

# metaproject 03

Rochester Institute of Technology | School of Design

# Contents

- 03 Industrial Design at RIT
- 05 Metaproject: A Definition
- 07 Metaproject Series
- 08 Introduction by Laura Young
- 10 Prologue by Josh Owen
- 12 Institutional Value
- 16 Student Designers
- 46 Runners Up
- 60 Winners
- 74 Student Designers' Statement
- 77 Augmented Reality by Susan Lakin
- 78 Project Team
- 84 Acknowledgements

**“Design, as Metaproject 03 shows, is the by-product of intellectual elegance... As I have always said, in design it is not WHAT you do that counts, but HOW you do it that is relevant. Once again, Metaproject is a live demonstration of this principle.”**

***Massimo Vignelli***

metaproject 03  
Rochester Institute of Technology

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## Industrial Design at RIT

At RIT, we believe that industrial design education lies at the nexus of theory, process and practice. Industrial design is a human-centered discipline which requires an understanding of the complex relationships between culture and commerce. Our varied and experienced faculty expose students to the history, context and state of the art, while imparting the skills necessary to compete as contemporary designers. Aesthetic sensitivity, technical competence, social and environmental awareness, and analytical thought are developed in a robust university environment where business, engineering, social sciences and scientific partners exist within arms reach as willing collaborators. Through hands-on experience in strategic design thinking, graphic visualization, technical drawing, model making and prototype development, graduates emerge with the skills needed to conceptualize, design, and develop new and improved objects and systems with an eye towards a better world-view. Our high profile internships expose students to formative experiences in the field. Our ever expanding international agenda links students to global thinking. The world renowned Vignelli Center for Design Studies is a unique resource that reveals the nuances of design process seen through the lens of some of the world's most masterful projects housed on site in the center's archives. With all of these opportunities, our students emerge as leaders in the field and our graduates redefine the profession as capable editors of content and 21st century story-tellers. The 2012 Design Intelligence Report ranked RIT's Industrial Design undergraduate program third in the nation with its graduate program ranked at second. US News and World Reports placed RIT ID in eighth place. Overall, RIT was named by Business Week as one of the top ten design schools in the USA and Business Insider ranked RIT's School of Design at #11 in The World's 25 Best Design Schools.

## Metaproject

Meta – (from Greek: **μετά** = “after”, “beyond”, “with”, “adjacent”, “self”), is a prefix used in English (and other Greek-owing languages) to indicate a concept which is an abstraction from another concept, used to complete or add to the latter.

### Word Origin & History

Prefix meaning 1. “after, behind,” 2. “changed, altered,” 3. “higher, beyond,” from Gk. meta (prep.) “in the midst of, in common with, by means of, in pursuit or quest of,” from PIE \*me- “in the middle” (cf. Goth. miþ, O.E. mið “with, together with, among;” see mid). Notion of “changing places with” probably led to senses “change of place, order, or nature,” which was a principal meaning of the Gk. word when used as a prefix (but also denoting “community, participation; in common with; pursuing”). Third sense, “higher than, transcending, over arching, dealing with the most fundamental matters of”

## **The Metaproject Series**

The Metaproject initiative from RIT is now running in its third iteration. In keeping with the Design is One philosophy espoused by RIT's Vignelli Center for Design Studies, Metaproject aims to encourage students to produce design that is "semantically correct, syntactically correct, and pragmatically understandable, but also visually powerful, intellectually elegant and timeless".

### **Metaproject 03: Areaware**

The title for this project and corresponding exhibition is reflective of the projects ongoing initiative: to impart a deeper understanding of one particular material with the goal of exposing the intricacies of design thinking through the execution of a project brief. This exhibition demonstrates that education partnered with industry can be a successful vehicle for fostering innovative thinking and product excogitation.

In the fall of 2012 twenty-two Industrial Design Seniors taking a course with Professor Josh Owen were given the task of creating a wooden universal toy that fit into the product line of Areaware, world-renowned avant-garde accessories manufacturer. Each student was required to explore the properties of wood and its use as a primary material in object construction. Students then responded with inventive proposals to explore the meaning and notion of the way toys integrate into contemporary cultures and lifestyles.

## Introduction by Laura Young Creative Director Areaware

Areaware is a New York City-based producer of functional and unusual everyday objects. Creating thoughtful products that inspire an emotional response, we explore design language as a means of creating new syncretic forms. We believe that appreciation for beauty is central to what it means to be alive and want to embody this principle in the simplest things.

The object is quickly losing its place in our world; landfills becoming graveyards for extinct technology. In an effort to controvert this disposable society, our goal is to produce the heirlooms of the future, creating objects that have true meaning.

We wish to create a forum for young and local talent and together, we hope to become a strong voice for American design.

This is the fourth sentence of the Areaware mission statement. It is exemplified in the collaboration between Areaware and the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) School of Design.

When Josh Owen approached Areaware in Spring 2012 with the opportunity to sponsor Metaproject 03, an RIT School of Design syllabus based on toy design with a material focus on wood, we agreed without hesitation. The objective was for each student to design a wood toy that was thoughtful, poetic, and inspired an emotional response. Naturally, we requested that the designs incorporate consumer product safety as well as a simplistic approach towards mass production.

I was privileged to represent Areaware as a lecturer for Metaproject 03, kicking off the class with a presentation on the Areaware collection and our impressive roster of designers, including David Weeks, Jonas Damon, Karl Zahn, Brendan Ravenhill, Harry Allen, Ross Menezes and Fort Standard. The students impressed me instantly, demonstrating their knowledge of production, materials and design.

I visited with the class several times over the course of the semester, which included a rigorous concept critique where I reviewed collections of drawings and models from each student and addressed the students as a whole on what worked, what didn't and why. It was during that visit that I realized the outcome of Metaproject 03 would be remarkable, and that the students in RIT's School of Design epitomized a level of excellence beyond my expectations.

After six visits to RIT and multiple desk critiques, I was joined by Areaware's founder and president Noel Wiggins, and David Weeks; a well-known toy and lighting designer whose Cubebot design is one of Areaware's most successful products; for the student's presentation of their final productions. Each student gave a five minute presentation in which they exhibited their work to a panel of judges, including myself, and an auditorium filled to the brim with their peers, friends, family and the prestigious RIT faculty. The impact moved me on an emotional level. The students presented themselves as true design professionals, showing an unprecedented body of work.

The hospitality and abundant generosity I received from the RIT School of Design community can only be defined as extraordinary. It is an understatement to describe the facilities, faculty and students as impressive and I am grateful for the opportunity given to Areaware and myself by Josh Owen and RIT. This venture not only redefined Areaware's approach to product development, but transformed my role at Areaware and my own plans for the future.

*Laura Ann Young*

# Prologue: Pedagogical Context

By Josh Owen  
Faculty and Metaproject Author

## Course Description

This two-quarter, sequential course introduced industrial design students to a working relationship with a client using a combination of seminar and workshop formats. The first half of each session presented aspects of the history, theory and the practice of product design as it related to the Areaware project agenda in the design and development of a 'Universal Toy' using wood as a primary material.

The second half of each session consisted of group and one-on-one critiques, discussions and materials workshops. Guest lecturers and critics engaged at regular intervals throughout the course to share their insights.

## Project Goal

Each student was required to explore the properties of wood and its integration as a primary material in object construction. Students were required to research examples of culturally specific historical and contemporary toys and to define the meaning of Universal Toy. If chosen for manufacture, projects would be realized primarily from sustainably harvested wood in order to make use of its time-tested qualities and to promote an attitude of social responsibility, giving these objects the qualities of a modern heirloom.

## Procedures

The judges used the following guidelines:

**Execution of object**  
(performance and craft)

**Design of object**  
(implementation and aesthetic of concept)

**Social value of object**  
(usefulness in its category)

**Suitability for manufacture**  
(understanding of materials and process)

## Project Deliverables

Students designed and produced high-quality, finished and functional prototypes from actual materials using available on and off-campus resources. They were expected to carefully archive the process and document the final products with design-control drawings suitable for manufacturer review, graphically compelling use-scenarios and the written word to convey their overall concept. Students were given the opportunity to art-direct the final documentation of the product using a professional product photographer to deliver press-quality communication materials.

## Outcomes

In addition to the considerable media exposure given to the projects selected by the jurors, the three winning projects along with all of the runners-up and remaining projects were brought to New York City and exhibited in the context of the International Furniture Fair (ICFF) and Design Week. Three were selected for commercialization and several more were earmarked for development to explore their feasibility as products suitable for manufacture. Each student retains the ownership of the intellectual property of his/her design.

## Institutional Value

### The furtherance of a strategic course plan

As demonstrated by this third generation of the course, Metaproject is a repeatable template to be used as a thematic umbrella. The program of study can be used as a model for other courses to follow the strategic plan of the institute which addresses innovation and globalization. Because of the professional nature of the output (production of working prototypes) the course was designed to anticipate a semester-long agenda. As such, it was scheduled into both fall and winter quarters in the form of sequential Special Topics courses (keeping the same student enrollment) to allow for ample time to complete the project.

### A partnership with the industry

In the case of Metaproject 03, the partnership was with world-renowned avant-garde accessories manufacturer Areaware. In this project, the company donated materials and services, educational site visits from their members and partners and the transport and exhibition of student projects to New York City in a partnership they forged with the International Contemporary Furniture Fair and the Javitz Center at the culmination of the project. In exchange, twenty two students designed products which were crafted in synergy with the sponsor's core values.

### An exhibition of RIT student work

Together with students from the course and a support team, which included a graduate teaching assistant and members of the sponsor's groups, an exhibit was designed to showcase the course output in a consolidated vision at the Simone Center for Student Innovation at RIT in February of 2012, during the judging.

### A global venue

The venue for further dissemination of the results of the student research in this project was the May, 2013 International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York City. The ICFF, in conjunction with "Design Week" in New York City, is the most visible design-related event in the United States. During the Fair's four days, 145,000 net square feet of the Javits Center are filled with more than 23,000 designers, architects, retailers, manufacturers, representatives, distributors, developers, students, educators, curators and media. More than 550 exhibitors display contemporary furniture, seating, carpet and flooring, lighting, outdoor furniture, materials, wall coverings, accessories, textiles, and kitchen and bath fixtures for residential and commercial interiors. Selected projects from universities and design schools are also showcased. Together with the many lectures and presentations held on site during the fair, and the hundreds of off-site events held throughout New York City and Brooklyn as part of Design Week, this assemblage of national and international exhibitors and visitors affords the chance to experience the most selective scope of the globe's finest, most creative, individual, and original avant-garde home and contract products showcased in one venue. This year's installation was housed within the Jacob Javitz center with an additional satellite exhibit of the work in the sponsor's Brooklyn HQ where they hosted a party for the media and students during design week.



**A case study book & a project identity**

This book chronicles the methodology and output from the course, shedding light on the project results. The design of the book itself reflects the "Design is One" philosophy espoused by the Vignelli Center for Design Studies which is overlaid into the project linking the student work and the print collateral thematically to the Vignelli Center. Together with a press-kit of images and information, this book is printed in edition of 3,000 and used as collateral to accurately communicate the course and its representatives to the scholarly world as well as to the media and to the professional sector when it is disseminated during the ICFF. Extra copies are used by the ID department to seed future projects and by SoD to promote further, trans-disciplinary collaboration as well as by the Dean's office and Development for their purposes.

**A trans-disciplinary team to focus & communicate course output**

David Strauss, a second year graduate student from RIT's ID program took the lead this year in developing the graphic materials for this course. Elizabeth Lamark, Visual Resources Supervisor at ETC Production Services photographed and processed the student projects together with her team of photography students under the art direction of myself and the students in order to provide press-ready high quality documentation of the work for use in all communications. The Simone Center for Student Innovation hosted the project's final on-campus event and displayed the student work for the university community and the judging event. Lucas Barber, Marketing Communications Manager at RIT made sure that the University's interests in promoting the project will be well represented working in concert with the sponsor's outreach efforts.

**A process-oriented support website**

Professor Adam Smith mentored two seniors from New Media Design, Joey Bright and Andrew Mikulski to generate the Metaproject global website during 2012. This new site consolidates the work from all three Metaprojects and creates a platform for future iterations of the project. The website serves as an on-line portal for the project, however it does not duplicate the efforts of the book. Where the book focuses on project results, the website focuses on the project back-story and linkages to the institution. This is revealed in a dynamic presentation of videos, conversations, and social media opportunities that allow students to cultivate their own content. As with last year, the new site content will be timed to be made live on the opening day of the event in New York City.

**Bringing in industry luminaries**

Together with the Areaware, leaders from industry were selected as visiting jurors for the project. Outside perspectives of this nature are invaluable in selecting the most promising projects to be shown in a critical venue. The jurors were:

**Noel Wiggins**  
President, Areaware

**Laura Young**  
Creative Director, Areaware

**Lydia Okrent**  
Product Development, Areaware

**David Weeks**  
Owner, David Weeks Studio

**Building the future**

Efforts like this project require extensive planning and the coordination of many resources beyond the classroom. It is our hope that the above methods of documentation, dissemination and exhibition initiatives will facilitate the generation of more such projects in the future.

## Metaproject 03

### Student Designers

David Buchanan  
Gonzalo Ciurlizza  
Alexander Cloutier  
Kevin D'Amico  
Ryan Erbe  
Rob Fish  
Alexandro M. Flores  
Paula Garcia  
Aaron Jackendoff  
Nicholas Kelemen  
Ian O'Neill  
Sean Petterson  
Lindsay Randall  
Ashley Valenti  
Nanxi Yu  
Jeffrey Burrell  
Jaclyn Jacobson  
Blair Prietz  
Megan Lin  
Katharine Beyerle  
Jay Liu  
James M. Paulius

## David Buchanan Lumbersaurs



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

Inspired by dinosaurs prevalence in popular culture, I wanted to design a collection of toys that blended the natural properties of hard plywood with the excitement, curiosity, and movement of their prehistoric siblings.

### Solution

The Lumbersaurs are made from durable hard plywood with metal fasteners that will last generations. Designed with a set of opposable joints, each character species in the collection has a set of mechanical movements that bring the Lumbersaurs to life, back from extinction. Each dinosaur has it's own unique action, so that when the tail is raised or lowered the neck, mouth, or head also moves.

### Brand Strategy

The Lumbersaurs were designed with minimalistic aesthetics in mind, but also the ability to create a variety of unique poses in each character. The qualities of this design help to keep manufacturing costs down in order to hit proper consumer price points. The iconic nature of the Lumbersaurs touch on humanity's timeless fascination with dinosaurs for enjoyment of all ages.



## Gonzalo Ciurlizza Stacking Skyscraper



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

The goal of the Stacking Skyscraper toy was to create a fun and enduring toy. The toy was inspired by looking up at the enormous skyscrapers in New York City.

### Solution

I defined universal as anything that lets a user have fun. The idea to create a stacking toy came from this concept. For this reasons, I decided to create a stacking toy in the shape of a skyscraper using nine wooden blocks that are registered in place with a central support shaft. This kind of activity has the finite sense of completion that brings joy to the activity.

### Brand Strategy

The Stacking Skyscraper is a clean and simple toy. Anyone can look at it from a far and instantly understand its function along with what it references. This product is something wonderful for today's and future markets because of its association with building, physical buildings, and the New York City skyline.



## Alexander Cloutier Mushroom Poppers



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

Inspired by rubber poppers and the natural shape of mushrooms that they formed, I wanted to design an object that was reactive and could be used by people of all ages.

### Solution

Mushroom Poppers consist of two parts, a simple conical wooden stem and molded rubber cap. To use, simply invert the cap on these cute little mushrooms and watch them jump off a surface into the air.

### Brand Strategy

The scale and material of Mushroom Poppers allow for a low consumer price point that would fit well into the impulse buy category of items, that are normally found by the check out cash register. Their playful easy function begs people of all ages to pickup and play.



## Kevin D'Amico Horizon Puzzle



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

This product explores the boundaries between vertical and horizontal orientation in puzzle design. Its surface color treatment options are patterned after phenomenological schemes such as sunrises etc. It can be played with by children or used as a desktop item in an office.

### Solution

This object is a meditative game / sculpture available in multiple colors on its facade along with natural wood on the reverse.

### Brand Strategy

This completely wooden toy is painted with current trending colors and themes. The aesthetic qualities of the Horizon Puzzle allows for a timeless quality that can last generations.



**Ryan Erbe**  
**City Blocks Music Box**



**Problem**

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

**Context**

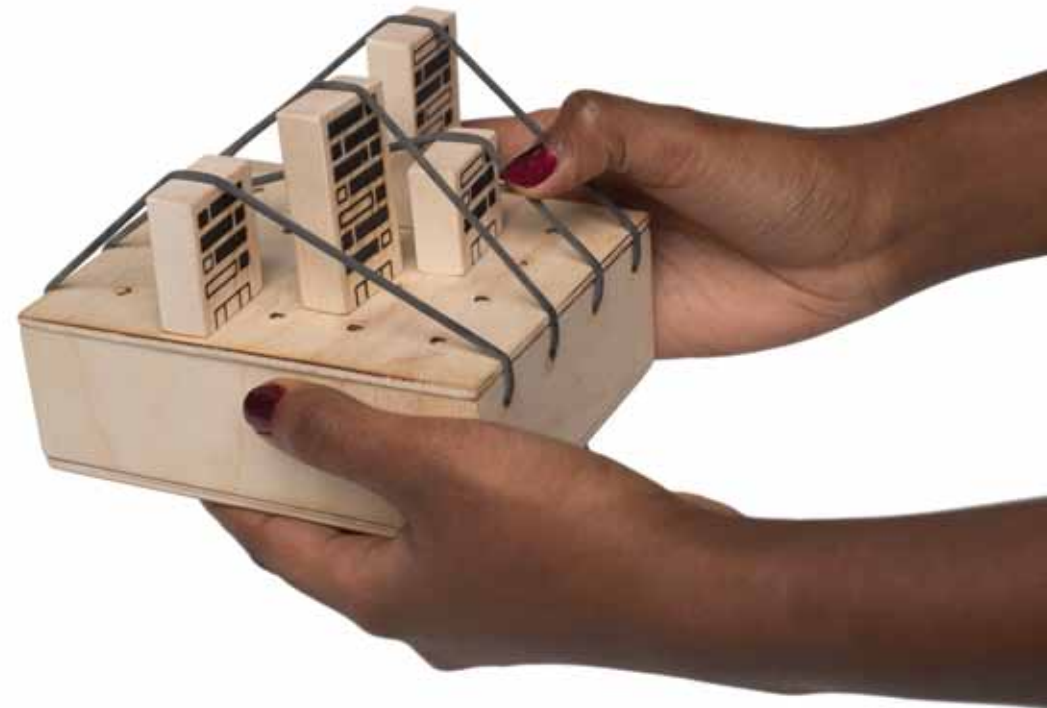
City Blocks is a musical toy that imitates the sound and feel of the city. Inspired by street performers and urban culture, this toy is sure to encourage creative play and social interaction. This toy is appropriate for all ages and connects with users through the universal language of music.

**Solution**

The final design solution is inspired by the look and feel of an urban setting. City Blocks is modeled in part after the finger piano and cigar box guitar. The repositionable toy blocks are modeled after urban buildings and the graphic treatment of the box imitates the look of New York City. Moving the blocks changes the pitches of the strings.

**Brand Strategy**

City Blocks is modeled after the spirit of urban living and culture. Acknowledging that New York is the home of AREAWARE's office, having this toy in their current product line will showcase their brand identity.



## Rob Fish Pathways



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

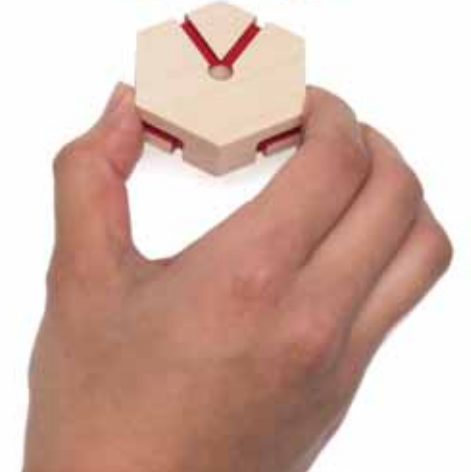
Pathways is a puzzle, like the Rubik's cube, but about life. There is no right or wrong way to search. For some it is about looking for a solution and for others it is the path you take to get there.

### Solution

Pathways is a universal toy that is both a puzzle and a creation game. For those who are looking for a solution, slide all the pieces off and rearrange them to create one continuous line across all the sides. For those who enjoy the search, lay all the pieces flat to create endless paths.

### Brand Strategy

This toy is one of a kind, combining two different elements for two types of people. Due to its simplistic nature, a product line could be produced with a variety of difficulties, colors, and sizes. It can be enjoyed by kids in the playroom or the professional on their desk. Red gives the illusion that the piece is flowing with life and symbolizes happiness and good fortune. The overall hexagon shape was chosen to show multiple sides from any given angle.





## Alexandro M. Flores Gorilla Family



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

Gorilla Family is a three piece set designed to be enjoyed by everyone. Their timeless playful spirit transcends age barriers. They can be found in the hand of a kid exploring his/her imagination or they can be used as a table top accent of an office.

### Solution

My definition of universal toy is a simple one: everyone and anyone can enjoy. The straight planes and small radius edges of the Gorilla Family give them a sense of elegance while still being safe enough for children to enjoy.

### Brand Strategy

Gorilla Family possess a timeless playful elegance that resonates with the AREAWARE brand. They can also be the start of a new line, a family product line full of individual personalities that come in a set.



**Paula Garcia**  
**USA Box**



**Problem**

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

**Context**

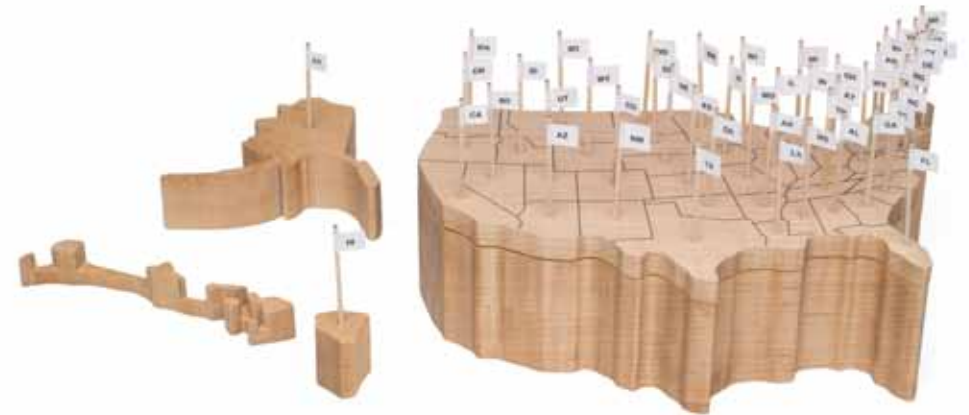
The USA Box blends two activities which are commonly done after traveling: mapping and storing. Mapping, locating places traveled to on a map, helps individuals visualize the places they have been and the places they want to go. Storing, the act of organizing souvenirs, helps individuals reminisce about a specific memory they may have with the object.

**Solution**

This product provides users the opportunity to interact with it in a variety of different ways. Its simple appearance is appropriate in a number of settings: homes, offices, schools, etc.

**Brand Strategy**

The USA Box is also a great learning tool for children: helping them identify the location of states based on their geography. It can be used by families or individuals to share and store collectables or souvenirs which remind them of their journeys.



**Aaron Jackendoff**  
**BeeKeeper**



**Problem**

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

**Context**

BeeKeeper provides for contemplative meditation through the sight and feel of the exquisitely carved wooden hive and the bees. Inspired by both the traditional “skeps” (baskets made specifically to hold bees and their honeycomb) as well as by the archetypal image of a natural beehive.

**Solution**

BeeKeeper is a wooden prototypical beehive, with wooden bees that can either be hung off it, “flown” by hand, or stored inside. Its design is minimalist, yet conjures images of the complex society of a beehive. Its simplicity provides minimalist beauty.

**Brand Strategy**

BeeKeeper can be marketed through several avenues: Purveyors of high quality honey products, such as boutique specialty food stores; Vendors of supplies and journals for apiarists (actual beekeepers); Museum shops in horticultural conservatories and formal gardens; Online shops of organizations that promote ecology and “green” causes; Museum shops in natural history museums and zoos; and, Museum shops in art museums, especially those that have large collections of modern and/or minimalist art. By stating that a portion of the purchase price will be donated to the fight against Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), the company will also be targeting these buyers’ proclivity towards supporting causes that protect nature.



## Nicholas Kelemen The Claw



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

Toys are best when they are simple, allowing one to fully explore their imagination. Even simple, natural actions can be joyful.

### Solution

Manipulating objects is one of the most primal human acts. By designing a toy that allows one to re-experience the childhood fascination connected with picking things up we can help them appreciate the simple joys of childhood again.

### Brand Strategy

Simple geometric shapes and wood constructions lend a classic yet modern feel to The Claw. The cord and wood aesthetic would fit in to nearly any style of home or office.



## Ian O'Neill Pendants



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

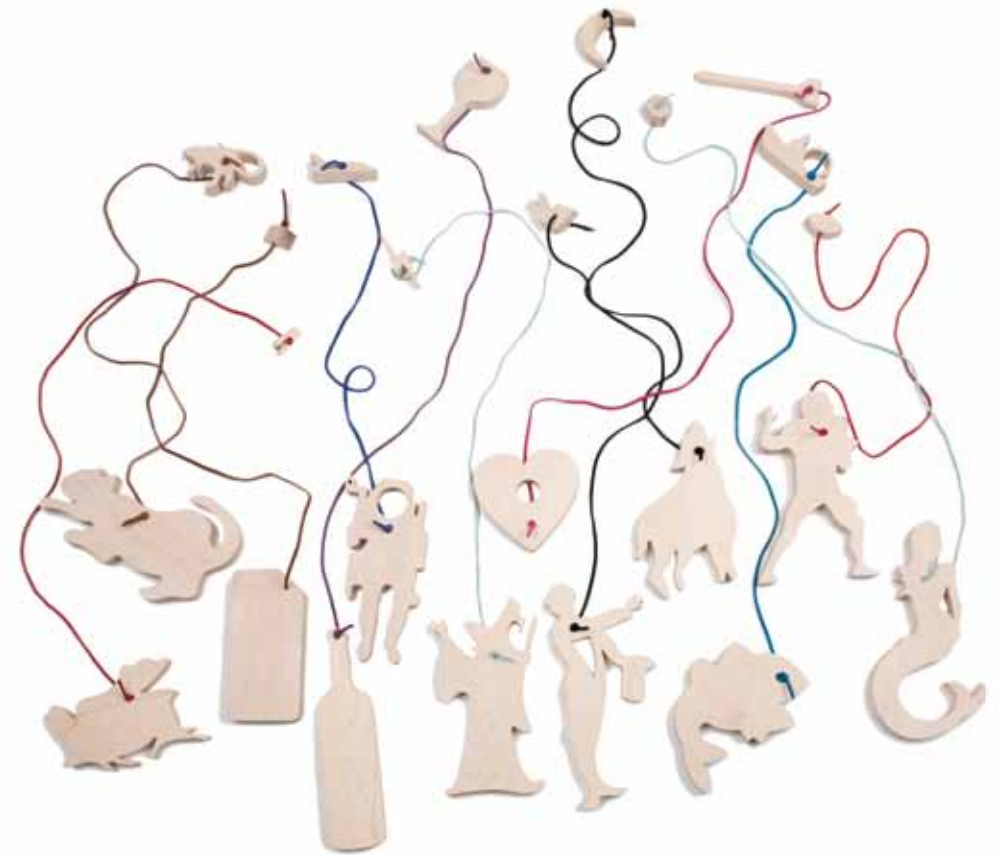
Inspired by American Indian craftsmanship of weaving and lashing, Pendants are literally tied together and honest in their materials. The characters tell different stories for any kind of person - young or old.

### Solution

Pendants are simply constructed, universal toys, at once timeless and unusual in their function and appeal.

### Brand Strategy

Stylistically cute, simple, and straight forward in their content, Pendants bring different relationships into focus to tell stories the way AREAWARE does so well.



## Sean Petterson Portable Backgammon



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

In an increasingly digital world the purity and simplicity of the interactions around analog board games is an opportunity. Board games are a time proof means of propagating unadulterated socialization.

### Solution

Portable Backgammon is a vehicle for the world's oldest game to be enjoyed in 21st century life. It has been designed to encourage a dialogue between people in their everyday environments. The utility of the form is its portability but the design fosters the inherent emotional response of game-play.

### Brand Strategy

The ancestral undertones of the iconic game in combination with the thorough use of rustic materials, provides a sense of nostalgia. Juxtaposed with an organic and rational form, the overall language is syncretic, timeless and most importantly fun. Portable Backgammon's form is optimal for simple manufacturing and compact shipping.



## Lindsay Randall Monsters



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

Around the world, monsters and mythological creatures are ever-present in folklore. These are deeply rooted in popular culture and their features are universally recognized. I wanted to reinvent bigfoot, the kraken, the loch ness monster, and a cyclops into forms that celebrate their fundamental characteristics, and update the monsters for a new generation.

### Solution

A collection of four simplified monsters. Each of them reduces the monster into its most fundamental elements and offers a new perspective on ancient creatures.

### Brand Strategy

The minimalistic nature of the collection, coupled with the iconic forms and functions, allow it to fit into the AREAWARE brand. The monsters are easily transformed from children's toys into desk objects.



## Ashley Valenti Cog Car



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

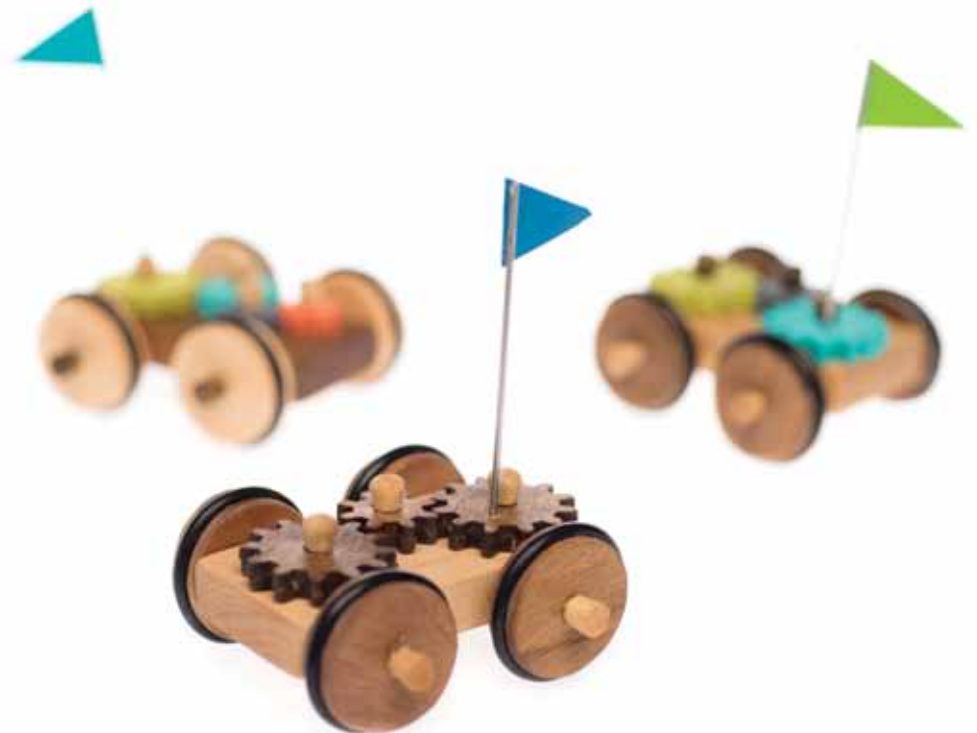
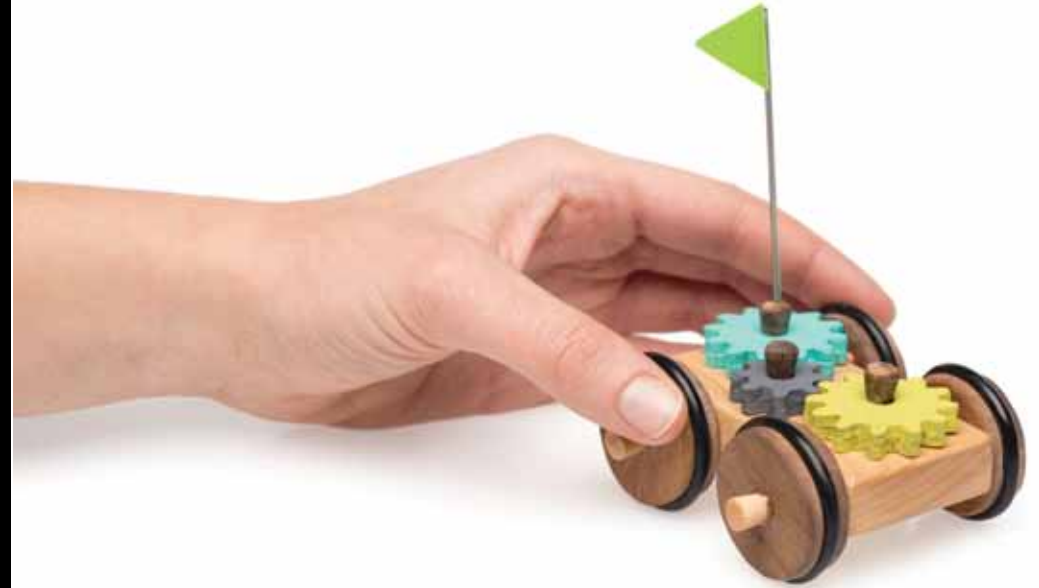
A toy that is able to stimulate the senses, but is also aesthetically appealing, displayed on a shelf or desk, when it is not being enjoyed by children and adults alike.

### Solution

By combining trendy colors, natural wood, and mechanical movements, the Cog Car is both visually interesting and interactive. The playful movement is fun and instructional in the most basic way.

### Brand Strategy

This is a fun interactive toy that will be enjoyed by kids and adults alike. Watch the cogs spin to life as you roll the car. The Cog Car could also be used as a learning device, as it shows how gears interact with one another and shows the basics of a power train system, which every "gear head" will love.





## Metaproject 03

### Runners Up

#### Student Designers

Nanxi Yu  
Jeffrey Burrell  
Jaclyn Jacobson  
Blair Prietz  
Megan Lin

**Nanxi Yu**  
**Little Biters Clips**



**Problem**

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

**Context**

With various graphics and the hair band graphic eyebrows, the Little Biters Clips express emotional connections to people who play with them.

**Solution**

In order to design a universal toy, I came up with simple animal clips which are connected using common elastic hair bands.

**Brand Strategy**

The Little Biters Clips come in set of five. Serving many utilitarian functions, these clips can be placed in many locations such as snack bags, handbags or hair.





## Jaclyn Jacobson Eye Know



### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

The Eye Know was inspired by the randomness of a fortune-telling device along with the metaphor of the all seeing eye.

### Solution

Eye Know is a personal fortune-telling device. This toy can be used by children and adults for personal use at home or as a desktop fidget. Eye Know also functions as a centerpiece for group games.

### Brand Strategy

Eye Know is a unique and quirky item for people of all ages. The simple design is easy for manufacturing and has a constancy that will stand the test of time and separate itself from anything similar on the market.



**Blair Prietz**  
**Jack Of All Trades**



**Problem**

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

**Context**

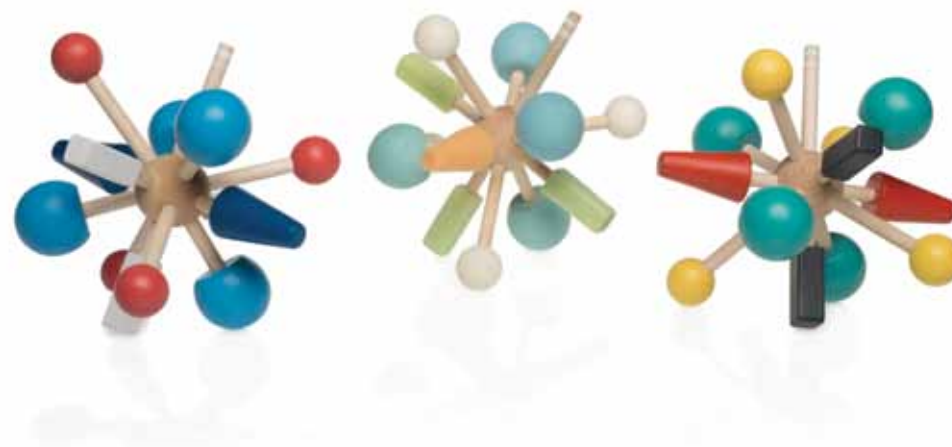
The idea came about while designing a 3D puzzle in the shape of a meteor, that when tossed onto the desk would fall apart on impact. As I was imagining the parts bouncing in all directions, the idea of a wooden object adorned with rubber shapes came to be.

**Solution**

What makes this a universal toy is its strange form that isn't easily identifiable. Its erratic bouncing quality is entertaining to all ages and when done playing with it can be visibly stored in the form of a bookstand, a picture holder, door stopper or just on the shelf to show it off.

**Brand Strategy**

It's quirky and multi-purpose nature makes it a good fit for AREAWARE. There isn't anything like this on the market. It's bold form and interesting combination of material sets it apart from other toys.





## Megan Lin Nesting Tree



cci AR image on page 57

### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

Take an adventure by discovering tree boxes and building a tree. You will find a woodpecker nested in the center by following the hints (holes made by the woodpecker) on the tree.

### Solution

The Nesting Tree is a universal toy that recalls the memory of nature and gives you a chance to build your own natural world. The set of toys is comprised of seven wooden parts, which provide the possibility of building your own tree and placing the woodpecker in the way that you want.

### Brand Strategy

Nesting Tree is a minimal design with a rich back story. It creates a unique connection with the audience, both mentally and physically by playing with it.

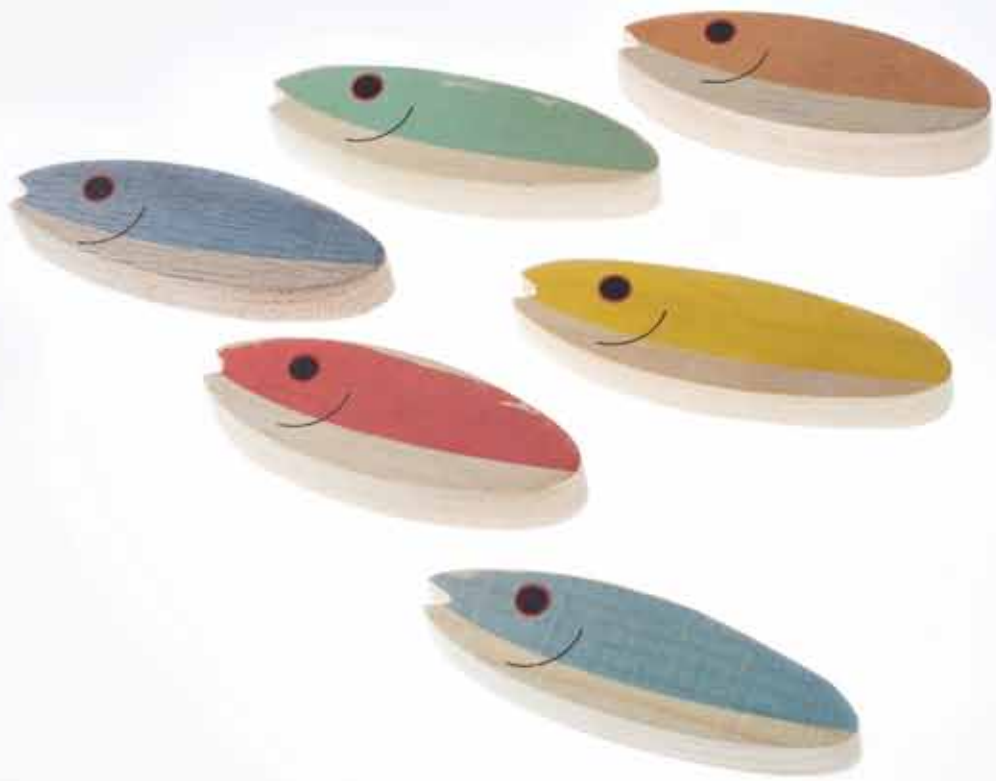


**Metaproject 03**  
**Winners**

**Student Designers**

Katharine Beyerle  
Jay Liu  
James M. Paulius





## Katharine Beyerle Fish Flip



cci AR image on page 62

### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

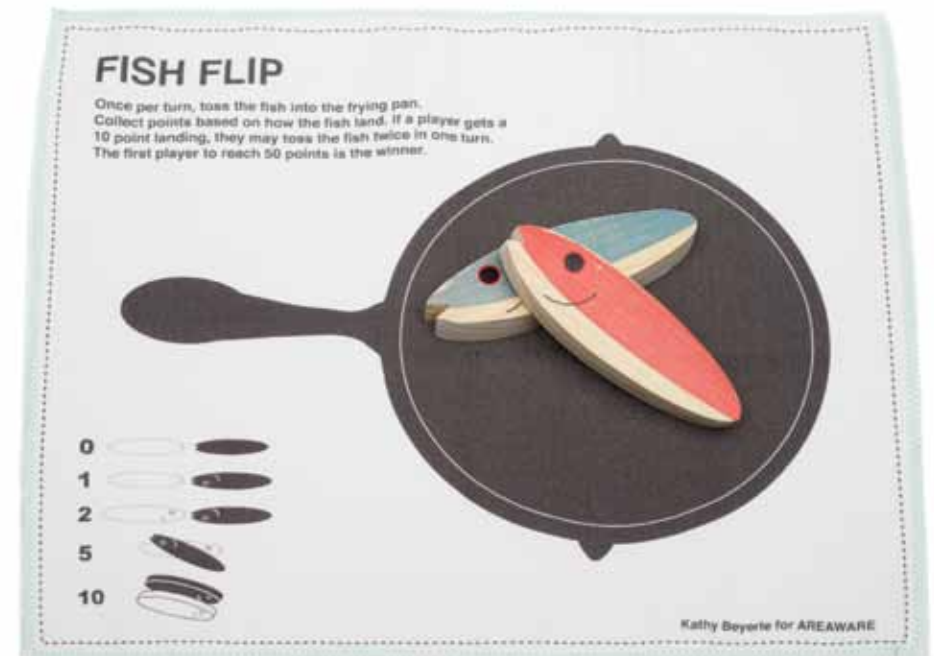
I wanted to design a rule based game that was created by the random act of throwing objects onto a playing field and then tallying points based upon a designated set of visual outcomes. I drew inspiration from the classic game of backgammon.

### Solution

Fish Flip is simple to setup and play anywhere due to its scale and understandable use for people of all ages. The cloth playing board is laid out and two wooden fish are thrown to land into a graphic image of a frying pan. Points are counted based on the orientation of the fish when they land. The first person to reach 50 points is the winner.

### Brand Strategy

The playful conceptual metaphor of throwing fish into frying pan, breaks the norm of what the typical buyer considers as a board game. The simplicity of materials used in the manufacture of the products along with the vintage aesthetic of the graphics on the playing board and fish allows Fish Flip to have a timeless, beautiful quality.





## Jay Liu Shapuzi



cci AR image on page 66

### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

My goal was to design an object for everyone, allowing them to explore creativity through mark making and stamping.

### Solution

The story behind the Shapuzi's diversity is that every Shapuzi wants to be one-of-a-kind, and so they mold their head into a shape that makes them different from each other. They can function as a shaped stamp and a photo/paper holder.

### Brand Strategy

Shapuzi is a universal toy that will be trendy forever. After all, simple elegance is always in style. With the beautifully detailed painting on its primary shape head, there is no doubt this toy will add a touch of elegance to your desk.





## James M. Paulius Blockitecture



cci AR image on page 70

### Problem

To create a universal toy primarily fabricated from wood.

### Context

Blockitecture is a toy that allows users to enhance their understanding of physical laws by using their creative and imaginative processes.

### Solution

Hexagonal blocks nest together in various formations, allowing them to counterbalance each other and create unique cantilevers found in modern and contemporary architecture.

### Brand Strategy

Using simple geometry and clean aesthetics, Blockitecture is a toy that can be used by people of all ages and passed down through the generations.



## Student Designers' Statement

By Ian O'Neill and  
Lindsay Randall

*Great events, we often find,  
on little things depend,*

*And very small beginnings  
have often a mighty end.*

The structure of Metaproject provided us with a lot of room to engage in our curiosity. If the melding of uncertainty and curiosity is where innovation occurs, we've learned to stare at the unknown and not run away. A successful Metaproject meant pursuing the unexpected. Early in our journey, in particular, we dipped (more like dove) into cultural anthropology in search of some themes that could embrace the rich gallimaufry of humanity; themes such as bold colors or simple materials or representations, like dolls or stuffed animals. This research helped us define the essence of our "universal" toys, and helped lead to the wide range of products that were created.

Working with wood as a primary material gave us the advantage of familiarity and rapid iteration, in contrast with the glass and laminate of bygone Metaprojects. Many of us were excited to make toys with wood, since it is such a departure from the typical plastic toys popular today. It would age well, be relevant for all generations, and embody the craft and care found in many universal toys. Early on, we were encouraged to experiment, and play with different forms, characteristics, and treatments that could be used with wood. This helped us stay true to the material, and understand its strengths and weaknesses. Many of those experiments also led to very unique ideas and forms that would

have never been explored on paper. We were fortunate to be able to work very closely with Areaware throughout the entire process. Laura's guidance was a big hand in carrying us through to achievement. Where our curiosity brought us a historical understanding of universality, she brought her expertise in contemporary application. In this way, we could really see the importance of having industry perspective. We were also incredibly lucky to work with Josh, who provided us with constant guidance and inspiration, and David who had many late nights putting together all the graphics for Metaproject and editing our material. Finally, to Elizabeth who took all the beautiful product pictures, and Rick who helped us in the shop, we are ever grateful of their willingness to help!

So much personal, and group success came out of Metaproject 03, that it's unbelievable to look back at ourselves before the project. Not only did we gain a vast personal knowledge of material, process, and manufacturing, but also a strong sense of camaraderie that elevated our work and spirits. Ultimately three projects were selected to produce, and quite a few are being pursued for development. All of us were able to feel like we were part of something great, and excited to see our products make it to the marketplace.

We look forward to seeing the next generation of Metaprojects, and hope that it brings success and joy to all of its future design students.

*Ian O'Neill and Lindsay Randall*



### How to view each Metaproject augmented reality aura:

- Download the Collaborative Composite Image (CCI) mobile app
- Open the app and point your phone to an active page
- Active page numbers from the book are: 57, 62, 66, 70

For videos: Tap twice to view the video full screen

For websites: Tap once on the url

<http://www.aurasma.com/supported-devices/>



## Augmented Reality By Susan Lakin

In this year's Metaproject book we used augmented reality (AR) to bring several pages from the book to life with animations of the winning projects. Using a mobile app, several pages from the book have an "aura" which links the physical page to artwork created by four teams of students from the School of Film and Animation (SOFA) and the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences (SPAS).



With the advancement of the processing power of smart phones, these mobile devices are able to trigger AR using image recognition technology. The AR platform Aurasma, which powers our project app, can seamlessly overlay digital content to the physical page using image tracking. The title of our app is the *Collaborative Composite Image* (CCI), which can be downloaded from either the apple store or google play.

At the Rochester Institute of Technology we have a unique environment with a diverse population ready to collaboration and I'd like to thank Josh Owen for being open to incorporating AR to the Metaproject. The book was ideal to bring advanced AR technology to the printed page and expand our experience of the physical world. My thanks to SOFA professor, Tom Gasek for his student recommendations and both our students from SOFA and SPAS for their enthusiasm and willingness to take on this project in addition to their coursework. Areaware was the inspiration to develop an interdisciplinary response to the Metaproject this year and I'd like to thank everyone involved and for giving us this opportunity to collaborate on this worthwhile project.

*Professor Susan Lakin*



## Project Team

### Industry Collaborator

Areaware is a New York City based producer of everyday objects that are both functional and unusual. Our goals are to create thoughtful products that inspire an emotional response and to explore design languages as a means of creating new syncretic forms. We like to think we have a good sense of humor and that our objects are poetic. We wish to create a forum for young and local talent and together, we hope to become a strong voice for American design. We believe that appreciation for beauty is central to what it means to be alive and want to embody this principle in even the simplest things.

### Judges

**Noel Wiggins**  
President, Areaware  
**Laura Young**  
Creative Director, Areaware  
**Lydia Okrent**  
Product Development, Areaware  
**David Weeks**  
Owner, David Weeks Studio

### ICFF Exhibition

**Concept / Art Direction**  
**Product Photography**  
**Process Photography**  
**Portrait Photography**  
**Graphic Design**  
**Augmented Reality Concept**  
**Augmented Reality**

**Josh Owen**  
**Elizabeth Torgerson-Lamark, ETC Photo, RIT**  
**David Strauss, Elizabeth Torgerson-Lamark**  
**Aaron Jackendoff, David Strauss**  
**David Strauss**  
**Susan Lakin**  
**Corinne Weber**  
**Joseph Heinen**  
**Joleen Zubek**  
**Parker Merrick**  
**John Keedy**  
**Rachel Fisher**  
**Kevin Kim**  
**David Tan**  
**Josh Owen**  
**Laura Young**

**Primary Author**  
**Contributing Writer**



## Studio Professors



The work of industrial designer and educator Josh Owen is at once simple, practical and creative. Although typologies that Owen creates are commonly described as refined, iconic or minimalist, he defines function in humanistic terms, combining clarity of purpose and functional efficacy with emotive and tactile qualities chosen to align strategically with industry. Owen is the president of Josh Owen LLC and is an Associate Professor and the Chair of the Industrial Design Department at The Rochester Institute of Technology. His projects are produced by major manufacturers and have won many awards. Owen's work is included in the permanent design collections of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Corning Museum of Glass, the Musee des beaux-arts de Montreal, the Denver Art Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Chicago Athenaeum and the National Museum of American Jewish History. His work has been featured in major exhibitions, numerous books on design and is regularly included in critical design discourse.



cci

Susan Lakin is currently an Associate Professor at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California and a Master of Fine Arts in Art Studio from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her recent photography examines our interaction with mass communication through electronic screens in our homes and looks at how these displays frame our lives. Additionally she is working in collaboration with computer science exploring the intersection between art, music, and interactive technology.

## Project Coordinators



Laura Ann Young graduated from Rhode Island School of Design in 2007 with a degree in Furniture Design. In 2008, she was hired by Areaware, a Brooklyn based giftware cooperative. She has since become Areaware's director of product development and artist relations. In January 2012, she was promoted to Creative Director. She is proud to know and work with a varied group of acclaimed designers, including Harry Allen, Ross Menuez, David Weeks, Paul Loebach, Jonas Damon, Fort Standard, Karl Zahn, Kiel Mead, Jason Miller, and Rich Brilliant Willing. Laura sits on the New York International Gift Fair Accent on Design board, as well as the NYC Design Week board. In her spare time, she enjoys antiquing and spoiling her english bulldog, Dooney Rockstar.

## Teaching Assistant



David Strauss holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design from SUNY Purchase College. He is currently pursuing a Masters of Fine Arts degree in Industrial Design at The Rochester Institute of Technology. David was the 2013 recipient of the RIT GlassLab Fellowship with the Corning Museum of Glass. Prior to attending RIT, he was the artistic director of design at Artistic Frame, a custom furniture showroom and manufacturer. David also has a background in graphic, web, and brand design. He has provided professional design services for several organizations, companies, and artists including: Purchase College Television, University of Pennsylvania, Silver Marketing Group, Phlare Magazine, Alma Phipps, Owen Morrel, and Dennis Oppenheim.



## Acknowledgements

The implementation of this project is the result of the work of many individuals, too numerous to mention here. Nevertheless, we wish to especially thank:

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Lorraine Justice, Dean, CIAS  
Peter Byrne, Administrative Chair,  
School of Design, CIAS  
Roger Remington, Massimo and Lella  
Vignelli Distinguished Professor of Design  
Josh Owen, Chair, Industrial Design

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Professor Adam Smith and his new media students Joey Bright and Andy Mikulski for their help developing the Metaproject website.

All of the Industrial Design faculty, guest artists and professionals who teach our ID students and prepare them for the rigors of this project.

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Elizabeth Torgerson-Lamark and her team at RIT ETC Photo.

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Pittsford Lumber  
[www.pittsfordlumber.com](http://www.pittsfordlumber.com)  
E. Parrella Co.  
[www.epcomfg.com](http://www.epcomfg.com)  
Norm Lein  
Technology Instructor  
Rush Henrietta High School

And of course all of our friends and families.





## Metaproject

**Meta** – (from Greek: **μετά** = “after”, “beyond”, “with”, “adjacent”, “self”), is a prefix used in English (and other Greek-owing languages) to indicate a concept which is an abstraction from another concept, used to complete or add to the latter.

### Word Origin & History

Prefix meaning 1. “after, behind,” 2. “changed, altered,” 3. “higher, beyond,” from Gk. *meta* (prep.) “in the midst of, in common with, by means of, in pursuit or quest of,” from PIE \**me-* “in the middle” (cf. Goth. *miþ*, O.E. *mið* “with, together with, among;” see *mid*). Notion of “changing places with” probably led to senses “change of place, order, or nature,” which was a principal meaning of the Gk. word when used as a prefix (but also denoting “community, participation; in common with; pursuing”). Third sense, “higher than, transcending, over arching, dealing with the most fundamental matters of”

### AREAWARE

Areaware

R·I·T

Rochester Institute of Technology  
Center for Student Innovation



College of Imaging Arts and Sciences

School of Design

### Industrial Design™

Industrial Design Department



Vignelli Center for Design Studies