Amanda Dziedzic (Monash University – Caulfield Campus), 'A Common Thread', glass and mixed media, 750 x 700 cm

Mon-xi Wu (RMIT University) 'Organic Sculpture', earthenware with semi vitreous slips, 30 x 50 x 30 cm

Art, Design and Media Arts
A GLOBAL 4 APPROACH

A key question must be addressed within the role, function and capacity of designers, artist and media producers, writes Prof. Ian Howard who advocates a multi-disciplinary approach whereby individuals will have enhanced opportunities to operate with distinction in varied and at times conflicting fields.

THE theme of the introductory remarks accompanying the annual Education Issue of *Craft Arts Magazine* has been an examination of the critical issues facing art, craft and design education in Australia and New Zealand. The "art, craft and design" nomenclature requires brief comment. At the College of Fine Arts (COFA), University of New South Wales, and I suspect in most art and design schools nowadays, work in the crafts has continued with good support and enthusiasm, however we have embraced and described the practice as either art or design. There are still practitioners who prefer the specificity of the craft title, but as you will gather from reading this article, as much as I champion the craft of using ones hands to work with materials in a highly specialised way, I am reluctant to exclude elements of design and art from such practice. A second terminology issue – "new media, digital media or media arts" in education, has on the one hand grown variously out of art and design practices, and on the other, created itself from

PHOTO: CAROL LONGBOTTOM

'Project X', (College of Fine Arts, UNSW), FBE and Engineering multi-disciplinary project, 2007

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an IT and entertainment industry base. Again, at COFA and in many other faculties, colleges and schools it is taught, either as a component of art and/or design or as a discreet discipline. For this reason, in the following commentary, I make most common reference to Art, Design, and Media Arts, all along acknowledging the specific qualities and practices inherent in professional studio "craft".

I have worked in art and design schools for more than 30 years. At no time previously have our disciplines approached the "core business" status that they now enjoy within universities. This is a heady and volatile time for art, design and media arts education and research with contesting opportunities and challenges, successes and disappointments.

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Global 1

I expect that most readers of this publication would have at some time in their training or teaching roles, perhaps occupying leadership positions within art institutions, put great faith, hope and expectation in the leading question: 'Show me something in this room, building or city which was not designed by man (or woman)?' This question is usually posed in advance of a claim for greater support and status for art and design, when opportunities (read funding) appear to be slipping away, or constraints (read lack of understanding of the central role of designed objects and services in all of our lives) upon our work too unreasonable or unfathomable. Certainly this claim, for the centrality of art, design and digitally mediated experiences within our lives has never been more strongly grounded, never more clearly evidenced than in this, the first decade of the 21st century.

Worthy of note is that in Australia, even the (new) Federal Government appears to have noticed. Of the 10 topics identified by Prime Minster Kevin Rudd's Australia 2020 Summit that is designed to address the 'long-term challenges confronting Australia's future' one is – Towards a creative Australia: the future of the arts, film and design. As a comparison and to provide a sense of relativities, of gravitas, of this chronicling of the elements that will make up Australia's bright future, the other nine topic categories refer to Australia's – Economy, including education, skills, training, science and innovation; Economic infrastructure, the digital economy and the future of our cities; Population, sustainability, climate change and water; Future directions for rural industries and rural communities; Long-term national health strategy, including the challenges of preventative health management, workforce planning and the ageing population; Communities, ways to strengthen them, supporting families and social inclusion; Indigenous populations and their future; Governance, including renewed democracy, a more open government (including the role of the media) the structure of the Federation and the rights and responsibilities of citizens; Future security and prosperity in a rapidly changing region and world.

1. Mei Yan Ge (Design Centre Enmore) 'Untitled', 2007

2. Georgina Humphries (RMIT University) 'Landscape', saggar-fired porcelain, 15 x 20 x 30 cm

3. Morgan Louise Anderson (Queensland College of Art, Griffith University), 'Untitled', 2007, sterling silver

4. Tamara Hahn (SA School of Art, Univeristy of South Australia) 'Cups', porcelain, blue celadon glaze, cone 9 reduction, 9 x 6 cm

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Global 2

The full list is included to illustrate the significant role art, design and media arts is recognised as playing across and amongst each of these other heavyweight issues.

Global 3

I believe that as well as the direct, specialist and particular contributing art, design and media arts make to these fields, there is another perhaps even more important role education in the arts can play. Although artists and designers by no means have a monopoly on creativity, it must be presumed that creative processes and innovative outcomes are core to their work and that education in this field is as attuned as any to training for creative responses, building creative capacity and outputs. This said, as creativity and innovation are valued central characteristics of art, design and media production, then as professionals in the field, these individuals could make valued and unique contributions, outside of their fields to allied and even divergent industries. It would follow that aspects of artists' education could be productively implanted directly into the education and training curriculum of other industries.

The "global level" observations made so far come from looking outwards, observing the role of art, design and media production within our everyday lives – from art's role within the rare and deeply personal process of self-realisation, to the expressed "green values" of furniture designed from recy-

5. Terry ???(Tai Poutini Polytechnic, NZ) 'Lime 5…' jade,

6. Ebony Addinsall (SA School of Art, University of South Australia) 'Connections in White II', blown glass, wheel cut, 72 x 155 x 29 cm

7. Lee Mathers (Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney) 'Memory Taps', 2007, optical 3D sub-surface laser-etched glass, copper taps, MDF

8. Des Frankhauser (Monash University – Caulfield Campus) 'Untitled', cast lead crystal,

9. Masahiro Asaka (School of Art, National Institute of the Arts, ANU) 'Surge 1', 2007, cast glass, cold-worked, 42 x 42 x 52 cm

PHOTO: GEOFFREY BROWN

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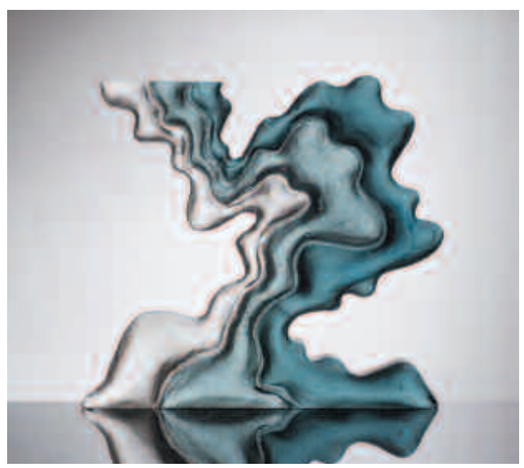

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PHOTO: ROB LITTLE

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cled materials, to the commercially driven competition for the hearts, minds and dollars of entertainment consumers.

Global 4

Further insights can be gained by looking inwards. We should observe carefully the actual products and services made by our disciplines. By way of demonstration, I have chosen a random set of designed goods and services, selected only because of the chronological sequence in which they were encountered over a recent two-week period. I have gone for variety – objects, services and combinations of each, eight examples within the panoply of things with which we interact on a daily basis. You might do the same. I would be interested in your examples but surprised if your encounters with objects of beauty and service, and services of pleasure and pain did not provide similar conclusions.

My examples:

Two weeks ago I was in China supporting COFA activities that were occurring in a number of Chinese art and design schools. I flew to Shanghai in an Airbus 300, in the hotel room, each of the 58 television channels deserved analysis, however the Fashion Channel broadcast in a mixture of "European English" and "flesh tones" is my pick. In Xi'an with a morning free, I visited, not the Terra Cotta warriors, but their less known and smaller cousins at the Man Yang Ling imperial tomb to the south. On return to Sydney I met an English designer who had just been appointed as a Fellow of the Crystal Palace, a building we discussed with much wonder and appreciation. Later in that same week I presented, with two colleagues, a wide-ranging lecture on the design, aesthetics and story line of the *Willow Pattern* plate. At about the same time, my 10-year-old Mitsubishi Lancer station wagon with more than 250,000 km on the clock, comprehensively stripped its automatic gears. Searching for a replacement gearbox or complete alternative car, I used my MacBook and went straight to the online Trading Post to locate the best available solution.

Before I launch into my analysis, I should mention that I have sometimes found support from, sometimes raised the ire of, colleagues in the faculties of the Built Environment (architecture) and Engineering at UNSW when I advance my

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10. Penelope Pollard (RMIT University) 'Grandma' (ring), 2007, copper, gold, wax, synthetic stone

11. Dougal Haslem (RMIT University) 'Tiny dancer' (ring), 2007, sterling silver, stainless steel, found object, plastic

12. Craig ???(Tai Poutini Polytechnic, NZ) 'Dolphin 4…' jade

13. Marta Giermanski (Queensland College of Art, Griffith University) 'Tribute to Mikolaj' (2006), 'Aleksander' (2007), 'The Inner Child' (2006), sterling silver, found materials, fabric, human hair

14. Anne Mossman (School of Art, National Institute of the Arts, ANU) 'Untitled', 2007, bowls, coloured porcelain, each 12 x 21 cm

15. M. Kary Benn (College of Fine Arts, UNSW) 'Silver Screw'

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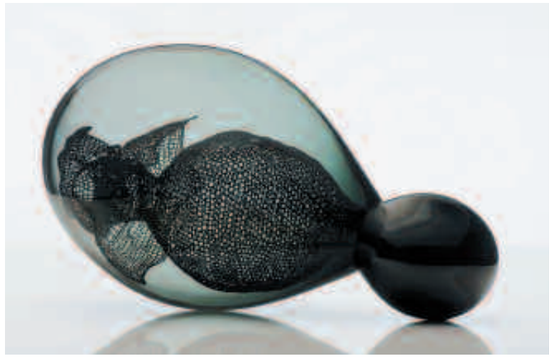

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PHOTO: GREG PIPER

"different by degrees theory" of art, design and engineering. It goes like this: 1. Goods and services are engineered to work reliably in their intended manner; 2. These goods and services are designed to interface as well as possible with their users, and; 3. The extrinsic value inherent in them, in owning and using them is their art. I do stress what should be obvious, that the roles of artist, designer and engineer do not sit in any hierarchical order. Nor are there set or predetermined proportions of contribution made by each of these disciplines to a single or range of objects or activities. Different examples of basically the same object or activity can and do have widely varying degrees of art, design and engineering input. As well, designated "artists" do not have a monopoly on creating art; sometimes engineers do, and equally, on occasions artists create solutions to engineering problems.

Before illustrating this "different by degrees" proposition, I should pause to affirm an assumption I have made. That is, that the practice of artists, designers and media producers results in the production of objects and services. During the latter part of the 20th century, particularly in advanced economies there was a dramatic increase in service industries and the contribution they made to individual, national and global economies. In the 21st century this trend continues unabated with service provision overtaking product manufacture in the GDP of many countries. Producing services requires as much engineering, design and artistic input as making objects. Designing for the internet, for the experience of a lifetime holiday or for a new way of visualising medical data, draws upon the same or closely related skill sets as working with graphics, objects and special relationships. Indeed, if by some measure, a clarity of differentiation, qualitatively and quantitatively, could be achieved, our current generation of students would likely gain a majority of their experiences from the virtual rather than the material worlds. Although service industries and virtual worlds require artists, designers and engineers, they have never been constituted as, nor claimed, a "home discipline" in the sense of an "arts and crafts movement" alignment of a singular, contained body of skills being applied to the manufacture of a particular product.

Returning to an assessment of the random examples of

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16. Erin Conron (School of Art, National Institute of the Arts, ANU) 'Seek', 2007, blown and cold-worked glass, enamel paint, 18 x 30 x 10 cm

17. Marina Hyasat (Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney) 'Metamorphosis II', 2007, blown glass, cotton thread, 28 x 54 x 28 cm

18. Raquel Thompson (National Art School, Sydney) 'Lilith', porcelain, terracotta and stoneware, 150 x 45 x 16 cm

19. Kate Christiansen (University of Wollongong), 'Feeling Comfortable in Your Own Skin', felted and woven textiles

20. William Lungas (Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney) 'Arca-Type' (installation detail), porcelain, black stain

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PHOTO: MICHELLE BOWDEN

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goods and services identified above, I have expanded upon the categories of likely input from the foundational, Design, Art, Engineering mix, to a more complex set that ranges across: 1. Historical Context and Narrative Content; 2. Art and Aesthetic Experience; 3. Craft and the use of Materials; 4. Design and Usability; 5. Media Arts; 6. Engineering and Operational Reliability.

The assessment process simply asks the question – 'What is the likely percentage of each input that has gone into making the whole object or service? An Airbus 300 aircraft would surely be dominated by engineering for operational reliability concerns (60%). We also know that the designed interface with pilots, crew and passengers is a strong selling point once the reliability factor is near to guaranteed (20%). There is a deliberate and sensitive use of materials, beyond their engineering function, a particular craft in the upholstery of the seats, the turn of the tap ware (5%). Other small percentage contributions that can be attributed to art and aesthetics, owing to the "style in flight" achieved by the aircraft and its operators compared to a Boeing operated by another company, (5%). For historical context and narrative, the story behind the journey with such an airline, (5%). And finally there is a role for Media Arts, granted mostly using imported material, recycled films, but nevertheless a new, even original format emerging in in-flight entertainment which also deserves to claim a (5%) stake in the object and service experience of flying from Sydney to Shanghai.

A faculty manager at COFA once told me, with some sense of achievement, that she had negotiated for the Fashion Channel to rent our studios for a film shoot which would benefit both the college budget and the fashion industry in Sydney. Seeing the Fashion Channel on Shanghai hotel television reinforced my suspicions that this enterprise was less about objects (the design of clothes) and more about an exposure to (via the television program) what could be described as the sexuality dimension of the industry. Consequently I score Design and Usability quite low (15%) and both Media Arts and Art & Aesthetics quite high (30% each). Art and aesthetics are high because the program deliberately promotes a strong extrinsic experience. I should declare that the percentage weightings allotted do not in anyway relate to the quality of the inputs, just their proportion of the whole.

You can see how the assessment process works, the Han Yang Ling Warriors, high on history, not from our perspective, from their context of sculpting the figures and building the tombs, high on art and material inputs. The Crystal Palace, high on engineering and design, the Willow Pattern Plate, almost equally strong inputs from design, craft, art and its strong narrative, although it isn't known which came first – the story or the design. I've included a mass produced Mitsubishi car which one could expect to have similar inputs to an aeroplane, however, as the engineering operational

21. Sarah Korte, (University of Wollongong), 'Fear of Mourning', ink on canvas

22. Chantelle Fisher (Queensland College of Art, Griffith University) 'The Price of Gold – 1 and 2', 2007, sterling silver, gold leaf, titanium and transparency

23. Joan Teo (Queensland College of Art, Griffith University) 'Poseidon Cup', 2007, sterling silver and coral

Product or Service	1. Historical Context & Narrative	2. Art and Aesthetic Experience	3. Craft and Materials	4. Design and Usability	5. Media Arts	6. Engin & Operational Reliability	Total
Airbus 300	5	5	5	20	5	60	100%
Fashion Channel	10	30	15	15	30		100%
Han Yang Ling Warriors	20	40	30	10			100%
Crystal Palace	5	10	5	30		50	100%
Willow Pattern Design	20	30	20	25		05	100%
Mitsubishi	5	20	5	25	5	40	100%
Mac Computer	5	30	10	40	10	30	125%
Trading Post	5	5		15	25	50	100%

PHOTO: MICHELLE BOWDEN

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PHOTO: ANTHONY BROWEL

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reliability is now secure, and failure does not automatically result in the death of the users, and the designed interface is equally high across the industry, so the art and aesthetic dimensions play an increasingly significant differentiating role. Note the recent history of the Mitsubishi plant in Adelaide. The "380 model" sedan produced there was acclaimed by motoring technicians as "car of the year". It looked terrible, the general public shunned it, the business enterprise failed, the plant had to close with the loss of thousands of jobs. When assessing my Apple Macintosh computer I found it difficult to contain my total score to 100%. I wanted to score engineering, design and art all quite high. So much so that I ended with an impossible 125% total. Perhaps such an inflated result would be typical of lead products. That is, they are exceptional because they appear to pack more qualities into an otherwise standardised measure. Finally, the Internet is a gigantic example of systems design and the *Trading Post* site a tiny component of it. My assessment identifies engineering, media arts and design as the dominant inputs.

More important than identifying the exactness of any contribution made, is the realisation that all objects and services are by nature, cross-disciplinary and it follows that this has major ramifications for artist, designer and media production education and training. Indeed, any education aimed at producing leading professionals in these fields should include a deep understanding of particular disciplines and a capacity to include work and insights from across multiple disciplines. Historically, educational curricula, pedagogy, courses, programs, facilities and assessment criteria have variously addressed questions of multidisciplinary practice. Ironically the convergence of media (digital technologies) can purport a semblance of working in a cross-disciplinary way through various practices coming together on the common ground of the computer lab, using so often the same tools of keyboard, software and screen. Taken to its extreme, such an argument could be extended to collapsing together the keyboard use of a stockbroker with a ceramist's online glaze data base and an artist working in Photoshop. Similar tools certainly, but not strongly related and hardly cross-disciplinary.

The challenge of meeting the demands and opportunities of a "Global 4" conception of artist and designer education lie within the need for, at the same time, a more structured and more free, a more focussed and generalist education within the material and resource capacity available. Structured to achieve deep experience in art, design, media or the crafts, free in order to capture and import

24. Alex Green (College of Fine Arts, UNSW), 'The Shape of Progress', 2006

25. Brendan Murphy (School of Art, National Institute of the Arts, ANU) 'Guitar', 2006, sitka spruce, Indian rosewood, Qld maple, black bean, Qld walnut, 100 x 36 x 9 cm

26. Justin Cooper (National Art School, Sydney), 'That Season in the Abyss', ceramic and mixed media, 30 x 32 x 18 cm

27. Romani Benjamin (Monash University – Caulfield Campus) 'Orrery' glass

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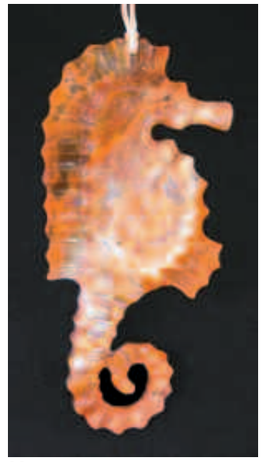

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into one's practice, ideas and elements of other related and unrelated disciplines. It is important to note that a multi-disciplinary approach is not one where all subjects are studied at the same level, and as a time and resources consequence, only superficial exposure and experience is gained. Rather there is a twin emphasis on achieving depth and facilitating breadth. At COFA we have for a long time adopted a "High Peaks and No Barriers" approach to our teaching and research. High Peaks refers to intense, specialist, "leading the field" level work in as many disciplines as we can sustain. No Barriers literally means there should be no barriers between knowledge and experience transfer amongst and across these high peaks.

Achieving this is itself a curriculum and pedagogy design challenge, however, it is important to note getting these material conditions right is only part of an optimal outcome. In any successful implementation scenario there must be a liberalising culture at work – call it the *Global 4 Culture* – which permeates the understanding and attitudes of all students staff and administrators.

We have had some successes in this regard at COFA. Our research centres: iCinema having commercialised its visualisation technologies and achieved more than six million dollars in sales to the Australian mining industry; our Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics, attracting wide ranging national and international grant support for its projects; our drawing and landscape imaging institutes and specialist cross-disciplinary studios have worldwide exposure and high reputations. It must be said though that we have been less successful in effectively implementing such an approach, an attitude, the culture, within our undergraduate student cohort. This represents too slow a start, a wasted opportunity across three or four years of study.

In the presence of such potential, not to mention responsibility, we will revisit this question. COFA is entering into a major rebuild program of its Paddington site. This will give us an opportunity for innovation in two major areas. Firstly, the relatedness of curriculum, courses and programs, and secondly, the locational, physical and operational nature of our teaching and learning spaces which includes studios, workshops, specialist labs galleries, library and lecture theatres. This is timely as our Associate Dean Academic is heading up a Carrick Institute grant funded, national review of studio teaching with an emphasis on the contributing and complementary role played by space, time/duration and teaching methodologies. In relation to the essential complementary cultural input we are attempting to formalise the spontaneous! That is, to establish a facilitating *Global 4 System* that can better deliver to students, the intellectual and material assets of our campus, faculty and university. For example, the system will incorporate in an integrated way such diverse capacities as: staff experience and expertise; visiting artist and key lectures presentations, live, recorded and pod cast; 24/7 access to studios with various levels of tutor support; universal wireless connectivity; and greater access to other UNSW faculty courses and facilities.

Perhaps, Global 5

I note in conclusion that in this examination of the critical issues facing art, craft, design and media education in Australia and globally, I have avoided the biggest question of all, so big, that it takes on ethical and moral dimensions. For what end should we be maximising the effectiveness of our educational processes? What are the desired outcomes from a multi-disciplinary approach to artist and designer education? Is it so that our graduates can design and produce more and more products in an already intensely resource pressured world, or rather, to work towards sustainable practices and outcomes both in the manufacturing of goods and the provision of services? This key question must be addressed within the role, function and capacity of designers, artist and media producers. Accepting that a multi-disciplinary approach to projects is likely to result in the most productive outcomes, individuals will have enhanced opportunities to operate as champions of varied and sometimes conflicting values. Many art and design schools, including COFA, through the convictions of their staff have adopted an educational philosophy that promotes the desirability, indeed argues for the necessity, of all art and design activity to support environmentally sensitive practices along local and globally sustainability principles. It is not clear as yet what outcomes such an "ideologically active" approach will achieve. More or less, higher or lower paid jobs for graduates, more or less impact on related government policy, more or less, better or worse products and services made, more or less wealth creation? But such an engaging and potentially contentious topic, *Global 5* – the place of values, philosophy and ideology in art, design and media production education – is for another occasion.

Prof. Ian Howard
Dean, College of Fine Arts
University of New South Wales

28. Brent King (Monash University – Caulfield Campus) 'Visage 1', cast lead crystal, 35 x 70 x 10 cm

29. Rhys (Tai Poutini Polytechnic, NZ) 'Seahorse', jade??

30. Kim Maree (National Art School, Sydney) 'Fractured Bowl', stoneware, 8 x 42 x 12

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