

CATHY LOCKHART

Where Are The Women? Women in Industrial Design

2014 | *Carlton Project Space, Chippendale Sydney*

Detail of Where Are The Women Design Exhibition Front

The gender mix of the student population in the industrial design courses in Australia has been changing over the past ten years with a notable increase in the number of women graduating. However, to date this gender change has not been reflected in the profession – very few women designers are evident in the country’s major award programs. What are the career paths that the women are following if they are not falling within those identified by the profession?

In design, Bruce and Lewis (1990) developed a ‘three-hurdles’ model to explain the factors influencing career advancement for women: 1. getting the qualification; 2. getting the first job in design and 3. becoming a success. Product design is frequently described as ‘technical’, ‘dirty’ and ‘industrial’, with the implication that this profession is not suitable for women. (Bruce 1985) The exhibition explores the ‘third hurdle’. Its focus is on the interpretation of the human experience within a social context to challenge the often-perceived understanding of industrial design as being a ‘job for the lads’. This exhibition presented a selection of fourteen designers who have graduated in the period from 1995 - 2013 demonstrating the scope of their work and engagement in the field.

While women have been included in broad design exhibitions this however is the first exhibition specifically of women with an industrial design education in Australia, financially supported by Women @UTS and the School of Design. Further the exhibition uncovered the wide scope of work that women with industrial design education engage in with both commercial and speculative projects at various stages of their careers.



CATHY LOCKHART
Where Are The Women?
Women in Industrial Design

Exhibition Photographs



CATHY LOCKHART
Where Are The Women?
Women in Industrial Design

Catalogue Front Cover and
Foreword by Cathy Lockhart



WHERE ARE THE WOMEN ?
WOMEN IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

a word from

Cathy
Lockhart

lecturer, industrial design
curator
cathy.lockhart@uts.edu.au
9514 8927

The starting point for the research behind this exhibition is very personal, I am a graduate from an industrial design course, I have worked as an industrial designer and have now been educating industrial designers for more than 15 years. As a female student I was in the minority and experienced some level of sexual discrimination throughout my study and into my early working career. The University of Technology Sydney is an obvious choice of location for my research, building upon my established network and understanding of the historical development of the course and its credibility. It is equally one of the largest courses in the country and maintains high demand.

The gender mix of the student population in the industrial design courses in Australia has been changing over the past ten years with a notable increase in the number of women graduating. However, to date this gender change has not been reflected in the profession – very few women designers are acknowledged or even evident is the country's major award program, the Australian International Design Awards. What are the career paths that the women are following if they are not falling within those identified by the profession?

Numerous studies have considered the traditional roles of women in the workforce and the gender stereotyping of both work and roles within it. There have been few investigating design or more specifically industrial design. British studies in the 1980's highlighted how industrial design was considered a 'job for the lads' and consistently

described as 'technical', 'dirty' and 'industrial', with the implication that this profession is not suitable for women. (Bruce 1985) Although the survey was conducted over two decades ago in Britain, such attitudes reflect stereotypical bias as to what is appropriate work for men and women. It provides a starting point for the understanding of the contemporary Australian context where there has been no research on experience or expectations of female industrial designers.

This is the first UTS alumni and student exhibition to recognise and celebrate the growing number of women who practice across a range of disciplines whose foundations are in industrial design. We seek to identify and understand the individual, and the circumstances that contribute to the success of their chosen career.

Bruce, M. 1985. 'A missing link: women and industrial design', *Design Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp.150-156.

CATHY LOCKHART

Where Are The Women? Women in Industrial Design

Banner Designs from Exhibition

Profiles of Designer Works and Experiences

DORTE BELL



"For me, the hardest part about following a career founded in design has been balancing work with having children - both are 24-7 jobs! Design by nature is project based, typically with tight deadlines that frequently require periods of work with long hours and intense commitment. This sits uncomfortably with the unpredictability of young children - the constant sleep deprivation and constant illness requiring time off work. Try as I might, I am just not creative on 4 hours broken sleep!"

"In a field still largely dominated by males, you need to be confident and learn to speak up for yourself and your ideas. Don't be afraid to voice your opinions and constructively argue your point of view. As a woman, you bring a unique and valuable perspective to design that I believe greatly improves design outcomes for all future users."



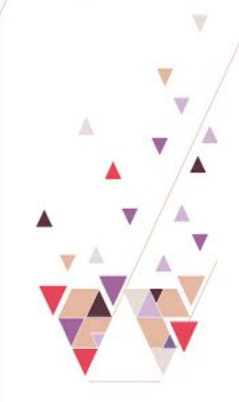
SOPHIE COX



"Being selected as one of only 450 international brands to show at premiere classe during Paris fashion week for the 3rd season running, is the highlight of my career so far."

"Fear of succeeding and failing is the most challenging emotion that one needs to overcome as a designer. Once you overcome that fear the world is your oyster."

"My advice to new graduates is to follow the area of design that you have the most passion in. Mine was a combination of fashion and industrial design and I channelled that into my obsession with shoes."

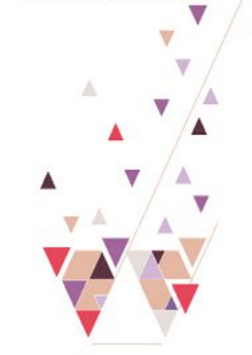


JESSICA DUNN



"The key highlight of my career has not necessarily been an 'event', but rather the overall 'feeling' or the 'buzz' I get from the creative stimulus of taking on a brief, then getting my head down into the zone, and working hard in order to successfully bring a project or product to life."

"Breaking through the (real or imagined) stereotypical barrier that many women end up designing the 'soft' things like textiles, jewellery, home decor and kitchenware, but the men design the 'hard' things like parking meters, a toaster, roof racks - even though 50% of the population are women who will be using these products, so it makes sense to have a female, or several, on the design team for any kind of product."



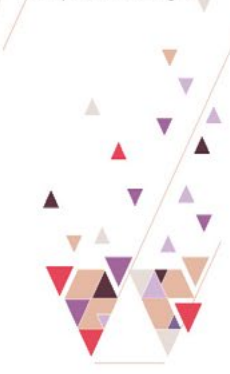
KATE ELTON



"The standouts of my career so far have been winning the Workshopped people's choice award for my Molar stool in 2011 and seeing kiosks I designed at Abuzz installed outside the entrance of one of the busiest MRT stations in Singapore."

"I find the most challenging part of being a woman in the Industrial Design industry is walking into a factory or workshop and feeling as though you have to prove your intelligence and knowledge before you're taken seriously."

"Have confidence in your own ability and treat every challenge as a learning experience that will make you a better designer."



CATHERINE FEDERICI



"Having the legendary fashion designer John Galiano order a bespoke ISSON frame. Based on my MILTON design. I was asked to vary the colour and lenses for the iconic designer. This truly has been the pinnacle of my career at this point!"

"Being taken seriously as a 'real' brand and business owner in a very male dominated industry has been arduous at times but the partnerships I have forged are based on mutual respect."

"I couldn't emphasise more the importance of learning and of growing your business to scale especially at first, and being at the forefront of your product. For many years my husband and I did everything in the business out of our home. This gave us priceless insight into our distribution and customers, living and breathing the brand."



ALEX GILMOUR



"Highlights of my career include being lucky enough to have won a few awards with my designs as an individual and as a design team in Evie Group. The main highlight is probably starting Evie Group and winning an internship with Marc Newson."

I also love working for myself! I find that managing a design studio and working on a range of client and internal projects is fun and motivating. Although it can be stressful at times on deadlines with lots of late nights and no real holiday breaks, I find every day is different and exciting and I wouldn't have it any other way."

"Work hard and be persistent. Learn as much as you can from others and use your best design skills to your advantage in finding the perfect role or for starting your own design business."

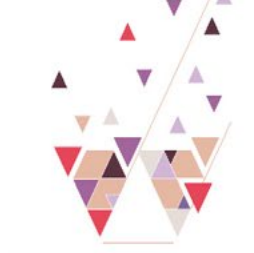


NICOLE LAW



"The highlight of my career so far has actually been the realisation that I do not need to follow a traditional career path in order to consider myself successful. With forays into accounting, graphic design, industrial and product design, screen printing, floristry, small business and teaching, it has taken me a long time to understand that I am a wide rather than a deep achiever - I work best with my fingers in several pies at once."

"I would advise recent women graduates to look for a mentor. I feel like I was a successful student but not such a successful graduate - what really would have helped me make the transition into industry would have been someone to guide and advise me. Later I found strong, experienced and capable women to model myself on - without copying, I learned much about how to operate in the world."



CATHY LOCKHART

Where Are The Women? Women in Industrial Design

Banner Designs from Exhibition

Profiles of Designer Works and Experiences

DANIELAH MARTINEZ



JESSICA WONG



ANNA MOLONEY-REISCH



TESS LLOYD



NANCY STEVENS



BIANCA MEDIATI



SABINA POPIN



"With experience I have come to learn that every person in the design process brings with them a perspective that is unique and valuable and by having an honest approach to your work and a confidence in your abilities, your skills and strengths will be recognised."

"Taking a design from concept to in store trial in the real world. This is rewarding in being able to really evaluate a design against its original purpose thereby to refine the design itself, as well as thoroughly researching and understanding user needs."

"As a young designer it is sometimes a challenge to be taken seriously by older professionals. The best solution I've found is to take the extra time to build up a rock solid knowledge base. Then gender and age differences become irrelevant."

"Make time for your own projects to foster this passion and continue to grow as a designer."

"Being versatile is a great advantage as a new-comer to the industry because your flexibility allows you to be utilised across a broad range of tasks. Once you find yourself within the industry, keep a clear view of your goals to ensure that every opportunity that you accept or decline is congruent with your career and lifestyle objectives."

"The Distortion Print Forming process has definitely been a highlight within my time thus far at Warringah Plastics. Distortion print forming is a difficult process where a flat sheet of material is printed with a purposefully distorted image which is then vacuum formed and allows for the print detail to land in the relevant positions. For example on the face example, the eyes needed to land on the eye socket detail area."

"If I were asked to give advice, it would be to always follow your interests and passions. I've learnt that my passion is actually manufacturing technologies and processes, but I wouldn't have found this without studying design. Follow what you love and the rest will hold your interest and fall into place. Life's too short to do something boring!"

"One career highlight would definitely be launching our clothing range. The process of making the colour bomb design felt like such an indulgent, free creative process. We discussed our love for colour and inspirations from the Indian festival - Holi. We then went about experimenting with our team how we could create colourful clouds. It was such an inclusive project using the entire team and the results were so rewarding. The design was digitally printed onto silk and sewn into tops and scarves. Wearing these products always makes me proud."

"Be open minded to all of the possibilities available to you. The degree equips you with such diverse skills so that you can chart your own adventure."

"Being given the opportunity to work alongside intelligent, experienced and mature designers from whom I have much to learn is a highlight of my career so far."

"I have been lucky enough to be around people who appreciate and celebrate the diversity. Fantastic women have paved the way before me."

"Don't be intimidated by anyone - we each have our own unique strengths and points of view that give us value as designers."

"There are a few highlights to my career so far.

Being involved in large scale international projects and being recognized as a key player on the design team.

Also having the courage to develop my own product and brand, and see it growing in the market.

The feeling you get when you see a stranger using your product (just the way you designed it!), and talking about your brand in a positive light."

"Accept that you don't know everything, and that you don't need to know everything. Collaborate, listen and build a network to grow with."

"Jump in, experiment, listen, learn from your mistakes, and dream big."

"The last three years have definitely been a challenge and a highlight rolled into one. I went from being quite lost after finishing my Industrial Design degree. Starting and failing at two small business ventures both alone and with friends before deciding to do a Masters in Germany. It was there that I learned my true strengths as a designer and rediscovered the passion for my work. Living in Berlin and doing my thesis, I finally had my eyes opened to the career path I wanted to follow. Upon returning to Sydney I was able to land my dream job working with incredible, smart people doing interesting and satisfying work."

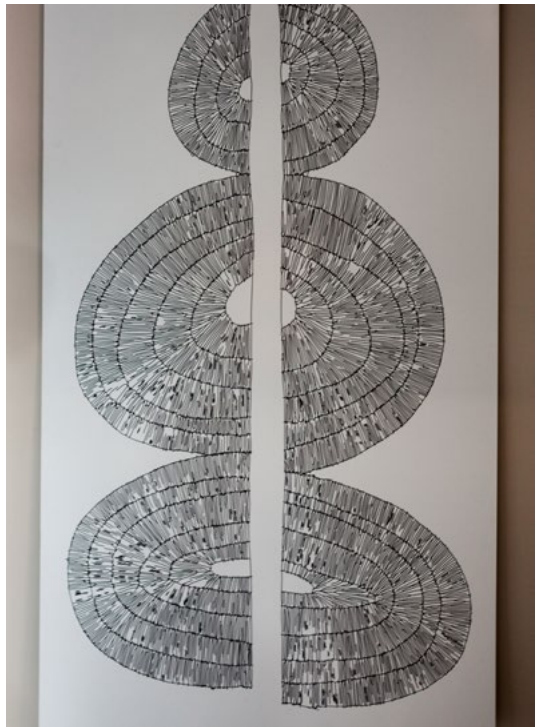
"Don't be afraid of failure. Don't compare yourself too much to others. Take your own time to find what it is you're really passionate about then work really hard for it."

CATHY LOCKHART
Where Are The Women?
Women in Industrial Design



Detail of Works Displayed within Exhibition

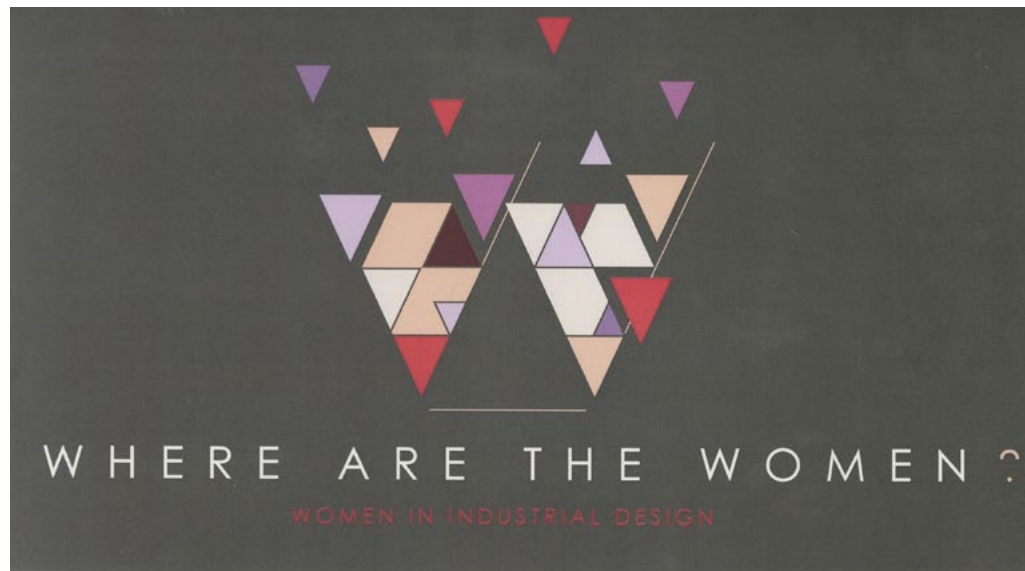




CATHY LOCKHART
Where Are The Women?
Women in Industrial Design

Detail of Works Displayed within Exhibition





An exhibition recognising the growing number of women working within a range of industrial design professions



Curated by Cathy Lockhart, Lecturer, UTS School of Design

21 August - 13 September
Tuesday - Saturday 12 - 4pm (or by appointment)

Carlton Project Space
Carlton Street Chippendale



www.sydneydesign.com.au/2014/event/where-are-the-women/
www.uts.edu.au/about/faculty-design-architecture-and-building

Part of Sydney Design 2014,
presented by the
Powerhouse Museum



WOMEN@UTS