Culture Creators

INTEGRAL
What is culture anyway?

INTERCONNECTED
How art and design help us build bridges across time and between communities

INCLUSIVE
DisArt Festival: Changing minds about disability one work of art at a time
ON CULTURE

Like most schools, KCAD is a culture in and of itself. One of our main goals is to expand our students’ skills and critical thinking abilities to prepare them for impactful careers in art and design. KCAD teaches and develops culture creators, those who shape and reshape the cultural landscape in which we live and interact. This edition of Portfolio is about locating culture in art and design, as we look for a school interested in educating those who create the very visual and performative expressions that help inform our cultural experiences. And in thinking about the place of culture and its diverse permutations throughout the world, I challenge the KCAD community to think about how a global approach to art and design can enrich both ourselves and our efforts to mold future creators for the 21st century.

Dr. Jordan Fenton, Professor of Art History

Read Fenton’s entire essay in the iPad version of Portfolio.

ON A MISSION

Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University (KCAD) has a simple mission: to develop artists and designers who make a difference, doing art and design that matters. KCAD believes in impact. We choose achievement over perfection, boldness over complacence, and learning over acceptance. Portfolio continues to evolve with KCAD, and we are committed to constant improvement. Let us know what you think: what should be kept, discarded, or improved. And let us know if you have ideas or stories for our writers and artists to dig into. You can always reach us at kcadcommunications@ferris.edu.

Portfolio is also available for iPad. Download the latest issue from iBooks (search KCAD) for all the articles plus additional exclusive content. Anywhere you see this symbol, there’s more to discover.

ON THE COVER

Inspired by the quote from Buckminster Fuller in our article “Changing the Course” (page 12), this issue’s cover artist, Yohan Daza, set about exploring how artists and designers impact the culture around them. Using the idea that exploration and creation are what make an artist and through that they influence humanity and change culture, Daza visualized a world where artists and designers are creating not only images and objects, but also shaping the culture around them. In the cover image, an artist is creating and exploring a world where her tools are at her fingertips, where her ideas are not bound by any limitations of reality. See more of Daza’s art in the Alumni Profile on page 14. You can also see more of his art at theartofyohandaza.com.

We’re not just learning how to make stuff for the sake of getting a job. We’re not selling insurance—let’s remind ourselves of that.”

— Aaron Draplin, Owner/Founder, Draplin Design Co. (DDC), encouraging KCAD students to push themselves during a visit to campus in October.

Receiving this award affirms my belief in the impact art and audience have on each other.”

— Sonya Clark, artist, speaking about sharing the Juried Grand Prize as part of ArtPrize 2005. Her piece “The Hair Craft Project” was part of The Fed Galleries’ award-winning “I AM: Money Matters” exhibition.

KCAD students once again showed off their imagination and skill at the Halloween Party. The annual event features food, fun, and a spectacular contest for best costume, judged by KCAD alumni.

This past fall, KCAD hosted 390 students (plus their guests) for a National Portfolio Day event.

Mary Free Bed Vice President of Advancement Timothy J. Pietryga (left), KCAD Director of Community Engagement Kellis Monte (center), and Illustration and Graphic Design student Jennifer Bafile (right) in front of a mural painted by Bafile and fellow students Anthony Cairo (Drawing) and Jason Betzing (MFA Painting).

Students listen to a presentation on how to get a realistic design career by Craig Welsh, one of a number of speakers at KCAD’s first ever Career Symposium.

Aaron Draplin talks with a KCAD student. His visit to campus in October was made possible through a collaboration between AIGA West Michigan and the KCAD Alumni Association.

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SeEN & HEARD

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What is culture? Ask anyone on the street and you’re not likely to get the same answer twice. Is it language? Social customs? Popular culture? What about fine art or modern design? The idea of culture is innate, but understanding it proves more elusive. So what is this invisible force, this presence that, though sometimes barely noticed, envelops everyone and everything?

by John Wiegand

“Exploring culture will go as far as you chase it because it gets at the fundamentals of what makes us human,” says Dan Klyn, co-founder and information architect at The Understanding Group in Grand Rapids and lecturer at the University of Michigan. In all of his work, Klyn constantly investigates both how information shapes culture and how cultural perspectives influence the perception of information.

Dictionary definitions often tout culture as something beautiful or exotic, a thing to be admired, the pinnacle of humanity’s creation. But there are plenty of cultural mores and artifacts that are not exactly representative of the height of human achievement. Perceived or not, that disparity between beauty and reality filters down into our daily lives, forming our current cultural reality, influencing what we eat, how we think, and how we shape our perspectives.

Instead of settling on the dictionary definition, Klyn suggests a simpler understanding, attributed to the musician Brian Eno: “Culture is all the stuff we don’t have to do.” Some anthropologists have argued that in light of not possessing great physical strength or natural weapons, humans developed symbolic and language systems to survive. As the day-to-day needs for language and symbols were satisfied, excess expression evolved and formed the basis for what’s developed over time into “human culture.”

“Maybe a better way of finding out where culture starts and stops is by looking at the [expressions of] it that weren’t necessary,” Klyn says. “Cursive rendering, the use of beauty on purpose, going to a play, all of the stuff we don’t have to do. That’s pretty weird.”

Yet defining culture is a fleeting notion by nature, and even if a definition could be agreed upon, it would still be limiting. Just as the word “culture” can refer to a cluster of living bacteria, the very essence of human culture is alive and ever-changing, Klyn says. Over time, the notions of culture have changed as the world experienced its various advancements. The Agricultural Revolution created the basis for mass sustained living; the Industrial Revolution created the basis for what’s developed over time into “human culture.”

As humanity progresses, those different layers of cultural realities will continue to evolve and be reshaped, Klyn says. But because culture is so embedded into humanity, those cultural shifts are unlikely to follow any sort of pattern.

“There are so few things we can say with certainty about culture, but that’s one of them, it’s alive,” he says. “It’s what people do, so it’s alive. It’s what people do, so it’s full of contradictions. It’s what people do, so it’s self-aware and not self-aware at the same time. It’s a mess.”

With culture constantly evolving, rebranding, and layering on top of itself, it begs the question, what’s next? It’s been widely theorized that as technology advances and worldwide connectivity increases, humanity will be pushed ever closer to one singular global culture. With world events and communication spreading instantaneously, and an increasingly onus placed on people being “plugged in,” it seems easy for humanity to make that leap.

However, even though mass connectivity—largely shaped by a Western perspective—looms over the world, cultures in the digital age are making a steady push to retain their uniqueness and forge new layers of culture on their own terms, Fenton says.

“I think there is a steady pushback against that,” Fenton says. “For as much as culture shapes the fabric of humanity, the relationship between the two is symbiotic. Culture’s constant evolution gives people the chance to interact and shape both their personal cultures and that of the world around them. Learning, conversing, collaborating, and exploring the unknown are all opportunities to shape the culture of tomorrow.”

If culture is the mechanism that makes it possible for us to conceptualize anything then what isn’t culture?” Klyn asks. “Maybe that’s the better question.”

—even Jordan Fenton, a professor of Art History at KCAD, sees history as the influencer rather than the other way around. In his work, Fenton has spent an extensive amount of time living in Africa and studying African art history, specifically masquerades, secret societies, and how historical circumstances have shaped cultural expression.

“We’re constantly reinterpreting the past to help us move forward,” Fenton says. “And in our reinterpretations we develop more layers of these mythologies that we haven’t made sense of completely.”

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Fenton says. “Yes, there is this sort of cloud that’s hanging over; however, I don’t think it will ever be this sort of homogenization of culture throughout the globe. It’s not that they don’t break Western influence, but they are constantly rekindling their heritage in new and interesting ways.”

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When we create anything, we tend to think of the act as one of self-expression. But in that moment when a painting is hung on the wall, or when a blueprint becomes reality, something larger emerges. Another voice joins the grand conversation to ask, what is art? What is design? Who are we? What is this world all about?

by Kyle Austin

From prehistoric cave paintings and Roman aqueducts to street graffiti and 3D printing, human creativity and human culture have always been in constant conversation with one another. As creators and consumers, we are always exploring the ever-shifting landscape of culture, not just to try and understand it, but to become more actively engaged in shaping it as well.

Consider the artists of the European Renaissance, whose quest for realism in their work was both influencing and influenced by the culture of inquiry that was developing around them. Or the music, literature, and visual art that fueled the American counterculture movement of the 1960s. Or the user experiences and user interface designs that have given rise to a contemporary culture driven by devices and aimed at global interconnectedness. Human history is a living, breathing case study of the connection between culture and creativity. Impactful creators then, says KCAD Art History professor Karen Carter, must also be voracious historical scholars. “If students are not participating in some sort of dialogue with the past, they are not going to be a part of the conversation today.”

Carter believes that understanding how culture and ideas about it have shifted over time also helps developing creatives get beyond the myth of self-expression. “Every culture in the world creates some sort of visual culture or objects, so part of what I try to emphasize with the students is that they’re part of a tradition of making that goes back millennia.”

In the summer of 2013, Gonzalez and his friends Christina Elizabeth Rodriguez and Erick Rojo Garcia founded the EXPO Collective. Based in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood, the art collective organizes exhibitions, public murals, and community art events that intend to create a culture where people don’t feel intimidated by art or excluded from participating in it. In each of the six exhibitions that EXPO has put on, Gonzalez estimates that half of those who attended came from outside the artistic community. Likewise, some of the neighborhoods the group works with went from having little previous artistic engagement to embracing the sense of community and identity that develops when they create together.

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—— Karen Carter, Art History Professor

When art can engage multiple people, be created by multiple people, and hopefully be preserved or exhibited by and for multiple people, it becomes part of the culture and has some effect on the people involved in it,” Gonzalez said.

This summer, EXPO is putting on its visual arts festival in Chicago. The Quetzal Art Festival—where artists will conduct community workshops and publicly create large-scale pieces to be donated to nonprofit and community-based organizations—helps create a culture where widespread creative engagement happens organically. "We’re trying to approach this not as a craft activity to fill time, but with more of an educational component to it," Vega said. "In all of the arts, whether it’s music, dance, or visual art, there’s that opportunity to bridge."

"That kind of thinking suggests this teleological progression where we end up as being the best now, and people in the past lacked knowledge or were misinformed. It’s more productive to think of culture as dynamic and constantly shifting, not static. We look at our present culture and say, ‘aren’t we so great? We’ve moved beyond national things, and now we’re thinking about all these other types of identities, gender, race, and all of these different things.’ But in many instances, that culture is just a reflection of the values we hold today, and these will shuffle in the future when people will say, ‘Oh what were they thinking?’"

"Culture may defy our definitive understanding, but that does not make attempting to shape it or investigating its historical progression futile. In fact, Morawski says, the more questions we end up asking, the better. Culture is always in a state of investigating its historical progression futile. In fact, Morawski says, the more questions we end up as being the best now, and people in the past lacked knowledge or were misinformed. It’s more productive to think of culture as dynamic and constantly shifting, not static. We look at our present culture and say, ‘aren’t we so great? We’ve moved beyond national things, and now we’re thinking about all these other types of identities, gender, race, and all of these different things.’ But in many instances, that culture is just a reflection of the values we hold today, and these will shuffle in the future when people will say, ‘Oh what were they thinking?’"

"I hope to continue to connect neighborhoods with artists to open young people and their families up to all of these pods within our community crossing over and mixing together.”

By Margaret Vega, Painting Professor
Art Is Every Body

Art has the power to bridge the gaps between our varied experiences of the world. Whatever form it takes, art is always created from one point of view and experienced from another. Art can give us a taste of what it would be like to see and feel the world in another body, with the biases of another mind, or from the perspective of a radically different social situation.

by Kevin Buist

The form and function of our bodies are far from uniform, but many of us still think about bodies in a very narrow way. DisArt Festival, a new planned biannual international art event coming to Grand Rapids this spring, aims to use art to expand our perceptions about disability and how it exists as a culture. It's an art event with a strong activist bent. The art is not window dressing for the message, however. Contemporary art has a unique ability to help us confront our misperceptions, sit with this discomfort, and resolve to bring about change. Art can animate a message in a way that other political rhetoric cannot.

There's a global community of contemporary artists tackling disability in their work, and many of them will contribute work to DisArt. The centerpiece of the festival is a major traveling exhibition of contemporary art called "Art of the Lived Experiment" (ALE). The show, which originated as part of an event in Liverpool, United Kingdom, called DisArt Fest, will be making its U.S. premiere at DisArt. ALE features the work of more than 35 notable international disability artists. Seven more North American pieces have been commissioned by U.S. curator Amanda Cachia, including mixed media and performance. The exhibition will be displayed at Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, The Fed Galleries at KCAD, and the Grand Rapids Art Museum.

In addition to ALE, DisArt will feature a wide variety of programming all over the city, including a fashion show, a film festival, theatrical and dance performances, additional visual art exhibits, lectures, and other family-oriented experiential learning opportunities. Dr. Christopher Smit, the director of DisArt and director of Kendall College of Art and Design's Arts and Access Initiative, is working with a dedicated team to ensure there are a wide variety of activities for all audiences.

The varied approaches to how art and disability intersect quickly make it apparent that disability as a cultural force is far more rich and complicated than most able-bodied people realize. Many of us approach disability from a purely medical frame of mind. Smit hopes that DisArt challenges this approach, and offers new ways of understanding disability within culture. The festival promotes a richer, social model of disability, as opposed to a reductive medical model. "What we're trying to do," says Smit, "is create a world-class art and culture event that also has a pretty strong political mission."

Speaking about the bias toward seeing disability through a medical lens, Smit says, "We're not denying the medical conditions of disability. What we're saying is that the medical condition is not the only condition that defines the disabled experience. Rather, it is culture, it is individual energy, individual stories and narratives that are wrapped up in the human condition, not simply the disabled condition. The problem is that when you get into a medical model, the only option is healing or health. Enough of us are saying that our lives have value without filling the norms of able-bodied imagination."

The medical model of thinking about disability has its roots in the Industrial Revolution. Medicine arose as an industry along with other industries that used mass production to increase efficiency and propagate sameness. Bodies began to seem like machines, with an ideal shape and function, and deviation from this norm was seen as a deficiency in need of some form of corrective technology. Extending the length and quality of life, as medicine often does, is certainly a good thing. But this approach is too often uneven, and out of step with cultural and personal realities. Smit cites the polio vaccine as an example. Preventing future instances of polio was a huge advance, but those who already had the disease were left disabled without a corresponding cultural response to how to think about the reality in which they lived.

We tend to think of disability as something to be feared, cured, or pitied. From the perspective of a disabled person, those are all pretty terrible options. "I am not disabled only by muscular dystrophy," says Smit. "I am disabled by an ableist imagination. And I'm also disabled by architecture, standards of public transportation, attitudes in the workplace, all that stuff." Once you realize that disability is something put on you from the outside, says Smit, "then you can also say, no, I'm taking it back. I'm going to use that queering idea. I'm going to say that disability is my identity. It's something that I can be proud of, and it's something that makes me, me."

As powerful as this perspective on disability is, it still leaves a nagging question: Why an art festival? DisArt exists alongside other examples of so-called social practice or activist art—art projects that exist to advance a particular political outcome. The cause may be noble, but what does an art festival offer that direct political action does not?

An artwork does not force an outcome; an artwork forces a confrontation with a truth apart from our own. How is the experience of the world different in a different body? A different mind? Art forces us to accept the limits of our knowledge and limits of our own experience of the world. Once an artwork brings us into contact with a radically different experience, we are changed. Precisely how we’re changed is up to us.

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— Dr. Christopher Smit, Director of DisArt

April 10–25, 2015

DisArt Festival

KCAD PORTFOLIO | SPRING 2015
The arrangement of basic visual information like color and shape depicts an organization of cognition both on an individual and a communal level. I am interested in how we structure our world in an epistemological sense that creates meaning for both micro and macro by contrasting the organic system or pattern of biology that already exists in humans—such as hair, skin, and cells—to a predetermined geometric construct of the grid.

Aj writes an ongoing blog series for KCAD, Points of View, exploring local gallery exhibitions in order to spark an exchange of ideas about the art being created and displayed in our community. You can read it at kcad.edu/blog.
Changing the Course

Cultures are everywhere – in the clothes we buy, the music we love, and the food we eat. It encompasses all of the intricate layers of humanity, defining us and driving us forward. But what happens when that culture requires a change?

by John Wieand

It’s a question that’s been tackled persistently by the arts and design community over the centuries. The same calling that encourages artists and designers to mold and reshape their own work sparks an inner desire to question their surroundings and propose new solutions to the impending problems around them.

“To me it’s about encouraging people to think beyond what they’ve been taught, to think without fear and without going back,” says Gayle Deltrey, Collaborative Design Program Chair at KCAD.

Altering culture is not an easy road. But perhaps the key to changing the status quo lies in the words of 20th century American futurist and novelist Buckminster Fuller, who stated, “you never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

Fuller’s philosophy is at the core of the Ellen McArthur Foundation, which seeks to build a positive future by thinking and re-designing our world through the framework of a circular economy. The circular economic model rejects the world’s current linear approach, in which products are made, used, and then disposed of, in favor of a system in which every part of a product is reintroduced into a regenerative process at the end of its life cycle. It’s not just a question of incorporating biodegradable material into the next generation of washing machines, but rather a full systemic change in the way humans operate and view the material world, even down to the way money is printed, says Colin Webster, Education Programme Manager at the foundation.

In 2014, the first DIF brought together thought leaders, students to think beyond both institutional and disciplinary boundaries to solve problems that are dubbed “wicked” because of their layered complexity. Currently, the competition focuses on the wicked problem of introducing the circular economy into mainstream society, a mission in alignment with DIF. In 2014, the first DIF brought together thought leaders, entrepreneurs, and others from around the globe for four weeks to collaborate and explore how to reshape the world’s economic perspective in a massive open online course format.

“If you want to normalize an idea and way of thinking, the only way to do that is to approach the issue on several fronts,” Webster says. “DIF and Wege Prize are part of that.”

“We set out to make the world’s economic perspective in a massive open online course format.

The circular economy represents a total shift in the status quo far beyond the intricacies of macro- and microeconomics and transcends the traditional notions of recycling. It’s a model that seeks to shape a new culture that permeates everything, from architecture, civil engineering, biochemistry, industrial design, economics, hospitality, architecture, civil engineering, business to education to everyday life. And at its heart are the students to network with them, harness their talents in ways they never thought possible.

See this year’s winners and details on next year’s competition at wegeprize.org.

Solving Wicked Problems

Now in its second year, Wege Prize has transitioned to a national level, opening the competition up to any undergraduate student in America. This year’s challenge was announced by 13 teams, composed of 65 undergraduates representing 20 different colleges and universities from across the country, as well as a staggering 42 different academic disciplines, including industrial design, economics, hospitality, architecture, civil engineering, mathematics, business, psychology, and wildlife ecology. To name a few.

Finalist teams presented their solutions to a judging panel of industry-leading advisors and advisors at the final presentation and award event at Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA). Wege Prize 2018, again focused on the wicked problem of creating a circular economy, within an open to any undergraduate student in the world. KCAD and The Wege Foundation want to see what happens when the planet’s next generation of innovative thinkers comes together to harness their talents in ways they never thought possible.

From top right: Wetzel posing for an Instagram photo shoot on a Los Angeles rooftop; Instaglam dress; Galactic Word Goddess with Turtle Island in Grand Rapids; Wetzel on stage with The Flaming Lips and Fever The Ghost in Denver.

Mixin’ It Up

Natalie Wetzel’s approach to art never fits into a tidy box. The Assistant Professor of Sculpture and Functional Art at KCAD originally trained as a sculptor, but even as a student, the ways she used sculpture in costuming and performance pieces tended to blur the lines.

by Kristin Lannon

“I always thought I had to produce a body of objects as my work, and everything else would just be extra,” she says. “It wasn’t until I got out of school that I finally had the freedom to say everything I do is my work. From object-based work to more ethereal performance-based art, there are no boundaries.”

That’s a concept Wetzel is encouraging both inside the classroom and out. “In my 3D classroom, I’ve invited artists from other disciplines to come hang out during our work sessions,” she says. “I very much encourage photography in my sculpture class and performance in my 3D class. A lot of the students have told me they really appreciate the interdisciplinary approach and never realized art could be that way.”

Wetzel also learned with KCAD Assistant Professor of Photography Leah Gose to start an interdisciplinary club for students that they call InterSpace. “The club gives them a way to balance the interdisciplinary part of their work with more collaborative processes and see what the real world is doing in contemporary interdisciplinary art and culture. It’s about getting the students into the contemporary art process early in their careers.”

In her own work, Wetzel enjoys going beyond her introspective studio practice to interact with other artists and musicians. This past holiday break, she went on an extended art tour that included making sculpture performances, organizing a music festival, and working with KCAD students. “Fever the Ghost is interested in doing a very cohesive body of work based around the album they’re finishing,” she says. “The goal is to make all the visuals, videos, stage show, music, lighting design, and everything about this particular album exceptionally sound, so it’s a traveling fine art piece. I want to bring Interspace and my students into that world so they can get experience helping with props, developing ideas, sketching, and storyboarding with the group through Skypes, then developing their ideas into finished work.”

As a culmination of the project, she says, “Fever The Ghost will take the finished work on tour, with a stop in Grand Rapids so students can see the entire performance. "DIF is already on board, and we’re talking steps toward making that happen," she says.

She’s also feeding the local art culture with another project called The Moon, a renovated warehouse that combines studio and living space, The Moon includes a darkroom, woodworking area, welding area, infill work, performance space, PA system, and kitchen. “The entire space is like a sculpture,” she says. “The idea is to bring musicians and visual artists in residence at The Moon. Then we could bring in students to network with them, see what they’re doing and how they can apply their skills in the real world, and have a blast doing it!”

From her classroom to Interspace and The Moon, she says the key is to terms of creativity. “It’s not just a matter of collaboration, asking ourselves what can we do. And pooling resources to make that happen,” she says. “I’d love to make interdisciplinary art part of not only the KCAD culture, but the Grand Rapids culture, haven’t had anyone say no to me yet!”

Above: Participants consider the design solutions found in nature by examining a spruce owl at John Ball Zoo as part of a workshop on biomimicry in conjunction with Wege Prize.
Asking the Right Questions

Digital Media alum Yohan Daza (’08) is an instructor in the culture of bullying with one simple question: Do You Hate Me? Through an organization of the same name, Daza and youth-success coach Jeff Wile combine art, music, engagement, and activism to open minds and inspire action.

by Nyasha Austin

Q: With Y Do You Hate Me?, you’re trying to change an existing culture. What’s the challenge there?
A: You get a lot of people who think that you can’t. I’ve been told since I started that kids are not going to change, that the culture is too strong. Some of the teachers and therapists I talk to don’t understand how technology has changed the way kids bully each other: it’s a different manner. It’s also hard to find support because people don’t want to admit that it’s happening in their schools.

Q: Despite that, the initiative has been going strong for three years. What keeps you moving forward?
A: We don’t want to take credit for everything that’s happened in the anti-bullying movement, but we’ve started little sparks at all the places we’ve gone—a schools, concerts, festivals, community events. Each time we do an event and see the kids respond so well, that keeps us going. We also get emails and Facebook messages from students, teachers, and mental health professionals who have used our tools and experienced responses so well, that keeps us going. We also get emails and Facebook messages from students, teachers, and mental health professionals who have used our tools and experienced responses so well, that keeps us going.

Q: How does art help you create those sparks?
A: It’s about trying to create bridges—between different ideas, different people, different organizations. That’s how you take conversations to the next level. When we say bullying in a way that is easily understood by all nations.

Q: What’s the key to moving from conversation to action?
A: Many programs raise awareness and stop there. We’re not about awareness. We’re about education. That’s another approach, because role-playing is where they really learn how to respond to bullies with kindness. Little by little, it becomes spontaneous and intimate interactions with some of the most ingenious creative talents working within the health care industry’s existing care model. Students in the Digital Media program are working with Grand Rapids-based game development company Underbite Games to develop an original application called Battling Extinction that educates users on the potential extinction of animals. Students in the Digital Media program collaborated with students from Kenowa Hills Middle School to create a mobile application called Battling Extinction that educates users on the potential extinction of animals. Students in the Digital Media program are working with Grand Rapids-based game development company Underbite Games to develop an original application called Battling Extinction that educates users on the potential extinction of animals. Students in the Digital Media program collaborated with students from Kenowa Hills Middle School to create a mobile application called Battling Extinction that educates users on the potential extinction of animals.

KCAD hosted a National Portfolio Day event in October 2014. The event drew 390 registered students, and a total of 228 portfolio reviews were conducted.

Johanna Gliederoff is commissioned to create a portrait of Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell.

ILLUSTRATION

Ashley Newton, Elizabeth Burt, Emily Markopoulos, and Victoria Hayos participated in the International Interior Design Association Michigan Chapter’s First Fashion Show. The current students were joined by alumni Becky Slaugher (’09, Interior Design), Jerome Filman (’09, Interior Design), Jessica Griffis (’05, Interior Design), Lindsey Reed (’00, Interior Design), Lauren Gammichia (’12, Interior Design), Melissa Powell-Shoppe (’00, Interior Design), Rachel Yanch (’11, Interior Design), Renee Hines (’12, Interior Design), and Sarah Fell (’12, Interior Design) continued next page.

Q: So how do you move from conversation to action?
A: Many programs raise awareness and stop there. We’re not an awareness group, because after you make people aware of something, you have to offer them solutions. Jeff developed a free online training program for parents and educators, and I’m working on writing and illustrating a children’s book on bullying that teachers can use in their classrooms and parents can use in their homes, because the problem affects all age groups.

Schools used to teach the Golden Rules, but now many don’t. We show the teachers and students how to take an active approach, because role-playing is where they really learn how to respond to bullies with kindness. Little by little, it becomes spontaneous and intimate interactions with some of the most ingenious creative talents working within the health care industry’s existing care model. Students in the Digital Media program are working with Grand Rapids-based game development company Underbite Games to develop an original application called Battling Extinction that educates users on the potential extinction of animals. Students in the Digital Media program collaborated with students from Kenowa Hills Middle School to create a mobile application called Battling Extinction that educates users on the potential extinction of animals.

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A: Many programs raise awareness and stop there. We’re not an awareness group, because after you make people aware of something, you have to offer them solutions. Jeff developed a free online training program for parents and educators, and I’m working on writing and illustrating a children’s book on bullying that teachers can use in their classrooms and parents can use in their homes, because the problem affects all age groups.

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PHOTOGRAPHY
Jean Rosolowsky was featured in “Forgotten Memorabilia,” an exhibition in Canton College’s DSQ Gallery.

Michele Fassa was a co-juror for the Michigan Youth Arts Festival’s Visual Arts Exhibit.

Jackie Schubert participated in the International Interior Design Association Michigan Chapter’s Fashionshout event.

Drawing professor Deborah Rockman won a $1,000 award from the American Coel Deutscher Union and Fountian Street Church for her ARP-3 2014 entry, “The Space Between Us.” Rockman also exhibited eight works from her series entitled “The Space Between Us” at the Musesque Museum of Art’s Tutta Gallery.

Sculpture and Functional Art professor Israel Devis was one of 97 artists selected for a featured in the inaugural Dwellwise Prize for Contemporary Ceramics. Devis was also featured in the publication: Ceramics Art and Perception, and gave a two-day workshop at North Central Michigan College focused on screen printing on clay. This summer, he will be participating in a three-week residency project at the European Keramisk Werkstätten in the Netherlands.

Art History professor Jordan Fenton and Karen Carter were featured participants of the College Art Association annual conference. Carter was featured on a discussion panel entitled “American Illustration and the Art Historical Canon,” while Fenton chaired a discussion panel entitled “African Art and Economics in Urban Spaces.”

Art History professor Karen Carter recently featured her research on “San Ysidro, Puerto Rico,” in a peer-reviewed paper, “Plant Dechirleurs and the Cultivation of Puerto Rican Art in Fis-va-lace-Pinaux,” at the 40th annual 19th Century French Studies Colloquium. Photographer Leah Gose published a panel discussion entitled “Photography: Marketing Photography” that was exhibited in a panel discussion entitled “Art in the Airport” exhibition at Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

Manda Carter (’14, MFA Photography), Brandon Alton (’13, Printing), and Shawn Barney (’10, Printing) have all been hired by branding agency Designing. Barry Kelly (’13, MFA Digital Media), who was featured on a discussion panel entitled “American Illustration and the Art Historical Canon,” while Fenton chaired a discussion panel entitled “African Art and Economics in Urban Spaces.”

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Anita Ford (’11, Digital Media) and Case Silver (’10, Digital Media) have been hired as an assistant and photographer for 22 Performance.

Angela Carter (’14, MFA Photography), Brandon Alton (’13, Printing), and Shawn Barney (’10, Printing) have all been hired by branding agency Designing. Barry Kelly (’13, MFA Digital Media), who was featured on a discussion panel entitled “American Illustration and the Art Historical Canon,” while Fenton chaired a discussion panel entitled “African Art and Economics in Urban Spaces.”

Arts Education Program Cindy Todd was named Educator of the Year by the Michigan Art Educators Association for the 2014-2015 school year.

The KCAD Student Commons is a meeting place that utilizes principles and techniques of abstraction.

ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

drew Kim took part in a convergence of design talent for a grand opening of the MS Design Fellowship Midwest.

The KCAD USA student organization volunteered at Kids Food Basket alongside members of the Detroit Red Wings hockey team.

Kurtin O’Connell won top honors and $300 in the Kitchen category of the National Kitchen and Bath Association of Michigan’s Student Design Competition.

A number of students were a part of a collaborative effort that helped turn an empty lot in Grand Rapids into a new Habitat for Humanity home.

MEDICAL ILLUSTRATION

Emily Ciosek worked as an intern for Thieme, a leading global medical illustration textbook publisher.

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NEWS & NOTES

Donna Karadsheh (’14, Graphic Design) is the portfolio of her photography work published in the Fall 2014 issue of Photographer’s Forum magazine.

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We are a digital media designer by full-service advertising agency VML.

Nolan Cleveland (’10, Photography) photographed a 230s-themed wedding of Luke Funk and Sara Veele at Silver Rose Vineyard, which was named one of the city’s Top Five Weddings of 2014 by wedding blog TulleShake.

Lisa Michoel-Eakin (’11, Illustration) received the 2014 Magazine Merit Honor Certificate for Illustration from the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators.

Louise Ahven (’10, Illustration) hosted the mural she painted on the bathroom wall of Hot Doug’s, a landmark hot dog restaurant in Chicago, featured in a solo exhibition at the Flora Kirsch University to brand their Golden Gala celebration in December 2004. During those 38 years, he touched KCAD in profound and nuanced ways. Through his many roles at KCAD, Harley exhibited “collegiality” in his relationships with the faculty and staff, through his service as dean of KCAD, through his leadership of the KCAD Faculty Association, through the key role he played in the design of the fourth floor, now home to Graphic Design, and through the significant planning process he led in the early stages of KCAD’s acquiring of what then known as the Federal Building. The College would like to extend special thanks to Kathy Withers and for starting the Jan Vond Endowed Scholarship to help support student success in the Graphic Design program.

The President’s Office was notified of the passing of Harley Wagner, a 1951 graduate of the Interior Design and Architecture students. Memorial bookplates will be placed in each of these four books to honor Julia’s life and memory.

The President’s Office was notified of the passing of Jon Van Zandt, a former professor and dean of the college.

The KCAD Alumni Association Board invites you to attend a PRECEPTION AND VIEWING OF KCAD’s Annual Student Exhibition.

The Federal Galleries @ KCAD Woodbridge N. Ferris Building | 17 Pearl NW | Grand Rapids, MI Admission free; open to the public.

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To submit articles, photos, or news for future issues or for the website, please contact kcadnews@ferris.edu.


Questions? Contact Jill Schneider at 616-452-2787, ext. 150.

Individuals with disabilities who require special accommodations to participate should contact the KCAD President’s Office at 616-451-2787 ext. 1200 at least 72 hours in advance.

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HOMEWORK
PEELING BACK THE LAYERS OF CULTURE
Jordan Fenton, Art History Professor

Think globally about culture
I challenge all to take pause as they create, to peel back the layers of one’s creations and endeavor to identify the nuances (both local and global) within one’s work. In unraveling the layers of culture in your own work, one is better aware of how the individual not only breathes life into culture but also how the global experience shapes one’s own complex configurations.

Experience cultures local and afar
Try one of the following and free-write and/or sketch about how it made you think about your own work, beliefs, ideas, social structures, and lives differently, send to kcadcommunications@ferris.edu for possible posting on the blog:

- Talk to someone from a different background
- Experience a foreign film, cuisine, and/or music
- Travel (anywhere)! See the study away opportunities at KCAD: www.kcad.edu/programs/overseas/
- Study an artist, designer, and/or architect from a different country
- Visit an exhibition featuring a global issue or concern Visit the GRAM to see “Edward Burtynsky: Water,” open until April 26, 2015. Burtynsky, a Canadian photographer, explores humanity’s relationship with its most vital natural resource: water.
- Visit a nonprofit or community center you would not normally frequent
- Read a nonfiction book about anything opening you to a different culture or way of thinking Check out “Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers” by Kwame Anthony Appiah, or read an essay adapted from it that was published in the New York Times: “The Case for Contamination,” www.nytimes.com/2006/01/01/magazine/01cosmopolitan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0