On the occasion of this year’s MFA exhibition we are proud to present the Graduate Class of 2017.

2017 MFA Exhibition April 7 – 22, 2017
Krannert Art Museum and Kinkead Pavilion
The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
www.kam.illinois.edu

AILEEN BAI – MFA INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
JOE CARPENTER – MFA GRAPHIC DESIGN
AUSTIN CHEN – MFA INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
BENJAMIN COOK – MFA STUDIO
COURTNEY CROSS – MFA STUDIO
EVIN DUBOIS – MFA STUDIO
JON GOTT – MFA STUDIO
BRETT HANOVER – MFA STUDIO
QING HE – MFA GRAPHIC DESIGN
RACHEL HEATON – MFA INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
SUNHEE JANG – PHD ART HISTORY
BRIT KROHMER – MFA STUDIO
SUE LEE – MFA STUDIO
SIZE MA – MFA GRAPHIC DESIGN
CAITLIN SKELCEY – MFA METALS
KAREN SPIERING – MFA STUDIO
ALBERT STABLER – PHD ART EDUCATION
HONG-AN WU – PHD ART EDUCATION
I am a product designer with combined experience of both interaction and industrial design. I currently focus on digital user experience design with product design thinking. I always seek to deeply understand people, their motivations, and contexts in order to inform and create experiences, services and products that resonate with people. My thesis topic is promoting positive communication for older adults and their family members. The initial motivation was the inconvenience of communication between me and my grandma who is in China. We are living in an era of highly developed communication technology. Although designs and tools make communication easier for people to connect each other, the growing numbers of older adults still cannot adapt to these technologies easily and quickly. Based on my research, I found the eagerness of how older adults want to connect with their family members who live far away and how they hope to learn new technologies. All these findings stimulated me to further develop this topic.
Critically composing design, _joecarpenter’s work asks how design can perform as mimicry for exposures of power and explorations of possibility. Character development, design of artifacts and performance conceive utopic dialogs and fleeting communities of speculative, alternative consciousness.

And satire.
I am an industrial designer focusing on human-centered design. Tackling design problems from the perspective of user experience, I am pursuing making exciting combination of aesthetics, user experience, and technologies.
My paintings are rooted in an exploration of structure. I explore a space akin to that of daily interactions, often structured through, and mediated by, a digital presence. I am interested in how images are created, manipulated and used to construct and extend our own identities within a digital platform. I apply methods of construction rooted in a digital realm to the traditional activity of painting. The processes of drawing on Snapchat photos, rendering layered shapes in Photoshop, cropping, concealing, and abstracting palettes from video games or blogs all come together to create paintings that exist in an awkward, in-between state.
The ocean
blobs
the moon
rocks
shells
language, not language
love, not love
land, not land
tcontrol, not control
restriction, not restriction
automatism
privacy, confession
sisterhood
womanhood
friendship
imprints, bumps
spaces
affect, affection
distance, closeness
daydreaming, the real fucking thing
blankets
self censorship
delusion, not delusion
sanity, not sanity
not knowing, not knowing
bad, not bad
not movement
faking it
losing it, finding it
not borders
not spatial
not typical, atypical
not connecting
not filling in
not horses
not clouds
everything all at once

I WHIP MY HAIR
PERFORMANCE/VIDEO
VARIABLE
2017

HAND DANCE
CHARCOAL, PAPER
VARIABLE
2016
Challenging notions of masculinity, my practice has fixated itself on the deconstruction and narrative of this often brash behavior. Confronting this state of tension between the body and identity is a series of symbiotic structures of attachment such as adornments, dress, and excessive ornamentation. This bricolaged surface contrast the body as these figures semiotically develop their sexuality and flirt their way through queer culture. Through intense confrontations of materials, process, and form, my work encounters the wear and tear reality of these engagements. Invested in gestures, self-portraiture, and the figure, these macho representations are caught between a unique moment of aggression and fulfillment, and get caught up in the drama of their own personal, fragmented, and constructed narrative. What emerges from this physicality and engagements is an intimate and revealing look at this conflated identity, the search for belonging and brotherhood, and the possibilities of an exhausted body. By adorning this sensibility, a bravado is built up and broken down for a new form to gaze upon emerges. What remains is unsolved potential, fractured function, and a desire for conclusion from angels that fall and fail again and again.
under the dark trees
follow the rivers and tides
you’ll burst into flames

MFA STUDIO

JON GOTT
I make movies about myself making movies about relationships, intimacy, and transformation. A hybrid of documentary and fiction, Rukus is a coming-of-age story set in the liminal spaces of furry conventions, southern punk houses, and virtual worlds. The narrative is anchored by my friendship with Rukus, a furry artist from Orlando, but opens up onto a broader network of queer and marginalized young people. I am interested in how people relate to each other through shared imaginary worlds, playing with identity and developing new empathetic connections. What are the risks and limitations of these universes, and what are their creative possibilities?
I am passionate about user experience design, specifically about creating engaging learning experiences. In my thesis project, I designed a mobile app that teaches young girls ages 5-8 years old a positive attitude towards body image. I conducted a user study with young girls to get more insights from them and transfer the insights to her mobile game interaction. The game uses random body size and characters with various body size to educate young girls that everyone is equally unique and has own non-physical appearance.
Industrial designers have multiple tools available to improve sustainability, but at the end of a product life cycle, it is often the conscious consumer choice to behave altruistically that determines whether a product is truly sustainable. Consumption culture acts against consumer altruism; products also play a role in aspirational personal identity, further driving individual consumption. As a result, designers must develop strategies to work around conscientious consumer decision-making about sustainability.

‘Timeless’ aesthetics in design have been linked to environmental sustainability through extended product lifetime of use. One approach to creating timelessness is visual ‘simplicity’—yet ‘simple’ can be a challenge to define, let alone to create. Prototypes, or best examples of a given conceptual category that are based on previously encountered exemplars, have been shown to be easier on the mind. This may be interpreted as a type of simplicity.

I am investigating whether we can apply knowledge of prototype effects when developing product form in order to reduce mental conflict between a product’s visual design and the user’s learned mental representation, or schema, of the product category. Using examples of discarded coffeemaker appliances, I have attempted to create a form that minimizes schema conflicts, hypothetically extending aesthetic lifetime.
BODY AS OPERATOR
BODY AS MACHINE
MACHINE AS BODY
BODY AS EXTENSION OF MACHINE
MACHINE AS EXTENSION OF BODY

BRIT KROHMER

WWW.BRITKROHMER.COM
MFA STUDIO

BODY+MACHINE
(DETAIL)

DOOM STUDY
(LABOR OF THE EVERYDAY)
My work tries to disrupt the typical workings of gender in order to imagine alternative possibilities for self-expression and interpersonal connection. I try to rethink the bodies, anatomies, sexual activities and proclivities that underwrite gender. By staging interactions of dominance, attraction, alienation, reproduction, pressure, and pleasure, my work asks if inherited binaries and limited networks of generalization can operate otherwise. Articulating and manipulating stereotypes and stereotyped bodies, de- and recontextualizing body parts, divesting animate figures of gendered attributes, and sexualizing inanimate objects, my work aims to exaggerate, pervert, obfuscate, and hybridize expected identities and actions. At the heart of my practice is a belief that art can be generative rather than decisive or dictatorial, a means of exploring our lenses of interaction with the world as we struggle to connect with, understand, and reimagine one another.
Eventide is a visual game through which people can experience Chinese culture and learn Chinese characters in a fun and interactive way.

Having been born and raised in China, I’m always proud of the fascinating culture and history of our country. To introduce Chinese culture to foreign people and to maximize the motivation of knowing it, I started the project Eventide aiming to create an immersing and playful experience of learning Chinese culture, especially the Chinese philosophy core value (the balance) and Chinese characters forming concept. Audiences will travel in a world where the balance of day and night is missing. They need to accomplish tasks and balance the world back to normal by finding an ancient god. Audiences will be immersed in the environment, the visual patterns and stories, from where they will get understandings of Chinese culture and more so, learn actual characters by choice.

It is an interesting, exciting and challenging journey, for audiences who play with it, and for me working on it.
As an object maker, I am interested in the cultural allure and subversion of the artificial, where fabricated cyborgish anatomy blurs divisions between the visceral body and machine. Through fusions of digital fabrication and traditional adornment-craft practice I explore relationships between human physicality and the tools and materials we use to enhance, deviate, extend, and create identity within a transhuman world. These reflections and works originate from my own modified physicality, a literal fusion of bone and titanium changed not only my body but enabled me to assume a truer identity, one not defined by genetic chance. Exterior prosthesis or interior implants, such modifications and enhancing adornments reflect a literal fusion of body and technology / tools challenging comfort levels of what is real or artificial. Using ubiquitous plastic, 3D fabrication, and implanted hardware, these extruded and fabricated pieces contort a wearer’s physicality in alluring, uncanny forms. Reminiscent of bone forms and medical device, tactile material ambiguity leads to a morbid sense of uncertainty and conflict, provoking reflection on the symbiotic nature of human biology and technology, hand and machine making, and an underlying desire for power and control in hacking our own biology to enhance and create an idealized image of ourselves.
In search of facilitating a deeper and more humane connection to the land/earth, my work comes out of my reflections, collected data and interpersonal conversations about place. Collecting moments by movement in landscapes, I map my experience of the assembled, remembered, interpreted, sensed, comprehended and imagined place. This project involves a daily walk (February 18, 2017-present) through varied land use areas in the Hillcrest area of Champaign, Illinois, collecting materials and narratives from these environments and through the process referencing the flows of people, ideas, information and materials which define a location. A location that is a hybrid of embodied experience and creative process, always transitioning in its material form and in the meanings associated with it.
After graduating from art school in 1997, I spent 15 years teaching, writing, curating, and making art in Chicago. Here at the University of Illinois, my dissertation project has been to both chronicle and theorize the artwork of Laurie Jo Reynolds, an artist based in Chicago whose group Tamms Year Ten was pivotally involved in the 2013 closure of the state’s only “supermax” total-isolation prison. While she still works with families of men incarcerated at the Tamms supermax, her current focus is on the legal and social scapegoating of sex offenders. In my writing about Reynolds I discuss her artwork, which she calls “legislative art,” in the context of all three branches of republican government, legislative, judicial, and executive, with a strong emphasis on the role of race in American jurisprudence. While studying in Champaign-Urbana my wife Katie and I ran a gallery in our backyard, called the Outhaus. I worked with the Education Justice Project to coordinate and co-facilitate an anti-violence group in a nearby state prison, and I also did anti-incarceration activism with the local group Build Programs Not Jails. In 2016 I curated a group show entitled “White Feelings,” which showed in both Champaign and Chicago.
As an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and researcher originally from Taiwan, I approach my art practice as a form of research with the purpose to educate at its core. I strive to facilitate a dialogue between audiences and myself about how we relate, respond, and react to cultural artifacts in our contemporary society. To do so, my work has been focused on developing pedagogical approaches that activate civic engagement through the creation and use of digital and interactive technologies that addresses diversity and social justice. Specifically, my dissertation examines the potential of transforming systems and structures with youth through prosumer development and critical play in community-based settings. Furthermore, with funding from the Office of Public Engagement at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, I have piloted video game modification workshops with youths across various locations, such as public schools, libraries, and makerspaces.
ABOUT OUR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The Graduate Programs of the School of Art + Design offer an opportunity to work closely with faculty who are active, recognized artists, designers and scholars. We foster a rigorous immersion within your chosen area of study while also opening doors to cross-disciplinary investigation and experimentation. As part of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, our students work alongside dancers, musicians, architects, urban planners and theater professionals. Along with the resources of the School—including up-to-date digital and material production labs—our graduate students have access to the Krannert Center for Performing Arts, the Krannert Art Museum, the world's largest public university library, renowned scholars in every imaginable field, and the many other benefits of an internationally recognized, public research university.

ART EDUCATION: EDM, MA + PHD
ART HISTORY: MA + PHD
GRAPHIC DESIGN: MFA
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN: MFA
METALS: MFA
STUDIO: MFA

FUNDING

Graduate students in good standing in the School of Art + Design typically receive support packages that include waivers of full tuition and most campus fees (a waiver value of $29,000 based on 2017 out-of-state tuition).

Primary funding sources include:

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS
These are competitive awards granted to degree candidates who have demonstrated especially strong academic achievement and outstanding future potential. Fellowship stipends range from $10,000 to $25,000 for the academic year and include a full waiver of tuition and a partial waiver of campus fees. Fellowships are gifts that don’t require service. For more information see http://www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowships.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS
Students in good standing can be assigned a teaching assistantship. These appointments require teaching and assisting faculty with courses, and require a work commitment of 10 hours per week. Assistants receive a stipend of $8,180 (before taxes) for the academic year and include a full waiver of tuition and a partial waiver of campus fees.

If you have any questions regarding the graduate admissions process or would like to learn more, please contact: Ellen de Waard, Coordinator of Graduate Academic Affairs at the School of Art + Design, edewaard@illinois.edu, phone: 217-333-0642.
FACULTY

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ART HISTORY Anne Burbus-Chasson, Jennifer Burns, Areli Marina, S. Prita Meier, David O’Brien, Kristin Romberg, Lisa Rosenthal, Oscar Vázquez, Terri Weissman

GRAPHIC DESIGN Eric Benson, Nan Goggin, Linda Kwon, Rachel Riley, Nekita Thomas, Stacey Robinson, Stan Ruecker

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN William Bullock, Deana McDonagh, Kevin Reeder, Suresh Sethi, Cliff Shin, David Weightman

METALS Billie Jean Theide

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DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS AND DIRECTOR OF THE KRANNERT ART MUSEUM Kathleen Harleman

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