



MFA | PRODUCTS

OF DESIGN



Graduate Programs

Design has transformed the world.

Now the world is demanding the transformation of designers.

The MFA in Products of Design (PoD) 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. Our program acknowledges the radical shifts in the classic profession of industrial design and embraces urgencies around the supply chain and cultural consequences inherent in the challenges of production and consumption.

We believe that great design and designers require a moral compass. In addition to the hard skills of design, we concentrate on developing the soft skills necessary for any productive and fulfilling career. These skills include 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 elite design firms and progressive organizations. Students transition seamlessly from our program into the field ready to create ingenious enterprises of their own and to become lifelong advocates for the power of design.

In addition to being immersed in a curriculum and culture of professionalism and diversity, our students engage in several unique opportunities for industry exposure as well as portfolio and career development. Right from the start, we place them in the heart of New York City where they take classes in some of the trade’s top studios in addition to campus-based courses. Our annual Design: Match Job Fair event gathers more than 35 leading design companies to spend the day interviewing PoD graduate students to discuss their portfolios and qualifications as potential hires. And we even have an annual partnership with the Museum of Modern Art in which students design products for MoMA’s Wholesale Catalog.

Our department welcomes students who are passionate about design’s potential. We invite you to visit us, to learn more about our wonderful program and to consider becoming part of our thriving community.

—Allan Chochinov, chair

About the Program

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

The department is next to the state-of-the-art Visible Futures Lab, outfitted with the tools and sophisticated equipment necessary for designers to delve into and realize their ideas 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 the physical design practice, its processes and the tools that enable it. Structures inform practice: students learn the information and business strategies that make effective design possible, which include research, systems thinking, sustainability, user experience and interaction/information design. Narratives acknowledge that design demands compelling stories: students figure out how to communicate their unique point of view through graphic representation, drawing, writing and videography.

The first-year experience concentrates 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. In the process, students build a powerful experienced network of advisors, who are ready to help in the move toward professional practice.

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.

OPPOSITE: Smruti Adya takes to the stage at the Annual Thesis Presentations in the SVA Theatre.



Finding Solutions Through Design

While studying sustainability and urban planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Antya Waegemann felt frustrated with the limited impact her interventions could actually have. It was only when she began SVA's Products of Design (PoD) program that she learned about the power design has to solve problems and inspire change. "Working in urban planning for so long—especially at Harvard, which is more academic—I kept seeing these interesting designs and ideas to help change cities but also the obstacles and barriers that made it difficult to make any of them possible," she says. "And then coming into the design world, I saw how design can so quickly shift behavior and policy." ►



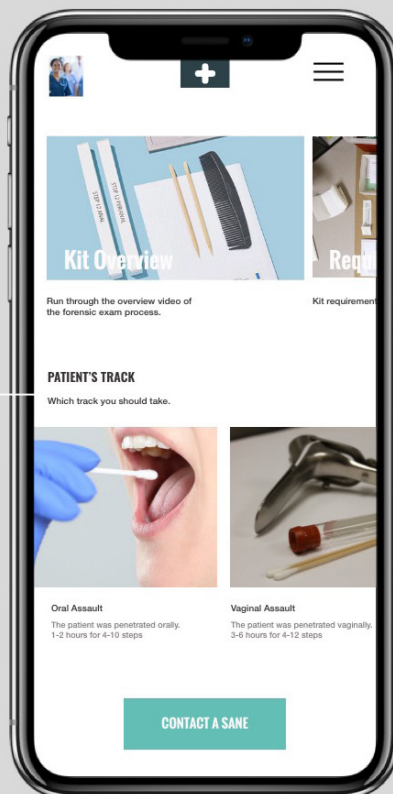
Antya's thesis project is an example of her fierce determination to solve problems and deliver solutions straight into the hands of the stakeholders. Her thesis, *When No One Believes You: Redesigning the Rape Kit and Responses to Sexual Assault*, was born out of her passion for women's issues and feminism.

"I never worked in the space [of women's issues] because I never knew how I could fit into it other than marching at a protest," she says. "But when I heard about women who had horrible experiences with the rape kit, I thought, *This has to be a design problem. Why is this one tool that is supposed to help victims seek justice not working for them?*"

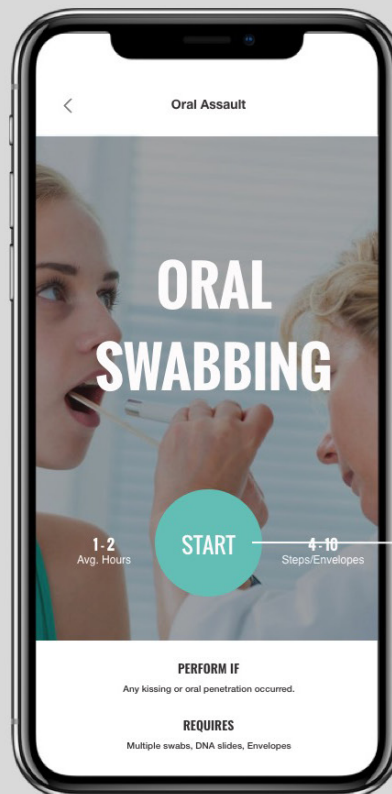
While her thesis project included six different products, since graduating in 2019, Antya has chosen to focus on just two: a kit for nurses and an app for survivors. She is embarking on developing a start-up called Redesign the Kit to continue working each. Her thesis has also been recognized at Dutch Design Week and NYCxDesign festival.

Physical kit design and digital mobile app prototypes from Antya's thesis work

KIT OVERVIEW



VIDEO TUTORIAL





The PoD curriculum emphasizes research, especially among the participants of the system where the design intervention is to take place. In Antya's case this included nurses, doctors, victims, social workers, lawyers and police officers.

"A really big challenge of mine with the kit was going into it thinking that human-centered design means it has to be victim-centered. But the kit that I'm creating now is really concentrated around the nurses and doctors," she says. "One of the things that happens when you do design research is you realize that making it for someone else will actually benefit the victim in a way that I never thought it could. PoD is great in making sure that you check your assumptions and have a human-centered process."

Antya has found her true calling as a problem-solver. With the kit, she is trying to shift policy instead of waiting for it to change and later designing the product—a perspective she gained at PoD. "PoD is an incredible opportunity for people who aren't sure which direction of design they want to go in," she says. "If you're able to take a real issue in your thesis that you truly care about, it is an incredible place to take that further."

Curriculum/ Sample Program

Degree candidates must successfully complete 60 credits, including all required courses. A residency of two academic years is required.

First Year

FALL	CREDITS
Design for Social Value: Design Outputs	3
Design for Sustainability and Resilience	1.5
Design Research and Integration	3
Lecture Series and Studio Visits I	0
Making Studio	3
Seminar I	0
Studio Intensive: Affirming Artifacts	1.5
Systems, Scale and Consequence	1.5
Three-Dimensional Product Design	1.5

SPRING	CREDITS
Business Structures	3
Design Narratives: Design Histories	1
Design Narratives: Point of View	1
Design Narratives: Video Storytelling	1
Framing User Experiences	1.5
Lecture Series and Studio Visits II	0
Seminar II	1.5
Smart Objects	1.5
Studio Intensive: Deconstruction and Reconstruction	1.5
Studio Intensive: Design Performance	1.5
Studio Intensive: Intervention Interaction	1.5
Studio Intensive: Material Futures	0

Second Year

FALL

	CREDITS
Product, Brand and Experience	3
Seminar: Climate Futures	1.5
Seminar: Design for Public Policy	1.5
Seminar: Designing Justice	1.5
Seminar: Leadership and Strategic Management	1.5
Thesis: Research and Ideation	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: Integration and Documentation	3

Annual live exhibition at WantedDesign, part of NYCxDESIGN festival

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

—Jennifer Rittner, faculty





Course Offerings

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

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.

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 upon goals, and the means by which to achieve them.

OPPOSITE: Product of Design's annual Design:Match Job Fair event brings together more than 35 world-leading design companies, which spend the day interviewing PoD graduate students.

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 an original business model and a 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, not found in old models that lead only to incremental solutions. This course, held at Johnson & Johnson Design studio, 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 exercise, students will create designs that

convert creative ideas into action and products grounded in human-centered research.

THESIS II: INTEGRATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Design work is often fraught with complex details and seemingly unanswerable questions. It turns out that it is entirely possible to make things without making much sense. This course will focus on making sense

of students' thesis work, and how best to communicate that work to peers, to stakeholders, and to the project's intended audience. The work in Thesis II represents the culmination of the program and will embody the knowledge and strategies students have learned during the past two years. The written thesis document and a formal verbal and visual presentation given by each Master of Fine Arts candidate will be produced in this course.

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 to wireframe to interface design and user testing.

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 (including scientists, engineers, farmers and other specialists), students create designs that address one of the most fundamental aspects of life. Sessions take place at various locations throughout New York City and its surrounding region, as living laboratories for design projects.

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, storyboarding, 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

Notable Alumni

Julia Lindpaintner
18F, General Services
Administration

Kathryn McElroy
argodesign

Souvik Paul
Cathbuddy, Inc.

Jon Lung
host, *MythBusters*

Tahnee Pantig
JustFix.nyc

Brandon Washington
Staple Design

Faculty

To learn more about the faculty members and to read their biographies visit: sva.edu/productsofdesign/faculty.

Allan Chochinov
chair, MFA Products of
Design Department; partner,
Core77

Rachel Abrams
associate principal, design
strategy, Arup

Paola Antonelli
senior curator,
architecture and design,
The Museum of Modern Art

Brent Arnold
design manager, Lyft Bikes
and Scooters

Hlynur Atlason
founder, Atlason

Kathleen Bakewell
founder, executive
director, BioCities

Emilie Baltz
innovation director,
experiential artist

Ayse Birsal
co-founder, creative director,
Birsal + Seck

Matthew Borgatti
founder, program director,
Super-Releaser

Michael Chung
freelance industrial
designer, filmmaker

Jenny Clark
associate director, product
design, argodesign

Abby Covert
information architect,
Abby the IA

Bill Cromie
co-founder, director
of emergent technology,
Blue Ridge Labs

Steven Dean
partner, Prehype

Andrew Dent
EVP, materials research,
Material ConneXion

Marc Dones
executive director, National
Innovation Service

Megan Ford
program manager,
argodesign

Ollie Gillett
program manager,
community engagement,
Blue Ridge Labs

Claire Hartten
co-founder, Green Rabbits;
designer

Alexandre Hennen
director, Healthcare
Solutions, J&J Design

Shanti Mathew
deputy director,
Public Policy Lab

**Jonathan Meléndez-
Davidson**
design strategist, J&J Design

Toshi Mogi
AVP, innovation strategy, frog
design

Daniel Perlin
founder, Make_Good_Design

Jennifer Rittner
principal, Content Matters

Andrew Schloss
co-founder, OneOneCreative

Jason Severs
chief design officer, Droga5

Sinclair Smith
principal, SS&Co

Becky Stern
community product manager,
Instructables

John Thackara
curator, Doors of Perception

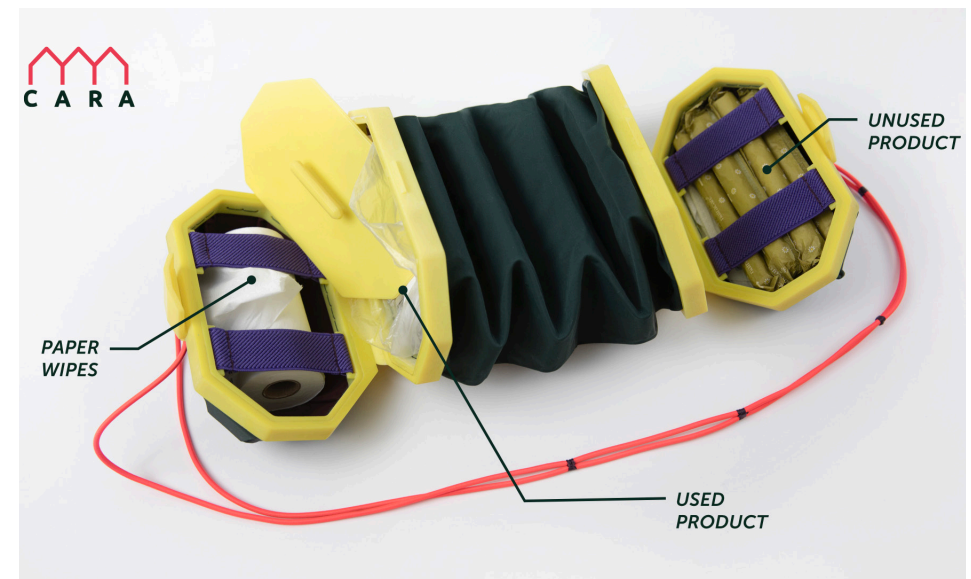
Richard Tyson
senior associate, director,
intelligent places, Gensler

Masamichi Udagawa
partner, Antenna Design

Rob Walker
author

James Wynn
director, intelligent places,
Gensler

Krissi Xenakis
Americas design lead, IBM
Cloud Garage



CARA: Menstrual Product and Waste Carrier for Multi-Day Trips Outdoors
designed by Alexia Cohen, MFA 2018



Application Process

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For a full list of application requirements and detailed instructions, visit:

sva.edu/grad/howtoapply

- Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: sva.edu/apply

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

OPPOSITE: Alexia Cohen, MFA 2018

Contact Us

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.

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Marko Manriquez, technical manager

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 [facebook.com/productsofdesign](https://www.facebook.com/productsofdesign)

 twitter.com/svapod

 vimeo.com/user6147977

 The people and ideas coming out of Products of Design are the future of design. The multidisciplinary approach and systems-level thinking that is applied within the program are truly unique and give us a contemporary design practice for shaping the future.”

—Lindsay Ellerby, senior design director, Normative

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 programs in Art Education; 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 on graduates of programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography.

The School of Visual Arts is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (msche.org), 3624 Market Street, Suite 2 West, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 267.284.5000. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The School of Visual Arts is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (nasad.arts-accredit.org).

The Interior Design program 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 350, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4014.

The School of Visual Arts' Department of Art Education is currently pursuing accreditation of its educator preparation programs by the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP).

Pursuant to Section 52.21 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the educator preparation program offered by the School of Visual Arts is considered to be continuously accredited for purposes of meeting the New York State requirement that all such programs maintain continuous accreditation. The School of Visual Arts' Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program was previously 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

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COVER: BABI Artificial Intelligence Assistant, by Will Crum, MFA 2018

School of Visual Arts

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