



MFA & MDES Thesis Exhibition 2014

University of Washington

School of Art + Art History + Design

FOREWORD

Christopher Ozubko, Director, School of Art + Art History + Design

Wyckoff Milliman Endowed Chair in Art

Every year I look forward to the exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery that showcases the work of our graduate students. For two years these students have been forging a course of inquiry, investigation and experimentation while benefitting from constructive interactive relationships with fellow colleagues and a faculty of professionals. Students and faculty from diverse cultural, educational and professional experiences come together to engage in critical discourse that challenges and strengthens students' understanding of art and design theory, research methodology and practice.

During their time here, students take a combination of graduate studios, seminars, art history courses and directed independent study projects that culminate in a graduate thesis project, exhibition and document. A strong commitment and dedication to the process of creating and sound critical thinking is also expected of the graduate-level student. They are encouraged to identify and expand their own voices as artists and designers. As educators, it is our goal to prepare our graduates not only to be skilled artists and designers, but also to be leaders in their area of study, offering sophisticated approaches to imagery and insightful perspectives within our global society. This attention to educational outcomes is why the UW School of Art has been recognized as one of the top graduate programs in the United States.

This year, the 16 graduate candidates are comprised of two groups: 11 MFA (Master of Fine Art) students from the Division of Art, and 5 MDes (Master of Design) students from the Division of Design.

Please celebrate with us the outstanding achievements of the class of 2014. ■

ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

Sylvia Wolf, Director, Henry Art Gallery

The Henry Art Gallery was founded as Washington State's first art museum in 1926 by Seattle entrepreneur Horace C. Henry, on the principle that art stimulates inquiry, fosters knowledge, and builds healthy communities. Today, the Henry is internationally recognized as a pioneer in the research and presentation of contemporary art. We engage artists to consider the museum as a studio or laboratory for creativity, and our exhibitions and programs invite audiences to push the boundaries of traditional thinking. In all that we do, we live our mission: to advance contemporary art, artists, and ideas.

For decades, the Henry has partnered with the University of Washington's School of Art + Art History + Design in hosting its Master of Fine Arts (MFA) + Master of Design (MDes) Thesis Exhibition. Our presentation of the MFA + M.Des Thesis Exhibition is a hallmark of our commitment to supporting artistic innovation and a culture of creativity campus-wide. We serve as a cultural resource and training ground—opening our doors and resources without charge—for over 50,000 students, faculty, and staff. The museum actively participates in the academic life of University students by offering jointly-developed courses, student internships, practicums, and work study opportunities, and we collaborate with over 20 academic departments and 10 other units across campus. The Henry encourages access to and research of the 25,000 objects in our permanent collection through our Elenor Henry Reed Collection Study Center, the only facility of its kind in the region, where visitors can study from original works of art.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to celebrate the achievements of this year's graduates in art and design. For many students, this has been their first experience working with a professional museum staff and crew. Special recognition goes to Henry Head Preparator and Exhibition Designer, Jim Rittiman, an artist himself, who has worked with students throughout the year to develop their installations and realize their visions. Jim has been facilitating the MFA Thesis Exhibition since he arrived at the Henry in 1983. Thanks also go to our colleagues at the School of Art, in particular Chris Ozubko, Director; Jamie Walker, Associate Director; and members of the faculty for partnering in this initiative.

But above all, we thank this year's graduates for making the art and design that is the subject of this exhibition and for sharing with us this important juncture in their lives. We applaud them for their educational achievements and wish them the very best as they launch their careers. Congratulations to the 2014 recipients of the School of Art's Master of Fine Arts and Master of Design degrees! ■

CONVERGENCE AND EXPANSION

Sarah Harvey, M.A., Division of Art History

A thesis exhibition is an important time to reflect on the achievements of master's students as they conclude a program that has asked them to evolve, hone, consider and reconsider their processes as artists and designers. The projects of these University of Washington graduate students are undoubtedly diverse. Their undertakings span from photomedia, to painting and drawing, to sculpture, to installation art, to visual communication, and to industrial and interaction design. For two years this group of fine art and design students have worked with their respective media, while simultaneously expanding the parameters of that media's expression. These sixteen individuals represent a large expanse of creative activity—encompassing different perspectives, unique backgrounds, and divergent processes—that have all converged on a particular moment and place. The UW School of Art + Art History + Design represents this point of convergence. Here, this group formed relationships with colleagues and faculty during a stimulating and fruitful tenure. This year's exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery showcases the creative outcomes of this confluence.

Both **Andrew Hoepfner** and **Hesheng Chen**, based in 3D4M: ceramics/glass/sculpture, address memory and re-imaginings of past experiences. Chen explores conflicting emotions surrounding traumatic memories that are incited by something to which we are greatly attracted, such as the exhilarating, alluring speed of automobiles coupled with their potential for tragedy. His sculptural works put the viewer at the wheel of an uncertain interplay of cause and outcome. Told through a lexicon of childhood objects, Hoepfner's large-scale ceramic sculptures investigate adolescent experiences and a desire to remake the past self. Functioning as metaphors for identity, their playful appearance is marked with surreal undertones and uncertain juxtapositions that address the subconscious and its transformative potential.

For **Abraham Murley**, memory and experience serve as part of the process of making. Murley's visually dense paintings and drawings are derived from recollections of striking encounters from each day or mental impressions of past incidents. By treating memory as a filtering process to crystallize the significant elements of a previous encounter, he arrives at imagery that builds layer upon layer, both pinned to the surface and vibrating free of it. **Joe Freeman's** photomedia works also feature a saturation of visual information and probe questions of perception. His mercurial, monochromatic tableaux play with our understanding of space through ambiguous configurations that refuse to remain static. Freeman seeks to arrest the point of transition between one thing becoming another, creating a liminal state of being and becoming.

Ephemerality as artistic inspiration and process links the projects of **Rebecca Chernow** and **Xinchen Xie**. The temporal nature of Chernow's work relates to a cyclical process of art making, rooted in an awareness of how materials are sourced and how they will return to the environment afterwards. Addressing the importance of connectivity, her site-specific installations encompass organic and human-made networks that appear at once galactic, neural, mycelial, and technological. The tenuous qualities of this work embrace notions of fragility and destruction. Interplay between inside and outside, space and flatness, characterize Xie's paintings and drawings, creating scenes that envelope the viewer in quiet solitude. Windows become a vehicle for interiority and exteriority to collide in temporary compositions. Changing light and shadows interact across domestic spaces to create substantive forms and patterns, which play with notions of reality and unreality.

Painters **Jonathan Happ** and **David Gress** adopt a calculatedly detached view of existence and death. Happ attempts to place concrete scrutiny on the abstract, ungraspable subject of death, calling into question issues of existence, identity, and the human condition. His paintings occupy a space somewhere between the cold objectivity of medical vision and the human-centered thrust of eighteenth and nineteenth-century vanitas paintings with their memento mori and reminders of life's transience. Happ's large canvases also offer a push and pull between representation and abstraction, with details of human bodies that emerge from and collapse back into vast territories of formally autonomous color and texture. Gress continues the art historical tradition of painting the slaughterhouse and its animal carcasses. This subject matter paired with Gress' documentary sensibility allows him to combine disorienting offerings of motion, violence, impassivity, repetition, and ordinary brutality. These scenes, where human and animal remain indistinct, are portrayed with ambivalence and seductively beautiful surfaces.

The UW design division creates solutions that clarify the complex problems of everyday life and address the needs of the future. The work of interaction designer **Jonathan Cook** navigates the uncertain terrain of integrating personal technology and medicine. Through an interactive platform, chronically ill patients are empowered to actively collaborate on their treatment with their doctors, using a model of self-monitoring, biometric tracking, and self-assessment. The design work of **Haeree Park** presents a future where technology and human knowledge offer new possibilities for work productivity. She conceptualizes information as constellations of interactive data projected out onto the physical world. Her Memex 2014 project, inspired by Vannevar Bush's 1945 hypothetical knowledge storage system, changes the way we will be able to organize information through wearable technology that can form links between tangible objects and clusters of stored information. **Jason Petz** investigates methods of information visualization in order to encourage critical thinking about consuming natural resources, supply chains, and their impact on the environment. His designs visualize the relationship between society and nature as it relates to consumption, such as the various environmental costs of

how food travels from farm to table, in a manner that both clarifies these complex systems and encourages emotional involvement in the ecological choices individuals make.

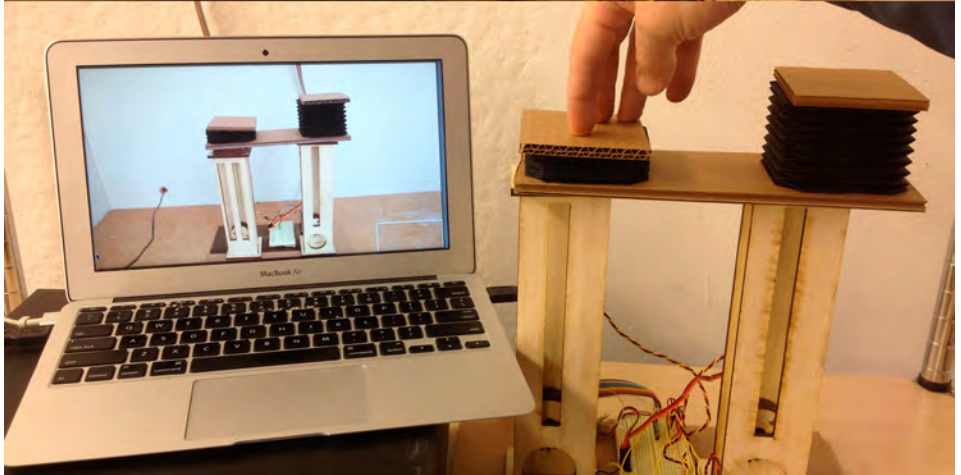
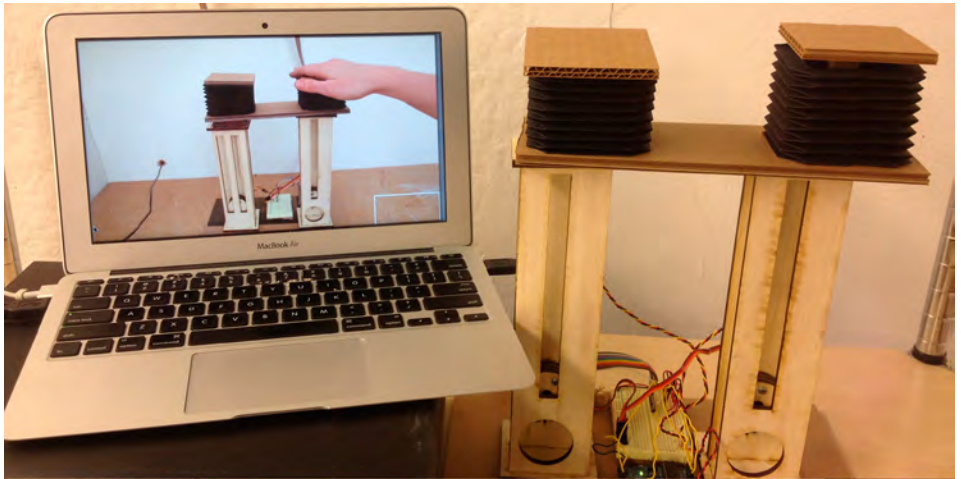
Designers **Bradley Trinnaman** and **Sandy Pawson** aim to preserve the significant qualities of an analog medium as media becomes increasingly digital. Their work recognizes the historical moment of this transition and the new possibilities that arise from it. Trinnaman investigates the transition of the magazine from a printed artifact to a digital presence. He examines user experiences with digital magazines and how they can best emulate the aspects of printed media that resonate most with readers. An interest in the attachments we form with objects in our environment drives Pawson's work, as well as a desire to make loved objects. His designs help give a physical presence to digital music by emulating the physical engagement, rituals, social interaction, visual presence and avenues of self-expression that inspire our attachment to media-based music such as vinyl albums or 8-track tapes.

In the photomedia program, **John Blalock** treats creativity and technology as inextricably linked, mutually-perpetuating forces. Blending art and science, Blalock works in a variety of materials to create exploration-driven, activity-based works that reference the history of photography, pictorial conventions, and engineering. The combination of technology and the visually familiar result in machines and devices that elicit empathy.

Kathryn D'Elia and **Hannah Patterson** deal with intersections of pop culture and the subconscious. Painting and drawing MFA student D'Elia uses the visual language of film, television, and visual ephemera to address cultural perceptions surrounding fear, vulnerability, and affection. These collaged configurations are pop culture images taken to their extreme, either through proliferation or through juxtaposition with repugnant textures, in order to observe the often bizarre undercurrents of our social subconscious. Patterson's video art is an engrossing yet unsettling look at the familiar made strange. The lush environments—surreal, alien worlds embracing kitsch and 1980s advertising aesthetics—create an uncanny amalgamation of perfection, facade, artificiality, and decay. Therein a mysterious body performs a series of empty activities evoking the gestures of religious ritual, but these ritualized actions are intriguingly detached from effect or purpose.

From their point of convergence on the School of Art + Art History + Design, the creative endeavors of these practitioners are poised to expand outward again, beyond the structures of the graduate program, beyond Seattle, beyond the community that they have built while here. The Henry Art Gallery exhibition has assembled this group just as they prepare to separate once again and push forward in their artistic careers. Now is the moment to celebrate their creative victories and the resolution they have forged during these past two years. ■

 MASTER OF FINE ARTS



JOHN BLALOCK

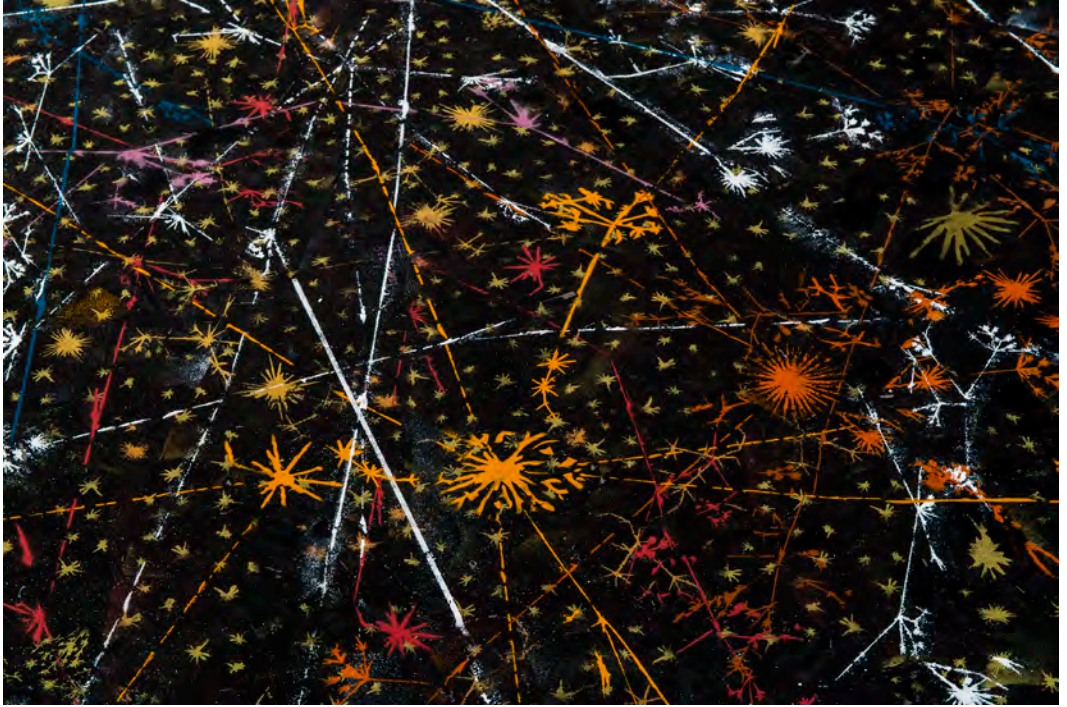
Tactile Communicators. Wood, motors, paper, bellows, microprocessor, 10 x 8 x 12 inches.



HESHING CHEN

Need for...

Mix media, 33 x 43 x 47 inches.



REBECCA CHERNOW

Gegenschein.

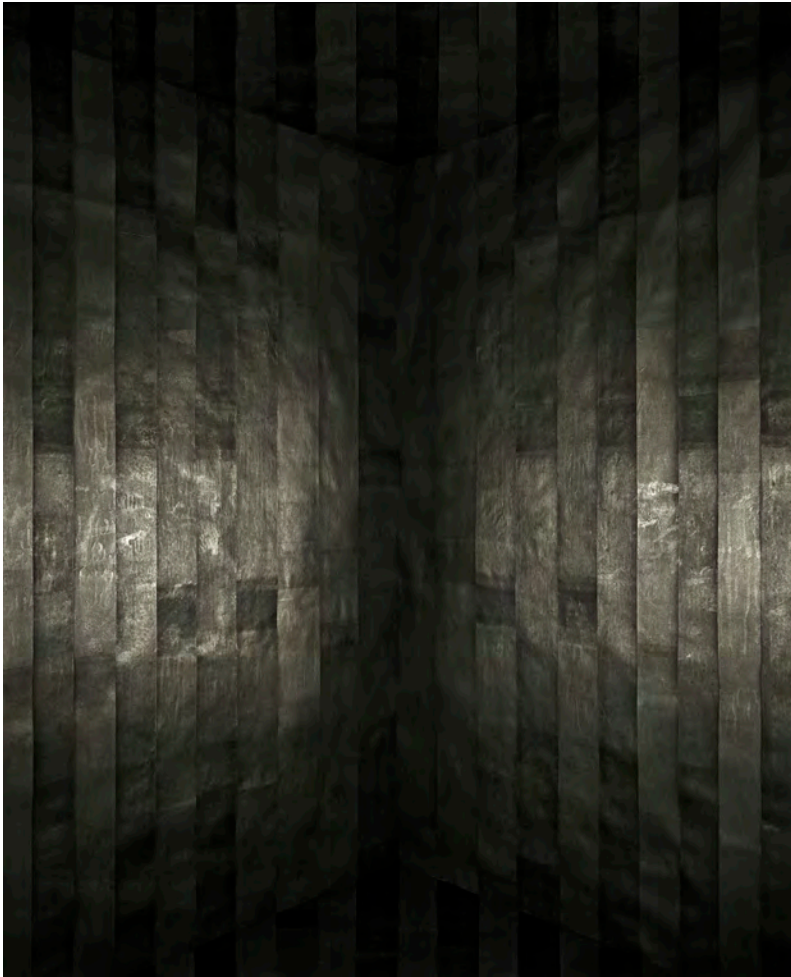
Activated powdered carbon, chalk, salt, sugar, turmeric, cayenne powder, paprika, cinnamon, oregano, spearmint, annatto, indigo, beet root, purple yam powder, cocoa, tobacco, coffee, black tea, chamomile, hibiscus flower, cardamom, saffron, lichen, cedar bark, and cherry blossom.

15 x 15 feet.



KATHRYN D'ELIA

Terms of Endearment. Laser print collage, 64 x 50 inches.



JOE FREEMAN

Wax on Paper. Silver on paper, 8 x 10 inches.



DAVID GRESS

Untitled. Oil on canvas, 223.5 x 195.5 cm.



JONATHAN HAPP

8802. Oil on canvas, 6 x 8 inches.



ANDREW HOEPPNER

My Boat and My Plane. Ceramic, metal, wood, astroturf, 40 x 36 x 36 inches.



ABRAHAM MURLEY
Cacao. Gouache on paper, 9.25 x 4.75 inches.



HANNAH PATTERSON

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TO GET HERE. Video still of plants and pigment, 2013.



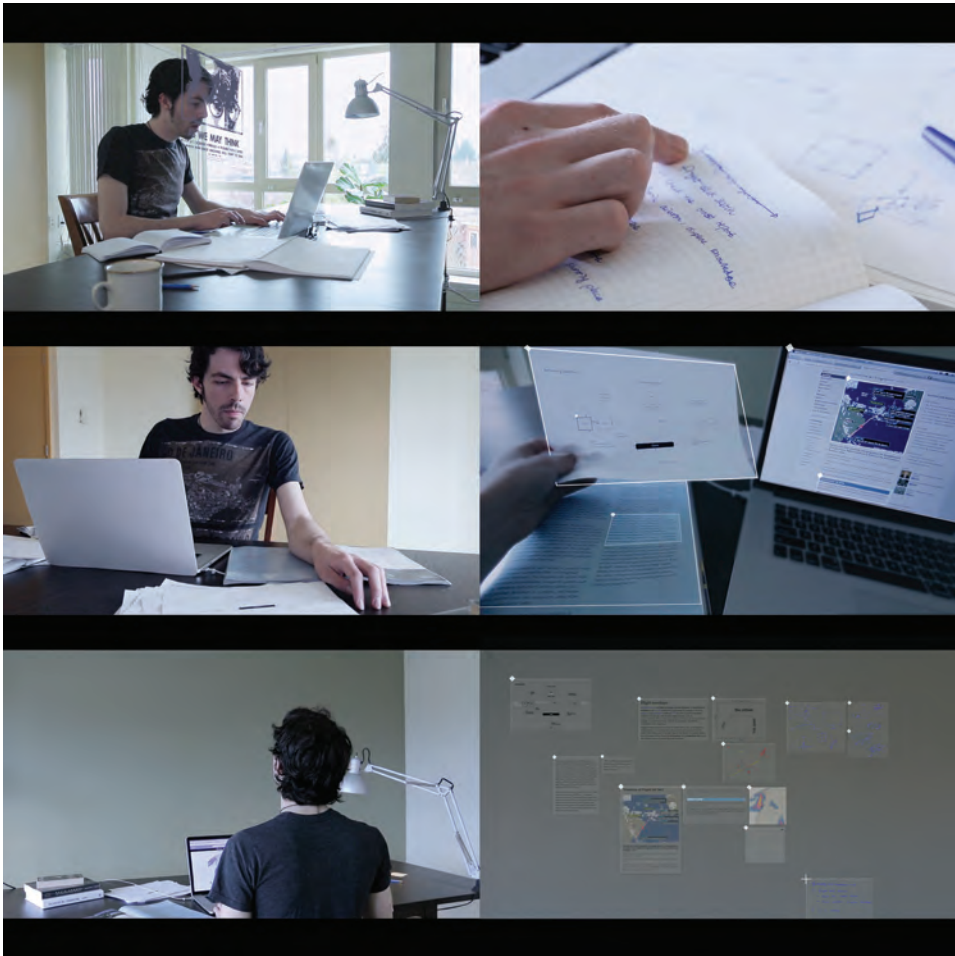
XINCHEN XIE
Untitled. Oil on canvas, 12.5 x 18 inches.

 MASTER OF DESIGN



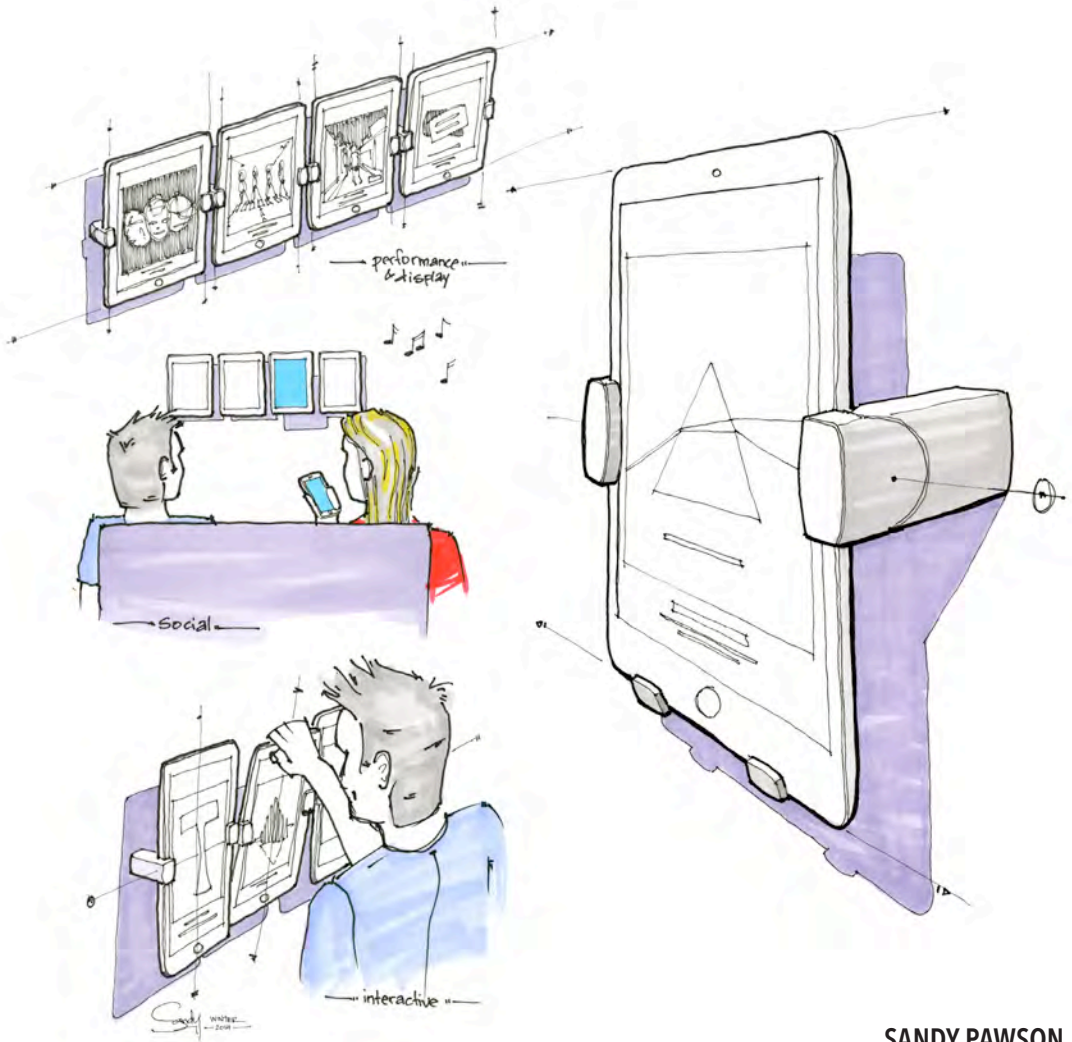
JONATHAN COOK

Chronologic. Video still, 1920 x 1080 pixels.

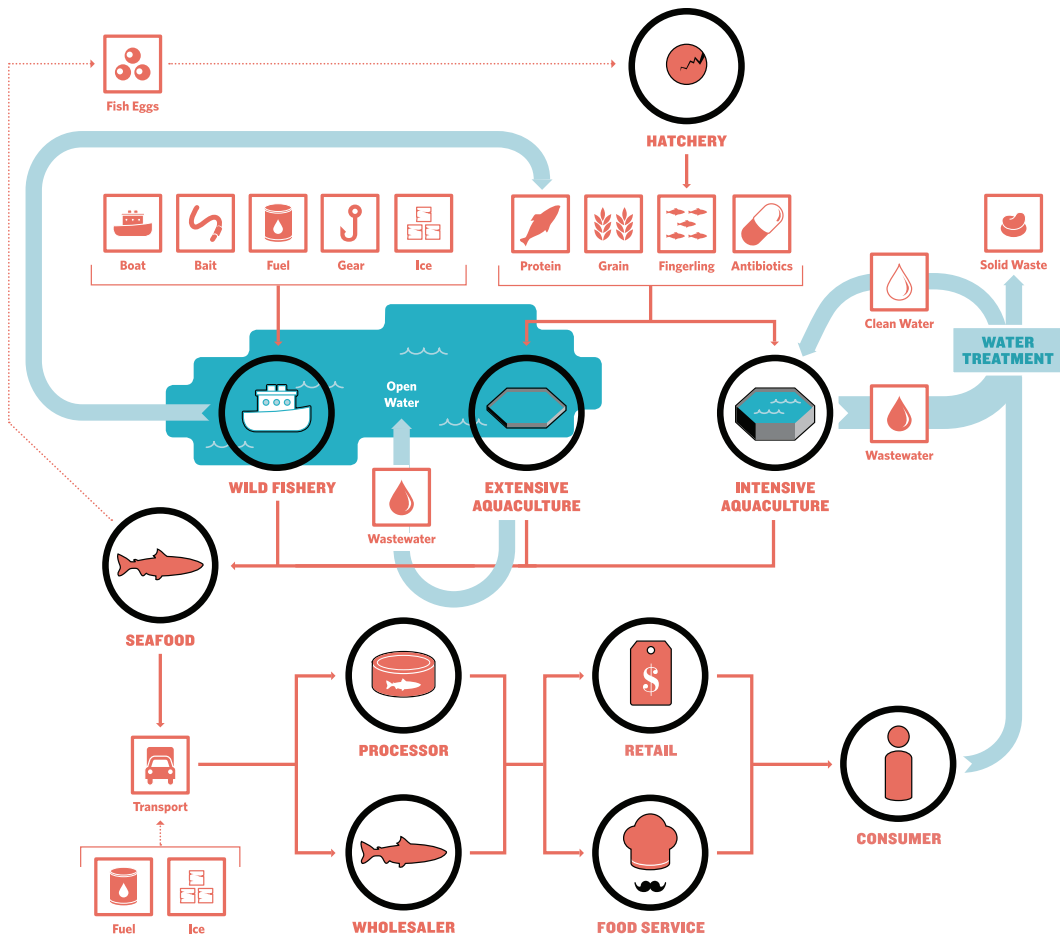


HAEREE PARK

MMX. Digital video stills, 1920 x 1080 pixels.



SANDY PAWSON
Process Sketch Work. Designing the physical presence and experience of digital music.



JASON PETZ

Supply Chain Visualization Study: Wild Versus Farmed Seafood.



BRADLEY TRINNAMAN

Mazkin: Identifying the Design Practices of Tablet Magazines. Digital publication, 2048 x 1536 pixels.

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