
SKETCH

Round up:
Canada's oldest *new*
university celebrates
young talent, big ideas



A MOMENT AT OCAD UNIVERSITY
A printmaking student preps a litho stone
Photo by Claudia Hung

ONTARIO
COLLEGE
OF ART &
DESIGN

SKETCH

OCAD University (www.ocad.ca) is Canada's "university of the imagination." The University is dedicated to art and design education, practice and research and to knowledge and invention across a wide range of disciplines. OCAD University is building on its traditional, studio-based strengths, adding new approaches to learning that champion cross-disciplinary practice, collaboration and the integration of emerging technologies. OCAD University publishes *Sketch* magazine twice yearly.

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President's Message

OCAD University



This spring, the Government of Ontario passed new legislation changing OCAD's name from Ontario College of Art & Design to OCAD University. This is a significant victory for our institution, completing the process begun in 2002 when we obtained degree-granting status.

It's a timely milestone as well, coming on the eve of our 135th anniversary. OCAD is the single largest and most comprehensive art and design university — or set of art and design faculties — in Canada. The name change is indicative, not of a revolution but, rather, of an evolution. In this sense, it is valuable to our alumni whose successes comprise the legacy that fosters positive change.

Names have long been perceived as powerful tools of identification. And because OCAD has always been important to Toronto's cultural fabric, our new designation acknowledges the regional, national and global scope of our role in society. The addition of "University" to our name now reflects more accurately our significant contribution to post-secondary education. The transition also reflects the government's

recognition of the ongoing expansion of our academic offerings, from the introduction of undergraduate minors to our extensive range of new curricula to our five recently launched master's programs.

As well, our name change underscores the development of our research capacity and the integration of research into undergraduate and graduate education. These developments mean that students entering OCAD must continue to excel at studio skills and that they will be equipped with critical, theoretical, scientific and historical knowledge.

Our new name sets the tone for recruitment by providing clarity to prospective undergraduate and graduate students in Canada and abroad. It reinforces our ability to attract and retain high-calibre faculty who want to teach, research and create in a university environment. It strengthens our capacity to develop partnerships with other universities in Ontario and beyond in delivering joint degrees. To potential industry partners, it offers a more precise picture of the research and development relationships that they can build with OCAD.

We have forged strong ties with industry leaders in the creative, information and communication technology sectors, in healthcare and in sustainable green technology. This has positioned OCAD as a key player in Ontario's innovation economy as well as Canada's. The process of our name change was strongly supported by our corporate, public-sector and academic partners who represented our value as a university with considerable economic impact.

We won our new designation as a result of a tremendous amount of diligent work, much of it carried out over the past three years. In choosing our new name, we researched and consulted with our internal and external stakeholders, and we took the professional counsel of a branding expert approved by our Board of Governors. OCAD community members were invited to participate, and they did, with characteristic enthusiasm,

submitting more than 300 names.

Through the brand research that was conducted, we realized that the OCAD acronym had street credibility, brand equity, awareness and goodwill at the local and national levels. It fits seamlessly into the continuum of our institution's long and prodigious history (which includes five previous names) while also reflecting its current realities, and it has the potential for longevity. For these reasons, the Board of Governors recommended to the government that our name be changed to OCAD University. Their recommendation culminated in the new legislation, which also officially recognizes the role of the OCAD Chancellor, adapts our Academic Council into a senate and refines the powers of the current board.

I'd like to take this opportunity to celebrate what we've accomplished. Thank you to our many champions at the Ontario Legislature. A standout among them is Monte Kwinter — MPP for York Centre and himself an OCAD alumnus — who was instrumental in speaking on OCAD's behalf to government. The Honourable John Milloy, Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, introduced the legislation. The leadership and advocacy of our Board of Governors here at OCAD was of great importance too, as were the efforts of the OCAD team.

Ultimately, the government recognized that the name change benefits our students. They're the real benefactors, as now they will graduate with a degree that is clearly at the university level. How fitting then, that in this issue of *Sketch*, we feature our "generation next." OCAD University is their legacy — and their future.

—DR. SARA DIAMOND

Sara Diamond Photo by Tom Sandler Photography



Measures of Our Success

The addition of "University" to OCAD's name acknowledges the increased scope of our position in Toronto, in Ontario, in Canada and beyond. Our new designation also underscores the numerous reciprocal relationships we've fostered over the years. And thanks to the ongoing support of the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario, we have continued growing our mandate for research and innovation — a forward-thinking expansion that is evidenced in several stories in this issue of *Sketch*.

This spring, OCAD University purchased two adjoining buildings, at 230 and 240 Richmond Street West, adding 114,000 square feet to our campus. The purchase, financed in part by a Strategic Capital Infrastructure Program grant for \$7.5 million from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), is part of our ongoing strategy to manage a critical shortage of space and will leverage important new space for research, teaching and learning. OCAD will immediately occupy 15,000 square feet within the properties while the current commercial tenants finish the remainder of their leases.

In January, we were awarded \$636,720 through the Aboriginal Post-secondary Education and Training Action Plan, a program of the MTCU. This provincial grant, to be delivered over three years, significantly boosts our Aboriginal Visual Culture (ABVC) program, which offers interdisciplinary education in art, design and curatorial practice through undergraduate, graduate and continuing education courses. The funding highlights our relationship with Ontario as well as our role in developing Aboriginal programming and services.

OCAD continues to build relationships with the City of Toronto. The most recent one is with Toronto Community Housing — a partnership aimed to promote accessible, inclusive design in social-housing buildings while enriching student experience in applied design research. The new collaboration was announced early this year, just as Ontario's public sector was gearing up to address legislation aimed at transforming the province into a fully accessible society through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Rich in possibilities for both OCAD and the City of Toronto, this

partnership will also provide our students with multiple opportunities in applied design research, specifically in the areas of inclusive/universal design strategies and processes.

In another example of interdisciplinary ventures — this time, involving representatives from both our art and design faculties — OCAD has joined researchers from York University and other educational institutions, as well as experts in the field, to develop the next generation of data analysis and visualization tools. The Centre for Innovation in Information Visualization and Data-Driven Design (CIV-DDD), led by York University in partnership with OCAD, brings together computer scientists, vision scientists, designers, artists and social scientists at York, OCAD and the University of Toronto with 14 industry partners and international experts. The mandate of this \$11.5-million, five-year project is to develop the next generation of data discovery, design and visualization techniques via new computational tools, representational strategies and interfaces. Dr. Sara Diamond will lead OCAD's team of 12 researchers, which includes Vladimir Spicanovic, Dean of the Faculty of Art, and Greg Van Alstyne, Professor in the Faculty of Design and Director of Research at the Strategic Innovation Lab (sLab).

OCAD's sLab will also lead a multidisciplinary strategic foresight project, 2020 Media Futures, designed to understand and envision what media may look like by the year 2020 — what kind of cross-platform Internet environment may shape media and entertainment in the coming decade and how Ontario firms can take action today toward capturing and maintaining positions of national and international leadership. This venture brings together researchers, creators, policymakers and other professionals representing the cultural and digital media industries. Significant support for 2020 Media Futures was provided by the Ontario Media Development Corporation through the Entertainment and Creative Cluster Partnerships Fund, with additional funds supplied by OCAD and key industry partners.

Left: Danielle Schon
Adrian
Digital Composite, 2010

The Multiversity: Internationalization at OCAD

“It’s time to sow the seeds of a world based on the earth’s design,” declared **Dr. Vandana Shiva** during “Soil, Not Oil: Earth’s Design in Times of Climate Change,” the lecture she delivered on April 6, 2010, at the OCAD University President’s Speaker Series. “The earth’s design works through creating common spaces — spaces for sharing.”

World-renowned as an environmental activist, philosopher, eco-feminist, interdisciplinary researcher and, according to *Time* magazine in 2003, “an environmental hero,” Shiva has campaigned for more than 15 years against the introduction of genetically modified organisms and the patenting of seeds.

Shiva’s activism springs from the ground up, literally: she has started a seed bank. She lends seeds and then asks borrowers to bring back more seeds, so others may share the resource. Thus, she helps preserve diverse species and provides a sustainable economic model for farmers. A model of sharing, says Shiva, will yield more — physically and intellectually — for people and communities.

According to Shiva, there are multiple places for learning. Together, they comprise “a ‘multiversity,’ rather than a university.” Her presence at OCAD was fitting, especially because a key facet of the university’s strategic plan — *Leading in the Age of Imagination* — is the development of international programs and curriculum that position knowledge in a global context.

Says Dr. Sara Diamond, OCAD President, “There are three aspects to this development: strategies to recruit more international students, reciprocal relationships with leading international institutions, and the internationalization of curriculum.”

What this means is more intellectual cross-pollination in OCAD’s classrooms. For example, students from Latin America, Asia and Europe are being recruited through a major outreach initiative led by the university’s Admissions & Recruitment Department.

“OCAD has an international reputation,” says Jan Sage, Director, Admissions & Recruitment. “Giving the institution a human face through outreach allows prospective students to imagine themselves as part of this community.”

It’s an approach that will generate more opportunities for OCAD students to study outside Canada. Dr. Soumyajit Ghosal, a visiting professor from the National Institute of Design in India, is joining OCAD to develop international collaborations with Indian institutions. Joint programs are also being developed with Goldsmiths, University of London and Malmö University in Sweden.

As well, a group of international scholars and industry professionals are working in tandem with the OCAD community as a result of collaborative initiatives spearheaded by the Mobile Experience Innovation Centre (MEIC), which is linking OCAD with universities and the industrial sector in Brazil to develop mobile technologies. Meanwhile, thanks to the generous sponsorship of affinity marketing company TD Meloche Monnex, OCAD’s Art and Design faculties are hosting lecture series that bring in international artists, designers, activists and business leaders. New to OCAD this year is the Unfinished Lecture Series, hosted by the university’s Strategic Innovation Lab (sLab) and sponsored by design consulting firm Torch Partnership.

The President’s Speaker Series also featured two other internationally acclaimed guests: Glenn Adamson, Victoria and Albert Museum’s deputy head of research and head of graduate studies; and Dr. Marie Battiste of the University of Saskatchewan, who is the director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre and co-director of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre.

The highly successful Nomadic Residency — which was created in collaboration with the non-profit Partners in Art (PIA) and is currently supported by the Jack Weinbaum Family Foundation — at OCAD’s Faculty of Art invites international artists to deliver public lectures and participate in residencies. Previous residents include acclaimed artist Orlan and scholar Hal Foster. Algerian multimedia artist Adel Abdessemed will be the next resident.

Twinning Cities, Twinning Artists, a new program created with seed funding from PIA, will establish a joint exhibition at OCAD’s Professional Gallery, featuring a Canadian and an international artist. In the exchange, an international artist will be invited to Canada

to work with a local artist on a project; then, the Canadian artist will travel to the international artist’s country to continue the collaboration.

Notes Diamond, “Ultimately, our institution will benefit from understanding the conditions and practices of people working elsewhere and from the richness of international exchanges.”

Clearly, these global collaborations can generate positive results. A good example is the Freedom Fibres program, which provides a forum at OCAD for projects centred on textiles and sustainability. After spending time with Vandana Shiva, Paola Aron Badin, Manager of the President’s Office at OCAD, initiated Freedom Fibres with Sheila Waite-Chuah, who coordinates the university’s Sustainability Office. Aron Badin was also inspired to plant organic tomatoes with her daughter.

“Change,” says Aron Badin, “starts with planting one seed.”

Indeed. As OCAD University develops its international connections, it sows the seeds for the multiversity described by Vandana Shiva, creating more common spaces for sharing knowledge in a truly global context.

Below: Dr. Vandana Shiva from *Dirt! The Movie*



A Mindset of Openness: An Interview with Jane Ngobia, Director, Diversity & Equity Initiatives, OCAD

In 2009 Jane Ngobia joined OCAD University as Director of Diversity & Equity Initiatives and as an instructor in the Faculty of Liberal Studies. Ngobia brings a strong background in the practical and theoretical aspects of equity and diversity.

Prior to coming to OCAD, she was the University of Toronto’s Diversity & Leadership Officer for four years. She is currently completing her PhD dissertation — “Internationalization and the Undergraduate Student Experience: How Domestic Students Experience Interaction with International Students” — at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto.

In her current position at OCAD, she has collaboratively developed two policies: “Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy” and “Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Customer Service Policy.” Ngobia has an open-door policy and welcomes anyone with an idea or issue to stop by her office during her weekly community hours.

Sketch: What has your experience been at OCAD?

Jane Ngobia: I’ve found the OCAD community to be very collaborative and supportive. Collaboration is important to me. I grew up in Kenya and I embody the African world view — “I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am.” I believe [that] diversity and equity live in the university’s strategic plan. They’re part of the university’s goals and mission and strongly supported by the senior administration.

How does this translate into action?

OCAD walks the talk. It’s one thing to say that you are committed to diversity and equity; it’s another to have a plan. OCAD’s Diversity Action Plan outlines our goals and how we will achieve them. It identifies the people who will lead the process, our timeline and our fiscal plan. Accessibility is one of the seven goals in the plan. This year, we implemented the first standard for the AODA Customer Service.

How was it implemented?

We provided AODA training for everyone at OCAD — faculty, teaching assistants, staff, student monitors, every OCAD employee and volunteers, including the Board of Governors. And we developed a policy, so people with disabilities can come to OCAD with service animals and support persons. If they need to use assistive devices, they don’t need to get permission. Everyone can use a laptop in the classroom if that helps them to learn. And people can request that they receive information in alternate formats, like Braille or video captioning. They can also give feedback online about how things are working.

What will you be working on next?

There are three areas that we’ll focus on. We’ll ensure that people know about the policies we have developed and that they understand them. We’ll develop a conflict resolution process and compile a list of mediators at OCAD who can help facilitate this process. And we’ll focus on implementing other AODA standards — Information and Communication; Built Environment; Employment.

Who is responsible for putting these standards in place?

We’re working to build an inclusive environment where everyone is responsible for equity, not just one person or a few experts. So we’ll work together to make this campus inclusive, rather than accommodative, proactive rather than reactive. There will always be a need for accommodation, but if we make it more inclusive, we’ll reduce accommodation needs. We want to create a mindset of openness.

Above: Jane Ngobia
Photo by Lino Ragnò

PLAY AS WORK:

New Hires for the Digital Future

by Leanna McLennan

OCAD University's commitment to a digital future is attracting renowned international scholars and artists. This year an impressive group with unique expertise in the field has joined OCAD to develop the Digital Futures Initiative (DFI), a set of cross-disciplinary programs and research in digital technology. As well, an inspiring collaboration among the faculties of Art, Design and Liberal Studies has resulted in a new interdisciplinary Digital Media Major Program to be launched in fall 2011.

"The DFI undergrad program is unique to art and design universities in North America," says Paula Gardner, 2009/2010 DFI Chair and Associate Professor, Faculty of Liberal Studies. "[It allows] students to 'get under the hood' of science and computational logics, to foresee future needs and creative applications of a range of technological practices. OCAD's Digital Media major is practice-based, merging hybrid technology and computation with aesthetic and critical inquiry. [It] will offer students the opportunity to engage with industry in a range of creative ways, including research projects and investigations of new technologies."

As part of the DFI, which has as its mandate the development of new practices in digital media, OCAD has enhanced its expertise by bringing in four new faculty members, all of them Associate Professors, who approach their work with equal parts rigour and play: Faculty of Design's Suzanne Stein and Emma Westecott, and Faculty of Art's Kate Hartman and Barbara Rauch.

Kate Hartman Nudgeables are an evolving set of accessories that allow the wearer to nudge a companion from a short distance away. These devices are inspired by "signals" (a scratch of the nose, a cough) or backchannel exchanges (text messages sent across a room). Each Nudgeable includes a Lilypad XBee, an XBee Series 1 radio, conductive fabric, conductive thread, a vibrating motor, and a lithium-ion polymer battery. Created with Hazel Meyer.

Top Right: The Brooch Hidden beneath a colorful confetti of cloth lies a pinch switch to be used to poke one's partner.

Right: The Garter This set of fuchsia bands worn around the thighs is easily concealed beneath a skirt. The wearer can surreptitiously launch a secret signal by a deliberate crossing of the legs and similarly receive a signal in the form of a vibration on the thigh.

SUZANNE STEIN

Suzanne Stein predicts the future, using ethnography to examine the effects of technology on people's lives and "foresighting" to predict upcoming trends and their impact on culture and industry.

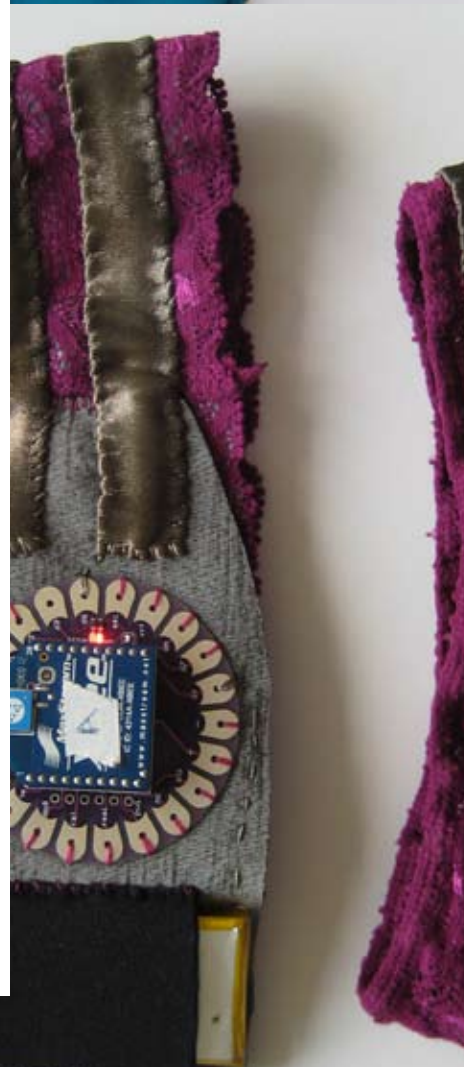
"By looking at systems and trajectories of change, I am bringing together foresighting and ethnography. They fit well together because when you look at change and the future, you need to look at everyday conditions," says Stein, who will be engaging these methods through her work at OCAD's Super Ordinary Lab. A foresighting centre that tracks technological changes and ensures that technology meets the changing needs of society, the lab will also offer trend workshops.

Stein's extensive professional experience includes the following: forecasting trends for Finnish communications corporation Nokia; developing communication strategies for Boston-based IT leaders Sapient Corporation; developing personalized technology for people with disabilities as a faculty member of the University of East London's SMARTlab Digital Media Institute; and teaching new technologies at the Canadian Film Centre in Toronto. She is currently completing her PhD at the London School of Economics.

At OCAD's Strategic Innovation Lab (sLab), Stein is working as a foresight expert for 2020 Media Futures: Strategic Foresight for Ontario's Cultural Media Industries — a multidisciplinary project funded by the Ontario Media Development Corporation and led by Greg Van Alstyne, Associate Professor, Faculty of Design. Stein perceives OCAD as the ideal non-partisan institution to run 2020 Media Futures. Aimed at understanding and envisioning what media will look like 10 years from now, the project alerts Ontario's cultural media industries to emerging opportunities and challenges. It will bring together 18 partners from the interactive media, music, publishing, film and television industries, including the Association of Canadian Publishers, the Canadian Film and TV Production Association, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, and the National Film Board of Canada.

Stein is also excited that OCAD graduates are being hired to do trend work in the mobile industry as well as in other sectors. "If I were hiring a foresighter and was faced with the choice between a business consultant, an ethnographer or designer, I'd go for the designer," she says. "OCAD prepares designers to understand the implications of technological advances and to do it quickly."

And she's looking forward to new technologies coming to OCAD, so students can play with them to see what they can do beyond their intended uses. Says Stein, "Foresighting has to be playful."



KATE HARTMAN

Kate Hartman also believes in the importance of play in the creative process. She is leading OCAD's new Wearables Research Lab, which is geared to artists creating wearable technology such as clothing with built-in electronic devices. "Play is a vehicle for enabling people to open up their thinking," says Hartman, who completed a Master's in Interactive Telecommunication at New York University and who also taught there as well as at Parsons The New School for Design.

"My primary interest is basic human interaction, how people relate to the world and to each other. I approach this through creating new technologies or reworking existing technologies that expand possibilities for interaction."

Hartman's creative tool set includes electronics, phone systems and conductive textiles. She frequently uses devices developed via the open source movement, through which software is developed and shared online by peers. One such device is the Lilypad XBee, a circuit board that enables clothing to receive and transmit data.

She has also collaboratively created a leaf-shaped circuit board that can connect a houseplant to the Internet, allowing it to notify people when it needs water. "My pothos has its own Twitter account," notes Hartman of the plant in her office. "It has over 3,000 people following it."

With emerging fashion designer Angella Mackey, Hartman started The Toronto Wearables Meetup, a monthly lecture series where people working in fashion, textiles, technology and industrial design discuss potential collaborations. "There's lot of possibility for collaboration at OCAD," says Hartman. "It's exciting working with people who are critically engaged, people who can make the things they imagine."

Right: Barbara Rauch
e-motional degrees, animation stills, 2008.

EMMA WESTECOTT

One such critically engaged, creative individual is Emma Westecott, who has been involved in the game industry for more than 17 years. Her achievements are numerous. In London, in the U.K., she produced and programmed interactive multimedia to promote bands on CD-ROMs and touch screens at Tower Records, and turned scripts into functional games as lead author at digital media company The Digital Village. She also ran the Zero-Game Studio, an applied-game research lab at the Interactive Institute in Sweden. "As I worked in the studio, I began to see game play as a performance form," recalls Westecott. "This focus on performance allows thinking to centre on the dynamic player experience."

In her PhD dissertation — "Performing Play in Digital Game Form" — at the School of Art, Media and Design at the University of Wales (UW), she theorizes play in relation to artistic practices, cultural adoption and technological developments. And in an effort to encourage young women to recognize game design as a career — the gaming industry employs more men despite the fact that there are as many women as men who play games — she organized the 2007 Women in Games Conference at the UW.

"Games help us rediscover play," she says. "Play means invention — new things, new ideas. My colleagues are very playful about their practices. I'm looking forward to playing more."

For Westecott, the art school is "a possibility space," uniquely engaged in making things, which generates possibilities.

BARBARA RAUCH

Barbara Rauch, who has a PhD from the University of the Arts London, also sees OCAD as a possibility space. Formerly the Chelsea College of Art and Design's director of sensory computer interface and innovation, Rauch views technology as a tool and medium, not the final product. "Technology is not the end but, rather, the interface," she explains. "And the play element enables me to explore different ideas, to do things with the technology that it wasn't designed for."

Rauch's 2002 installation [Remote] Mind: The Strangers Are Still Me, co-created with U.K. artist Georg Muehleck, explores identity in a culture of global transitions. In it, she projects onto skulls images of artificial skin alongside a composite skin from diverse people. There is no single, unified subject in the work. Instead, there is a cultural hybrid that resists reductive interpretations.

For her current project, e_Motion, Rauch scans a fox head and human faces with different expressions into a database and, using specialized software, merges the images. Then she utilizes a virtual modelling pen to sculpt the figures. To demonstrate the process, she taps the pen on the screen. The fox's nose recedes.

Rapid prototyping allows her to bring objects back to the physical realm. In the end, she produces a three-dimensional sculpture — half fox, half human — that exhibits an emotion that is almost, but not quite, human.

Rauch also explored artists' interaction with digital surfaces in "Close to the Surface: Digital Presence," a 2008 conference and exhibition she co-curated at the Institute of Contemporary Arts at London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

"OCAD is developing new programs in digital media and I want to be part of it," says Rauch. "It's a fantastic opportunity to do something creative and innovative. It's refreshing and brave."

Leanna McLennan's fiction and poetry have been published in numerous literary journals and anthologies, including *Third Floor Lounge: An Anthology of Poetry from the Banff Writing Studio*. She currently writes in her studio at Artscape Wychwood Barns and teaches at OCAD and the University of Toronto.





Photo by Rachel Nixon
flickr.com/photos/rvnix

Art and Design
Education Lab:
A Course on
Collaboration

by Earl Miller

Art and Design Education Lab: A Course on Collaboration

by Earl Miller

Pam Patterson and Vladimir Spicanovic express such infectious enthusiasm for Art and Design Education Lab (ADEL), a course they have both designed and taught, that this writer is tempted to enroll after interviewing them.

They should certainly be proud of this third-year interdisciplinary initiative, which is unique to OCAD University in that its focus is on teaching. Given the institution's 134-year tradition of producing artists and designers who frequently go on to teach, there is no question that focus is invaluable. Not only does it allow students to acquire teaching experience as part of their undergraduate education at OCAD, it also invites them to engage in a dedicated study of the methodologies of teaching. For students interested in pedagogy — and they exist in considerable numbers across all faculties of the institution — as well as for those considering teaching, ADEL fulfills a real need.



Developed in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ontario, ADEL, Spicanovic stresses, is “a collaborative project between the two neighbouring institutions.” Spicanovic, who is Dean of OCAD’s Faculty of Art, taught it last year, and Patterson this year.

The course is aimed at students planning to teach art without necessarily entering a bachelor of education, a traditional course of study wherein, as Patterson notes, “people coming into arts education are not necessarily artists.” ADEL, on the other hand, appeals to students who put art and design at the forefront and, consequently, can and often do make better teachers.

Patterson has long been interested in “how artists self-educate.” Instead of referring to herself as an instructor, for example, she deems herself an “animator and a facilitator.” Whether instructor, animator or facilitator, she comes with solid qualifications: a PhD from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE) in arts education and feminist studies, plus 35 years of teaching experience while simultaneously maintaining an art practice that crosses disciplines, from performance to new media art.

Spawned three years ago, ADEL is the product of considerable dialogue between the OCAD faculties of Art, Design and Liberal Studies and the AGO educational team. Spicanovic describes a particularly memorable lunch he shared with Kelly McKinley, AGO Director of Education and Public Programming, during which hopes and challenges for a future collaboration were discussed. Clearly there existed a need, on the part of the AGO, to hire practicing artists with a background in teaching theory. There also existed real interest, expressed time and again by OCAD students, in exploring a career in teaching.

And there also existed a challenge: how to prepare students to teach in way that was valuable to the community.

Left: ADEL “Emergent Curriculum” workshop with Amy Swartz (from Youth Studio Toronto School of Art)
Photo by Nick Pigeau, 2010

Above: ADEL “Emergent Curriculum” workshop with Amy Swartz (from Youth Studio Toronto School of Art)
Johanna Joseph in foreground
Photo by Nick Pigeau, 2010



Accordingly, ADEL provides students with pedagogical theory in tandem with museum, interpretive and studio teaching through the AGO. First, students attend workshops led by AGO staff, including Carolyn Swartz, program coordinator of high-school and post-secondary programs; and Lorrie Ann Smith, manager of public programs and audience development.

Next, students embark on their requisite 30 hours of fieldwork via guided museum tours and studio programs. They complete the course as assistants to AGO education officers or in the AGO School of Art, affording them opportunities to work in, respectively, museum and studio settings. They are also required to develop a theory-justified lesson plan that is critiqued at the AGO and in class. Towards the end of the course, students undergo brief stints leading AGO education programs. Consequently, ADEL students, says McKinley are “the people we want at the AGO” as future teachers.

While always pertinent to the AGO collaboration, the wide-ranging course content also reaches beyond its provenance, with Spicanovic defining ADEL as “a collage of different forms of pedagogical engagement and perspectives.” Course readings offer a comprehensive historic overview of art and design teaching principles, from the 1920s to the present — a perspective that includes, incidentally, Arthur Lismer, best known as a member of the Group of Seven but also as a visionary educator at the OCAD as well as at the AGO. Lismer is ADEL’s true precedent.

In addition to readings, students write a critical review of an article or other text relevant to the course. And through the semester, they also keep a reflection/research journal. To document their writing, students launched, at the end of the spring 2010 semester, an ambitious online publication at XPACE Cultural Centre — the ADEL Journal (adeljournal.wordpress.com/2010/04/14/welcome-to-adel-journal). It features critical reviews, discussion topics, lesson concept designs and personal reflections. ADEL student Farah Yusuf is the publication editor of this growing course document.

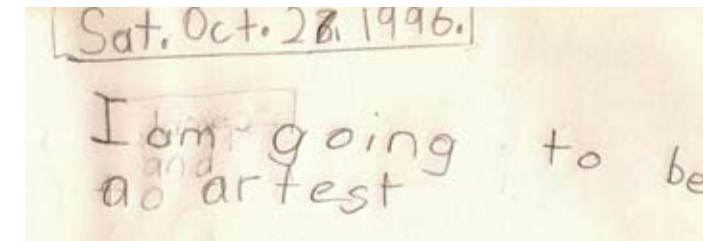
Meanwhile, integral to ADEL are visiting educators from a wide range of disciplines and institutions. Besides seminar leaders from the AGO, guest speakers from OCAD have addressed the classes. One of these is Doreen Balabanoff, Acting Dean of Design, who discussed how design students perceive evaluations of assignments and also offered her insight into rubric development and sought feedback on how to improve plan evaluations.

Other ADEL visitors have extended ties beyond OCAD and the AGO, encouraging students to work with youth in diverse community contexts. Among them is Amy Swartz, coordinator of the Toronto School of Art’s Youth Studio Program, designed for high-school students. Another is Craig Morrison, an artist/teacher at the Oasis Alternative Secondary School, who gave a presentation on the Oasis Skateboard Factory. A pilot project on skateboard design for inner-city youth, participants in this program work closely with the Roarocket Skateboard Company, which was founded by Ted Hunter, Assistant Professor in OCAD’s Faculty of Design.

Morrison’s class visit was a course highlight for student Yusuf, who exemplifies the varied backgrounds of ADEL students — photography, design and criticism/curating. “I applaud Craig’s commitment to students who are ignored by the system,” she says.

Top Right: Justine Julia Di Nardo, 1996

Below: Meghan Walsh, emailable rob #4, 2010



A mature student in the Criticism & Curatorial Practice program, Yusuf returned to school intending either to teach or to work in a museum or gallery. The ADEL course, she notes, was “a natural fit” because she could bring to it her present curatorial practice as well as her background in animation.

Given the students’ diverse skill sets and cultural backgrounds, Patterson encourages them to develop lesson plans that use “personal relevance and expertise” to advantage. “Boys on the Move in the Moore Gallery,” produced by Meghan Hers, stems from her having three active younger brothers and witnessing first-hand how easily they become restless. Motivated as a result to incorporate physical activity into learning about art, Hers asked a group of boys to respond via movement to the sculptures in the Henry Moore Sculpture Centre at the AGO.

Clearly, Patterson believes that what OCAD students teach should “come from where they are as artists.” Maya Kamo’s lesson plan directly incorporated her studio practice by using collage as the central premise. Combining visual art and handwriting, Kamo had students write five things significant to them on pieces of paper and then rip them into shapes, which she collaged. Stephanie Fielding developed lessons reflecting her feminist beliefs as well as the experimental nature of ADEL itself — her “Boys Will Be Boys and Girls Will Be Girls” encouraged discussions of gender-typing in artworks at the AGO, allowing students to realize that art can be studied critically, not just reverentially. Masahito Toguchi’s final class assignment is as far-reaching globally as it is innovative. He used his design background to update a Grade 5 art and design education classroom for a school in Japan following research into open classrooms in North America in the 1970s and 1980s.

Emphasizing outreach, Patterson and her class are continually developing an expansive network of opportunities for students, be it teaching art therapy or working in challenged neighbourhoods, like the Jane/Finch Corridor. Moreover, ADEL is forging links with OISE through the interdisciplinary research program of Women in Action (WIA), the gallery scene through XPACE, and the Toronto District School Board through the Oasis Skateboard Factory. And to further urge OCAD students to progressively develop their interests, skills and experience in this capacity, there are ambitions to develop a fourth-year extension of the existing ADEL course.

On the home-page banner of the ADEL Journal site is a photo of the AGO’s rear façade, with OCAD’s main campus reflected in a window. The image perfectly illustrates what ADEL is ultimately about: collaboration between two dynamic, recently redesigned institutions that are evolving in the same community.

Earl Miller is an independent art critic and curator residing in Toronto. He has published in *Azure*, *C Magazine*, *Canadian Art*, *Flash Art* and other leading international publications. He has recently guest-curated exhibitions at the Kenderdine Gallery in Saskatoon and the Art Gallery of York University in Toronto.

THE FORESIGHT SAGA

A NEW OCAD UNIVERSITY MASTER'S PROGRAM EXTENDS THE THINKING PROCESS OF DESIGN TO ANTICIPATE POSSIBLE FUTURES

by Doug Dolan

In 1955, the president of **Lewyt Corporation** predicted that within the decade most American homes would boast a new technological breakthrough: the nuclear-powered vacuum cleaner. In 2008, OCAD announced that its three recently introduced graduate degrees would soon be augmented by a fourth: the Master of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation (SFI). One year later, the new program was up and running with an initial class of 22 students. We're still waiting for those vacuum cleaners.

So where do we foresee
this article going from here?
Two possibilities:

OPTION 1: TRY TO DEFINE "STRATEGIC FORESIGHT."

If you're hoping for a prophecy about your future as a designer, your best bet is to visit a fortune teller. If you're seeking insights into the future of design, you want a futurist — someone like Alvin Toffler, who predicted the paperless office (I've got the exact reference in a folder here somewhere). But if your goal is to understand how design can prepare us for the future, or how it can anticipate multiple potential futures, you need to talk to a *foresighter* — a practitioner of strategic foresight. And soon. Before it's too late.

According to sLab, OCAD's new centre for research and innovation (see "Taking It Back to the Lab," page 15), strategic foresight involves "thinking about, debating, planning and actively shaping the future. It requires envisioning and understanding choices, and choosing among them while anticipating and navigating accelerating change."

For all its emphasis on looking ahead, however, strategic foresight is not so much about predicting the future as reassessing what's happening right now relative to where we may be heading next. As noted foresighters Andy Hines and Peter Bishop explained in their 2007 book, *Thinking about the Future: Guidelines for Strategic Foresight*, "the ultimate goal of strategic foresight is to make better, more informed decisions in the present."

OPTION 2: EXPLAIN WHAT THIS NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM IS ALL ABOUT.

Bringing together knowledge and methodologies from a wide range of disciplines, the Master of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation is a two-year part-time program with an ambitious objective: "To apply *design thinking* to complex problems that result from changes in human behaviour, technology and/or the economy in order to make more intelligent decisions today for a sustainable future."

It sounds reasonable enough. In fact, it sounds great. You take design thinking, with its fundamental interest in finding better ways of doing things, and you mesh that with the foresighter's systematic approach to exploring future social, economic and technological possibilities.

WHO TAKES THIS PROGRAM?

A sampling of CVs from the **Class of 2011**: a science fiction writer who recently completed a thesis on *anime* and *manga* fan cultures / a **mechanical engineer who applies her expertise in forensic analysis to automotive collisions** / a computer scientist who blends engineering and collective intelligence to develop "social logistics" / a **Stanford grad who led research into user-experience design in Silicon Valley** / a graduate in environmental law who develops design strategies for workplace and healthcare settings / a **sustainability consultant specializing in energy efficiency for small business** / a technology strategist who creates software for schools and not-for-profits / a **professor at the Queen's School of Business who already has three graduate degrees** / a multimedia producer focusing on data visualization systems and interface design / **the global marketing director for an educational film company** and / an MBA with experience in finance, pharma and technology who builds "intelligent devices" — when not cycling, skiing and singing Bach cantatas.

BUT WHAT DO THESE GRAD STUDENTS DO, EXACTLY?

"This is not a traditional design program," explains Lenore Richards, the program's Director and former Dean of OCAD's Faculty of Design. "We're educating design thinkers who will approach problems differently. Our students are all very accomplished in their own disciplines. We have engineers, scientists, social scientists, media communications experts, cultural producers, business people. And yes," she adds with a laugh, "we have a couple of designers as well."

"While our students come from very diverse backgrounds, they have a common goal: they want to do work of significance, to have a positive impact. At the core of our program is the idea that design is not successful unless you're addressing people's needs. And the impact of this multidisciplinary group is going to be that much greater as graduates go back into their own disciplines and apply new thinking and knowledge to solving problems."

Where Will It All End?

Predicting exactly what kinds of problems graduates will solve requires — predictably — a measure of foresight. They could end up designing business models, or organizational structures, or policy frameworks and implementation plans. "There will be tangible outcomes," Richards says. "They just won't necessarily be traditional design outcomes."

En route to becoming innovative design thinkers, students learn to immerse themselves in ambiguity and consider all the consequences of a problem, intended or otherwise, before proposing a solution. They also hone their diplomatic skills. "We recognize how difficult it is to actually implement new ideas," Richards explains. "Students have to learn to be good facilitators. They need to know how to bring diverse groups together, achieve consensus, develop a shared vision of how to move forward and then do it."

So how is Canada's only strategic foresight program moving forward? Plans are in the works for an international conference to be hosted at OCAD every other year, along with a journal devoted to groundbreaking research. And as members of the first class begin working on their major projects ahead of next year's graduation, Richards says the future foreseen by the program's creators is becoming a reality: "The ultimate goal — and it will take both the graduate program and the lab to do this — is to establish OCAD as the thought leader for strategic foresight in Canada."

THE FORESIGHT SAGA

Student Snapshot

CHRIS MEIER

MANAGER OF PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Li Ka Shing
Knowledge Institute
St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto

"I thought my MBA would give me the tools I needed to effect change in healthcare," Chris Meier recalls. "But I still lacked the specific set of competencies to really understand human needs and behaviours, and to create value through innovation. I'd suspected for some time that the answer lay somewhere in the realm of design."

With a BSc and early career experience in the health system, Meier initially joined St. Michael's as a corporate strategist. Since moving to the hospital's research institute two years ago, he has focused on new ways to enhance the patient experience:

"We don't do a good job of seeking out patients on their own terms and finding out what they want. In some aspects of medicine, we're at the cutting edge. But we don't keep up with social and technological realities.... I'm hoping to use the knowledge I gain in this program to design healthcare interventions that help people manage their lives better, so that sick people can become healthy more quickly and healthy people can become sick less often."



Student Snapshot

ZAN CHANDLER

MULTIMEDIA ARTIST AND FILMMAKER

Former cultural policy
analyst for the
federal government

"This program would be completely different if it were in a business school," says Zan Chandler, a graduate in media arts and an alumna of the Canadian Film Centre Media Lab. "While we juxtapose design and business, there's a certain flexibility in an art and design environment, an openness to new ways of seeing and doing, that you're not going to find elsewhere.... Also, the fact that we're a very diverse group is one of the strengths of the program. It presents some challenges because we have different areas of knowledge, different skill sets and different perspectives. But once you get over the initial bumps of understanding how people learn and work and create together, it makes for a very rich experience."

Where will she apply that experience? "I'll most likely work with media and entertainment companies, and particularly Canadian filmmakers, helping them navigate the future."



Strategic Innovation Lab



Taking It Back to the Lab

It's impossible to talk about OCAD's new master's program without looking at the research nexus that's inextricably linked with it: Strategic Innovation Lab, or sLab. Integrating academic research with the perspectives of designers, business people, educators and students, sLab is a hub for innovative thinking in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

"We're a centre of design research, innovation and strategic foresight — in that order," says Greg Van Alstyne, sLab's Director of Research. "Innovation is a multi-headed creature. We bring design thinking and research, along with foresight, systems thinking and complex adaptive system studies, to understanding how it works."

Like all enterprises devoted to thinking, sLab articulates thoughtful statements of purpose that are stimulating, even inspiring, but they can sound so abstract that it's hard to get a precise picture of the work at hand. That changed in February of this year, when it was announced that sLab will lead 2020 Media Futures: Strategic Foresight for Ontario's Cultural Media Industries — a multidisciplinary project aimed at envisioning what the rapidly evolving sector may look like a decade from now.

Funded by the Ontario Media Development Corporation, the 14-month initiative brings together researchers, content creators, policymakers and — in keeping with OCAD's vision of blending research with graduate studies — students in the Strategic Foresight and Innovation program.

"The practical agenda of 2020 Media Futures is to grow competitive capacity in the creative cluster in Ontario," Van Alstyne explains. "Everybody on board agrees that the disruptive impact of the Internet creates both new opportunities and new threats. Our goal is not to protect the incumbents against the upstarts, but to create a healthy ecosystem that undoubtedly will involve elements of both — preserving the values we want to preserve while finding ways to give opportunities to new players."

How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Design

It's inevitable to find a certain tension between theory and practice in a lab dedicated to Thinking Big Thoughts around issues such as sustainability and the explosion of social media — especially one with intellectual origins that trace back to Cold War think-tanks and their doomsday scenarios involving rather different explosions (the kind that put a gleam in Dr. Strangelove's eye).

But while Van Alstyne and his sLab colleagues explore some highly speculative terrain, they're keenly aware of the importance of practical applications. "It's only natural that foresight should be embraced by OCAD as the university of the imagination," says Van Alstyne. "What we need to bring to it is the kind of rigour that you expect in disciplines such as business or public policy. If we aren't engaged in real-world activities and finding the traction that design uses to understand itself — if we're not working against constraints and criteria — pretty soon it starts to look like something other than design."

PARTING PREDICTIONS...

For the 10th anniversary of the inaugural MDes in SFI graduating class, this article will be collectively re-authored on WikiFaceTube by a group calling itself Bring Back Betamax. By then, all the world's cuisines will have fused into a standard sustainable meal prepared from excess hydrocarbons and served in former Internet cafés — topped off with strategic foresight cookies. And every vacuum cleaner on the planet will be powered by cold fusion.

Doug Dolan is a Toronto-based writer and communications consultant who works with corporate, not-for-profit and public sector clients. Once, about 20 years ago, he experienced a moment of strategic foresight.

A NEW
PROGR
THINKI
DESIGN
POSSIB



Nadja Sayej

is the host of *ArtStars** — a “TMZ for the art scene” — and the founder of the Toronto Alliance of Art Critics. She’s also an OCAD alum. Sayej writes for *The Globe and Mail* and *The New York Times*, as well as *artUS*, *Border Crossings* and *C Magazine*. She has interviewed Douglas Coupland in third person, snuck onto a film shoot to catch Peaches on-set, mobbed Bruce LaBruce and, more recently, appeared on Fashion Television for taking her clothes off for New York photographer Richard Kern. Sayej kicks off the *ArtStars** Odyssey, a world tour starting this summer in Finland.

artstarstv.com

Who is a gen-nexter?

“Generation Next is anyone born between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s (1980–1995)...the youth that goes into the next millennium and will be the first to have all the advantages of the Jetsons-like high-tech age, better known as “The Future,” [when] there are robots and flying cars and such — not that much of this will probably be true.” — UrbanDictionary.com

What is ArtSpeak*?

ArtSpeak* is a pretentious way of talking about your art that makes no sense to anyone. It is a language better known as academese or jargonese that uses big, complicated words like *hyper-intellectual* and *postmodernism*, which could better be explained in plain terms to reach the broadest audience possible. ArtSpeakers* should always be prompted: “Could you repeat that in English?” — Nadja Sayej

Thou shall not ArtSpeak*

All Photos
By Carl W. Heindl
(except where indicated)

Toss out the textbooks and rewrite the rules. The top 10 ArtStars* coming out of OCAD University

by Nadja Sayej

Hyper-intellectual. Postmodernism. Contextual analysis. Now, *that* is classic ArtSpeak*. There’s nothing like reading an article about art that you don’t understand. Must we really consult the biblical critical-theory texts to get through *Artforum*? Too bad, I burned them all. That’s the rule I rewrote in the art world: Thou shall not ArtSpeak*.

And just as my show, *ArtStars**, keeps the art world at the edge of their seats, the following 10 artists are the riskiest, most promising OCAD gen-nexters who are moving and shaking up the art scene and rewriting the rules of the crusty Canadian art world into something more spectacular.

From sculptors to garrulous performance artists, clever street artists to not-your-average painters, they are making history before they know they’ve got the *snap.* And here, on special assignment for *Sketch*, I’ve asked these up-and-coming alums to dish their own rules, those they consider they’ve rewritten.

Rule #1: Don’t work in a series.

Whether it’s crafting Satan’s signature hotline from pink plastic flowers or dangling tampons from gaudy chandeliers, Fine Arts graduate **Xenia Benivolski** is a Jill-of-all-disciplines — painter, sculptor, installation artist, performance artist and curator.

At this hot moment, she is the youngest on the board of directors of the Mercer Union, an artist-run centre for contemporary visual art, as well as an assistant for internationally renowned Canadian artist Bill Burns. She has organized *Mom Jeans*, a zoomer-esque fashion show where models are decked out in their moms’ flared jeans and power blazers. But she is probably best known as the director of *The White House*, an artists’ studio in Kensington Market that calls to mind Warhol’s *Factory*.

Her work sprawls the map, but one issue holds it all together. “I feel [that] ideas are more important than materials,” says Benivolski, “The rule I may break is: ‘You should work in a series.’ Who decided that?” She laughs. “Everything I make is a totally different thing.”

zeniabenivolski.com; theotherwhitehouse.ca

Photo of Xenia Benivolski
By Helena Kvarnstrom

Rule #2: Rip off the price tag.

Jesjit Gill, a Printmaking student graduating this summer, thinks *outside* the art market — most of his art is free.

While he started out making posters in 2004 for local bands, he began a quarterly newspaper in 2008 that dishes the art scoop without headlines, columns and, basically, without words — a broadsheet metro newspaper he calls *Free Drawings*. Open up Issue 3 to find hand-drawn record-label advertisements alongside full-page dreamscapes of a fetus saying “LOL”; Mickey Mouse parodies; and Beatles-esque hand-drawn bubble letters that spell out the word *Peeps*.

While the daily grind may leave most newspapers in the recycling bin, *Free Drawings* is something worth saving. “I was drawing a lot and knew a lot of people who drew,” says Gill. “I’m trying to make it accessible for other artists to be a part of something, making free art and large editions to give away.”

jesjitgill.blogspot.com



Rule #3: Curate your life.

Morgan Mavis, a 2005 Sculpture/Installation graduate, is the garrulous type, a kind-hearted chatterbox willing to open the door of her house — and her life — to the casual observer.

This is reflected in her practice as well. The Contemporary Zoological Conservatory — featuring 73 pieces of “growling” taxidermied works — is a home museum that she founded in her living room in April 2008.

“Rather than curating a body of work, curate your life,” declares Mavis, who has been featured on the CBC, *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. “I’m reversing the rules of display. Traditional art has been about exhibitionism, but artists themselves become exhibitionists to put themselves out there. I made the choice to remove myself from the art scene and curate my own life and to observe the audience’s reactions to it.”

The collection is wide-ranging — from an emu egg to an alligator standing on its hind legs to a wallaby head obtained from a Turkish store in Berlin — with the stories behind the pieces becoming the pieces themselves. “Everything with my work has stories,” she explains and then drifts into a tale about the mice in her pantry (which she later made into taxidermy). “I have this passion for collecting.”

Next up: Mavis starts her master’s in museum studies at the University of Toronto and interns in summer 2011 at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

thetaxidermyconservatory.com



Rule #4: Stay multidisciplinary.

David Hanes, a Sculpture/Installation major graduating next year, has a finger in every bowl — and doesn’t plan on counting down.

“I’ve always felt it was really important to not narrow your cone because the risks of [being] pigeonholed are massive,” says the performance artist, writer, director, sculptor, curator and video artist. “People fall into it because they want to do something secure. But I think there is this predisposition to view art from this medium-specific point of view and that’s really sterile.”

Among the videos produced by Hanes — he has also performed as a character who spills into the audience with awkward dance moves — is “Watch Trecartin Watch Trecartin,” which features Philadelphia-based video artist Ryan Trecartin in Toronto, twitching as he watches his own work at a panel alongside Power Plant Gallery curators, who seem disinterested.

Well, so long as he isn’t pigeonholed for being interdisciplinary. Says Hanes wryly, “Being multidisciplinary is kind of medium-specific as well.”

davidfmhanes.co.nr



Rule #5: Don’t be a wimp.

Paintbrush in tow, 2008 Drawing & Painting rebel **Brian Rideout** does anything but play it safe.

He recently mounted a solo this spring at 52 McCaul showing a dunce cap scrawled with red ink alongside a long piece of paper that says, “I am not God,” typewritten 174 times.

One drawing had nothing on it. Another, titled “Touch me and become a part of history,” was a piece of white paper encouraging the audience to touch, kiss and break the well-worn rule: Do not touch the art. “I feel like everyone is trying to please the viewers, and [yet] the viewers shouldn’t be pleased with themselves,” notes Rideout. “I’ve never thought that art was supposed to do anything else.”

One thing has paid off for him, though — “being really upfront.”

archieandrewsftw.com



Rule #6: Choose your own adventure.

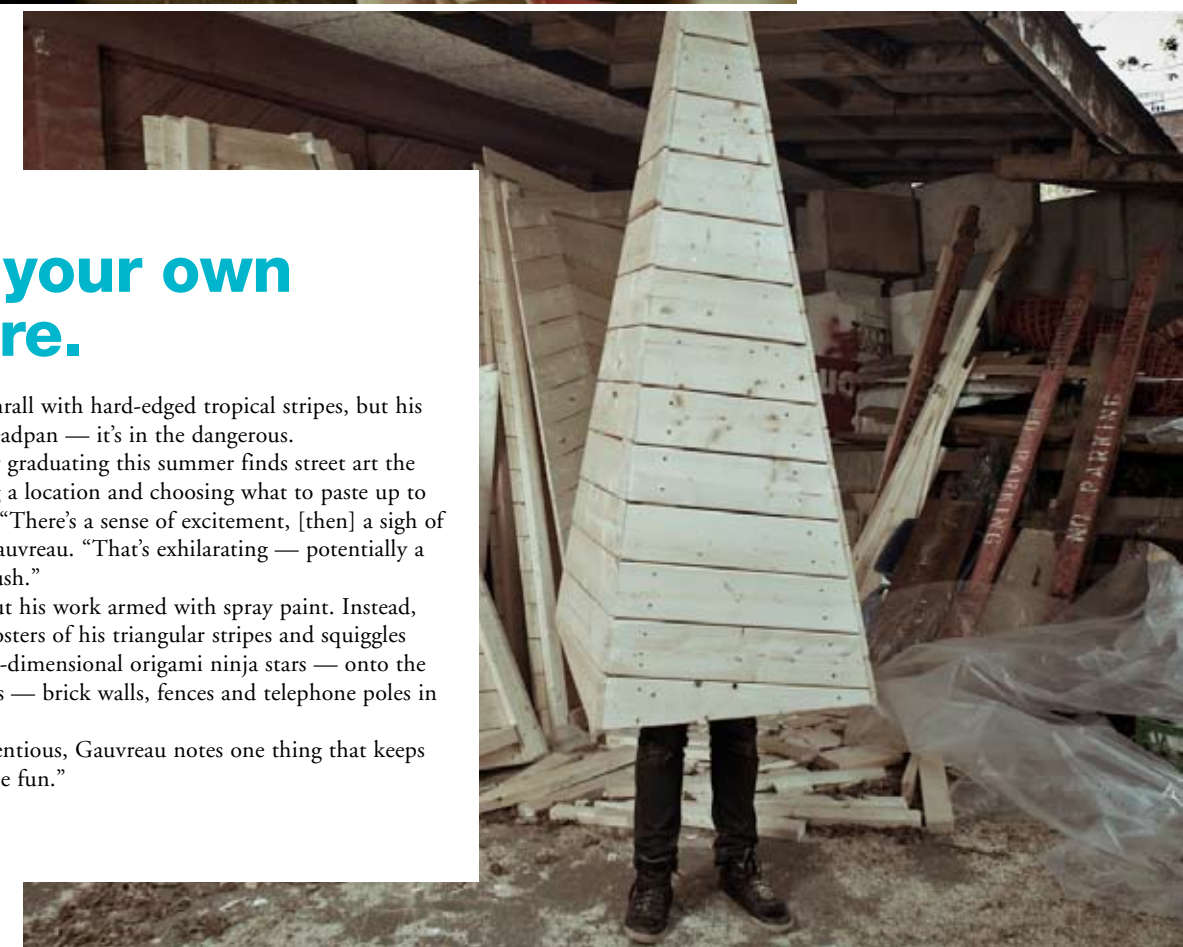
James Gauvreau may enthrall with hard-edged tropical stripes, but his inspiration is not in the deadpan — it’s in the dangerous.

This Printmaking major graduating this summer finds street art the biggest thrill, from finding a location and choosing what to paste up to the risk of getting caught. “There’s a sense of excitement, [then] a sigh of relief,” confides a giddy Gauvreau. “That’s exhilarating — potentially a fine or worse. It’s such a rush.”

But he does not go about his work armed with spray paint. Instead, he pastes screen-printed posters of his triangular stripes and squiggles — which call to mind two-dimensional origami ninja stars — onto the most unlikely of art venues — brick walls, fences and telephone poles in Parkdale.

Playful rather than pretentious, Gauvreau notes one thing that keeps him going: “Art needs to be fun.”

jamesgauvreau.com





Rule #7: Keep it playful.

Tomas Del Balso is a witch doctor of the comic world. The Drawing & Painting 2006 graduate, who has toured the world with his band, DD/MM/YYYY (they're opening for Iggy Pop this summer at Yonge and Dundas Square) is currently working on a book of drawings. He is best known for his chaotic, surreal comics that blur the lines between American gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, the Cabbage Patch Kids and *MAD* comics — all splashed together in a blender of decay.

The only thing certain in his life-sized ink murals is uncertainty. In short, a part of him never left high school. "The only rule I have is to learn and play. I want to be forever stuck in this loop. There is no end," says Del Balso, who uses gel pens to create his sketchbook drawings and who exhibits animated films at rock shows. "Ultimately, I am sort of a songwriter."

His advice: "Go outside your comfort zone as much as you can. Over time, you [will] see [that] all the great people that make the most art and music are those who make the most sacrifices."

tomasdelbalso.tumblr.com; ddmmyyy.net/tomas.html



Rule #8: Think outside the white box.

Alex Mackenzie is showing everywhere — in storefronts, on the streets and in venues across the city. The third-year Printmaking student and musician, who is scheduled to graduate next fall, thinks outside the white box. Her drawings and prints adorn album art and show posters for her three bands and beyond.

In her studio, shared with a few other artists in an art space and gallery called the House of Everlasting Super Joy, are large-scale ink drawings riddled with trickery and rhyme and ranging from pyramids and third eyes to mystical treatises and the grotesque.

Her most recent series of works could be considered a trembling gateway to the dark side. One drawing depicts someone who looks like a member of the Ramones rock band, draped in quartz crystals and muffler pipes. Another work is of an Egyptian god drooling cobra venom onto a necklace of mini blinds, the cryptic deity crowned by a quixotic rainbow that calls to mind the edging of a sacred coin.

Mackenzie's prints and posters, which float through the music scene, are rooted in her style. "The DIY non-gallery setting is where my art fits in," she says from her studio, music blaring in the background. "I work against the idea of the cold gallery world. I don't think my work would be welcomed there."

newphenomena.blogspot.com

Rule #9: Don't follow tradition.

Digital maverick **Alex McLeod** may be more Bruce Mau than van Gogh, but whichever way you view him, don't call his work "digital painting."

"Digital painting"...words used [for] lack of anything better," muses the 2007 Drawing & Painting graduate who gave up the brush to produce digital works in 2008. "I don't think it's really appropriate. [My work is] more like a digital drawing than anything [else]." Now, McLeod also helps OCAD profs brush up on their skills, all from programs that he'd taught himself.

He scored his first solo with Jamie Angell last fall and he's part of a group show at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto, which opens June 15. He also has shows coming up in Denver, San Jose and São Paulo.

The paradox in McLeod's work is the lack of physicality. The bubbling, icy, sugary candy-land world, for example, that he creates from 3-D modelling software does not, in fact, exist. Everything created onscreen stays onscreen; a printout creates a different world entirely. If anything, these saccharine dioramas — which could peel off the pages of a Narnia novel or be lifted from a video game like *The Legend of Zelda* — are visual fairy tales that reveal what could exist. They are, if anything, hopeful.

"We were encouraged to not make designs or illustrative work," McLeod recalls of his painting classes. "I don't know why we have to maintain the barrier between art and design. You can live in both realms."

alxclub.com



Rule #10: Keep a low profile.

There's nothing but cheap wine and cheaper conversation at art parties, the recluse painter, experimental musician and Fine Arts graduate **Jacob Horwood** remarks, scowling.

"That's an art criticism for me, not going to openings," he says, clanging around in his studio on a recent afternoon. "I like seeing art; I like seeing my friends' art. But going to an opening and a band is playing is the worst thing. I'm never at an opening talking about the art. It's about the party, the afterparty — or getting drunk. It's a huge distraction."

He may not have an in-your-face personality or business cards in his back pocket, but Horwood is still hustling. As the co-founder of the Bennifer Editions record label, he has mailed out thousands of handmade, limited-edition records, albums and publications since 2004 (he spent \$4,000 on mail-outs alone last year).

Horwood has travelled the map playing music with his band, Gastric Female Reflex, and still finds time to whip out the most eclectic abstract paintings. And there isn't a problem skipping the art party — if it hasn't anything to do with art. Says Horwood, "Keeping a low profile isn't dangerous."

privatepressprinting.com

Emerging Alumni Profile

Nate Archer:
Design Incubator

by Charlene K. Lau



Above: Nate Archer

As a student at OCAD, Nate Archer (Industrial Design, 2007) kept up-to-date on design cycles and trends, reading websites and blogs including *designboom*, one of the most widely read design publications online. Little did he know that in short order he would become an editor for that very site. Mere days after graduating from OCAD, he responded to a job posting on the site for an editorial intern and was immediately hired. Archer then moved to Italy to work in *designboom*'s office in Milan.

Functioning much like a one-stop postmodern visual-culture shop, *designboom* offers online courses and features interviews alongside international exhibitions and competitions, even products from around the world. And although international in scope, it has a predominantly European readership.

So, what is it like to be Canadian in a European-heavy design scene? As a country constantly curious as to how it's viewed by the rest of the world, Canada comes across somewhat like a self-conscious teenager, compared to the self-assured maturity of Europe. With that premise as a given, Archer's observation is that Canadian designers are reluctant to promote themselves abroad. To support good local designers, he has taken on, at *designboom*, the role of ambassador for the Canadian design community, presenting this country's talent not only to Europe, but to the wider international audience as well.

Of Canadian design's status in the international marketplace, Archer says, "Europeans still don't quite have an impression of what Canadian design is all about. For the most part, they have only seen bits and pieces that don't really create a single [comprehensive] image in their minds. However, I think this is a good thing. Canadian design is quite diverse, and its multiple personalities are actually indicative of our country's makeup and ideology."

Where design powerhouses such as the Netherlands, Italy and Germany hold court, Archer sees Canada as inhabiting the middle ground — which is ideal, he says, praising the smaller Canadian design community for its strong quality of work. And he sees potential for young designers in cities like Toronto. "[This] is a relatively

young city in a constant state of renewal. Unlike crowded cities with established identities — like New York, Paris and London — Toronto is a city with room to grow, room to leave your mark."

After a year working for *designboom* in Milan, Archer moved back to Toronto to continue on his own as an editor, but not just of *designboom*'s online content. He now promotes young designers via *designboom* "marts" — a series of exhibitions that bring together upcoming as well as established designers from all over the world to international design fairs in New York, Stockholm, Tokyo, Seoul, Sydney and Melbourne. Transposing the global to the local, Archer organized "NY Local," an exhibition in 2009 featuring New York's design culture and its young designers, and, in 2008, "Seoul Design Essence," which showcased cutting-edge contemporary South Korean art, architecture and design.

In making design accessible, Archer is also creating a well-rounded profile for *designboom*, positioning it not only online but also as a strong, tangible presence within the international design community.

What about today's emerging generation of designers? If 20th-century design spoke largely of design personalities and



Above:
Nate Archer
An original piece of Canadiana, *Timpins* (2007) is a limited-edition series of pins inspired by Tim Horton's iconic donut holes. *Timpins* explore the social and cultural function of souvenirs.

iconic aesthetics, does the driving force of this new generation signify a movement towards a focus on practice? Archer thinks so, observing that young designers are undoubtedly different from those of the past. "[They] are thinking about things in a more holistic way. Their work tends to be more user-focused, drawing on the past to create products with history and a story. The days of meaningless bright plastic chairs with funky forms is gone. Today's consumers are looking for products that have meaning, that serve a purpose; and the smart designers are listening." This emphasis on accessibility illustrates a shift in the thinking of the definition of democratic "good" design. Archer favours products that are initiated and produced — right from the start — to be affordable, durable and widely available, rather than inaccessible luxury design that's remade using more inexpensive materials.

When asked about future projects, Archer is coy. For now, he is focused more on his work as an editor for *designboom* than on his practice as a designer. But although writing about design was not Archer's initial calling, perhaps it is not so different from industrial design itself. He describes his approach to writing as similar to his approach to a design problem. Inspired by his mentors — *designboom*'s founders, Massimo Mini and Birgit Lohmann — Archer is continually motivated to make design accessible through his writing and curation. Since his arrival at *designboom*, two more OCAD graduates have been hired.

Notes Archer, "Clearly, there is something in the water fountains at [OCAD]."

Read more about Nate Archer at natearcher.ca.

Charlene K. Lau is a Toronto-based art writer whose reviews have been published in *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *Akimblog* and *Fashion Theory*. She received her MA in history and culture of fashion from the London College of Fashion (U.K.) and is a curatorial assistant at the Textile Museum of Canada.

What about today's emerging generation of designers? If 20th-century design spoke largely of design personalities and iconic aesthetics, does the driving force of this new generation signify a movement towards a focus on practice?



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