MA DESIGN

CERAMICS

FURNITURE

JEWELLERY
Welcome to MA Design 2020.

We have great pleasure in introducing this year’s generation of international graduates from MA Design; Ceramics, Furniture or Jewellery.

Ceramics, Furniture and Jewellery share rich cultural histories and traditions of practice. Each concerned with an ‘intimate architecture’, the physical relationship between an artefact and the body.

As we found ourselves in the midst of the first COVID-19 pandemic, challenged physically, economically and existentially, the response from these determined and adventurous designers, was to step up to the challenge and deliver.

A sustainable practice requires going beyond a simple singular consumer perspective, which considers the immediate context, to one which includes a longer view. The longer-term view requires a community of practice and a systems or networked approach, evident in many of these research rich projects.

Whilst the immediate and future contexts appear dynamic, probably more so than we would like, this years’ cohort of designers are uniquely placed to embrace ambiguity and complexity. The ability of design to embrace ambiguity and uncertainty makes this a time of challenge and simultaneously of tantalising opportunity, within and beyond the familiar parameters of the disciplines we share.

It is important to acknowledge the debt to the community of practice, our global network of colleagues, contributors and friends who have supported us this year with trust, enthusiasm and good will.

Thank you to each and every one.

Simon Fraser,
Course Leader

London,
July 2020
YI YIN
‘CX5’
(from re-cycling, re-using, re-inventing, reducing, re-designing)

At the core of ‘CX5’ is an investigation into five facets of research seeking more sustainable futures for the ceramics industry. Yi Yin creates new value from ceramic industry waste, whilst designing for urban public spaces.

From extensive research in Jingdezhen Yin forged a new material, made from 100% up-cycled industrial ceramic by product. Yin continues the tradition of China’s thousands of years of ceramic innovation through a range of benches, inspired by cross-section profiles from classic Song Dynasty hand thrown wares. For Yin the beautiful curves are the traces left by the ancestors’ hands.
Skills training, sustainable design and community collaboration are crucial for the sustainable future of wood craft and furniture industries.

The ‘Branchwood’ furniture collection explores and experiments with solutions to these issues in collaboration with communities of practice in Morocco’s High Atlas Mountains. For young people in rural communities with limited vocational opportunities, skills training in the crafts is a vital route to economic survival. ‘Branchwood’ is an innovative material, sustainably sourced and made from pruned branches from community olive, apple, plum, apricot, and walnut orchards.

Woodwork, weaving, and copper-smithing, craft community and designer collaboration are at the heart of this casual furniture collection that disassembles for the convenience of international travellers.
‘DAR’ is inspired by Ecuadorian ancestral cultures, rituals and symbols, specifically the Pampa Mesa (‘table in the mountain ground’) and the Inca – Cañari architecture. The designs celebrate the importance of equality, sharing and bonding with others through the global ritual of eating together.

The collection comprises three elemental tables. A long dining table composed of five tables that work together or separately, a coffee and a side table. All created in collaboration with highly skilled craftsmen in Ecuador and made from ‘Seique’, an exciting, yet unfamiliar wood which can be sustainably sourced and supports Ecuadorian rural exports.

This collection supports the maintenance of traditional skills, celebrates collaborative design and trans-generational community practice.

Thinking sustainably and to save air miles, the collection has been designed to be flat packed. The inclusion of design for distributed production allows shipping to consumer locations for final assembly and finishing to local preferences.
Over the past 50 years, rapid urbanisation and industrial development have launched the Republic of Korea as a leading Asian economic force in the global context. Recently, this renewed confidence has led a new generation of young designers to reconsider Korean cultural values and heritage for the 21st Century.

Traditional Korean furniture can be classified according to its function: specialist functions or simple practicality. ‘Godeun Collection’ proposes a new identity and direction, playing with these classifications to offer, in a playful and contemporary mode, cabinets for display and storage.

JAEWOONG LEE
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‘Tight’
Rapidly expanding megalopolis cultures emerging all over the world are driving collective expressions, some of which are new and some revitalisations of age long pre-occupations or desires. The Art Design market has created a location in which to seek items that express unique identities or cultural status.

Haiming Li has identified the importance of outstanding personal spaces and interiors to this new generation. Li’s pieces act like jewels or accessories in these extreme interiors, reflecting confidence around social and sexual identities.

Hand-made, using often eroticised materials, such as latex and leather, Li’s furniture invites the viewer to engage in sensual surfaces and interactive, tactile experiences. ‘Tight’ transfers ideas that may be seen to be sexualised or naughty, into a physical validation in tangible form.
Contemporary Ruins are the visible part of the overproduction in the construction industries. The European economy, organized in the form of a chain market, overproduces at all stages. From the constant creation and discard of construction materials, caused by strict checking and over-regulated safety and quality. To the approaches to producing the spaces that surround us, delivered completely finished and pre-designed beforehand and therefore rarely according to the rapidly changing real needs of users.

Over the past two years, Roca researched how this system works. Making use of legal grey zones to obtain materials in perfect condition, discarded by construction companies, underpinned the production of the collection. Roca proposes a series of ‘recipes’ for people to follow to create domestic solutions. The collection offers an ensemble of 11 modular elements.

Roca illustrates how sustainability is a matter of operations and behaviours not merely a matter of architectural design and technology.
‘Hide and Seek’ designs alternative ways to make the most of a material that is widely discarded. Newspapers and news print can easily be recycled and reused in furniture design, it helps protect the environment, minimising waste and doesn’t require virgin resources, when we can use this material to make new things.

The growth of Millennial ‘pet parents’ in Asia and their spending power is creating a new market, particularly by cat lovers. Yinjinghan Wu designed chaise longues for people who love cats, with a view to providing a comfy space to interact with their pet. Wu created areas within the design for cats to play “hide and seek” with their owners. Envisaged as a piece of furniture that is both playful and exciting, yet comfortable and relaxing for both cat and owner. The customer can relax in the knowledge that they are making an ethical consumer choice in their purchase.

Wu’s striking statement piece is novel in appearance and use. Consumers can buy ‘Hide and Seek’ chaise longues directly or make at home by themselves, it’s cultural and creative.
JEWELLERY
‘Fenomenal’ originates from an exploration of Olivia’s movements through experimental dance. To generate the collection, the essence of the movement is first captured by freeform drawings. Barthe is suspended, dancing in the air, as she draws on the paper below. Moving into metalwork, Barthe seeks to maintain the sense of rhythm, energy and flow within the final piece. The apparently simple aim of the collection is to express immaterial emotions through material artefacts.

‘Fenomenal’ celebrates the potential of jewels as empowering objects. It explores emotional traces, creating jewels that exist beyond the body of a woman. These artefacts hold emotion; the collection is gender-less and untied from traditional functionality. Each piece is unique and made by Barthe exploiting specialist techniques, forging, raising and casting in recycled silver and gold plated.

These jewels hold the energy and specificity of the moment each was created.

OLIVIA BARTHE

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The history, culture and textiles of Peru, in particular the “Lliclla” a cloth wrapping worn by women for millennia, inspires the design identity. The 'J'arapay' Collection challenges the current values of consumption and production of jewellery, by uniting Peruvian heritage, longevity and craftsmanship.

A system of collaborative working wove the thread that connects the forms for this collection. Each piece is the result of a dialogue between two women, Andrea Jose and local metalsmith Karent Salinas.

The natural alloys of Peruvian gold and silver gift a rich and unusual tonal range. Using a regenerative perspective, the gold has been 'slow-mined' using responsible practices through a partnership with Don Pedro, a miner from Peru's Amazonian region.

Recognising the value of heritage the collection draws upon, a percentage of profit from the gold pieces will contribute to the reforestation of the Amazon Rainforest and training in mercury-free practices in collaboration with ‘Pure Earth’ a New York based NGO.
In the era of extensive urban redevelopment, conservation of cultural heritage is an issue for many large cities around the world. Heritage is the crystallization of a country’s culture and the sequential memory of historic events.

‘Urban Memory’ reflects the atmosphere of the historical culture of Wuhan City in central China. Amongst the traditional ‘Lifen’ residential buildings a culture of diversity and generosity has endured. Inspired by this cultural heritage, the design ethos leveraged innovative material and craftsmanship to reflect the breath of cultures and handicrafts from around the world.

‘Silhouette’ draws upon three key architectural elements of the ‘Lifen’: cornice, window guard and pediment. Using silver repousse and over 30 layers of traditional Chinese lacquer onto fine beech veneer, the pieces offer subtle luxury with innovative craftsmanship.

YIN CHANG

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The apparent contradiction of dense metal and extreme lightness lies at the heart of Qimin Chen's collection. ‘Meteorite and Nebula’ explore emerging foamed metal technologies for an everyday ‘jewellery extravagance’, crafted for fashion conscious young professional women.

The ‘hollow’ metal materials, used in this collection, are relatively “new” to the jewellery industry. These techniques offer gently pillowed cloud forms, that are ultra-light and comfortable to wear given their scale and impact.
With the background of cultural globalization, Hon unites different cultures via his jewellery collections by incorporating western myths with eastern materials. The elemental characters of Greek gods and their associated patterns, create jewellery pieces reflecting contemporary temperaments.

‘Olympians in the East’, inspired by Greek mythology, recreates the extravagance of ancient powers for contemporary consumers incorporating the totemic energy of Asian jade.

Chun redefines jade for the contemporary context and illustrates that beauty can be found in un-expected places. Traditional jade crafting skills and the CNC milling technology are adopted to create precise and unique jewellery pieces.
‘The Emotion Digester’ is a combination of jewellery, touch and emotion, which can calm negative emotions and release them in a tactile way. It is a piece of portable decompression jewellery designed for young people who need to relieve the pressure of the urban world.

The emergence of new materials in the jewellery market makes more young people choose jewellery with attitude and expression.

Made from light and bendable foam with a layer of velvet-textured flocking ‘The Emotion Digester’ is great for the office or customers can carry casually in their bags to wear to bars and restaurants. The metal structure in the sponge gives the audience the power to recreate the jewellery form. Through the tactile design with interaction, the audience can extract happiness and relax from the jewellery while squeezing. It is a playable jewellery toy which gives audience confidence and pleasure by interacting with them.

JIAQI FU
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‘Wahlenbergbreen mementos’ captures the ephemerality of the melting process of Svalbard’s glaciers, Norway. Integral to the research was a live visit to Svalbard in the polar north, to meet and interview scientists and study ice melting due to climate change. Indeed, the most important thing to learn was that to tackle climate change, everything relies on communication and science outreach. The devastating scale of change crystallised the issues for the project.

This collection of rings freeze focuses on the microscopic process of liquification, as millennia of ice is disappearing. The study of melting snow crystals with an electronic microscope gives a new and exciting vocabulary of forms.

The jewels pay tribute to the Arctic, but also spark interaction and discussion such as ‘memento-mori’; they are constant reminders of what is being lost.

The project is delivered through a wide range of modes of experimentation, production and technologies from historical to entirely contemporary. Using recycled or sustainable materials was non-negotiable and part of the knowledge base and approach.
Exploring texture and volume through the familiar tactility of denim, ‘Volutes’ has its origins in the starched ruffs and collars of 16th Century European fashion. This collection spotlights the ability of denim to hold sculptural form, tell a story, and express visually striking colour and surface texture.

Denim represents a contradiction – simultaneously familiar, democratic, and iconic yet often unsustainably produced. Alise Kennedy examines the way in which giving a second life to repurposed denim celebrates this dynamic, distinctive textile and in using organic denim, attests to a rapidly regenerating industry.

Employing materials and techniques from the arenas of costume making, millinery and traditional jewellery has resulted in densely packed volumes, folded forms, and striking variations of colour.
As societies evolve with the advance in globalization and urbanized development, younger generations are questioning the traditional values associated with materiality, for example, ‘precious’ gems and metals. Increasingly there is a demand for new paradigms of non-traditional, enduring and innovative jewellery to define this 21st century generation in their public lives and private passions.

Wensi Li celebrates this symbolic desire for a new sense of self-recognition and self-expression. Li's chosen medium is an intense colour, formed into ground-breaking Titanium jewellery, audacious in scale and the statements expressed.
The Chinese expression for landscapes, ‘Shan Shui’, means ‘mountain and water.’

‘Shan Shui’ is a 10-piece collection of Chinese jewellery. It explores jewellery carving, casting and subtle patination to reflect the natural processes of weathering.

Yin Yang philosophy forms the backdrop landscape, a harmony of contrast and flow in interpersonal space and aesthetics. As you walk into a garden you become the moving pulse and the garden becomes the motionless vessel of time, together an embodiment of ‘Shan Shui’. The human body echoes the movement in the water “Shui” and the jewellery anchors the mountain “Shan”.

The collection uses these ideas to identify one's culture within a multicultural environment, blurred in today's social communities. Where identity is no longer defined by race and gender but life experiences, new and old.

The design exploration investigated a sophisticated and evolving market place. Culturally positioned through the selection of historical gardening and the concepts of Yin Yang, unlocked access to discussions about the emerging value systems of Generation Z.

As the value of luxury is shifting to experiences. Space is the most direct way to understand culture. You walk into the culture and you are redefined by your experience.

CHEN-HSING LEE
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Bringing together spheres of practise from science to craft and inspired by a family heritage of conservation work, this high-jewellery collection spotlights the value of preserving biodiversity.

The jewels are a physical imagining of priceless data including precise genomic information from endangered species, fragile ecosystems and microcosmic biospheres.

The design process has been informed by study in the archives of some of Britain’s most eminent natural history collections, including The National History Museum and Frozen Arc Project. ‘1 Minute to Midnight’ explicitly focusses on the climate and biodiversity emergency, heralding and commemorating vulnerable species and natural environments.

To create the collection Jet collaborated with traditional British craft communities and explored contemporary technical processes like CNC machining. Recycled materials: re-refined metals, vitreous enamel and rescued gemstones are the focus of this collection.
This project describes the traditional Chinese food culture in the artistic language of contemporary jewellery design. As an important part of Chinese traditional folk art, food culture has national cultural characteristics and special aesthetic values contained in the handicrafts. The incredible textures and patterns in the traditional food cooking process were the inspiration for the ‘Sugar Melon’ collection.

The jewellery preserves these beautiful details using porcelain and gold-plated silver. The final works use two materials to metaphor the combination of contemporary and diverse art expressions and the unique cultural connotation of the nation. The audience faces the contradictory reality of high-tech and traditional handicraft, contemporary art design and traditional folk art in the global context. The audience answers are always open and full of opportunities.
‘(UN)EXPLORED’ manipulates materials and processes by synergising textile and jewellery disciplines. Disrupting assumptions around traditional textile use, Lindey Tydeman has developed a process that enigmatically places textiles within a jewellery context. Exploring and experimenting through making, led to the creation of these lightweight and voluminous structures, which are inspired by the form and movement of deep-sea creatures.

The collection is hand fabricated using the same textile technique, which has been adapted in unique ways to create beautiful wire forms and textures. All forms really find their shape through material exploration and hand manipulation. The combination of scale and delicate weight evokes a relationship with deep sea creatures and encapsulates a hidden textile language.

Light is a complex and necessary element in the deep sea used to communicate, survive and attack. ‘(UN)EXPLORED’ uses light as a way to manipulate and amplify forms through shadows and reflection. The pieces are created from gold, gold vermeil and sapphires.
‘Lady Danger’ is inspired by global club and dance cultures. Observant of the ways in which these spheres can enrich people’s identities outside of their daily routines Yi Xu has responded to an emerging urban trend.

‘Lady Danger’ creates accessories for office ‘girls’ to emerge as dangerous and sexy ‘women’ who are having a good time on their own terms. The innovatory and patented double-sided titanium fringe pulses to reveal a different style with different movements.

The full range of jewellery artefacts offer unusual and alternative ways of wearing, they can be matched with everyday wear, transforming women for a dramatic night-time life.

Yi’s research explored from London’s club scenes and parties in Soho, to the more traditional settings of Savile Row. Yi observed how women seek to express themselves, changing identities via items of extravagance, dance and sexuality beyond respectable home and work lives.