

GOLDSTEIN MUSEUM OF DESIGN

240 McNeal Hall
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MUSEUM HOURS

Mo/Tu/We/Fr 10:00am–4:00pm
Th 10:00am–8:00pm
Sa/Su 1:30pm–4:30pm



VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission and Parking
Admission to the Goldstein Museum of Design is free. Parking is available at the nearby Gortner Ramp located at 1395 Gortner Avenue. The parking ramp and the Museum are both handicapped accessible.

Tours
Visitors are invited to schedule a tour of the exhibition. Tours may include gallery activities or a visit to the Museum Research Center. Contact 612-624-7434 or gmd@umn.edu.

PRODUCTS OF OUR TIME™

July 21–September 30, 2007

PRODUCTS OF OUR TIME™

combining an array of designers and artists who comment on environmental, economic, political zeitgeist in medium-products.

For the last ten years or so, this growing cadre of designers and artists has been choosing the formal and conceptual language of products as a form of expression—and revenue generator.

Some of the works pose theoretical questions through the form of one-of-a-kind objects imagined as a prototype for future products, such as Scott Christianson's **Combination Brush**. Other works, including those made in Mike Libby's Insect Lab, take a singular concept and create customized variations on the theme—for Libby, the mash-up of real insects with antique watch parts and electronic components. Still others have been conceived and engineered to actually go into mass production. There is an endless supply of Tobias Wong's chrome-plated **Box Cutter**.

A closer look at **Box Cutter** provides an opportunity to illustrate a salient theme of **Products of Our Time**—beneath seemingly ordinary objects runs a subtle subtext that belies the product's everyday appearance. New York City resident, Wong made his box cutter in 2002, not long after high-jacked planes were flown into the World Trade Center on 9/11. Engraved on the side of Box Cutter are the words "Another Notion of Possibility."

All of which raises vague, yet relevant questions—why products? Why now?

Design is a medium through which we shape our world. Given the spread of Western-influenced culture and the rise of consumer-based economies, designed products have become ubiquitous in our lives and increasingly function as the leading cultural indicators of who we are as a society and where we are going.

The idea that products and objects tell us about ourselves isn't a novel one. Archaeologists rely heavily on the study of human-made artifacts to reveal complex histories of bygone civilizations. The Sumerian culture existed more than 5,000 years ago, yet they produced the first known writing system. This writing, etched into objects such as tokens and clay pots, was used to record commercial transactions associated with the exchange of products, no less.

Singer/songwriter Bob Dylan was widely regarded as an artist who had his finger on the pulse of an entire generation's counter-cultural movement. In 1965, Dylan sang "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." In 2007, we still don't require the services of a weatherman for our edification, nor would we look to a folk singer for that information either.

Design critic David Redhead wrote "The products that surround us provide an instant cultural history, a mirror in which our own preoccupations are vividly reflected." The quote is from the cover of Redhead's 1999 book **Products of Our Time**. I bought the book in 2001 and, like most designers, proceeded to look only at the pictures. While full of valuable insights into current design trends, my copy of the book is not destined to be a cultural artifact unearthed by future archeologists. Within a month of purchase, the cover completely separated from the spine. Days later, in lemming-like fashion, the pages followed suit.

A book entitled **Products of Our Time** that falls apart after purchase provides a metaphor too rich not to pursue. Even this mundane exercise in buyer's remorse can tell us a lot about ourselves. On the one hand, the content of Redhead's book suggests that we are a narcissistic society. Not satisfied to only buy products or look at them in catalogs, we also feel compelled to buy books about the products we purchase in order to learn more about ourselves and marvel at the ingenuity of our consumer culture. On the other hand, the physical construction of the book and the fact that it fell apart suggests that books, by and large, are just another disposable commodity no longer intended to become tomorrow's historical documents or treasured family heirlooms.

Theorist Guy Debord characterized the philosophical underpinnings of the mediated environment in which we coexist with commodities in the following terms "What appears is good; what is good appears." Products are typically concrete statements couched in positive terms, a celebration of themselves and the munificent culture that produced them. For instance, a handgun isn't advertised as a device for killing people, instead it is presented as a device for protecting oneself and one's family.

Imagine, then, for the next three months, the Goldstein Museum as a temporary retail outlet offering salable items that question not only the culture, but the very impetus that produced them:

Tobias Wong's **Bulletproof Rose** broach for evenings out on the town; Mark Franchino's, **Totem** is a painstakingly lathed from wood, roll of quilted toilet paper; For literal foreshadowing, FredriksonStallard's **Kite** that evokes Edgar Allen Poe's ominous raven; Marti Guixé's **Brushkey** to clean keyholes presumably for one's voyeuristic pleasures; because being born with a silver spoon in your mouth is no longer enough, Keith Farley's baby rattles, made of gold and silver, have precious jewels clattering inside; Kate Bingaman-Burt's detailed drawings of her monthly credit card statements; and Dunne & Raby's **Huggable Mushroom** cloud pillows, so you too, can learn to love the bomb.

As someone who is inherently mistrustful of authority figures it causes me some discomfort to position myself as an authority on this collection of work. For this reason I will not propose a grand narrative of what it all supposedly means. Instead, I invite the viewers to become their own authorities. I invite the viewers to perform their own analyses, draw their own conclusions and construct their own narrative as to what the objects say individually or collectively about the proverbial "interesting times" in which we live.

In conclusion, if you too are reluctant to accept that you are an authority on this topic, let me suggest the origin of your authority:

We are all sentient beings—living, breathing and consuming in the seventh year of the 21st century. By and large we listen to the same tonally sequenced music. We watch on television the same preternaturally attractive people selling us goods and dispensing tidbits of information in the guise of "news." With increasingly slight variations, the globalized economy ensures that we can eat the same foods, drink the same liquids and wear the same clothes. We experience the same invasive searches as we pass through one another's airports. When riding public transportation we sometimes wonder, if only for an instant, what that fellow traveler has in his backpack. The winters of our youth seemed to be more cold and the summers less unbearably hot—but we still don't need a weatherman to tell us which way the wind blows. The shadows on our shared Platonic wall seem to be cast by inorganic objects of uniform design produced in endless multiples. We sometimes wonder if the shadows are our own.

WE ARE ALL PRODUCTS OF OUR TIME.

Daniel Jasper
Guest Curator and
Assistant Professor of Graphic Design

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The Rake
SECRETS OF THE CITY

Join us for **Gallery Grooves** The Rake's monthly art, jazz, and wine event. Sponsored by The Rake, The Wine Company, KBEM Jazz 88, and Applause Music & Movies. **Goldstein Museum of Design** Thursday, September 20 from 7:00-9:00pm

DNA 11

Ottawa, Canada
<http://www.dna11.com/>

DNA 11 was founded by Adrian Salamunovic and Nazim Ahmed, both who have a passion and appreciation for the arts, as well as the vision and determination to transform DNA into unique art and share its beauty with the world.

Adrian Salamunovic is a 10-year business technology veteran with extensive experience in marketing and design. Adrian holds a diploma in Business Marketing from Algonquin College, and was recently nominated for **Fast Company Magazine's FAST 50**—showcasing the world's most innovative entrepreneurs of 2006.

Nazim Ahmed has more than 10 years experience in various sectors of the biotechnology field. He worked for a California-based biotech company specializing in digital imaging, capturing and manipulating biological images. Nazim holds a degree in Molecular Genetics from the University of Western Ontario.

Dunne & Raby

London, UK

<http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/>
Anthony Dunne & Fiona Raby use products and services as a medium to stimulate discussion and debate amongst designers, industry and the public about the social, cultural and ethical implications of emerging technologies.

Many of their projects are collaborative, working with industrial research labs, academia and cultural institutions to design both speculative products and services. BioLand, their current research project, investigates how a critical design approach can be applied to the field of biotechnology.

Anthony and Fiona were founding members of the CRD Research Studio at the Royal College of Art (1994-2002), where they currently lead studios in the Design Product and Architecture & Interiors departments.

Paul Elliman

London, UK

Paul Elliman's work, using both typography and the human voice, explores the mutual impact of technology and language. His work has been exhibited internationally and included in collections by the British Council, London's Tate Modern and Victoria & Albert Museum and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York. He has taught at Yale University School of Art, New Haven, since 1997 and is thesis supervisor at the Werkplaats Typographie in Arnhem, Netherlands.

Keith Farley

Alexandria, KY USA

<http://artwork-inform.com/>
Raised in Colorado, educated at Washington University in St. Louis (BFA) and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (MFA), Keith Farley was trained as a traditional contemporary metalsmith whose work was influenced by Heikki Seppä, his mentor. Working in metals and jewelry for over thirty years, he has developed his own unique style of embedding and hiding precious jewels, combining metals and creating objects of delight. Keith's jewelry and other metal objects have been sold internationally, are in private collections, and worn by those who value finely crafted, highly individual works.

Mark Franchino

Clarion, PA USA

<http://www.markfranchino.com/>
Mark Franchino received a BFA in 1998 from the State University of New York at Buffalo and a MFA from the University of Delaware in 2002. In the last 5 years his works have been shown in more than thirty group and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally, including exhibitions at the Universität der Künste in Berlin, Germany, the Print Center in Philadelphia, PA, and the Los Angeles Center for Digital Art. He has received numerous awards including the H. Douglas Pickering Memorial Award and purchase prizes from Lessedra Gallery in Sophia, Bulgaria and the Amy Art Foundation in Connecticut. Recent visiting artists lectures have been given at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice, Italy and the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, PA.

Currently Franchino is an Assistant Professor of Art and the Gallery Director at Clarion University of Pennsylvania.



Dragonfly
Mike Libby

Boxcutter photo courtesy of CITIZEN:Cityzen
Dragonfly photo courtesy of Mike Libby
Evidence Doll photo courtesy of Dunne & Raby

Karl Frankowski

Minneapolis, MN USA

<http://www.tytopect.com/fonts.php>
Karl currently works at Worrell, Inc. as a designer and documentary filmmaker. Additionally he serves as a cultural consultant and editor for the Design Evolution blog (www.worrell.com/blog). His work has been featured in **Adbusters** magazine, and he has participated in several international design-activism conferences. The Spectacle, his typeface comprised of corporate logos, has been downloaded by thousands of people from tytopect.com.

Much of Karl's free time is spent collecting vintage records and producing events under the Attitude City moniker (attitudecity.com).

FredriksonStallard

London, UK

<http://www.fredriksonstallard.com/>
<http://www.citizen-citizen.com/>
After meeting at St. Martins in 1995 and a fruitful period of acting as sparring partners, Patrik Fredrikson and Ian Stallard officially founded FredriksonStallard in 2005. Coming from the seemingly disparate worlds of crafts based ceramics and product design, they now share a common platform. Together they create a world populated by objects that possess a stark and wondrous beauty.

As we penetrate ever deeper into the digital age, we are leaving behind modernisms driving imperative mass production by industrial means. The new age is a more fluid, more transient one and it is in need of typologies that reflect these new parameters. Form and function have long ceased to be valid guidelines for designers working in a world overflowing with objects that do everything for us and yet are completely devoid of meaning. It is against this backdrop that FredriksonStallard's work should be viewed.

Marti Guixé

Barcelona, Spain

<http://www.guixe.com/>
Born in Barcelona in 1964, Guixé studied interior design there, then industrial design at Milan Polytechnic. Dedicated to inventing "brilliantly simple ideas of a curious seriousness," Marti Guixé divides his time between his native Barcelona and Berlin. Dubbing himself an "ex-designer," he designs products for textiles and shoe shops for Camper as well as conceptual projects.

As a "product designer who hates objects" Marti Guixé faces something of a conundrum. He reconciles himself to his professional role of continuing to develop new products because "I need to use them" and by focusing on the functionality of his designs, rather than what they look like and the materials they are made from.

Cory Ingram

New York City, NY USA

<http://www.citizen-citizen.com/>
Cory Ingram designer, artist and entertainer is a native Texan living and working in New York. Long interested in found objects, his work combines and contrasts consumerism and retail presentation with social topicality. Cory Ingram attended University of North Texas and graduated with a degree in fine art. He has worked in conjunction with most of the leading global fashion brands, and the sensibilities of this world are finely mixed with his own perceptions of them to create objects that question the role of brands and consumerism in our lives.

JimmyJane

San Francisco, CA USA

<http://www.jimmyjane.com/>
<http://www.citizen-citizen.com/>
JimmyJane is a design-oriented lifestyle and accessories brand that makes everyday a little bit sexier by emphasizing the provocative potential in each person and their lifestyle. Combining sophisticated design, quality, and a healthy dose of wit, JimmyJane creates luxurious products that range from a limited edition 24K gold-plated vibrator to a threesome of interrelated fragrances designed to intrigue and seduce. By upgrading and diversifying this neglected category, JimmyJane radically changes the context in which these products are conceived, purchased, and experienced.

Ethan Imboden, Founder, CEO, and Creative Director earned his BSEE from Johns Hopkins University and his Masters in Industrial Design from Pratt Institute.

JuSt Another Rich Kid

New York City, NY USA

<http://www.justanotherrichild.com/>
<http://www.citizen-citizen.com/>
New York-based artist Ken Courtney is founder of the independent fashion label, JuSt Another Rich Kid. His artwork and clothing address fame, pop culture & music, and the commodification of cultural icons in contemporary media. Courtney debuted in 2002 with an installation entitled "The New American Dream," addressing the commodity of celebrity. He then presented a performance piece entitled "Paparazzi" in September 2004 at Terminal 5 in New York. His collaboration with Tobias Wong, titled **Indulgences**, has brought him to the attention of an even broader audience, extending his comments from the fashion world to that of product design.

Mike Libby

Portland, ME USA

<http://www.insectlabstudio.com>

Mike Libby is a multi-disciplinary artist who makes highly detailed sculptures, models, collages and drawings. Through diverse materials and methodologies, Libby explores themes of science, nature, fantasy, history and autobiography. By employing strategies of misinterpretation, reorganization and remediation to readymade and natural objects, Libby highlights illogical and acute correspondences between the real and unreal. Libby Graduated with a degree in Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1999 and has since attended the Vermont Studio Center and was recently artist-in-residence at the University of Maine at Orono. He has been in many solo and group exhibits, throughout the US and Canada, including the Center for Maine Contemporary Art 2006 Biennial, with future shows in Boston, LA and New York. He has been published in **Metro London**, **The New York Times** and **Playboy** and is in collections worldwide.

Steven McCarthy

Saint Paul, MN USA

<http://www.episodic-design.com>
<http://faculty.che.umn.edu/dha/smccarthy/>

Steven McCarthy is a professor of graphic design at the University of Minnesota. His seminal work in developing a theory of design authorship has led to his interest in the designer as activist, whereby our culture, economy and society are shaped in beneficial and sustainable ways.

Steven's international scholarly presentations have included: Declarations, (Montréal), Mind the Map (Istanbul), Hidden Typography (London), Politics of Design (Belfast), New Views (London), Wonder-ground (Lisbon) and ConnectED (Sydney).

Studio Oooms

Eindhoven, Netherlands

<http://www.ooms.nl/>
Studio Oooms is a company that tends to make you smile. Their aim is to create and produce salable products with a distinct feel of witicism. Using nature's imperfection as inspiration, Studio Oooms' daring designs are characterized by an apparent contradiction within. By playing to taboos and expectations in the mind of the beholder, their products trigger a conflict of perceptions that make you think twice.

Studio Oooms is formed by Guido Ooms and Karin van Lieshout. Both work as designers as well as inventors tinkering away, not minding to get their hands dirty. This attitude enables them to find fine-tuned their products to a satisfying perfection. As a team, they fuel one another's creativity with wit, humor and a positive skepticism towards what is generally considered to be "normal".

Studio Smack

Breda, Netherlands

<http://www.studiosmack.nl>
Dutch artist collective Studio Smack consists of a number of like-minded artists of various disciplines.

Ton Meijdam graduated in 2002 at the Academy of Fine Arts St. Joost Breda, the Netherlands, where he studied graphic design. At the Holland Animation Film Festival his film "Let it Rain" got the jury's special mention. His film "Bigger Better" was selected for Impakt Highlights. He received the design award from the American Centre for Design for a poster designed for the play "Absurd Person Singular" by Alan Ayckbourn.

Thom Snels graduated in 2003 at the Academy of Fine Arts St. Joost Breda, the Netherlands, where he studied animation. His animation/Installation "Television" was shown at several film festivals and galleries in and outside the Netherlands. Some of his animated bumpers and leaders were shown on Dutch television and MTV.

Bela Zsigmond graduated in 2004 at the Academy of Fine Arts St. Joost Breda, the Netherlands, where he studied graphic design. His film "De Eén Minuutmens" won the Items/Spinhex & Industrieprijs for best graphic graduation project of the Netherlands and Belgium.



Evidence Doll
Dunne & Raby

Noam Toran

London, UK

<http://www.noamtoran.com/>

Born 1975 in Las Cruces, New Mexico, Noam Toran studied fine art and combined artist commissions with set designs for theatre and film before receiving an MA in design at the Royal College of Art in London.

Research-based, Toran's work focuses on the social, psychological and ethical implications of emerging technologies, mass culture, and celluloid media, and attempts to both define and criticize the intersection between science and society, between modernity and culture. Consistently, the work appropriates the discourse of product design and the effects of products themselves as a means with which to investigate and envision anomalies in contemporary and speculative human behavior.

Toran not only creates products but their narratives and contexts as well, imagining them to be the real protagonists of modern everyday life.

Toran's work is exhibited, screened and published internationally, most recently in London, Tokyo, Stockholm, Berlin, Paris and Jerusalem. He currently teaches at the Royal College of Art and lectures worldwide.

Tobias Wong

New York City, NY USA

<http://www.brokenoff.com/>

<http://www.citizen-citizen.com/>
Originally from Canada, Tobias Wong (b.1974) studied art at Cooper Union in New York City, where he graduated in sculpture. Veering across disciplines and materials, Wong has created an oeuvre that is immediately accessible, yet contentious. He pursues his own brand of conceptualism, the self coined "Paraconceptual," and "Postinteresting," and uses design as a medium, as he says, to expose the similarities between art and design, rather than to blur their boundaries. Producing work more often for high-end design showrooms than art galleries, Wong has received a glut of editorial praise in glossy design magazines that highlight the beauty of his objects, the cleverness of his actions, and ironically, Wong as an enfant terrible. Wong is the first to note that his work "continually questions the notion of authorship, the role of the artist and the value of art. I am uncomfortable with uniqueness and precociousness as well as ownership." Wong's work is available and exhibited on an international level, from Colette in Paris to Commes des Garçons in Tokyo, Paul Smith in London to the MoMA in Berlin, Art Basel in Miami and at New York's Cappellini, Cooper Hewitt and the Iike.



Boxcutter
Tobias Wong

This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Direct requests to Barbara Powell, Goldstein Museum of Design, 240 McNeal Hall 1985 Buford Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55108 612-624-7434

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