

the intelligent optimist

The Intelligent Optimist

The Intelligent Optimist exhibition goes to the heart of everything we do at Central Saint Martins. The work of our students is almost by default optimistic – why design the world as a worse place? – and is always shot through with a canny intelligence. This intelligence takes multiple forms: the rigour of traditional inquiry, emotional intelligence of empathy, tacit intelligence built through experience, haptic intelligence where hand meets mind, and so on. In all cases the intelligence is deployed in a productive manner to transform the status quo or to imagine new and better futures.

Last year's highly acclaimed Restless Futures exhibition at CSM explored the societal issues that designers are engaged with; this year's exhibition presents the types of designer that are needed to achieve positive change within those issues: Future Gazers, Material Explorers, Social Agents, and The Fixers.

The Intelligent Optimist has never been needed more than in the current era of political and social despondency. We are all looking for alternative visions, but not naively hopeful ones. In their various combinations of wit, rigour, lateral thinking, sensuousness, ingenuity, social engagement and all round intelligence, these Central Saint Martins graduates provide a brilliant riposte to the novelist Howard Jacobson's provocation that he "has never met an intelligent optimist."

Professor Jeremy Till
Head of Central Saint Martins
Pro Vice-Chancellor of University of the Arts London

Future Gazers

06

The Exquisite Corpse
Ava Asaadi & Camille Auclair

07

Fuji Skatepark
Milligan Beaumont

08

Ting
Bridgette Kwok Ching Chan

09

Hindu Tales Souvenirs of a Future
Anne Couvert-Castéra

10

HighLight
Hortense Duthilleux

11

Undertaker
Louis Crosperin

12

Hello, Stranger!
Han Kim

13

Legacy Scape – A place to remember
Vania Kristiani

14

The Excessively Long Shoes
Paulina Lenoir Guajardo

15

TMO: The Mars Odyssey
Alexandra Ilona Lucas

16

Blank City
Wei Shao

17

Another Skin
Akiko Shinzato

18

Trehalose Artifacts
Jaime Tai

19

Supervive
Xinyuan Xu

Social Agents

22

The Shape of the Self to Come
Yi-Chun Chen

23

Skills Exchange: Bankside Craft
Centre and Pop-up Market
Moetaz Fathallah

24

On the Shoulders of Giants
Martin Hanly

25

Project "Seen"
Emil Kozole

26

Border Crossings
Marta Monge

27

Industrious Neighbourhoods
Carlotta Novella

28

Banta
Evangeline Pesigan

29

Revolution Listen
Saeeda Saeed

30

#Flashtag
Ben Silvertown

31

62 Pendants, 62 Stories -
The Diary of a Couchsurfing Host
Yuxi Sun

32

Apple Tree Hills Cider Bottles
Dominic Upson

33

Tits Up
Misha Venter

The Material Explorers

36

Plastic Lights
Marta Borges Blanco

37

MKNB
Matty Bovan

38

Are you going to leave that there?
Stephanie Buttle

39

Teri Dancer
Persis Hajiyanni

40

XiXi
Jim (Chen-Hsiang) Hu

41

Chasing Colour
Natha Kyunprasert

42

Hyper-Opera
Kakia Konstantinaki

43

Extending the Body,
Skin and Hair
Oliver Thomas Lipp

44

Constructed Reality
Harnet Rose Paynter

45

MA Collection
Beth Postle

46

Materia Madura
Ana Cristina Quiñones

47

Material Emotion
Anna Laura Schlimm

48

Colouring Book
Gabriele Sucas

49

The Refugee and the Burden
Esna Su

The Fixers

52

Mind Wandering Bloom
Caroline Angulo

53

CastAway Furniture
Ilaria Bianchi

54

Collaborative Cally
Luiz Conceicao

55

Carpet Everything
Georgia Fleck

56

MA Collection
Hayley Grundmann

57

Auxiliary Tools
Gareth Ladley

58

Met Office Rebrand
Sidney Lim

59

Counter – Creating
Habits by Design
Sherif Maktabi

60

Buttermere Walk
High Street
Emma Twine

61

Memetry
Pan Wang

62

Delightful, Diffusing,
Disgusting,
Abay Zhmagulov

SOCIAL agents



These are the designers whose work is embedded in social and political contexts, and whose aim is to transform the status quo for the better. Often they are critical realists, starting with the given, the real, and then operating on it. Critical here does not suggest a negative turn, but rather something that starts out with an unravelling of the social and material reality of the given condition so as to be able to understand how to reshape it into something better.

Social agents expand the actions of design beyond the object, paying attention to the spatial contexts and immaterial processes in which design is always situated. The designer can often operate most productively by intervening in these processes. Sometimes these social agents use design as something whose primary purpose is to empower others, deploying their creative nous to enable other citizens to realise their hopes, using art or design as a political act to achieve transformation.

Banta Evangeline Pesigan

Banta means design or intent in Tagalog, in Chinese it is derived from Lu Ban, the master of architecture and craftsmanship; in English, it is an informal conversation or discussion involving two or more people.

.....
 @thebantaevangelinpesigan.com
 www.evangelinpesigan.com

Wood veneer, wood, metal, abaca fibre, recyclable polythene

Collaborators

Tiritias veneer loop chair developed with *Vivere Lifestyles Co. Inc.*
Pista tassel chair developed with *A. Garcia Crafts*

Photography: James Barnett

Evangeline Pesigan explores a collaborative process between design and artisan craft cultures to generate furniture, an embodiment of contemporary ideas inspired by cultural influences from the Philippines. The collection highlights a sophisticated hybrid of heritage and modern production methods that celebrate culture and community within a changing global landscape. The structural frames support a secondary woven layer characterized by unique qualities from traditional techniques of basket weaving and dwelling construction. The fluid forms and dynamic interwoven lines create a translucent environment within the chair. By engaging with artisans, Pesigan helps foster meaningful collaborations that advocate uniqueness of design and quality of craftsmanship.



Revolution Listen Saeeda Saeed

Mixed media

Below are the first 10 people who trusted Saeeda enough to project their voices on the radio transmitter as creative outlets or for more pressing social needs. Without them the project would not have been possible.

Mohammed J underground erotic poet / broadcasted: encrypted poetry **VM and BH** underground music liberation activist and Sauck dj / broadcasted: their music **Z** nuclear artist / Saudi tv / broadcasted: her art **Mr. Moon and Faisal** engineers for humanity / broadcasted: educational content outside of the Saudi wabbabi public school curriculum **Social Outlets Aziza and Malik** illegal immigrants / broadcasted: warning signs against police raids as well as broadcasting those in need of medical/financial aid **Mohammed A** truck driver / broadcasted: neighbourhood watch system **Mona** divorced housewife / broadcasted: her story of a 7 year physically & mentally abusive relationship & her advice to other women **Maha** middle school student / broadcasted: an offline rotating social media system for her friends.

Photography: James Barnett



Revolution Listen is a guerrilla platform for communication that transgresses state censorship and transmits directly from within Jeddah, Saudi Arabia's most underground safe spaces. The platform takes the shape of a DIY Pirate Radio that has a frequency of up to 300 meters. It was designed in collaboration with 10 people, each with different narratives alternate to the State Controlled Media. A three stage procedure was designed which involved embedding the Pirate Radio into an object from the person's safe space as well as designing a manual to be introduced to their trusted community. Through joint incremental collective action, broadcasts were transmitted throughout apartment buildings, neighbourhoods and local parks challenging the country's physical architectural spaces built on the notion of privacy and gender segregation. The broadcasts were aired between April 6th - 23rd, 2015.



Once broadcasting systems were developed within each of the subcommunities, Manuals were designed in order to introduce the platform to the next 10 trusted people.