Design has transformed the world.

Now the world is demanding the transformation of designers.

The MFA in Products of Design creates exceptional leaders for the shifting terrain of design. We educate heads, hearts and hands to reinvent systems and catalyze positive change. In our interdisciplinary MFA program, we consider everything to be a “product of design”—from sets of instructions to augmented reality, from social interventions to DIY projects, and from speculative objects to design art.

Indeed, the Products of Design program at SVA is itself a “product of design”—responding to the current explosion of interaction, experience, and platform thinking taking place across the globe. It acknowledges the radical shifts in the classic profession of industrial design—from digital fabrication to strategic foresight to circular economies—and embraces new urgencies around the supply chain and cultural consequences inherent in the challenges of production and consumption.

Design and designers also need a moral compass. In addition to the hard skills of design, we concentrate deeply on developing the soft skills necessary to any productive and fulfilling career—leadership and ethical practice, negotiation and team building, collaboration and point of view, and documentation and writing. By using all these tools to reframe problems and rapidly prototype possibilities, graduates emerge fortified—with the methods, the confidence, and the strong professional networks necessary to excel at top design firms and progressive organizations, to create ingenious enterprises of their own, and to become lifelong advocates for the power of design.

The department welcomes students who are passionate about design’s potential. Right from the start, we place them in the heart of New York City—an epicenter of thought leadership—taking classes in many of the top professional studios in the world in addition to campus-based courses. We welcome you to come visit us, learn more about our program, and consider becoming part of our thriving community.

—Allan Chochinov, chair
The MFA in Products of Design is a two-year integrated program dedicated to design thinking, design making and design doing. An immersive, optimistic exploration into the next artifacts of design, students in the program simultaneously engage in prototyping and debate, research and interaction, and problem framing and presentation skills.

The department is adjacent to the state-of-the-art Visible Futures Lab, outfitted with the tools and sophisticated equipment necessary for designers to explore their ideas and realize them in three-dimensional form—from low- to high-tech, and from handmade to computer-aided rapid prototypes.

The heart of the program is the mastering of the three fields crucial to the future of design: making, structures and narratives. Making grounds design and designers: students investigate multiple dimensions of physical design practice, its processes and the tools that enable it. Structures inform practice: students learn the information and business structures that make effective design possible: research, systems thinking, sustainability, strategy, user experience and interaction/information design. Narratives acknowledge that design demands stories—from initial idea through marketing—that are made compelling through graphic representation, point of view, drawing, writing and videography.

The first-year experience focuses on project-based work and new ways of thinking—both through semester-long courses and shorter studio intensives—complemented by provocative speakers and inspiring field trips.

The second year focuses on business structures, environmental stewardship, design metrics, strategy, entrepreneurship and delight. The yearlong thesis project generates change-making, multidisciplinary work around a chosen field of inquiry, resulting in a signature portfolio of prototypes, service blueprints, apps, platforms, business plans, videos and a book. A powerful professional network of advisors is built during the process, who are ready to help in the move toward professional practice. The program ends with a public celebration around the power of design.

Degree candidates must successfully complete 60 credits, including all required courses. A residency of two academic years is required. In the final year, each student completes a thesis project, which must be reviewed and approved by the thesis committee and the department chair in order for the student to be eligible for degree conferral.

Students present an interactive exhibition at WantedDesign, a part of the annual citywide NYCxDesign celebration.
What do ugly produce, outdoor workspaces, robot arm night-lights and survivalist kits have in common? How about launching a cabbage with a crossbow, painting with explosives, finding a needle in a haystack, and building and sailing a full-size boat made entirely out of cardboard? The common denominator is Jonathan Lung. The former is just a sampling of the projects Lung worked on in the MFA Products of Design (PoD) program, where he earned his degree in 2016. The latter highlights some
of the challenges Lung faced on the show *MythBusters: The Search*. The show, which aired on the Science Channel in early 2017, was a competition to find two hosts for a new iteration of the very popular show *MythBusters*. Lung competed—and won!—a coveted co-host spot.

Before joining the PoD program, Lung had studied engineering and design, and worked as a furniture designer and in various fabrication shops “building and teaching others to build,” he explains. Both the diverse projects Lung worked on in the PoD program and the challenges he faced on *MythBusters: The Search* required a multidisciplinary approach to thinking about, designing and building many types of projects. This kind of approach is central to the department. “Two years is not a lot of time, so every chance we’d get to do something different, we would seize the opportunity,” he says. “It’s good to work on different problems to keep your mind flexible—and I also have a short attention span, so keeping it fresh is really important to me,” he jokes.

He also says that collaboration is essential: “It is almost impossible to complete a project without a team in the real world, so...
getting used to the collaborative nature of the creative process is integral in developing something that actually works.” And as Lung explains, the people in the program are as diverse as the products they design and build: “from graffiti artists to graphic designers, from architects, to people who work in finance—each bringing his or her own unique point of view and skill to the table. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn from my peers because I spent a significant amount of time with them.”

Given the multidisciplinary nature of the program and the extensive faculty, Lung found ample support and many experiences that influenced his development as a product designer. Most notably, Michael Chung’s Video Storytelling class had an impact on his work, causing him to see his own work from a different point of view. As he describes it: “I have worked in the prototyping and fabrication end of design for many years, but his class allowed me to work on the visual narrative and stretch a different set of creative muscles. Also Michael is pure energy and excitement, always amping it up for our night classes.”

For now, Lung will be hosting the Myth-Busters reboot, designing and building things we can only imagine. He gives a final piece of advice to anyone in the program: “You get out of this program what you put into it, so I would just go all out in terms of effort and creativity. No holds barred. No ideas are too crazy.”
# Second Year

## FALL CREDITS
- Design for Social Value: Design and Politics: 0
- Design for Social Value: Design Outputs: 3
- Integrated Sustainability: Mass-Production Manufacturing: 1
- Leadership and Strategic Management: 3
- Product, Brand and Experience: 3
- Thesis I: 6

## SPRING CREDITS
- Business Modeling: 1.5
- Design Delight: 2
- Designing for Screens: 3
- Futuring and Three-Dimensional Product Design: 3
- Presentation: 1
- Service Entrepreneurship: 1.5
- Thesis II: 3

"The power of design is the power to shape knowledge, relationships, communities, beliefs, experiences and identity."

—Jennifer Rittner, faculty
SERVICE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Services have a significant impact in our everyday lives and in great measure determine the quality of our well-being as we interact with the world around us. As designers are called upon to imagine and design increasingly complex product-service systems, we need new frameworks for understanding, and tools to steer us toward better outcomes, more meaningful service experiences, and greater chances for the viability of businesses.

Great service experiences are about relationships: those between people, between people and things, and between people and processes. These relationships form and grow based upon the quality and effectiveness of the “conversations” that take place. Learning how conversation works among the participants of larger service systems is useful to describe how a service works, and to reveal opportunities for improvement through design. In product-service ecosystems, students will learn to see participants, objects and interactions as opportunities for conversation to define and agree on goals, and the means by which to achieve them.

Richard Clarkson (MFA 2014), Smart Cloud.

SMART OBJECTS

The ubiquity of embedded computing has redefined the role of form in material culture, leading to the creation of artifacts that communicate well beyond their static physical presence to create ongoing dialogues with both people and each other. This course will explore the rich relationships among people, objects and information through a combination of physical and digital design methods. Beginning with an examination of case studies, students will gain a sense of the breadth of product design practice as it applies to smart objects. Through a combination of lectures and hands-on studio exercises, students will investigate all aspects of smart object design, including expressive behaviors (light, sound and movement), interaction systems, ergonomics, data networks and contexts of use. The course will culminate in a final project that considers all aspects of smart object design within the context of a larger theme.

This is a sample of our recent course listings. For our full curriculum, please visit: productsofdesign.sva.edu/curriculum.
PRODUCT, BRAND AND EXPERIENCE

Products are increasingly seen as the embodiments of brands and consumer experiences, with product design playing a critical role in reflecting a brand’s personality. In this course, students discover how product design, consumer experience, and branding interrelate, and how addressing the needs of both users and markets from different perspectives can provide a more holistic approach to the creation of designed objects. We will work through a complete design process, defining an opportunity within a specified consumer space, performing research, developing insights and strategy, concepting and refining. Throughout the process, students concentrate on creating a cohesive and viable brand campaign, including final design, identity and packaging.

BUSINESS STRUCTURES

This course examines the critical aspects of successful organizations, including the development of strategy and business models, business plans and pitches, intellectual property and entrepreneurship. Through an exploration of fundamental business issues at the beginning of the 21st century, students develop either a business plan for a new organization or a new business model and strategic plan for an existing organization. The result is a formal “pitch” presentation given to guest professionals and classmates.

DESIGN RESEARCH AND INTEGRATION

Design, its related tools and its research methods have become essential components for companies that seek disruptive change and true innovation, and have found that old models lead only to incremental solutions. Held at the design firm IDEO, this course will examine early phases of the innovation process with an emphasis on design research methods—from framing an initial challenge to inspiration, insight, synthesis, idea and concept. We will address the key transitions between articulating needs and designing solutions for those needs. Working in teams on a shared challenge, students will create designs that convert creative ideas into action and products grounded in human-centered research.

THESIS I

Thesis I is an opportunity to explore design-thinking, design-making and design-doing that is ambitious in scope, innovative in approach and worthwhile in enterprise. Each student will choose an area of investigation and then begin rapid design-making exercises to create a body of design work, research, ideation and presentation materials. Research and exploration will help to surface the design opportunities that resonate most powerfully with a point of view, the urgencies of design needs, the scale of potential solutions and the richness of design endeavor. Since theses tend to be multilayered, students will execute design work on a continuum of enterprise—from design gestures and discursive design concepts through primary and secondary research to prototypes, as well as systems and business models.

DESIGNING FOR SCREENS

Digital interaction is a ubiquitous form of communication in today’s world. Designing for Screens provides students with the framework to understand, discuss and create effective interactive designs on digital displays. Through a series of collaborative studio sessions, open discussions, critiques, site visits and guest lectures, students will be immersed in the current culture of screen design. From mobile apps and tablets to desktops and immerse displays, this course will cover the process of designing products for screens from concept and wireframe to interface design and user testing. Students will gain fluency in the digital screen design lexicon and learn to articulate the “Right Now.”

DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Many product designers feel trapped in siloed roles, supporting the production of wasteful, disposable and toxic materials. Through the theme of food, this course will examine relationships, systems and infrastructures connecting us to local and global sustainability; growing, harvesting, processing, transporting, distributing, selling, preserving, cooking, eating and disposing of the waste related to food—the elements that shape many aspects of our lives and relate directly to our planet’s future. Working with sustainability experts and change makers, students create designs that address one of the most fundamental aspects of life.

DESIGN NARRATIVES: VIDEO STORYTELLING

Visual storytelling has become a critical tool in helping designers sketch, prototype, visualize and communicate their ideas. Increasingly, this storytelling takes place within the medium of video, which provides a powerful, immersive and easily disseminated means of articulating the products of design. From context to scenarios, from use to benefits, as product designers expand their purview into the realm of experience design, video has become a lingua franca of both design practice and design commerce. This course will cover the basic principles of visual communication using techniques in contemporary filmmaking. Working in teams on a tangible project, students will get hands-on experience in different stages of the storytelling process, including observation, ideation, script writing, storyboardung, shooting and editing.

“The program offers a great degree of freedom for students to pursue the same program from many different angles.”

—Jon Lung, MFA 2016
To learn more about the faculty members and to read their biographies visit: sva.edu/productsofdesign/faculty.
Application Process

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS
For detailed instructions, visit: sva.edu/grad/howtoapply
- Online Application and $80 Application Fee: sva.edu/apply
- Statement of Intent/Personal Statement
- Résumé
- Letters of Recommendation
- Official College Transcript

Some applicants may be required to submit the following:
- Proof of English Proficiency
- Copy of Permanent Residency Card
- Declaration of Finances
- Verification of Finances
- Foreign Transcript Evaluation

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS
For specific guidelines about these requirements, visit: sva.edu/grad/deptreq
- Portfolio

DEADLINES
For information on application deadlines, visit: sva.edu/grad/timeline

IMPORTANT LINKS
- FAQ: sva.edu/grad/faq
- International students: sva.edu/grad/intl
- Tuition and fees: sva.edu/tuition
- Visit SVA: sva.edu/grad/visit
We encourage applicants to visit our department. Contact us directly to schedule a department tour or sign-up to attend an Information Session. For more information and to register, go to: sva.edu/grad/visit.

If you have any questions about the application process, contact Graduate Admissions at 212.592.2107 or email: gradadmissions@sva.edu.

Allan Chochinov, chair
Alisha Wessler, director of operations
Marko Manriquez, systems administrator
Krithi Rao, program coordinator
John Heida, director, visible futures lab
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Oya Kosebay, lab manager, visible futures lab
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“Michael Chung and his Video Storytelling class gave me an opportunity to experience product design from a completely different viewpoint. I have worked in the prototyping and fabrication end of design for many years, but his class allowed me to work on the visual narrative and stretch a different set of creative muscles.”

—Jon Lung, faculty

ACCREDITATION
The School of Visual Arts has been authorized by the New York State Board of Regents (www.highered.nysed.gov) to confer the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Advertising; Animation; Cartooning; Computer Art, Computer Animation and Visual Effects; Design; Film; Fine Arts; Illustration; Interior Design; Photography and Video; Visual and Critical Studies; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts on graduates of the programs in Critical Theory and the Arts; Curatorial Practice; Design Research, Writing and Criticism; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching on graduates of the program in Art Education; and to confer the degree of Master of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Art Practice; Art Writing; Computer Arts; Design; Design for Social Innovation; Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; Interaction Design; Photography, Video and Related Media; Products of Design; Social Documentary Film; Visual Narrative; and to confer the degree of Master of Professional Studies in Art Therapy on graduates of the programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography; Data required by the U.S. Department of Education on “Gainful Employment” for each of the above programs may be found on each individual program page at sva.edu/ge.

The School of Visual Arts leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (accredit-id.org), 206 Grandville Avenue, Suite 305, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503-4014.

The Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

The Master of Professional Studies in Art Therapy degree program is approved by the American Art Therapy Association, Inc., and as such meets the Education Standards of the art therapy profession.

CREDITS
© 2018, Visual Arts Press, Ltd.
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School of Visual Arts

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