Digital is not what you think...

'The UK design industry has grown since 2005, despite the recession. There are 232,000 designers, 29% more than in 2005 and earnings have increased by £3.4bn.'

**"50% of new jobs in the UK economy
in 15 years time will be in the creative sector"**

Christopher Frayling, quoting
the UK treasury on
'Start the Week' Radio 4

"investing in design represents a 26% better return than banking and a 20% improvement over investing in computing"

(MacLeod et al,
Design as an Instrument of
Public Policy in Singapore
and South Korea, 2007)

"more than a third of art and design graduates are still without a full-time job more than three years after graduation."

from Guardian Careers
(http://careers.guardian.co.uk/careers-blog/
design-studies-careers?commentpage=all)

There were 55,310 undergraduate design students in the UK in 2010 and yet only 51% of practising designers have a degree!!?

'learning <u>with</u> industry'

not to replicate industry

... but to enter into a discussion that reveals insights that will help us respond to and keep pace with rapid technological, environmental and socio-political change.

... and use these insights as a starting point for the design of educational experiences.

ALT/SHIFT

Alt/Shift

altshiftual.com

Alt/Shift — 13.12.12

Examining the future form of education for design and the creative industries

About / Event / Discuss / Speakers / Resources / Contact

ual: university of the arts london

ALT/SHIFT | EVENT

13th December 2012 9am – 6pm

Alt/Shift — Examining the future form of education for design and the creative industries
Overview

Opportunities will be provided throughout the day for the audience to contribute to the debate via Twitter. The day will culminate in a panel discussion involving the day's speakers and drinks in the LBi bar

Morning:
/

Views from the creative industries:

Shane Walter: Founder of onedotzero, **Matt Wade:** Partner at research led, interaction design studio, Kin, **Russell Holmes:** Partner at ICO Design; a creative director from LBi and **Will Hudson:** Founder of 'It's Nice That' and creative agency INT Works.

After Coffee:
/

Case studies of innovative educational practice will be presented by **Sophie Walter** creator of 'onedotzero Cascade', **Darryl Clifton** from the the Camberwell Press, **Stuart Price and James Corrazzo** from the Thoughtful 6 and finally **Patricia Austin,** Course Director, MA Creative Practice for Narrative Environments at CSM.

After Lunch:
/

Nat Hunter from the RSA will then kick off the afternoon by providing an ethical dimension to the debate and **Professor Shan Wareing** – Pro Vice Chancellor

Details:
/

LBi Event Space
146 Brick Lane, London, E1 6RU

Alt/Shift

altshiftual.com

Alt/Shift — 13.12.12

Examining the future form of education for design and the creative industries

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ALT SHIFT   SPEAKERS

For the last seventeen years Derek has been involved in education at every level. Most recently he has been at the forefront of innovation in the development of work related and work-based learning at Camberwell College of Arts. Here he has brokered partnerships with commercial agencies such as Wieden + Kennedy, Moving Brands, Dazed and Kin, cultural institutions like the V&A and respected journals such as Eye Magazine. Most recently Derek has worked with onedotzero to co-create the award winning Cascade education platform. Cascade works in a place between industry and education, allowing graduates to test and respond to the emerging methodologies. He is currently developing 'Alt/Shift' – a discussion space that questions conventional modes of study and examines pedagogy that better engages with contemporary practice.

Derek Yates
/
Project Coordinator, Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design. Camberwell
/

www.learningwithindustry.blogspot.co.uk

Working in digital approaches to narrative, Shane Walter is a multi-disciplinary producer, creative director, writer and speaker. He co-founded onedotzero, the 16-year-old global-reaching moving image organization and festival, in addition to onedotzero industries, producing and consulting for the world's best known agencies, brands and bands from Nike to UAL, Google to The Pet Shop Boys. He has authored three books, produced three TV series and dozens of short films and animations, many winning awards. He has curated for museums and venues worldwide including Decode: Digital Design Sensations at the V&A London, CAFA Beijing, Garage Moscow and Tel Aviv Design Museum. He is in demand as a speaker, judge and chair for festivals, conferences, awards and events across digital media, art, design, film and the creative industries. He was the first 'digital person' nominated for the Prince Philips Designers Prize in 2011.

Shane RJ Walter
/
Co-founder and Creative Director of onedotzero
/

www.onedotzero.com

Matt's work examines the way we read and create relationships with objects and spaces. He studied Design at Goldsmiths and Adaptive Architecture and Computation at the Bartlett. On graduating Matt spent 3 years at Imagination, Europe's largest independent design agency, followed by 4 years as Design Director at Moving Brands.

In 2008, Matt founded Kin, a Research & Design studio with Kevin Palmer. Over the last four years, they've delivered over 350 projects in over 10 countries. Matt is actively involved in education through research projects and as a visiting tutor and external examiner at Goldsmiths. In 2011 he was invited to run design workshops in Russia, and China for Strelka and onedotzero respectively.

Matt Wade
/
Co-founder and Director of Kin
/

www.kin-design.com

Russell Holmes is Creative Strategy Partner at ico Design. Since graduating from Central Saint Martins he has gained nearly twenty years experience as a designer and art director, working with many of the world's biggest brands. A respected writer, Russell has written on art, design and related topics for publications including eye and Idea.

www.icodesign.com

Russell Holmes
/
Creative Strategy Partner at Ico Design
/

14.00
/
17.04.13
UsTwo Studio
Shoreditch High St.
London E1

'creative education for a digital context?'

ALT/SHIFT 2.1

ual: university of the arts london

Participants included:

Nick Bell (designer and RCA visiting critic)

Lawrence Zeegan (Dean of Graphic Design at LCC)

Chris Downs (Method)

Durrell Bishop (Luckybite)

Andy Huntington (Berg)

Nick Farnhill (Poke)

as well as secondary school teachers and lecturers from tertiary and higher education.

#altshift2_1

key ideas:

> 'hold students in the journey'
> don't focus on outcomes
> iterate
> 'take risks, make mistakes – fail'
> 'relinquish creative control'
> 'leave your ego at the door'
> have 'empathy' for the user
> be open, collaborate, work across
disciplines
> disrupt/ hack/ intervene

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disciplines
> **disrupt/ hack/ intervene**

	Mechanical Object	Organic System
Economic era	**Industrial Age**	**Information age**
Paradigm Author	**Newton**	**Darwin**
Metaphor	**Clockwork**	**Ecologies**
Values	**Seeks simplicity**	**Embrace complexity**
Control	**Top down**	**Bottom up**
Development	**From outside**	**From inside**
	Externally assembled	**Self Organizing**
	Made	**Grown**
Designer As	**Author**	**Facilitator**
Designers Role	**Deciding**	**Building Agreement**
Client as	**Owner**	**Steward**
Relationship	**Request for Proposal**	**Conversation**
Stopping Condition	**Almost perfect**	**Good enough for now**
Result	**More deterministic**	**Less Predictable**
End State	**Completed**	**Adapting or evolving**
Tempo	**Editions**	**Continuous updating**

The success of a piece of communication has always been dependent on the connection between content, form, audience and context – what the message is, who it's aimed at, what it looks like, and how and where it's communicated. In recent years the balance between these elements has shifted. Graphic and communication designers have traditionally offered style and packaging solutions for brands and products. However, as the nature and complexity of brands has changed within our economy, a designer's ability to analyse, understand and clarify has become ever more important.

In this world, the thinking behind a communication outcome is much more significant to the income of a creative agency, and designers are often employed to help a client understand what sort of design they need, rather than simply to style up what a client thinks they want. It is this shift in the designer's role that this book examines, through themes of participation, navigation, authenticity, implementation, advocacy and critique.

Providing educators, students and design practitioners with an overview of the most important and exciting developments in contemporary communication design, Communication Design identifies a series of emerging modes of creative practice to help clarify the mind and skill-sets that are inherent to successful working practice.

A very good overview of the world of Communication Design – trends, opinions and issues facing young aspiring designers.
Michael Dancer, Glasgow School of Art, UK

'…emphasizes the importance of ideas and communication, rather than styling, which can often be the case when discussing current trends in creative practice.'
Alison Barnes, University of Western Sydney, Australia

Derek Yates is course leader for FDA Graphic Design/Illustration at Camberwell College of Arts, UK. He has been involved in education for the last seventeen years and has taught across the academic spectrum. He has been at the forefront of innovation in the development of work-based learning and has brokered partnerships with commercial agencies such as Wieden & Kennedy, Moving Brands, Bibliothèque and Kin, cultural institutions like the V&A and respected journals such as Eye Magazine.

Jessie Price works as a researcher at the University of the Arts, UK, and as a freelance designer for numerous publishers, authors and arts professionals. In the past, she has worked with Thomas.Matthews, Container+ and WorkForm Studio.

Insight from:

Sennep
Dunne & Raby
Bibliothéque Design
onedotzero
SomeOne
Ogilvy & Mather, London
Its Nice That!
Ogilvy & Mather, Rio
Zuess Jones
Kin
De-De, NYC
Ico Design
Droga 5
Red Bull

Vital Arts
Morag Myerscough
Peepshow
Ella Doran
Berg
UsTwo
Karsten Schmidt
Moving Brands
Adrian Shaughnessy
After the Flood
Artomatic
Chrissie Macdonald
RSA
Method

FAIRCHILD BOOKS

Communication Design:
Insights from the Creative Industries

Derek Yates & Jessie Price

Interpret
Test
Generate
Understand
Prototype
Share
Engage
Hack
Interpret

BLOOMSBURY

"A lot of design is about problem solving, but more interesting for me, is the opportunity creation part."

Interview

Mat Hienl
CEO, Moving Brands

Moving Brands are an independent, global creative company. We work in partnership with some of the best companies in the world, defining and articulating their stories, building systems, and designing and producing emotive experiences. Their clients have included Nokia, Swisscom, Hitachi, Infosys and Hewlett Packard.

1. Visual identities help define a commercial proposition. At the beginning of the twentieth century this was done through graphically.

1

The studio is built around a set of core thoughts and attitudes and Mat began our conversation by trying to define them.

The first is the power of a team. "We are in a team business as a result everybody who works for us needs to be able to understand this. Our business is inherently multidisciplinary, inherently complex and inherently involves lots of people who are not from the design industry. You need to have the right attitude to work in this situation… We need people that are able to move from an individual mentality to a group mentality. Our business is built around the capabilities of the team. And it is the different qualities within the team that come together to solve problems."

He talked about a desire to build a narrative around the brands they work with and how this desire can be traced back to the interest in story telling that it is inherent in the film making backgrounds of the company's original founders.

They also have what Matt called a 'slightly obsessive desire' to exploit the latest technology. From the beginning they have had an insatiable curiosity to find out how things work and how they can be used to do new things.

He stresses that they are happy to sit outside of traditional definitions of different types of practice. Matt says "We are not wedded to accepted norms" indeed I would go so far as to say that moving brands are suspicious of these norms. He also points out that they have no desire "to be framed by their capabilities" and see each task is an opportunity to extend them. He sums up their approach "we try to look at the brief a bit differently and really drill down into what the client is really trying to achieve and having established this we bring the talent we have in the studio to bear in the delivery of this objective."

Finally he stresses a belief in quality. Several times in our conversation he talked about not letting something be released until it reached a certain standard. This is interesting given that many other digital agencies talk about a minimum viable product and seeking to perfect in the marketplace.

There is a visual rigour to their work that we might associate with studios like North or Bibliotheque and indeed Moving Brands have worked collaboratively with these studios. As Mat points out "there is an honour in going for perfection. This is inherent in the characters within our business. There is a sense of wanting to get something right and being prepared to stay until it is." And this makes business sense because it allows them to market themselves as a premium service. As with any digital agency, Moving brands do also recognize the need 'to ship' to get work out and perfect through user input, but the point that this process starts the standard is probably is a little higher than at other agencies.

When they started Moving Brands organised their practice within defined areas: static, moving, responsive, and sonic and this helped describe a new way of thinking about brands. Mat is now keen to distance himself from this stressing that now these areas are just inherent to how you have to think. The ideas now no longer differentiate them in the marketplace. Using technology is now simply about creating identities that are fit for purpose. "Media responsive systems are now simply more cost-effective because they have a longer life. Sooner or later a system will need to address a range of new touch points and this is something that has always been part of the Moving Brands offer. It has value in terms of the economics of profit and loss. So while we might get excited about it the visual richness that these options add – to a businessman they just makes sound economic sense."

This ability to look at a project from a business perspective is something that is built into the way Moving Brands work. Every project has a business lead and the creative lead and they will have input at every stage of a project. Mat stresses the need for a balanced perspective that does not allow them to only look through a design lens. "A lot of design agencies try to design their way through every problem – but a lot of problems have nothing to do with design, they are to do with commerce, with people's careers or the power relationships within an organization.

These factors might be what created the need for the project in the first place and we try to be sensitive to this fact"

Any project begins with a proactive conversation with the client. "The point of the brief is not to say thank you very much and then go away into a pit make something amazing and hand it back to them. The point of the brief is to ask why the brief was written in the first place."

As with many agencies Moving Brands structure their design process:

1. Assess
2. Define
3. Create
4. Thrive.

Initially, this process works like waterfall, with insights at the 'assessment' leading exploration at the 'definition' stage. Then once they have moved into the definition stage the whole process becomes more agile and the team then use their expertise to move back and forward through the process creating prototypes are and testing these with the user.

As well as looking for problems to solve, the team are primed to look for creative opportunities. "A lot of design is about problem solving, but the more interesting for me is the opportunity creation part." by this he means identifying things a company can do to extend their business, such as developing new products and services. As he says "Lets look at creating the thing that does that thing."

"People think we are in the business of changing perception, but the design industry is about so much more that. Is about making things safer making things cheaper or just simply making things work better."

Moving Brands define the success a project by how 'correct' they are to what a client is trying to achieve. This idea of correctness is not just about function satisfaction or service it's also about whether it feels correct for the brand. i.e how well it relates to its character, attitude and the principles. Mat uses the word 'correct' in favour of the word 'appropriate'. Correct has more strength and is more incisive and as a result it feels closer to what Moving

Brands stand for.

This approach means they have produced a really wide range of projects "If somebody sees that you have done a really high-tech responsive environment for some somebody like Infosys and they see that you've also done a really traditional brand like Norton & Sons and both are completely correct for the opportunity then for a client this is really exciting."

The openness and complexity of this approach provides a very particular set of challenges and as Mat acknowledges it requires a special type a designer. Moving Brands has created a culture of high achievers – people who relish a new challenge with every project. As he points out "To work at Moving Brands you need to give shit, you need to work hard and you need to give of yourself. There is no sitting around and being quiet if you've got an opinion you need to state it at any level. And you need to be prepared to stand apart and have your own position."

Previous Moving Brands employees include the likes of joint founder of Kin, Matt Wade and groundbreaking computational designer Karsten Schmidt.

Casestudy: iO

iO is an example of 'a thing that does that thing.' Having designed their identity in 2007 Moving Brands have engineered a long-term partnership with the telecommunications giant, SwissCom. From the start they have sought to move beyond the traditional branding agency model of the creation of guideline creation for third party implementation. Instead they see themselves as stewards in an ongoing and evolving interpretation of their original brand definition. I/O is the latest step in this process. It started as a piece of in-house technology that Moving Brands identified the potential of. A creative opportunity uncovered and then developed with their client. It has allowed them to evolve a business within the SwissCom business and is an example of the potential of the symbiotic evolution of brand and product. It Illustrates the studios desire to connect up brand identity, product development to help evolve the eco-system of touch points that make up a brand experience.

iO is an application that delivers free calls, chats and messages to SwissCom customers, but it is envisaged that with Moving Brands help it will become much more. They are engaged with both product and brand development – shaping what iO does and helping it feed into the definition (and re-definition) of the visual identity of the brand, through a website, brand films, photography treatment, guidelines, messaging and launch campaigns.
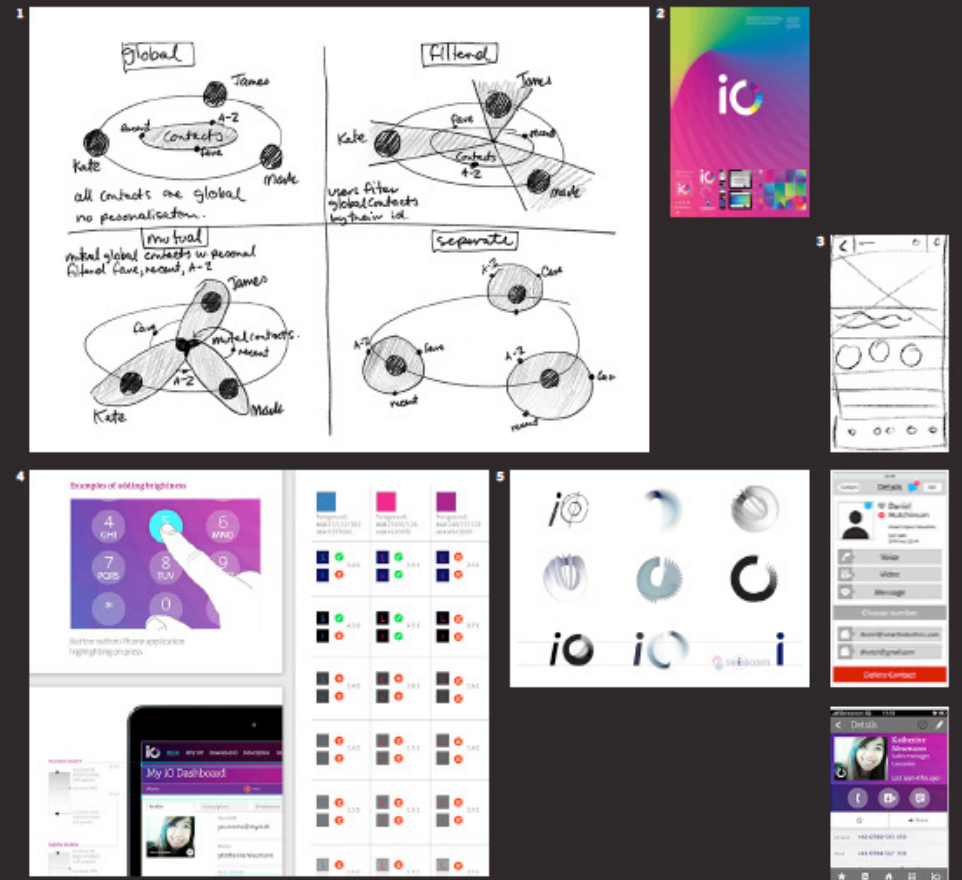
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5. Visual identities help define a commercial proposition. At the beginning of the twentieth century this was done through graphically.

Communication Design: Insights from the Creative Industries

Contributions from:
Russell Holmes, Ico Design/
Mason Wells, Bibliothéque Design/ Matt Rice, Sennep/
Fiona Raby, Dunne & Raby/ Shane Walter, onedotzero/
Simon Manchipp, SomeOne/ Matt Heinl, Moving Brands/
Tara Austin, Ogilvy & Mather, London/ Paco Conde, Ogilvy & Mather, Rio/
Adrian Ho, Zuess Jones/ Kevin Palmer & Matt Wade, Kin/
Hashema Bajwa, De-De, NYC/ Droga 5/ Red Bull/
Matt Webb & Denise Wilton, Berg/ Mills, Gyppsy & Neil Macfarland, UsTwo/
Karsten Schmidt/ Adrian Shaughnessy/ Will Hudson, Its Nice That!/
Max Gadney, After the Flood/ Tim Milne, Artomatic/ Chrissie Macdonald/
Nat Hunter, RSA/ Lindsay Liu, Method

"One of the problems with digital is that people cannot separate the tools from the culture.

There is a cultural and artistic way of expressing yourself that is shaped by digital technology – that uses code, that uses generative systems, that's collaborative, that works across disciplines, that involves the user etc… etc… this is what is significant."
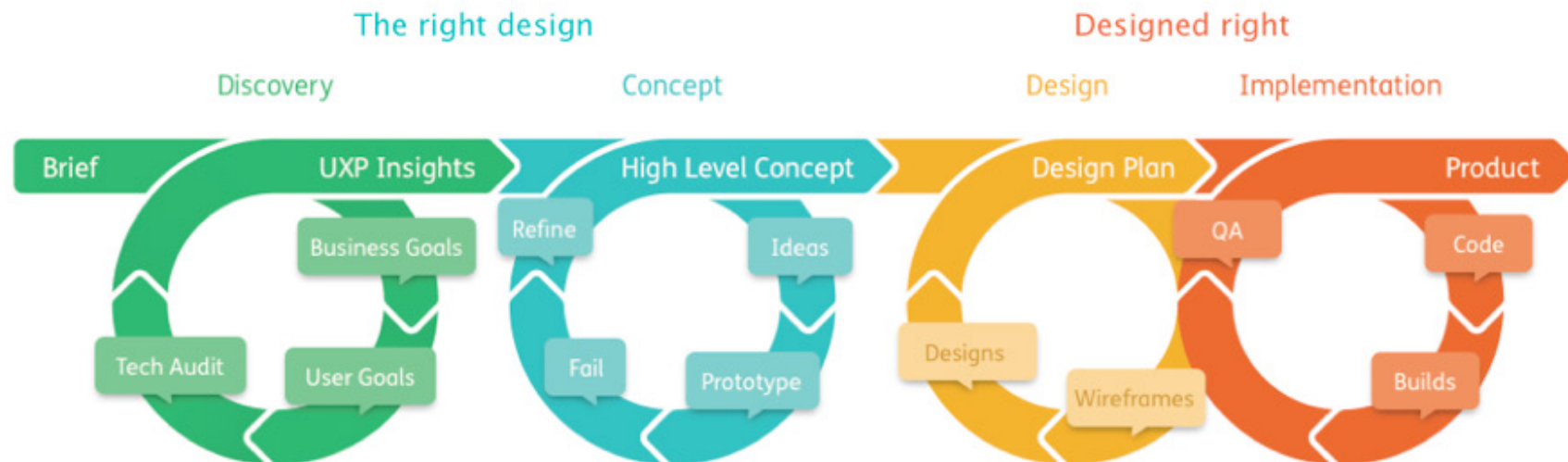
Shane Walter
onedotzero

"if you're making a physical product the development cycle is much longer – you spend more time perfecting and developing the product before you release it.

But in the digital sphere the development cycle is very different. You have to see people interacting with your product and then you incrementally improve it as you go along."

Hashema Bajwa,
CEO, NYC Digital production
studio De-De.

UXP: ustwo's user–centered design process

UXP is about designing the right thing right. ustwo™ believe that focusing on the user's relationship and experience with technology we can create more engaging, enjoyable and intuitive digital products & services for brands and their customers. The four phases of UXP are Discovery & Concept, which define the project goals and UI/UX foundation, and Design & Implementation which achieve them.

The right design

Discovery   Concept   Design   Implementation

Brief   UXP Insights   High Level Concept   Design Plan   Product

Business Goals   Refine   Ideas   QA   Code

Tech Audit   User Goals   Fail   Prototype   Designs   Wireframes   Builds

Designed right

Discover the opportunities. Conceptualise from insights. Design the best product & service. Implement to the highest standard.

"There is no space for ego at UsTwo...

Digital design is about generosity and empathy."

Mills
founding partner,
UsTwo

"Our style is that we do not have a style. We are about the user. We find out what the user needs because we want to create something that they will love."

Mills
founding partner,
UsTwo

CREDIT SUISSE

Credit Suisse tasked ustwo with a completely new design of a Single Dealer Platform for their traders.

The principal challenge was to unify the functionality of the bank's disparate trading systems siloed in different asset classes, within a fully customisable dashboard and widget architecture that mixed execution and research capabilities. ustwo engaged the business, stakeholders and end-users in a user-centered design process to unwind the design of systems build in the image of a sole lead trader or division head to deliver a web application that addressed the needs of the entire local and global trading team as well as those of their clients.

Asset Classes: FX Spot, FX Forwards, FX Swaps, FX Vanilla options, FX Exotic Options

Widgets included: Spot Tickets, Forward Ladders, Swap Widget, Strip Pricer, Vanilla options widget, Blotter
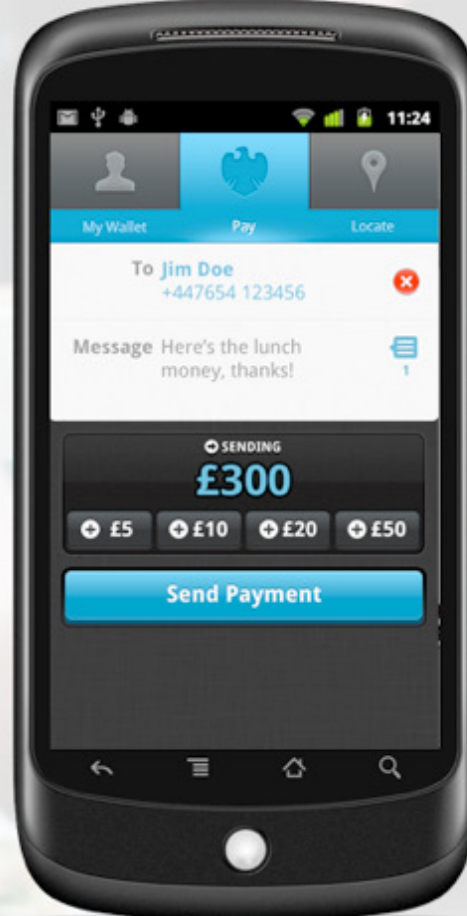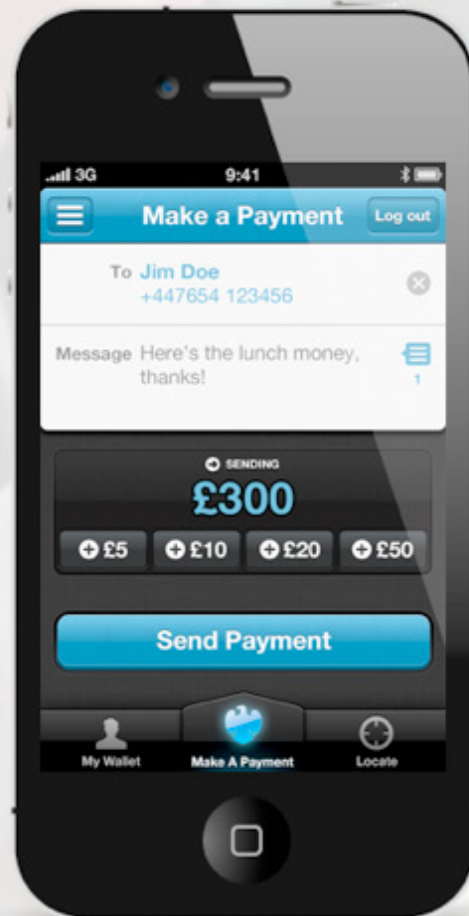
BARCLAYS

Barclays bank collaborated with ustwo™ to reinvent the way we make mobile payments.
Barclays Pingit was the result.

Barclays Pingit is the new mobile payment service from Barclays, now available for iPhone, Android and Blackberry smartphones. Working with the UK's largest bank, ustwo™ delivered UI and UX designs for Europe's first person-to-person service for sending and receiving money using just mobile phone numbers. The application saw 20,000 downloads in the first two days of its release, supported by a huge wave of national and international press interest.
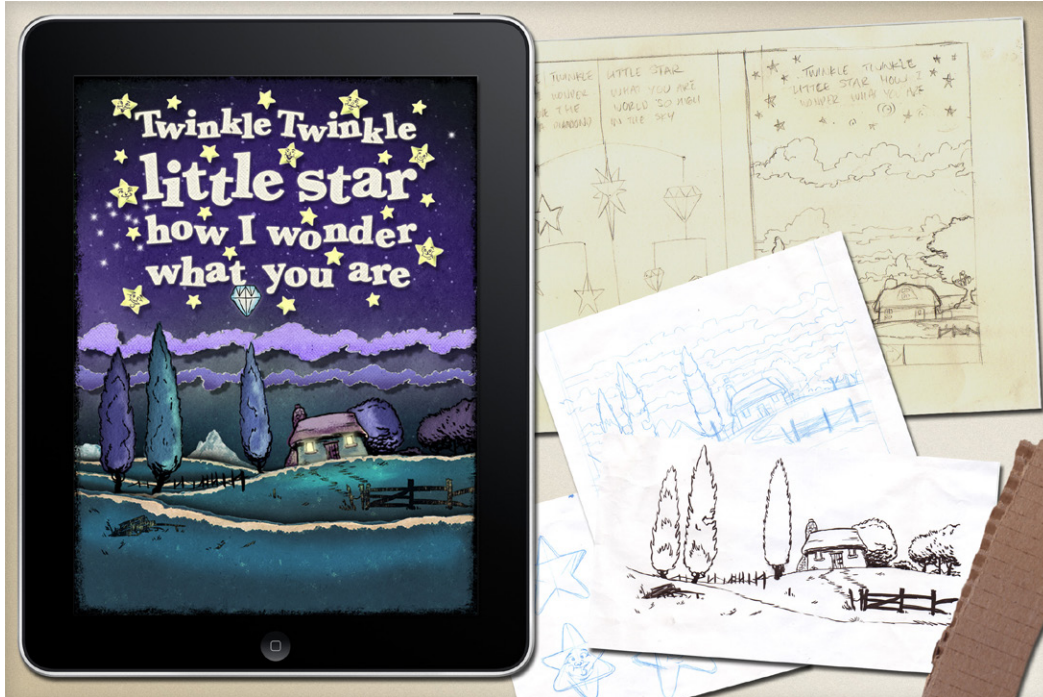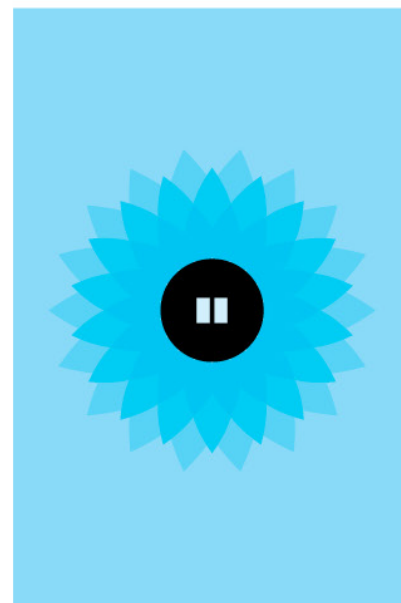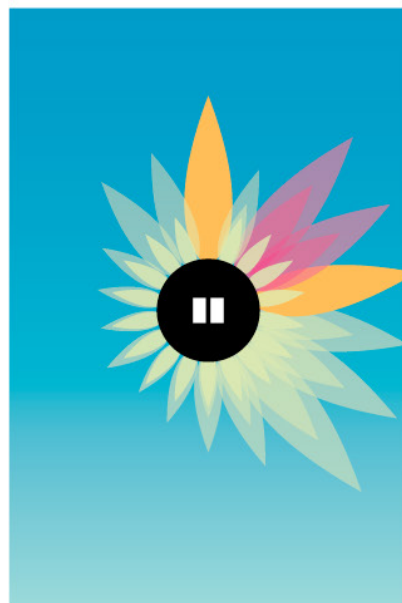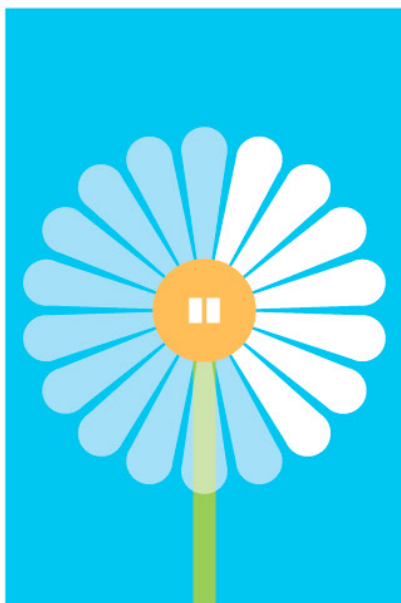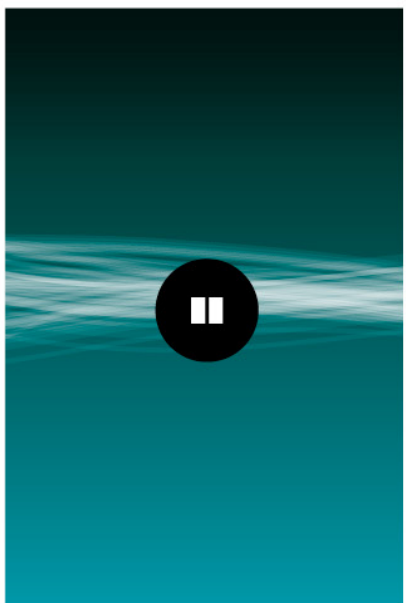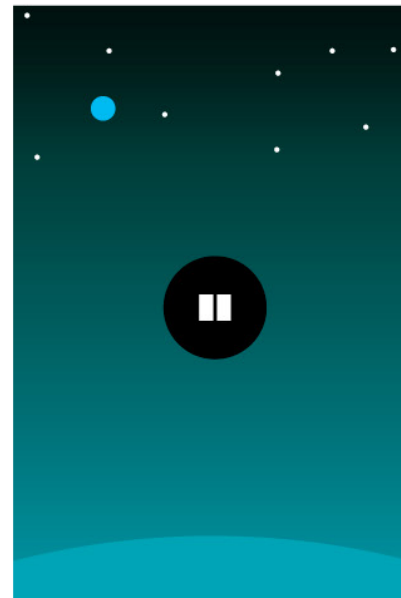
"Prove it! test it! and make something that allows you to do that"

Matt Heinl
Moving Brands

Dancer

Band

Dancer + band

instrumentation
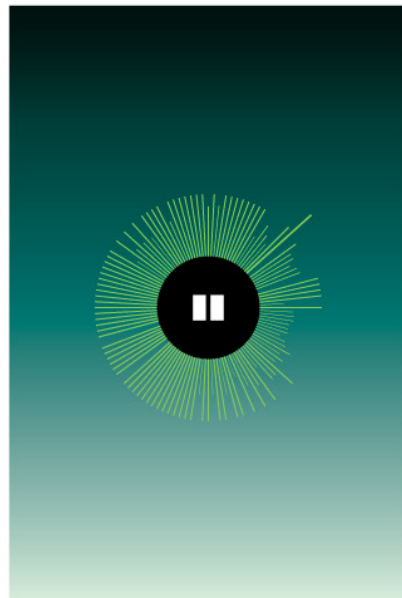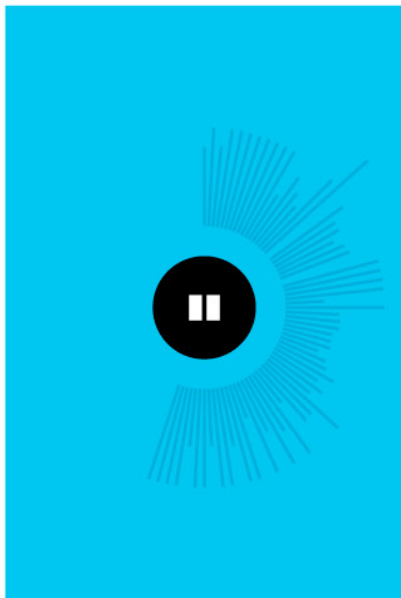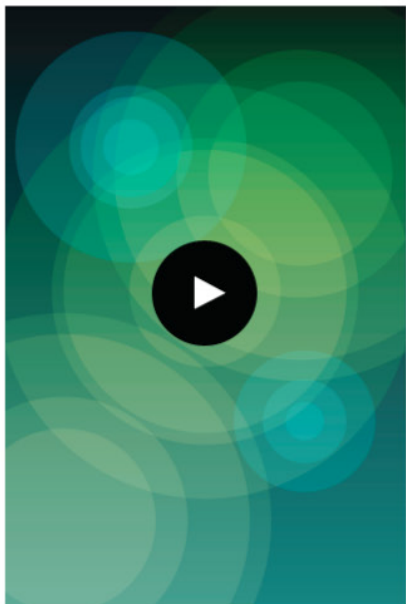
01:15 01:45 02:45 03:00 03:15

Try and get control of yourself
Sometimes your look like someone else I don't know
And can't you see I'm tied to the tracks
Everybody else is turning back
and heading home
What do you know?

I can feel it coming down bit by bit
I can feel it coming down bit by bit
Footsteps come creeping round firewalls
Footsteps come creeping round firewalls
Everywhere you look but I just can't see
Everywhere you look but I just can't see
I remember you if you remember me
I remember you if you remember me

Try and get control of yourself
Sometimes your look like someone else I don't know
And can't you see I'm tied to the tracks
Everybody else is turning back
and heading home
What do you know?
Is it you? Is it me?
Is it you? Is it me?

chorus 1

verse 2

chorus 2

outro

01:15 01:30 01:45 02:00 02:15 02:30 02:45 03:00 03:15 03:30

"Iteration is really just building small things, looking at them, trying them out and seeing what happens. It's about getting a response from people and in light of that response adapting what you do.

On the one hand there is a strategic way of thinking about developing something but also on the other hand there is an emotional, intuitive feeling of creating stuff that people respond to."

Matt Rice
founding partner,
Sennep

"When creating a digital product we really need to think about what are the behaviours that matter and how that translates into decisions such as where a button goes, what colour the interface is, what's in the menu bar and what's not in the menu bar – very granular things about product design.

I describe this as empathy plus efficiency.

Can you empathize with the users experience? and therefore come up with new features, new ideas, new things and then understand it sufficiently to execute and engineer them."

Hashema Bajwa,
CEO, NYC Digital production studio De-De.

"When creating a digital product we really need to think about what are the behaviours that matter and how that translates into decisions such as where a button goes, what colour the interface is, what's in the menu bar and what's not in the menu bar – very granular things about product design.

I describe this as empathy plus efficiency.

Can you empathize with the users experience? and therefore come up with new features, new ideas, new things and then understand it sufficiently to execute and engineer them."

Hashema Bajwa,
CEO, NYC Digital production
studio De-De.

UCID service brand definition

Service principles

Smart
UCID's response to each user's needs is knowledgeable, intuitive and reliable. Every interaction feels graceful and considered.

Simple
The complexities that drive UCID are never evident. It always reassures that anyone can use it. It's a delight – never daunting – to engage with.

Close
People always come before the technology. The user feels confident that UCID knows them as an individual and keeps everything it holds of their unique world secure.
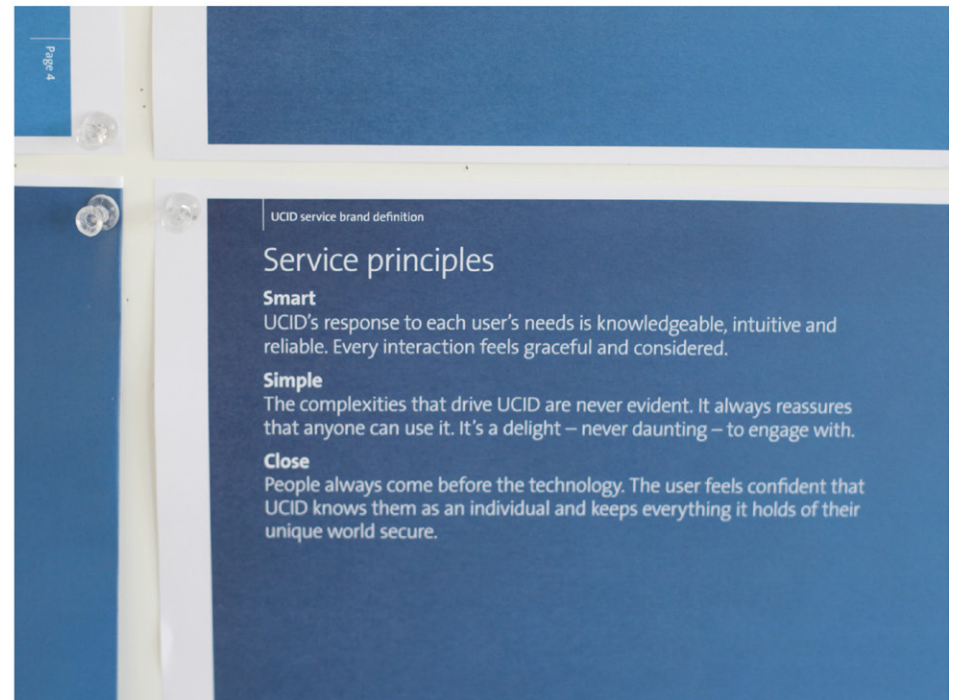
"Part of what we do is to make tools that will allow us and other people to experiment individually."

Matt Webb
CEO, Berg
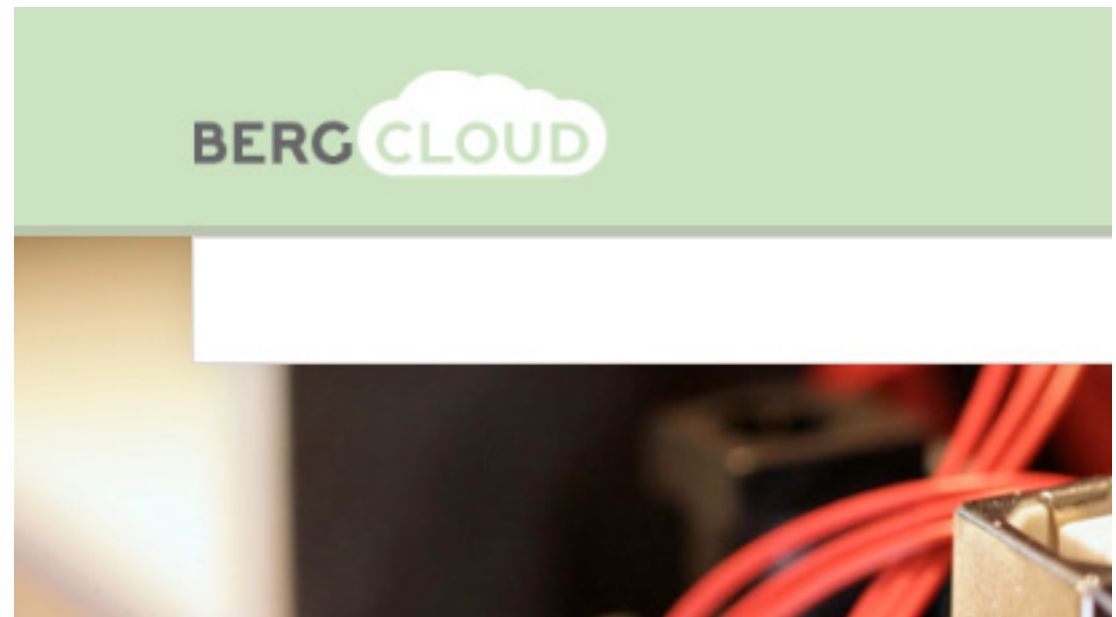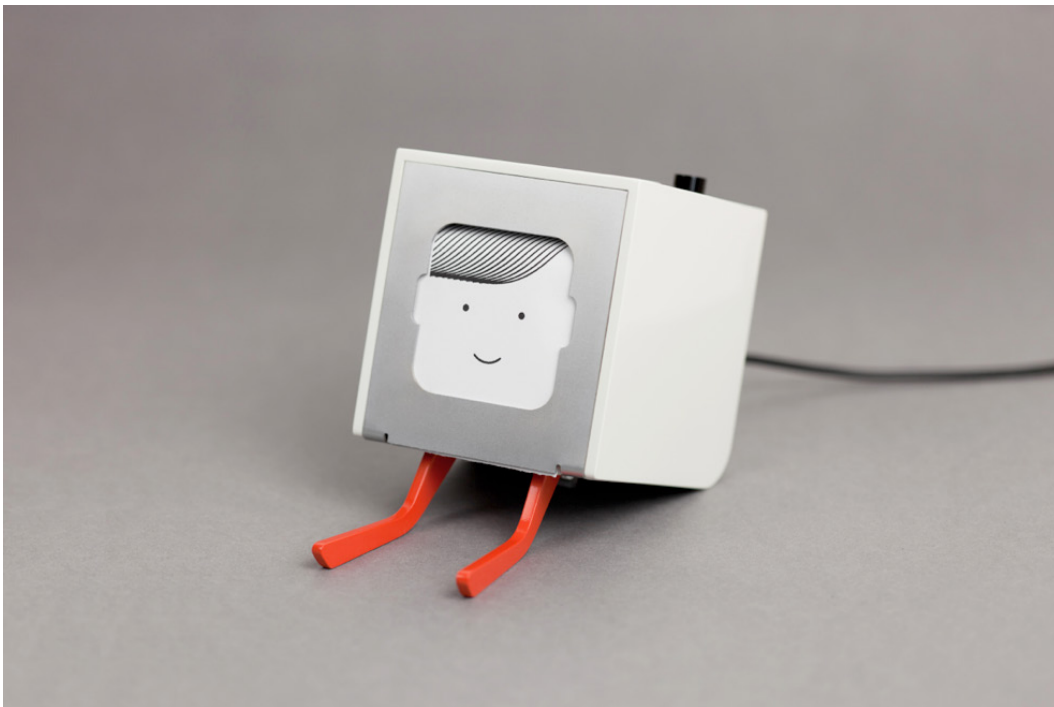
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"the digital world and the physical world used to be very separate... Now we don't really like talking about the real and the virtual. There is no longer a divide.

Kevin Palmer
Founding Partner, Kin
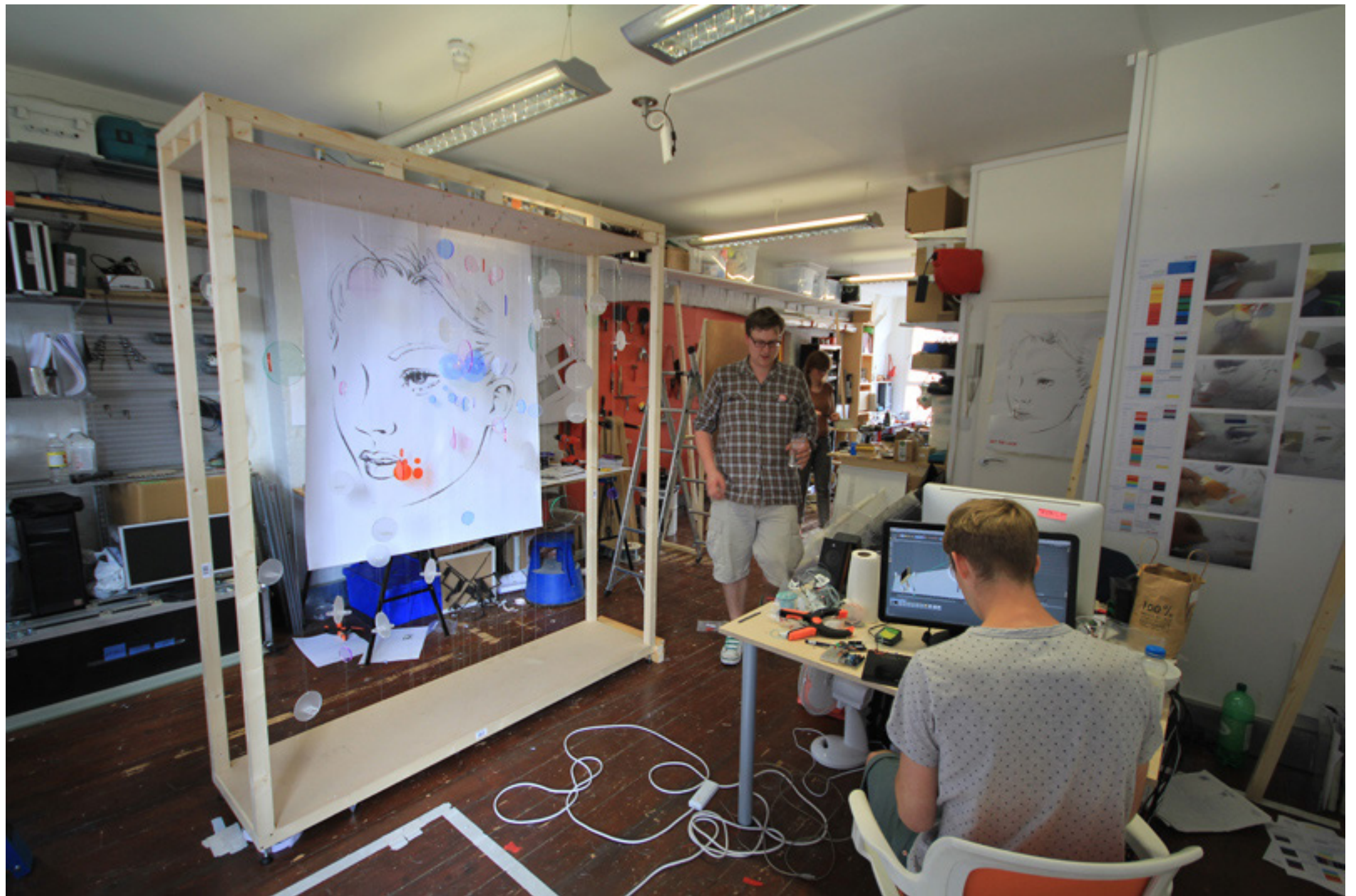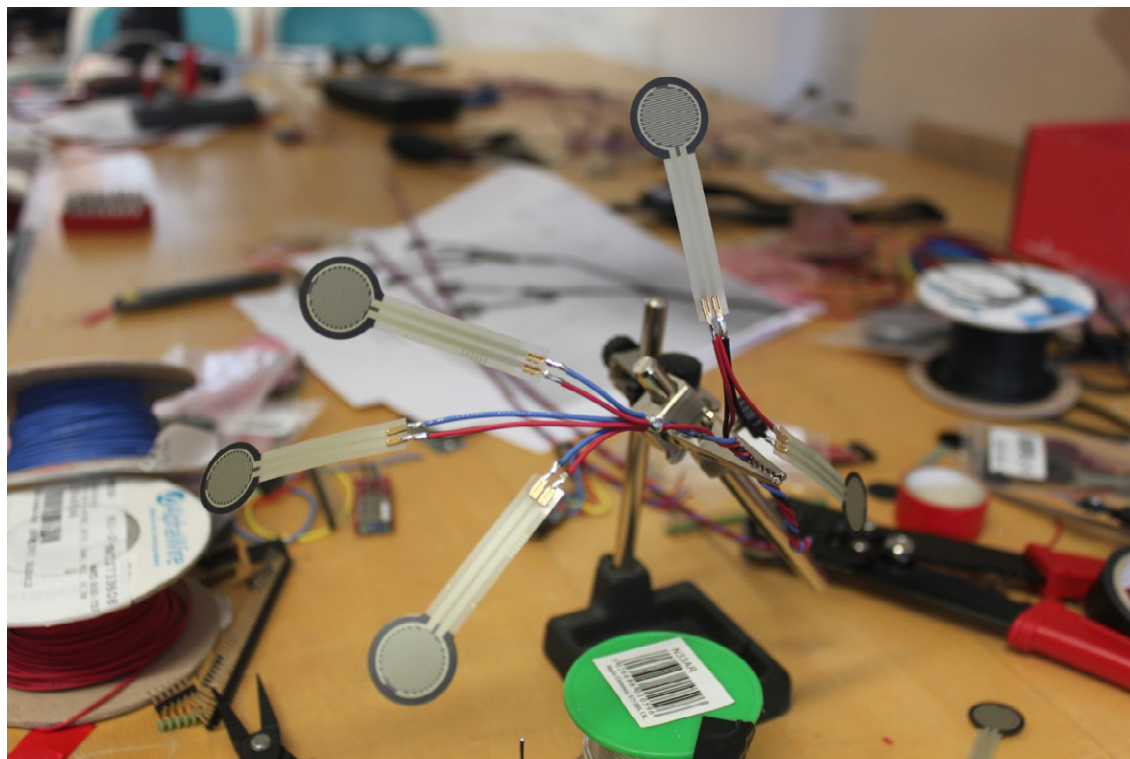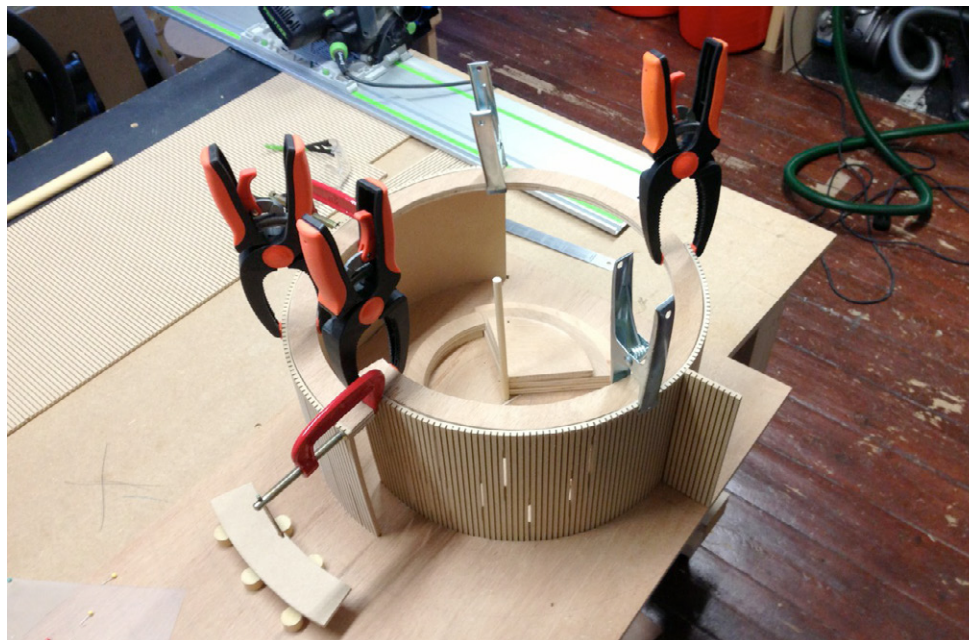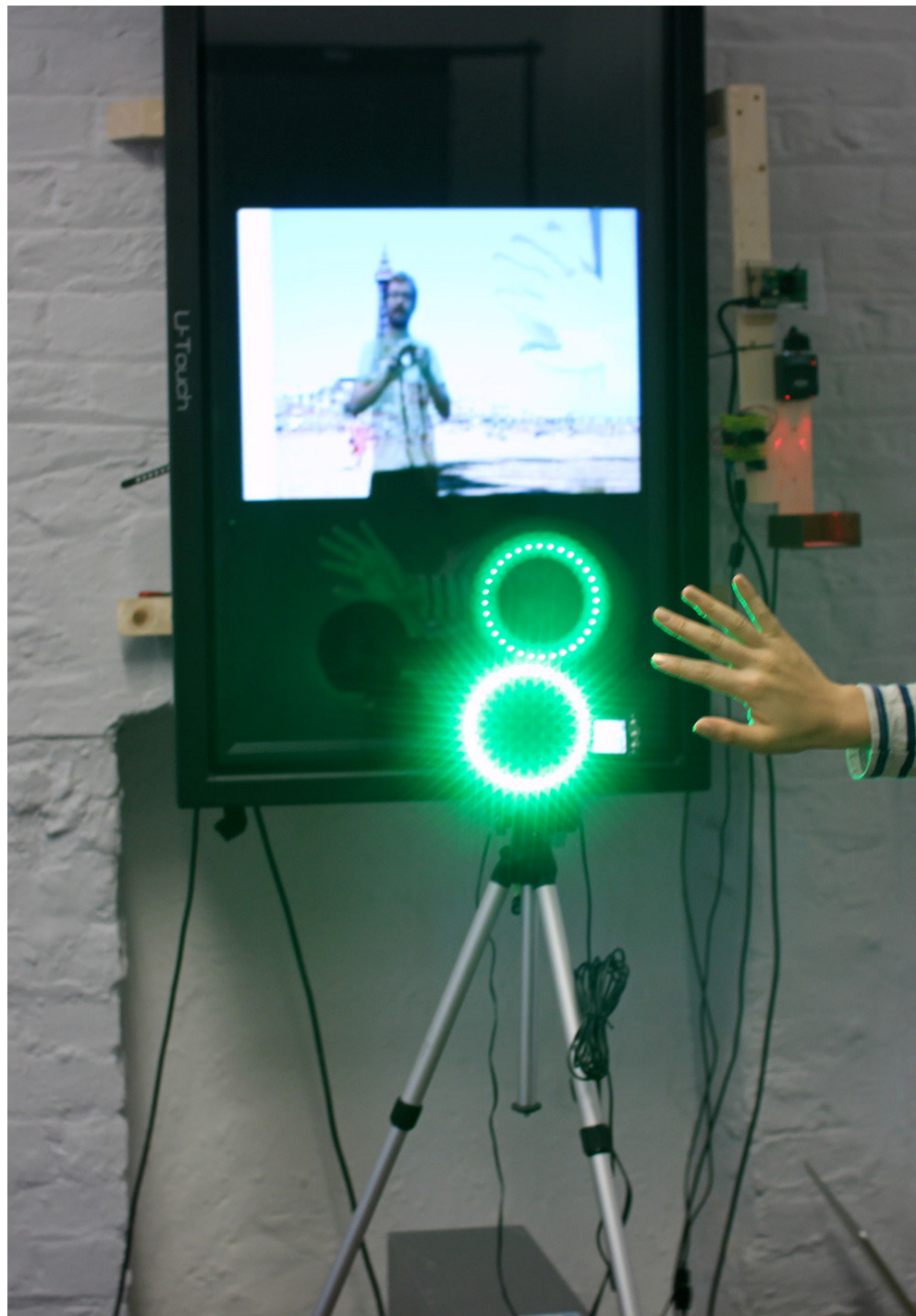
Alt/Shift: Collaborative Curriculum Development

Derek Yates, graphic design course leader, on 'motivations for change' and 'learning with industry'

In a recent article for American business magazine Forbes, Adam Swann, Head of Strategy at Gyro, says: 'All businesses, no matter what they make or sell, should recognize the power and financial value of good design'. He goes on to say that 'the design bar has been raised and design-oriented businesses are winning'. The UK creative industries in particular have benefited from this realization. According to Design Council research the design industry has expanded by 29 percent since 2005 and earnings have increased by 3.4 per cent. Unfortunately this growth does not seem to be reflected in graduate employment. Guardian Careers recently reported that 'graduates from creative art and design courses were more likely to be unemployed than most other UK graduates', and according to the Design Council in 2010 only 51 per cent of practising designers had a degree.

Recent changes in the funding of higher education have meant that demonstrating the employability of your graduates has become increasingly important for HE providers. As a graphic design course leader at the University of the Arts I have consequently been very keen to make a connection between the growth of the design industry and the job prospects of my graduates. In 2008 I secured funding to create a body of research examining the potential of industry partnerships and work-based learning. This research has enabled a series of projects that it is hoped will allow creative students and educators to 'learn with industry' – but as I am always pointing out, 'learning with industry' does not mean trying to recreate industry practice.

My most recent initiative is the curriculum development platform Alt/Shift. This platform provides opportunities for meaningful dialogue and constructive collaboration between the creative industry and design education. It is central to the aims of the project that both sides recognize the value each has to inform and challenge the other. We hope that opening up this conversation will help both practitioners and educators respond to and keep pace with technological, environmental and sociopolitical change, and that this – as well as ensuring the continued economic success of our creative industries – will have benefits for society as a whole.

Alt/Shift was launched at a major conference in December 2012. 140 educators and industry practitioners from across the UK gathered at the headquarters of digital communications agency LBi to discuss the potential of genuine collaboration. The day featured presentations from key industry figures such as Shane Walter, founder of digital arts organization onedotzero and Will Hudson from creative blog It's Nice That, alongside talks from innovative educators such as Nat Hunter from the RSA and Professor Shan Wareing, Pro Vice Chancellor of Learning & Teaching at Buckinghamshire University. The presentations stimulated a series of discussions that enabled contributions from every level of creative education. Before and after the event, the debate was captured on the Alt/Shift website (altshiftual.com) and on Twitter via '@altshiftual'. An ongoing exchange of ideas is also featured on our blog: altshiftual.tumblr.com.

To kick off the December conference Joe Macleod, spokesman for the #IncludeDesign campaign, made a presentation about the impending EBacc proposals. Joe is also Global Design Director at digital design studio ustwo™ (see *AD*, page 08-09). The event focused on the implications for designers of recent digital communication innovations, and how educators can take advantage of the opportunities this new technology opens up for their students.

'Alt/Shift 2.1: Creative Education for a Digital Context' took place on 17 April 2013 at the ustwo™ studios in Shoreditch. It took the form of a round table discussion between leading industry practitioners and a group of invited educators. Participants included Nick Bell (designer and RCA visiting critic), Lawrence Zeegan (Dean of Graphic Design at LCC), Chris Downs (inventor of 'Service Design'), Durrell Bishop (Luckybite) and Andy Huntington (Berg), as well as secondary school teachers and lecturers from tertiary and higher education. It became apparent very quickly that 'although there are gaps between industry and education (and some gaps are important to maintain), we also share a lot of the same concerns and motivations for change not just within digital media but across all areas of creative education.' (Comment from PhD student and lecturer, James Branch)

We have synthesized some of these 'motivations for change' into a set of principles that will provide a framework for future development:

Process rather than outcome
Industry practitioners talked about the need to 'hold students in the journey' and to avoid learning strategies that are too focused on outcome. An emphasis on finish does not enable a full understanding of the discoveries made on the way. Iterative development processes and the rapid prototyping engendered by digital technology require students to understand the benefits of an ever-evolving working process that does not have rigid beginning and end points.

Learning rather than assessment
A series of practitioners emphasized the need for students to 'take risks, make mistakes – fail'. It seems clear that deep learning and robust employability skills are developed through such experiences. Learning that is overly focused on achievement measured through formal assessment prevents students and educators from fully embracing the benefits of this process. We must find more sophisticated ways to measure learning. User testing might be one route to a rigorous 'real world' measure of success, and could allow the student to be more directly engaged in assessing their learning.

Dynamic learning frameworks
Alt/Shift participants suggested that a quest for parity and accountability has led to overly specific curriculum guidelines. Representatives from both industry and education complained that these restrictions interfere with the development of dynamic learning strategies that connect with genuine innovation. The open, collaborative, cross-disciplinary nature of all areas of contemporary creative practice requires learning that reflects these principles. We need frameworks that are flexible enough to accommodate these types of activity. Curriculum guidelines that describe principles without defining specifics would open up the possibility of interpretation at an individual level and maybe the opportunity for cross-curricular, cross-college activity.

User centred rather than egocentric
The contemporary creative industries demand that 'students leave their egos at the door'. The uncompromising creative maverick we have revered in the past now has a less prominent role. The potential for user input and the growth of collaborative practice require that individual designers 'relinquish creative control'. A key value for the contemporary designer is 'empathy' for both the user and fellow developers. A learning framework built around picture making, artifact creation and individual portfolio building is not able to successfully nurture these qualities.

Educators rather than practitioners
In a field as dynamic and fast moving as communication design, pedagogy driven by an individual educator's creative practice is soon irrelevant. The ability to facilitate enquiry and enable independent discovery has a far more potent value for students. Contemporary educators need to develop links with each new generation of innovative practice rather than focusing on their own.

Utilizers rather than users
Using a computer does not in itself enable an understanding of the digital context, and industry practitioners urge that we focus students beyond the passive use of hardware. The purchase of computers, digital whiteboards, laser cutters and 3D printers by schools and colleges is not enough. Students need to learn how to disrupt, hack and utilize this equipment beyond its prescribed use.
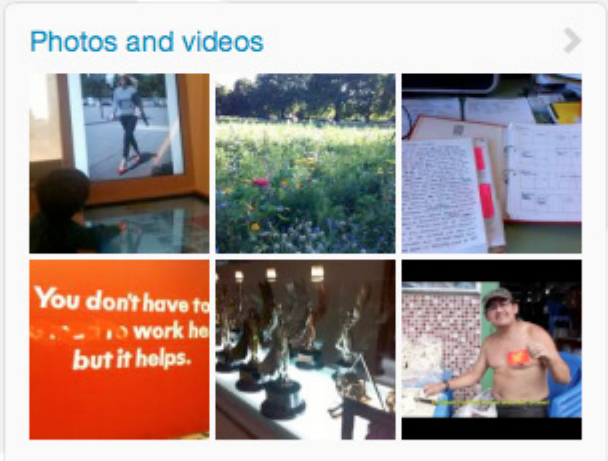
Context rather than theory
Contemporary design practice focuses on the needs of the user – to fully understand users' needs requires an understanding of the world they inhabit. The development of an understanding of the political, social, cultural and economic context that design operates in is therefore extremely important to a designer's education. Contributors to Alt/Shift have called for the integration of activities that build this knowledge into all aspects of creative learning.

These ideas are still in their infancy and it is envisaged that they will evolve and develop with the discussion. What is most exciting at this stage is that there is a clear desire for industry and education to understand each other. There is also a growing realization that their viewpoints are not as polarized as was once believed. An approach to pedagogy that engages with contemporary industry practice does not necessarily run counter to traditional notions of good practice for art and design educators. By working together we can create learning frameworks that will have benefits for both parties and this, in the long term, will enhance the economic and cultural development of our society. ■

Derek Yates
For more information about Alt/Shift visit:
altshiftual.tumblr.com or altshiftual.com

'Industry practitioners talked about the need to 'hold students in the journey' and to avoid learning strategies that are too focused on outcome'

derekyates (altshiftUAL) on Twitter

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ALT/SHIFT

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Dinner with @hugoandmarie a massive highlight of the week so far in
NY. Great people, amazing work, pity we don't work out of the same
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Jiggling Atoms is an interdisciplinary science and illustration project exploring the wonders of particle physics, sponsored by the Science and Technology Facilities Council and the Institute of Physics. 25 artists illustrate the atomic world as seen through the eyes of a scientist; from the inner workings of atoms to the motion of galaxies. By mixing knitting and black holes, paint and giant particle-detectors, the atomic space collides

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