ART
BROADCAST
CINEMA
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
MEDIA DESIGN
Thank you for your interest in Art Center College of Design’s Graduate Media Design Program (MDP).

We prepare designers for a world in which anything—from sensor networks to interactive surfaces to entire cities—can be a medium for communication.

We invented the name ‘Media Design’ when our students’ work no longer fit in the established categories. In the process, we created an entirely new discipline.

ANNE BURDICK
Chair, Graduate Media Design Program
OUR PROGRAM

"Prior to the Media Design Program, I was taught to think of designers as problem solvers. The MDP philosophy is much more about doing provocative work and finding and illuminating new problems."

JONATHAN JASPER ’96

Art Center’s Media Design Program (MDP) helps ambitious makers from a variety of backgrounds become design leaders and researchers. We challenge our students to push design in new directions by following their curiosity, refining their expertise and inventing new practices within a context of cultural and technological change.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Three key concepts help us navigate a design field that is in constant flux: hybridity, emergence and discovery.

Hybridity
While communication is no longer a strictly graphic affair, our roots are in graphic design. Our students learn to integrate aspects of architecture, film, computation, interaction and industrial design into their work. They are exposed to theory, history and methods from both the humanities and the sciences. We believe designers with broad exposure and mixed expertise have the agility to work through issues from multiple perspectives. This provides excellent preparation for work in interdisciplinary contexts.

Emergence
Within our graduate studios, new practices, forms and ideas emerge out of the process of designing. We foster this activity by challenging experienced and burgeoning designers to identify their own unique place within the rapidly changing landscape.

By following their own interests, MDP students learn to identify new methods, lay claim to emerging genres or repurpose existing practices to their own ends. Our graduates are prepared for a lifetime of reinvention.

Discovery
We believe the act of designing is a unique way of knowing about the world. As designers, we create communications (objects, systems, environments) that inform, influence and alter everyday life. In the process of making, we visualize, iterate and critique. Through these activities, we believe designers can gain unique insights and generate new ideas and artifacts.

ADAPTIVE TOOLS AND METHODS

Our design methods call upon both established and novel strategies. Our sketching and prototyping tools include paper, video, software and hardware. Our program develops critical media forms intended to rework how knowledge is produced and shared. We expand and test new research approaches to people, technology and ideas. In addition to the established modes of interaction and communication design, MDP students explore transmedia typography, massive- and micro-scale displays, distributed narratives, dynamic information, tangible and virtual interfaces, graphic visualizations, fictional scenarios for both the near- and far-future and computationally enabled objects and spaces.
STUDENT LIFE OFF CAMPUS

TOP LEFT - RIGHT
Slides from a presentation by MDP student Jonathan Jarvis document- ing his Designmatters fellowship with UNICEF’s innovation team at the U.N. in New York. Jarvis worked on the Our Stories project, which began as a sponsored research project in the MDP and went on to include One Laptop Per Child, Google, and StoryCorps.

MIDDLE
MDP student grant funds supported five students to attend and present at the Social Studies: Educating Designers in a Connected World 2008 conference at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.

BOTTOM
MDP students Yuseung Kim and Mari Nakano on the road to the Social Studies conference where they ran a workshop titled “Probes: A Designerly Way of Researching.”

OUR CURRICULUM

The Media Design Program offers a Master of Fine Arts curriculum that prepares graduates for the design of future communication technologies and practices.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Each student takes a combination of required and elective courses based upon their research interests, course offerings and degree path or concentration. The two-year and three-year paths are designed to meet the educational needs of both aspiring and experienced designers. Please visit our Web site for more in-depth information: artcenter.edu/mdp.

TWO-YEAR PATH

Concept Year
In the Concept Year, students complete a combination of core classes and topic studios. The fall term exposes students to concepts in media design in a structured way. In the spring term, students choose among a variety of topic studios in which students have greater freedom to define project outcomes. Course offerings include: Media History and Theory; Authoring Critical Media; The New Ecology of Things; The Ubiquitous Moving Image; and New Modes of Reading and Writing.

Summer X-Term
In the summer between the Concept and Thesis Year, students enroll half-time, completing one of the following options: Specialized Study allows students to take courses within another Art Center department to develop deeper knowledge of a secondary discipline; Off-campus Internships with MDP partners, such as the United Nations, T-Mobile, Intel Research and others, provides students with valuable experience in the field; and On-campus Research Internships give students the opportunity to work side-by-side with MDP faculty and visiting researchers on experimental design research projects.

Thesis Year
The Thesis Year is spent creating an individual Masters project with the support of a team of advisors. Coursework consists of classes that support the development of the thesis. Course offerings include: Design Research Practices 2; Histories of the Future, Thesis Workshop; and Knowledge-Sharing Workshop.

THREE-YEAR PATH

Foundation Year
Students on the three-year path must complete the Foundation Year prior to entering the Concept Year. The Foundation Year is designed for students who come from a non-design background and/or designers who wish to expand or refine their skills. Students take a combination of MDP core courses and undergraduate design courses customized to each applicant’s specific needs. Foundation Year courses may include: Design History; Information Design; Transmedia Design; and Visual Narrative.

Year 1

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Year 2

Students on the three-year path must complete the Foundation Year prior to entering the Concept Year. The Foundation Year is designed for students who come from a non-design background and/or designers who wish to expand or refine their skills. Students take a combination of MDP core courses and undergraduate design courses customized to each applicant’s specific needs. Foundation Year courses may include: Design History; Information Design; Transmedia Design; and Visual Narrative.

Year 3

Students on the three-year path must complete the Foundation Year prior to entering the Concept Year. The Foundation Year is designed for students who come from a non-design background and/or designers who wish to expand or refine their skills. Students take a combination of MDP core courses and undergraduate design courses customized to each applicant’s specific needs. Foundation Year courses may include: Design History; Information Design; Transmedia Design; and Visual Narrative.
OUR FACULTY

Our students are guided by a diverse faculty of design visionaries and thought leaders who bring knowledge, experience and rigor to their critiques.

ANNE BURDICK
Department Chair

Anne Burdick is a regular participant in the international dialogue regarding the future of graduate education and research in design. In addition, she designs experimental text projects in diverse media, for which she has garnered recognition, from the prestigious Leipzig Award for book design to I.D. Magazine’s Interactive Design Review for her work with interactive texts. Burdick has designed books of literary/media criticism by authors such as Marshall McLuhan and N. Katherine Hayles and she is currently developing electronic corpora with the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Burdick’s writing and design can be found in the Los Angeles Times, Eye Magazine and Electronic Book Review, among others, and her work is held in the permanent collections of both SFMOMA and MoMA. Burdick studied graphic design at both Art Center College of Design and San Diego State University prior to receiving a design at both Art Center College of Design and is held in the permanent collections of both, among others, and her work of Rochester. Studied literature and history at the University

TIM DURFEE
Core Faculty

An architect and partner of Los Angeles-based Durfee | Regn, Tim Durfee’s work includes exhibitions for The Hammer and The Huntington and a permanent gallery for Target’s corporate headquarters. He has collaborated with artists—Doug Aitken’s installation “Ultraworld”—and developed an award-winning Web site for AEOLAB, a design and technology consulting firm in Los Angeles. While exhibiting studying, he has been a part of Pillow Lavās, a collaborative group that intersects lifestyle, culture and social interaction. In 2004, the group was part of the Class: C gallery for the Orange County Biennial of Art. Kevin holds an M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego and an M.A. and B.F.A. from Webster University in St. Louis.

BRAD BARTLETT
Director

Bradd Bartlett earned his master’s degree in design from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1998, and holds a bachelor’s degree in graphic design from North Carolina State University. His work at Cranbrook, which explored the relationship between media and culture, was presented at MIT and Fabrica of Benetton in Italy. In 1999, Print magazine selected him as “New Visual Artist.” That same year he established a design studio whose clients have included UCLA Live, MOCA and the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising.

JOHN BRUMFIELD
Director

John Brumfield received his B.A. from UC Berkeley, his M.A. from California Institute of the Arts and his M.F.A. from CSU Los Angeles. John has received an NEA Grant and his work has been seen in Afterimage, Art Issues, Artweek, Artforum, Graphis, LAICA Journal, Camera Obscura and SF Camerawork.

ELISE CO
Director

Elise Co is a media artist and founding partner of Aelobab, a design and technology consulting firm in Los Angeles. Co holds an M.S. in media arts and sciences and a B.S. in architecture from MIT. Previously, she taught courses in interaction design and physical computing at the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst in Basel, Switzerland. Her work has been shown internationally, including at MoMA, SIGGRAPH and IMRF Tokyo.

SHONA KITCHEN
Director

Shona Kitchen is an internationally renowned multidisciplinary artist/designer with a passion for technological advancement. Her work explores the intersections between the physical and virtual and the ways in which they manifest themselves as new spatial experiences. Kitchen uses technology to enhance and enrich, rather than distract from, the culture and aesthetics of its surroundings and she considers its subsequent social, political and environmental consequences.

"The Media Design Program took my thought processes and concepts to the next level. The faculty brought so many unique perspectives to my work that they completely changed the way I think about design."

Nikolai Cornell ’04
“Yes, you can learn how to wire circuits, but the most important thing a designer needs to learn is the vocabulary of your collaborators. The future of design is going to depend on collaborative relationships with engineers, interactive designers and product designers.”

STUDENT WORK

NORMAN KLEIN
Norman Klein is a cultural critic, media historian and novelist. He is the author of The Vatican to Vegas: The History of Special Effects; The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory; and The Imaginary Twentieth Century, a science-fiction database novel and exhibition which ran at ZKM in Karlsruhe, Germany. Klein is a professor at CalArts, has taught as adjunct faculty at Art Center since 1982 and is now also a thesis advisor for the Media Design Program.

LISA KROHN
Lisa Krohn is the creative director and lead designer at Krohn Design, a brand and design practice whose clients have included Herman Miller, Walt Disney Imagineering and the San Diego Children’s Museum. Krohn studied art and art history at Brown University, trained at the Cranbrook Academy of Art and worked with renowned designer Mario Bellini. A winner of the prestigious Rome Prize, Krohn’s work can be found in the collections of SFMOMA, MoMA and the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum.

THEA PETCHLER
Thea Petchler is Art Center’s Director of Writing. She teaches courses on postwar U.S. history, creative nonfiction and visual studies and her research focuses on the democratization and professionalization of creativity in American business and education. Petchler has served as a visiting scholar at Princeton University’s Center for Arts and Cultural Policy and as a program officer at the Center for Arts and Culture in Washington, D.C. She holds a B.A. from Yale University and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa.

HOLLY WILLIS
Holly Willis is an Associate Director at USC’s Institute for Multimedia Literacy. She is also the editor of The New Ecology of Things and the author of New Digital Cinema: Reinventing the Moving Image. The former editor of RES magazine, Willis has written extensively on experimental media practices for a variety of publications. She holds a Ph.D. in critical studies in cinema-television from USC.

Sebastian Bettencourt
Beyond the Fold, 2007

Video stills demonstrate Bettencourt’s concept for an interactive news reading device. The reader applies traditional newspaper gestures such as folding, shaking and turning the simple two-sided e-paper to move through live content.
Jinmi Choi

*The Next Illusion*, 2008

Based on a study of the uses of optical illusions, Choi created site-specific installations that combine video projections and sculptural objects. *The Next Illusion* manipulates our perceptions of both cinematic and “real” time and space, pointing toward new opportunities for the filmic experience.

Maria Moon

*Neurographica*, 2008

Moon’s thesis project investigates how design can be used to explore and analyze neurological data. Typically, design is used to encapsulate or document scientific activity, but Moon collaborated with scientists from the University of Tokyo and Caltech during the discovery phase. The result: visual symbols and systems that allowed the data to reveal meaningful information.
Parker Kuncl  
*Right at Hand, 2009*

*Right at Hand* is a series of tangible interfaces for digital collections. The videos above show working prototypes that combine the physical and the digital. Kuncl’s project attempts to restore the materiality that is lost with digital archives, which are primarily accessed via point-and-click Web browsers.

Jiyeon Song  
*One Day Poem Pavilion, 2008*

The perforated surface of the *One Day Poem Pavilion* allows light to pass through and create shifting patterns which, during specific times of the year, transform into the legible text of a poem. The precise arrangement of the holes reveals different shadow-poems according to the solar calendar.
Yu-Ming Cho
*Transbehavior*, 2008

In a world of ubiquitous computing, Cho’s thesis explored the role of biology and culture in our understanding of the things that surround us. Cho designed a set of interactive objects that adopted the behaviors of pets, embodied cultural rituals and extended the user’s senses in unexpected ways.

Jackson Wang
*Peace of Mind*, 2008

What happens when Target partners with the Department of Homeland Security? Wang’s *Peace of Mind* imagines a line of products and a distribution system that illuminates the politics of fear following 9/11 and explores the intersection of consumer culture and civil liberties.
Jonathan Jarvis

*Crisis of Credit Visualized, 2009*

An 11-minute visual story that uses graphic symbols and diagrams to clearly communicate the origins of the recent economic crisis. Jarvis’ *Crisis of Credit Visualized* went viral, appearing on a variety of sites from *Motionographer* to *Forbes*. The spread of the video supported Jarvis’ argument that designers are needed to communicate the complexity of today’s world.
Our Community

The MDP student experience is shaped by coursework, classmates, studio life, the extended community and our surroundings.

MDP Culture

Our students and full-time faculty come from all over the world and bring with them backgrounds and degrees from a variety of fields. Our part-time faculty, advisors and critics are drawn from the vibrant art, design, architecture, entertainment and technology-related fields of Southern California. Our community also includes faculty from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech); the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc); UCLA; USC; UC Irvine; UC Santa Barbara; Otis College of Art and Design; and the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts).

From time to time, students share space with a “visionary-in-residence.” Design futurist and science fiction author Bruce Sterling finished his influential book Shaping Things in the MDP studio. As “visionaries,” Mieke Gerritzen and Koert van Mensvoort brought their Biggest Visual Power Show to L.A. During the summer X-term, students intern with guest “researchers-in-residence.” We also host a variety of symposia, lecture series and exhibitions. “Design Dialogues,” hosted each term by a guest curator, brings luminaries from across the spectrum into the studio for an intimate extended conversation and individual student meetings.

Through Designmatters, Art Center’s educational department that focuses on design education with a social impact agenda, MDP students regularly intern with the United Nations including UNICEF, and automobile manufacturers (BMW, Honda, Volkswagen) to set up key design facilities in the area. Our industry partners— recent relationships include T-Mobile’s Innovation Center, Intel Research, George P. Johnson and AutoDesk—visit our campus, host internships and sponsor research projects.

The Los Angeles region is also home to a thriving art scene with some 350 art galleries and several world-class museums, including the Getty Center, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). Our students and faculty regularly participate in events and exhibitions region-wide through both the cultural establishment as well as do-it-yourself communities (e.g., Machine Project, Make Magazine, Dorkbot).

Situated just 10 miles from downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena is a lively and sophisticated city in its own right. Known as a “City of Learning,” Pasadena contains the second-highest concentration of art, cultural and educational institutions in the United States—a notable achievement considering the city’s population hovers around 150,000. Pasadena has long been a center for scientific and aerospace innovation, and is home to both Caltech and NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The city has a rich architectural and design history that includes works by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Greene brothers, Wallace Neff and artisans of the Arroyo Craftsman style. It also hosts an impressive collection of cultural institutions including the Norton Simon Museum; The Huntington Library, Art Collection & Botanical Gardens; the Armory Center for the Arts and the Pacific Asia Museum.

Many Art Center students and alumni choose to live and launch their businesses here, and companies like Honda Design Studio have moved to the area to be closer to Art Center and benefit from our wealth of resources as a leader in design research.

About Art Center

Founded in 1930, Art Center College of Design has long been at the forefront of cultivating leaders in the fields of art and design. From its seminal role in the founding of the first advanced-design concept studio for the automotive industry in the 1950s, to being the first design school to receive the United Nations non-governmental organization (NGO) status, to its commitment to expanding the role of art and design in addressing key sustainability issues, Art Center has a history of anticipating societal changes and trends.

Art Center offers undergraduate programs in Advertising, Entertainment Design, Environmental Design, Film, Fine Art, Graphic Design, Illustration, Photography and Imaging, Product Design and Transportation Design and graduate programs in Art, Broadcast Cinema, Industrial Design and Media Design. Art Center also offers a wealth of public programming for the larger community—including seminars, lectures, exhibitions and conferences, as well as nurturing classes for adults and children.
Our Alumni

“My career is completely different now than it was prior to grad school. It is becoming global. Since graduation I have worked in design and branding in two other countries besides my own. The Media Design Program prepared me to navigate through different working cultures, which has given me a broader picture of the world that seems more realistic, more complete, more complex and much more exciting.”

Adriana Parcero ’03

Companies have created new positions—with new titles—for our graduates. Because they bring expertise geared toward the future of communications of all kinds, the range of options available to them is found in amazingly diverse contexts.

Our graduates find positions as media designers, interaction designers, graphic designers, design researchers, experience designers, broadcast designers, information designers, futurists, entrepreneurs, inventors, educators and more.

Below are some of the positions currently held by our alumni:

- **Eric Boisvert ’04**
  Founder and creative director, Push Offices, Los Angeles; former digital creative director, Motorola

- **Laura Crawford ’05**
  Designer and co-founder, Balsara + Crawford Inc., Los Angeles

- **Jennifer Darmour ’05**
  User experience designer, Artefact, Seattle; former design researcher, Microsoft

- **Laura Janisse ’07**
  Human-centered design research/human factors, IDEO, San Francisco

- **Jonathan Jarvis ’09**
  Designer, Google Creative Lab, New York

- **Qusai Kathawala ’07**
  Interaction designer, Intel Research, Portland

- **Jean Ku ’08**
  UX Designer, Microsoft, Seattle

- **Matthew McBride ’05**
  User experience designer, Schematic, Inc., Los Angeles

- **Scott Nazarian ’04**
  Associate creative director, Frog Design, Seattle

- **Prathana Panchal ’05**
  Senior interaction and visual designer, T-Mobile Creation Center, Seattle

- **Hannah Regier ’07**
  Design analyst, Frog Design, San Francisco

- **Amy Sheppard ’07**
  Design director, Johnson & Johnson Global Strategic Design, New York

- **Jin Hyun Park ’03**
  Multimedia design professor, Kaywon School of Art and Design, Seoul

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**Fashioning Technology**

*DIY Intro to Smart Crafting*

Published in 2008, includes primers and DIY projects that blend sewing and electronics. The projects, photography, book design, and writing were done entirely by Pakhchyan herself.

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**David Schwarz ’04**
Co-founder and creative director, hush, New York

Still from a promotional video for Sony Ericsson’s new “Big Screen” phone shows one piece of a campaign that included video ringtones, demo movies, wallpapers and more.

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**Syuzi Pakhchyan ’05**
Designer; author; entrepreneur; blogger, fashiontech.com, Los Angeles

*Fashioning Technology: A DIY Intro to Smart Crafting*, published in 2008, includes primers and DIY projects that blend sewing and electronics. The projects, photography, book design, and writing were done entirely by Pakhchyan herself.

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**David Schwarz ’04**
Hush, with Nikolai Cornell ’04, Obscura Digital

An interactive installation to promote Nokia’s Supernova phone series installed in Nokia’s flagship retail stores premiered worldwide in 2009.

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**Adriana Parcero ’03**
Head and senior manager, brand identity strategy, Nokia, London

Annual Trends 2010 is a future forecasting document designed, co-edited and co-written by Parcero in 2007 for Nokia’s internal use.
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- **David Schwarz ’04**, HUSH, with **Nikolai Cornell ’04**, Obscura Digital
  An interactive installation to promote Nokia’s Supernova phone series installed in Nokia’s flagship retail stores premiered worldwide in 2009.

- **Adriana Parcero ’03**
  Head and senior manager, brand identity strategy, Nokia, London
  Annual Trends 2010 is a future forecasting document designed, co-edited and co-written by Parcero in 2007 for Nokia’s internal use.

- **Nikolai Cornell ’04**
  Director of interactive media, Obscura Digital, San Francisco
  The CueLight Pool Table, featured at the Paradise Tower Penthouse, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, uses Obscura Digital’s projection, sensor and tracking system to reveal images and animations that “follow” the movements of pool balls as they are hit around the table.

- **Jed Berk ’06**
  Artist; designer; inventor, ALAVs.com, Los Angeles
  ALAVs—Autonomous Light Air Vessels—are networked blimps that respond to one another, their surroundings and people through the use of microcontrollers and mobile technology. Blubber Bots are the DIY offspring of the ALAVs sold in kits. Once built, the autonomous robotic inflatables can roam the landscape in search of light and cellphone signals.

- **Blubber Bots**
  Featured on the cover of Make Magazine Vol.12, 2008.

- **Blubber Bots shown at the Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria, in December 2007.**

- **Blubber Bots**
  Featured on the cover of Make Magazine Vol.12, 2008.

- **Jed Berk sitting amongst a flock of feeding ALAVs 2.0 shown at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Taipei as part of the Third Digital Art Festival Taipei 2008.**
APPLYING / PORTFOLIO

APPLICANT PROFILE

The MDP seeks risk-takers and self-starters who believe critical investigation leads to innovative design, and who want to use the power of design to become stakeholders, inventors, entrepreneurs, cultural interventionists and visionaries. Applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree.

The MDP offers two- and three-year paths appropriate to applicants with different backgrounds and goals. For the two-year path, we look for applicants with exceptional training and experience in the visual, spatial, interactive and graphic design fields who can realize high-level concepts. For the three-year path, we accept both accomplished and burgeoning designers from a range of backgrounds. Applicants with degrees in fields such as information technology, philosophy or biology (to name just a few) bring valuable perspectives to the practice of design.

See the “Our Curriculum” section of this brochure for more information.

SUBMISSIONS

Please see our Web site and contact the department directly prior to preparing your application materials. In addition to the application forms, fees, transcripts and TOEFL test scores outlined in the Graduate Admissions section of Art Center’s main Web site, applicants to the Media Design Program must submit the following:

MDP supplemental application (download from the MDP Web site)
Résumé
Design portfolio
Personal statement
Letters of recommendation (one to three)

MDP AT-A-GLANCE

Year Established
2000 (as Media Design Program)

Degree Offered
Master of Fine Arts

Total Number of Students
45

Number of Core Faculty and Thesis Advisors
11

Total Units Required
2-Year Path: 66; 3-Year Path: 95

CONTACT

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