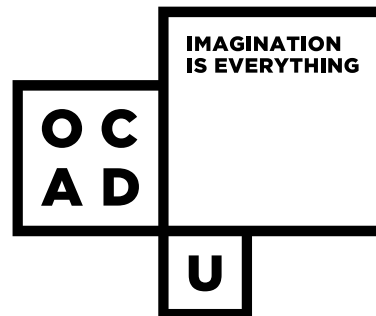
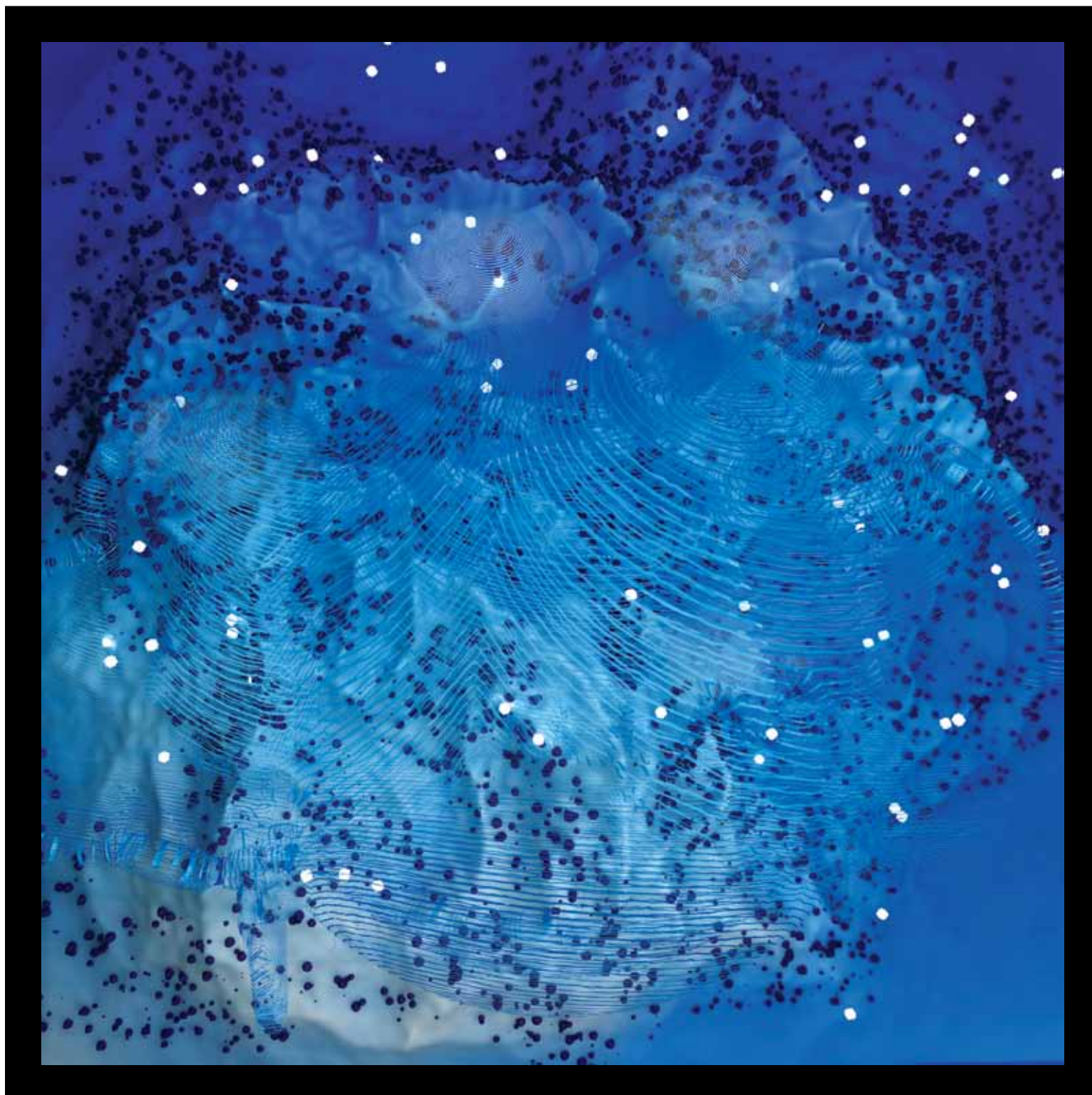


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Summer 2012



SKETCH



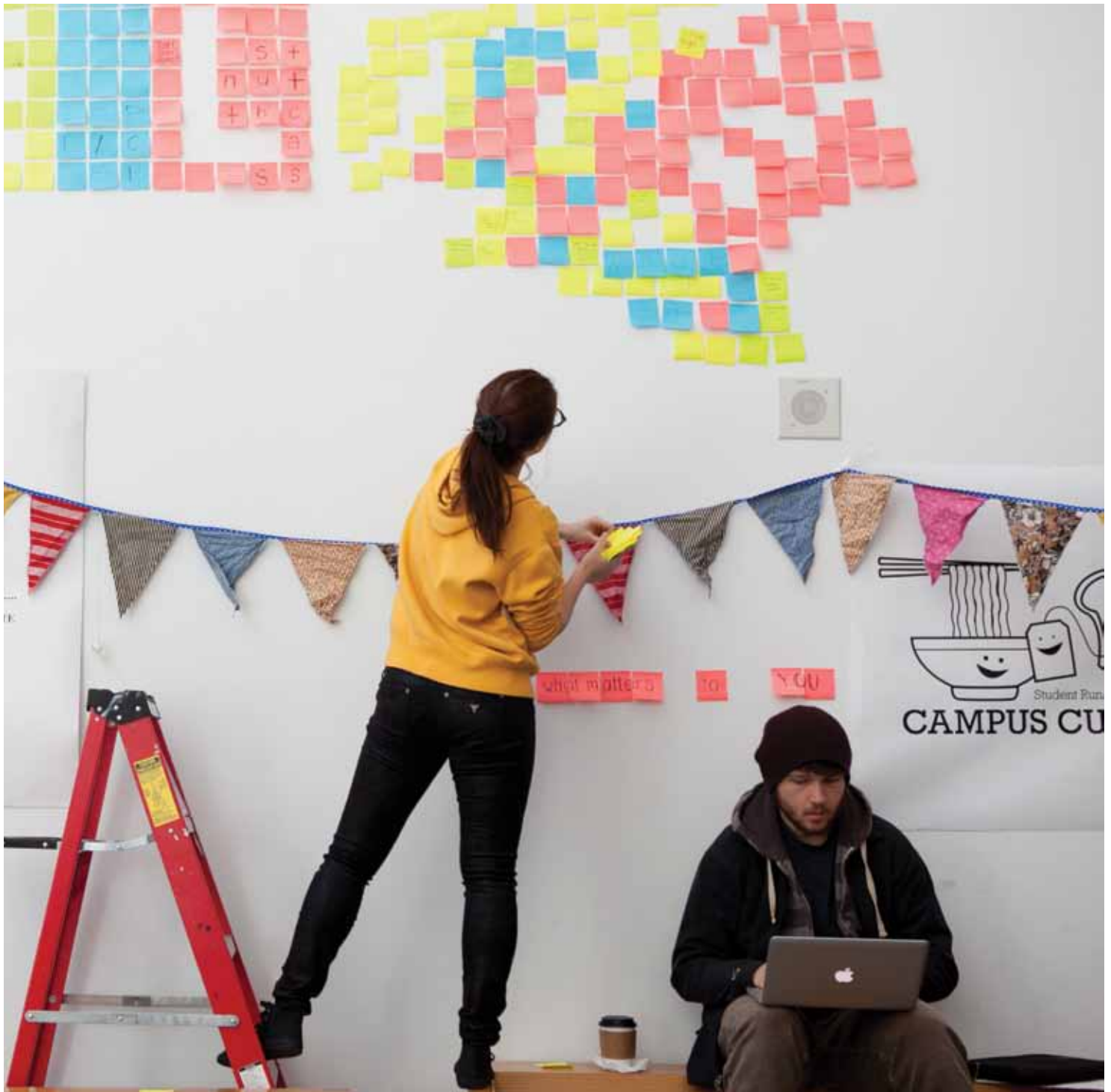
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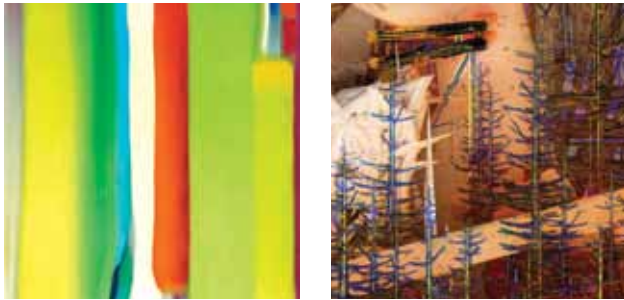
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Editor **Larissa Kostoff**
Design **Hambly & Woolley Inc.**
Contributors: **Suzanne Alyssa Andrew, Steve Billinger,**
Sky Goodden, Mireille Osbourne, Charlene K. Lau
Special thanks to: **Lynn Austen, Shannon Gerard, Stacy Kelly,**
Keith Rushton, Kelley Teahen, Cheryl Wang

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CONTENTS



FEATURES

10 Bringing 'what if?' and 'what wows?' to 'what is?' and 'what works?'

A new look at innovation from the head of OCAD University's Imagination Catalyst
By Steve Billinger

12 A leap into the digital future

As the Founding Chair of DFI and Director of its graduate and undergraduate programs, Tom Barker's role is to anticipate what's coming next
By Suzanne Alyssa Andrew

16 Old schools and new tricks: what our traditional 'makers' are making with digital technology

How established disciplines such as painting, jewelry and textiles are being reshaped through digital imaging, 3D modelling, scanning and printing and wearable technology
By Charlene K. Lau

2 HAPPENINGS

3 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

4 CAMPUS NEWS

19 DONOR LIST

21 ALUMNI NEWS

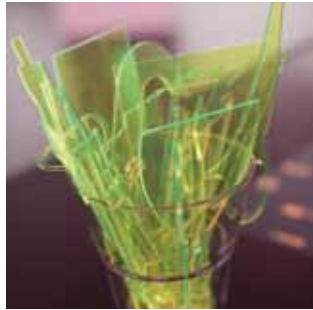
25 EXHIBITION

Front cover Alex McLeod, *Cloud Birth 2*, CG, 2012
Opposite Pictured at right is Alexei Golob (BFA, Integrated Media, 2011). Photo by Christina Gapic
Back cover Anda Kubis, *A Rush* (detail), oil on canvas, 2012



Sketch has a new look!

Several months ago, we hired Hambley & Woolley — the award-winning Toronto design shop responsible for the look of our magazine for years — to help guide us through a redesign. We wanted to integrate new accessibility standards, and continue the great work carried out by Bruce Mau Design in creating OCAD University's new visual identity. Like that identity, we needed *Sketch* to be a true reflection of what we experience every day: an inclusive, vibrant and vital institution based on creativity, risk and innovation.



Happenings



Row 1 Guests of the 97th Annual Graduate Exhibition; Faculty of Design Professor Gord Peteran (R) and guest, also at Grad Ex
Row 2 At the Grad Ex Celebrate Excellence Reception: 2012 Industrial Design Medal Winner Milena Milicic (L) with Heather Tay (R); Grad Ex Opening Night
Row 3 President's Walk Through, Grad Ex (L-R): Professor Keith Rushton, Dr. Sara Diamond, Associate Professor Cheryl Giraudy, Rose Anne McCants; Grad Ex Opening Night
Row 4 At Project 31, an auction of 31 works donated by 31 faculty members, which in 2012 raised \$82,750 in support of scholarships, awards and programming at OCAD U: Erica Segal, Julie M. Gallery for Contemporary Art; (L-R) TD Bank Group's Scott Mullin and Robyn McCallum and Bruce Lawson of The Counselling Foundation of Canada; Auctioneer Stephen Ranger of Waddington's and guests. Photos by Greg Tjepkema
Row 5 2012 Convocation (L-R): Board of Governors' Chair Ian C. Tudhope, Associate Professor Archie Graham, Hon. Monte Kwinter, Chancellor Catherine (Kiki) Delaney, Dr. Sara Diamond; Dr. Sarah MacKinnon, Dr. Sara Diamond, Chancellor Catherine (Kiki) Delaney
Row 6 At the Chancellor's Installation Reception: Julia Foster, Chair, National Arts Centre (L) and Chancellor Catherine (Kiki) Delaney (R)
 Photos by Christina Gopic unless otherwise noted

President's Message

Advancing Excellence at OCAD University for the Age of Imagination



OCAD University has developed a dynamic new strategic plan: “Advancing Excellence at OCAD University for the Age of Imagination.” It reiterates a vision for the institution that you will see here too, in this future-facing issue of *Sketch*:

OCAD University is Canada’s “university of the imagination,” engaged in transformative education, scholarship, research and innovation. OCAD University makes vital contributions to the fields of art, design and media through local and global cultural initiatives, while providing knowledge and invention across a wide range of disciplines.

The plan also lays down our objectives for 2012–2017. As a specialized institution, OCAD University will continue to reinvigorate the traditions of studio-based experiential learning. Because we are flexible, critically informed and intimately engaged with the world around us, we will continue to nurture individual talent while enabling unprecedented collaboration. And we will be a hallmark for experiential learning, whether through online, blended and mobile learning; service-based learning; internships; or partnered curriculum with not-for-profits and industry.

Throughout its 135 years, this institution has been a city builder working in close alliance with its neighbours. We will continue to expand our campus, providing a resource to the larger community through our galleries, public facilities or incubators. 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 reported cultural sector GDP in Toronto alone and the \$20 billion reported in Ontario. We will continue to build our contribution and generate jobs through entrepreneurial creativity. Beyond cultural fields, our alumni will continue to enter many sectors, and their successes and our enhanced partnerships will galvanize additional resources for the university.

We will continue to be an efficient and effective institution, striving for increased productivity and the best possible use of our resources while providing a compelling and supportive environment for staff, faculty and students.

We will be judged by our achievements:

- Talented students and alumni who will make contributions in their fields and act as agents of positive change
- Research and creation by our faculty and students that galvanize us with new ways of understanding and acting in the world, and produce material and virtual objects and systems
- Art, design and media that inspire, interpret and move us
- Relationships and actions that strengthen communities, build social capacity and economic strength

Our ability to solve problems creatively and to move from ideas to actualization is the most valuable resource we have as a nation and global society. At OCAD University, we will advance the learning experience, improving our students’ creative journey. We will advance recognition, strengthening our capability for research, knowledge generation and art creation. We will advance our influence, nurturing a community of reciprocal relationships. In order to do these things, we must support our enterprise through a significant commitment to improve all our resources, be they human, our campus infrastructure or our financial support.

I invite you to join us and support OCAD University’s future. Help us travel to where our imagination already soars. □

Dr. Sara Diamond

President and Vice-Chancellor, OCAD University,
O. of Ont., RCA

Above
Photo by
Tom Sandler

New strategic plan for OCAD U

The university's senate and board have approved a new five-year strategic plan to guide the institution through planned growth in enrolment both for undergraduate and graduate studies. It also sets goals to expand the breadth and impact of university research, improve student experience and increase the influence of the institution as a leader in art, design and media. Titled "Advancing Excellence at OCAD University for the Age of Imagination," the plan sets a roadmap for 2012-2017 and builds on the previous five-year strategic plan, "Leading in the Age of Imagination." Priorities are "advancing experience," which focuses on improving the quality of education for students and faculty; "advancing recognition" of the university through its research; and "advancing influence" as a city builder, collaborative partner and thought-leader. Underpinning all of these is a commitment to "advancing the enterprise" — building strength in staff, processes, physical space and fundraising capabilities. An online version of the plan will be posted later this summer at ocadu.ca



Education mission to Brazil yields major opportunities for collaboration

OCAD U has formed five new partnerships with universities in Brazil. Announced during April's Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) Presidents' Mission to Brazil, the partnerships will offer two-way faculty and student exchange opportunities, joint research collaborations and opportunities for jointly organized scientific events, conferences, workshops and seminars. Partnered now with OCAD U are: Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Universidade Anhenbi Morumbi (UAM), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFGRS) and Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar).

University President and Illustration Alumna both named to Order of Ontario

OCAD U congratulates Dr. Sara Diamond for her appointment in January to the Order of Ontario. The award recognizes Diamond's many achievements by including her in this year's group of 27 Ontario appointees, all of whom have made significant contributions to the arts, law, science, medicine, history, politics, philanthropy and the environment.

Also in this group was internationally acclaimed children's author and illustrator Barbara Reid (AOCA, 1980). Reid is a Governor General's Award winner who has sold more than 1.5 million books worldwide. She routinely visits schools and libraries across Canada to encourage reading and inspire young people to express themselves.



OCAD U's Paul Dallas wins Artist-Educator of the Year

New York's prestigious 3x3 magazine has named Illustration Chair Paul Dallas "Artist-Educator of the Year." Contenders for this year's award represented 17 countries, with Dallas selected for his contribution to the illustration community and his development of the Illustration program at OCAD U.

Dallas has won more than 130 industry awards for his work with clients such as *MTV*, *The New York Times*, *Time* and *BusinessWeek*. He has served as a juror for The Junos and the National Magazine Awards and is represented in the permanent design collection of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Judith Doyle granted Distinguished Researcher Award at June Convocation

Faculty of Art Associate Professor and Integrated Media program Chair Judith Doyle has been recognized with OCAD U's Award for Distinguished Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity.

From her work with Worldpool in the late 1970s (where she and colleagues engaged with some of the first proto-Internet systems) to her recent forays into Second Life, Doyle has consistently occupied the vanguard of media art. In recent years she has shifted the focus of her research in digital media to include both the art and scientific communities. One such project has Doyle working with neuropsychologists Dr. Brian Richards and Dr. Eva Svaboda at Baycrest in Toronto, where they are investigating the benefits of creative practices for those experiencing trauma to the brain.

Opposite left OCAD University's Sharp Centre. Photo by R. Johnson
Opposite right Paul Dallas, *A Milli-Picture Is Worth a Word*
Below Cinema projector slide from the collection of Bangalore's Bharathesh G D

15 new scholarships funded by Ada Slight

OCAD U received one of its largest-ever philanthropic gifts for students during this, its 135th anniversary year. The Ada Slight Scholarships, funded by a \$300,000 gift from Ada Slight, represent 15 new entrance scholarships based on academic merit. Said Dr. Sara Diamond of this gift, “Over the years, Ada has served on event committees, been an Honorary Trustee and worked as a volunteer during our Ideas Need Space campaign. These new scholarships will recognize the best and the brightest students in art and design, and we thank Ada for her very gracious and generous gift.”



University gallery gets new digs on Richmond

After four and a half years at its original location on McCaul Street, Onsite [at] OCAD University moved in January to a much-expanded location at 230 Richmond St. W. The inaugural exhibition in this new venue represented the first in a series of partnerships between Canadian and foreign artists. “Avalon” (Bangalore and Toronto) was the first project in the Twinning Artists—Twinning Cities series, which was conceived of in collaboration with Partners in Art.

To launch “Avalon,” Toronto’s Oliver Husain completed a 2011 residency in Bangalore, India, during which time he shot a new film (*Item Number*) and premiered it. The Toronto exhibition of “Avalon,” co-curated by Shai Heredia and Professor Charles Reeve, introduced three highly regarded artists from Bangalore — Abhishek Hazra, Yashas Shetty and Bharathesh G D — and incorporated collaborative elements by Oliver Husain.

Do dedicated learning communities help ESL students thrive?

Researchers at OCAD U think so. The Writing & Learning Centre’s Rebecca Smollett, with Mina Arakawa and Kateryna Keefer, are offering recommendations for the design of sheltered ESL programs at the post-secondary level. They’ve published their findings in a report that the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario has highlighted as exemplary.

Smollett’s study looked at the impact of OCAD U’s English Language Pathway Program, which offers participating first-year design students ESL-only versions of five required courses. Students take the remainder of their courses with native speakers. Researchers drew on rich interview data from students in the 2009-2010 cohort, as well as institutional and survey data, to articulate the challenges ESL students face, and identify the benefits and liabilities of the program. They found that Pathway improved both engagement and performance for ESL students. In fact, students attributed the benefit they received from the program to the “safe space” it created, and the mutual support they experienced as participants.

The research is part of an ongoing conversation at OCAD U about how best to support ESL students. The idea is to help them engage fully in their classes — so that they succeed and so, as a community, we benefit from the richness of perspectives they bring with them.

MaRS recognizes OCAD U entrepreneurs for second year running

Just one year after graduating, Henry Chong’s Industrial Design thesis project, the Revelo LIFEbike, has earned him the \$10,000 grand prize in the 2012 Up-Start Competition hosted by MaRS Discovery District. To win, Chong pitched his LIFEbike — a foldable electric bike that weighs 15 kgs and can travel up to 30 km on a single charge — to the judging panel of the competition, which is the capstone for the MaRS Entrepreneurship 101 program. The pitch itself was nurtured through OCAD U’s brand new entrepreneurship and innovation incubator/accelerator, Imagination Catalyst.



International thought leaders on digital inclusion converge at OCAD U

The University has hosted this May to Designing Enabling Economies and Policies (DEEP), a program of the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict). The conference — which brought together the world’s most influential digital inclusion thinkers, information and communications technology designers, persons with disabilities advocates and policy makers — coincided with the official opening of the Inclusive Design Institute (IDI). The IDI is an OCAD U-based regional research hub that focuses on the inclusive design of emerging ICT systems and practices. Funded by the Government of Canada through the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Research Fund Research Infrastructure program, it includes core partners OCAD U, University of Toronto, Ryerson University, York University and University of Ontario Institute of Technology, as well as Sheridan, George Brown and Seneca colleges.



The power of inclusive thinking

Judith Heumann, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the U.S. Department of State, visited OCAD University in January as part of the Faculty of Design Speaker Series. Heumann is an internationally recognized leader in the disability community and a lifelong civil rights advocate for disadvantaged people. From 1993 to 2001, she served in the Clinton Administration as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education.

Heumann’s talk, “Changing Society: The Power of Inclusive Thinking,” also marked the launch of the Faculty of Design’s annual four-day Design Competition, sponsored this year by the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto. “Design for All” focused on engaging people of all ages, abilities and cultures through the re-envisioning of Grange Park.

To ready and inspire the students involved, Heumann spoke in “Changing Society” about the profound importance of play:

“The issue of inclusion is something we talked about a lot in legislation in Canada, the U.S. and internationally. The recently passed Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities talks about issues of inclusion and inclusion in play. Why is play important?”

Well, it’s a chance to rest and recharge our batteries. It’s a break from work. It fosters socialization and social cohesion. It promotes health and stress relief. It provides us with an opportunity to be competitive in a safe environment.

What does this mean for the disabled person? The right to play is equally important for children and adults with disabilities. But barriers to the enjoyment of this right exist: physical, attitudinal and informational barriers, as well as a prioritization of segregated play [opportunities] rather than inclusive ones.”

Heumann also spoke broadly about the built environment. She enumerated our biggest design challenges, entertaining those in attendance with an anecdote about our progress:

“It’s amazing for me to see some of the dramatic changes made in my own lifetime. Every day I take the bus to work. That’s something I didn’t do growing up. [At that time] there was a big movement in the U.S. to make buses accessible. When it was resolved and when it became clear that transit authorities were responsible for making public transit accessible, there were people like myself and others who had never been on a bus. We were afraid to get on a bus because we had never been on a bus! We had never independently traveled and were afraid that if we got on a bus and something went wrong, people would be angry at us. The first time I took a bus, something broke down. The lift broke down and people were grumbling and I thought: Oh my god. And the driver said, ‘Honey, things break down on buses all the time.’ ”

Top Left Performance to celebrate the 2012 launch of the IDI. Dancers are Spirit Synott, IDRC Research Assistant, and Aaron Water, OCAD U MDes student in Inclusive Design
Top Right Judith Heumann, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the U.S. Department of State



OCAD University's Nomadic Residents program is presented by the Faculty of Art with the generous support of the Jack Weinbaum Family Foundation.

“Amer and Farkhondeh’s intricate investigations of representation and pictorial space, and their collaborative working relationship, present our students with a window into how they might engage in creative collaboration in their future careers.”

— Dr. Vladimir Spicanovic,
Dean, Faculty of Art

A unique approach to collaboration

Artists Ghada Amer and Reza Farkhondeh are the consummate Nomadic Residents — international artists and thinkers whose work, in the language of the program mandate, “questions issues of travel, displacement, dislocation, homelessness and the instability of modern life.” Visiting OCAD U this spring for a week-long residency, the pair spoke with students about their unique approach to collaborative art. Amer and Farkhondeh (who hail from Egypt and Iran, respectively) began collaborating on canvas, paper, and in video performance in 2000, and now share studios in Harlem, New York.

At the public talk that culminated their residency, the artists described their practice — a process that involves responding intuitively (and with no prior discussion) to what the other has expressed on canvas. Farkhondeh identifies this approach as having emerged from his personal struggles with depression. In 2000, he experienced “a serious emotional low,” something he felt resulted from the practice of making art. He wondered what would happen if he used a brush and a canvas that wasn’t his. Would the depression fail to reach him?

Amer was candid with the audience about the surprise she felt the first time Farkhondeh stole into her studio to commit a secret mark to her canvas: “I thought Reza wanted my stretcher!” Yet Farkhondeh continued to experiment with her work, calling the practice his “measure” of whether his depression was going away. “I started to get greedy,” he explained, “with Amer’s canvas.” Meanwhile, Amer found herself enjoying the changes she noted each time she returned to her studio. She would eventually embrace these changes as collaborative process. But as intrigued as she was at the outset, she was also embarrassed, unwilling to take credit for work she didn’t author. She devised an acronym — RFGA — to track their explorations. Later the pair adopted this acronym as their collaborative signature.

As part of their week at OCAD U, Amer and Farkhondeh invited participating Faculty of Art students to try a creation and collaboration project of their own. Given 90 minutes, students first worked independently, later surrendering their artwork to a peer for modification. As individuals creating together, they considered some of the following questions: *What to build on or erase? What to emphasize or minimize? Will there be harmony or dissonance?* □

Above left Ghada Amer and Reza Farkhondeh, *Cutn Caress*, fabric, pencil and acrylic on paper, 2011

Above right Ghada Amer and Reza Farkhondeh. Photos by Paul Nathan

Rail travel the focus of curatorial project for MFA students

Artist Aimée Henny Brown relived the early days of Canadian rail travel this May in “Overland Station: par voie de terre,” a unique partnership involving OCAD U, VIA Rail and the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). Curated by the first-year Criticism & Curatorial Practice MFA students who comprise September Collective, the “journey” featured multiple performances and one long-haul passenger train.

Brown traveled aboard the “Canadian” en route from Vancouver to Toronto and back, performing twice daily for passengers in the VIA Rail Activities car. She dressed as a turn-of-the-century station agent and carried out an historic station agent’s duties, which included delivering mail and telegrams and doling out handmade letterpress tickets. Inspiring conversation about some of the personal stories that underlie passenger rail lines such as the “Canadian” was a key goal of the project, and this conversation was enlivened by a mid-trip, public performance at the AGO.

“VIA Rail is delighted to promote some of Canada’s most talented artists across a broad spectrum of genres. This partnership with the Art Gallery of Ontario and OCAD University is a great addition to the magic and appeal of VIA’s renowned Canadian,” said Geneviève Béland, manager for VIA’s on board entertainment program. “Through this initiative, our passengers’ travel experience will be enriched, both culturally and historically, throughout their entire trip across the country.”

For trip logs and correspondence as well as a wealth of images and research about early Canadian rail travel:

overlandstation.ca



Above Aimée Henny Brown, HO (1:87) scale Canadian train station model, curated by September Collective, 2012



Right Passenger train caboose, nitrate negative. Photo by Arthur Bloomfield Dawson, 1915. Courtesy of Arthur Bloomfield Dawson Nova Scotia Archives

MDes visionaries lauded for new financial models

In April, Rotman Designworks Executive Director Heather Fraser again acknowledged OCAD U as “a leader in innovation.” This followed the second- and third-place wins realized by OCAD U’s Strategic Foresight and Innovation (SFI) students in the Rotman Design Challenge.

University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management and its sponsor TD Bank, with partners Doblin Innovation Consultants and IDEO, asked the 22 participating teams to respond to the following business/design challenge:

“Investigate innovative and proactive models to enable students and graduates to embrace positive financial behaviour, to prepare them for a more economically and socially viable life after school, and foster trust and lifelong customer relationships with TD.”

Competitor teams represented Rotman, the Sloan School of Management at MIT, the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business, New York University’s Stern School of Business, the California College of Arts MBA in Design Strategy, and the University of Cincinnati/ School of Design — to name a few.

SFI MDes students Jen Chow, Josina Vink, Jessica Mills, Martin Ryan and Phouphet Sihavong, whose team took second place for the concept TD Table Talk, presented a socially innovative departure from the challenge itself. Their idea involved the facilitation of family conversations around money using an aggregate view of family finances: “TD Table Talk proposes that TD Bank shift its focus from servicing individuals with individual accounts to servicing the family unit with a platform that knits together a simple, high-level, *whole* picture of the family’s finances.”

SFI MDes students Ben McCammon, Uma Maharaj, Eric Leo Blais and Ana Matic, who won third place, introduced “Life Map,” as well as student reps and a banking coach, as part of the concept BranchOut: “An innovative customer experience that would allow TD to connect with young people online and offline, and empower them to take ownership of their financial futures.”

Ambitious student press makes art and design inseparable

The OCAD U Student Press began with a desire to “get great ideas out of OCAD U,” according to directors Antonio Lennert (BDes, Graphic Design, 2012) and Symon Oliver (BDes, Graphic Design, 2011). This resulted in the birth of the Shift series and eventually led to collaborations with cultural heavyweights Edward Burtynsky, Christopher Hume, Marian Bantjes and Mark Kingwell. For its efforts, the press was recognized recently by *Applied Arts*, taking three of the magazine’s 2012 Design Awards.

Key project goals are cross-disciplinarity and reach. Directors wanted to create a publication that truly encompassed the student body, incorporating undergraduate and graduate research across all OCAD U disciplines. This year marks the publication of the fifth book in the landmark series: *Shift: Conventions*.

The press has also introduced three pilot projects: *RIVET*, *FUNCTION* and *WORKSHOP*. An experimental publication, *RIVET* showcases work from OCAD U students, alumni and faculty. *FUNCTION* is the lecture series inspired by Tokyo’s “Pecha Kucha Night” events, while *WORKSHOP* is just that — a series of workshops designed to help students understand independent publishing, and to explore book arts as a platform for creating, sharing and circulating work.

OCAD U Student Press publications are on sale in Toronto at the OCAD U Student Gallery (285 Dundas Street West), Swipe Design: Books + Objects, Art Metropole, and Type. For more information:

ocadustudentpress.com

“Our aim was to start a conversation between art and design to show that they are inseparable and complementary. The exchange is represented throughout the book as pictorial and written content, critical and personal. *Shift: Conventions* exemplifies the malleability of designers and artists and the diversity of skills that enable us to drift beyond the boundaries of our own disciplines. Art and design are inextricably linked; they share similar processes and yet the outcomes of each differ widely. Everything you’ll find in *Shift: Conventions* represents the remarkable potential of language — both written and pictorial — to inform, excite and express ideas.”

— Antonio Lennert and Symon Oliver, Co-Directors, OCAD U Student Press (2010-2012)



Right At the book launch for the publication *Shift: Conventions*. Photo by Emma Novotny
Above Inside *Shift: Conventions*. Produced by Nicole Tarasick, photo by Emma Novotny

Cross-Disciplinary Art Practices: Publications (PUBL)

On offer at OCAD U beginning in September 2012 is a brand-new Publications specialization, which ties together curriculum from across Faculty of Art programs. The PUBL Specialization features a cross-disciplinary framework that also draws on courses in the Faculty of Design’s Graphic Design program and the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Students specializing in Publications will learn through hybrid and collaborative methodologies and gain valuable critical thinking, business and entrepreneurial skills. They’ll work in digital and print and address all areas of book and magazine publishing, from the DIY endeavours that are growing in popularity to academic publishing. As BFA graduates, they’ll be in a position to seek career opportunities in publishing, graphic design and web design, or pursue independent projects in art publications.

Bringing ‘what if?’ and ‘what wows?’ to ‘what is?’ and ‘what works?’

By Steve Billinger (for the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation’s weekly blog)



New to OCAD U this year is Imagination Catalyst, an entrepreneurship and innovation incubator/accelerator dedicated to the community’s students and alumni. Imagination Catalyst is led by Canadian and British designer, technologist and entrepreneur Steve Billinger, who brings to the role more than 20 years of experience in digital media strategy and business development. Through Imagination Catalyst, Billinger will lend his expertise to the university’s emerging inventors and entrepreneurs, connecting them with private-sector partners and creating invaluable opportunities for mentoring.

Photo by Christina Gopic

In a speech in January 2012 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the world's movers and shakers, "We haven't seen the kind of private-sector results and the results in commercialization that we've been seeking." This despite Canada spending nearly \$30 billion on research and development (R&D) projects last year.

With so much money spent here, one has to wonder why Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), told the International Economic Forum, "The great challenge for Canada is productivity."

If the result of Canada's traditional R&D spending is not the increased levels of productivity and new industries we hoped for, perhaps a new way of looking at the future is in order.

Innovation is more than a set of "eureka moments." It is both the creative process of thinking that drives sustained invention and the commercialization of that invention, which creates new products, services and industries. That process of creation and commercialization is often referred to as "design thinking" or "creative thinking." It's what Timothy Brown — founder of the international design and innovation consultancy IDEO and designer of the first Apple mouse — describes as "a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible, and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity."

There is value and relationship between this innovation and productivity. And design/creative thinking-focused universities such as OCAD U play a key role in the process.

In its 2011 report "The Future of Productivity: An Eight-Step Game Plan for Canada," the consulting firm Deloitte suggests that new productivity requires both new ways of thinking about innovation and new interdisciplinary structures for its creation.

R&D alone may not be enough to drive the innovation required to grow productivity. Ford Motors spent a little more than \$4 billion on R&D in 2005 — yet that same year the company lost more than \$12 billion.

The report suggests that a critical component is higher education, already a substantive source of R&D in Canada: "Universities and other post-secondary institutions must be more flexible regarding interdisciplinary learning, and create specific structures to encourage students to combine their specializations with business and managerial studies... Initiatives like this will develop engineers, scientists, artists, musicians and others with an improved understanding of the business context of their specialization; an enhanced ability to build entrepreneurial activities around their innovative ideas; and the ability to manage businesses in their fields of specialization."

The importance of creative thinking as a process, whether by the report's "engineers, scientists" or "artists, musicians" and a collaborative, interdisciplinary learning environment, are two critical parts of the "Eight-Step Plan."

In the book *Designing for Growth*, Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie describe this design/creative thinking as one of the most important trends in business, based on its "ability to turn abstract ideas into practical applications for maximal business growth." They depict the approach as a collaboration/combination of the "what if?" and "what wows?" questions typical of artists and designers, and insights drawn from the "what is?" and "what works?" approach of business and science.

I have a responsibility at OCAD U to facilitate both innovation and the commercial development of that innovation, and see this form of collaborative innovation in action every day. The importance of the "art" of creative thinking (an interdisciplinary approach to learning that includes practice, research and innovation) along with new support for entrepreneurial thinking form part of what venture capitalists like to call the "secret sauce" of OCAD U — its culture.

Both artists and designers share a largeness of vision, are highly motivated and learn to overcome barriers and blocks to new ways of thinking. They learn to build on their ideas and to criticize them through an enquiry-led form of ideation. They are not afraid to experiment and fail, and are masters at what leading innovation agency Idea Couture identifies as the four key and distinct steps in the innovation process: creating, mobilizing, refining and executing. As Einstein once noted, "If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got." Or as Edgar Degas put it, "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see." □

A leap into the digital future

By Suzanne Alyssa Andrew



“A sense of restlessness, curiosity and discovery are the drivers for all successful creators, and OCAD U as an institution has this. I think it’s really vital to its energy.”

— Tom Barker, Chair,
Digital Futures Initiative (DFI)
& Graduate Program Director

Tom Barker has more energy — and ideas — than his small, temporary office can contain. It’s a utilitarian space, with two plain tables and a couple of iMacs. On the bright yellow poster paper lining the walls Barker has mapped out milestones for OCAD University’s Digital Futures Initiative (DFI) the low-tech way (by hand, with a marker). Look around and everywhere you’ll see clues he’s someone with a unique perspective, from the boxed Texas Holdem poker game on his desk to his shiny blue patent leather shoes.

He’s someone who needs a strong vision, because he has a seemingly impossible job. As the Founding Chair of DFI and Director of its graduate and undergraduate programs, his role is to anticipate what’s coming next — and prepare students for it.

Yet when I sit down with him to chat he’s both confident and excited. It’s just 10 weeks into his new post. He arrived in January from Australia’s University of Technology Sydney (UTS) via a short visit to London’s Royal College of Art, his alma mater. He jokes it’s like the all-important first 100 days of an American president. “This is the best job I’ve had so far in my career,” he says. “I’ve been in a lot of art colleges around the world and this is a particularly smart bunch of passionate people.”

According to Barker, the OCAD U faculty is vigorously forward thinking: “A sense of restlessness, curiosity and discovery are the drivers for all successful creators, and OCAD U as an institution has this. I think it’s really vital to its energy.”

Barker is impressed with the strong faculty hires his department made prior to his arrival. Yet even with his DFI faculty dream team in place, he admits that the rapid rate of technological change is an issue, because if you were to set up a course on apps or social media today, in a few years’ time it would no longer be relevant. Instead, DFI will feature a portion of courses Barker describes as “wet paint,” to be constantly updated, an idea based on the Japanese concept of *kaizen*, or continuous incremental improvement.

What makes DFI unique is how it joins together art, design, science and enterprise to create what Barker calls the “X-shaped designers” of the future. Stanford University coined the popular term “T-shaped people,” engineers or industrial designers who branch out and synthesize other skills, but Barker’s ideal is a knowledgeable and skilled

ART

DESIGN



SCIENCE

ENTERPRISE

collaborator in all four areas. “There are very few examples of programs or courses which manage to bring all of those areas together and achieve a balance,” he says, “And that to me is a differentiator.”

Barker is the perfect Captain Kirk. He helms a creative program that must achieve constant fluidity and collaboration to stay vital. And like the futuristic *Star Trek* captain, he’s an accomplished leader. Still only in his mid-40s, Barker boasts a lengthy resumé of academic experience, including high-profile funded scholarly research, international awards and a prolific publishing history. At the same time, he’s also an accomplished designer, architect and entrepreneur, with plenty of projects, patents, installations and exhibitions in his portfolio. His research is extensive, but focused on three primary areas: design enterprise, urban digital media and innovation learning.

He’s also a natural storyteller and teacher adept at making compelling historical references and connections to ground both the present and future. Press him on the important balance among art, design, science and enterprise and he’ll tell you about Plato’s concept of *technæ*. This is the similarly well-rounded toolkit of invention that Plato’s Greek titan Epimetheus gives to humans as their unique quality (once the forgetful Epimetheus runs out of all other qualities after bestowing them on the rest of the animals, he decides people should be the designers of their own nature). At Barker’s inaugural OCAD U lecture on April 9 — where, it should be pointed out, he sported gold lamé sneakers — he covered everything from the dystopian futures depicted in sci-fi films to the invention of video games and the idea that emotion is the new benchmark of success in machine and robot design.

Barker is as invigorated explaining Greek mythology as he is describing Marketplace Casino, a game he invented — with his Texas Holdem poker chips — to help students and entrepreneurs brainstorm and sort ideas more effectively. His eyes glimmer especially bright behind his glasses when he talks about SmartSlab, his internationally licensed digital display system. He even produces a small piece of the SmartSlab screen technology he and his team invented, describing how it’s based on the multiple hexagonal photoreceptor units of a fly’s eye. He’s so excited to explain the concept, he doesn’t mention that SmartSlab is a commercially successful company worth more than \$18 million.

But Barker is a firm believer in the value of academia — not only for its provision of higher learning, but also its wellspring of insight and strategy for commercial enterprise. As he explains it, academics aren’t as constrained by hectic production schedules: “We have a real advantage in academia in that we can still think,” he says. “Supercharging people’s thought processes is really important to me.” In fact, thought leadership is an important core skill all DFI students learn. It also forms a feedback loop: since industry engagement is critical to both the undergraduate and graduate programs, students venturing outside the university to gain hands-on experience are simultaneously exposing businesses to fresh ideas.

“What is now proved was once only imagined.”

— William Blake

As Barker describes it, the DFI programs are designed to function as a “career runway,” particularly at the graduate and “continuing” levels, in which professionals wanting to shift their career paths either pursue a part-time diploma while working, or take a sabbatical to concentrate exclusively on completing a master’s degree. The first graduate class has already begun (the undergraduate program starts in September) and Barker and other DFI faculty are meeting with businesses to find suitable projects students can contribute to as thesis research.

The design team rebuilding Union Station, Toronto’s venerable but aged transit hub, for example, will be asking graduate DFI students doing thesis projects to help improve how customers navigate the space during reconstruction. They’ll also research e-platform retail options. It’s an opportunity to participate in a landmark design effort, with DFI faculty setting the context for students and the Union Station team providing mentoring and support.

Scot Bryson, president of Toronto-based digital studio Stone Canoe, is also looking forward to collaborating with DFI students. “It’s a great feeling to be able to give back to OCAD U and continue to be involved in the school,” he says. It also makes smart business sense, since working with the DFI will expose Bryson (BDes, Advertising, 2006) to a network of other involved industry partners and connect him with bright students who may one day become employees.

Ensuring students learn about entrepreneurship, creative industries and what they can do as “X-shaped designers” is one of Barker’s goals for DFI partnership collaborations. “We’re creating a journey for a student that doesn’t stop at graduation,” he says. “The emphasis for our graduates will be to move forward into bigger organizations, create start-ups, become sole practitioners and do all sorts of interesting things that we haven’t thought of yet.”

Perhaps there’s no better model for DFI students than Barker himself. As for the daunting task of navigating digital futures, Barker remains unflaggingly optimistic. He described the development of robot technology in his inaugural lecture, observing that all progress occurs step-by-step. “Walking is a process,” he explained, “of continuously falling forward.” It seems that for Barker, momentum is easier to achieve when you’re X-shaped — and wearing flashy footwear. □

Suzanne Alyssa Andrew is a Toronto-based freelance writer specializing in digital copywriting, strategy and storytelling. She’s written extensively for websites, games, apps and cross-platform television projects, including the award-winning Total Drama Online and *Race to Mars*. Her work has also appeared in print in *Taddle Creek* and the *Toronto Star*.

Old schools and new tricks: what our traditional ‘makers’ are making with digital technology

By Charlene K. Lau

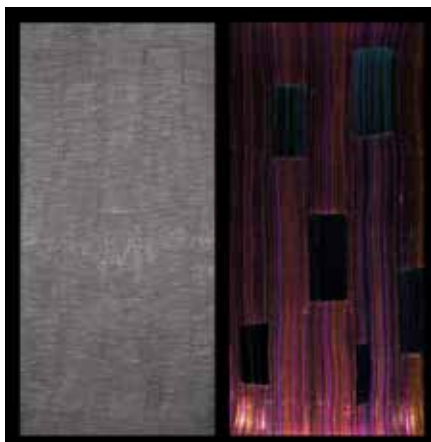


What we’ve become, as a result of our present immersion in digital technology, is hybrids. Our phones, our tablets, the Internet — these aren’t just tools for communication; they’re extensions of our bodies. But what does digital mean to artists and designers? In the context of learning and making, “digital” refers to methods of production in art, craft and design practice. These new and innovative processes are quickly becoming their own traditions, and institutions such as OCAD University are helping to advance emergent technologies for the future. Traditional disciplines such as painting, jewelry and textiles are being reshaped through digital imaging, 3D modelling, scanning and printing and wearable technology.

Painting is not dead

Anda Kubis, OCAD U Chair of Drawing & Painting, sees new technology as an enabler of older technology, and asks, “Could anyone have predicted there would be a resurgence of craft and handmade culture in an age of global interconnectedness aided by the Internet?” Just as surprising are the relationships that have developed — all of them fuelled by the push and pull between digital and analog.

Painting, considered the most exalted traditional art form for many centuries, is experiencing a shift in the form of digital painting. The term “digital painting” is a hybrid of new technology and traditional medium, but are “digital” and “painting” really opposites? Kubis doesn’t think so: “The tradition of painting has created and absorbed scientific discoveries throughout its history. The invention of perspectival space within drawing and painting was a revolutionary ‘view’ of the world that impacted Western philosophical thought for a long time — and we’re not quite done with it yet. Digital space is simply a

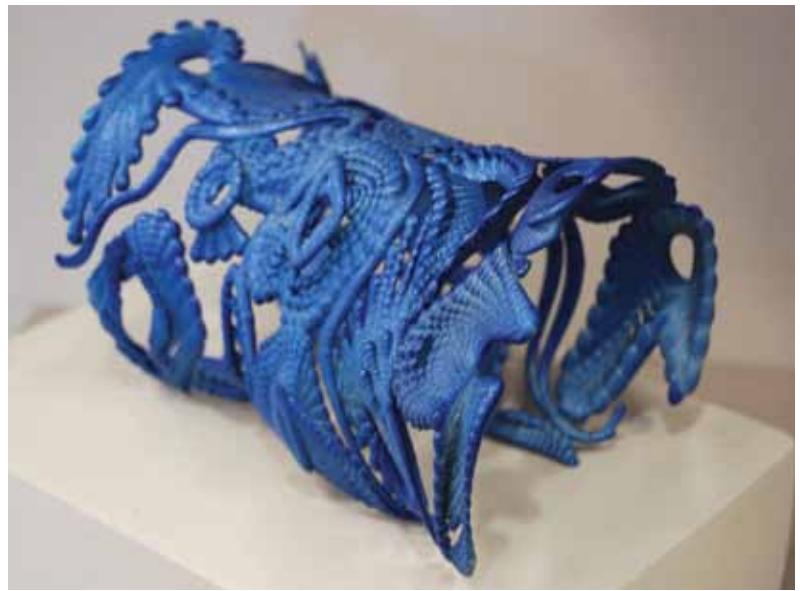


Above Anda Kubis, *Boundless*, digital output and oil on canvas, 2012

Right Oldouz Moslemian, *Talk to Me*. This fabric is hand-woven with fibre optics and cotton and is sensitive to ambient sound in the environment. Cotton tape, fibre-optics and electronic components, 145 cm X 75 cm, 2010. Photo by Taimaz Moslemian

new potent platform for this activity.” Kubis’s current work reflects this in-between of old and new, incorporating several layers of images created using a digital tablet. The final images are then printed onto canvas, and she paints overtop of the canvas in oil to create texture in what she calls a “mixing of synthetic and organic brushstrokes.”

In response to the digital redefinition of traditional disciplines, OCAD U will launch a Digital Painting and Expanded Animation specialization (DPXA) in September 2012 for students of Integrated Media and Drawing & Painting. DPXA challenges students to see beyond the traditional limits of the canvas, screen or gallery. “The stream encourages a vision of visual research that discovers painting in various forms: as an object, as a virtual experience, as movement through time and space on various scales and multiple platforms,” says Kubis. For her, “the most important aspect of this stream is that it’s completely open.”



Above Gregory Phillips, *Homology 2*. Inspired by comparative evolutionary biology’s concept of homologous structures, such as a human hand, a bat’s wing or a whale’s flipper, the intricate forms in this series were derived using several techniques, including terrain analysis and logic list functions. Bracer; selective laser-sintered nylon, synthetic lacquer, 2012

Thinking in 3D

Dr. Barbara Rauch, Director of the Interdisciplinary Master’s in Art, Media & Design (IAMD) and a key member of the Digital Futures Initiative, acknowledges the impact digital 3D has had on learning and making: “I have big hopes for a new aesthetic through the use of digital 3D input and output, such as 3D printing technologies for our labs at 205 Richmond St. By using 3D scanning devices, we go beyond what the natural eye can see. We scan the world with a higher resolution than we’ll ever be able to perceive it.” Developed over the past three decades, 3D printing has only now become accessible due to the affordability of machines. It’s a process whereby horizontal “slices” of an object (generated using data from computer-aided design software such as Google SketchUp) are printed in a manner that repeatedly layers a powder or liquid medium. The results are used either as prototype or final product.

Still, it’s possible to find loss in these gains. If we often see digital in contrast to analog — where digital represents the new and the future and analog is tradition and the past — has digital replaced analog? The answer from OCAD U’s faculty is a unanimous “no.” According to Material Art & Design (MAAD) Chair Ken Vickerson, “Our students need to know and understand traditional practice as well as digital technology. Learning a 3D modelling program takes as much skill as learning how to solder or cut a pattern; it’s just another tool.” The ubiquity of digital is making it

necessary, Vickerson says, “for students to be familiar with a wider and wider range of these technologies to compete.”

This familiarity alters the landscape. In jewelry-making, Vickerson sees drastic change in the role of the model-maker: “Traditionally the model-maker would meticulously carve the original pattern from wax or fabricate a metal original. This person would have exceptional hand skills and many years of experience. With 3D modelling software our students are able to produce very complex and precise models that would have been out of reach in the past.”

The work of MAAD student Gregory Phillips is a case in point. Phillips’s series of jewelry-objects are based loosely on natural forms via chaos theory (a branch of mathematics). He uses various 3D modelling programs to create these forms before feeding the data to a 3D printer. The printer produces a laser-sintered (or “cured”) nylon or resin piece of jewelry, achieving a higher level of precision than that afforded by traditional model-making methods, and creating a more intricately structured object.



Above David Clarkson, *Painting After Icebergs*. Digital landscape painting from “After Icebergs,” the artist’s MFA thesis exhibition. Each painting represents a multi-step process that involves digitally manipulated mass-reproduced drawings, photo collages and layers of paint. Acrylic paint and digital ink on canvas, 2012

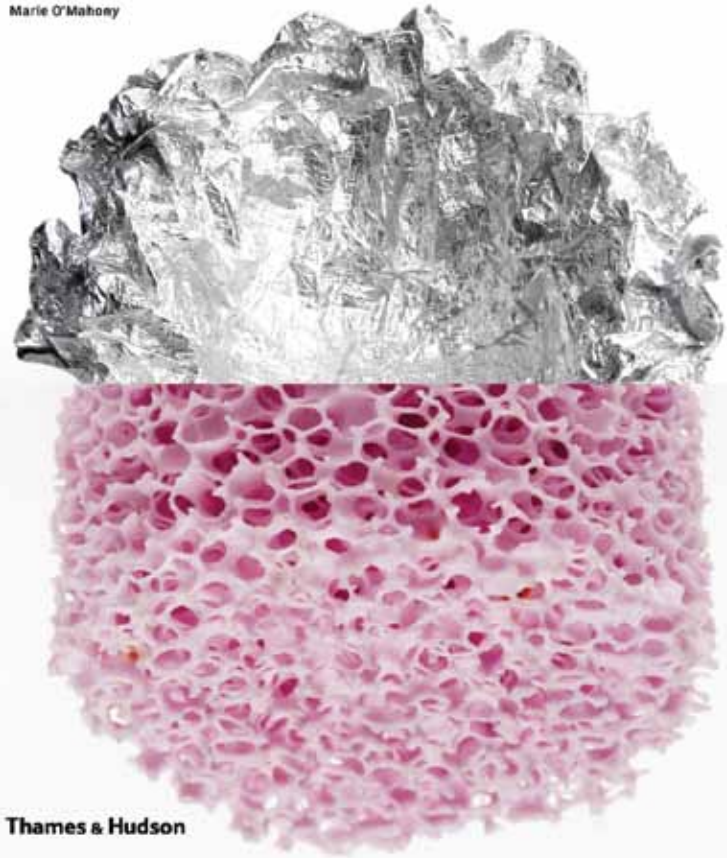
Not your grandmother's chintz

What comes to mind when you think of textiles? Dusty carpets? Musty curtains? Marie O'Mahony, OCAD U's new Professor of Advanced Textiles for Fashion and Design, is helping us see the way textiles are being transformed via new technologies. O'Mahony (who is also a visiting professor at the University of the Arts London) comes to OCAD U from University of Technology, Sydney and has recently published the book *Advanced Textiles for Health and Wellbeing*. Given the book's title, it's no wonder she is enthusiastic about the future of fashion textiles: "We'll see a bringing together of high-quality digital printing and a greater tactility in fabrics — an increasing use of texture and hand-crafted techniques with the digital. Size and fit are becoming hugely important and this is where new technology can really add benefit. A better, more accurate fit adds to the quality, comfort and use of clothing."

"Use" may be the operative word, for as extensions of the body, textiles and fashion can change the way we behave in our environments. MAAD Fibre graduate Oldouz Moslemian (BDes, 2010) is using her time as a resident researcher in OCAD U's Social Body Lab to develop a traditional, hand-woven textile that integrates fibre-optics, sensors and other electronics. Wearers of a garment created from this material will be able to interact with their surroundings, as the garment will project light patterns when in low-light environments, based on the information collected by light sensors embedded in the textile.

Advanced Textiles for Health and Wellbeing

Marie O'Mahony



A continued history of technology

Until humans built Colossus, the first digital computer introduced during the Second World War, we wrote and recorded our history using simple tools and machines. Today, digital tools, processes and methods are transforming this history, merging tradition and innovation to create a delicate balance between old and new. As time-honoured disciplines such as painting, jewelry-making and textile-production absorb new methods, intriguing hybrids emerge. These hybrids are a little like us — transformed by the technology that now writes history, linking the past, present and future of creation and innovation. □

Charlene K. Lau is a Toronto-based writer whose reviews have been published in Akimblog, *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *Fashion Theory* and *PUBLIC*. She is a PhD candidate in Art History and Visual Culture at York University.

Top *Advanced Textiles for Health and Wellbeing* is the most recent book by Marie O'Mahony, published in 2011 by Thames & Hudson. It explores fibre and fabric developments as well as applications in fashion, transport, architecture and the environment.

Bottom Loretta Faveri, *Qanun* (front). Loretta Faveri's belly dance costumes integrate the Lily Pad micro-processing platform and wireless transceivers. A dancer's movement triggers samples of traditional instruments that together produce an improvised musical score. Materials used: synthetic fabric, washers, buckram, conductive thread, conductive fabric, grommets, insulated wire, fabric snaps, cotton thread, Lily Pad Arduino, XBee radio, lithium polymer battery, 10k resistor, velostat. Dancer pictured is Ioana Timariu. Photo by Amanda Mackay



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— Melanie Tan, third-year student, Environmental Design

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— Ilan Leizerovich, fourth-year student,
Integrated Media

Storied hotel is host to second annual Alumni Exhibition



The OCAD U Alumni Exhibition recently swept the Gladstone Hotel, presenting six decades of alumni and spanning a broad swatch of scale, media and style. Juried by Tobi Bruce (Senior Curator, Historical Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Hamilton), Simon Glass (Associate Dean, Faculty of Art) and multidisciplinary artist Tony Taylor, and curated by 2007 Drawing & Painting graduate Amanda McKinney, the exhibition featured 55 works of photography, drawing, painting, printmaking, advertising, jewelry, video installation, sculpture and fibre arts.

The variety and depth on view in March at the historic Toronto hotel stood testament to what Alumni Association President Maggie Broda calls “The Art College.” She writes in her introduction to the catalogue, “for you it may be OCA, OCAD or OCAD University — what has never changed is [its] fusion of ideas, innovation and energy.” Photographer **Ozzie Ciliberti** (Drawing & Painting, 1972) shows us this energy with *Fire in the Sky, Caledon, Ontario* — a roiling landscape printed in a chiaroscuro black and white. **Lisa Neighbour** (General Studies, 1982) also brings life to the grey scale with *Head on*

Asphalt, a simple, disturbing figuration simultaneously evocative of the beheading of John the Baptist and Mexican tabloids. In other explorations of the two-dimensional, **Nadia Colella** (Drawing & Painting, 2011) presents a photo of naked babes revelling, their bodies covered in paint and their baroque wigs and laughing masks both suggestive and melancholic. Meanwhile, **Francisco Gomez** (Drawing & Painting, 1997) emotes tones of Francis Bacon and Francisco Goya in a colour-obscured abstraction, not figurative in line so much as movement.

Considered together, these graduates make it impossible not to reflect on OCAD U’s significant history of artistic production. Representing a piece of that history is **Ronnie Kaplansky** (AOCA, 1963), a mysterious figure practically lost to the Canadian art world since his graduation (though a little research uncovers a trace of him, now going by “Buffalo” Kaplansky and producing work among a new cache of Western plein-air painters in New Mexico). He is portrayed clutching his pipe and worrying his forehead in a sepia-tinged photograph published in *Mackenzie* magazine some decades ago. **J. Lynn Campbell** (Advertising/Graphic Design, 1969) features a new work with the photographic print collage *Whispered Confabulation*. And **Keijo Tapanainen** (Design, 1970) experiments in pattern and texture with the cunning print *Race to Extinction*. When considered alongside the beautiful catalogue cover by **Nik Dudukovic** (Printmaking, 2009), one can see strong design throughout this showing, as well as captivating contemporary expressionist painting such as *0:21/3:52* by **Christopher Arnoldin** (Drawing & Painting, 1998) or *Stoney Lake Road, October 10, 2011* by **Jacquelyn Sloane Siklos** (Graphic Design, 1998).

One can also see this second iteration of the OCAD U Alumni Exhibition bringing to bear the advantages of hindsight and inventory — illuminating “The Art College” through both its history and present. □



Top left Francisco Gomez, *If you could see me now*
 Top right Keijo Tapanainen, *Race to Extinction*
 Above Nadia Colella, *Female Mockery*

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Alumni Profile: Alex McLeod

By Sky Goodden

Like a modern-day flâneur, artist Alex McLeod graces the Toronto art scene in style. He attends art openings and crawls Queen St. W. in tailor-fitted velvet overcoats, light-catching brooches and chest-baring silk dress shirts. He speaks in an attractive, Scarborough-inflected post-party drawl that suggests a marriage of West Coast skater boy and text talk. He wears his hair long, and plays out an easy smile under large, sepia-tinted glasses. For all apparent affectations, though, McLeod, 27, is unusually down-to-earth.

The artist has only just returned from the Pratt Institute in New York City, where he gave a talk and held studio visits, the latter of which attracted a long waiting list of eager students. Although generated in the elusive media of digital rendering, McLeod's work, which typically features fantastical landscapes and miniaturist illusions, carries broad appeal, especially for a generation of digital designers and artists working in the most recent technology. "Kids in school are learning the software that I had to learn on my own," McLeod observes (noting that if he doesn't keep up with it, "they'll soon put me to shame"). Yet he acknowledges that beyond an interest in rendering software, he doesn't share much with the generations coming up beneath him. "They're coming to it from a different place. I'm not a 'gamer.' I was playing Nintendo. Instead of shooting at things, I was traversing landscapes, making journeys, stringing things together."

McLeod's landscapes allude to the virtual realities he was immersed in growing up and the stuff of dreams. The prints picture diorama-like scenes of sugar-coated mountains, storytelling trees and otherworldly refuse. Crystalline globes and light-reflecting bauble buildings suggest, on the one hand, a benevolent future — but look again and you'll see that it's scaled in portentous industry. For while the miniature, toy-like quality of these other-worlds may invoke in viewers a certain fantastical nostalgia, the images also carry Kafkaesque notes of environmental, governmental and industrial intrusion.

In recent years McLeod has expanded to include interactive digital realities (some involving karaoke) among his media, presenting the immersive environments in solo exhibitions at Angell Gallery, international art fairs and (forthcoming) Galerie Trois Points in Montreal. However, the work McLeod is known for — that which propelled him to the privileged position he inhabits as one of Canada's



most recognized young artists — is evolving in recent months into more esoteric terrain. Modelling his newest rendering techniques after "Magic Eye" or autostereogram puzzles (the kind requiring cross-eyed concentration to decipher), the artist is embracing an aesthetic he jokingly terms "stoner art." More abstract than his previous figurative landscapes, this new work features checkered landscapes that bend and disorient their obscured subjects, and loan themselves to pattern over profile. "I was restrained in my choices before because I had something to earn, to prove. But now that I'm a little more accepted and can take more chances, I'm leaning into things that might formerly have been a little too hip, a little too candy," he says.

One of the most identifiable shifts is in McLeod's narrative redux. Whereas before virtual clouds hinged on strings, and the vignettes depicted were reminiscent of flimsy set designs, now McLeod's fourth-wall conceits have given way to the cool abstraction of rolling landscapes, pattern and palette.

McLeod cites an interesting difference between the art world and Silicon Valley (he had a solo exhibition at San Jose's Anno Domini Gallery in 2010 and works part time as an illustrator for clients such as Toyota Prius and *Wired Magazine*). When it comes to understanding his images, people involved in the arts are "always asking how big the real thing is. And I have to tell them there is no 'real thing' — it's not a set, not a maquette — this is it." McLeod laughs. His colleagues in the digital realm always begin with the same question: "What renderer are you working with?" He nods appreciatively. "They get it. They're already there, in the work; they live in those worlds."

But does he prefer one response over the other? He shakes his head. "No, no, I like it all. I want it all." □

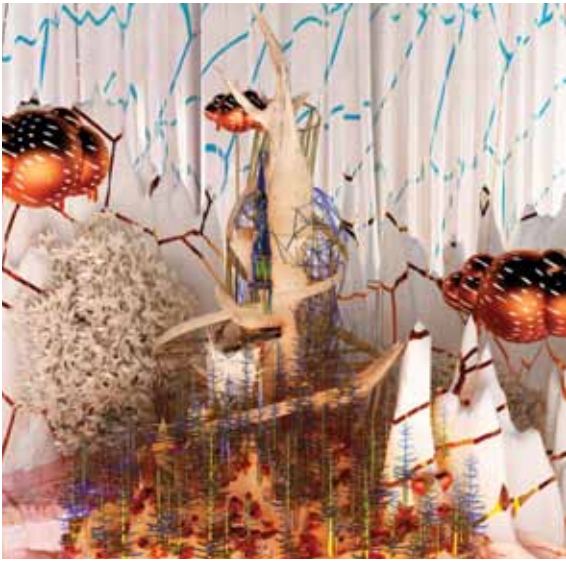
Alex McLeod is represented by the Angell Gallery in Toronto. See more of his work at alxclub.com

Sky Goodden is Executive Editor of the popular contemporary art site *BLOUIN ARTINFO* Canada (ca.artinfo.com) and regularly writes for publications such as *C Magazine*, *Canadian Art*, *Magenta*, and *Modern Painters*. She holds an MFA in Criticism & Curatorial Practice from OCAD University.

Portrait photo by Elise Victoria Louise Windsor

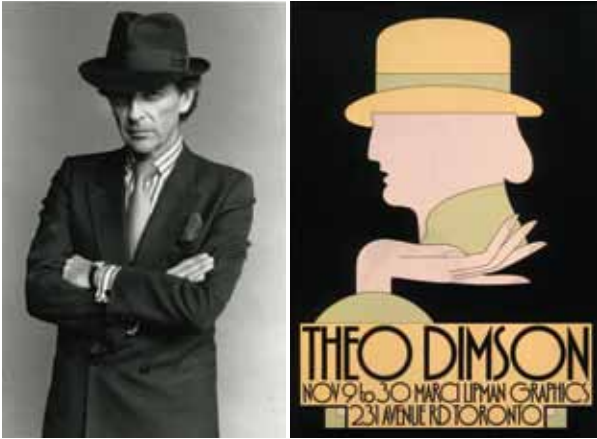
“I’m leaning into things that might formerly have been a little too hip, a little too candy.”

— Alex McLeod



Clockwise from top Alex McLeod, *White Mountains*, CG, 2012; *Blood Clouds 3*, CG, 2012; *Magic Eye 3*, CG, 2012

ALUMNI NEWS



Illustrator Theo Dimson remembered as eclectic

The OCAD U community mourned the passing this winter of design icon and style maverick Theo Dimson (1930–2012). Born in London, Ontario, Dimson spent most of his life in Toronto, where he developed an international reputation for his posters and designs. The title of Dimson’s 2010 retrospective, “Distinctly Different,” describes him well — for he created a wholly unique design aesthetic by infusing Art Deco lines with his love of B-list horror, astrology and mid-century American nostalgia literature.

After graduating from OCA (Advertising/Art Direction, 1950), Dimson apprenticed with Art Associates Limited in Toronto. He would become VP eventually and, decades later, President and Director of his own shop — Theo Dimson Designs. Along the way, he designed titles for Norman Jewison films and arm patches for Canadian astronauts working the robotic “Canadarm.” He was nothing if not eclectic.

Dimson received numerous awards in his career, and held exhibitions in Europe, Asia and the United States; his work has also been published internationally. He is author of *Great Canadian Posters* (Oxford University Press, 1979) and designer of three Canadian postage stamps. Dimson was “exuberant and willful,” remarks Marian Bantjes, a member, with Dimson, of the Alliance Graphique Internationale. He was “filled with delight.”

Alumnus creates third official Canadian portrait of Queen Elizabeth II

Phil Richards (Drawing & Painting, 1973) worked for two years on the painting, which was a Canadian government commission commemorating Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s Diamond Jubilee. The artist based his work on a series of photographs taken of the monarch during her 2010 royal tour of Canada. He also had an audience with the Queen to discuss his concept. Unveiled in a Buckingham Palace ceremony with Richards present, the painting is only the third such work commissioned by the Government of Canada during the Queen’s 60-year reign. It was displayed at Canada House in London before returning to Canada for installation at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.



Work of recent grads finds home in Toronto’s Bell Trinity Square

This spring, OCAD U and Bell Trinity Square unveiled the Bell Trinity Square Imagination Zone, a permanent installation of works by graduating students and recent alumni of the Faculty of Art. The works complement the newly renovated common public areas of the building, located at 483 Bay St. in Toronto.

Selected for purchase through a juried competition sponsored by Bell Trinity Square owner Union Investment, the 14 artworks include paintings, drawings, photographic prints and video installation, and illuminate three key thematic frameworks: Spaces of Nature, Light and Architecture, and Cross Cultures. Representing OCAD U are Drawing & Painting grads **William A. Angus** (BFA, 2010), **Jared Herda** (BFA, 2011), **Jin Sil Park** (BFA, 2011) and **Jillian MacLachlan** (BFA, 2011), as well as **Elise Victoria Louise Windsor** (BFA, Photography, 2011), **Chi Moscou-Jackson**, **Natasha Gouveia**, **Alexa Hatanake**, **Dianne Davis** and **Keita Morimoto**.

See the online gallery at: stevenneiman.ca/belltrinity_imagination_zone

Monumental sculptures showcased on NYC’s Park Avenue

This spring, the New York City Parks Department showcased nine monumental sculptures by **Rafael Barrios** (AOCA, 1973). On view through the month of June along Park Avenue from 51st to 67th streets, the works, which only appear to exist in 3D, culminate 40 years of art-making for Barrios, who lives and works in Caracas, Miami and Paris.



Clockwise from top
Theo Dimson, c. 1987.

Theo Dimson, promotional poster for exhibition at Marci Lipman Graphics, 2008.

Phil Richards, acrylic paint on canvas (328 cm X 224 cm), 2012

Rafael Barrios, *Malabarismo Lineal*, 2011. Photo by Claudio Napolitano, courtesy of Art Nouveau Gallery

Exhibition

MAGGIE CHIU

Fourth-year student, Graphic Design

The detail below comes from a project developed for Chiu's Expressive Typography class. Students were asked to document 12 consecutive hours from a day in their lives using any recording method they felt would enhance the process. The idea was to use final core findings to build a design that reflected their experiences over the course of 12 hours. Chiu used a program on her laptop to record all the conversations she engaged in or overheard that day. The recording included two actual classes. She then used a colour-coding system to highlight specific voices at various times. According to Chiu, "The result was a very intense, textured insight into my personal relationships and peripheral influences."

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ALISSON PARK
DOMINIC AYRE

ACTIVITIES
LISTENED TO
DOMINIC
WATCHED JAPANESE



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