OMAG
Otis College of Art and Design Magazine
2007 Vol.3

10 Years of Digital Media & Toy Design
This year marks the 10th anniversary of Otis’ Digital Media and Toy Design departments. At their inception, both programs were considered highly innovative. Toy Design today remains one of only three such programs in the country. The rise of these departments to the top of their respective fields within a decade is remarkable. Digital Media students have routinely swept top prizes at national and international competitions, and young Toy alumni have created industry trend-setting toys. This issue of OMAG features a look at Digital Media and Toy Design at ten, as well as success stories from our graduates.

Several Otis trademark factors underpin the achievements of these departments: strategic development of new programs that respond to the needs of industry and society; a pedagogical balance between blue-sky creativity and work-place know-how that enables young professionals to innovate in a real-world setting; and active partnerships with industry leaders to provide our students with top faculty mentors, internship opportunities, and employment upon graduation.

In addition to connecting students with professional opportunities, Otis is committed to providing students with a socially aware and diverse educational experience. This fall, Otis is launching a new graduate program in Public Practice that explores new artistic strategies and practices based on social engagement and activism. At the undergraduate level, Otis’ Integrated Learning (IL) curriculum extends the classroom boundaries by requiring students from various departments to work collaboratively on site-based community projects that involve experts from fields other than art and design.

The undergraduate Fine Arts department offers the Artists, Community and Teaching (ACT) program for students interested in careers in art education. In addition, the Otis Teenagers Educators Artists Mentors (OT TEAM) initiative offers low-income Los Angeles youth an afterschool academy in digital media that provides skill-based media arts education and a path toward higher education. These and other efforts have earned Otis a place in the inaugural group qualified for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s Community Engagement Classification – as the only art and design college to be included.

Otis’ educational mission and impact are recognized by major funders. Recent grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Annenberg Foundation provide resources to offer scholarships to financially challenged students. The James Irvine Foundation has also awarded the College a grant for leadership advancement, including the research for a strategic diversity plan.

An Otis education is distinguished by a fruitful combination of innovation, optimism, diversity, and opportunity.

—Samuel Hoi, President

President Samuel Hoi with Scholarship Recipients Honoring Jacques Hall and Paul Fitzpatrick of Macy’s

Otis prepares diverse students of art and design to enrich our world through their creativity, their skill, and their vision.

Founded in 1918, Otis is LA’s first professional school of visual arts. Otis’ 1,100 students pursue BFA degrees in advertising design, architecture/landscape/interiors, digital media, fashion design, graphic design, illustration, interactive product design, painting, photography, sculpture/new genres, and toy design. Graduate Studies are offered in fine arts, public practice and writing. Alumni shape contemporary visual culture—from fine arts to the Hollywood screen, from the clothes we wear to the toys that engage our children.

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President Samuel Hoi with Scholarship Recipients Honoring Jacques Hall and Paul Fitzpatrick of Macy’s

Front Cover: Otis Impakt ’07
Right Cover: Digital color print from the exhibition in the Ben Maltz Gallery, “SIMS: In the Hands of Artists,” July 14–August 11. Students created work inspired by the popular game for a competition sponsored by Electronic Arts.

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Tenth Anniversary of the Digital Media Department

Digital Media has evolved over the last ten years as the industry changes and grows. The department’s primary goal is to strike a balance between traditional art and technology, and individual vision and teamwork. Video Game Design, the most recent addition to the curriculum, trains concept artists, modelers and animators.

Motion Graphics express personality in all aspects of the entertainment industry. Visual Effects enhance narrative and immersive experiences. 2D Design emphasizes image and text manipulation, and 3D Design encompasses animation and model making. Together, these five elements of the curriculum prepare students to respond to rapid changes in technology.
All audiences, even soap opera viewers, are used to the fantastic. Where do you think special effects are going? With the advent of bootleg renderers (PS3, Xbox, Wii), hardware is getting faster and faster, so that soon I can see sharing of assets around the globe, to create a virtual YouTube of real time animation ongoing in real time.

What can the visual effects houses and artists do to keep wowing people? Has the industry reached a plateau? Software and houses come and go—it’s the artist and the idea that keep wowing us. It essentially all boils down to “a vision or idea,” and with digital filmmaking that vision is literally right at our fingertips.

What would you recommend to students here and afar who want to become visual effects artists? Too often students come looking to learn software. We try to get them to learn the concepts and principles of art, design and storytelling.

What would you tell students to learn in and out of school? What kind of studies should they undertake? What kind of people skills should they develop? Give me a piano, and I would be the worst piano player you could ever imagine; give the same piano to Chopin, and he would play a masterpiece. The point is the software is just a tool that can be technically mastered by anyone; it’s the internal visual concepts that are of greatest importance. Analyzing a shot in a movie to determine what is or is not working, in terms of its look, is where the concepts of design, color, and composition come into play.

Alex Alexieff, who developed pin screen animation with his wife, Claire Parker, commented “You will find more inspiration, more suggestions in all fields outside your own. Look to poetry, science, music, psychology, astronomy. Anything. Anything. From these alien fields may come inspiration unexpected by you, which will enrich you and give you more raw material than thousands of screenings of your colleagues’ works.”

I completely agree with this and, in fact, have based my life on it. I take this even one step farther. Apart from looking to the arts and sciences for inspiration, I also look to my everyday mundane tasks of gardening, cooking, cleaning, and paying bills, and attempt to find the aesthetic aspects. Art is Everywhere and Everything!

Where does innovation come from in this field? Innovation is always driven by the idea. If films didn’t push the envelope in terms of effects and looks, technology would probably be 10 years behind. With almost every film I have embarked upon, we went in having no idea of how we were ever going to accomplish some of the things we intended. But put a bunch of brilliant and creative artists and scientists together, and it’s magic!

What distinguished Lord of the Rings’ visual effects in the history of our industry? When I first met with Peter Jackson, I told him that I wasn’t a huge fantasy film buff, but that my goal would be to make the fantasy world real enough so that the viewer would wonder how to book an airline ticket to the world we were creating. It was a pivotal point in time where technology was advancing enough to allow us to create the level of worlds that we wanted. Gollum was a good example of this, where software and hardware allowed us to achieve a character not previously realized.

Are sound and music areas for growth and cooperation? Sound and music certainly give the effects that we do the necessary impact needed to enhance the shot. For instance, if you saw a clip of an explosion, with ground-shaking subwoofer bass, and saw the same shot with the sound turned off, your experience of that clip would be enormously different! In terms of a component of visual effects, I rely on it but don’t necessarily utilize it.

What are you working on now and what is in the future for you? I am currently directing commercials, and have just signed on as visual effects supervisor for The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, the 3rd in the Chronicles of Narnia series.

What are some recent films that you especially enjoyed? Pirates, Casino Royale, and I am very excited about seeing Transformers!

What are your all-time favorite films? 2001, Mad Max, Road Warrior, Shawshank Redemption, Fargo, Sling Blade and of course the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

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Nostalgia question from Sarah Russin: Can you share some of your early Otis experiences with video? Didn’t you collaborate with classmates Bruce Yonemoto and Jeffrey Vallance? We had the luxury of using the fantastic reel-to-reel portable. (pg. 2) I can’t remember a day that we weren’t helping each other out preparing for a show. When I went into digital animation, Jeffrey Vallance wanted a little help on a video he was putting together called Blinky the Friendly Hen, based on a book that he produced, so I was doing a little digital video animation for him on a $5 million Gray XMP supercomputer!
It’s been a little over a year now since I came up north to the Bay Area to work at LucasArts, and it feels great to be able to share my post-graduation experiences.

LucasArts is the game development arm of Lucasfilm Ltd, located in the beautiful San Francisco National Park Presidio that overlooks the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge.

I am currently a 3D artist on the environments team for the game Star Wars: The Force Unleashed. Before this I spent a year working on the Indiana Jones game for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 (release date to be announced).

My primary role as an environment artist is to create the digital 3D environments that players immerse themselves in when they play our games. For SW:TFU this means making the futuristic world of the Star Wars Universe: enormous imperial factories, deadly battle arenas, alien worlds and the artifacts that inhabit these spaces. I model them, paint them, light them, and place them in the game to ensure that they look good, feel right, and run efficiently. This is the most unique part of our jobs as game artists; we need both an artistic eye and a savvy technical left brain to ensure that we do not exceed the limitations of the engines that run our games.

I have been a gamer since my early teenage years back in the days of Pong and the Atari 2600, and I have been playing games steadily ever since. The only time I stopped playing games was while I attended Otis so that I could focus on my studies. I classify myself as an old school gamer. I enjoy quirky action and puzzle games that don’t rely heavily on photorealistic graphics.

Geeks No More

By Gilbert Martinez

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Gaming for Edutainment

By Brock Ramirez

When I graduated from Otis in 2005, my main focus of study was character animation. Currently I work for a company called Knowledge Adventure (KA) in Torrance, CA. I have been there since October 2004 of my senior year. KA is an edutainment company that produces programs that contain elements of today’s platform games mixed with educational and learning content. Major current titles include Math Blaster and JumpStart. Past titles include Barbie Fashion, Jessica’s Park, and American Idol.

I am one of three animators, and act as the senior technical director, which puts me in charge of setting up rigs so that the other animators and I can properly animate the characters. A day in the life here at work can range from extremely laid back and goofy to energetic and stressful. We are all properly equipped with Nerf dart guns to execute office justice to unsuspecting coworkers, or (if team members prefer the non-human variety) inflatable animals and objects that are available for target practice. Also, every Friday ends with an all-out match on Counter Strike Source.

The benefit of working on children’s games is that as an animator I am greatly influenced by animation as a 2D cartoon medium. Most adult audience games require realistic animation that makes me yawn. With cartoon games, not only do I get to avoid unnecessary violence, but I also create fun, energetic, bouncy characters. There are no limits to realism when I want to make them do something. I am a huge advocate of pushing animation to make things seem “more alive” than reality. The only downside I find in a child-oriented company is everything has to be politically correct to the extreme in order to avoid offending anyone.

During the three years I have been here, I have hired four Otis alumni: three from my graduating class and major (Ty Viveiros, Chris Marsh, and Susan Kim) and one from Communication Arts (Lance Thatcher). I have worked on four titles that have been released, and am currently working on four more. In all titles I am credited as animator and rigger.

The greatest thing about my work is that I am one of the few people who, when asked what I do, can honestly respond with a smile and say that I love going to work each and every day (for at least I never regret going to work due to the type of work I do). Be sure that fact rings true with you.
Recipe for Collaboration

by Parme Giuntini, Director, Art History

Take two Otis faculty members: one art historian trained in 18th-century portraiture, gender and social history (but enamored with fashion and pop culture), and one fashion illustrator who is also a fine artist, a writer, and equally interested in fashion. Mix lightly at various Otis events for a few years, giving the two time to discover their mutual interests, time to bridge the gap between studio and Liberal Studies boundaries, and time to develop and team-teach a course on fashion and art.

Add one large dose of creativity, three years of research and writing, and a commitment to collaboration. The result is “GARB: A Reader on Fashion and Culture,” which features the combined work of Parme Giuntini and Kathryn Hagen, as well as a host of essayists (many of whom are Otis faculty members).

Collaboration and (inter)disciplinarity are currently two key buzzwords on college and university campuses, and for good reason: They enrich our understanding of any issue in a globalized world that embraces a multiplicity of positions and options. Theoretically, faculty from different departments and disciplines should spend significant time engaging their colleagues in discussion pertinent to their interests — this will both corroborate both their work and their students’ work. That is, of course, an ivory tower myth. The reality of faculty life anywhere is a haze of preparing for classes, teaching, working with students, participating in meetings, and handling ongoing departmental responsibilities; opportunities for faculty to indulge in purely intellectual conversation are rare indeed — and that’s within one department. It’s doubly difficult to find time to engage colleagues in other departments. So when it does happen, we cherish the interaction.

From initial conversations about fashion, the myriad meanings that clothing can communicate, and the intriguing crossovers that we saw between fashion, design, culture and fine art, Kathryn and I proposed to develop and team-teach a course on fashion and art. We hatched the actual idea for the book at one of our innumerable breakfast meetings in the summer of 2003, and within a few months we pitched the idea to Kathryn’s publishing contact at Prentice-Hall.

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We decided on the title of disciplines. Our writers ranged from poets to art critics, illustrators to book designers, and outside essayists from a variety of other disciplines. We always intended to invite essayists from a variety of disciplines. We always intended to invite essayists from a variety of disciplines.

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We agreed, but we always came to better conclusions as the result. “GARB: A Reader on Fashion and Culture” is a testament to our shared belief that the ivory tower myth can become a reality. The result is “GARB: A Reader on Fashion and Culture.”

Writing and editing a book together is a bit like co-habitation. To be successful living with someone else’s mind, there has to be enough space for sharing as well as independence, an ability to recognize and capitalize on each other’s strengths and expertise, and the flexibility to blend divergent positions into a cohesive whole without jeopardizing the critical (and often divergent) points. These factors are doubly important when the collaboration is interdisciplinary because incorporating different areas of expertise always means a negotiation of interests and priorities. I suspect that is why when we look back over the past three years of working together, our fondest memories — and the reason that we want to collaborate again — will always be those summer days when we pushed back from the computer and talked through different issues. They were challenging discussions and we often disagreed, but we always came to better conclusions as the result. “GARB: A Reader on Fashion and Culture” is a testament to our shared belief and determination that the ivory tower myth can become a reality.

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“All those years of not sleeping are definitely paying off now.” So says 2002 Digital Media alum Amy Kaufman Levy, who has recently been promoted to Head of Production at award-winning bicoastal creative production company Stardust.

But at times during her schooling, in addition to the 30-35 hours a week as a junior animator at a place called Hornet plus nine hours of interning at Fox Sports Net, Amy says her goal was to avoid a non-paying internship after graduating. She’d always had a sense that it was important to get to work early. And that’s exactly what she did.

Taking a liking to sports graphics, she built her senior thesis around a Fox Sports Net 3D promo. With plenty of experience under her belt at two companies over the span of two years, she was in a prime position in terms of employment. Within two weeks of graduation, Fox promoted her to Graphics Coordinator/Producer. “It all sort of trickled into my lap,” she recalls.

“I would recommend getting an internship early on. With me, sometimes I’d be learning things at work, and be ahead of the class; it would definitely help me problem-solve by simply applying what I’d learned in the workplace. I’d also advise students to focus on design that uses software as a tool—develop a strong background in design. Otis was an amazing experience. They teach you everything; but there’s a danger of spreading yourself too thin. Even through the demand right now is high for animators and designers, if you want to do 3D animation, really just focus on that. Sometimes I hear people say ‘I want to design and edit and do sound and get talent and do motion graphics, etc.’ But it’s important to focus on your passion.”

Then came the choice to freelance or stay with a staff job. Amy moved on to freelance work at 3 Ring Circus (as Graphics Producer), Exopolis, and Stardust (as Senior Producer). She got to the point of juggling roughly five commercials at a time, each with several million dollar budgets, sometimes composed of as many as 20 promos, and often filming around the world.

“I just kept getting great jobs at Stardust, and getting the work done on time and within the budget. They finally hooked me in January ’06 as a full-time employee, and I’ve been working there ever since. Over my freelancing years, and since, I’ve recruited a lot of talent and built a huge roster, many of them from Otis.”

As Head of Production, her job no longer entails producing directly; rather, she makes sure things go smoothly, production-wise, in terms of creative. Or as she says, “Basically, I kind of have my nose in everybody’s projects.”

Stardust’s particular appeal seems to come from the fact that a large number of employees are art school grads who deliver work that’s organic in nature, and which focuses on the fundamentals of color, design and composition. A lot of the resulting imagery is still hand-drawn and scanned in, creating a magical, ethereal quality that happens to be hot right now.

“As far as the future goes, despite the challenge of constantly adapting to new technology and software, Amy sees a constant appetite for advertising that’ll continue to propel jobs in this market. "Companies will always need to get product out there. In the next year or so, everything will be HD. A lot of work is going onto cell phones, like little promos and downloads onto iPhones, and of course the Internet, and also in-demand. That opens up all kinds of doors since what we do can be useful with many different multimedia tools. In the next 10-15 years, we might not have magazines and fliers because everything will be online, but I don’t see motion graphics going the way of print.”

“Korpenfester” Tours the Cosmos and the World

Student Michael Tavarez, a Digital Media junior, created this animation, inspired by the typography of Philipp von Rhoden. He used simple neon-like shapes to explore the processes of decay and regeneration, expanding from the human molecular level outward to encompass the entire sweep of the cosmos. It was selected from 2,200 entries for Resfest, an international festival of pioneering film and digital arts which traveled to 43 cities and six continents. www.michaeltavarez.com/portfolio/animation/ korpenfester_med.html

By George Wolfe

Sleepless in L.A.
Otis Digital Media Alumni

Digital Media graduates are working in all aspects of motion graphics, broadcast design, animation, visual effects and game design.
As a result of the close proximity, the department faculty members are industry professionals who are experts in their field. The comprehensive design curriculum includes all the major toy design categories of plush, preschool, dolls, action figures, toy vehicles, and games. Classes in child psychology and development, marketing, engineering, model making, digital design, computer rendering, packaging, presentations, and conceptual drawing and illustration complement the design curriculum. Students use the newest technology available in the industry, including rapid prototyping, whereby they draw on the computer and a machine prints the actual model. The students also receive valuable practical experience in summer internships at toy companies. When they graduate, they have an extensive portfolio of work, and display their work at the end-of-the-year exhibition in a showroom setting much like the New York Toy Fair. Otis’ Toy Design Department has such a powerful reputation that hundreds of toy industry representatives come to this exhibition to recruit graduating seniors. With graphic, product, and digital design skills, the toy design graduates are prepared to work in almost any area of children’s product design. Some other colleges have offered classes in toy design, but they cannot compete with the comprehensive curriculum that Otis offers, combined with a liberal arts education.

As the toy industry has grown in its size and the vast array of categories and types of products, there is a need for designers who have specialized skills. I began my career in toy design more than 20 years ago. Like others in the industry at the time, I did not go to college intending to be a toy designer. I graduated from the University of Cincinnati, College of Design, Architecture and Art, with a Bachelor of Science in Design. One of my internships was at Kenner Toys, where I designed plush characters and fashion dolls. After graduation, I had the amazing experience of designing women’s clothing for Gianni Versace’s ready-to-wear line. The job required that I travel to Los Angeles, and on one of my visits I saw an ad for a designer at Mattel. I applied for the position and was hired as a toy designer. There I was able to use my fashion design and industrial design skills to create toys with features. None of the designers I worked with at Mattel were trained as toy designers, nor did they think that this might be their career when they were in college. They came from a variety of backgrounds including automotive design, industrial design, fine arts, fashion design, graphic design, and engineering. We were self-taught or learned from each other, sometimes saying we were at “Mattel College.” In the past it took many years on the job to acquire the skills that toy designers at Otis have upon graduation.

Over the past 10 years, the Otis Toy Design program has gained worldwide recognition as the place to go to find talented toy designers. Los Angeles, the hub of the toy industry, is home to Mattel, the world’s largest toy maker, and has spawned hundreds of other Southern California toy companies.

As a career as a toy designer carries a great deal of responsibility because of the important role toys play in children’s lives. At Otis, we teach students that social consciousness is an important part of being a toy designer. Toys are an important part of our history and culture, and have existed since ancient times. Imaginative play is not only fun, but psychologists have proven that it is also crucial for the development of high-level human skills such as decision-making, socialization, and creativity. In primitive cultures where no manufactured toys are available, children play with everyday objects and make them into imaginary friends and enemies, and create games and puzzles. At the turn of this century, MGA introduced an ethnically ambiguous doll line called “Bratz,” which captured a huge market share of the fashion doll business. The culturally and ethnically diverse student population at Otis is well prepared to express cultural and societal shifts in the toys they design. Our toy design students are an almost equal mix of males and females as well, and their designs reflect changing ideas about gender in our society. In the action figure class, students design female action figures that are strong, empowered heroes, equal to their male counterparts.

Modern toys vary from the simplic to the technologically complex, and provide children with fun and fantasy, while teaching social norms. The modern toy industry produces products that reach a worldwide audience, creating new trends in toy design.

A career as a toy designer carries a great deal of responsibility because of the important role toys play in children’s lives. At Otis, we teach students that social consciousness is an important part of being a toy designer.
Ten years ago I knew I liked to make art, but I really had no idea what realistic options I had to pursue my artistic ambitions. It wasn’t until my senior year of high school that I finally chose a path that would ultimately lead to my “dream job.”

My teacher and mentor Barbara Kitchin worked with me to develop my portfolio, and came to me one day with a brochure for Oliv’s toy design program. Needless to say, I was very intrigued by the idea of combining my love of toys with my passion for design. After I was accepted, it didn’t take much convincing for me to pack my bags and drive all hours from Long Island to Los Angeles.

From day one, I knew my time at Olivs would be an arduous journey that would test my devotion to the design process and the importance of considering early on, I saw firsthand just how exciting the toy design industry could be. Between sophomore and junior years, I took a summer internship with Art Asylum, an action figure company in New York. I felt somewhat like a small child wandering through Santa’s Workshop. I had learned a few things the year before, but this was certainly a whole new experience. The designers who worked at Art Asylum were amazingly talented. And the deep wells of knowledge they offered me whetted my artistic palette for things to come.

The true excitement came when the internship postings came around the next year. I was pleased to hear that my luck would continue, as I was offered a position with the LA offices of Pixar in Denmark. After weeks of preparation and stressing over whether I would make the cut, I was offered a position as a temp. I began touring the Mattel design center and exploring other Mattel opportunities, and when the sponsor made an offer, I accepted.

To support L.A.’s toy companies and their designers, there are many model making and prototype studios. A toy design can quickly go from a thumbnail on a scrap of paper to a working sample in a matter of weeks.

MT Toy design in the Los Angeles area differs from the Midwest and East Coast toy businesses largely because of the influence and growth of the entertainment industry. Ruth and Elsa Handler, founders of Mattel, were the first to exploit this relationship by billing the American toy demographic with products from Disney’s Mickey Mouse Club TV show. These brands quickly outstripped the “old line” toy company products.

The concept of designing brands instead of items was an outgrowth of this part- nering with entertainment properties. Mattel, with their advertising agency Ogilvy Mather, led this trend, but all toy companies got on the licensing, branding and cross-promoting bandwagon. This partnership dominated the market through the late ’70s, ’80s and into the early ’90s. The predominance of marketing throughout the toy development process (design) is stronger on the West Coast than anywhere in the nation. Toys are primarily designed for maximum visual appeal rather than extended play pattern. Every feature must pay its way in advertising results. Other toy companies see the product as the innovative core and depend on promotion (advertising) to find a way to sell it.

What are the objectives of sponsored projects such as the spring 09 “Hot Wheels” studio with Mattel, both for the students and for the sponsor?

MT The students were able to work with a large, successful brand while maintaining their student autonomy; producing state-of-the-art creative, professional and existing presentations to Mattel’s Hot Wheels, Matchbox and Tyco management.

1. Mattel management (Matchbox and Tyco) leaders saw fresh new vehicle concepts from designers who were close in age to consumers, with minimal prejudice or bias. The designers were from wildly diverse cultural backgrounds. I am proud to say the girls did much more than hold their own in this usually male-dominated brand; they kicked some serious ass.

2. The Mattel managers were able to witness up-and-coming talent and judge the effectiveness and practicality of the methods for their own use.

3. The Mattel design team provided feedback that inspired students to explore new types of designs and consider new product possibilities.

4. Because the project was based in an educational environment with a “blue sky” thought process, the Mattel design team could look beyond the basics, and consider students’ design approaches that would not emerge in a “strictly business” environment. Product innovation and quality of concept were the important goals, without the myriad of pre-conditions that exist in a large corporate environment.

5. The competitive market research was open and extensive, and students often discovered and presented surprises and new business opportunities as part of the problem-solving process.

MT They also met 20 to 25 toy design students and discover a new, fresh pool of talent that will eventually be available to them as future employees.

Thanks to the open and helpful attitude of the Mattel (Matchbox and Tyco) designers and their generous critiques, the students received a gentle touch of toy reality and a pat on the back. This is invaluable for their practical toy knowledge and their professional pride, and it served as a very positive boost to their creative spirit.

How is toy design responding to interactive technology?

MT Interactivity is the “Holy Grail” of play patterns and is a constantly moving target. Finding the magic blend between the two camps of interactive technology is the trick. (The “Tech Nerd” camp values the complex, difficult, chance to make happen, abstract and vague but very unique.) The “We kinda been here before” camp premiates features that are extremely well done before so they can probably be done again (with a few new wrinkles). This approach evokes a franchise blending into market mediocrity that encompasses many entertainment licensed toy products.

CONTINUOUS
CL American toy companies design their toys in a manner that follows the latest trends happening fashion, technology and music. Asian consumers, especially in Japan, are often the people setting many of the new trends in technology. The American companies “shop the marketplace” in Japan and in Hong Kong a regular basis, always searching for newest look or idea.

What was your favorite toy when you were a child, and what is your favorite toy today? If you have children, what are their favorites?

MT Since I was very much the tomboy as a child, I always wanted to be outside escaping to an imaginary world—the Wild West, a Medieval Castle or Robin Hood’s Sherwood Forest. So I played with the walking horse, big guns, swords and shields and bows and arrows. I became characters from my favorite stories and comic books. Now I collect action figures and resin collectibles of my favorite comic book characters and imaginary creatures like dragons. When I look at these toys, I sit back, close my eyes, imagine that I “live in the world” where these characters come from. The three children I am with all the time are two, nine and eleven. The two-year-old loves ANYTHING Elmo, from Sesame Street, and Berry Bear. The nine-year-old loves her new American Girl Doll “Samantha.” She is even taking a summer school class about dolls. The nine-year-old takes his iPad with him everywhere and regularly downloads new music.

MT When I was a child, it was a pencil and paper. My favorite toy today is my computer (yes, it’s both a tool and a toy). My all-time favorite toys are the skateboard, Frisbee, “Big Wheel,” “Fast Traxx RC” and “Masters of the Universe.” I have no children of my own but I have always tried to design wonderful toys, for all children, all over the world, of all ages.

C What do you give young people who want to become toy designers?

MT First and foremost, you have to be able to still think like a child. Using your own imagination and making the emotional connection to remembering when you were a child and played with toys all the time. Is it fun, do you escape to another world when you play with it? Does the toy keep pulling you back to play with it again?

MT Feed your imagination with books, film and the internet. Most of all, learn to really listen and observe, and not just about toys. Let your imagination run wild and don’t let anything or anyone stop you. Find a good design school and completely lose yourself in your work. Just do it! Learn some stuff and then do it again. If you don’t like the doing of it, you’re in the wrong business.

CL How do American toy companies differ from those in Europe or Asia? How different are the consumers?

MT To my knowledge, no American toy company is subsidized, assisted by the government or insulated by import taxes or quota limitations against foreign competition. American toy companies only have three major retail outlets for injection-molded traditionally packaged toys: Wal-Mart, Toys R Us or Target. European toy companies have broader distribution networks from large toy store chains to “mom and pop” shops, and they sell across seasons. American toys are considered high priced and low quality by the rest of the world. When they are purchased, it’s usually because of a very popular license, such as a Disney entertainment property.

European toy companies depend on huge quotas to support their brand marketing, license acquisitions and overhead. Because of the accelerated obsolescence of styles and demand for new, fresh products on the shelf by the retailers, tooling budgets are astronomically. European toy companies tend to be rather small, and the complexity of the information on the computer chip depends on the age level of the child. No matter how innovative the toy is, it must still allow for the child’s imagination to explore and discover new things.

CL The innovative move toward animatronics and heroic action figures for pre-school, and the iPod and iPhone (yes, they’re also toys) and “i”-products that will continue to follow them, “outside the nine dots” and beyond.

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What Matters?

In March, Otis hosted WHAT MATTERS?, the first triennial symposium produced in collaboration with the :OUTPUT Foundation, based in Amsterdam. Over the course of two days, professionals, academics, and students of graphic, product, and environmental design heard lectures presented by internationally recognized designers.

Anne Burdick - Acting Chair of the Graduate Media Design Program at Art Center College of Design, and Director of Electronic Book Review, Los Angeles

Laurie Haycock Makela - Graphic design and digital media designer, and former Director of the Design Department at Walker Art Center; now living and practicing in Stockholm

Volker Albus - Author and curator, Professor of Product Design at Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe; Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe

Fiona Baby - Partner at Dumm & Baby, and former Taylor Research Fellow at the Royal College of Art, London

Terry Lee Stone - Professor at Art Center College of Design, and Director of the :OUTPUT Foundation, Amsterdam/Bremen

R.E. Somol - Professor in the Knowlton School of Architecture at Ohio State University, and Visiting Professor at Princeton University

Elliot Earls - Designer in Residence, and Head of Design at Cranbrook Academy of Art; Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Neil Denari - Professor in Residence in the Architecture Program at Art Center College of Design, and Chairman of the Design Program at Art Center College of Design, and Director of Electronic Book Review, Los Angeles

Anne Burdick presented several projects including "Writing Machines," an interactive site for a book by N. Katherine Hayles that "embraces the index as a component of the territory of Hayles' "text/ness". Big Packets," an online dictionary for Karl Kraus' literary works that features an incredibly elaborate XML schema and is a rich source for data scholars. Finally, she showed "The New Ecology of Things," a trans-media publication project done with Art Center students, based off science fiction author Bruce Sterling's book. She made it clear that Burdick is looking at the very nature of what precisely is a publication in this age of ubiquitous computing. She talked about the importance of the web as a whole new way of experiencing content, the act of absorbing information, and the use of the Web itself. Her active, complex databases create interplay in a dynamic environment. These complex databases can be made to be not your father's Web sites."

Anne Burdick: "Yes, but she's also striving for an old fashioned editorial voice. Her question: "When do design choices become editorial." She made it very clear that "This really made me think. www.electronicbookreview.com"

Fiona Baby: "What was interesting to me was Raby's exploration of the role of design in the debate about the future of human interaction with technology. Her firm's products, especially the "Hide Away" furniture, that provides a peaceful place to hide while at home, had a very serene beauty."

Elliot Earls: "For me, Raby's abstract product designs are all about the contradictory nature of human beings and the potentially scary results of tampering with nature through technology. www.dunneandraby.co.uk"

Munro: "It was great to see visions of the cutting edge and the future of the practice from a broad range of design practitioners and educators. It was intellectually stimulating during the presentations and in the conversations between (and the spread was great, too)."

Stone: "It was a mind-bending experience for me. The symposium allowed us to step away from the day-to-day practice of design, and imagine what it could be in the future. It's great to have this high level of discourse happening at Otis.

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L.A.’s Creative Economy

by Susan Martin

Otis commissioned the Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region, which was released on March 11 to approximately 300 regional education, cultural, business, and political leaders. Prepared by Jack Kyer, Chief Economist of the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), the key findings are stunning, including one million direct and indirect jobs generated by the creative industries in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Far from being a “supporting player” in the L.A. economy, the creative industries lead the pack, surpassing the two longtime “traditional” leaders: international trade and tourism.

The Report puts real numbers to creativity. In 2005, the creative economy accounted for 894,000 direct and indirect jobs in Los Angeles County alone and generated $152.7 billion in sales/receipts and more than $53.4 billion in state tax revenues. The data also has far-reaching policy and business implications. Centered on new ideas and new approaches, it is clear that education is critical to maintaining competitive- ness in a global economy increasingly built on innovation, sustainability, and good design.

The Report offers a new, more accurate and useful economic definition for creative industries: Architecture and Interior Design; Art Galleries; Communication Arts; Digital Media; Entertainment; Fashion; Furniture and Accessories; Product and Industrial Design; Toys; and Visual and Performing Arts Providers (theater and dance companies; museums; performing arts companies).

The Report also offers a deeper understanding of how creative industries form the hub around which the very fiber of the Los Angeles regional economy revolves. Until now, the perception has been that the creative industries’ strength and numbers lie in “Hollywood.” The Report indicates that the entertainment industry accounts for only 37.5% of the creative jobs. Another key finding is that Los Angeles leads New York as a creative economic center, with the advantage coming from fashion, toys, furniture, and the entertain- ment industries. Los Angeles County was first in the number of creative establishments with 27,121 in 2005, 13% higher than the 23,934 establishments in the New York Primary Metropolitan Area. In employment, Los Angeles was comfortably ahead with 340,000 creative workers, about 47% above such jobs in the New York area.

Other key findings, by industry segment, indicate the total economic impact of the creative economy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Segment</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Sales/Receipts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>25,200</td>
<td>$1.8 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Galleries</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>$463.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Arts</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>$3.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Media</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>$1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion/Accessories</td>
<td>58,000</td>
<td>$8.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/Home Furnishings</td>
<td>21,200</td>
<td>$9.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>$781 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Furnishings</td>
<td>41,200</td>
<td>$11.9 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial Design</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>$299 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>$720 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Media</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>$463.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Recording</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>$2.7 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Arts</td>
<td>36,400</td>
<td>$14 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product &amp; Industrial Design</td>
<td>33,200</td>
<td>$14.6 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys &amp; Games</td>
<td>41,200</td>
<td>$11.9 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Performing Arts Providers</td>
<td>34,300</td>
<td>$14 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, even these numbers don’t tell the full picture, as large numbers of people working in the creative industries are self-employed independent artists, writers, designers, and performers.

Otis thanks Merrill Lynch, the California Community Foundation: the James Irvine Foundation, and the Department of Cultural Affairs of L.A. for their support of this project.
In July 2004, I became Director of a new program in Fine Arts known as ACT: Artists, Community and Teaching. I started recruiting students by asking why they were interested in teaching. I wondered how many might tell me they wanted to minor in art education as a back-up to being an artist, but found myself incredibly moved to discover that they all had a story about teachers in their lives who made such a profound impact that they, too, were inspired to teach—or work in a variety of educational pursuits.

Fred Guzman ('07)
Fred, voted as commencement senior class marshal for his community-mindedness, created his own version of a the 2007 yearbook in a unique comic style. After graduating, he returned to the Imperial Valley to apply for an art teacher position at a continuing education high school. “Because of ACT, I go out of my way…to do…group projects that facilitate creativity.” Art projects that relate to students’ lives have been instrumental in re-connecting alienated teens to school and assisting with the development of life goals. Along with team-building through drawing and painting classes, Fred will shape the “Art of Comics,” contemporary art lessons he developed during ACT.

Abigail Cosio ('07)
Abigail Cosio, a Sculpture/New Genres major who is also a musician, has created inventive sculptures of instruments out of all kinds of soft and hard materials. “The coolest thing about the ACT Program is that is showed me that you might not even consider art education part of the art community, but it has defined herself as an “activist” until she met Billy, the sole surviving elephant at the L.A. Zoo, during an animal painting course there. His isolation and unhappiness have resulted in a nervousness that causes him to rock back and forth constantly. Mayuka spent a year painting portraits of Billy, and sold buttons of her portraits to support his release, as part of a long-standing campaign to free the elephant. Through fundraisers she met at an Otis scholarship-winners luncheon who were impressed with her drawing skills, she was invited to participate as the “artist activist” on an animal rights panel at the Reagan Library. This event resulted in a $100,000 donation, which has launched a campaign to build a ranch for Billy and others like him. She has been accepted to graduate school in animation, which will allow her to combine interests in art, education, book illustration, and children’s television. The career that will unfold for her will undoubtedly be informed by her social commitment as a world citizen and her critical eye to the equality and tolerance of all creatures in our increasingly interconnected world.

J. Allyn Guzman, Otis and ACT Director

Mayuka Thais Nagasawa came to Otis with three years of teaching at an interna-tional school in Tokyo, and her painting of Billy.

MFA degrees. Honorary degree recipient Cheech Marin and alumni guest speaker Kesh Viss (*95) spoke to the graduates, and Hudnut, current Dean director for Visual Arts, advised the new alumni to launch a rich and exciting life by taking risks and learning from making mistakes. (Honorary degree citation for Cheech Marin)

Your creative work as an actor, director, writer, musician, and comedian are legendary and celebrated throughout the world. Wide-ranging and sometimes provocative in nature, your sustained body of work has enriched and entertained millions.

Students, educators, and community leaders have found leadership and inspiration in your humanism and your continued support of the arts. Your important collection of art, which has been widely exhibited and published, has helped promote the voice of diversity in our culture. The dissemination of the collection has enabled you to share your life’s passion and contribution to the growing common of Chicano art and cultural identity.

(excerpt from speech by Kesh Viss. Complete text at www.otis.edu/vinh)

When I look back at my career at Otis, I think I was a good student, but I didn’t have a spectacular student. I never would have dreamed that I would have been invited here to speak to you today, especially when I remember all the extremely talented people with whom I graduated at the time. Oh that’s a little bit of encouragement for those of you out there who are as unimpressive as I was—there’s hope!"

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Design by Brooklyn Brown ('07, Communication Arts)

Experiencing the real world back-and-forth of writing and design, the writers collaborated with the designers to edit their content during the design phase. The full publication (pdf) is posted at www.otis.edu/squint.

L.A. Culture

Led by Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty member Jeri Finkel, students looked at Los Angeles and conducted research and interviews on topics of interest, including architecture, fine art, fashion and design. Working with graphic design students, they identified their audience and journalistic style for Squint. Experiencing the real world back-and-forth of writing and design, the writers collaborated with the designers to edit their content during the design phase. The full publication (pdf) is posted at www.otis.edu/squint.

Design by Brooklyn Brown ('07, Communication Arts) with Communication Arts faculty advisor Ginni Hader

Michelle Thais Nagasawa and her painting of Billy.
Elaine Goldsmith: A Constant Presence

by George Wolfe

More than 900 guests attended the annual Scholarship Benefit Fashion Show at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in early May, raising over $1 million for student aid. Recipients of the creative vision award were Paul Fitzpatrick and Jacque Hall of Macy’s. This year marked the show’s 25th anniversary, prompting Board of Trustees Chair Emerita Elaine Goldsmith to reflect on its history.

Twenty-five years ago, Elaine Goldsmith, who joined Otis’ Board of Trustees as a young sculptor, joined forces with Founding Chair of Fashion Design Rosemary Brantley to create the first Otis (Scholarship) Fashion Show, thus beginning a fruitful professional relationship spanning more than two decades.

Mrs. Goldsmith recalls, “Rose and I sold tickets for that first show (1982) at the new Hard Rock Café. The school made the runway out of tables with red checked cloths to match the Café. I think we charged about $100, and had about 100 people; we had box suppers, and it was a great show!”

The following year, the fashion show was at The Palace, a Hollywood nightclub, and catered by Wolfgang Puck—one of his first catering jobs. After that, the venues generally shifted to hotels, with The Beverly Hilton being in the schedule for the last 22 years.

“In the beginning [of the fashion shows],” says Mrs. Goldsmith, “Helen Rose was wonderful for us. She showed a lot of her clothes, with The Beverly Hilton being in the schedule for the last 22 years.

The first catering jobs. After that, the venues generally shifted to hotels, with The Beverly Hilton being in the schedule for the last 22 years.

Twelve months, and Wolfgang Puck’s wife, Barbara, bought the box suppers, and it was a great show.”

“Each year has just been so fantastic,” beams Elaine. “And at the end of each event, we always say ‘Oh, my goodness. What can we possibly do to equal it?!’ Last year the mentor Cirque du Soleil helped make it a truly memorable year, but each year gets better and better. Each time he’s been involved, it’s been very dramatic, and there have been beautiful clothes. One year, he featured each of the twelve months, and Wolfgang Puck’s wife, Barbara, bought the month of April, which was gorgeous: a picket fence with flowers, and there have been beautiful clothes. One year, he featured each of the twelve months, and Wolfgang Puck’s wife, Barbara, bought the month of April, which was gorgeous: a picket fence with flowers, which she ended up wearing to Spago.”

And as for the future of the fashion show, say, 25 or 50 years from now? “Well I’m sure it’ll be the current fashion, very au courant, and I assume by then we’ll have people underwriting everything so there isn’t a student in the school who can’t get a scholarship to go to Otis.”

Advertising Design

Communication Arts ’07 graduate Jesse Kersey won the Heineken USA/American Advertising Federation Public Service Advertising Competition, a national program for advertising students that addresses underage drinking prevention by developing a public service announcement advertising campaigns for print, radio and Internet. Her winning campaign was based on traditional games—word search, mazes and trivia—that reinforce how judgment and cognitive skills are impaired by alcohol. Campaign elements included tear-off cards, coasters, online pop-up ads and a radio public service announcement. Student Delene Fontanilla won an honorable mention.

Architecture/ Landscape/Interiors

Seniors Matt Gillo-Teran and Emme Yoon won second place and a $5,000 scholarship in the 2007 Los Angeles AIA Interior Committee’s “A+” Student Competition. Competing against teams of students from eleven other schools, they created an interior design for a 50,000 square-foot truck stop in a six-hour charrette.

A/L/I students also won three of five prizes awarded in the 2006 “Launch Your Career in Exhibit Design” International Competition hosted by the Exhibit Designers and Producers Association. Gary Garcia, Kevin Lee, and Jesus Aguilar won 1st, 3rd, and 5th prizes respectively, and will receive tuition scholarships. They designed an exposition booth for the debut of a hand-held gaming device.

Student Competition Winners
Andrew Brandou

**CLASS NOTES**

**EXHIBITIONS**

- **Multiple Vantage Points: Southern California Women Artists 1980-2006**
  - The women artists were well represented in “Multiple Vantage Points: Southern California Women Artists 1980-2006,” curated by Debra Frankel, at the LA Municipal Gallery, Barnsdall Park, February 16-April 15. It included work by alumnae Alison Saar (’81 MFA), Carrie Whitney (’96 MFA), Camille Rose Garcia (’92), Pattsi Valdez (’85 Fine Arts) and Sarah Perry (’83) as well as work by faculty member Carole Caroompas and former faculty members Lisa Albuquerque and Betye Saar.

  - **Stuart Arndt (’81, Fine Arts)**
  - "Rogue Wave 2007"
  - Of the twelve emerging L.A. artists selected for this annual exhibition, three are Otis alumni: Sandeep Mukherjee (’96), Eduardo Sarabia (’99), and Timothy Tompkins (’03). Included is Sandeep Mukherjee’s "Blow," a painting collection (Home One (Murphy)), 2006, www.murphydesign.com

  - **Tofan Chin (’75, Fine Arts)**
  - "Flame" magazine, cover and four-page spread, November 2006

  - **Blaine Fontana (Hogg) (’72, Communication Art)**

  - **Anthony Kwan (’79, Communication Art)**
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  - **Andrew Broudis (’90, Communication Arts)**

  - **Diana Miao (’99, Fine Arts)**

  - **Mario Ybarra (’99, Fine Arts)**

  - **Eduardo Sarabia (’99), and Timothy Tompkins (’03)**
    - LA Louver Gallery, Venice, CA, June - September 2007

  - **Timothy Tompkins (’03, Digital Media)**
    - "Two Ways," Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL, www.robertrainey.com

  - **Joe Sola (’99, Fine Arts)**

  - **Robert Dobbie (aka Rob Dob) (’02, Communication Arts)**
    - "Painting Collective 10 (Murphy)," 2006, www.murphydesign.com

  - **Tofer Chin (’75, Fine Arts)**

  - **Blaine Fontana (Hogg) (’72, Communication Art)**

  - **In Memoriam**
    - **Anthony Kwan (’79, Communication Art)**
    - "Rogue Wave 2007" curated by Debra Frankel, at the LA Municipal Gallery, Barnsdall Park, February 16-April 15. It included work by alumnae Alison Saar (’81 MFA), Carrie Whitney (’96 MFA), Camille Rose Garcia (’92), Pattsi Valdez (’85 Fine Arts) and Sarah Perry (’83) along with work by faculty member Carole Caroompas and former faculty members Lisa Albuquerque and Betye Saar.

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This is a small sampling of recent alumni accomplishments. To keep up with Otis’ ever-active alumni, and to see the fully illustrated monthly news archive, click on “Class Notes” at www.otis.edu/alumni. To submit news and images, contact Sarah Russin, Director of Alumni Relations at otisalum@otis.edu. To receive a monthly message with a link to the most up-to-date news and Class Notes, click “Register” at www.otis.edu/alumni. It’s easy and we don’t spam you! Also, feel free to call Sarah in the Alumni Office at 310.665.6937. Regular readers of the online alumni news reconnect with old friends, and take advantage of opportunities for professional development. If you haven’t already, we hope you will join the Otis alumni online community!

Entrepreneurs, Award-Winners, Cool Designers, Soloists, Entertainers, In Print, In Memorium

Sonia Boyajian (’12, Fashion Design) Designer www.soniaboyajian.com

Allison Whitney (’03, Fine Arts) Owner/Senior Designer of Stanza. www.monicastanza.com


Kasey Maurer (’03, Fashion Design) Designer of custom women’s wear. www.kaseymaurer.com

Mark Caneso (’03, Communication Arts) Lead Designer for 3rdSpace. www.3rdspace.com

Andrew Brandou (’99, Communication Arts) Designer. www.brandou.com

Sarah Coon (’16, Fashion Design) Senior Assistant Designer at Bee Toys. www.bee-toys.com

Ryan Ford (’16, Communication Arts) Senior Designer at Strada, Costa Mesa. www.strada.com

Alison Saar (’97, MFA Fine Arts) Designer, sculptor and performance artist. www.alisonsaar.com

Sarah Perry (’81, MFA Fine Arts) Designer and Producer at Sony Pictures Imageworks. www.spmi.com

Andrew Brandou (’99, Communication Arts) “In A Man Thinketh, So He Is.”


Sarina Lee (’04, Communication Arts) "I have seen things." ANDARL, L.A.


Cynthia Harper (’79, Fine Arts) "In A Man Thinketh, So He Is."

Ben Fried, Gallery, Calvary


Corrie Gregory (’91, Fine Arts) "From the Root Cellar." Metro Gallery, L.A.


Mark Caneso (’94, Communication Arts) "I have seen things." ANDARL, L.A.

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Ben Fried, Gallery, Calvary


Corrie Gregory (’91, Fine Arts) "From the Root Cellar." Metro Gallery, L.A.


This year twelve young filmmakers from Southern California and New Orleans were invited to Paris for free week to soak inspiration from the region of Aube, Brittany and The Midi-Piroten. Undergraduates and recent graduates were selected from four American schools: Otis College of Art and Design, Art Center College of Design, California Institute of the Arts and University of New Orleans. Since their return, these young artists have created short films, expressing their vision of the region they visited. The trip was sponsored by Ministre de la France USA, the French Government Tourism Office and the Cultural Services of the French Consulate in Los Angeles.

Jeunes Talents

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Ruben Ochoa (’04, Fine Arts) (Photo courtesy of Inframe Caffaro/Los Angeles Projects)

Sarah Coon (’16, Fashion Design) Senior Assistant Designer at “Bee Toys.”

Ryan Ford (’16, Communication Arts) Senior Designer at Strada, Costa Mesa. www.strada.com

Alison Saar (’97, MFA Fine Arts) Designer, sculptor and performance artist. www.alisonsaar.com

Sarah Perry (’81, MFA Fine Arts) Designer and Producer at Sony Pictures Imageworks. www.spmi.com

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Corrie Gregory (’91, Fine Arts) "From the Root Cellar." Metro Gallery, L.A.

Speaking to a sold-out crowd, Chair of the new Graduate Studies: Public Practice program Suzanne Lacy and Judy Chicago continued a student teacher conversation that began in 1970 at Fresno State. As Chicago characterized it, “hope and change in the air” when she moved from L.A., after receiving her graduate degree in fine arts from UCLA, to start the Feminist Art Program. Her goal was to reunite her impulses as a woman with a professional art practice by helping young women reconnect to their own femininity and create a new kind of art-making. Lacy was a 23-year-old Psychology major who joined the Program.

Chicago and Lacy recounted stories of the costumed “Cheerleaders” greeting NOW President Ti-Grace Atkinson at the Fresno airport as a group of Shriners observed the move to Cal Arts; and the launching of a feminist art practice through Women House and the Women’s Building in L.A.—all underscored by decades of performances and the wearing of war bonnets.

As Lacy explained, “We developed courage as women because more power. Private experience became public, used as a subject for art.” The shared goal was to reunite her impulses as a woman with a professional art practice by helping young women reconnect to their own femininity and create a new kind of art-making. Lacy sees her “Dinner Party” in the continuum of work that seeks to expand the role of artists to create different kinds of art. Lacy’s work uses the city as a frame, transforming public awareness, and equating art and life.

In closing, Chicago mentioned what she now sees as the error of the 70s: “We should have cast the dialogue on values rather than gender, and as a result we alienated a lot of men who could have been our friends. Moving into the future requires men and women working together to build a different kind of society.”

More on Wikis and iTunes

The Library's Faculty Teaching and Learning Center has spearheaded two recent initiatives in applying new technologies to teaching: hypertext wikis and iTunes podcasts. At its annual conference in July, The New Media Consortium recognized these achievements by presenting Otis with a Center of Excellence Award for “demonstrated excellence and outstanding achievement in the application of technology to learning or creative expression.” At the end of May, the iTunes Store added a new feature, “Flower,” prominently featuring podcasts on culture and design created by faculty member Christian Mounger. Apple reported that viewership to iTunes U skyrocketed from 38 to 70,000 in just one week on line.

Faculty member Gay Bennett’s “Hyperliterature” course, focused on electronic literature works featuring hypertext and/or hypermedia technologies, was the perfect subject for a wiki-based class.

“With a technology grant from the Library’s new Teaching and Learning Center, supported by the Fletcher Jones Foundation, I presented the wiki project to my students on the first day of class. I told them that they could contribute as much or as little as they liked to any of a number of pages, provided they reached the required word count. For the most part students had no trouble inputting their information and formatting it correctly. One of the benefits of the wiki is that it does not disappear at the end of the semester, like term papers, and the student work remains online as a resource for the Otis community and the public, and could be expanded in future courses.” Bennett concluded that the students were excited about exploring this relatively new technology, and stimulated by the opportunity to do scholarly work collaboratively.

Inside the Designers Studio

2007 Fashion Design Mentor Francisco Costa spoke with Fashion Design Chair Rosemary Brantley about his youth in Brazil, where his family had an apparel business. He had dreamed of becoming a designer in America, and arrived in New York as the early 90’s. Beginning with only enough money for English lessons and a few fashion classes, he embarked on a rapid journey to success. His first steps in N.Y. included designing for Bill Blair, and he went on to spend five years in Paris with Oscar de la Renta and Pierre Balmain, and then four years with Tom Ford at Gucci before finally joining Calvin Klein in 2003. Costa has been compared to an architect for his fine tailoring and precision, which result in classic lines and refined dresses in geometric grids and patterns. When the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) awarded him Women’swear Designer of the Year in 2006, they cited his “skilled tailoring and attention to minute detail as dresses ranging from power suits to chiffon gowns.”

Visiting Artists and Designers 2006-07

Otis Speaks Public Lectures

Yamandu Canoro, artist Judy Chicago, artist Roger Coatsman, artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña, performance artist Nira Israël, theorist Charles Ariès, DJ

Susan Leig, public artist Legacy Project, photographers Dada Luna, museum director Guy Maddin, filmmaker Yvonne Rainer, artist Julian Robinson, curator Steve Roden, artist Alexsandra Smith, artist Smadar Sheff, critic Susan Stilson, artist Cindy Smith, artist surrounded, feminist art practice Joan Torner, artist

Architecture/Landscape Interactions Steven Ehrlich, architect Elisa Torres, architect Matthew Custódio, environmental educator Halsey Reitberg, architect Communication Arts Sean Adams, graphic designer Philippe Delarché, graphic designer Brad Berling, graphic designer Kathy Black, illustrator John Butel, art director David Clapton, graphic designer Sean Donovan, graphic designer Aquitín Caro, graphic designer Gary Heathcote, marketing/ advertising creative manager Erika Heador, graphic designer James Jean, illustrator Geoff Kaplan, graphic designer Joe Leadbetter, illustrator Harriet Landurgt, graphic designer Harrow Laser, graphic designer Henri Lutis, graphic designer Tony Luan, consultant New Media Mark Murphy, designer


Otis celebrated Scott Grieger, one of its most beloved faculty members, on the occasion of an exhibition of his work from 1969 to the present at Patricia Faure Gallery in Santa Monica. Currently Painting Program Director, Greiger has mentored alumni for more than 30 years, and many of them attended this closing reception.

The event took place on April Fool’s Day, underscoring the comments of Los Angeles Times art critic Christopher Knight, whose review compared Grieger’s ability to combine humor and potent social meaning to the work of comedians Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner and Sid Caesar, all of whom “embrace unadorned entertainment as an artistic vehicle.”

Grieger’s humor on April Fool’s Day

I wish I had been there to honor Scott. Most of the stories I have about him shouldn’t be shared with the public! But I will say that, whenever I could make the time, I loved to drop in on Scott’s painting crits. Even at my ripe old age, I always walked away with something to think about. I especially admire the way that Scott can find something positive to say about any piece of work. He always leads the student to a deeper approach, finding meaning that the student often never intended.

River Montijo (’76), Registrar, Va. Commonwealth Univ., Doha, Qatar

Way back in the ’80s he would challenge us, both in what and how we thought. He once asked the class: Did a male or female make this painting? Needless to say, it made everyone think.

Ed Engel (’88)

The one thing that sticks from my classes with Scott Grieger was his ubiquitous advice during painting class: “If you keep pick’in at that thing, it’ll never heal!” He was always a positive influence during my education at Otis, and one of a handful of teachers that inspired me to continue.

John Haines (’87)

I remember something Scott said very well: There are NO Art Police!!! That statement has kept me loose in my art all these years, and I quote him often. He was a great teacher. Also, my very first day in class, I was timid and we had a model. He said: He’s got a penis, draw it!

Janet Makare (formerly Sorell) (’84)

But the work that I am most proud of is my work as a professor. I think that I have affected more lives, in more ways, over a number of years, and it comes back to me in nice ways. My students have won academy awards, and shown in the best museums... Karmically, being a professor, and doing good work, and having people go out and be successful, that’s the best.”

(Comments from alumni)