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In the head up to holidays and Australia’s notorious silly season, there are a still several events worthy of being added to already busy social schedules.

Art and design colleges are graduating their next cohort of ‘creatives’. From an outsider’s perspective, this presents the opportunity to discover new talent and better understand ‘what’s new’ in emerging art circles. From the standpoint of an emerging artist, graduation is both a celebration of achievement and a move into the sometimes unknown-life of the professional practitioner.

This issue of Incubate marks this significant moment of departure in the lives of emerging artists and designers. It’s an image packed issue intended to showcase visually the great range of ideas that the College of Fine Arts (COFA) graduates (recent as well as older) are exploring.

One of these students is Jesse Chapo, an American artist completing a master’s degree at COFA. His work – spew-factory (featured on pages 62-63) – is a graphic illustration of the effects of television on the mind. He’s rendered it in a playful manner, yet like much of Chapo’s work, there is a menacing undertone. Chapo’s work is also featured in Incubate’s new online design section – Design Site Bytes (pages 60-61) – which examines the intersection of design, art, media and music in national and international websites.

Sculptor Lachlan Anthony is another artist about to finish a degree and emerge onto the Australian arts scene. His work aims to “dysfunctionalise and refunctionalise” everyday items and objects. Strongly influenced by his participation in the tripartite educational initiative (The Porosity Project) between COFA, the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, Anthony’s Death Place series (see pages 40-41) has been picked up by Sydney’s Black & Blue Gallery, along with fellow COFA graduate David Withers.

This year’s much anticipated Primavera exhibition at the MCA includes the work of two increasingly well-recognized collaborative acts; sisters Dan and Dominique Angelaro of Soda_Jerk and husband and wife duo Ms & Mr. Sydney arts writer, Tracey Clement, explores the similarly absorbing subject matter of both as they re-cast the past according to their own desires (see pages 12-13). Like other artists whose careers were launched in past Primavera exhibitions, including Shaun Gladwell, the Kingpins and Mari Velonaki (all of whom are COFA graduates), Ms & Mr and Soda_Jerk are the latest COFA grads rising in prominence through an events deliberately aimed at supporting the careers of emerging artists.

With a dearth in Sydney-based artist-run-initiatives, the opening of The Red Rattler in a warehouse in Marrickville is both exciting and important (see pages 52-53). Run by a group of five women, including COFA’s Penelope Benton, The Red Rattler is a deliberate ‘shake-up’, according to Benton, of present day conventions. If you’re interested in new ventures in performance art or you’re an artist attempting to break into the scene, this is a must see venue.

Congratulations to the 2008 graduates from Design, Digital Media, Fine Art, Art Education and Art History & Theory from COFA. We wish you the best in your future. Please do keep in touch.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Incubate and would welcome your comments.

Jo Bosken
Every year the College of Fine Arts (COFA) hosts a major exhibition for graduating art, design and media students. The ANNUAL, as it has come to be known, marks a critical moment of transition in the lives of emerging artists and designers. As they present the last projects made under the guidance of teachers and the gaze of their peers, these students begin a process of metamorphosis. Soon they will enter the professional arena and be transformed into the next generation of fine artists, media artists and designers.

After the ANNUAL, COFA’s graduates go on to do great things. This year the Archibald prize, one of Australia’s oldest and most prestigious art awards, was won by Del Kathryn Barton. She joined fellow COFA alumni Wendy Sharpe and Adam Cullen. Internationally acclaimed media artists Rosemary Laing, Shaun Gladwell and Susan Norrie all represented Australia in the 2007 Venice Biennale. In 2008, Gladwell will return alongside two other COFA grads Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro. Designer Trent Jansen was invited to this year’s prestigious Milan Furniture Fair. The phenomenally successful Dinosaur Designs team, Liane Rossler, Stephen Ormandy and Louise Olsen, started their business while they were still COFA students. And the list goes on and on.

The COFA ANNUAL 08 includes stunning examples of: animation, ceramics, drawing, digital imaging, environments, graphics, installation, interactive media, jewellery, motion graphics, objects, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, sound, textiles, and video.

Don’t miss an amazing opportunity to see the future of Australia’s creative talent.

COFA ANNUAL 08
Opening Night: Wednesday, November 26, 6-8pm.
Running: Thursday - Sunday, November 27-30, 10am – 4pm.

LOCATIONS
College of Fine Arts (UNSW), 118 Oxford St, Paddington, Kudos Gallery, 6 Napier Street, Paddington.

CAN’T SEE THE EXHIBITION BUT WANT A CATALOGUE?
Call us on (02) 9385 0744 or (02) 9385 0705.
Primavera was founded in 1992 by the Jackson family in honour of Belinda Jackson, a creative person who, at 29, died much too young. Every spring, the Museum of Contemporary Art hosts the exhibition as a celebration of young Australian creative talent. In its 17-year history, Primavera has gained something of a reputation as a fast track to success for artists under the age of 35.

In the last five years alone, Primavera has helped launch the careers of dozens of talented and ambitious artists including David Griggs, The Kingpins, Sangeeta Sandrasegar, Mari Velonaki and Shaun Gladwell. Soda_Jerk and Ms & Mr are next in line, alongside nine other hot young things selected by guest curator Hannah Mathews for the 2008 exhibition.

Mathews draws parallels between Soda_Jerk and Ms & Mr through their irreverent, revisionist approach to the past. Both duos use video footage as raw material, which they cut and paste in order to, as Matthews puts it, “re-write history to their own satisfaction”.

In Primavera, Ms & Mr present the next chapter in their continuing Videodromes for the Alone project wherein they each use digital trickery to insert their adult partner into videos from their childhood archives. “We retroactively collaborate with each other’s past selves,” they explain. They also present high school drawings by Ms of a man that bears an uncanny resemblance to Mr, part of the duo’s attempt to find the “precocious and teenage precogs in ourselves”. In their new work, Ms & Mr have become increasingly focused on manipulating time. Next year is their 10th anniversary, “so,” they say, “we’re figuring out how to send one of us into the future.”

Soda_Jerk also have grand plans for messing with the time-space continuum. In Primavera, they present three episodes from their latest video, Astro Black: A History of Hip-Hop, a heady combo of radical racial politics, ‘Afrofuturist’ science fiction mythologies, pop culture and funky sounds. All of Soda_Jerk’s videos are constructed from existing footage, wilfully pirated and reassembled to create an original narrative. According to Dan, “We see remixing as a radical form of historical practice. We are rewriting history and altering the future.”

It remains to be seen whether or not Ms & Mr can actually travel through time or if Soda_Jerk can significantly alter the flow of history. But one thing does seem certain, the artistic future of these collaborative duos is bound to be bright.

Placentia Clement

Ms & Mr both have COFA Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) degrees and are currently undertaking a collaborative masters degree at the College. DOMINIQUE ANGELO is completing her Bachelor of Art (Honours) degree at COFA, while DAN ANGELO is completing her PhD at UNSW focusing on remix cultures.

Primavera 2008 is currently on at the Museum of Contemporary Art and runs until 30 November. www.mca.com.au
Although it is frequently assumed to be an impartial medium, photography is often used to tell a specific story. With a critical eye on the history of photographic representations of Indigenous people, as noble savages, dying races and trouble makers, the exhibition traces the impact of Modernism on 20th century Australian design. Spanning the years 1917–1967, the exhibition traces the international movement’s influence on local architecture, design, visual arts and popular culture through five action packed decades and two world wars. The Powerhouse’s extensive collection of Modernist artefacts is complimented by interactive displays, key artworks and films.

**Modern Times**

November 21 - February 22

Modern Times traces the impact of Modernism on 20th century Australian design. Spanning the years 1917-1967, the exhibition traces the international movement’s influence on local architecture, design, visual arts and popular culture through five action packed decades and two world wars. The Powerhouse’s extensive collection of Modernist artefacts is complimented by interactive displays, key artworks and films.

**Half Light**

Portraits from Black Australia

January 30 - April 5

Half Light takes charge of the lens and of their own representation. The exhibition brings together over 140 works as an expression of contemporary Indigenous life in Australia.

**Abundant**

March 29 - June 7

Abundant is a selection of works from Australia’s contribution to the 11th Architecture Biennale held in Venice, 2008. According to Australian Pavilion co-Creative Director Kersten Thompson, “Our big picture idea is to explore this amazing laboratory that is Australian architecture. Our capacity for hybrids is amazing.” Interpretative models, ranging from abstract forms to architectural fragments, will showcase what Australian practices are currently doing. Projections of historical buildings will include both well-known icons and anonymous structures.

**Yayoi Kusama**

Mirrored Years

February 25 - June 7

Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama is known for her fixation with bright polka-dots. A self described “obsessive artist”, Yayoi’s paintings, collages, soft sculptures, performance art and environmental installations reveal her preoccupation with repetition, pattern and accumulation. This major exhibition features selected work spanning 40 years of this internationally acclaimed artist’s prolific practice, including a recent body of 88 paintings made over the last three years.
The Biennale of Sydney is one of the biggest events on the Australian art scene calendar. Every two years local artists share the spotlight with their international peers. It is a dramatic spectacle that shares many parallels with the theatre: the artists play starring roles, the curator directs, and backstage there are countless people making it all happen.

This year, art education students from the College of Fine Arts (COFA) UNSW were invited to play a key role in the Biennale’s behind the stage team. Acting as writers and publishers, they were able to provide critical support to help further the important role of the Biennale in inspiring and engaging young audiences and fostering a lifelong interest in contemporary art.

In connection with the Biennale of Sydney’s Public Program and Education section, seven COFA art education students produced a special newspaper targeting visual arts high school students in years 9-12. The newspaper proved a chance for COFA students to put their theory into practice by communicating in an engaging way with younger viewers. Together, they brainstormed ideas, researched the participating artists, wrote articles and contributed to the design and layout.

The COFA students also had the chance to work with the head art teachers in NSW high schools and education officers from major art institutions, enabling them to see how professionals construct educational documents to address the requirements of students and teachers. Sally Leaney, one of the COFA art education students, found this the most enjoyable part of working on the newspaper, saying, “meeting many other people who are practising in the field of art education broadens my experience”.

According to Kim Snepvangers, Head of School, Art History and Art Education, the project, “provided a good opportunity for students to turn academic work into a real world scenario”. The Biennale student newspaper was a classic win/win scenario as it benefited younger viewers of the exhibition by unpacking the complex theme: Revolutions – Forms that Turn. The 24-page newspaper sorted the works of more than 180 artists into six major topics, and while the language was designed to be simple, it was also thought-provoking.

Dr Dougal Phillips, the Public Program and Education Manager of the Biennale of Sydney, thought the COFA students’ involvement added extra value to the project, saying, “the art education students provide a useful link between more senior teachers and venue staff and the school students themselves. They are closer in age and perspective to the target audience, and so their contribution is not only creative and expansive on the topic of the Biennale, but also helps in targeting the publication to its readers.”

According to Dr Phillips, educators at various venues, as well as high school teachers and students, have all expressed very positive reactions to the newspaper as an innovative resource for education. In fact, the project was such a success that COFA’s School of Art History and Art Education has embarked on another collaborative venture with the Biennale education office, this time producing an information package aimed at high school teachers. More good news for students.
With his signature self-deprecating charm, Rodney Love introduces himself on his blog as “an over-educated and under-funded internationally-ignored visual artist who lives and works in Sydney, Australia”. It’s a description he may need to amend in light of recent events, with his inclusion in the 18th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial and a just-published book suggesting that plenty of people are paying attention.

It’s best known for his unusual use of materials, which have included used socks and human hair, Love is an artist with a deep interest in memorials. He collects and meticulously catalogues traces of the individual - belongings, body parts and names - transforming them into intriguing and often beautiful art objects.

It was four years ago, while undertaking his Master of Fine Arts degree at the College of Fine Arts (COFA), that Love first put out a call for people to donate their socks, eliciting an enthusiastic response from the community (and journalists too, who delighted in penning headers like “Put a sock in it”). A year later, he turned his attention to hair (one writer now heralding “Sock Jock Goes to Hair”), often rummaging through the rubbish bins of boutique salons to gather his art materials. Always resourceful, while the Artist in Residence at UNSW in 2005, he even had his hairdresser set up a barber chair at market day, offering free haircuts in return for the students’ off-cuts.

“The collecting is a big part of the work,” Love says, but he also points out that the spinning, weaving, sewing and plaiting of his materials are each “ridiculously long processes”. His ambitious 10-panel work Six Degrees, included 10 samples of hair per panel, woven into a long pieces of textile, striped in shades of red, black, brown and blonde. Recording the names of each donor alongside their hair, Love set out to weave connections between the individual and the mass, explaining: “these woven forms were an embodiment of the metaphor ‘the fabric of society’.”

It’s a concept he discusses in his publication, *I am Because We Are: Names and their Meaning in Art & Memorials*, a reworking of his MFA thesis which can be ordered online.

The artist also continues to explore the conceptual and material properties of hair in the work he is crafting for the upcoming Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial. Curated by Valerie Kirk, the Biennial includes 25 Australian artists (five COFA students and affiliates among them) and brings together the best in current textile practices, situating the work as an experimental thread of contemporary art practice.

“You need to have the enjoyment or the passion for art, regardless of recognition,” Love says. “For me it’s a simple equation of ‘I’d like to be more well-known so that I can sell my art and therefore make more art, but not necessarily because I want to be famous’.” In fact, the artist firmly believes that being in the spotlight is no guarantee of long term success. For his next ‘memorial work’, Love has his eye on the changing roll-call of names on the Australian Art Collector magazine’s annual ‘50 Most Collectable Artists’ list, asking provocatively, “who was collectable 10 years ago and where are they now?”

Dominique Angeloto

**MOMENTUM: THE 18TH TAMWORTH FIBRE TEXTILE BIENNIAL**

is on at Tamworth Regional Gallery, November 15 - January 18. www.tamworthregionalgallery.com.au
It’s easy to see why Marc Newson is an inspiration to many young designers. Newson is himself relatively young, having achieved by his early 40s what many spend a lifetime attempting. His designs have edge and wit. His chairs, lights, glassware, watches, clothes are sought after internationally and he’s prolific. Each new design hit serves to further his creative momentum.

It’s no wonder Newson is credited by Oliver Billington as having sparked the idea for his new sculptural lighting system. It was the linear pattern of a Newson G-Star textile that drove Billington’s initial design concept. The final Billington design, however, has taken on a life of its own, and has in all likelihood launched the career of a new Australian design talent.

Billington, who is in his final year of a design degree at COFA UNSW, was after a way to unite his various passions. He’s a country boy, raised on a NSW alpaca farm, who loves spontaneity and adventure. He’s also a self-professed handy-man who has always enjoyed building and fixing things. Then, after moving to Sydney and starting university, Billington discovered an interest in the ‘design space’, particularly in the areas of environments and object design. These three interests — adventure, building things, and the nature and effect of design — have shaped this emerging designer’s goals and ambitions.

Billington’s modular lighting system, Flight, which employs LEDs to control brightness and colour, has been a virtual overnight success. His concept and background research were done in a lighting design class at COFA, run by senior lecturer Karina Clarke. Billington says he “liked the idea of making a pattern 3D, taking it from the 2D and giving it new dimension”. He also understood the importance of giving the design his own signature style. While referencing Newson, he knew he needed to make the outcome distinctly ‘Billington’ and so he honed his aesthetic, which he describes as “geometric, 3D, sleekness”.

Clarke and Billington soon realized that his prototype could be installed on an entire wall of a nightclub or other space, acting both as mood lighting and sculptural artwork. He approached the owners of the Cruise Bar (where he was working at the time) in Circular Quay to talk about featuring the light in their space. They liked the idea.

Simultaneously, Clarke spoke to the award winning Australian manufacturing company Planex, who have a reputation for innovation and supporting new designers, about manufacturing the product. They too liked it and manufactured a version of Flight to be presented at the prestigious In Design 08 exhibition.

Billington, while excited about the response to his Flight design, is also interested in what others are doing in design and lighting internationally. On the back of Flight’s success, Billington has won two scholarships to travel, live and study overseas for a year. He’s selected Milan, Italy as his destination, saying “I’ve got the mindset that I can go there and immerse myself in a country where design is a given; a part of life”.

No doubt when Billington returns home to Australia, it will be the next chapter this adventurer’s design success story.
In a society that often draws boundaries between artists and designers, it’s interesting to speak with someone who understands, although with some hesitation, that she is regarded as both. Abi Alice has been a practising artist for almost ten years and a successful and internationally recognised designer since 2005. She’s just completed a new sculptural and painting series during a residency at Sydney’s ArtSpace, which assesses in typical Alice-style, the creative potential of lines, shapes and mathematical patterns. She’s also finished her third product, the Harmonic basket, for the iconic Italian design factory – Alessi – following the success of her Resonance centrepiece.

Examination of her portfolio reveals an exact and deliberate creative excellence. Alice is a painter, a photographer, a sculptor and a product designer. Key elements of expression cross the disciplines and give all of her work a signature look and feel. She says that there is an intricate relationship between her 2D and 3D work and suggests that it could have to do with a primary interest in “form and colour and how we experience and value paintings and sculptural objects”.

Alice’s unexpected move from art into design began in 1995 when, as an undergraduate fine art student at COFA, she took part in a workshop taught by Alberto Alessi. Forty students from Singapore and Australia were selected to participate in the project. Unsure what to expect, Alice was immediately struck by Alessi’s philosophy on art and creativity. He articulated something that Alice was exploring in her own arts practice as she sought to bring visual concepts from her paintings into sculptural formations. In his workshop, Alessi did not separate the purpose and outcomes of design from that of art. Instead he spoke, Alice recollects, of “bringing art and poetry into the design process, production and consumer culture. It was to become a happy collaboration between an artist-come-new-designer and a world-leader in the area of product design. The Resonance centrepiece was Alice’s first piece produced through the Alessi design factory. It’s a large shallow stainless steel dish (7cm high and 59.7cm in diameter) constructed from one sheet of material, with three folds. The object originated from a geometric formula Alice used to create her associated Resonance drawing and painting. (A similar methodology is frequently used also in her sculpture.) The product sits seamlessly in the two worlds of Alessi design and Alice art.

With its sleek polished surface and simple linear formation, the Resonance product has a sculptural appearance. It is clearly of the house of Alessi. Alongside other Alessi products such as Pio Manzu’s Cronotime table clocks, Philippe Starck’s Juicy Salif (the classic lemon juicer resembling a three legged steel spider), and Joanna Lyle’s egg shaped Ovo kitchen container, featuring a colourful amoeba shaped handle – Alice’s Resonance centrepiece holds its own. It is a purposeful, yet sculptural, stainless steel object; a methodically designed industrial product suggesting a biological or mathematical sequence. Resonance, like Cronotime, the Juicy Salif and Ovo, attests to a unique vision that has kept the Alessi brand desirable and competitive for almost a century. The Alessi factory (otherwise known as the House of Happiness or the Fun Factory) deliberately keeps production levels low, and experimental ideas, craftmanship and world exposure high.

Perhaps as a testament to the impact of Alessi’s vision, and to Alice’s genuine curiosity about the potential of a creative concept in both the worlds of art and design, Alice ventured to Italy. She showed up at the company headquarters in Cruninallo, close to Omegna, on Lake Orta, and chanced a meeting, unsure if Alessi was even there. As it happens, he was, and as Alice says, “I shared my work with him and he liked it”. So began their discussions about the design process. Meeting and listening to Alessi helped Alice formulate a clearer vision for the outcomes of her visual arts practice. Until this workshop, Alice had defined herself as a visual artist (a perspective she still holds today). But through Alessi, she says, she discovered a shared excitement of what creativity could be as art is transformed through design and vice versa.
While she admits that it has been a “surreal” buzz to see and hear about her products on display in shops and galleries around the world, Alice takes greater pleasure in experiencing the full translation of a creative idea: from a thought or a feeling, to a drawing, painting and sculpted form. She is at heart an artist. Fuelled by an intense interest in the process of creativity and beautiful things, Alice has travelled the world to see and make art. She says, “I’ve made choices about the life I want to lead. I know there are things I won’t have, but these are not the directions I want to head. I aim to keep my life as simple as possible.”

Similar to a designer who reduces a concept down to a simple yet effective core, Abi Alice’s decisions in life and art demonstrate the paradoxical maxim that ‘less is more’. Except, as Alessi (and Robert Venturi) would agree, when ‘less is a bore’ and one requires another trip to Italy.

Notable Australian artists and designers including: Akira Isogawa, Minnie Pwerle, Dinosaur Designs, Julie Paterson, Catherine Martin are united by having adapted their art for the floor in collaboration with Designer Rugs, one of Australia’s leading rug makers. In 2008, design students majoring in textiles from the College of Fine Arts (COFA) were invited to compete for a chance to join this celebrated list. The challenge was accepted with alacrity.
"To have your design made into something is awesome," says Lia Pielli, senior designer for Designer Rugs. "It never had the opportunity to have my design produced when I was a student at university. It's very rare." Following an intense selection process, six design students were chosen for having created designs and presentations equal to industry standards. The challenge given to students was to design a series of rugs that created a dialogue with the venue, its activities and audiences. The judges were looking for something that broke away from the usual repetition of ideas and motifs, not just a pretty picture, but a design that caught the eye while still being saleable.

"The integrity of the COFA designs was very good and well though out," says Pielli, who considers the work to be of the highest standard so far encountered in working with a tertiary institution. All six students’ designs were manufactured by Designer Rugs and the company was so impressed by results that it hopes to repeat the project next year.

Harriet Watts, a third year textiles student, won the competition with a rug designed for the NSW Writers’ Centre at Rozelle, using the rich textures of a large magnolia grandiflora in the garden as inspiration. She used a contemporary aesthetic with strong references to Victorian textile design, to connect the interior space of the building to its historical, geographical and cultural contexts.

"There’s something really beautiful about the winning work," Pielli says. "It’s well resolved and interesting that Harriet went entirely to the source to get her inspiration. The colours of her rug (entitled Magnolia Six of Six) are well chosen. You don’t think that it could have been pushed a bit further when you look at it; it’s such a solid design." Finalist Lara Juriansz had been intrigued by the idea of using topographical maps to suggest pathways at the Ngadu Hostel in Leichhardt while another student, Bei Sun, devised a complex rug (entitled Repton) for the Mitchell Library. Rachel O’Loghlen’s mostly red Covil was designed for the Sydney International Airport first class lounge.

Anabel Dean, photo by Sue Blackburn.

Marion Gelbart’s mostly red Covil (devised for the Mitchell Library) and Rachel O’Loghlen’s mostly yellow Nepton (for the Red Cross Blood Bank) were striking visual show stoppers. O’Loghlen says her rug was intended to be hung on the ceiling to give life to the room and distract people while they donate blood.

"I thought O’Loghlen’s yellow one was fabulous," Pielli says. "It’s outrageous. Very high impact, and you want that in an exhibition. You want people to be drawn into the showroom saying, ‘Wow! That looks fantastic’; because even if they then say ‘It’s too scary and I can’t put that on my lounge room floor’, they might go for something else."

Pielli recalls a rug by Dinosaur Designs called Banana Splits which some thought would never sell because it was so yellow. They were wrong. "There’s an apartment in the Horizon building looking really groovy with that rug. It would look spectacular in such a place."

"The problem is that these days almost every place you go to after leaving college is going to have a different skill base and it’s impossible to teach all of them," he explains. The rug project was one of several ways to expose students to a real design situation. Evocative pattern and colour combinations are one thing, but the design has to be propitious when scaled up. Students have to use their creative skills to resolve commercial problems as well as working within a limited range of yarns and colours to get the economics right. "My job is really like taking a ship to port: I know roughly where it’s got to go, but students meander, and you’ve got to point them in the right direction," says Stone.

The individuality of each student was encouraged and each rug reveals a different approach. Some are organic, others are architectural, and that’s where design stands at the moment. "The students sometimes pick up on the zeitgeist of what’s happening and not only on the street level but in the commercial arena," says Stone. What works in the end has to do with colour and balance within the rug. Much like a painting, there needs to be enough going on but not too much, the colour must be inspiring and different.

Harriet Watts, photo by Sue Blackburn.

As winner, Watts is allowed to keep her rug, placed for now in the family room where unfortunately “our dog has rolled all over it with his white hair”. Designer Rugs bought the rights to reproduce and sell the six selected designs while the remaining finalists, having been paid a one-off designer fee, were given the option of buying their rugs for a discounted price. According to Stone, "It’s all very well seeing something on paper but what you end up with is very different from the two dimensional form when actually produced into the finished product. You realize there is a production cycle and a way of doing things.”

"The individuality of each student was encouraged and each rug reveals a different approach. Some are organic, others are architectural, and that’s where design stands at the moment. "The students sometimes pick up on the zeitgeist of what’s happening and not only on the street level but in the commercial arena," says Stone. What works in the end has to do with colour and balance within the rug. Much like a painting, there needs to be enough going on but not too much, the colour must be inspiring and different."
The Living Treasures project is a refreshing antidote to our popular culture which is obsessed with youth, and enamoured with newness, convenience and disposability, and which equates age and experience with old and boring. Williamson proves that a lifetime's dedication to a field doesn't mean you are stuck in a rut. Even after three decades, she is still excited by textiles, "I am continually amazed by what I can do with weaving. It is incredibly fascinating to shift traditional areas and explore new things."

The Living Treasures series was initiated in 2005 by Object: Australian Centre for Craft and Design and Craft Australia. The project taps into the tradition of the Japanese model, established in the mid 1950s, which honours the skills of senior master craftsmen and the intangible, yet invaluable, contribution that they make to culture. It provides some much needed balance to the National Trust list of 100 Australian Living Treasures which includes the likes of the relatively youthful actor Russell Crowe and tennis pro Pat Rafter, but Margaret Olley is the only fine artist and there are no craftspeople or designers. Williamson's fellow living treasures include: Les Blakebrough: ceramics (2005); Klaus Moje: glass (2006); Marian Hosking: jewellery (2007); Jeff Mincham: ceramics (2009) and Robert Baines: gold and silversmithing (2010). One a year, over a six year period, each craftsman's practice is documented by a lushly illustrated monograph and their work is showcased in a solo exhibition, which tours nationally for two years.

Respected craft theorist Dr Grace Cochrane has written the text for the book which examines Williamson's influences, looks at her past and celebrates her career so far and, opening in November 2008, Williamson's solo show of new work at Object Gallery presents another chapter in her longstanding enquiry into the unique properties of cloth.

Williamson is deeply fascinated by the structure of cloth and the way in which it absorbs memories and records experiences through wear, tear and repair. She has conducted intensive studio based research into the history of darning, and the place that it occupies in people's memories. While traditional darning is meant to be invisible, a clever and thrifty way of extending the life of a garment, Williamson draws attention to this process and celebrates it, saying, "the very act of darning transforms the character of the cloth as the darning threads are inter woven into the fabric; they impact and distort the surface becoming visible, like an embellishment or decoration on the garment."

In her Living Treasures exhibition, Williamson extends her ongoing research into the particular qualities and traditions of textiles in both wearable wraps and wall pieces. While still researching and referencing disintegration and repair in her work, she has embarked on a new direction, turning her attention to "the protective and enclosing properties of cloth". Williamson has begun weaving long tubular forms in her Loop series, which have distinctive structures created by using the very different inherent properties of leather and silk. These new pieces explore the possibilities of wearability and blur the boundaries between textiles and jewellery. The potential for containment and protection, within the structure of Williamson's wearable loops, in turn forms the starting point for large wall pieces, evidence of dynamic and vital experimentation.

Tracey Clement

Liz Williamson is the Head of the School of Design Studies at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW.

Well-known weaver, Liz Williamson, was in 2008 added to a list of craftspeople recognised by the Living Treasures project. The title Living Treasure celebrates Williamson's thirty-year career in textiles and her ongoing passion and dedication to her craft as an advocate, educator and practitioner.
The College of Fine Arts would like to congratulate Trent Jansen, COFA design graduate, who is one of two winners of the 2008 Design Discovery Award, presented by Bombay Sapphire.

Jansen has been living in The Netherlands since August this year where he has been working with Marcel Wanders of Moooi and Casper Vissers. He won the prize for his entry Kissing Pendants, two identical pressed metal light shades. When the lights are turned off, they hang separately side-by-side. The two shades are attracted to each other by a magnetic device that holds them together - as if they are kissing - when the lights are turned on.

This is the sixth year of the competition, and the first time the judges decided to equally split the $30,000 award prize money between two finalists.

Jansen shared the design award with Ilias Fotopoulos for his Listen and Record: Wallpaper in Braille.

The 2008 Vogue Living People’s Choice Award was awarded to COFA Design graduate Elliot Rich for her Urban Billy seven-piece tea set.
IDEAS + ART + DESIGN

what's happening

IDEAS + ART + DESIGN

what's happening

Cofa Annual: Screening Time Based Art

Masters Coursework Applications due

UNSW/Cofa Semester One Commences

Cofa Alumni Meet Janet Laurencie

From Lausanne to Beijing: The 5th

Cofa Annual Preview for Cofa Alumni

the glorious u

alison clouston and boyd

nd daniel kirkwood

katherine olstone

MMa robertson

UNSW O-Week Commences

liz williamson

Cofa Annual

Watch this Space

keith childsey

simon taylor

tracey clement

ideas

uaC offers released

brett east

dirty hands 2

kurt shranker

shannon field

printmaking 08

Cofa Annual

leading lights

zanney begg

Cross roads: belem letti, Joel beerde and James lyle

Cry from the grass boxwood

white

UNtil november 14.

liwan na chan: red in black and

UNtil december 13.

UNSW Info Day @ UNSW Kensington campus.

Key student dates

february 18

alex kiers, dara gill, daniel kirkwood: an artistic investigation

January 27

Rochelle haley: land incorporated

January 30

Jan

270 Devonshire St, Surry Hills, (02) 9698 3200.

Ray Hughes Gallery

19 Meagher St, Chippendale, (02) 9690 2601.

19 Meagher St, Chippendale, (02) 9690 2601.

tinshed gallery

City Rd, University of Sydney, 148

March 25

Until March 14. @ Kudos Gallery.

SiMoN taylor: articulatiNg the grid

 Until March 7. @ Kudos Gallery.

Keith Chidzey: shadow and silence

Until February 28. @ GRANTPIRRIE Project Space.

Clare milledge

February 5

Until February 14. @ Kudos Gallery.

Paul Dorenbosch, Dr. L. Subramaniam

February 13

Until February 21. @ Tin Sheds Gallery.

Chauvel cinema

Until March 27. @ red box Gallery, royal
descent
eMMa robertson: Ascendent and

February 17

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A new venue called The Red Rattler has just opened its doors in Sydney’s inner west. Citizens of a certain vintage will associate this term with City Rail’s creaky, pre-Tangarra carriages. But don’t get the wrong idea. The Red Rattler is not a space for train spotters to congregate over a nice cuppa. The venture is an initiative of Penelope Benton and four like-minded friends. As she explains, “It’s not really about trains, it’s more of a metaphor for what we are trying to do. We are trying to shake things up and we are a bit raw, a bit retro.”

Left: Penelope Benton, 2008. Photo by Glen Wilke.
The Rat (as it is already affectionately known) was born out of the homespun truth, if you want something done properly, you have to do it yourself. Benton and her partners: Teresa Avila, Patsy Black, NDY and Meredith Williams are all active members of what she calls, “Sydney's queer feminist anarchic inner edge.” As veterans of the performance/cabaret/gurlesque scene, they got tired of seeing alternative spaces closed down at the whim of greedy landlords and over zealous police. They decided to open their own venue and do it right.

The five women have purchased a warehouse in Marrickville and The Red Rattler is a council approved, liquor licensed, 100% legal venue with a vision. Not only is it a not-for-profit community orientated space, but a three year renewable energy and sustainability plan has already been put into action. As Benton explains, “People just aren’t thinking about what they are spitting out into the world and what they are sucking up. We wanted to do something that would make us feel good about running a venue... We are aiming to create the greenest and most sustainable space of its kind in Sydney.”

Penelope Benton is the Manager of the COFA student cooperative Arc. She is also a graduate of the Master of Art Administration degree at UNSW, Sydney. The Red Rattler is located at 6 Faversham St, Marrickville and opened on 31 October 2008 with Dark Carnivàle. Visit www.redrattler.org

Above: The Red Rattler crew, from left: Teresa, Patsy, NDY, Meredith and Penelope, 2008. Photo by Glen Wilke.
Christopher Hodges exemplifies a model of the artist as fully engaged, complex, multi-dimensional, and able to move effortlessly between the creation of art, the business of art, the love of art and the use of art as a powerful tool for understanding and interchange.

Hodges is someone who nurtures art and talent and who recognises that the art market, in all its complexity, can be a beneficial tool.

After being an exhibiting artist for more than 27 years, Hodges is now even better known as the Director of Utopia Art Sydney, located in the Danks Street Waterloo arts precinct, but which began more than 18 years ago under the flight path on Parramatta Road in inner west Stanmore.

A chance meeting at a dinner led to Hodges’ first sale of Aboriginal artworks and his first exhibition, in his own house, of art from the Central Australia Media Association (CAMA). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Hodges quickly developed strong links to Central Australian Aboriginal communities and artists, including emerging artist communities such as Utopia, north east of Alice Springs, and Papunya Tula, to the west. But because Hodges was also an exhibiting artist himself, with a real interest in fostering contemporary Australian art, he has continued to represent and exhibit both non-Indigenous and Indigenous artists, and his exhibitions of Aboriginal artists have been on equal terms with other contemporary artists.

Over the last 18 years, Utopia Art Sydney has played an absolutely central role in the development of the appreciation of Aboriginal art, both in Australia and overseas, often as the source of the first Aboriginal contemporary works acquired by major private and public collections.

Because Hodges has always approached Aboriginal art with respect for the artist and their work, he can be distinguished from both the commercially-focussed Aboriginal art market, which stretches from tourist shops in Darling Harbour, through job-lot entrepreneurs, to the major auction houses with their concern with “investment returns”, and community organisations and their galleries.

From the beginning, Utopia Art Sydney presented solo shows by artists such as Emily Kngwarreye and Gloria Petyarre (both from Utopia), positioning them as contemporary artists and as part of what Hodges termed a “New Australian Art”. For Hodges their work primarily represents neither investment nor simply “culture”, but the complex expression and development of an individual vision. The influence of Hodges’ pioneering work in this approach can be seen in the recent exhibition which travelled to both Japan and the National Museum in Canberra entitled Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye. Hodges has said of this ground-breaking exhibition, “this is an opportunity to scrutinise the best of her work as a body of art”, helping ensure that Kngwarreye is seen as an artist and not simply an economic phenomenon.

The importance of ethics, and respect for the artist and artwork has been central to Hodges’ career. The Melbourne Art Fair Foundation, which he has chaired, has as one of its principles, the ethical representation of living artists, which moves the Fair away from being another auction house where works are exchanged on expectations of rising value, without any return to the artist. Hodges also has played an important role in the education of buyers and collectors to move beyond capital appreciation, getting a bargain and following the latest hype, to the exhilarating reward of great art. For Hodges, ethics is not just a luxury extra. As he stated to ABC radio, those who buy for investment alone, for nothing other than money, actually run a risk, “they’ll get a big shock”.

Christopher Hodges’ own career has been marked by a commitment to, and passion for, contemporary Australian art, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Although clearly referencing the Utopia Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory, the name of his gallery also alludes to his ideals for a world in which art is collected by those who love it, irrespective of economic gain.

Graham Forsyth

CHRISTOPHER HODGES

Christopher Hodges graduated from COFA – then known as the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education – with a Diploma in Art Education in 1977.

LEFT Christopher Hodges, 2008. Photo by Britta Campion.
The allure of six young and energetic artists working together to promote their art and a beautiful art publication, *Midnight Morning*, cannot be overestimated. Matt Huynh, Haline Ly, Will Leong, Tak Tran, Kevin Vo and David Tang are Popperbox – a hip collective of artists based in the Canley Vale and the Fairfield West area of Sydney.

Their website is composed of three easy-to-navigate and distinct sections - Popperbox (Projects), Upcoming Events and Popstars (Artists). These sections are further divided into external and internal links to each of the artist’s websites, their favourite videos on YouTube and photo albums on Flickr which showcase the group’s artistic practices and projects. The blog is a hub of information, with archived thoughts and images of current projects. Its unexpected content is a must for those interested in lesser-known but interesting art and related projects.

**The Cool Hunter**

A website dedicated to finding out about the cool things in life, perfect for those who love a jump start on what’s hot tomorrow. The Cool Hunter covers everything from the most innovative designs in prayer rugs to the best and hidden art fairs and most creative objects on a global level.

**Throw Shapes**

This bright orange splashed site aims to entertain, amuse, and distract. *Throw Shapes* is a fortnightly arts and music online zine that reviews albums and art works. The design of the site is very graffiti-esque and targets a certain young and street press wise audience. The blog’s style plonks each article down in a list format making for easy scrolling and reading. The art content is aimed predominantly at Sydney’s Eastern Suburbs, showcasing quality but lesser-known Sydney artists along with some well-known international exhibitions coming to Sydney galleries.

**Chapolito**

Jesse Chapo is a San Diego (California) based artist, who came to Sydney on an exchange program with COFA. His portfolio styled site, Chapolito, features artist interviews (taken from published journals), details on openings and works for sale. The site is essentially only two pages - one being an artist portfolio and the other a store - yet due to its busy design layout, it feels like much more is happening. Chapolito is very colourful, playful and decorative. It’s easy to get a real sense of Chapo’s own personality through the artworks, photographs and text on offer.

**Design is Kinky**

This site has stood the test of time and proves itself to be continually current in design matters. It profiles Australian designers and artists as well as their international counterparts. The site includes full reviews, exhibition details and images of art and design works. Over the years, Design is Kinky has had many transformations, the most recent design being simple, sleek and to the point. The hard work of deciphering the good from the bad in cyberspace has been done for you. Every image is an external link to a site containing great images of amazing design and artworks and even information on possible employment.

**Typeradio**

An audio site all about fonts. It contains MicroFM broadcasts, MPR internet radio streams and podcasts. The Typeradio team includes Donald Beekman and Liza Enebeis (aka LoveLiza & Underware) and has been streaming out of The Netherlands since 2004. Its content is produced in English and contains profiles on well-known designers as well as stories on curious fonts. Typeradio workers travel the world visiting different design events to meet and talk to designers, delivering the ‘speech on typeface’ to you in an unexpectedly easy to access format. Even if graphics are not to your personal taste, this site is definitely worth a look and a listen.
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Running: 27 - 30 November
10am-4pm
Where: COFA and Kudos Gallery
6 Napier St, Paddington

ASSOCIATED EVENTS

Big Screen Blowout:
Digital Media & Time-Based Art Screening
Date: 18 November
Time: 6pm Digital Media
9pm Time-Based Art
Where: Chauvel Cinema
Paddington Town Hall
Cost: Free Admission

Special Alumni Preview
(exclusive to COFA Alumni)
Date: 25 November
Time: 6-8pm
Where: COFA
Contact: Katy Fitzgerald
katy.fitzgerald@unsw.edu.au

COFA Graduate Prize Night
Date: 27 November
Time: 6-8pm
Where: F Block, COFA
Contact: Amy Griffiths
amy.griffiths@cofa.unsw.edu.au

In early 2007, Rick Bennett was introduced to a group of Filipino women in Lumban, a small village in Laguna province four hours away from Manila, who earn their living making and selling embroidered garments. Bennett was struck immediately by their talent but was aware of the significant poverty that pervades the area.

Bennett, who is the founder of Omnium, an online community of academics, artists, designers and programmers based at the College of Fine Arts (COFA), realised the Lumbana embroiderers could be benefited by taking part in Omnium Outreach, an initiative that aims to assist communities in developing countries through sustainable art and design projects.

Following his initial visit, Bennett says he began to travel to Lumban every three months “to watch, learn and think about what could be done to make the women’s work more sustainable.” He was conscious of the lack of social security in Lumban, which meant, he explains, “that if a sewing machine breaks down, even though it only costs a dollar to fix it, the woman using it will be out of work.”

Conceived in 2006, Omnium Outreach Projects are funded by profits from Omnium’s design and software divisions. The projects strive to improve the world simply by applying the principles of design to worthwhile causes.

Omnium’s first Outreach Project originated in Sri Lanka in the wake of the 2004 tsunami. The second project took place in Kenya (2007), wherein Omnium designed football t-shirts and other visual aids to improve awareness of six different health issues including malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

“Omnium Outreach Projects are about designing for the greater good. We aim to help other creative people in the world who, through no fault of their own, cannot afford to fund further growth and development,” says Bennett.

Upon returning to Australia from Lumban in 2007, Bennett asked COFA student Anne-Louise Dadak, who is now a full-time employee at Omnium, to devise ideas that might help the Lumban embroiderers improve their daily lives.

“Anne-Louise developed a concept called [re]frame, which involves sectioning off areas of the women’s embroidery and reframing them in a more contemporary context. These sections might be used for any number of products, as individual artworks, as art installations, as jewellery pieces, or to decorate hotel interiors,” says Bennett.

He presented Dadak’s idea to De La Salle College of St Benilde in Manila, which runs a Social Action Office dedicated to linking the university with community groups. The university became [re]frame’s first commercial client, commissioning a six-storey high mural to decorate the foyer of its School of Art & Design, which would be sewn by the Lumban embroiderers.

For two months, Bennett and Dadak laboriously designed a mural divided into 26 different colours. Then, over the next six months, Bennett hosted workshops in Lumban to teach the embroiderers how to fulfil the project.

Between December 2007 and May 2008, the Lumban embroiderers busied themselves creating no less than 2,556 square designs, while men in a nearby village created 5,112 wooden frames.

During its production, [re]frame was divided into 26 different sections, each one of which was sewn by a group of three women. Each embroidery was sewn on to a wooden frame, which was the workshop's most time-consuming task. Once complete, the works were exhibited at De La Salle College of St Benilde in Manila.

The project employed approximately 60 villagers, offering them new skills and opportunities that will hopefully make their businesses more sustainable over the long-term.

“There were some funny instances,” Bennett says, “when we were talking about money. I said, I need 100 different designs by the time I return in six weeks time. How much will that cost’? An hour later, I asked for the price. My offer was four times higher. They simply didn’t know how to price their work realistically, which is something we tried to teach in our workshops.”

For the opening night on 15 May 2008, the Lumban embroiderers travelled to Manila to view their finished artwork, which stood a lofty 4.8 metres wide and 11 metres high. It was an emotional experience as many of the women had never travelled outside of their village before.

“It was quite overwhelming for everyone involved. There were tears of joy, and we felt that the project’s idealistic principles actually did come to fruition,” says Dadak. “It was exciting to see a concept come to life that really does impact on people’s lives. It gives you a lot of faith that design can actually be of benefit to people.”

Students at COFA and De La Salle College of St Benilde are now designing prototypes for additional [re]frame products that might help the Lumban embroiderers attract more customers, with proceeds flowing back to their village.

The process reflects the goal of all Omnium Outreach Projects, which aim to generate ongoing benefits for participants as opposed to a one-off payment. Bennett explains, “many craftspeople in developing communities are open to change, they simply don’t know how to enact it. They need guidance in developing products and honing their business skills. Hopefully projects like [re]frame can introduce work practices that will completely transform their businesses over time.”

Barbara Messer

OMNION http://omnium.net.au/oop/

LEFT [re]frame – Manila, designed by Rick Bennett and Anne-Louise Dadak (Omnium), produced collaboratively by Omnium (Australia) with the Pinagkaisang Magbuburda ng Lumban and the Social Action Office, De La Salle College of St Benilde (Philippines), 2008.
However, most people are not Mirna Nassar, who was accepted into the 2008 festival but decided on Lebanon as her preferred travel destination over Cannes.

Nassar’s 12 minute winning documentary, *A Wishful Smile*, explores the effects the 2006 Israeli air strike on the Southern Lebanese village of Qana had on two of its residents. The film is Nassar’s first and formed the major component of her Master of Digital Media degree from the College of Fine Arts. *A Wishful Smile* was initially intended to be a short film on the beauty and vitality of Lebanon, Nassar’s birthplace. She imagined it as a film shown on a home and lifestyle channel to demonstrate that Lebanon is much more than what is seen on the news. However, when Nassar arrived to shoot the footage, she found herself being drawn to Qana. “I was living in Lebanon at the time of the bombings, but I was watching the whole event on TV because even though it was just outside my door I couldn’t go out there,” she explains. “I was seized. So when I returned I had to travel to Qana to find out what I could and to talk to the people.”

Nassar describes the process of making *A Wishful Smile* as an unconscious and cathartic act; a way of acting out to better understand circumstances and events. Despite having worked as a journalist in Lebanon, her documentary does not have a distinct political tone. “In the film,” she says, “I really just wanted to represent a mother who had lost a child because no matter who you are or where you come from, when you loose a child the pain is the same.”

Amy Griffiths

Nassar’s documentary was screened in the Short Film Corner Category of the Cannes Film Festival.

Positive Frames is a confronting series of short films exploring the stigma attached to having HIV/AIDS in Delhi India.

In every corner of the world, there are prejudices associated with having HIV/AIDS that are inaccurate, unfair or irrational. But how do these prejudices compare across geographic borders, affected by a delicate array of cultural and social variables?

This is a question COFA graduate and installation artist Jamil Yamani recently explored through a series of educational initiatives in Delhi, India, which he undertook in collaboration with the SARAI Media Lab New Media Initiative (supported by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies).

With some funding support from the Ian Potter Cultural Foundation in Melbourne, Yamani approached SARAI wanting to access to a three-month artist residency in Delhi. In exchange, he offered SARAI a range of workshops wherein he would teach locals to document their lives on film.

Yamani explains that the project aimed to provide a case sample of what has become a global problem involving the spread of HIV/AIDS combined with cultural and religious sensitivities, poverty, stigma, education and access to drug treatment.

With a commitment to host nine workshops over 11 weeks, culminating in an exhibition of 10 short films titled Positive Frames, Yamani invited fellow COFA graduate and partner Louisa Dawson along to co-direct the project. “We were outsiders,” says Dawson, “so trying to negotiate our way through a community that’s already very marginalised was very difficult. Some people spend years trying to get people effected by HIV/AIDS to open up to them - we had two and a half months.”

Yamani and Dawson worked with aid workers, sex workers and families to explore the impact of HIV/AIDS. The resulting videos tell the story of ‘Anita’, an 18 year-old sex worker, and ‘Deepak’, a 16 year-old boy whose father contracted the HIV virus and was subsequently ostracised by his entire family, alongside eight other real-life stories.

The resulting 10 films, including one shot by Yamani, were showcased in a screening in Delhi late in 2007. Interestingly, although Yamani and Dawson have tended to operate as independent artists, there are synergies in their approaches and concepts, which reflect their compatibility and closeness as a couple. “We usually create completely disparate artworks,” explains Yamani, “but have similar approaches and ideas. At the moment, we’re both exploring domesticity, whereas we both used to be focused on transience.”

In September 2008, Yamani presented his fourth major exhibition at Gallery 4A called Family/Familiar, which explored the inaccurate and often exploitative depiction of Muslim families in Australia. His 2007 exhibition, The Glittering City, examined the social injustices affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

Dawson is currently completing artworks commenced during a three-month ISCP artist residency in New York City in 2007 funded by the Australia Council. This follows her exhibition, Moving House: The Renovation of the Everyday at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery in 2007 and a solo show at First Draft Gallery in 2008.
Put these dates in your diary now for 2009

MARCH 25 Meet internationally respected installation artist Janet Laurence in her studio

APRIL 22 Discuss the world’s political hotspots with artist/film maker George Gittoes

MAY 20 Check out the next generation of design talent in Design Now! at Object Gallery

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Yinka Shonibare, MBE. How to Blow or Tie (Dress, Calling) (detail) 2006. Two 15 x 15 ft. (4.6 x 4.6 m) combinations, two guns, Oxford shoe print cotton, dress, leather dollar boots, prints. Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and Jancis Cohen Gallery, New York © the artist. Photo: Stephen White
If you are interested in finding out more about these graduates from the College of Fine Arts and their work, let us know. Email incubate@cofa.unsw.edu.au

5. Adam White, United, 2008.

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