as it was named for most of the 20th century, added design and other applied arts to the curriculum in 1945, such studies were primarily hobby- and craft-based.

But by the 1950s, OCA was home to a formidable advertising design department, with graduates and faculty alike creating some of Canada's most iconic corporate identities. Take, for instance, former faculty members Allan Fleming and Hans Kleefeld, whose respective CN (1959) and Air Canada (1964) logos remain vintage Canadiana. In the 1970s came the op art-inspired CBC logo (1974) by former instructor Burton Kramer, a controversial redesign its detractors called "the exploding pizza," followed by the much-emulated Loblaw's No Name branding and packaging design (1978) by alumnus Don Watt. One reason why OCA became a hub for influential design was that instructors like Fleming and Kramer, who simultaneously maintained significant studio practices, were not only able to teach a technically demanding, well-rounded curriculum but were also able to help graduates land jobs at design firms in Toronto. Many of these graduates subsequently returned to the college in the following years as instructors.

Such an enduring and expanding network at OCA spawned many firsts. In the 1960s,

Douglas Ball, a graduate of the industrial design program, pioneered "systems furniture"—the now ubiquitous office cubicle. Meanwhile, Kramer and Stuart Ash, an OCA graduate who founded the international design firm Gottschalk+Ash International, spearheaded Swiss modern design in Canada, famous for its clean, hard-edged graphics. And modernist design from OCA would visualize Canada's emerging contemporary identity: graphics and the exhibition design for Expo 67 (Kramer and Ball), furniture for Habitat 67 (alumnus Jerry Adamson), and Watt's role in redesigning the Canadian flag in 1965.

While OCA was undoubtedly producing innovators, by the forward-looking late 1960s many students considered the school an anachronism—lamenting its enduring atelier education of drawing from life models or from reproductions of canonical sculptures. Add in the progressive times of the day and institutional change was inevitable.

The catalyst was Roy Ascott. A progressive educator and practising artist from England who was hired as president in 1971, Ascott radicalized the curriculum to stress a creative and conceptual education over a technical one. He even temporarily instilled a now cliché countercultural aesthetic at the school by, among other things, designing its academic calendar as a tarot card set. Not surprisingly, Ascott's dramatic reinventions split the school between enthusiastic student supporters and perplexed traditionalist faculty.

Yet his legacy helped to modernize design education at OCA. Current Ontario MPP Monte Kwinter, who graduated from the college in 1954 and served as Vice-President from 1971 to 1973, recalls that "Ascott opened up the vision of people in the design field," most notably by allowing students to explore beyond conventional fine arts and design departments. Consider Photo-Electric Arts, a department Ascott created in 1972 to offer instruction in computers, video, and even robotics and holography. This department represented a progression toward a cross-disciplinary education that would suit the eclectic nature of the postmodern design of the late 1970s and 1980s.

One of the key contributors to Canadian postmodern design from OCA is Louis Fishauf, an Ascott-era graduate and current part-time professor. Fishauf is credited with taking over the art direction of the once stodgy *Saturday Night* magazine in 1982 and infusing it with colourful splashes of new-wave graphics and a jagged, asymmetrical layout. That same year he co-founded Reactor Art and Design, the first major Canadian studio to work on a Macintosh computer and draw with Adobe Illustrator. Integral to the studio is its international representation of a wide range of high-profile illustrators, and over the years the school's creative and technically rigorous illustration program has served Fishauf well as a source of talent. In fact, Reactor represents Fiona Smyth and Maurice Vellekoop, both 1986 graduates and current faculty members.

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# AIR CANADA



Courtesy Canadian National Railroad Company



Courtesy Herman Miller Inc



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Another former student, Bruce Mau, considered by many to be Toronto's best-known graphic designer, is to postmodernism what Kramer, Ash et al. were to Swiss modernism. Leaving the college in 1980 before graduation to work for agencies in Toronto and London, Mau made a breakthrough toward self-employment in 1987 when Zone Books hired him to design the academic *Zone 1/2* series. His hip, colourfully abstract, yet never excessive covers of more than 100 volumes redefined book design—academic or otherwise—and accordingly expedited the launch of his own firm, Bruce Mau Design. Mau, who has continuously defied design convention by incorporating art, pedagogy and social concerns into his practice, achieved a *fait accompli* with his museum exhibition *Massive Change*. Beginning at the Vancouver Art Gallery and next travelling to the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2005, *Massive Change* made a powerful argument that design could facilitate global social progress.

Just as iconic as the *Zone 1/2* series was

Scot Laughton's 1987 Strala light, developed when Laughton was still an industrial design student (he has also taught in that same department). A Memphis-influenced design capped by a quintessentially postmodern triangular shade, the lamp made *Time* magazine's Top 10 designs that year.

Multimedia followed postmodernism, and two computer savvy graduates of OCA's Photo-Electric Arts department, Kevin Steele and Gord Gower, literally created the Canadian market for this design trend. After graduation they began applying their Mac computer skills to advertising, forming Mackerel Interactive in 1990, which they promoted with a black-and-white interactive electronic brochure available on a floppy disk.

Multimedia's old-tech beginnings sharply contrast with Martha Ladly's current practice. An associate design professor and the Director of the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media, & Design program, as well as a graduate who once played keyboards in the seminal Toronto new-wave band,

Martha and the Muffins, Ladly specializes in interactive communication, social networking and mobile experience design.

Ladly's interactive media specialization exemplifies a new era at OCAD University, one heralded by the 2005 appointment of Dr. Sara Diamond as President. Diamond came with an extensive academic, administrative and artistic background in media art and computer science. Moreover, she fully implemented the academically-informed education that Ascott espoused by transforming a studio-based art college to a degree-granting university.

In 2008, President Diamond launched a graduate studies program, with a Master's in Design stream that attracts students with impressive qualifications due to the expertise of Ladly and other faculty actively affiliated with Canada's design epicentre in downtown Toronto. Barr Gilmore, for example, a 2011 graduate and a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Art (RCA), entered the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media & Design program after working for Bruce Mau and running a freelance business with clients that included TIFF and the New York-based Gagosian Gallery. With such high-calibre graduates poised to enter—or to re-enter—the workforce, OCAD U will undoubtedly continue to define and shape the Canadian mediascape well into the 21st century, and beyond.

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Earl Miller is an independent art critic and curator. He has written for *Art in America*, *Azure*, *C Magazine*, *Canadian Art*, *Flash Art* and other leading international publications. He has curated exhibitions at venues including the Art Gallery of York University in Toronto and the Tree Museum in Gravenhurst, Ontario.

## DONOR PROFILE: TEKNION

Teknion is a leading international designer, manufacturer and marketer of design-based office furniture. They first supported OCAD University's annual campaign in 1991, along with donating office furniture, and through the Ideas Need Space campaign provided funding for the Teknion Environmental Design Centre. "The studio is a hotbed of activity, and is where second- through to fourth-year Environmental Design students gather for preparing their studio work and where teacher/student 'desk' critiques happen," says Cheryl Giraudy, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Design. Teknion's CEO and President, David Feldberg, strongly believes that such a centre is an integral component in "supporting students today who will be tomorrow's design leaders."

# Teknion



## Striving for a sustainable future At home and abroad, OCAD U is finding ways to reduce its footprint

By Sheila Waite-Chuah

**B**efore the environmental movement had reached maturity and was capturing headlines around the world, OCAD University was not only aware of the consequences of turning a blind eye, it was actively involved in identifying opportunities for engagement.

In 1993, the university introduced Design for the Environment, one of the first courses on sustainability in an art and design curriculum in Canada. Throughout the 1990s, as the impact of global warming spawned campaigns for drastic economic and societal change, artists and designers were faced with growing evidence of the “shadow side” of their practice and its impacts on both environmental and human health. In response, OCAD U faculty developed a curriculum that raises difficult issues and explores sustainable alternatives without naively latching on to “the next big thing.”

In the Faculty of Design, students in Biomimetics study the analysis of natural materials and processes to better understand self-sustaining and self-renewing solutions. In addition, through the Habitat Housing Studio they work in collaboration with the Habitat for Humanity agency, while strategies for designing vital communities is the main premise of the Cities for People course. There is also an Urban Landscape Ecology offering where students view cities as living labs, and in Sustainable Design and Development they consider the global issues involved in the consumerist lifestyle. All second-year design students are also required to take Think Tank 1: Awareness, which includes a project focused on social enterprise.

In the Faculty of Art, students are increasingly engaged in issues relevant to their discipline. The process stream of courses includes health and safety issues and also the

inherent implications of materials and their impact on our world. Senior students are also examining broad-based issues in Painting in the Expanded Field and Landscape to Environment course.

Underpinning the studio-based education in art and design, the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies provides a rich offering of sustainability-related courses in theory, history and science. In Biological Principles of Sustainability, fundamental principles of biodiversity are being linked with issues such as agribusiness and genetically modified foods. The Design and Sustainability offering also focuses on defining sustainability within today’s contemporary global context, and in Nature, Culture and the Environment consideration is given to the notion of progress and the consequences of technological development.

Another key curricular development across the university is the Sustainability Minor, which has expanded to embrace an interdisciplinary framework, while the unique Aboriginal Visual Culture program provides essential perspectives on First Nations, Métis and Inuit traditions and visions of linking land and culture.

Such advancements in the curriculum are mirrored outside of the classroom. In 2008 the Sustainable Task Force was created in part to develop strategies for environmentally responsible practices. Also in 2008, the Sustainability Office launched a mandate to coordinate all sustainability initiatives on campus and to work closely with both the Task Force and the Sustainability Working Group of the New Ecology of Learning (NEL). During its inaugural year, the Sustainability Office and Frog Pond, led by Design Chairs Bruce Hinds and Keith Rushton, collaborated with the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief to launch “Food Prints”: an interdisciplinary team of

students who created a display with salvaged materials to showcase food security issues in West Africa. Another international endeavour involves a Memorandum of Agreement with Dr. Vandana Shiva’s “Freedom Fibres” project.

On campus, a number of grassroots initiatives have also taken root. The Green Exchange has to date diverted 15,000 lb. of electronic waste, while the national Bottled Water Free has resulted in 800 individuals and 26 departments pledging not to use bottled water on campus. Environmental stewardship is increasingly embedded in the built environment and studios are replacing toxic solvents and adopting conservation measures that target energy and water. Additionally, Bullfrog Power provides the OCAD U Student Centre with 100% renewable energy, and the Zerofootprint partnership launched ZERO Lab to create visualization tools. Future projects include building re-skinning and plans for a solar panel installation. And such initiatives are paying dividends. Last October, the university received a Better Buildings Partnership incentive of nearly \$253,000 for its efforts to reduce electricity consumption at the Student Centre.

In looking forward, OCAD U is well-positioned for future engagement. Faculty are continually collaborating with colleagues and experts on climate change, smart cities, healthy communities and social enterprise. Through cultivating such interdisciplinary partnerships and incorporating them into the curriculum, OCAD U can prepare its students for real-world challenges and, just as importantly, to be ambassadors for what architect William McDonough calls “good growth.”

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Sheila Waite-Chuah is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Sustainability office at OCAD University.

## Going abroad: a chance to see, and study, the world

By Deanne Fisher

**P**icture OCAD University in your mind. You probably see the iconic Sharp Centre for Design, or a collection of densely packed buildings in Toronto’s downtown core. But do you imagine students solving design problems in an architectural studio in London, England? Or a collaborative online space where photography students from Finland, Korea and Toronto critique each other’s work?

Just as OCAD U’s Toronto campus is stretching, so too is its international presence. The historical turning point in the university’s international strategy was the development of the Florence Program. For 37 years, groups of students have enjoyed the unique opportunity to strengthen their technique and deepen their understanding of art history in a communal studio setting, under the guidance of OCAD U faculty, while surrounded by architectural and artistic treasures from the Italian Renaissance.

Although Florence is still OCAD U’s flagship international program, a network of partnerships now takes teaching, learning and research into new regions. At the heart of this global network of artists, designers and educa-

tors is an understanding that intercultural and transnational collaboration deepens the learning experience for students and generates new discoveries in research and practice.

“Nothing is more amazing than being completely immersed in such a different culture,” says Tlell Davidson, a fourth-year design student who studied at Jiangnan University in China last year. “China is such an incredible up-and-coming presence in the design world, so I wanted to see it through their eyes.” China is one of the newest study abroad opportunities OCAD U offers to its students through the Mobility/Exchange program. Through partnerships with more than 50 of the world’s most renowned art and design programs, OCAD U allows students to situate their practice and intellectual development within a cultural context that is not their own while continuing to progress toward their degrees.

The roots of the Mobility/Exchange program rest within OCAD U’s membership in AICAD—the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design—a consortium of North American schools that agree to facilitate mobility of their students between institutions. Over the past decade, the development of new partnerships has opened up options for study beyond North America in such locations as Australia, Israel and Europe. And most recently, partnerships with institutions in Brazil and India, spearheaded by President Sara Diamond, have opened up opportunities for graduate students to enrich their experiences in those countries.

While students may be the driving force

behind the university’s global presence, faculty are also spearheading innovative collaborations around the world. This past summer, a group of 18 students studied The Future of Inhabited Form with Professor Stuart Reid and architect Will Alsop in London, England. The course is just one example of OCAD U’s new model of the mobile studio.

“For me, those kinds of connections are really, really important,” says Peter Sramek, Chair of OCAD U’s Photography program. Sramek recently turned his documentary photography course into a cross-cultural collaboration with counterparts in Finland. Through Skype sessions, a class blog and an online gallery of work, the students discussed and critiqued each other’s work. To culminate the experience, Sramek took three students to Tampere, Finland, for a year-end exhibition of the work. This year, Sramek plans to add an additional element—a group of students from Seoul, Korea. They will join the project and all three classes will gather in Berlin to meet face to face.

As OCAD U’s tentacles reach to all corners of the world, back at home faculty and staff are making global collaborations palpable and accessible on our downtown Toronto campus. Curator Charles Reeve considers internationalization synonymous with his mandate to bring professional contemporary art onto campus. Through his efforts, OCAD U has hosted artists from regions as diverse as Thailand, France, New Zealand and Algeria. With funding from Partners in Art, Reeve will launch a new project called “Twinning Cities & Twinning Artists,” which will see collaborations with artists in India, China, Brazil and Mexico.

“We’re being more deliberate about featuring Toronto activity internationally,” says Reeve. But at the same time, bringing internationally acclaimed artists and designers to the campus gives students, faculty, alumni and the public an opportunity to engage with them. “For a student to get that kind of engagement with someone at the pinnacle of the art world is an invaluable experience.”

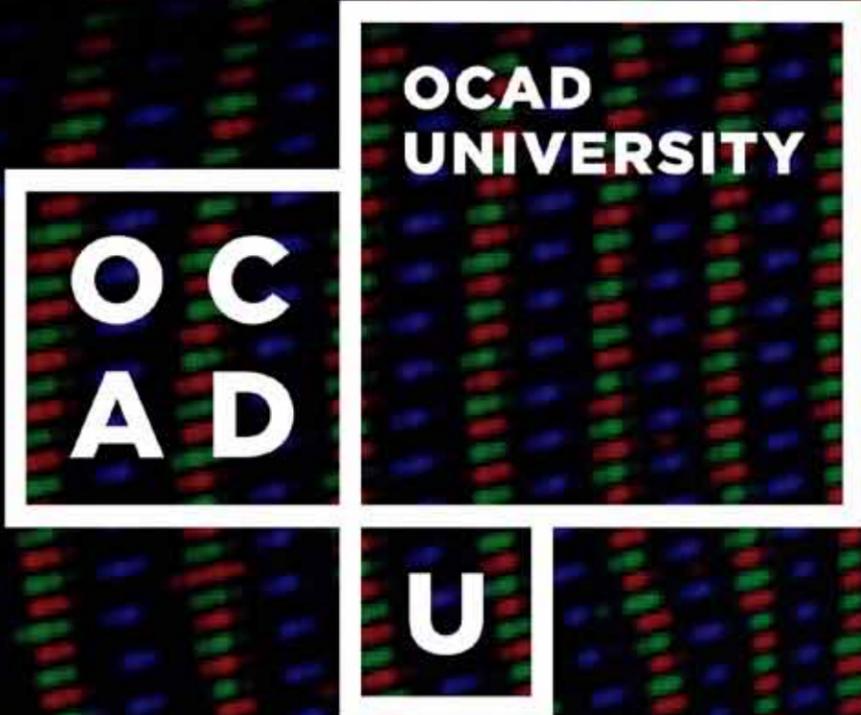
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Deanne Fisher is OCAD University’s Associate Vice-President, Students.

### DONOR PROFILE: MARION SELIG

Marion Selig has been passionate about art and design since she was a young girl. “My mother, being a true Scandinavian woman, had all the innate arts. She was an outstanding potter and began the Potters Guild in Toronto,” says Selig. “She was also a weaver, had her looms and even sheep that needed to be sheared.” That passion led to Selig studying art history at the Sorbonne in France and later establishing the Joubin-Selig Bursary to support students at OCAD U who wanted to take part in Mobility/Exchange programs in their field of study in Canada or abroad. Says Selig about the importance of such opportunities for students: “They learn and stretch their minds, and I think when you are without all your safety nets—family and the same friends and structures—you are more serious and you observe better and you are exposed to new cultures and histories.” Photo by Greg Tjepkema



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## OUR NEW VISUAL IDENTITY

*A process in discovering who we are, and how we want the world to see us*

*By Susan Mohammad*

*When OCAD University's Graphic Design Chair, Keith Rushton, was a student at the school in the late 1960s, the entire school was the size of the program he now runs. And since he began teaching shortly after graduating in 1969, Rushton has watched the school develop into a leading, internationally recognized art and design institution. He's also been witness to a few identity changes, beginning with OCA, then the Ontario College of Art & Design, and finally OCAD University.*

*"It's impossible to stand still," says Rushton. "It's important to protect and hold on to what makes an institution what it is, and also important to show that creativity doesn't stand still. Ideas change and society changes, and a constant in the creative field is to be ahead of that movement." Considering the transitions Rushton has seen over the years, he viewed the school's unveiling of its new visual identity at the graduation exhibit in May as a logical step in OCAD U's evolution.*

## During the pitch process Bruce Mau Design demonstrated a desire to design the “process” as much as the identity itself.

Steve Virtue, who was the Director of Marketing & Communications for OCAD U during the process, couldn't agree more. A new visual self was necessary, he says, to reflect the school's university status and expansion into other areas, such as research in the experiential and patient-care design areas. “These are activities you may not think an art school would have, but OCAD U is dramatically increasing its research activities by building strong partnerships with companies like Apple and Microsoft,” says Virtue. Another sign of the school's growth is the students. There are now about 3,700 students at OCAD U, and that number is growing.

The school's new logo is anything but conventional. The modular black-line frame of three windows inspired by the iconic Sharp Centre for Design and the ever-changing, student-created art spilling out is reflective of OCAD U as a place of creative and talented problem solvers. It's also representative of an institution that is in the midst of tremendous growth.

But what exactly does the new visual identity say about OCAD U, the people who work and learn there, as well as the direction in which the school is heading? And how tough a job would it be to create an identity that defines a place bursting with such a diverse range of critical, top-level artists and designers? From the start, the process to find the new identity was a challenge. Even before the new identity selection committee (made up of a group that included alumni, students, faculty and senior administrators) was created, some insiders felt spending money on rebranding was wasteful. Others expressed strong emotional attachment to the school's former identity and feared change would mean losing the gravitas of the school's reputation.

Bruce Mau Design won the contract, says Virtue, because they expressed emotional and cultural intelligence about OCAD U's diversity. During the pitch process the firm demonstrated a desire to design the “process” as much as the identity itself. What followed was months of consultation, research and debate conducted by five members of the firm, along with input from a leading branding consultant, Mary Jane Braide. On campus, students were given markers and poster paper and asked to share their ideas on what the identity of the school was, while prospective students were even interviewed for their thoughts on portfolio day. Eight workshops with various community stakeholders were also held, online questionnaires were sent to alumni, and a Facebook page engaged students on themes of identity and the school's future.

“One exercise was asking people to draw a university crest. Another was getting people to define their quintessential OCAD U moment, or talk about what attracted them in the first place,” says Laura Stein, Associate Creative Director at Bruce Mau Design. “There were a lot of different opinions, and interesting metaphors like designs with cogs and wheels representing the school as a place that affects change throughout the world.”

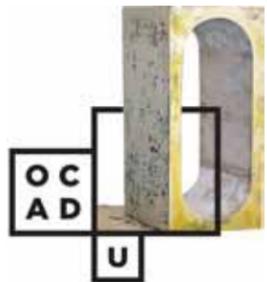
Although the research group couldn't estimate how much feedback to expect, an impressive 40 per cent of the total responses were from students. Alumni from 12 different countries (on four continents) also participated. Once the research was complete, Stein and her co-designers sifted through the material, then boiled it down to key identity principles. The insights were then posted in the firm's space for inspiration. “Then we sketch, sketch, sketch,” says Stein from the firm's loft-like King Street West studio. Feedback from the community and research process was synthesized to establish the Identity Design Guidelines, which were as follows:

**Be fearless and future-facing.**  
**Be an authority.**  
**Be gorgeous and smart.**  
**Be vibrant.**  
**Be flexible.**

“The first principle on having a history built on risk-taking is a key part of the school's identity. So we ask ourselves: ‘How do we reflect that?’” says Stein. “People start by sketching crazy things and ideas develop. We then ask which of these have the best promise, and let's drive at those.”

“I have to say Bruce Mau did a fantastic job,” says Frederick Burbach, a professor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies and a brand and typography expert who was part of the selection committee. “It's important to understand that OCAD U is not just a Toronto, Ontario or Canadian brand. It's a world one.” Great design is extremely important for any business, and Burbach points to the near “sensual” experience of opening a new Apple product as one example. “It's like foreplay. I mean, get on to an Apple computer and work. Then go work on a PC,” he says. “Why is Apple the number one corporation in the world based on market capitalization? It's because the atomic level of that brand is sensuality. Well, the atomic level of OCAD U is vibrant curiosity. That's what drives our brand.”

Burbach also points out that the Gotham font is a good fit for the logo because it's stripped down, basic and serious. “It just



Interior images (top to bottom): Anna Soper '11, Nate Storring '11, Georgia Dickie '11, Sean Lewis '11



feels right typographically. There are no games being played.” However, he would never want the job of creating the new visual identity himself for a few reasons, including the wide audience it must resonate with (from students and parents to donors and members of Canada's art and design industry, just to name a few). Furthermore, branding educational institutions is tough, adds Burbach, because they need to incorporate a sense of both seriousness and play.

Toronto-based brand strategist Mary Jane Braide began working with OCAD U two years ago as a consultant on the new naming process (she was also a member of the visual identity steering committee), and says the identity is successful because its flexibility speaks to a wide audience and really describes the institution as one that is balanced and multi-faceted.

“What makes a good identity also is a good development process. The identities you see that really fail are the ones that haven't paid attention to the audiences they are trying to reach,” says Braide. “There was intense consultation and a real sensitivity to what's going on in the OCAD U environment, and that was reflected in so many ways in this new identity.”

In today's global marketplace, even the smallest misstep in the rebranding process can be damaging for any business (a lesson Gap Inc. learned the hard way). Last fall, the clothing giant revoked their new, very American Apparel-looking logo (a white box with Gap written in black Helvetica typeface) days after unveiling it due to extreme protest from designers and the public who called it pedestrian, among worse things.

Braide has also witnessed how emotional the process can get. In the summer of 2009, she advised the University of Waterloo during the time their new logo was leaked—unleashing an uncontrollable brushfire of response. “Unfortunately, it leaked as the university was about to enter an extensive consultation phase, so the process got completely sidetracked,” says Braide, who was involved in the brand strategy for U of W. “Ironically, someone in the design group loved it so much they put it on their blog, and somebody decided they didn't like it and it started this crazy wave of negative stuff,” she says. “Within two or three weeks there were 9,000 members on this Facebook page.”

### ALUMNI PROFILE: PHIL RICHARDS

Phil Richards (AOCA, Drawing & Painting, 1973) has been a visual artist for nearly four decades and has created everything from intimate portraits to large-scale murals for such places as the Eaton Centre in Toronto. He has also been commissioned to produce the portraits of premiers and university chancellors and is currently working on a new portrait of Her Majesty the Queen that will be unveiled during the Diamond Jubilee in 2012. “Of course, as one can imagine, gaining access to the Queen as a portrait subject is a complex undertaking. However, an artist must get to know his or her sitter to some degree, which meant there was a great deal to accomplish during our meetings,” notes Richards. “It was quite amazing to meet and talk to the person with the most recognizable face on the planet, and then come up with a new take on her image.” Photo by Michael Richards



In January, Bruce Mau Design invited OCAD U's approximately 20-person identity steering committee (including university President Dr. Sara Diamond) to their office for a presentation of the last three designs and a final vote. Before voting, President Diamond asked everyone around the table what they saw in the designs. The decision was unanimous. Stein says it was a rare moment to see such consensus in the room.

During the May 5 Graduate Exhibition, everyone involved was percolating with anticipation as the school finally revealed how the world would see OCAD University going forward. James Gauvreau (BFA, Printmaking, 2010), a former medal winner, had his work chosen as the prototype in the basic window framework of the new logo. (Each year, medal winners from the departments will be asked to leave their mark on the school's visual identity—some designs will be used on school stationary, while others are better suited for the anticipated website, etc.).

The 28-year-old multidisciplinary artist was thrilled that his 20-foot sculptural installation (entitled *Really Long Lake*) was selected. He says the new visual identity makes sense because it will always be adaptable to where the school is headed. “Having a simple black-line object that can be filled with other designs is good,” says Gauvreau. “I think it's quite smart. A blank canvas.”

Outside of OCAD U, the wider community echoed this enthusiasm. Fast Company's Co.Design site, for one, described the identity as a “mini art gallery for student work” that demonstrates the school's dedication to its students.

But what does this new identity offer people like Rushton, whose relationship with the school dates back nearly 45 years as a former student and now teacher? “It's like the small school has become a mid-size school. The school is growing so much and the design can morph and change as we go along. The frame of the three squares never changes but the rest does, which is about the legacy of creativity and freedom, and that's a good thing.”

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 Susan Mohammad is a Toronto-based writer, editor and broadcast journalist whose work has appeared in *Maclean's*, *Canadian Business*, *Homemakers*, the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *CBC Online*.

# Teaching Art and the Archipelago of Imagination

By Vladimir Spicanovic



Artists first learn how to teach by exploring and evaluating the ways in which they have been encouraged or inspired, by transforming or transcending past experience and by reflecting upon their own studio education. As artist-teachers arrive at their own ensemble of methods and values, exceptional teachers—both “good” and “bad”—continue to resonate. Imagine, then, the number of pedagogical longitudes, latitudes and teaching coordinates that have emerged over the 135 years of teaching at OCAD University. Complex matrices of philosophies, methods of critique, discourses and forms of studio inquiry have animated the past, present and future of teaching at one of Canada’s leading art and design institutions.

The complexity of studio teaching might feel daunting, yet how we teach art evolves organically, for our inquiries and methods must be nimble and responsive, entertaining and critically informed. From course to course, week to week, making through trial and error, studio teaching has persevered as art in itself. This essay offers some ideas about the meaning of teaching art today, in the context of this publication, a collage of multiple voices and insights that captures the creative resilience and vitality of this hybrid university.

Undoubtedly, the last 10 years represent a period of great transformation at OCAD U—from the inception of degree granting and the establishment of new research and graduate programs, to the official name change and the launch of the new visual identity. We can also think of the last 10 years as a period of sustained interrogation of the education of artists as exemplified in numerous book publications, conferences, panel discussions and curatorial projects. For example, last summer, Heather Nicol’s *Art School Dismissed* (2010) illuminated intricate relationships between teaching and art making, playfulness and pedagogy by transforming a decommissioned building of the Shaw Street Public School into a site for interdisciplinary interventions by some influential artist educators, 18 of them representing OCAD U. And in Steven Henry Madoff’s recent collection of essays, *Art School: (Propositions for the 21st Century)* (2009), we learn about the issues and dilemmas facing the future of art education. From alternative models of studio pedagogy and reformulations of Bauhaus, to blueprints for the transdisciplinary model of an art school in which art making intersects with science and design, this book, as does any true art school, offers a multiplicity of perspectives from practitioners who teach. Madoff reminds us that:

*It’s a common place to reiterate the fact that an artwork is anything now—a parade, a meal, a painting, a discussion, a hole in the earth filled with the thought embedded in the work’s title—and it is now more than obvious that preparing young artists to live in a landscape of infinitely elastic production will demand some new requirements...*

In all art education, there must be reciprocity between learning and teaching, and a correlation between graduation requirements and abilities to respond to contemporary actuality, globalization, technological innovations and cultural diversity. In the “Altermodern” culture of “positive vision of chaos and complexity” proposed by Nicolas Bourriaud (2009), an artist perceives the world with all the senses. She/he questions ideas, assembles and reassembles different

cultural signs, and reaches out to diverse audiences “exploring all dimensions of the present, tracing lines in all directions of time and space.” Bourriaud sees contemporary art practice as analogous to an archipelago—not simply a constellation of islands but a whole network of thematic studio-based activities and modes of meaning-making.

But it seems that we can teach only around art, around making silent moments tactile, palpable, available, by interpreting visual metaphors that sometimes blur the boundaries between aesthetics and ethics, making and thinking, observation and imagination. In the catalogue that accompanied the 2011 Sculpture/Installation thesis students exhibition, *Something More Concrete*, held in the historic Brink’s building, George Boileau, Ian Carr-Harris and Paulette Phillips suggest that there is:

*A thin line between observation and imagination. Or perhaps there isn’t a line at all. The Oxford Dictionary offers us this idea...that imagination is “the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses.” Doesn’t that sound like, “observation, second phase”?*

Perhaps that “second phase” has to do with finding ways to connect imagination with reason, to humanize technology and to deepen our sense of empathy. Aren’t those paths different for everyone who learns and teaches art? In whatever choice of media, discourse, or inquiry, teaching art today sometimes feels like mapping, like making visible and audible an archipelago of imagination meant to be discovered, shared and sustained for at least another 135 years.

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Dr. Vladimir Spicanovic is the Dean of OCAD University’s Faculty of Art.

# The Idea of an Art & Design University

By Kathryn Shailer



When the Provincial Legislature granted university status to the Ontario College of Art & Design in 2010, it completed a process started a decade ago when legislation empowering OCAD to grant university degrees was first approved. But why has it been so important for OCAD to become a university? How does this move benefit students? What are the benefits to society? To answer these questions, we need to go back 50 years to unravel the relationship among universities, colleges, and art/design schools in Canada. We also need some perspective on the history of universities in Western culture.

From the early years of European settlement to the 1960s, a stretch of 300 years, Canada established some 30 to 35 universities and a few specialized post-secondary schools, including art schools, agricultural colleges, technical colleges/polytechnics, etc. Most of the small percentage of high-school grads who pursued further education went to university. Then, in preparation for educating the baby boomers—and accommodating their huge consumer appetites—the 1960s saw a massive expansion and restructuring of post-secondary institutions. This included the founding of a new category of schools—community colleges—to provide applied diploma programs to train skilled labourers and office workers. At the same time, the university system doubled in size.

What distinguished a university from a community college/institute was its core purpose. A university, to quote from John Henry Newman’s *The Idea of a University* (1873), “is a place of teaching universal knowledge.” Universal knowledge or liberal education incorporates the seminal ideas and writings of philosophers, artists, poets, historians, scientists and other thinkers from ancient times to the present. The purpose of a liberal education, to paraphrase Newman, is to discipline the mind to pursue learning and knowledge for its own sake, not to shape it to serve a specific trade or profession. A community college seeks to achieve the latter; that is, it prepares students for a trade or a job as defined by industry right now.

So where do art and design schools fit into all this? Although most universities and colleges also have fine art or visual art departments with programs that reflect the nature of the home institution, independent art and design schools share characteristics of both. OCAD’s four-year diploma program (AOCA/D) was based on the traditional atelier system of learning; it offered a smattering of liberal education but the onus was largely on the student to partake of it or not. Eventually, by the late 1990s, it became clear that a new curriculum with greater breadth and redefined standards was required, and the move to gain university status began in earnest.

Similarly, other art and design schools in Canada and abroad have embraced university status in recent years: the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design became NSCAD University in 2003 and Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design became Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2008. These were predated by Philadelphia’s University of Arts, Berlin’s Universität der Künste, and London’s University of the Arts.

Why this scramble for university status? The simple answer is social, economic and cultural change. Career opportunities for art and design

graduates are at an unprecedented high and the best require a university degree: depth of expertise in one art or design discipline combined with a breadth of knowledge and the capacity to apply and extend expertise to new scenarios. Where are these career opportunities? Think in terms of the burgeoning creative industry, which ranges from a thriving global art market to mass propagation of entertainment and communication devices in search of meaningful content. Consider how artists and designers are adapting social science research methods to address mechanical and systemic issues in health care, rehab services and community development. Consider how business and industry are adapting art and design processes to breathe new life into stagnant operations and to develop new ventures. All of these endeavours require a level of criticality that keeps social and environmental, as well as economic considerations at the forefront.

The speed of technological change is staggering and almost defies just-in-time training if one wants to pursue a long-term creative career. Here is where being a university is so important for OCAD U: with a liberal education underpinning a studio-based art and design curriculum, OCAD U’s degree programs not only ensure understanding of traditional techniques, equipment and processes, but also develop a critical awareness of historical factors and social contexts. Students learn to utilize and explore the possibilities of new technologies, while also considering and critiquing the implications.

OCAD U has become a remarkable example of a university dedicated to the conscious integration of applied and academic learning of professional expertise grounded in universal knowledge. Cardinal Newman move over; the idea of an art and design university has come.

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Dr. Kathryn Shailer is the Dean of OCAD University’s Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies.

# Digital Innovation in the Classroom

By Lena Rubisova

Digital technology plays an important role in the educational experience at OCAD University and has come a long way since the mid-1980s when the first Macintosh computers began to appear in classrooms. Back then, it wasn't unusual for an entire class to share one computer.

During the 1990s, and throughout the past decade, the university has seen enormous changes in the realm of digital technologies, which in turn have created numerous possibilities for collaborations between scientists, designers, artists and programmers in a wide range of departments and studios.

Since 2007, the Digital Futures Initiative (DFI) has been developing a series of interdisciplinary programs to create new opportunities for students who are working with digital technology in both art and design programs at the graduate and undergraduate level. Initially made possible by a \$2-million annual investment grant from the Government of Ontario, the DFI has grown to receive additional grants and awards to support research. The DFI supports developments in other departments by creating joint courses that give students a better understanding of how digital technologies can enhance their work. This includes providing funding to such areas as the Photography Department for the purchasing of new cameras, and to the Drawing and Painting Department for the development of a digital painting lab.

Two years ago, the DFI began offering minors in Digital Media and On-Screen Media, as well as a Graduate Degree and Master's Degrees in Arts, Fine Arts and Design. Since its implementation four years ago, the DFI has grown to include new faculty members that are bringing new areas of expertise to a variety of projects at OCAD U.

The Photography Department has had a constantly expanding relationship with digital technology for several years. Computer programs have been taught, to some extent, since the late 1980s despite their limited availability at the time. Initially, digital processes were used primarily for photography book layouts and fairly low-quality printing.

A major contributor to the growth of digital printing in photography at OCAD U has been the department's partnership with Epson that was developed in the 1990s through the digital work of Professor Barbara Astman. Under SuperBuild, an investment from the Government of Ontario to help expand and renew the university's facilities in 2000, Epson donated printers and scanners to help set up the Epson Imagining Lab, now part of the Photography Department. Epson has continued to support the Photography Department through further donations, while older models of printers and scanners have been passed on to other departments and areas at OCAD U.

An important part of digital development has been retaining more traditional analog processes and integrating them into singular practices. "Philosophically, [the Photography Department] sees the medium in hybrid terms, presenting students with a mix of production media and processes for their exploration and art making," says Chair of Photography Peter Sramek. As digital print quality and camera resolutions improve, students have been able to experiment with going back and forth on printing digitally from analog negatives and vice versa.

Since the late 1970s, the Integrated Media Department, originally called Photo/Electric Arts, has been investigating technologies such as film, audio, video and robotics. It was the latter area that pushed interest into interactivity and connectivity within the department, with



3D scanning in the Rapid Prototyping Centre

Photo by Lorella Zanetti

projects such as David Rokeby's *Very Nervous System* that uses sensors to convert movements of the body into sound and musical pieces. (Rokeby graduated from OCAD U in 1984 with a degree in Experimental Art.) The scope and nature of the department began to change in the early to mid-1990s when digital computer labs came to OCAD U, and as courses that had to do with the Internet and with digital design began to be offered. Moving into the start of the 21st century it became clear that many students were more familiar with digital technology than with traditional print processes, and labs such as the Rapid Prototyping Centre and Physical Computing Hybrid Lab were established for use at graduate and undergraduate levels.

One of the ongoing trends in the development of digital technologies in the Integrated Media Department has been the integration between digital and analog practices, which allows opportunities for collaboration and research between different departments and areas. "We see more integration of digital tools across every aspect of university practice," says Judith Doyle, Associate Professor and Chair of Integrated



David Rokeby in *Very Nervous System* in the streets of Potsdam (1993)



3D scanning in the Rapid Prototyping Centre

Photo by Claudia Hung

## DONOR PROFILE: GEORGE AND MARTHA BUTTERFIELD

George and Martha Butterfield have given more than just financial support to OCAD University, they've given their time and energy. Martha, who earned a fine arts degree from the University of Toronto, was an active member on the Board of Governors in the 1990s. "When I was at U of T, I was envious of what was happening here and I was so happy to see the school at close range," says Martha. Not to be outdone, George was Chair of the Ideas Need Space Campaign where he found himself putting in endless hours trying to attract would-be investors. "I like hard work and we spent countless hours trying to get investors on board," says George. Not only did the largest campaign ever executed by the university conclude successfully, the Sharp Centre for Design was built and George was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree in 2007, acknowledging his monumental effort and a truly inspiring success. Photo by Christopher Wahl



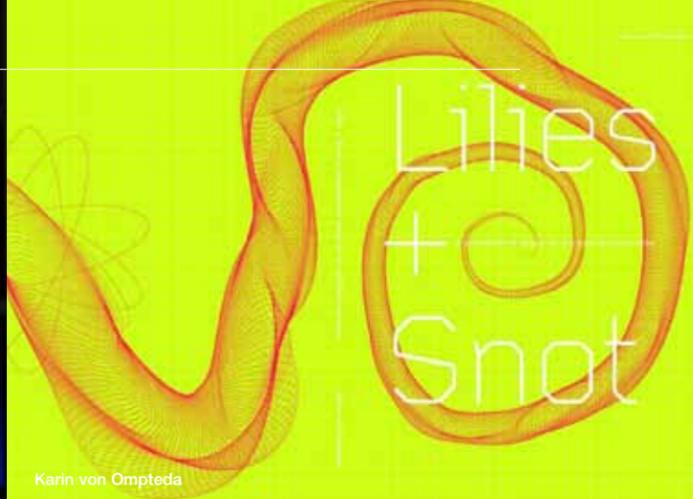
Media. Since Integrated Media has been available as a minor, it has become a set of skills that students from the Faculty of Art, and in particular the Faculty of Design, are using to add to their arsenal.

To go along with developments in the above-mentioned departments, OCAD U features many labs that allow students to explore digital technologies through critical and innovative practices. Examples include the Physical Computing Hybrid Lab that has been at OCAD U since January 2009, which allows students and professors to work on projects relating to computer sensors detecting motion, sounds, beams or infrared lights. The lab has plugs, connectors, cameras and displays, as well as a soldering station and installation spaces.

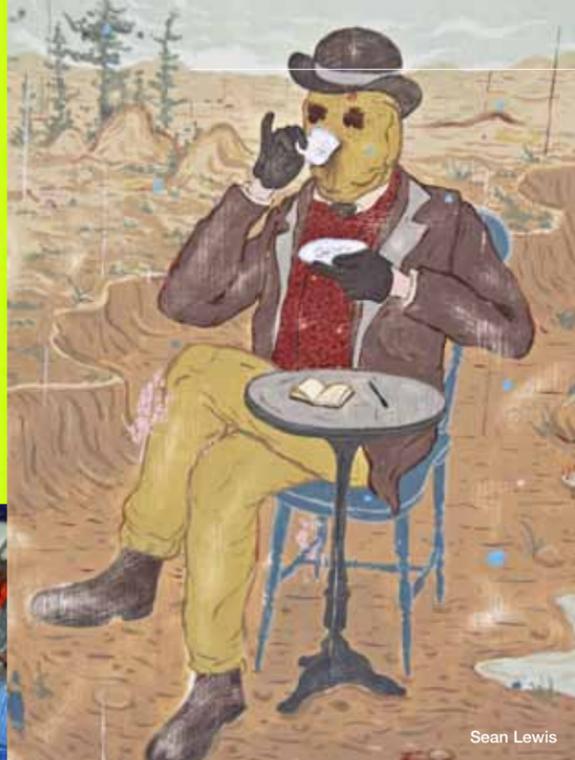
Another example of ways in which the university is using digital technology is the Drawing and Painting Digital Suite. The suite is a collection of interactive SMART Board whiteboard systems with Wacom Cintiq displays for digital painting. The scale and sensitivity of the equipment allows students to transition intuitively from analog to digital painting in a way that would not be feasible on a laptop.

There have been many changes to the university over the last 20 years as digital technologies have increasingly played a more important role. This has spread to both the Faculty of Design and Faculty of Art and has changed the way that emerging artists and designers think. Initiatives such as the DFI and technological partnerships with external partners are taking the university towards a future that mixes digital and analog technologies in a provocative and exciting way.

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Lena Rubisova is a fourth-year Graphic Design student at OCAD University. She graduated from the University of Toronto in 2007 with a degree in Art History and Classical Civilizations.



Karin von Ompteda



Sean Lewis



Lauren Dynes



James Gauvreau

Rachel MacFarlane



Elizabeth Pead



Rico Law



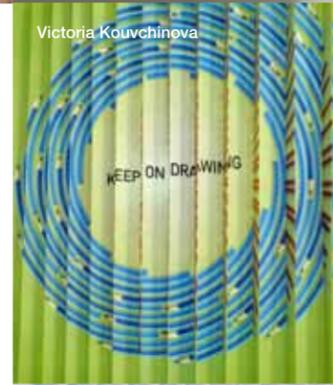
# WHAT OUR STUDENTS ARE MAKING TODAY: Works by our recent Medal Winners

Christopher Kuzma



Photos courtesy of OCAD University's Dorothy H. Hoover Library and Archives

Victoria Kouvchinova



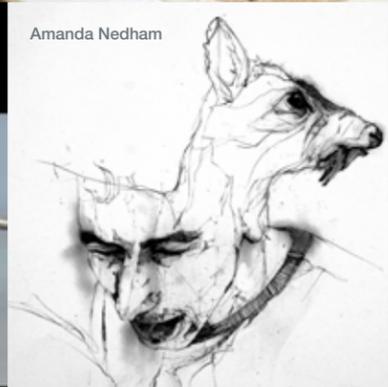
Meryl McMaster



Stephen Shaddick



Amanda Nedham



Heidi Mok



Farah Yusuf



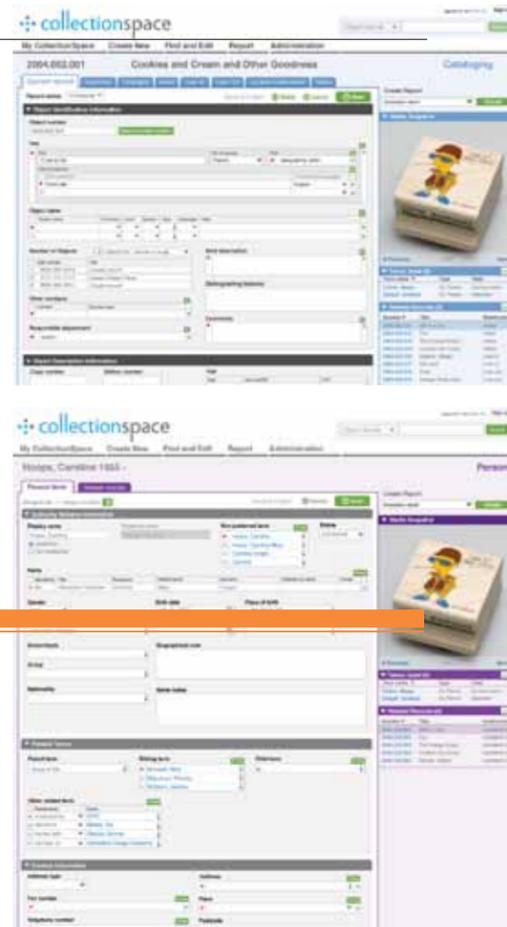
Tom Briggs



# The “University of the Imagination” meets Digital Inclusive Design

By Jutta Treviranus

CollectionSpace  
An open-source  
collections management  
system for museums



On August 1, 2010, the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) joined OCAD University. IDRC is a reformulation of the Adaptive Technology Research Centre (ATRC) that was established at the University of Toronto in 1993 as an international centre of expertise in the inclusive design of emerging information, communication systems and practices. One of the ATRC's main research focuses was the Web, and the ATRC grew up with the Web. On that August day, more than 25 permanent research staff and 15 multi-sector, international and national research projects made the transition to a new home at OCAD U.

The largest of these projects is an infrastructure project to build a multi-institution regional research hub focusing on digital inclusion called the Inclusive Design Institute (with a budget of \$15 million supported by the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation). Post-secondary partner institutions include York University, Ryerson University, the University of Toronto, UOIT, Sheridan College, Seneca College and George Brown College.

IDRC's mission is to ensure that mainstream information and communication systems are designed from the start to be inclusive of the full range of human diversity. This is made possible by the unprecedented flexibility and adaptability of digital systems and resources. To achieve the largest impact, IDRC research and development focuses on the beginning of the development “food chain” and intervenes at the formative stages of emerging technologies.

Research initiatives, such as the Fluid Project (fluidproject.org), create inclusively designed building blocks for the most popular

software development toolkits so that software applications built using the toolkit integrate accessibility from the start. This means that adaptability becomes embedded into the foundations of the software, and users who depend on that adaptability, such as users who are blind, have low vision, or difficulty controlling a keyboard or mouse because of a physical disability, can operate the software.

Projects such as ATutor (atutor.ca) help curriculum content producers create accessible learning resources. The FLOE project (floeproject.org) is building a global framework to deliver learning resources that meet individual learner needs, making education accessible to previously marginalized learners. IDRC gives priority to initiatives that will result in systemic or cultural change. This includes helping to create policies, standards, international specifications, international guidelines and legislation that support inclusion. IDRC also establishes and fosters open-source communities to recruit help from around the world in this sometimes overwhelming but critical effort. IDRC distributes all of the work produced under an open-source, open-access licence to enable the greatest possible uptake and implementation.

Reactions to this major transition for IDRC (and for OCAD U) have been very diverse, but the predominant response from those who are familiar with both entities is: “What a brilliant move, good for OCAD U!” Less than a year from that important transition, I can say with certainty that IDRC at OCAD U is an inspired match—for more than the obvious or initial reasons. The generative fermentation has begun and there is a palpable potential to collectively create and demonstrate hugely disruptive, timely and transformative ideas and practices.

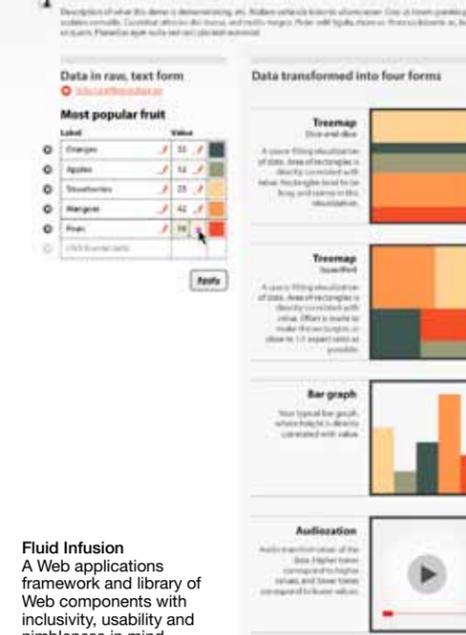
Establishing IDRC at OCAD U

symbiotically expands the intellectual scope of both entities. OCAD U and IDRC share a common grounding in design thinking, applied practice and critical analysis. While OCAD U is known for expertise in the visual modality, IDRC brings an emphasis on multi-modality and on translation from one modality to another.

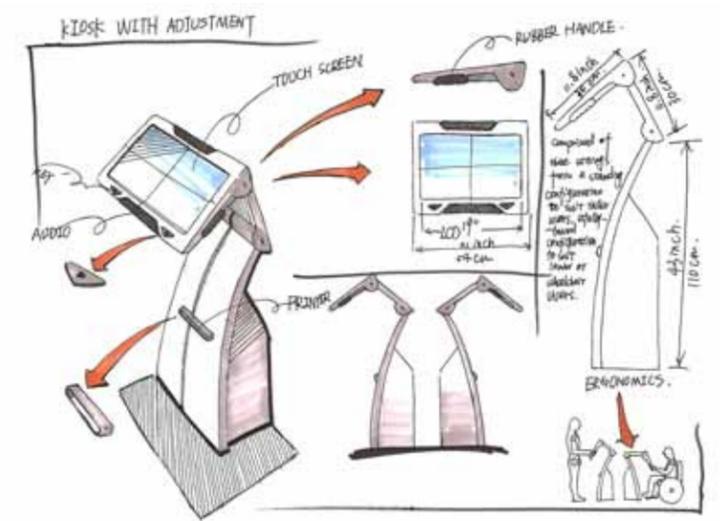
While IDRC was founded to address and has focused almost exclusively on the digital, OCAD U helps round out the digital with the creative merger of the digital and the physical, thereby helping IDRC transition to the inclusive design of the emerging “Internet of things.” IDRC's concentration on functional accessibility is completed by OCAD U's concentration on aesthetic accessibility. IDRC provides ready-made instantiations of many of the goals of OCAD U—international collaboration, research leadership, interdisciplinary studies, as well as established competence in software research and development. It can be said that the combination helps both entities resist the stereotypes they are frequently assigned.

The fit with design is obvious, but the fit with art is just as important. In a paper I wrote with Derrick de Kerckhove and David Rokeby in 1993 (the same year the ATRC was established), we argued that art (interactive art in this case) and inclusive design had five concerns in common (paraphrased here):

## Fluid Infusion framework demo



**Fluid Infusion**  
A Web applications framework and library of Web components with inclusivity, usability and nimbleness in mind.



**Fluid Engage**  
Inclusive museum visitor experiences across mobile, Web and in-house spaces.

**1. A primary focus and emphasis on the person: the highly individualized nature of the aesthetic relationship between a person and an artwork also reflects the personalized nature of inclusive design.**

**2. An informed and searching interest in the senses, sensory modalities and human perception.**

**3. An understanding of interactive technologies as extensions of the human body.**

**4. An interest in developing techniques to observe, process, and interpret and extend human input.**

**5. A common desire to promote the quality of life and the richness of the human experience: the condition for success in the aesthetic experience is the same as that for the inclusive experience; artists, like inclusive designers, are motivated by a deeper sense of what being human is all about.**

I would add to this the common driver of innovation and creativity. Innovation occurs at the margins of any domain. A diversity of perspectives results in greater creativity. Both OCAD U and IDRC understand the potential of disruptive notions, the counterintuitive, the unexpected and the unconventional—powerful catalysts for

innovation. Neither is comfortable with the average, typical or conventional.

Both IDRC and OCAD U are also concerned with the positive potential of the digital transformation of our tools and our environment. IDRC has pioneered a reframing of universal design in the digital realm. This reframing is based on the premise that the mutability of the digital frees us from the need to create a single configuration, design or solution to meet everyone's needs. Making use of the adaptability of digital systems, and the great potential to pool and share resources presented by online networks, we can dynamically reconfigure or replace the interface and resource in response to the goal, the context, but most importantly the individual requirements of each user. Thus every individual can create a personal specification of what he or she needs or prefers and whatever networked system they encounter (e.g., Web service, kiosk, multi-user workstation) can match that personal specification. With partners around the world, IDRC is leading the construction of a global infrastructure to support this vision (gpil.org).

IDRC brings with it a compelling challenge to implement the imagination of OCAD U. To make it possible for everyone to participate in our digitally mediated society requires new ideas, focused risk-taking, creativity and innovation—things that OCAD U excels at. And it couldn't be more timely, or more urgent, as jurisdictions around the world come to recognize the social and economic impact of exclusion. The possibilities are limited only by the limits of our combined imagination.

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Professor Jutta Treviranus is the Director of OCAD University's Inclusive Design Research Centre and Inclusive Design Institute.

## ALUMNI PROFILE: EUNSOL YEOM

When Eunsol Yeom (BDes, Industrial Design, 2008) was six years old and living in her native Korea, she began making Christmas cards for friends and family with an unabated passion. Her work caught the eye of her mother who encouraged her to pursue a career in art and design. When she reached high school, her entire family moved to Canada and she eventually made her way to OCAD U where she “learned how to build concepts, run research and conduct experiments before designing products,” says Yeom. To say the least, her passion and devotion to her studies paid off. Last March, Yeom won the prestigious Red Dot Design Award for her highly innovative smartphone project, Voim, which she created with her collaborator, Youngseong Kim. “During four years at OCAD U, I learned to think outside the box and to generate design processes from start to end,” says Yeom. “And eventually, I learned to expand my design thinking process and viewpoints.” Photo by Sueng-min Kim





Karin von Ompteda



Graphic Design



# OCAD UNIVERSITY'S 96th ANNUAL GRADUATE EXHIBITION

Photographs by Christina Gopic



# AN INSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE:

## ALANNA MULE

HOMETOWN: HAMILTON  
PROGRAM: DRAWING AND PAINTING

Alanna Mule, a third-year Drawing and Painting student, is happy she listened to her mother.

"Although I'm the only one in my family who pursued a creative line of work, my mom always noticed that I seemed to be particularly into arts and crafts and painting when I was a kid," she says. As such, mom always enrolled her daughter in summer arts schools and encouraged her to keep up with her passion.

"Even in high school in Hamilton, I was focused on the arts," recalls Mule, adding that coming to OCAD U was an obvious choice. "The difference between a university with an arts program and OCAD U is that you're put in an environment with people who are just as driven as you are, and that's really inspirational."

Mule says she's always painting and, even though there isn't a lot of downtime, describes the program as the perfect balance between individual work and learning from instructors and classmates. "You'll be working on your own and then a professor will come and help you with a technique that can really help you improve."

Her muse is classic horror, which she paints in a photo-realistic manner. Not long after she started at OCAD U, she made the switch from oil to acrylic, which works better on the large wood sheets she now paints on. "I find larger-scale artworks grab more attention and also let me work more freely with paint," says Mule.

For Mule, the transition to Toronto and OCAD U was easy. She got a job quickly and made friends with people in her classes, and with the help of people at OCAD U found an apartment literally two blocks from campus. Her smooth transition is something she attributes, in part, to a desire to see the world, and her undergraduate work and time in Toronto is the first step in her plans to travel and work abroad extensively.

"I love it here," she says. "There are so many great people and there's so much going on. It really keeps you on your toes."

## MARC DE PAPE

HOMETOWN: WINNIPEG  
PROGRAM: MASTER'S IN DIGITAL FUTURES

Knowing all too well that things can change quickly, Marc De Pape came to OCAD U to keep up with the times. Although it was only six short years ago that he graduated from Concordia's Digital Image and Sound in Fine Arts program, he already feels that it's time to re-immense himself in education—OCAD U's pioneering Digital Futures Program—to maintain a cutting edge.

"When I graduated, YouTube didn't even exist," he says. "There were no smartphones even. There are so many more platforms for digital interaction." For De Pape, it's not about the job market, since he's already an accomplished videographer and has given up a full-time job at the ROM producing video content to accompany exhibits. "If I wanted to, I could continue being a video producer making videos, but I want to draw inspiration from a wider variety of media and a wider variety of ideas," he says. "That's important to me."

De Pape felt the time was right to go back to school and was investigating a program in Interaction Design at the Copenhagen Institute, even though he really didn't want to leave Toronto. "When I was travelling with the ROM, I took a little detour and visited the school. Then on my way home I was on the flight and flipping through the catalogue next to me was Geoffrey Shea, a professor at OCAD U. He told me they were developing a program devoted to that," he recalls. "It was very lucky that I learned about it—just in time. I found out about the program just three days before the deadline."

The other thing De Pape is looking forward to in his new program is a little company. As a video producer, he found that he was working a lot on his own and sorely missing the collaborative projects he worked on in bygone days when he was a student at Concordia and, for many years, played in the band Reverie Sound Revue. Says De Pape: "It'll be nice to have true collaborations. It'll be a little like being in a band again."

# WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A STUDENT AT OCAD U

By Christine Sismondo

## CHRIS ALLEN

HOMETOWN: TORONTO  
PROGRAM: GRAPHIC DESIGN

Chris Allen, a third-year Graphic Design student with a minor in Advertising, enrolled in OCAD U's Graphic Design program after already graduating from Centennial College with a Graphic Design Media certificate.

"I graduated at the height of the recession, when design jobs were really scarce," explains Allen. Although enthusiastic to get into the workforce, he applied to OCAD U's Graphic Design program to keep his options open and to improve his skill set. It didn't take him long to decide that everything had happened for the best.

"At first, I was a bit overwhelmed, but was quickly floored by how supportive an environment it was," he says. "There are so many resources here to help students." Allen is certain his time at OCAD U, spent not only in classes but also taking advantage of programs like the peer-mentoring program that he participated in as both a protege and a mentor, will give him a life-long advantage in the field of graphic design.

Allen has been particularly inspired by his program, which, he notes, is taught by professionals with impressive and recognizable portfolios who take students through every stage of the branding process, just as it would take place in the marketplace. "I do really well in an environment where I respect the people teaching me," he says. "For example, one of my instructors designed the logo for the Toronto Football Club (TFC)."

While Allen appreciates the practical hands-on training he received in the first stage of his education, one of the things that he values most about the approach of the Graphic Design department is that it's not centred solely on results, but also on teaching students to focus on the entire creative process. That's important to Allen since it helps teach people how to think about the bigger picture.

"So, not only are you learning how to make things, but you're also learning how to think," he says. "Teaching you how to use tools is not a substitute for a good idea."

## FAREENA CHANDA

HOMETOWN: KARACHI  
PROGRAM: INTERDISCIPLINARY MASTER'S IN ART, MEDIA & DESIGN

Photographer, designer and artist Fareena Chanda has been working toward mastering design on four continents—Africa, Asia, Europe and Africa. She's lived in Seattle, Paris and Karachi, but her current frontier is at OCAD U where she is working on her Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media & Design. She enrolled in the program to enhance her background as a content designer, along with her education in photography and design that she first studied at the University of Washington in Seattle.

"I've always been interested in design practices and this program has given me a tremendous amount of freedom to combine practices from different fields and explore the space between art and design," says Chanda. "A program like this allows you to try new things."

Although she points out that Seattle has arguably better weather, Chanda, who grew up in Paris and Karachi, was attracted to Toronto because it has all of the benefits of a large, international city, along with some of the comforts found in a smaller town. "Toronto doesn't feel as intense as some of the other places I've lived; the people here are really nice."

Chanda feels fortunate to be presented with so many novel opportunities at OCAD U. "This school places a lot of emphasis on collaborative work, which is really great. Last semester, I was taking a course sponsored by Microsoft and was very lucky to work with colleague Nermin Moufti on a groundbreaking project for the associated Microsoft Design Expo Competition." This pioneering course was a first for OCAD U and the first time a Canadian school was chosen to participate in the annual competition. What's more, Chanda and Moufti won the competition. Says Chanda: "The opportunities the school offers are great. You have to make the best of them!"

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Christine Sismondo is a Toronto-based writer, researcher and university instructor.

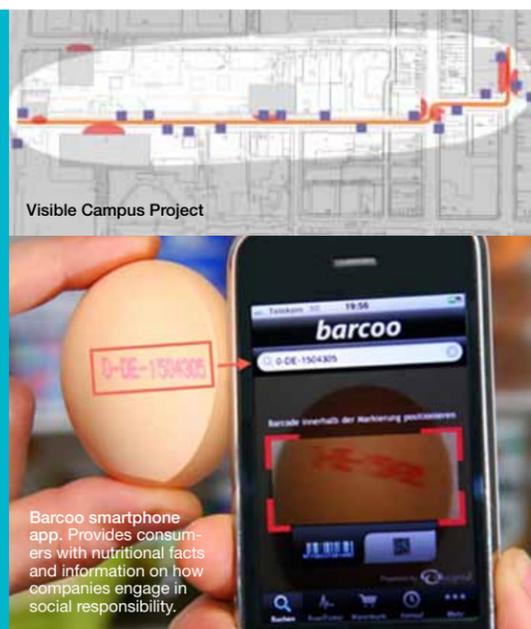


Photos by Victoria Sigurdson



# VISION EDUCATION APPLICATION: OCAD U'S TRIPLE THREAT FOR ONTARIO

By Larissa Kostoff

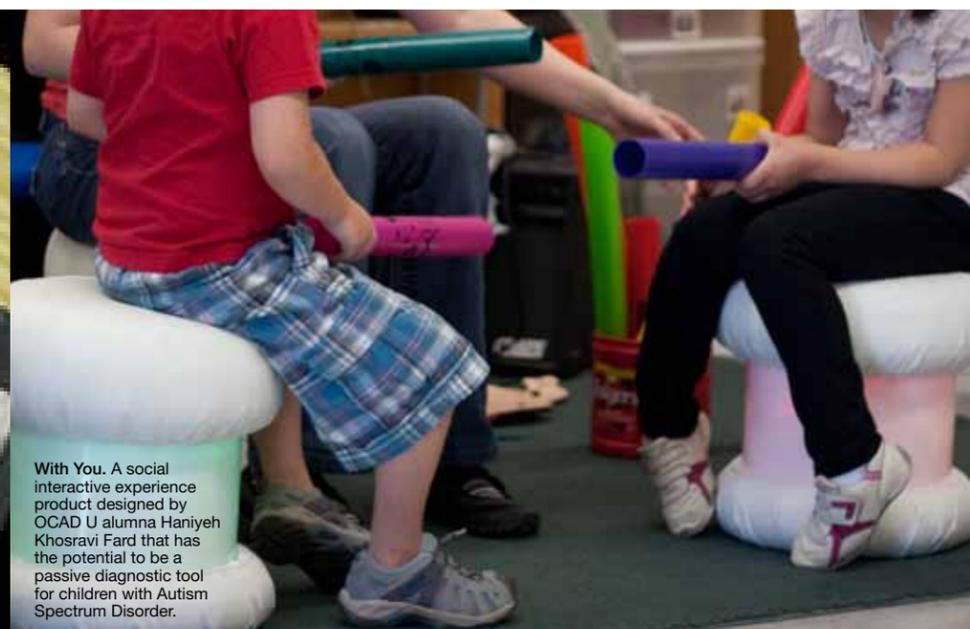


Visible Campus Project

Barcoo smartphone app. Provides consumers with nutritional facts and information on how companies engage in social responsibility.



Haptic Holography Project. Pairs OCAD U with Entact Robotics to develop technology that allows users to interface with 3D displays that provide sensory feedback.



With You. A social interactive experience product designed by OCAD U alumna Haniyeh Khosravi Fard that has the potential to be a passive diagnostic tool for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

To look forward with imagination is one of OCAD University's strengths. Artists and designers at the university are working with advanced technologies in increasingly collaborative environments, and the knowledge and innovation they provide represent major growth areas for Ontario's economy.

As a university first, OCAD U realizes its vision by cultivating it through education. It recognizes that today's world requires teaching and learning based on problem-solving models in which people from a variety of perspectives work together by bringing the strengths of different methodologies to the table. One example, among many, is the Digital Futures Initiative (DFI), a set of programs that draw upon expertise from all faculties to look at practice, research and innovation in digital media and its emergent developments.

Collaborative learning at the undergraduate level also engages outside partners. Consider the OCAD U/Rotman Design Practicum, which joins OCAD U with the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. As part of the practicum, 24 MBA students and 12 OCAD U Industrial Design students work on real-world problems with clients such as RIM and Jenny Craig. The purpose is to enable students to learn about the process, methods and mindsets of business design. "Our methodology is based on applying three gears to design," says Designworks Director Heather Fraser. "The first is about empathy and deep user understanding; the second, concept visualization; and the third, business design. What's important to remember is that without this third gear, you don't get traction into business."

Such traction is of increasing concern to students at OCAD U. In 2011, the university launched a pair of master's programs for those interested in working in sectors that engage digital media, information and communications technology (ICT) systems, including government, arts and culture, health, and the mobile and interactive industries. The first, the MDes in Inclusive Design, examines the ability of design to recognize the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference. The second, the Graduate Program in Digital Futures, features unique partnerships with the Canadian Film Centre Media Lab and the University of Waterloo, and builds on OCAD U's strengths in practice and research in digital art, design and media. "Both programs envision products and prototypes: they're practice-based, so students leave with something they can actually develop," notes Dr. Helmut Reichenbacher, Associate Vice-President, Research, and Dean, Graduate Studies.

Reichenbacher's remarks underscore OCAD U's continual desire to provide tangible benefits

for the real world—a demonstrated success of OCAD U's. In 2010, Research Infosource included OCAD U among Canada's top 50 research universities, and just as impressive was the percentage growth (2,317%) that the university experienced in research income from 2008 to 2009.

Our government is also investing in research commercialization at OCAD U. Early this year, the university was granted \$359,800 in funding from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) through the Applied Research and Commercialization Initiative. This investment supports commercialization of the projects of 12 OCAD U research teams and their private-sector partners. Over the long term, it also creates jobs and sustains economic growth by helping small businesses get new ideas into the marketplace faster. Projects are wide-ranging and span the fields of mobile, health, environmental and digital technologies. Support of this kind recognizes OCAD U's ability to see vision and education through to application—a strength evinced by the institution's skyrocketing number of research

## ALUMNI PROFILE: SAJ JAMAL

Not all high-school students know what they want to do and where they want to study. But Saj Jamal (AOCA, Environmental Design, 1990) had a very clear idea at an early age. "If I was to follow my heart and pursue the arts, there was only one institution on the radar for me. If it wasn't OCA, I would have taken a path down a science or math degree at a local university," says Jamal, who since graduating has worked as the director of an international genetics organization and is currently the Managing Director, Marketing and Creative Services at eSolutionsGroup in Kitchener-Waterloo. "I have to admit I was really nervous presenting my portfolio and the idea of not getting into OCA went against my very being. Glad it all worked out...26 years later." Photo by Ryan Whillier



initiatives and partnerships, as well as the more than two dozen research laboratories and incubation facilities that support them.

Take as an example the Centre for Information Visualization and Data Driven Design (CIV-DDD), led by York University in partnership with OCAD U, the University of Toronto and a multiplicity of industrial research partners. Imagine, like these researchers do, looking at millions of genomic patterns and seeing the diagnostic implications. Such data visualization, and the need for it, is growing exponentially in such sectors as health, the social sciences and finance.

Another forward-thinking venture on campus asks designers to consider how we access our world. Called the Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC), this self-funded centre conducts research in the inclusive design of emerging information, communication systems and practices. Led by world-renowned inclusive design expert Jutta Treviranus, the IDRC represents an international group of academic researchers, students, government, community and private-sector partners whose work responds to legislative commitments, market demands and universal values of inclusion and diversity. The IDRC also leads the Inclusive Design Institute, supported by the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation, that is comprised of eight post-secondary institutions as its core partners: OCAD U, the universities of Toronto, Ryerson, York and the Ontario Institute of Technology, along with the colleges of Sheridan, George Brown and Seneca.

In addition to considering issues of access, researchers at OCAD U are also changing the way we experience the world, through work of the sort carried out at the Ambient Experience

Lab. Based on a deep understanding of the values, needs and cultures of end users, ambient experience design integrates ambient technologies (image, light, connectivity, scent and sound) into architectural environments. Led by Professor Job Rutgers, OCAD U's Ambient Experience Lab conducts research with partners such as Princess Margaret Hospital, Rotman School of Management and Singapore Polytechnic. It also engages OCAD U students like Evi K. Hui. Together with DuROCK, a Canadian manufacturer of exterior cement and coatings, Hui is working on the FedDev-funded Visible Campus project. To express the "vibrancy and innovation" defining present-day OCAD U, Visible Campus is creating street furniture, wayfinding and other graphical elements as a means of linking the university's 12-building campus.

A further examination of experience is being studied at OCAD U's Mobile Experience Innovation Centre (MEIC), which provides leadership in building innovation capacity and design excellence in Canada's mobile and wireless industries. Through applied research and commercialization, SME advisory and services, conferences and workshops, and international outreach, the MEIC is recognized as a leading organization across Canada.

Effective innovation also identifies capacity and need. OCAD U's Strategic Innovation Lab (sLab) develops and applies strategic foresight, design research, visualization and prototyping methodologies to clarify and feed the front end of the innovation process. Among the lab's many outcomes are early-stage recognition and support for innovative products, services, platforms and business models with industry partners such as the Association of Canadian Publishers, Achilles Media and Corus Entertainment.

Despite the potential for all of these projects and initiatives, one thing is certain: they'll only be relevant if we safeguard the world they benefit. That's where the university's ZERO Lab comes in. It uses a visualization and mobile computing environment to develop new applications, tools, visualizations and methodologies to reduce our carbon footprint. The ZERO lab will eventually house collaborations with Zerofootprint Inc. An early example is the FedDev-funded Neutral Carbon Product, which pairs Zerofootprint with OCAD U to develop a visualization aesthetic that communicates different aspects of a product's carbon footprint.

Not only will ZERO Lab direct research into green technologies in coordination with industry and institutional partners, it will also work with other university research facilities such as the Design Research Centre, which supports collaboration between the Faculty of Design and external partners by researching and developing new products, communications, systems and environments that are useful, desirable, inclusive, sustainable and economically viable.

Vision, education, application: they come together at OCAD U. Whether it's the human factor they introduce into health research, or the cultural knowledge they apply to the digital advance, OCAD U's artists and designers are engaging innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to the opportunities we face as a society, now and in the future.

Larissa Kostoff is currently on leave from her position as Managing Editor, Marketing & Communications. Her work has been published in numerous literary journals and trade publications, and she is a senior editor at *Descant* magazine.

# The Power of Design as a Vehicle for Social Change

By Gayle Nicoll



**D**esign has an important and purposeful place in advocating, supporting and implementing positive societal changes and preserving our highest cultural principles. In the late 1970s, when I was beginning my design education, much of the world around me seemed engaged in unprecedented social and economic changes associated with equality, the availability of energy and pollution.

Design education at that time, due principally to each discipline's specific isolation within the educational system, provided little insight into the importance of the design disciplines in advancing the public good, especially in areas of social justice or sustainability. My architectural education, for example, focused almost exclusively on building design rather than exploring a transdisciplinary understanding on the influence of the design disciplines on social issues. Over time, however, it became evident that social justice and ecologic public issues endure as challenges for each generation to address for the benefit or to the detriment of the next generation.

The design disciplines have played a pivotal role in advancing the public good and creating the society we experience today and that we will pass on to future generations. A very brief historical inventory of designed communications, objects and environments since the start of last century illustrates only a few of the many examples where the product of designers influenced social action.

Consider the importance of iconic illustrations such as "Rosie the Riveter" (1942), designed during the Second World War to attract female homemakers to join the workforce when men were leaving the industrial workforce to engage in combat. The image has transcended its immediate message for the need for labour during an extraordinary time to play an important role in breaking down the stereotypes of male-oriented jobs and empowering women within our society.

I recently viewed a WWII poster titled "Together" (1943) that depicted a group of uniformed troops from all nationalities and ethnicities within the British Commonwealth of Nations marching together as a united force. The message was aimed at sustaining support for the war effort. The poster's message of unity and ethnic diversity would have been broadminded for its time, yet it prophesied Canada's emergence in the post-war era as a union of peoples from many cultures and ethnicities.

Effective public service advertisements such as the 1960's "Buckle up for Safety" seatbelt campaign I viewed on television empowered me, as a child, to be the agent for change by asking my parents to use their seatbelts. Similarly, the famous "Crying Indian" (1971) commercial and the development of an international recycle symbol (1970) were instrumental in promoting public awareness and action for safety, stewardship and sustainability issues that we embrace today.

The Industrial Revolution, responsible for the chaotic growth of urban areas across Europe and North America, produced the urban environments that were the incubators of infectious diseases in the late 19th century. At the start of the 20th century, the leading causes of death were from infectious diseases like influenza, diphtheria and cholera. Environmental innovations in the design of cities to include the provision and design of public parks, in addition

to the separation of industrial and residential areas, sanitation and water and public transportation service, played the dominant role in combating the spread of infectious disease. By 1940, largely as a result of better designed environments (since antibiotics and most medical procedures we use today had yet to be developed), infectious diseases accounted for only 11 per cent of deaths.

Canada was a leader in the social justice movement in the 1970s with the inclusion of barrier-free design requirements in building design. The industrial design discipline, by embracing the universal design movement—a product of the social justice movement of the 1950s—was especially influential in the development of functional and aesthetically pleasing products available in the mainstream marketplace for household, workplace and the public domain. Noteworthy as well are wearable objects of expressions that develop awareness or identity for causes, positions or groups. Most of us understand immediately the significance of wearable symbols such as a red ribbon, or the yellow silicone wristband that indicate personal support for awareness and support of important social and charitable causes.

OCAD University continues Canada's leadership in accessibility through inclusive design initiatives for providing accessibility to digital communications and applications. Today, OCAD U's Faculty of Design has assumed public leadership by providing exposure and investigation within aspects of design that inform social and environmental responsibility. Through lecture and studio courses, to theoretical and service learning pedagogies and learning activities, students are taught to think critically and responsively to the human condition and to nurture a transdisciplinary understanding of the means and media that inform and cultivate the stewardship of our finest societal values.

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Dr. Gayle Nicoll is the Dean of OCAD University's Faculty of Design.

# Research that Makes a Difference in the World

By Helmut Reichenbächer



**L**ast March, Deputy Ministers Deborah Newman (Training Colleges and Universities) and George Ross (Research and Innovation) visited the campus to see our new Inclusive Design Research Centre, the hub of the Inclusive Design Institute (IDI). The Deputy Ministers and Noëlle Richardson, Ontario's Chief Diversity Officer, met with Professor Jutta Treviranus and her team at IDI where researchers are focused on making digital media more accessible.

Treviranus' team develops technology that adapts access to electronic media to meet the individual needs of the user, whether the user be short-sighted (enlarged fonts), blind (screen readers), with limited motor skills (alternate human-computer interfaces), or requires health information in culturally relevant formats.

OCAD University embraces such real-world challenges and encourages its faculty and students to develop innovative and creative solutions, particularly in the health and wellness sector. Ever since OCAD U's symposium on Cultural Knowledge and the Healthy Society in the fall of 2009, research in the health and wellness sector at the university has become increasingly prominent. The symposium underlined what we do so well: bringing together designers, artists, and creative and cultural industry workers to explore how these disciplines can engage productively to create measurable impact on improving the quality of life for all Canadians. Here are some highlights of a few ongoing projects:

## Creativity and mitigating memory loss

Professor Judith Doyle's collaboration with neuropsychologist Dr. Brian Richards at Baycrest engages patients with acquired brain injury and their family members to mitigate the effects of memory loss. Drawing on her expertise as Chair of the Department of Integrated Media, Doyle employs a number of studio-arts-based approaches. One client who suffered traumatic brain injury in a cycling accident and subsequent coma in 2004 has recently resumed using software to compose/create visual effects at the Memory Link Media Studio. When the client enlists his embodied memory or "knowledge in the hands" of video compositing software, he activates his procedural memory system.

## Improving end-of-life experience

Collaboration with Toronto's teaching hospitals is also spearheaded by Professor Job Rutgers whose research in the health sector builds on his professional design experience in the industry. He currently supervises Oksana Kachur, a graduate student in OCAD U's Master of Design in Strategic Foresight & Innovation program. She is working with Dr. Gary Rodin at the Princess Margaret Hospital to identify design elements in the environment of palliative care units that particularly engage the senses of the patients and their families in order to maximize quality of life. The goal is to discover the positive influence of sensory experiences, such as light and colour, sound, scent, or touch, and how they contribute to the patient's experience.

## Unfolding the meaning of complex data sets

Visualizing complex medical data sets constitutes one of the Centre for Innovation in Visualization and Data-Driven Design's major research streams. In collaboration with York University, the University of Toronto and Toronto's medical

communities, Dr. Sara Diamond and the team develop new approaches to representing difficult-to-read medical data. Visualizing, for example, extensive numerical data through new systems of shapes, colours, or animation will help medical professionals, patients and their families gain more immediate access to complex information.

## Better training for surgeons

Professor Francis Lebouthillier, Chair of the Sculpture and Installation program, puts his talent and skills to use in medical environments. He develops high-fidelity silicone models for surgeons preparing complex operations. Highly detailed models of the fetus in the womb allow the surgeon to plan and practise challenging procedures in a no-risk, realistic, three-dimensional context, thus better preparing the surgeon before they tackle their task in the hospital's operating room.

## Access to the marketplace

OCAD U's "Take Your Idea to Market" competition last spring highlighted the great potential of our students. Two examples from amongst the 11 finalists who presented their innovations to a group of invited angel investors: Adam Oliver presented a prototype of "Next Step," a device based on a rollator that facilitates the gradual sitting down while storing kinetic energy to help patients stand up again. Jessica Nguyen presented her prototype of a storage container for dental drill heads that attaches directly to the hand-held drill thus making drill heads more easily accessible to the dentist.

These examples of innovative contributions from OCAD U faculty members and students reflect the priorities of the university's strategic plan, and show the great potential of our institution's impact on quality of life and well-being, and for improving economic prosperity.

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Dr. Helmut Reichenbächer is OCAD University's Associate Vice-President, Research, and Dean, Graduate Studies.



**past now:** Curated by Suzanne Morrisette and Lisa Myers. Photography by Meryl McMaster and painted woodcarvings by Luke Parnell.

# Burgeoning Curators and Education

## The evolution of curating in Canada

By Rosemary Donegan

**T**he work and practice of art curators—variously defined as writers, organizers, historians, stylists, friends of artists and intellectuals—has never had such

currency. In popular culture, the notion of the curator has taken on a chic and contemporary resonance as people curate auto collections, poetry readings, branding campaigns and clothing stores. Internationally, art curators have been elevated into glamorous art stars in mega-exhibitions like Germany's Documenta, the Istanbul Biennale and Sydney Biennale where the independent transnational curator often overshadows the artists.

In Canada, curating has evolved from the historical notion of the institutional keeper of the collection to a robust and engaged creative practitioner that reflects the changes in contemporary art and exhibitions practices, and parallels the 135-year development of OCAD University from a small art school on King Street West to the institution it is today.

To understand the evolution of curatorial education in Canada, it is necessary to examine it within the larger historical context of Canadian art. At the beginning of the 20th century, the few art galleries that existed in Canada either employed local connoisseurs/artists, like Martin Baldwin at the Art Gallery of Toronto, or hired English director/curators, such as Eric Brown of the National Gallery of Canada. Curators as keepers of the collection undertook acquisitions when there was money, kept track of artworks, undertook basic conservation, organized and installed exhibitions. Some, like Eric Brown, saw his curatorial role as a promoter of Tom

Thomson and the Group of Seven as a nationalist art movement.

By the 1950s, the line between directors, curators, dealers and artists was becoming more distinctive, even though they often overlapped. The new generation of gallery directors and curators came from a variety of backgrounds. Some were from undergraduate art history programs, a few were recent European immigrants who had professional experience in Europe before the war, while most learned on the job starting as secretaries, framers, registrars, artists and art teachers. In smaller galleries the curator would organize and install exhibitions, bring in travelling shows, run art classes, work with local arts groups, write press releases, and probably sweep the floor before an opening. The larger public institutions, such as the Art Gallery of Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum and National Gallery of Canada, hired graduates such as Robert Hubbard, Jean Boggs, Russell Harper and Doris Shadbolt from the new art history departments at McMaster University, McGill University and the University of Toronto.

In 1958, Alan Jarvis, then Director of the National Gallery of Canada (NGC), initiated the first gallery internship program, which included "some art history, as well as connoisseurship [sic] and museum techniques." Interns received practical training in management and administration, conservation, security and standards for installation, lighting and storage. In 1967, the NGC expanded its internship program for artists and art history graduates from U of T, McGill, McMaster, Université Laval, Université de Montréal and even OCA. Many of the NGC summer students and interns from the 1960s were to go on to long careers in

Canada's major public galleries. The first formal museology program was established at the Royal Ontario Museum in 1969, later becoming Museum Studies within the University of Toronto.

The development of curating as a profession within public art institutions parallels the social and cultural shifts of the late 1960s and 1970s that mobilized the energy of the period and resulted in the establishment of new exhibition spaces at the local/regional level and in major urban centres. The first aspect of this shift was an increase in regional public art galleries as many cities, prodded by local artists and art societies, took advantage of federal Centennial funds to build new art galleries and exhibition centres. These new galleries were assisted by the federal government's initiation of the National Museums Corporation in 1972 to make museums and galleries more accessible and to decentralize programs and activities. Substantial sums of money were fed into public galleries and museums to develop effective administrative and registration procedures, conservation, and to establish education departments and extension services. The Museums Corp (as it was known) was integral to the establishment of a national network of local exhibition centres that offered young graduates in art and art history positions in education and extension services departments. Many would go on to curatorial positions.

Simultaneously, throughout the early 1970s, the creative and energetic application of government employment funds, such as Opportunities for Youth and the Local Initiatives Program (LIP) and the creative use of unemployment insurance benefits, provided the seed money for numerous independent artists' exhibition spaces. The first was A Space



Meryl McMaster: *Horse, Buffalo* (2010);



Photo by André Bénéteau

**Best Before** (2011): Curated by Lisa Myers. Foreground: KC Adams, *The Gift That Keeps Giving* (2011). Background: Suzanne Morrisette, *Solve for spur to burn area, for some* (2011). On the right: Peter Morin, *Salmon and Bannock* (2005/2010).

in Toronto (1971), soon followed by one in virtually every major city. Many of these spaces focused on the new practices of video, performance and installation art that defined the exhibition space as a "vessel to be filled by the artists who used it."

Once established, the network of artist-run galleries were funded by the Canada Council of the Arts and various provincial arts councils. With the various councils' acknowledgement of the principle of paying artists exhibition fees (which had been advocated by Canadian Artists Representation) there were funds to pay artists, and eventually fees for writers and curators. Funding for exhibitions enhanced and strengthened the independent curators' role, which combined with the councils' more demanding jury processes required applicants to develop complex exhibition proposals such as curatorial thesis statements, budgets, schedules and catalogue essays.

Simultaneously, curatorial and critical writing was fostered in catalogue essays, magazines, books and eventually within academia in new art publications like *Vanguard*, *Parachute*, *Fuse*, *C Magazine*, *Provincial Essays*, *M5V*, *Back Flash*, *Borderlines*, *Public*. The energetic engagement with critical writing reflected the international interest in critical theory in the art world and the paralleled development of feminist, gay and post-colonial art criticism. The development

of these new critical voices, particularly in curatorial and critical writing, brought together issues of representation, race and gender, in addition to a more theoretical approach to critical and curatorial practices. This combination of artist-run spaces, art magazines and the funding of the arts councils supported an informal apprenticeship system for artists, critics and curators that provided a creative laboratory for new art forms and a new generation of audiences.

These varied investigations of new art practices, critical theory and curatorial practices that originally took place in bars, galleries, lofts, artists' panels and at conferences gradually converged in the 1990s into formalized programs of study, in the form of critical and curatorial studies, within various art colleges and university art departments.

It is within this Toronto context and in the exploration of "the artist as curator" that OCA mounted its first undergraduate courses in criticism and curatorial practices in the mid-1990s within the Sculpture/Installation program through the administrative efforts of Ian Carr Harris. The Criticism & Curatorial Studies (CRCP) interdisciplinary program combined seminars in curatorial practices, critical writing, art history, field study placements and thesis. Over the past 13 years the CRCP program has graduated 69 students, many of whom are working as independent curators, gallerists/dealers,

institutional curators and critics/writers, while others have gone on to work in community arts and education or to graduate school.

Following the success of the undergraduate program, OCAD launched its first graduate program in Criticism & Curatorial Practices in 2008. Now in its fourth year, the interdisciplinary program, while drawing on the proximity of the local Toronto art scene and the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), integrates a range of curatorial practices within a theoretical framework emphasizing cultural history, research and investigation, analysis and critical writing.

The success of OCAD University's graduate and undergraduate criticism and curatorial programs has provided young and emerging curators and critics with an engaged education in which they can develop their curatorial eye, write essays, undertake critical research, hang shows, paint walls, develop websites, organize events and respond to local communities, such as emerging Aboriginal curators, and most importantly work directly with artists.

It is fitting that in celebrating its 135th anniversary, OCAD University is graduating critics and curators who are entering the art and design world with big ideas, solid practical experience and new ways of thinking, writing and working with and about art, design and media in the 21st century.

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Rosemary Donegan is an Associate Professor at OCAD University and an independent curator.



# THE ART OF THE APP: HOW OCAD U IS FUELING THE TORONTO MOBILE EXPLOSION

By Ryan Bigge

Courtesy Gabe Sawhney



**T**hose looking for a sneak peek at the future of mobile might be surprised to learn that one of today's most innovative smartphone apps involves

the decidedly undigital game of tag. Which makes Matthew Milan, founder of Normative—a Toronto-based interaction design company—an “It” boy. Literally. Over the last 18 months, Milan has steered not one but two different mobile projects through OCAD U’s Mobile Experience Innovation Centre (MEIC) incubator.

Normative Lab’s first mobile app, called Red Rover, was completed in the summer of 2010. “It” is an exploration of real-time, location-based gaming. Or, as Milan explains, an attempt to discover what happens to simple games like tag or red rover when players can augment their sense of sight and hearing through the radar-like capabilities of smartphones. “Mobile devices have become cyborg-like extensions of people’s self,” says Milan, echoing a key theory of the late Marshall McLuhan. “And being reliant on the sensor systems in these devices has become second nature to people.”

Normative Labs, meanwhile, has become gently reliant on the resources, funding, interns and guidance the MEIC has provided. As Milan notes: “We started the business with a very clear understanding that you wouldn’t be able to figure out what the future of interaction design looks like if you didn’t have an R&D function within your company. The MEIC was invaluable in getting that function jump-started in our business early on.”

Of course, the MEIC is not the only start-up incubator in Toronto—there are at least a half-dozen other options for new tech

companies looking to grow their business. This reflects the fact that Toronto has become a North American hub for mobile app development—there are now over 200 companies in the GTA working hard to produce the next Instapaper or Angry Birds.

“But with any incubator, the people are the real difference,” argues Milan. “And since Normative is a design-driven company, connecting with an institution like OCAD U was a perfect fit. They get how we work.” Kathleen Webb, the current Director of the MEIC, agrees with Milan’s assessment. “People might call it a business accelerator or an incubator, but it’s really just a room. It only becomes an accelerator when you provide expertise and mentorship—all those extra layers of support.”

Founded in 2007 by OCAD U and now a broad not-for-profit membership organization, the MEIC is the latest example of OCAD U’s long-standing commitment to mobile innovation—be it through research, app development or industry partnerships. Along with the MEIC, OCAD U also founded the Mobile Experience Lab, a key partner in the Mobile Commons Digital Network, and has hosted a conference entitled Mobile Nation. But this acronym soup of organizations (MEL, MEIC, MCDN) is meaningless without results. And OCAD U university staff and students, along with outside companies like Normative Labs, have produced numerous successful and innovative mobile projects over the past five years.

Ads for the Apple iPhone like to boast that no matter what you like to do, “there’s an app for that.” But the history of mobile development at OCAD U proves that if you want to create an innovative smartphone app in Toronto, there’s also a university for that.

Murmur, a site-specific mobile storytelling experience.

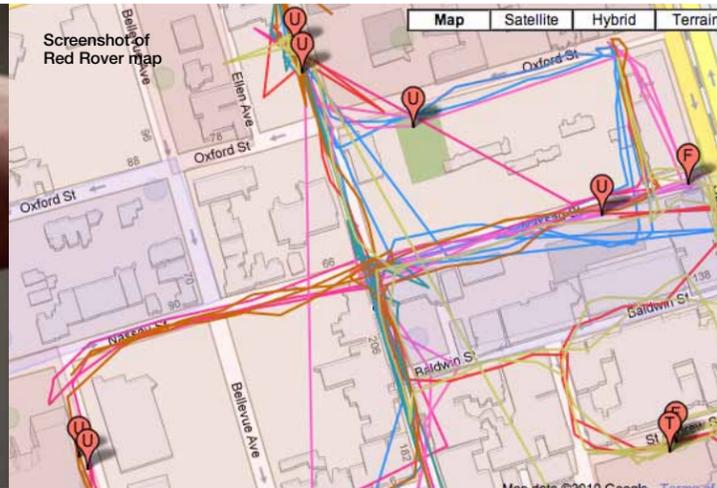


**“One of the really beautiful things about mobile is that you can go through any circumstance, any situation and not damage anything.”**



Normative Labs' Red Rover app.

Photo by John McArdle



Screenshot of Red Rover map

Map Satellite Hybrid Terrain



Dave Colangelo and Patricio Davila at Nuit Blanche.

Photo by Franco Deigo



Qosqo Llika postcard

A little over four years ago, on June 29, 2007, the first iPhone was released for sale. And although Steve Jobs has a habit of calling every new Apple product revolutionary, in this case his description was entirely accurate. The smartphone explosion that the iPhone helped inaugurate now means that users can send and receive data from almost anywhere, while built-in GPS allows for location-specific applications like Normative Lab's Red Rover. Tag, among other things, will never be the same again.

Equally important, of course, was the creation of the App Store, which allowed developers to sell iPhone software directly to consumers. Today, BlackBerry, Android and Windows-based phones provide users with access to thousands of apps that increase both the productivity and fun factor of their respective devices.

The belief that mobile devices can enhance our everyday lives is not confined to software and hardware manufacturers like Apple, however. In March of 2007—three months before the iPhone launched—OCAD U hosted Mobile Nation, a four-day conference that explored mobile experience design, locative technologies and games. It was a culmination of the Mobile Digital Commons Network, a three-year, multi-million-dollar research project with Concordia University, OCAD U and the Banff New Media Institute. A year later, the findings of the conference were published in an anthology entitled *Mobile Nation: Methodologies for Mobile Platforms* edited by OCAD U's Martha Ladly and architect Philip Beesley.

One of the projects described in the Mobile Nation anthology was The Haunting, a multi-player, location-based cellphone game that utilized historical information about people buried in Montreal's Mount Royal cemetery. OCAD U's David McIntosh spearheaded the project, and as he writes in *Mobile Nation*, the game reimagined the cellphone “as a cage for these spirits on

the loose,” as well as being “the marker on a Ouija board through which direct contact between the living and the dead was made.”

Although pleased with the end result, McIntosh now recalls that “one of the real frustrations I felt with that process was how technology-specific it was. For people to participate you had to have one of our cellphones.” Overcoming this obstacle clearly stuck with McIntosh, and became a central consideration when creating his most recent project, *Qosqo Llika*. A distributed documentary that took place over a week-long period in the winter of 2010 in Cusco, Peru, *Qosqo Llika* had a strong focus on inclusivity and accessibility.

In practice, this meant that his walking tour of 1930s Cusco (the former capital of the Incan empire) relied on a series of text messages that were timed to deploy at site-specific locations along the route to help people uncover the lost history of the city. Messages were available in English, Spanish and Quechua (a local Aboriginal language), with more than 20,000 texts sent over a seven-day period.

McIntosh also worked to expand the definition of mobile, which meant moving

beyond the phone itself. This included distributing 5,000 music CDs to bus, cab and garbage truck drivers, who played them constantly, creating a soundtrack for the event. Meanwhile, four performance artists roamed the city, projecting photographs on to buildings and themselves.

“One of the really beautiful things about mobile is that you can go through any circumstance, any situation and not damage anything,” notes McIntosh. “You don't have to install anything.”

Patricio Davila, an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Design and a member of OCAD U's Mobile Experience Lab, worked on *Qosqo Llika* with David McIntosh. He also co-created E-Tower, a mobile-phone controlled art installation that premiered during last year's Nuit Blanche. Designed to measure the fluctuating energy levels of Nuit Blanche attendees over the course of the evening, E-Tower asked people to text the word “energy” to a specific number. The more texts the system received, the faster the LED lights on the CN Tower pulsed—and changed from cool to hot colours.

The project was developed with Dave Colangelo, a Ryerson PhD student, and received financial and technological assistance

#### ALUMNI PROFILE: DANIELLE BLEACKLEY

After finishing her undergraduate degree at Ryerson University in 2001, Danielle Bleackley spent numerous years travelling and working as an arts educator and administrator. Her practice was mostly photo-based and she began to feel a desire to expand beyond her photographic background. “I wanted to incorporate new materials and processes, and get a bit messy,” says Bleackley, who enrolled in OCAD U's Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media & Design. “I was keen to develop my writing skills and build on my knowledge of art theory, [and] it was also very important for me to be immersed in my studio work and be connected with other artists in that studio setting on a consistent basis.” Since graduating from her master's program, Bleackley has completed a Research Assistantship with OCAD U President Sara Diamond, while her graduate thesis work, *There Is A Light That Never Goes Out*, was exhibited at the Board of Directors Gallery.



from Rogers Communications. Reflecting on his work in the mobile sphere, Davila believes that some of the most promising opportunities for apps involve “crazy ideas” and lots of experimentation. “There still isn't a category in the iTunes app store for art,” he notes.

This productive tension between experimentation and commercialization remains a key element of OCAD U's approach to mobile. As Kathleen Webb of the MEIC explains, her mandate is to increase the productivity of mobile app developers and help entrepreneurs get to market faster. In practice, this means connecting start-ups with mentors, providing access to free or discounted technology or taking new companies to international conferences and trade shows, such as Futurecom in Brazil, or Telecomm in India.

David McIntosh's next art project, meanwhile, will utilize three different touchscreen arrays, each composed of 16 tablets. The idea is to connect participants in six different South American cities, across three countries and three different time periods. McIntosh admits it's an ambitious project: “I mean it's lunatic.”

In 2003, Gabe Sawhney, Shawn Micallef and James Roussel created Murmur, a site-specific mobile storytelling experience as part of their residency at the CFC media lab. Sawhney, now a master's student in OCAD U's Digital Futures Initiative program, is quick to stress that his work isn't exclusively mobile. That said, he's a founding member of the MEIC steering committee. He has also worked on a series of research projects for the MEIC, including helping a large software company called NexJ Systems to integrate game mechanics into health apps for people recently diagnosed with diabetes.

As part of his graduate work, Sawhney is leading three research projects at OCAD U.

Funded by FedDev, these initiatives involve establishing stronger connections between the university and small- to medium-sized businesses. They also involve mobile in some way, either as an interface for interactive installations, as a platform for gaming, or as a way to navigate information visualization projects. So, for example, in his work with Echo Mobile, Sawhney is exploring a variety of interfaces. “We really want to explore the possibilities of a tangible interface like the iPad offers, where you have a touchscreen and an accelerometer to really give a different kind of experience for exploring data visualization.”

Like McIntosh, Sawhney believes that mobile is most interesting when it's defined more broadly. “From a creator perspective, the line between what's mobile and what isn't is super fuzzy,” argues Sawhney. He favours the phrase mobile experience, as it presents an opportunity to rethink what a smartphone app might involve.

The multitude of apps now available means that art and productivity apps often coexist on the same phone. And while some prefer fuzzy mobile, Josh Sookman, the founder of Guardly, is crystal clear about the intent of his app. The Guardly app allows users to leverage their social network of friends and family to help them during an emergency response situation. The app harnesses “contextual data,” information that your social sphere would have access to (such as medical conditions or the route you use to get home every evening), but that 911 operators would not.

Sookman recently completed the MEIC's incubator program, in the process growing his company from four employees to six. “I think the MEIC is doing a lot of leadership to help mobile companies become more global,” notes Sookman, who is now one of the MEIC's Board of Directors. “And I think the incubator is one of those on-the-ground initiatives that's extremely valuable.” Sookman is currently developing a

university partner program, with OCAD U slated to be a pilot member of the program. The hope is that the Guardly app could one day replace the blue security poles currently in use on campus with a virtual version.

Coincidentally, Normative Lab's latest app, called Sousveiller, also involves security but approaches the issue from an opposite angle. Sousveiller is designed to document surveillance systems in urban areas and encourages users to take photos of security cameras that are then pushed to a mapping system that documents their location. Milan hopes that Sousveiller will be completed by the end of the summer, and in the iTunes App store soon after that.

As foreshadowed by the 2007 OCAD U conference, we now live in a mobile nation. And thanks to OCAD U, Toronto is now one of the capital cities of that nation. Not that such an outcome was obvious four years ago. The future, is after all, notoriously difficult to predict.

What OCAD U did foresee with great clarity was that a significant technological shift requires a parallel shift in human psychology. Which is to say that without the MCDN and the MEL providing the theoretical impetus, and artists willing to pursue seemingly crazy, fuzzy or lunatic experiments, the MEIC might be without projects to incubate.

Apps, as it turns out, aren't just powered by venture capital. Or all-night coding sessions. Or even smartphone batteries. Instead, the key element of the mobile revolution is imagination and creativity. And for OCAD U, incubating these precious human traits has become the most important element of the mobile revolution.

---  
Ryan Bigge is a Toronto-based cultural journalist and content strategist. His work has appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Toronto Life*, and the *Globe and Mail*. He recently completed a postgraduate degree in Interactive Art and Entertainment from the CFC's New Media Lab.

# FOUR TO WATCH OUT FOR

By Christine Sismondo

## RAJNI PERERA DRAWING AND PAINTING, 2011

No moss gathers on Rajni Perera. Having graduated only this past spring—with the Nora E. Vaughan Award, OCAD University Medal, Spoke Club Membership Prize and the medal winner of her program—Perera launched her career with a solo art show and an installation in Vaughan, Ontario. She has become known throughout the OCAD U community as an emerging talent with a playful, cartoon-inspired take on some rather weighty matters: images of the ethnic female body, hybridity, ethnography, deities and sacrilege. Not to mention the pervasive dinosaurs.

"I have friends from every discipline at this school. I think that is a really valuable part of going to art school or any post-secondary institution," says Perera. "You make friends everywhere and then, at the end of your tenure, you have a Criticism & Curatorial Practice grad to curate you, a Printmaking major to make your prints, a Bachelor of Design for your site and promo, and a Material Art and Design specialist for your saleable merch!"

Perera draws inspiration from a wide range of sources, including science and paleontology textbooks, comic books, fashion imagery, contemporary kitsch, pop culture and Bollywood, as well as the contrast between her adopted Canadian culture and her Sri Lankan heritage. She adds that Toronto has been inspirational because of the people she has met and the passion she has for the local art scene. There's also the fact that the cold winter forced her to stay inside and work hard.

Her family's fear over the viability of a career in the arts has also been assuaged by her more than encouraging early success. "Now my mother understands that my work is successfully selling and supporting me," says Perera. "I want to paint until I die, whether I sell or not. But I'd really like to sell, haha!"



Photo by Eugen Sakhenko

## DEREK ENG GRAPHIC DESIGN, 2011

When Derek Eng found himself less than inspired at his ad agency job a few years ago, he knew it was time to make a change and decided to try to find a way into an industry he had been passionate about since he was a kid—magazine publishing. He also knew that his commerce degree from the University of Guelph wasn't going to get him where he wanted to go. After a little independent research and career counselling with a mentor in the industry, Eng figured out that OCAD U's Graphic Design department was the ideal place for him. Citing "amazingly talented, friendly and supportive" colleagues and instructors who helped him focus on magazine design, Eng is glad he made the right choice.

While at OCAD U, Eng distinguished himself by winning the H.L. Rous Award at convocation, in addition to winning the AIGA Maine 2011 Abstract Conference Student Competition and the Society of Publication Designers Student Competition—twice. The aspiring magazine designer also completed internships at *More* and *W* magazines. Currently, though, he is in New York City, interning at his dream publication, *Martha Stewart Living*.

"This was actually the magazine that got me interested in editorial design," explains Eng. "It's one of the few magazines that places as much importance on the visuals as the text, so it's been interesting to see how the editors, art directors, stylists and photo producers all collaborate to create a story."

Since Eng lived in Toronto for his entire life, save the four years he was an undergraduate student in Guelph, we asked him about the move to Manhattan to pursue his dream. "New York in the summer is crowded, hot, noisy, and smelly. Yet, somehow, I love it," he says. "There's an energy and diversity here that's hard to describe."



Photo by Bryan Gardner



Photo by Richard Fung

## SARAH ROTELLA INTEGRATED MEDIA, 2011

No question Sarah Rotella is going places. For starters, Los Angeles, where she is already working in film for a production company called Odd Lot Entertainment, which recently put out the Ryan Gosling movie *Drive*. But the award-winning OCAD U graduate is also happy to receive acclaim here in Toronto, where her short animated film *Bramula*, about a cat who once lived as a vampire, was selected for screening at the Eighth Annual Student Film Showcase at the Toronto International Film Festival this summer.

Rotella came to OCAD U with a degree in Film and Television production from Humber College but wanted to continue her schooling to round out her skills. "I already knew the production side of film and the technology side, the hands-on editing and using film software," she explains. "But OCAD U gave me a new skill set and a new way to think about the way in which I make films."

Aside from winning the William F. White Scholarship—twice—and the 2010 Toronto Animated Image Society Award, Rotella also scored a chance to have her film viewed and critiqued by Tim Burton at the TIFF student film showcase. She says her connection with TIFF, which came through volunteering, has been fantastic for making connections with people in the industry. She has also worked with Capri Films, Disney, the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto and the National Film Board of Canada.

And while the independent study and real-world film connections forged through OCAD U have inspired her to express herself with films like *Bramula*, nothing inspired her more than her pet cat. "She does a lot of crazy things," says Rotella.



Photo by Lino Ragnio

## SUNG WOOK PARK INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, 2011

Sung wook Park isn't afraid to put all his eggs in one basket. After deciding to immerse himself in the world of design, he applied to only one school—OCAD U. "Fortunately, I made it in," he says. "Becoming a good designer and learning professional skills was my only goal, so the professional faculty, consisting of professors like my mentor Scott Chin, made me want to come to OCAD U."

Luck probably didn't have much to do with it, given his outstanding performance in the Industrial Design department. He won first prize in the Audi-Umbra Driving Design competition, the Nora E. Vaughan Award, Spoke Club Membership Award, OCAD University Medal and was the medal winner in his department for his project, *Ami*, a personal security device designed to help women in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake.

Says Park: "I was inspired by refugees who have survived natural disasters, especially in Haiti, where women are suffering in silence every day. I really wanted to help them and create something that would improve their lives." Park's *Ami* is designed to help women communicate with each other and relief organizations about where to safely get food and supplies, and was a response to the problem of male-dominated relief centres and a rising incidence of rape in what is known as Haiti's sex-for-food problem.

Park recalls his time working in teams in the Industrial Design program, wherein professors, classmates and technicians worked hard to support one another and solve problems as a group. "It's difficult to come up with a fresh, new idea," says Park, who currently works at Umbra as a product designer, "but it's worth it once you see a real product appear that will change lives for the better."



Photo by Chris Barnes



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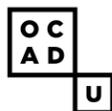
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Alumni Day is open to all alumni and their families and is part of OCAD U's 97th annual Graduate Exhibition.

Join us for this exciting event that features:  
 Alumni welcome from  
 OCAD U President Dr. Sara Diamond  
 Outdoor BBQ  
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Opening in March 2012 at the Gladstone Hotel in Toronto, this exhibition offers alumni a great way to showcase their work and connect with OCAD University and the OCAD University Alumni Association.

Submissions will be accepted through  
 December 1, 2011

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Proceeds will support the OCAD University Alumni Association and its projects, including crucial support of scholarships, awards and bursaries, biannual exhibitions and the OCAD University Alumni Window Gallery.

Contact: Amanda McKinney  
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**OCAD UNIVERSITY**  
**135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Marquee  
Event Listing**



**SEPTEMBER 2011**

**Chancellor's Welcome Back Event**  
 September 8  
 (Butterfield Park)

**Faculty of Art Speaker Series presents  
Ricardo Dominguez**  
 September 13  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**Alumni Association Social**  
 September 20  
 (Gladstone Hotel)

**OCTOBER 2011**

**Scotiabank Nuit Blanche @ OCAD U -  
Future Forward**  
 October 1-2  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**"a retrospective of works that have  
never been seen" - assume vivid astro  
focus Opening**  
 October 1  
 (Onsite [at] OCAD U)

**Colloquium - Revisioning the Indians of  
Canada Pavilion: Ahzhekewada, Let Us  
Look Back**  
 October 15-16  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**Toolbox Tradeshow**  
 October 27  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**Look Inside**  
 October 29  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**digifest**  
 October 29

**Onsite [at] OCAD U Gallery Launch**  
 October 29  
 (Onsite [at] OCAD U)

**OCAD University's  
135th Anniversary Date**  
 October 30

**NOVEMBER 2011**  
**President's Lecture Series presents  
Gilberto Gil**  
 November 7

**National Portfolio Day**  
 November 12  
 (100 McCaul Street &  
 Sharp Centre for Design)

**Faculty of Design Speaker Series presents  
Blaine Brownell, Els Zijlstra,  
Stephanie Forsythe**  
 November 17  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**DECEMBER 2011**  
**Alumni Association Holiday Schmooze**  
 December 6  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**FEBRUARY 2012**  
**Alumni Association Social**  
 February 7  
 (Gladstone Hotel)

**Faculty of Art Speaker Series presents  
Carol Conde and Karl Beveridge**  
 February 9  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**MARCH 2012**  
**Sumo Robot Challenge**  
 March 3  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**OCAD U Alumni Exhibition**  
 March 6-30  
 (Gladstone Hotel)

**Project 31**  
 March 29  
 (100 McCaul Street)

**APRIL 2012**  
**Faculty of Art Faculty Exhibition**  
 (Brinks Building)

**MAY 2012**  
**97th Annual Graduate Exhibition**  
 May 3-6  
 (100 McCaul Street &  
 Sharp Centre for Design)  
 Opening Night - May 3  
 High School Students & General Public - May 4  
 Alumni Day & General Public - May 5  
 General Public - May 6

**JUNE 2012**  
**Alumni Association Meeting &  
End of Year Social**  
 June 5

**Convocation & Chancellor's Installation**  
 June 8  
 (Roy Thomson Hall)

For more information on these and other events please visit [www.ocad.ca](http://www.ocad.ca)

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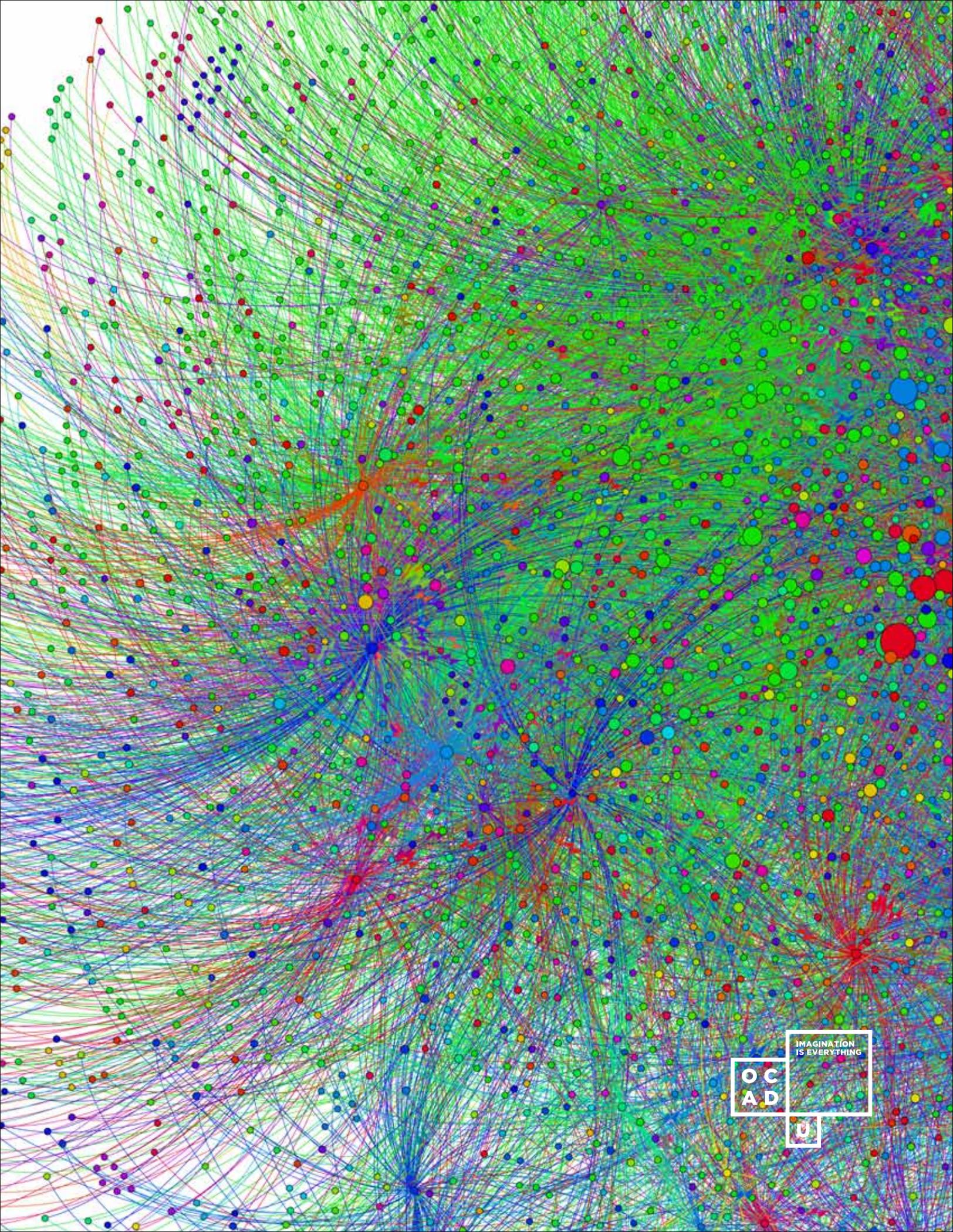
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