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CREDITS

EDITORIAL
EDITOR/WRITER
Elizabeth Mariotti

CONTRIBUTORS
Julie Elliott, Instructor  
Fonna Forman, UCSD Professor  
Malorie Pugh, BFA candidate  
Samantha Rosado, MFA candidate

COPY EDITORS
Ellen Mathis  
Ashley Mick

ART DIRECTION—GDSO
FACULTY ADVISOR
Courtney Barr

ART DIRECTOR
Luisa Restrepo Pérez

DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION
Sarah Alexander, BFA candidate  
Yerin Heo, BFA candidate

ON THE COVER
Slipping Through monoprint  
by Clare Samani, MFA candidate

LSU PHOTOGRAPHERS
Sarah Alexander, BFA candidate  
Slade Blanchard  
Giovanni Gutierrez, BFA candidate  
Eddy Perez
LETTER FROM THE DEAN

This issue of the Quad celebrates the LSU College of Art & Design community as well as the LSU community at large. It celebrates the community within the College itself and the ways in which art and design students, faculty, and alumni work together to make the world a more beautiful and just place for all.

Our work starts in our own backyard, the LSU campus, and extends to the surrounding neighborhoods, the parish, the state and beyond. We propose transformational changes big and small. We use our unique art and design skills to help communities not only envision but also visualize a brighter future. And we are motivated by our love of humanity, in other words, philanthropy in its original meaning.

It is in this spirit that LSU enthusiastically launched the Fierce for the Future campaign, a magnificent example of the transformative power of philanthropy. The campaign is a monumental fundraising effort that will profoundly and positively mark our future. It will enable our community to develop and grow stronger, more diverse and more cohesive as we build the pillars of the College of Art & Design for:

THE LSU 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

1. The Institute for Human Health and Wellness
2. Caribbean Basin Collective
3. Sustainable Urban Design Strategies to Promote Livability, Equity and Resilience
4. Alumni and Faculty Archive
5. The Center for Green Technologies

These initiatives will carry us forward into the future of art and design at LSU.

Alkis Tsolakis, Dean
**DID YOU KNOW? WITH JULIE ELLIOTT**

**Q:** HOW IS HEALTHCARE IMPACTED BY DESIGN?

In my 30-year career in healthcare design, I have witnessed the dramatic shift in the healthcare delivery model. Consumerism and self-care, uncertainty in healthcare payment reform, shifts from volume to value, growth of enabling technologies, and the delivery of care in settings closer to home are all burgeoning trends. These trends require that health organizations assess their geographic footprint and physical plant, as the built environment will play a critical role in the success of this future model of care.

I am excited to enter the next chapter of my career at my alma mater, LSU School of Interior Design, teaching the health and wellbeing design studio to future generations of designers. Our school’s mission goes beyond healthcare spaces and accommodations, creating spaces that enable and improve the human condition – bringing out the best of who we are, and providing a lasting and positive impact on outcomes. Providing comfort through purposeful design.

There are easy things one can do to make the built environment encourage people to want to be more active, and to engage with nature.

During the spring semester, students researched and integrated LEAN and Evidence-Based Design (EBD) best practices for outpatient facilities. Students had the opportunity to shadow one of the primary care teams at Ochsner’s newly opened High Grove Medical Complex, conducting observations on the 8 healthcare flows: flow of patients, flow of families, flow of staff, flow of medications, flow of information, flow of supplies, flow of equipment.

After analyzing the research and data, the students built an exam room mock-up that incorporated EBD best practices.

Louisiana ranks as one of the least healthy states in the country. Why is that? It is a big question...

In the fall, Health and Wellbeing students will begin to research and assess the built environment and health of our population here at LSU, exploring innovative ideas to elevate the health and wellness of students, faculty, and administration.

**Julie Elliott** is an instructor in the LSU School of Interior Design who has over 20 years of planning, design and project management experience in the healthcare arena. She has worked in leadership roles alongside large healthcare networks developing new construction and renovation projects that include: Stanford Health Care, Veterans Health System, Catholic Health Initiatives and Kaiser Permanente.

Some design considerations that impact health outcomes include:

- Commuter stairs with access to natural daylight
- Universally designed walkways and trails
- Convenient water bottle filling stations
- Sit to stand desks
- Access to outdoor spaces
- Respite areas
- Spaces that engage the senses
- Access to fresh produce markets
Any discussion of borders today must begin on an urgent note. The human rights of migrant populations are in jeopardy across the world right now, and too many cities are closing their doors. Our world is veering dangerously away from the norms of human dignity. The very language of a caravan is derailing us. Migrants seeking asylum from poverty, violence and the disproportionate impacts of climate change are individuals, not a mass – humans, not aliens – each with stories and traumas that need to be heard, each bearing rights that need to be protected.

Fonna Forman is a professor of political theory, University of California, San Diego, and principal, Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman. She is the 2019 Nadine Carter Russell Chair in architecture.

I live and work at the border between San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico - the busiest international checkpoint in the world. This border region is a microcosm of all of the conflicts and deprivations that globalization has inflicted on the world’s most vulnerable people: poverty, climate change, accelerating migration, labor exploitation, human trafficking, gender violence, explosive urbanization, privatization, and so on. It is a zone of dramatic asymmetries between rich and poor, and presently the main site of arrival for Central Americans seeking political asylum, a lightning rod for American nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment. Here, geopolitics is intensely local. Public debate about immigration, about the wall, about the fate of “Dreamers” gets very real.

A line that physically divides the U.S. and Mexico is not a new thing. It is another nineteenth-century story of annexation and partition, with a long legacy of violence and radical disparity. Throughout most of the 20th century, however, the border performed sort of like a line in the sand, with obelisks and later low chain-link or corrugated metal fences demarcating where one country began and the other ended. When these walls simply demarcated the territory, people in border towns moved quite freely back and forth to work, to visit family and friends, children on both sides hopped the fence in play, and hopped back as easily. But over time the walls began to thicken, with massive force and surveillance infrastructure. Borders perform more now like a partition than a border, because its purpose is less to demarcate than to separate, and willfully obstruct the flows that have always defined life in this region.

But borders and even partitions are ultimately porous things; they cannot contain many flows – environmental and hydrological flows, economic flows, normative and cultural flows, ethical and aspirational flows, and the vibrant cross-border practices and exchanges and circulations of everyday life that operate often beneath the radar of formal institutions. With my partner, urbanist and architect Teddy Cruz, I have been committed to telling a very different story about urban life in this region. Over the years, we have been documenting the often invisible dynamics that define this territory, and shape the transgressive, hybrid identities of people who inhabit it.
Our work reimagines the U.S.-Mexico border as a tissue of social and spatial ecologies, a thickened convergence of systems, not an artificial jurisdictional line.

For example, we exhibited MEXUS, in the U.S. Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. It is a visualization project that presents the continental border between the U.S. and Mexico border as a region rather than as a line, revealing the shared cross-border social and environmental flows that are framed by the eight binational watershed systems. MEXUS reveals what walls cannot stop: watersheds, indigenous tribes, protected lands and croplands, 28 urban crossings and 15 million people. MEXUS has become our laboratory for political and urban creativity, and seeking more expansive ideas of citizenship.

Over the last decades, we have been linking border regions across the world to investigate what these regions can learn from each other about civic, economic, and environmental interdependence. The Political Equator is an experimental visualization project that traces an imaginary line along the US-Mexico continental border and extends it directly across a world atlas, forming a corridor of global conflict between the thirtieth and thirty-eighth parallel north. Along this imaginary border lie some of the world’s most contested thresholds, including the U.S.-Mexico border at San Diego/Tijuana, the most-trafficked international border checkpoint in the world and the main migration route from Latin America into the United States; the Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, the main funnel of migration from North Africa into Europe through which waves of migrants and refugees from North Africa and Syria flow across “Fortress Europe,” recently thickened to contain the flow of refugees from Lampedusa into Italy and from Lesbos into Greece; the Israeli-Palestinian border that divides the Middle East, emblematized by Israel’s fifty-year military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; India/Kashmir, a site of intense and ongoing territorial conflict between Pakistan and India since the British partition of India in 1947; and the border between North and South Korea, which represents decades of intractable conflict, carrying Cold War tensions forward to the present day.

In a world marked by escalating border tensions, increased surveillance and militarization, we have been calling for transgressive experiments in “unwalling” that enable people in border regions to see each other anew and cultivate cross-border public commitments toward more inclusive, democratic, and environmentally connected binational regions.

In our work we seek to intervene into the beliefs people have about the border, to provoke a more ecological way of thinking about border spaces, and a more inclusive idea of citizenship and regional interdependence.
LSU’s spirit of unbreakable passion, ambition, and community inspires the change the world needs. Ours is a vibrant, diverse, and rewarding community with a rich culture and history and an even brighter future. Louisiana has the highest level of native-born residents of any state in the nation. The sense of community for which we are known is literally rooted in the land upon which our campuses sit. We are deeply committed to positive transformation of opportunity, resources, and well-being for all.
Art and design are, inherently, practices of creating something new – artists imagine new forms of expression; designers plan new buildings, spaces, and cities – and in this practice of creation, they instigate change. Paintings and sculptures evoke conversations; photographs capture raw moments in life and challenge the observer; and as technology continually advances, architects and designers find new ways to build and better the world, changing the spaces we inhabit, the cities we traverse, the very landscapes that surround us.

In the pages that follow, meet some art and design students who are working to help instigate change in their communities.
The LSU School of Architecture hosted the Bordering On symposium and workshop in February 2019. Organized by assistant professors of architecture Kris Palagi and Angeliki Sioli, the symposium joined visiting scholars with expertise in the areas of architecture, urbanism, political science, design, landscape architecture, art, geography, sociology, anthropology, law, and more. Political theorist professor Fonna Forman, founding director of the UC San Diego Center on Global Justice, delivered the keynote lecture titled “Unwalling Citizenship.”

“Borders can be tangible, solid, concrete, palpable, impenetrable, aggressive,” the organizers stated. “They can be implicit, abstract, undetectable, tacit, porous, and soft. Spatial borders – visible or invisible – define our encounter with the world around us, from the small scale of the neighborhood to that of the nation. They define our engagement with the public shared place of human interaction, and shape our social, political, ethical, and personal stand as architects and world citizens.”

“The symposium opens the conversation on what exists ‘past the buttressed, scavenged, and policed’ understanding of borders in a local, national, and international scale, and aspires to look into borders as the possibility for a meaningful adjacency and spatial interexchange,” Sioli said.
Professor Forman is the 2019 Nadine Carter Russell Chair of the LSU College of Art & Design. Forman conducted a workshop with LSU architecture students in tandem with the symposium, exploring borders within the framework of an investigative case study. The students explored communities in Baton Rouge to better understand the complex issues that border zones face.

In the workshop, architecture students of all skill levels teamed up to study particular border areas in Greater Baton Rouge. "This allowed students to bring together different perspectives and skillsets, and let them have creative freedom, but also create really strong work," Palagi said.

Together they created interventions to break down borders in some of Baton Rouge’s most divided and bordered areas, MArch candidate Brittany Howard said. Whether those borders were physical or metaphysical, students designed a plan and presented their ideas to visiting guests who then participated in the symposium.

"The workshop gave us an opportunity to think and analyze a problem that is so prevalent to architecture and society right now," Howard said. "We don’t always get to work with parameters like this in our studios, so being able to focus on the issue, apply it to our local community, and create solutions was very enriching. The workshop experience has impacted the way I see, interact with, and think about borders on a small scale in my own community, but also on a larger and more global scale."

The students analyzed certain geographic zones, studying raw data courtesy of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, and Forman directed the process by posing systematic questions to the groups to develop conflict diagrams to better understand these complicated communities.

"**DESIGN AS CITIZENRY: it comes down to our role as designers in our community.**"
SHRINKING DISTANCE

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE FORGOTTEN AND THE SECLUDED IN THE CORTANA MALL NEIGHBORHOOD

By Brittany Howard
MArch Candidate

Shrinking Distance
By Brittany Howard
MArch Candidate
First, students worked to understand the context: “They needed to understand the many concerns – social, political, physical, etc. – present, investigating not just the data, but the individual needs,” Palagi said. “Only then can one make thoughtful recommendations for community change.”

They began to analyze the areas by identifying the key questions: who, what, where, why, when. “Once those were addressed, the design process moved fluidly because we had such a good understanding of the community,” Howard said. “It was so much more than the physical location of the community, but also where it stands in relation to surrounding communities, where it fits in to the economy of the larger region, and where it fits in to the social climate of the surrounding region.”

“Working with LSU students, stimulating thinking about how the university can engage with marginalized communities in Baton Rouge is crucial, and yet very provocative,” Forman said.

“It struck me the way that not only the students worked together across all studio levels, but also the way the professors and the visiting lecturers and panelists worked with us,” Howard said. “It was an interconnection of communities coming together and working toward understanding another community to find a way to better serve it.”

“You produced beautiful, critical work about your own city,” Forman said to the architecture students at the symposium’s conclusion.

“The idea is design as citizenry,” said Ursula Emery McClure, A. Hays Town professor of architecture, at the symposium. “It comes down to our role as designers in our community.”

INCUBATOR FOR URBAN EQUITY

Research on world cities and urbanization has highlighted inequities in access to urban resources that result in uneven development. Inequities are exacerbated through politics of differential developments, history of racial segregation, warfare, and environmental disasters. Societies are in desperate need to develop innovative urban strategies that comprehensively address social, ecological, material and cultural factors to enable equal access to opportunity among communities of different economic base, income, racial profile, and/or physical ability.

Part of the College of Art & Design’s Strategic Plan, this initiative proposes to establish an innovation incubator, a research and production facility within mid-city Baton Rouge that connects community members, students, faculty, local leaders, and funding agencies through collaborative and immersive projects. The goal of the incubator is to develop integrated initiatives that foster innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship within local (Baton Rouge) and regional communities (Louisiana) as a tool to combat urban inequalities and increase access to opportunities.

The Incubator for Urban Equity aims to promote: skill-building; entrepreneurial initiatives; outreach programs to educate students to develop interdisciplinary models of intervention and change for the betterment of the societies they live in through design/build projects; community involvement and applied research; and research on urban equity with a global perspective, and local and regional applications.

Contemporary urban environments face complex challenges that often do not neatly align with any one area of expertise or study. As a college within Louisiana’s flagship university, we have a responsibility to address the complex problems we confront as a city (Baton Rouge) and the state of Louisiana through art, design, research, teaching, and engagement – and their potential to connect the diverse disciplines and resources at the university. Solutions to challenges in the urban environment require the engagement of multiple disciplines in very complex, interconnected ways,” stated Marwan Ghandour, director of the LSU School of Architecture.
New Orleans-born MLA candidate Taylor Jacobsen chose to pursue landscape architecture in hopes of designing cities. So when he had the opportunity to participate in a beautification project in downtown Baton Rouge, it was a chance to improve the city that he currently calls home. He recently started a design firm called New Land Development, embarking on a number of projects to benefit the local community.

“I am lucky to live in downtown Baton Rouge, therefore calling the heart of the city my neighborhood, so naturally I find it easy to help my neighbors and citizens build a better environment,” he said. “If you walk your neighborhood enough times, you will find ways it can improve and hopefully you can connect with business owners or government agencies to fund these ideas.”

Jacobsen participated in an art installation, designing and painting a mural on a 2000 square foot wall on 6th and Main Street in downtown Baton Rouge, across from the restaurant Cocha. The restaurant owners Enrique Piñerua and Saskia Spanhoff had a vision for beauty on the city block, and the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, the Downtown Development District, and the Rehabilitation Individuals through Strategic Encounters (RISE) program collaborated on the project.

After the Louisiana flood of August 2016, Denham Springs city officials asked residents what they’d like to see as the city recovered and rebuilt. The community is prioritizing making Denham Springs a friendlier place for pedestrians and bikers.

LSU landscape architecture students in assistant professor Brendan Harmon’s studio are developing conceptual plans for more walkable streets, paths and parks, to help inform the city’s new master plan.

“The [residents] definitely want a stronger linkage throughout the community, whether that’s some sort of path or trail, and to help slow down traffic as it comes through North Range,” MLA student Sophie Lott said.

MLA candidate Josh Black presented a project that looks at, among other things, a pathway that would connect downtown to the Amite River. The path would weave from the Antique District to the planned amphitheater at the flooded City Hall to Spring Park and then to a beach or boat launch on the river.

“It would be great to have more bike and pedestrian-friendly areas there where people can cross the street and bike through Denham Springs,” he said.

The ultimate goal: to re-design Louisiana communities to improve the lives of residents after disasters.
Mural in downtown Baton Rouge, designed by MLA student Taylor Jacobsen
The goal of the project is to beautify urban streets to drive more pedestrian traffic downtown, and benefit the local economy. “We called this theme, ‘From tradition to transformation,’ a statement that spoke to the idea of challenging older designs and renovating spaces to fit the needs of citizens in the 21st century,” Jacobsen said.

ART MEETS LANDSCAPE

RISE participants – ex-offenders in a re-entry program – and a group of volunteers worked together to paint the wall white, creating the blank canvas for the mural. The project brought together a group of diverse people working together to beautify downtown Baton Rouge.

The mural depicts trees, with a series of shadows of branches that blend seamlessly into the landscape of the tree-lined city street. The scene marries art and nature, cleverly integrating the painted trees with the real ones. To soften the wall, Jacobsen implemented negative space painting techniques to trick the eye into creating more space and depth.

He placed native animals throughout the scene, ranging from small lizards to large birds, all flocking to the “tree of life” painted on the wall. The tree of life reflects the changing seasons, representing both a connection to nature and the nearby restaurant; essentially, the local community.

When sitting in the restaurant window across the street, as the sun slips down over the horizon and the light dims to the dusky hues of twilight, the real shadows of the live trees blend along with the painted shades, forming a tapestry on the wall.

Building relationships in the local community made these projects possible. “I have been lucky to be good friends with amazing people who support local designers and artists,” Jacobsen said, citing project support from Renee Chatelain at the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge.

“Public art plays a vital role in our public health and wellbeing and that is exactly why we aim to design spaces to stimulate appreciation for one’s neighborhood and overall economic growth.”
REJUVENATING URBAN SPACE

With a new wave of citizens moving back to a city’s center or urban landscape, our attention to redefining and redesigning the space must be at the forefront of our minds. We need to rethink how we use our urban space in order to design to fit our current demands and future needs.

Jacobsen also designed an urban trail to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. The Heart Trail is a 5K walking/running trail throughout downtown Baton Rouge, developed to "encourage people to embrace the importance of a heart-healthy lifestyle, get out in their city, and experience art in unexpected ways."

The Ebb and Flow Festival held in April 2019 hosted a walking tour of the Heart Trail, in which attendees enjoyed art popups and performances set up along the path. The annual public art event aims to spur economic activity in the region through cultural tourism, and increase community engagement through arts and education, according to the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge.

His work reimagines not only Baton Rouge, but the state as a whole. Jacobsen’s MLA thesis project naturally focuses on designing for the landscape of Louisiana: “I am studying the idea of converting a collection of large river barges into the world’s first traveling park, that have the ability to travel and connect to over 60 cities along the Mississippi River.”

“Landscape architects, by definition, reimagine the built environment,” said Mark Boyer, director of the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture. “The goal is to plan, and design for, the future."

These are just a few examples of the downtown beautification project, which includes ongoing development of the city of Baton Rouge, adding newly designed spaces and businesses, and careful planning choices all intended to rejuvenate the area. The architects, landscape architects, and designers collaborating on various projects are working to change Louisiana’s capital city, and revitalize its urban character.
CREATIVE COMMUNITIES
ARTISTIC NEIGHBORHOODS

On Martin Luther King Day 2019, LSU art students collaborated with the LSU Museum of Art Neighborhood Arts Project, visiting a local urban area to teach art-making.

The Neighborhood Art Project partners with community groups in areas where there is a high density of children and low resources for creative activities during the summer or after school. Art graduate and undergrad students taught handbuilding, relief printing, impromptu sculpture and assemblage, painting, and more.

"I had the pleasure of collaborating with a number of grads and undergrads from the art and design program," said Grant Benoit, museum educator at the LSU Museum of Art. "It was a great opportunity for students to get out of the studio at Gardere Initiative during their MLK Day program. There were about 60 children and adults who were able experience the program."

Art students Diana Abouchcra, Luke Alexander Atkinson, Samantha Combs, Claire Kane, Maddie Norton, Ian Park, Kyle Peruch, Mary Ratcliff, Sam Rosado, Claire Samani, Carli Solomons, Sarah Ulm, Michael Whitehead, and Matt Zorn volunteered for the outreach project.

"As an artist and graduate student in the LSU School of Art, I am very interested and excited to find ways that we can work with the community to spread art to the youth and the neighborhood, and hope to incorporate it more into my practice," said MFA candidate Diana Abouchacra.

"On MLK Day 2019, I took part in LSU’s printmaking club ‘One of One Printmakers’ where we demonstrated how to make prints from styrofoam plates," she said. "The kids pressed on the plates with pencil, which leaves the surfaces scratched, allowing for the image to show up when ink is rolled on. We had our to-go press and some ink laid out to make quick and fun prints. There were also other fun art activities, such as sculpting with clay, painting, and building objects. I was honored and excited to have been part of such an enriching experience, for not only the neighborhood, but for the volunteers as well. I hope to continue volunteering and bringing more of the arts to the local community."

"I worked with the children to express what Martin Luther King Jr.’s life meant to them, and what their dreams are."
"Some of the other painting students and I spent the day painting with the neighborhood children, filling a mural sized canvas with images inspired by MLK Day," said MFA candidate Alexander Atkinson. "I worked with the children to express what Martin Luther King Jr.’s life meant to them, and what their dreams are. It was great, and there ended up being a lot of flowers."

"We’re so proud and appreciative of the students who went out in the community," said Rod Parker, director of the LSU School of Art.

"I look forward to continued collaborations with the art and design students and the education program at the museum," Benoit said.

MFA grad Grace Tessein taught a ceramics mini-camp for underserved high school students over the summer as part of the LSU Upward Bound Program, a free college preparatory program for Tara High and Woodlawn High School’s eligible 9-12 graders. Participants receive academic advising, tutoring, college and career counseling, social and cultural enrichment, opportunities to visit college campuses, and more. Upward Bound provides participants with the keys to unlock their full academic potential, to help them realize their dreams, and to help make those dreams a reality.
Kenneth Brown is a homegrown design celebrity with a cosmopolitan worldview. Born and raised in Baton Rouge, he received a bachelor’s degree in interior design from LSU in 1995. Kenneth is the principal and owner of Kenneth Brown Design, founded in 1997, with offices in Los Angeles and Baton Rouge. He has completed homes for Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens, Kristen Bell, Mia Hamm, and Nomar Garciaparra. In addition to his residential portfolio, Kenneth has completed numerous commercial projects such as A. Rudin’s Los Angeles Flagship Showroom, Cedars-Sinai’s Founder’s Room, Endeavor Talent Agency, Wood & Vine Restaurant and Bar, and hotel collaborations.
His broad exposure and popularity from his own television shows on Fine Living, TLC, and HGTV led MSN.com to offer Kenneth the role of Resident Interior Design Expert. Oprah’s O magazine featured Kenneth in her “Live Your Best Life Tour.” He has been named a top 100 designer by House Beautiful and Western Interiors. He has appeared on The Today Show, Tyra, CNN, iVillage Live, Entertainment Tonight, Good Morning America, and Fox Morning News. Kenneth was a visiting professor in the LSU School of Interior Design in 2011 and 2012. The College of Art & Design presented him the 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Here, LSU interior design student Brannon Hardy sat down with Kenneth Brown to explore his illustrious career. Kenneth gave a tour of his offices, sharing his work on some current projects, and a peek into the life of a design star.

BRANNON HARDY: What is it like being back in Baton Rouge after living and working in Los Angeles?

KENNETH BROWN: I like being back, but I do go back and forth between the two cities, so I never felt like I left Los Angeles. But my partner and I have two children, and we wanted to be closer to my family. Louisiana has this way of always pulling you back – it’s a very weird thing, and it doesn’t happen in any other state.

When I came back, I thought I’d be returning to the city I left [in the 1990s], but I came back to a totally different city. Being back in Baton Rouge is wonderful, because there’s a strong sense of community. I think in the career that we work in, design is based in community, and that’s a nice underlying connection that a lot of people feel.

There’s something about the South in general that has an eye for design. I think it’s very much at the forefront now in terms of what people are looking for when it comes to design style.

So I like being back, but things are not what I expected.

KB: When I was in design school back in ’94, which was when - I always associate the time with HGTV, because HGTV opened the doors to people understanding what design can do. It was not something that people thought about. Back in the early ’90s, the average person just didn’t have access to good design.

So when I was looking for a job, my only offer was in Los Angeles, so I took it. I moved out there, and worked for a firm that did a lot of large Las Vegas casinos, which was fun. I barely made it, since Los Angeles is an expensive city, but I enjoyed being exposed to different things.

BH: Are there certain lessons that you think designing casinos taught you about what you wanted out of design, or what you didn’t want out of design?

KB: I got a lot out of the job. It was a very structured environment, so I learned really soon about how projects were run, from some of the best designers out there. That structure is with me today in how I approach a lot of the projects I tackle.

Also, my very boss was so mean, so I always make sure I’m never that type of boss for people that work for me. I learned what I didn’t want to be. You learn what you want to do, and what you don’t want to do, in those early jobs.

BH: Do you think that moving to L.A. influenced you to open your own firm?

The universe pushes you to do things that you never thought you were going to do.

KB: You know, the universe pushes you to do things that you never thought you were going to do. We have something in common: you thought you were going to be an attorney.

BH: Right. So how did you end up choosing interior design?

KB: In high school we have these ideas of what our life is supposed to look like, based on what we know. I said, “I’ll be a doctor.” When you’re younger, you lose connection with what your passion is, and you start to get influenced by money and status. So I came to LSU and started taking microbiology classes and was failing miserably. It’s a hard pill to swallow when you realize that what you think you’re supposed to do doesn’t work.

BH: Absolutely. I’ve seen Baton Rouge growing and changing so much. Can we talk about the early part of your career: your first job or internship?

Design is based in community.
Through exploring general education requirements at LSU, I came across the class Introduction to Interior Design and thought, “a class on fluffing pillows, I can ace this.” (Laughs.)

What I soon learned is that interior design is so much more dynamic, and in a way influences people’s lives more than I ever could have as a doctor. It was never on my radar, but the universe opened that door for me, because of a failure.

I didn’t even investigate how much interior designers made. And that’s when I realized that I’d found something that really connected. It didn’t matter if I’d be rich or poor. I fell in love with this path, at LSU, because I realized that it’s so much more in depth than what you see on the surface.

When I went to LA, and I had this boss that was horrific, and I was designing this Luxor stairwell for a year, and I hit a wall. I was overwhelmed with fear of failing at the job I’d moved across the country for, and I thought I hated design. But it wasn’t that I hated design, I just hated the experience I was having with it. I felt like I was failing.

And then this woman came into our office one day, her name was Laurie Webb, and she was from Atlanta, and she recognized my accent. She and I became fast friends. We were two Southerners in Los Angeles in our own little world.

She told me, “What I really want to do is rehab old houses.” She said, “Why don’t you do this with me? We’ll get into the guts, redesign them, and sell them when they’re done.” It’s now called flipping. I would have free range of the design work. So we started working on these historic homes in Los Angeles, and I didn’t even realize what I was doing was beginning my career, building up clients of my own.

So I started my own business, out of my garage, and in that process Kenneth Brown Design was started. It just happened, just like that Introduction to Interior Design class happened.

**BH:** Were you ever afraid of your firm not taking off, and how did that impact you?

**KB:** The lesson I’ve learned, looking back is: if you have a passion that’s truly passion, you’re going to find a way to make it work, to find work.

My biggest fear was telling my parents that I wasn’t going to be a doctor. We’re all ultimately trying to make our parents proud, it’s what drives us. I see that now as a parent myself.

When I told my parents that I was going to change majors, my dad said, “When you were little, you used to go in the front yard and rake all the leaves into floorplans in the yard. You would create hallways and living rooms, and you would be out there for hours, and we couldn’t get you to come inside for dinner because you weren’t done designing your house in the yard. You used to get lost in that process. That has always been a part of you.”

**BH:** Any advice?

**KB:** You always have to keep moving forward, and you have to let go of the expectations of others, and the expectations that you have for yourself. And you have to stop comparing yourself to other people.

After I got my television show, I was at a launch that Oprah Winfrey hosted on the “Living Your Best Life” tour. Oprah said to me: “The biggest mistake I see people do is, they try to live the life of someone else. The only role you can fill is the role that have yourself.”

I can’t try to be another designer. You have to be yourself.

So that’s where it started, in the garage of my house.

**BH:** That’s awesome. Obviously it was a success.

**KB:** Thank you. I appreciate that, and yet I’m sitting here now, and I still feel like I’m working toward that success.

**BH:** It’s a never ending growth. So how did you get in to television?

**KB:** There was this new network called HGTV that I’d heard about. I was buying my house, and my real estate agent said,
"there’s this new show that the network created, called House Hunters. It focuses on the real estate agent showing you houses, and since you’re a designer you might want to do it."

In the last sequence they show the house you buy, the before and after. Between me buying it and moving in, Laurie and I had gutted it, completely redid the space, so the before and after was dramatic. Without even knowing it at the time, that show that aired became their highest rated episode of House Hunters. Every time they reran it, it peaked in ratings.

One day years later, I was working, and I got a call from the president of HGTV, who said, “We’d like to talk to you about having your own show.” I really thought it was a joke. That’s how I accidentally got my show. I didn’t look for it. Hard work paid off, and being true to who you are.

BH: So then you worked with HGTV and TLC?

KB: I did, and I did a line with Babies R Us. I continued to run my own business. I knew there was a lifespan to television. My show was very high end for the network. It was about the design process, with realistic timeframes and budgets. I played the role of a real designer.

The show came to end after 100+ episodes, and I had built my business, and the crazy thing is, you don’t realize how many people watch your show. Zac Efron’s mom loved show; he’d just bought house, so it led to me working for him. Then I worked with Kristin Bell, and other celebrities I’m not allowed to name, and it was great. That ultimately allowed me to continue what I was doing.

BH: What’s your favorite project that you’ve worked on?

KB: There have been so many. I designed for these two girls who had been homeless, and I did a makeover of their home for them. Having a beautiful place to live, they told me that helped change the trajectory of their life. I still stay in touch with them. Those are the projects that mean the most.

BH: How did LSU prepare you for a role in design?

KB: One thing that LSU did for me, was it gave a well rounded view of what you could do for your career. And it led me here. The universe will whisper in your ear and if not, it will hit you upside the head with a brick. But it all goes back to raking leaves in my yard as a little boy – and here I am.
It’s a good time to be an LSU Tiger. Looking forward with optimism and innovative thinking, LSU has identified six strategic challenges that will guide the university’s growth over the next six years. The Fierce for the Future Campaign mirrors the strategic challenges identified in *LSU Strategic Plan 2025: Leading Louisiana. Impacting the World.*

Throughout the campaign, the College of Art & Design will focus on developing five pioneering initiatives that respond to the university’s strategic challenges, while supporting students and faculty. The outset of LSU’s record-setting $1.5 billion campaign and the university’s strategic plan allows the college to consider how philanthropy can shape our future. But, as always, there are three perpetual priorities that philanthropy always supports: the students who entrust us with their education, the faculty who make it possible, and the facilities in which they create, work and learn.

**PHILANTHROPY WILL ALWAYS SUPPORT...**

**STUDENTS**

The College of Art & Design was proud to offer support for hundreds of students in the 2018-2019 academic year. This support helped students travel, buy supplies, and offset the costs of tuition. Our students are singularly dedicated to pursuing their degrees in a discipline that comes with a lot of upfront costs. From laptops with specialized software to physical tools, to the costs of printing and displaying their work, studying any of our four disciplines requires a considerable investment/financial commitment.

**TRAVEL**

Travel is one of the most enriching experiences our students can have, and one of the most expensive. Studio classes have taken trips to Paris, Rome, and Mexico City, and some students have elected to travel to Thailand and the Netherlands to study design challenges faced by other cultures.

**TIPTON TRAVEL AWARD**

Tipton Associates is a Baton Rouge-based architecture, interiors, and planning firm with a 130-year history of enhancing the quality of life for individuals and communities through its emphasis on excellent design. Tipton Associates endowed a fund for the College of Art & Design to be used for travel for university-approved research.

Led by LSU School of Architecture alumnus Ken Tipton, BArch 1981, the firm has an interdisciplinary focus; projects are about partnerships and working together with smart people to implement a shared vision. Tipton Associates approach assignments in collaborative, interdisciplinary teams that include specialists in architecture, interior design, urban planning, and landscape architecture as well as LEED Accredited Professionals: the team is the core of everything done.

In this vein, Tipton Associates wanted their firm’s gift to represent their philosophy of interdisciplinary work, which is why students from any design discipline at the LSU College of Art & Design are encouraged to submit an application for the Tipton Associates Travel Award.

Throughout the campaign, the College of Art & Design will focus on developing five pioneering initiatives that respond to the university’s strategic challenges, while supporting students and faculty. The outset of LSU’s record-setting $1.5 billion campaign and the university’s strategic plan allows the college to consider how philanthropy can shape our future. But, as always, there are three perpetual priorities that philanthropy always supports: the students who entrust us with their education, the faculty who make it possible, and the facilities in which they create, work and learn.
PROFESSORSHIPS

Our faculty don’t just teach our students everything they know about design - they’re actively researching and creating to further their fields. Ursula Emery McClure, A. Hays Town Professor, investigates, researches, and designs for changing coastal conditions, examining the changing coastline and how change between land and sea is affecting the way we inhabit the coast. Kevin Benham, assistant professor of landscape architecture who holds the Jon Emerson/Wayne Womack Design Professorship, received acclaim for his land art project Broken Kilometer, an environmental restoration initiative that acts simultaneously as a piece of art and a catalyst for increased biodiversity. Darius Spieth, art history professor who holds a distinguished faculty alumni professorship, researches the interrelationships between art, intellectual history, and economics. He recently published the book Revolutionary Paris and the Market for Netherlandish Art.

Art & Design students learn from our faculty members’ expertise and from the ever-expanding knowledge base they continue to contribute to their disciplines.

LAUNCHING A HISTORIC CAMPAIGN

On the first LSU Giving Day on April 30, 2019, Tigers everywhere gave, and generous donors multiplied our impact by creating exciting challenge gifts. The day was filled with Tiger pride, spirit, and tenacity. The goal was for 1,860 individuals to give to LSU on Giving Day: the result was 2,743 gifts, raising a total of $869,730 in 24 hours. 76 individuals supported the College of Art & Design specifically, raising $7,829.

Art & Design students demonstrated their skills for the Fierce for the Future Campaign launch on March 28, 2019, kicking off the largest and most far-reaching fundraising campaign for higher education in Louisiana. Students and faculty across disciplines showcased their work at the event.

A group of undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate ceramics art students worked together to produce the 130 vases used at the campaign launch event in less than six weeks. Using design software, five designs were created and then milled using digital fabrication technology to create plaster pour molds. Each vase was then hand-poured, cast, fired, sanded, and finally glazed. “The commission was both a unique design challenge as well as an exceptional learning and professional opportunity for our students,” said Ashley Mick, assistant director of development services.

Three printmaking students created 200 “Fierce for the Future” prints at the public celebration, demonstrating printmaking technology for event attendee, LSU alumni, students, faculty, and friends. Digital art students manned a Digital Media Arts & Engineering exhibition that gave viewers the opportunity to interact with technology such as Tilt Brush VR painting tool, which lets you paint in 3D space with virtual reality. Guests used the interactive technology to paint in a VR space, as onlookers watched their painting come to life on a monitor.

Using cutting-edge technology, teamwork, and creativity, these students helped manifest the campaign’s fierce vision on campus.

For more information go to: fierceforthefuturecampaign.org
THE CARBO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE RECRUITMENT CENTER

The generous donation of Jeffrey Carbo (BLA 1985) and his wife Wendy (HS&E ’88) made possible the renovation of the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture (RRSLA) main office, transforming it to become the Carbo Landscape Architecture Recruitment Center: an innovative, modern space that will enhance recruitment efforts and recognize fellow alumni’s and professors’ outstanding contributions to the field of landscape architecture.
“Students today think very differently than I did 35 years ago. They think like my son – he’s very observant,” Carbo said. “If you say that you’re a number one program but you don’t look like you’re the best, they’re questioning you.”

The RRSLA main office was renovated with this goal in mind: to attract the best candidates in the world with top-notch facilities that reflect the high caliber of the program. The newly refurbished spaces are sleek and modern, with an elegant design aesthetic. A documentary film was commissioned with support from several RRSLA alumni to play on the television monitors, telling the story of “Doc” Robert Reich, founder of the LSU school of landscape architecture, and educating prospective students about the profession and program.

“The idea is to use the space to recruit and develop the very best students, and educate them about the legacy of excellence in the program,” Carbo said. “Look up the most successful landscape architects in the world, and most are LSU graduates. It’s pretty amazing!”

“The new facilities are now a physical reflection of the high caliber of the school,” said Mark Boyer, Director of the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture.

“I chose the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture because it’s the best program in the country,” MLA Mai Nguyen-Thibodeaux said. “Once I visited and talked to faculty, it just solidified the decision to come to this really beautiful, welcoming place.”
JEFFREY CARBO, (BLA 1985)

Jeffrey Carbo, FASLA, serves as chair of the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture Professional Advisory Board. With more than 25 years of experience in professional practice and now principal of his own firm, Carbo provides leadership in client relations, conceptual design, budget development, design criticism, project management, and construction observation.

Carbo is a registered landscape architect in Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Since 1998 he has held professional certification by the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB), earned in part through meeting or exceeding professional experience requirements.

Carbo has spoken about his firm’s work and philosophy at numerous state, regional, and national conferences, design conferences, and garden organizations throughout the South. Carbo has overseen more than 50 award-winning projects throughout the southeastern United States.

CARBO is a nationally recognized landscape architecture and planning firm established in 1995 as Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects. Works include: residential and estate gardens; regional parks; institutional, corporate, and academic campuses; botanical gardens; environmental education venues; urban streetscapes; and large scale planning initiatives.
with Malorie Pugh, 2020 BFA candidate

I MADE THAT!

RENDERING A CHARACTER DESIGN WITH DIGITAL ART STUDENT MALORIE PUGH

BFA candidate Malorie Pugh “pursued digital art with the dream of making interesting and memorable characters for people around the world to enjoy and interact with.” She won an honorable mention at the 2018 Animation Jam, and participated at the Chillennium Game Jam 2018 in Texas. After graduation she hopes to work for a videogame company as a character designer or character modeler.
I MADE THAT!

MATERIALS
PAPER • WRITING UTENSIL • ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

ROUGHLY SKETCH OUT THE CHARACTER
you have in mind. Some people are inspired to draw while listening to music, sitting outside, or out of the blue! Whenever the feeling hits, sketch out the character. These sketches can be on paper or digital, but for the sake of this tutorial, I made a rough sketch on Photoshop.

BASE OUT THE DESIGN
I do this by looking at reference images and choosing a color scheme. Using references of both dogs and lizards, I based out the line work for my character. Once the base design is finalized, begin to define your character using the colors you chose. Color is important to setting the tone of the character. The more muted the color scheme is, the more somber the character may look. The lighter and more colorful the scheme, the character will seem more energetic or playful.

SECONDARY POSE OR EXPRESSION
Roughly base out the expression or pose and add color to highlight key elements. During this stage, I also gave my character a job as a service animal, thought about its personality, and added a collar.

FINISH THE INITIAL DRAWING + SKETCH
I fully rendered the character with and without accessories so the viewer can see the designs on the character’s back. I also added my signature (logo) to mark the character as my own design. Have fun with your designs and never be afraid to scrap a design and start over at any time during the process.
FIELD NOTES

/ Architecture
PUERTO RICO

MArch students traveled to Puerto Rico with professors Traci Birch and Marwan Ghandour to explore the architecture of San Juan and Ponce.

"Professor Manuel De Lemos, an architect who teaches in Ponce, and his son Manuel De Lemos, an architect and urbanist in San Juan and Miami, gave us an architectural survey of Old San Juan. It was a great opportunity for students to see the historic architecture of the region."

– Director/Professor Marwan Ghandour

/ Art
TEXAS

Students in Professor Kelli Scott Kelley’s performance art class attended the Experimental Action Performance Art Festival in Houston, where they saw pieces performed by artists from around the world, and visited art galleries and the Menil Museum.

“We carried the weekend over into the classroom the following Monday with discussions about the pieces we saw, and their relationship to the work the students are making for the class."

– Professor Kelli Scott Kelley
/ Landscape Architecture

BRAZIL

Professors Max Conrad and Bruce Sharky led a trip of 26 landscape architecture students to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to discover the built and natural environments of South America.

“We took a cable gondola to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain to see the spectacular view of Rio de Janeiro and visited a garden designed by Roberto Burle Marx, in the mountains above the rural town of Pedropolis. We explored the surrounding regions, taking in many new sites.”

– Professor Bruce Sharky

/ Interior Design

CZECH REPUBLIC

The LSU School of Interior Design collaborated with Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic, culminating in a design workshop for LSU and Mendel University students in Brno. The three-day workshop with American and Czech students was held at historic Krtiny Castle.

“I was very inspired by the work of Mendel University students and I believe that the students from Mendel University were inspired by our work.”

– Catherine Bloemer, BID candidate
Keeping up with Art & Design alumni

CLASS NOTES

70s

- **TIMOTHY BAIRD**, BLA 1972, was made a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). He is chair and professor of the department of landscape architecture at Cornell University. He has taught at six universities and has practiced landscape architecture on both coasts of the United States and in the Middle East.

- **STEPHEN CAPLINGER**, BLA 1974, is the president at Caplinger Design and Planning in New Orleans. Stephen is responsible for all land planning, conceptual architectural design, consultant coordination, landscape architecture, zoning entitlements, and overall project management for large-scale planned communities and mixed-use projects. He is currently partnering with Edwards Communities where he manages and directs outside consultants including architects, engineers and attorneys.

- **GEORGE STANZIALE**, BLA 1976, was elevated to ASLA Fellow. He is a senior vice president and director of the Design Studio at Stewart, an engineering, design, and planning firm in North Carolina. Stanziale spearheaded the development of the Durham Innovation District, an initiative to redevelop a zone of downtown Durham, North Carolina.

- **BOB COX**, MLA 1978, has retired in Grand Junction, Colorado. His professional career evolved around environmental review and compliance along with large land use and river basin planning at the private, state and eventually the federal level. He was elected chair of the Association of State Floodplain Managers, and ended the last 16 years of his career as Chief Regional Environmental Officer for a federal agency in Denver, Colorado. He retired from the federal government in 2008 and lives with his wife Jacquelyn Monday in Grand Junction, spending time hiking, biking, camping and with his family.

80s

- **REID FALCLONER**, BArch 1979, is a Representative, Louisiana Legislature, District 89, and a candidate for Louisiana State Senate, District 11. Falcolner has served in the State House of Representatives since 2016. He served on the St. Tammany Parish Council from 2008-2016.

- **GREG LACOUR**, BArch 1982, is director of campus planning at Louisiana State University. After a 30-year career with Gensler, he returned to LSU to direct the new Master Plan.

- **JOHN MARRO III**, BArch 1983, is owner/principal of John Marro III, AIA Architect. After graduation, he headed back to his home state of New Jersey to work in architectural and commercial development firms until opening up his own practice in 1991. In 1998, John relocated to Massachusetts. Over the last 27 plus years, the practice has worked on a wide range of projects from single-family residences to regional mall expansions. Licensed in 41 states, John provides architectural services to a large client base throughout the USA.

- **MELISSA FIRESHEETS SIEFKEN**, BID 1987, is designer/owner of M Studio Interior Design LLC in Midland, GA.
MICHAEL HAASE, BID 1991, is a certified kitchen designer with Nordic Kitchens & Baths in Metairie, Louisiana.

KYLE HUFFSTICKLER, BFA 1992, is director of the Department of Maintenance for City of Baton Rouge.

GERALD “MARTY” SIXKILLER, BFA 1992, is the IS Director of the San Antonio Development Center at H-E-B, the largest private grocery chain in the state of Texas. Prior to joining H-E-B, he spent 2.5 years as a Senior UX Manager at Rackspace, a cloud hosting company based in San Antonio, TX, leaving a software development team for customer-facing, self-service documentation. Before moving to Texas, Marty spent 17.5 years at DreamWorks Animation, where he held several different roles and earned over 20 animated feature film credits including the Academy Award® winning Shrek, Madagascar, Kung Fu Panda, Over the Hedge, Megamind, Turbo, Bee Movie, Antz, Shark Tale, How to Train You Dragon and many more.

WILLIE YANG, BFA 1993, concentration graphic design, is art director at Bluebonnet Nutrition in Sugar Land, Texas.

LANCE HENDRIX, BLA 1994, is an engineering manager at PSDesign Engineering in Baton Rouge.

ROB GRAY, BLA 1997, PLA, ASLA, is principal at Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects in Kansas City, MO.

CHARLES NEYREY, BArch 2001, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB, is architect & principal at New Orleans-based M2 Studio, ranked #11 on LSU’s 100 Fastest Growing Companies in 2017. His work was featured as ‘New Build of the Year’ 2018 in New Orleans Homes & Lifestyles. Charles’ portfolio includes a wide variety of projects ranging from multi-family, educational, healthcare, sports facilities, offices, hospitality, libraries, and residential. He is licensed and has practiced in Louisiana, Texas, and New York.

AARON HUSSEY, MFA 2002, is an artist and owner of ApH Studio in Baton Rouge. His recent public sculpture “Undercurrent” is part of the Washington State Art Commission’s permanent collection. He is currently working on a bronze for a church, consulting on a memorial park, and participating in several exhibitions in the southeast.

SHERRIE HOPE, BID 2003, is founder/owner of Modern Market, an upscale design store showcasing modern furniture and home accents in New Orleans.

INGRID ADRIANZA, BID 2004, was named as senior interior designer by Sizeler Thompson Brown Architects. She was senior interior designer for hospitality and commercial projects at Mathes Brierre Architects and previously had her own company, Adria Designs. The Venezuela native earned her bachelor of interior design and minor in art history from LSU.
BRAD ROBICHAUX, BID 2008, was recently promoted to Senior Associate at Stantec Architecture. He serves as Interior Design Leader for the Dallas office. He will present at the Neocon conference in June 2019, with the presentation titled: “Learning and Earning: Why Higher Education & Workplace Environments Are Colliding.” At Stantec, Brad has focused primarily on the education sector with projects ranging from progressive NetZero elementary school facilities to large higher education buildings such as the UT Permian Basin Engineering Building, UT Dallas Science Building, and Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine.

BILLY HARGROVE, BArch 2009, is owner of Hargrove Roofing and Construction in Shreveport, Louisiana.

JUSTIN GREENLEAF AND MICHELLE LAWSON, BArch 2009, are principals of Greenleaf Lawson in Mandeville, Louisiana.

ELYSE MARKS, BArch 2010, is a restoration architect, project manager, and studio head at CANY Architecture + Engineering, DPC in Bronxville, NY. She has been involved in the restoration of historic buildings in New York City and the surrounding area, such as The City Bank Farmer’s Trust, The Plaza Hotel, the former Coty Building, Snug Harbor Music Hall, the Armor-Stiner Octagon House, the Crown Building and the Flatiron Building.

MARY MARTINICH, MLA 2010, is a landscape architecture project manager at Seamon+Whiteside, a multi-disciplinary firm in Charleston, SC.

NICHOLAS QUINT, BFA 2010, is transportation network manager at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia.

CRISTINA NAVARRO GARVIE, BID 2011, is an occupancy planner at Jones Lang LaSalle in San Diego, California. Cristina Garvie started her career as a workplace strategist and commercial interior designer at Gensler-Houston in 2011. She earned her NCIDQ certificate in 2014. In 2017 she began work at Jones Lang LaSalle as an Occupancy Planner for a Fortune 500 company. She manages various commercial design projects within an 8 million square foot portfolio nationwide. In her spare time, she teaches an exam preparation study group for the NCIDQ exam based out of her home in San Diego.

MARY SIMPSON, BFA 2011, is a UX Designer for REI, based in Seattle, WA. Mary has worked as a front-end developer for CDK Global, a visual experience designer at Amazon.com, and is currently a user-experience designer at REI. She is passionate about accessibility design in the digital space, stewardship and activism related to increasing access to the outdoors, and using data to inform design solutions. She has had the opportunity to work for clients such as the University of Washington, Yale University, Disney, Lucasfilm, T-Mobile, LEGO, Hasbro, La Roche-Posay, Lorac, Givenchy, Cadillac, Lexus, GMC, Buick, and Chevrolet.

ALYCE HOWE DIETZ, MLA 2014, is an architect at BCB Architects, LLC in Baton Rouge.

CAMILA CARVAHLO, BLA 2016, is a landscape designer at Terrain Studio in San Francisco.

RILEIGH WATTS, BFA 2017, concentration in graphic design, is a social media & design specialist at Palisades Holdings in Greenwellsprings, Louisiana.
The driving force for my 2-D work is play. I aim to bring humor into my studio and do so using shape and color. The shapes reference the body and the colors chosen elicit child-like joy, memory, characteristics and experimentation. This body of work includes water color paintings on paper, chalk/charcoal drawings on loose canvas, oil/acrylic paintings on canvas and mixed media paintings on loose canvas. The images in these pieces are drawn from still life in studio, with the intention of rendering objects as genitalia. The dimensions of the loose canvases are referencing specific dimensions of my body. Working on unstretched canvas allows me to create compositions that give illusion of emerging space.

Separately, there are examples from a semester-long performance piece, “The Novena,” that pulls from Catholic and Hispanic traditions. This piece includes costumes, objects, words and movement. Each week I adapt the performance based on my own stages of personal development, events happening in the church, and the message of the previous performance. I create my own language that follows the format of the Catholic rosary. The performance is a nine-week project that is held at the LSU Indian Mounds each Sunday at sunset. The relationship between this performance and my Puerto Rican heritage centers around a tradition called “La Novena” that is hosted following the death of a loved one.

I use the tradition to inspire a sense of self-discovery and hope through song and prose. The performance is done in Spanglish, challenging the participants in both language and comprehension.

Historical art inspiring the 2-D body of work include Louise Bourgeois’ Janus Fleuri, Fillette and Femme Maison, Pablo Picasso’s interpretation of women using phallic imagery to sculpt and paint women’s faces, and Alberto Giacometti’s sculptures including Suspended Ball. I am especially drawn to Bourgeois, because she makes sculptural pieces that combine elements of female and male bodies to create conceptually serious, yet visually comical objects that shock the viewer. Her work provokes commentary and question. I am drawn to her phallic forms because of the humor I see, though I am aware that her intention is otherwise. Picasso directly womanizes his female figures, clearly depicting them as objects for the male to claim as his own. He cleverly uses the nose as a key structure to do so. Giacometti’s pieces are most indirect at first glance. In Suspended Ball, he abstracts and simplifies the body into two forms. I admire the playful, rough, intuitive qualities in his work and aim to pull that into my own. His paintings are done with grit and struggle, using line as a guiding force throughout each piece. I pull inspiration from the strength in line and the texture he fights to create.
MATERIALS

1 BRUSHES

2 SAFFLOWER OIL: For cleaning brushes (natural and non-toxic)

3 VEGAN OIL PASTELS & VEGAN SOFT PASTELS: (After sketching), the drawings are then water colored and used as small scale pieces for the larger paintings/drawings on unstretched canvas.

4 OIL PAINT (ACRYLIC AND WATER COLORS/GOUACHE): The colors I choose are bright and reference child-like qualities.

5 PALETTE KNIVES, SCRAPERS, SPATULAS

6 WOOD CHIPS: My work falls under the category of “naive art.” It is expressionistic and surrealist.

7 HAIR: The forms in my work reference the human body. The body for me growing up was always a very serious topic and looked at through a perfectionist lens, but my work aims to use these forms in a more witty way.

8 GLITTER & GLITTER GLUE: My work is youthful.

9 SAND: I use natural elements in my work.

10 CHARCOAL: My process begins by sketching my surroundings and intuitively responding to what I see. In this body of work, I did a series of abstract drawings of my studio.

11 SIDEWALK CHALK: My work aims to be playful, humorous and witty.

12 GLASS PALETTE

13 PENCILS: I move the viewer’s eye through the 2D space with color, line and shape.

14 BLACK INK AND BAMBOO: I look to create other worlds in my paintings and drawings and push for depth and dynamism.
ON THE COVER

ARTIST’S STATEMENT:

My work focuses on exploring the symbolism and identity inextricably intertwined with people and clothing. It centers around the exploration and communication of self, and gender, through fashion. Currently, I physically work with articles of clothing that I am either given, have found, or have bought. I create object-based portraits using the fabric as both a material artifact and tool to creating imagery. These various clothing-based portraits serve as an growing anthropological index of different style and personalized iterations of expression. They become an exploration into the complex world of self-representation, cultural and personal identity, and fashion.

BIO:

Clare Samani is an artist that specializes in printmaking, sculpture, and installation. She has a BFA in Printmaking from California State Long Beach and is a current MFA candidate at Louisiana State University. Her work has been exhibited nationally with some highlights including shows in California, North Carolina, Colorado, Minnesota, and Missouri. Political and social themes like identity, gender, and assimilation through fashion pervade Samani’s work.
Learn more at DDES.LSU.EDU

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