



A multidisciplinary community creating experiences that connect people to place

segd.org

2009 Academic Summit

Program Sponsors

Matthews Paint Company

D3

Jacobs Environmental Graphic Design

Zumar Industries

05.26.2009

San Diego



Society for Environmental Graphic Design

The global community of people working at the intersection of communication design and the built environment.



Fashion Institute of Technology

Seventh Avenue at 27th Street

www.fitnyc.edu

May 21st, 2009

FIT Educational Summary

The following information provides an overview of the Graduate Exhibition Design program curriculum at SUNY/Fashion Institute of Technology.

Summary

The Graduate Exhibition Design program is a 13-month, 36 credit Master of Arts program with a focus on providing coursework in the primary disciplines comprising the exhibition design profession. The curriculum includes instruction in concept design and development, narrative, audience research, front end, formative and summative evaluation, and the fundamental areas of exhibition design including lighting, environmental graphics, spatial planning and model making. Particular emphasis is placed on the creation of audience-centered exhibitions informed by narrative. With a broad approach to defining what an exhibition is and can be, the program explores venues including museums, trade shows, expositions, retail, showrooms, visitor centers, natural, cultural and historic sites, and alternative experiential environments. The student body is highly international and comprised of individuals with strong technical proficiencies. Most come with undergraduate degrees and career experience in architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design and stage design.

Faculty

The Graduate Exhibition Design program has a faculty of 11 including the department Chairperson. Each instructor is an active working professional in their particular discipline, some of who also teach undergraduate and graduate courses at FIT and other colleges. The Department Faculty are:

- Instructor Robin Drake, *Intro. to Exhibition Design and Exhibition Design Studio I*
- Instructor Matthew Moore, *Exhibition Design Studio II*
- Professor Michele Washington, *Introduction to Exhibition Graphics*
- Instructor Lucian Leone, *Exhibition Graphics Studio I and II*
- Professor Brenda Cowan, *Exhibition Planning Design Studio I and II*
- Professor Scott Lundberg, *Directed Thesis Research*
- Instructor Norm Bleckner, *Museums and Permanent Exhibitions*
- Instructor Karl Matsuda, *Model Making*
- Instructor Michael Stiller, *Lighting Design*
- Instructor John Newman, *Lighting Design*
- Instructor Ran Lerner, *Lighting Design*

Goals

The following statement is the mission of the Graduate Exhibition Design program, and serves as its overarching directive:

Exhibition design is more than the sum of its interdisciplinary parts. It is a communicative design profession driven by an understanding that it is by nature, a public medium. Students of exhibition design should come to embody the knowledge that exhibitions are informational experiences created for and driven by audiences, and that to be an exhibition designer is to be a storyteller. As designers, they bear a responsibility to themselves and the venues in which they work to foster an exhibition's power to convey intellectual content, generate affective experiences and encourage physical interaction between visitors and their designed environment.

Exhibition design education should be comprehensive, incorporating myriad design disciplines and the cultivation of conceptual thinking. It is a forum for experimentation where students are inventors, maximizing advancements in media and interpretation to truly unique ends. Here, instructors of exhibition design have the opportunity to instill in their students a creative logic that includes the ability to plan, generate a tangible construct for interpretation, and implement the technical design process with an original "voice." With a

foundation built upon field and studio work, critical research and thesis construction, students of higher education in exhibition design should conclude their educational experience as leaders, the bearers of great vocational achievement who see themselves as stewards of the profession.

Lesson Plan Outline

A select number of courses have been chosen to represent the primary thrust of the program's overarching curriculum. The courses included in this report are represented by their title, description, objectives and required resources. As follows:

SUMMER

• Introduction to Graphic Design

Ed 581.59b

Term: Summer .08

This introductory course lays the framework for you to develop a visual language and understand the interdisciplinary process of graphics design. Elements covered include practical design application skills in visually communicating through the development of content and concept, which consist of typography, color, image selection and branding identity issues. This course provides you with established practical knowledge to meet requirements for the following semester.

Course Objectives

- :: Learn the importance of visually communicating utilizing text, image and color.
- :: Understand how visual language engages the viewer
- :: Explore environmental graphic venues, materials, and applications to produce graphic components for your projects
- :: Develop a visual vocabulary, aesthetic and voice within your design style. :: Learn various methods of print and panel presentation of design work utilizing digital formats, to be utilized throughout the program in the final presentation of all design work.

FALL

• ED531 59A Presentation Techniques I

Term: Fall 2008 (August 26th – December 11th, 2008)

Course Description

The course will review various presentation techniques for exhibition design in a variety of formats including hand sketching, drafting, concept model making, model photography and computer visualization programs.

Participatory Design Process

Two distinct participatory design projects will serve as design development models for the following venues.

1. A Large Scale Trade Show Exhibit.

(Developed in collaboration with Russ Fowler of Derse Inc.)

Design Process: (to be developed in conjunction with the chair Brenda Cowan)

Introduction to Large Scale Exhibits for Trade Shows

Researching a topic, Programming, Diagramming, Conceptual Development (sketching, collage)

Design Development, Production Documents, Materials, Preliminary 3D visualization, Final Design & Presentation

2. A commercial showroom to introduce Procédés Chénel© to the design community.

The showroom should exploit paper as a space modulator, and even as a fixture material.

Process: Review paper products, characteristics and previous uses. Review program requirements from Chénel. Study each paper product and learn their particular characteristics. Develop paper concept sketches using Chénel paper samples. Refinement and Detail: develop the paper environment and paper fixture options. Develop the paper sketches into 3D models (using digital software), Produce fabrication drawings in scale, Create images that reveal the visitor's experience inside the showroom.

Exhibition design as a multi-faceted Profession

Several guest lecturers will visit the class and present short talks on different aspects of exhibition design. We will also take field trips will be taken to explore exhibition venues.

Guest and class lectures will be : Graphics and new digital media (to be announced)

Exhibition design for large Museums (MOMA pre-fab housing show), Green Materials and Actions for trade shows.

Course Objectives:

Learn about the design and culture of large trade shows.
Develop a personal strategy to improve your production drawings and or 3-D visualization skill sets.
Demonstrate how innovative concepts, branding and custom fixture design can improve showroom design and function.
Coordinate all your class skills to improve the depth of your message and the clarity of your design.

• ED582.501 Exhibition and Planning Design Studio I

Term: Fall, August 26th, 2008 – December 11th, 2008

Tuesdays, 10:00 – 1:00pm, Thursdays, 2:00 – 5:00pm

Instructor: Assistant Professor Brenda Cowan

Brenda_cowan@fitnyc.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00pm

Course Description

This course focuses on exploring and understanding four overarching critical elements of exhibition planning and design: Object Interpretation and Narrative, Audience and the Visitor Experience, Exhibition Concept Design Development, and Exhibit Research and Evaluation. It is through these areas of concentration that students will learn to create exhibitions that appropriately use design methodologies to meet the needs of their audiences, utilize content to “tell a story,” and that are visually and environmentally powerful.

Course Objectives

This course will enable students to:

1. Use and interpret content to inform their exhibition design work in all of its various design disciplines.
2. Develop a metacognitive understanding of the methodologies intrinsic to the creative conceptualization and visualization process.
3. Develop the tools and methodologies that are fundamental to successful exhibitions in every possible corporate, trade, museum and public exhibition venue.
4. Strengthen their learning experience by sharing developmental progress at critical junctures with invited professionals and guests as well as site visits to firms, museums and production facilities.

• Course: ED542.501

Exhibition Graphics Studio I

Course Description

Exhibition Design Graphics 1 will explore visual communications by focusing initially on the timeless universe of graphic design elements– such as typography, color, proportion, positive and negative space, and other two-dimensional design considerations. In short order, the third dimension will be added to this graphic design vocabulary by drawing upon other disciplines – including architectural, interior, landscape, and industrial design. Exhibition Design Graphics 1 will address a logical approach to problem-solving processes for exhibit design graphics programs, wayfinding and other signage systems, interior and exterior interpretive panel design, graphic identity and branding systems, logo design, and the development and assimilation of diagrammatical and symbolic devices within a graphics system.

Objectives

- > To understand the fundamental elements of two-dimensional graphic design and to learn its unique vocabulary.
- > To apply those fundamental elements in developing graphic programs and systems for environmental settings - both interior as well as exterior.
- > To work with real-world design projects by partnering with FIT patrons (museums, fabricators, etc.) in conceiving, developing and designing graphic design solutions.
- > To refine and sharpen a graphic design skill and sensibility by learning and maintaining expected professional standards– both in the classroom as well as on-site

WINTER

• ED591 Exhibition Design Thesis: Directed Research

Course Description

Students state a thesis on the practice of exhibition design. The thesis will supported by end of the term a research and development plan. This plan will be substantially completed by the end of the term. Then the students will propose an exhibition that will demonstrate the value of their thesis.

This is the student's opportunity to examine the results of their recent months of intense study. It is the time to consider views on exhibit design and their role within it's practice. This is the student's opportunity to proactively design the form and focus of the conclusion of their academic experience.

Students will display various skills and methodologies that will assist them in the analysis and presentation of data and design criteria. The effect of stylistic decisions on clarity is given particular attention. Industry professionals with a specialization in exhibition design will offer critiques and guidance at the end of this programming phase.

Course Objectives

This course will enable students to:

1. Develop, produce and present an original thesis about the practice of exhibition design.
2. Develop, produce and propose an exhibition for self conscious purpose. In this case the purpose is to demonstrate the value of their thesis.
3. Make sense of big projects by deconstructing them into manageable, plan able parts.
4. Become familiar with the research process and make objective findings and conclusions.

SPRING

• ED532.59A Advanced Presentation Techniques

Course Description

This course is about communicating design. We will focus on refining the student's ability to create & communicate compelling stories around the visitor experience in exhibit design culminating in the development of the student's portfolio and Thesis Documents. On the theoretical side we will work to understand the underlying dynamics of presentations, client & coworker motivations, information appropriateness, conversations, and desired outcomes. The portfolio will be developed, materials and presentation strategies, in parallel with the Thesis Documents to prepare the student for internship interviews and employment opportunities beyond. The documentation of the student's Thesis will be developed in parallel with each of the other studio classes to assure the student demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose and standard requirements of these materials while developing their Thesis Document.

Course Objectives

This course will enable students to:

1. Clearly communicate their thesis design.
2. Communicate their ideas effectively to potential clients, clients, and other designers and have productive conversations about their designs.
3. Optimize workflow to create the best possible deliverables.
4. Communicate design concepts appropriately and effectively in all phases of a typical exhibit design process.
5. Compile the various deliverables from their classes into a Thesis Design document.
6. Tailor project work in their portfolios towards specific internship and employment opportunities.

Handout 1: General Thoughts

What's The Problem?

As designers we are faced with the conflicting desires & limitations - wanting to generate endless ideas, explore these ideas to wherever they may lead, to generally "keep the balls in the air" as long as we can - against time and resource limitations, the need for concrete deliverables, and other hard practicalities. We work towards a final design via a series of presentations. Sadly, these presentations in many ways are the reality of the design - while the final built, operating exhibit is what we are working towards, we won't get there unless we communicate our ideas and get approvals in a series of presentations.

There is *never* enough time to do everything we want. We must learn to work efficiently so that the work we show is as good as it can possibly be and communicated as effectively as possible. Our presentations force us to finalize our choices, to prioritize, to face the hard facts of what can we get done well vs. what can we get done mediocrity. As our presentations represent the gates that our designs must pass through it is essential that we make the right choices; that we allow ourselves, our ideas, the best chance for success.

A Few Inflammatory Assumptions

- An un-communicated idea may as well not exist.
- An idea that is not understood may as well not exist.
- People tend to react to what is in front of them at the level it is presented. For example: you can say something is rough - but if there aren't visual cues to reinforce this, the ideas will be seen as finished.
- Not all ideas are equal - there are appropriate ideas and inappropriate ideas.
- We tend to stink at seeing the true virtues (and flaws) of our own ideas.
- Design is not a straight line - but too many detours are just not practical.

Stray Thoughts On The Job Of A Designer

- Be an idea factory - impractical and practical ideas & solutions.
- Poke ideas - understand the intent / underlying concepts for every idea.
- Make choices - We need to use our design sense and taste to make choices. Be tough!
- Be visual - help clarify meaning through visual representations of concepts.
- Roll with the punches - things will go wrong, will go badly. Deal with it - emerge wiser. When possible use setbacks to improve your design.
- Be stubborn/be flexible - learn to recognize when you need to push your idea against all odds & adversity. Learn to flex your design ideas while maintaining their underlying truths. Develop your personal confidence so you can make these decisions well.
- Know what you are good at:
- Fix your weaknesses to a reasonable level.
- Go with your strengths.
- Work with people who compliment your strengths.

Handout 2: Key Concepts

These concepts will recur throughout the class, they form the foundation for how we will look at, and discuss, design communication.

1. Purposefulness - Everything developed and presented should have a purpose that can be articulated.
2. Progression - Ideas need to flow from a perceivable structure. For example ideas can be from big to little or follow flow of the visitor experience.
3. Appropriateness - Not all ideas or presentation methodologies are appropriate for a given project or context (in terms of phase, presentation audience, etc). Designers must learn to use their judgment to be constantly evaluating appropriateness and reacting as necessary.
4. Design functionality - Every element of a design has a function: business, emotional, ergonomic, operational, etc. Understand the function of each design element and be able to articulate it. This allows the designer to be prepared to productively discuss their designs in response to comments and questions. [See Handout 2]
5. Excitement - Generating client excitement through perceived end-user excitement is the name of the game.
6. Reducing perceived risk - The person being presented to will inevitably have a certain amount of money or prestige at risk personally. Their company or institution will also. The designer needs to identify and address the areas of risk. The perceived risks that are almost always present are: A) will the end-user like and/or appreciate the design B) is it doable in time and on budget and C) does it accomplish the goals and D) how will they look to their boss.
7. Understanding underlying meaning - Frequently what is said is not exactly what is meant. It is vital that the designer understand the underlying meaning or intent of comments, directions, and questions.
8. Designer's role - The designer provides the means with which the client and the end-user can effectively communicate with each other. The goal of the designer is to create something that meets the goals of the project and that creates a compelling and appropriate experience for the end-user. While the designer needs to be able to stand behind their work and be proud of it, their personal expression and presence or not requirements. At the end of the day, artists are about personal expression - designers are about functionality.

Handout 3: Design Functionality

All elements of a design can be seen through a lens of functionality. Everything *does* something – we need to be able to articulate what and why to explain our choices, our designs. If we can be clear with ourselves about the intended functionality of each design element we can better evaluate our own work, we can ask better questions, we can make our decisions with greater confidence and speed.

Aesthetic Functionality

- Creates the mood / makes emotional connections
- Creates memorable visual icons
- Creates hierarchy of perception
- Creates the appropriate level of order/chaos

Content/Business Functionality

- Creates an interface between the institution and their clients / end-users
- Makes ideas, concepts, material, and other content - *other stuff* - accessible
- Creates means to clarify the above through
- Clarifies content choices
- Creates the appropriate level of order/chaos

Navigational Functionality

- Creates environments that people can find their way through
- Creates the means for multiple people to function in the space
- Helps people make informed choices
- Decreases unease and confusion
- Creates the appropriate level of order/chaos

Social, Ergonomic, and Cognitive Functionality

- Benefits society at large in some way.
- Understands the underlying cultural expectations and “ground rules” to allow people to do all of the above items with minimal effort
- Creates environments that promote connections between people
- Creates environments that promote a sense of trust between visitors and staff
- Creates ergonomically appropriate spaces
- Acknowledges our fundamental cognitive biases
- Accommodates perceptual realities and differences

Operational Functionality

- Creates an environment that supports the staff’s needs and training; that places them in a position to succeed
- Creates environments that are appropriately durable and will age well.
- Allows for easy maintenance, fits within the operational budget
- Accommodates change

- **Course: ED 543.501 Exhibition Graphics Studio II**

Exhibition Design Graphics 2 will prepare you for the Graphics Package component of your thesis, and ultimately address the required items you must produce for the Graphics Package.

Graphic Design areas to be covered :

- Color: Subjective and objective uses and meanings
- > Typography: Explorations and logo development
- > Hand Drawing: Encouragement of it for concept development
- > Labels: Exercises in graphic treatment of content for differing types, including hierarchy, composition, and reproduction methods
- > Interpretive Graphic Panels & Exhibit Signage System
- > Thesis Presentation Panels: Composition, layout, formatting thereof
- > Thesis Graphics Package: Formatting and individualized assistance

Objectives

> **To understand** the fundamental and historical elements of two-dimensional graphic design and its unique language.

> **To apply** those fundamental elements in developing graphic programs and systems for your thesis project, in addition to integrating appropriate contemporary digital technologies.

> **To develop** the unique unifying graphic identity system for all the program elements of your Graphics Package

> **To finalize** those graphic design elements into a cohesive Graphics Package which will comprise your Final Thesis

Product.

• **ED583.501 Exhibition and Planning Design Studio II**

Course Description

As a continuance of the fall semester "Exhibition and Design Planning Studio I" and "Directed Thesis: Research" course of the Winterim session, this course focuses on the creation of the MA program's final thesis document and development of the final exhibition product, conducted in close partnership with "ED543.501 Exhibition Design Graphics II," "ED551.501 The Exhibition Model," and "ED532.59A Advanced Presentation Techniques." The completed thesis will be a fully researched and substantiated design document as explored via an accompanying exhibition product solution. This course also attends to preparation for internships, interviewing and presentation skills.

Course Objectives

This course will enable students to:

1. Learn how to create a graduate level thesis document;
2. Learn and implement the exhibition design development process;
3. Develop a metacognitive understanding of the methodologies intrinsic to their personal creative conceptualization and visualization process;
4. Develop a final exhibition product to use in their professional career;
5. Strengthen their learning experience by sharing developmental progress at critical junctures with invited professionals and guests;
6. Exercise design presentation and interview methodologies, including public speaking, body language, eye contact, and verbal and written English language proficiency.

Report

The original intentions of the program have evolved since its inception in 2005-2006. With an initial foundation primarily in technical design considerations, there has been a need to enrich the curriculum with a greater depth of study in concept development, audience study, narrative and storytelling, exhibition evaluation forms, analytical thesis, and understandings of client service. Great strides have been made towards bringing these areas of focus into the curriculum and executing them in a naturalistic manner without weakening the successful technical design areas. In part, the program has been able to achieve this enrichment by hiring more faculty (from an initial faculty of 5 to a current faculty of 10) who bring greater experience with educational practice and design process, as well as by better engaging the professional community into coursework via master classes and integrated projects.

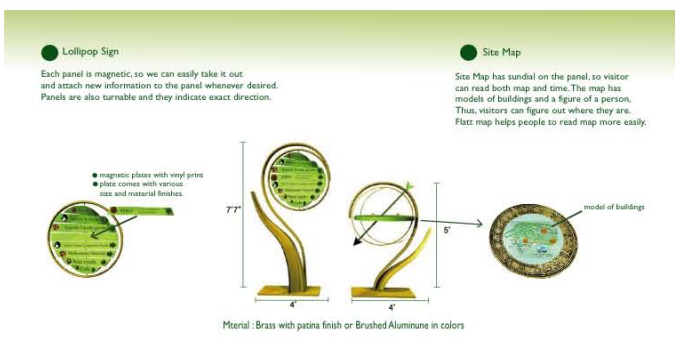
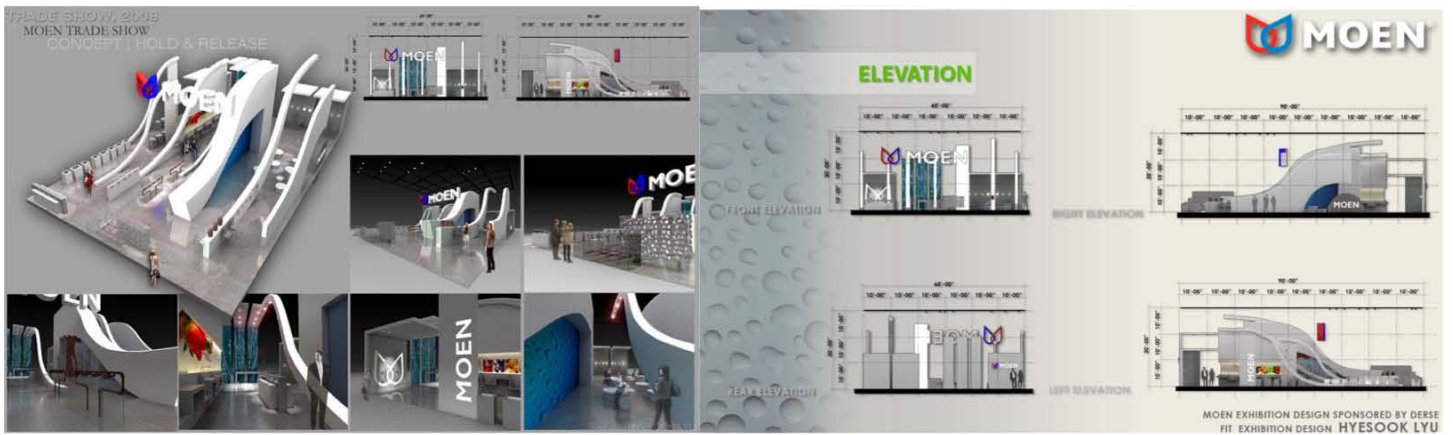
The next steps for the program involve looking at lengthening the scope by adding a third semester so as to bring in critical educational elements that are necessary to further both theoretical study as well as practical applications of design work. At this point, changing the 36 credit degree into a 42 credit MS is being considered. This would be achieved by adding additional coursework in history and theory, and engaging in a design research lab initiative that would enable students to work with design experts in high level research projects. This design research lab initiative is currently being developed with segd as well as other educational institutions and private enterprises.

Samples of Student Work

Museums:



Trade Shows:



By Yoo Rang Shon

New York Botanical Garden Wayfinding Signage System

8

By Yoo Rang Shon

New York Botanical Garden Wayfinding Signage System

7

Lighting Design:

