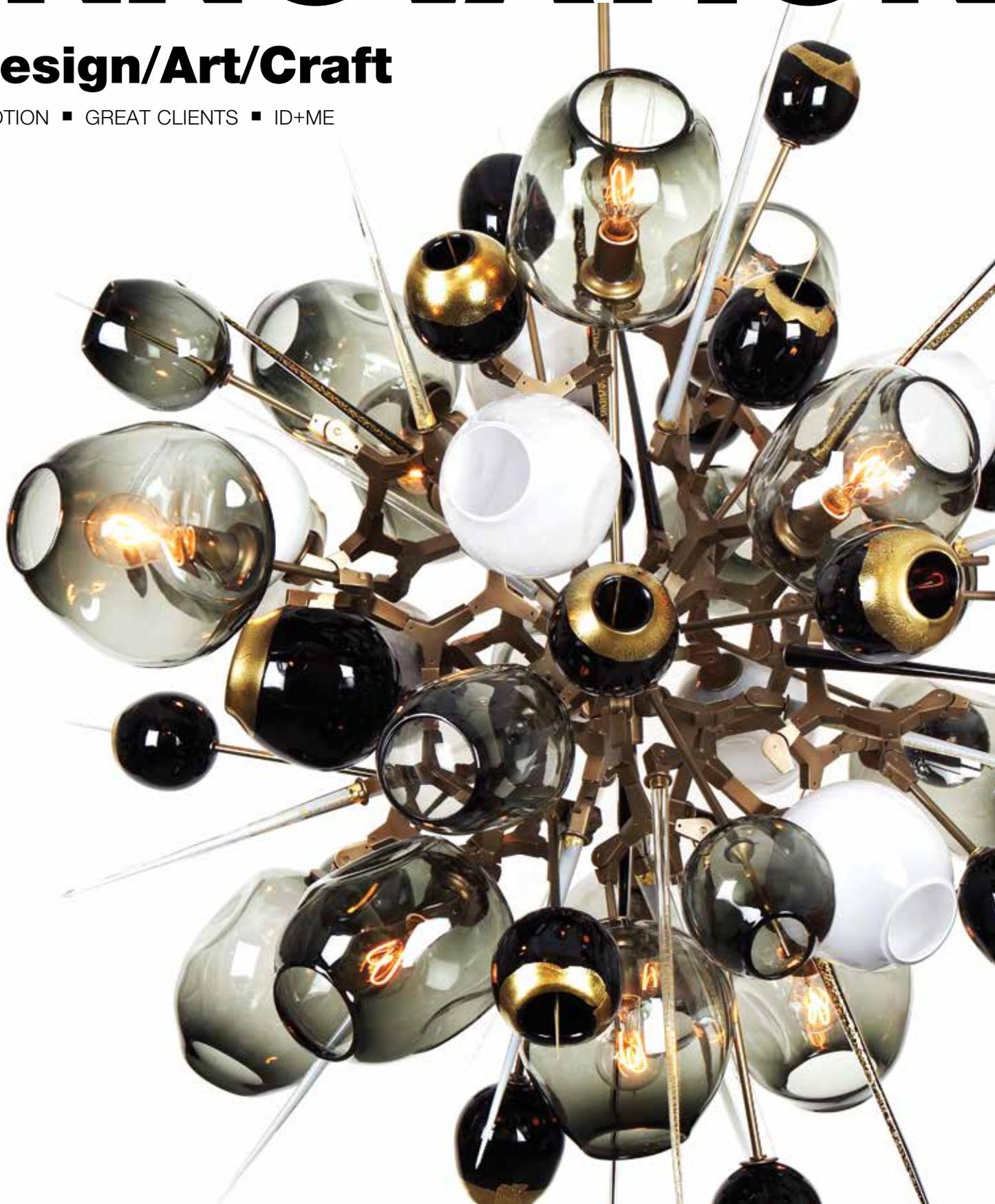


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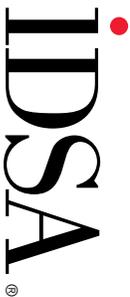
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Fort Standard's Crest Bottle Openers. See p. 49.

Brian Ferry



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The quarterly publication of the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), INNOVATION provides in-depth coverage of design issues and long-term trends while communicating the value of design to business and society at large.

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FROM THE EDITOR

A WORK OF DESIGN

Recently I was asked to give the Penny W. Stamps lecture at the University of Michigan, the college where I received my BFA; my talk was centered around industrial design. The event is open to the general public and is also attended by the entire art school. Based on the responses I received afterward, I am pretty sure I connected with the designers and the public, but I am not so certain about the art majors. There can be a pretty big difference in perception of value between artistic expression and design for industry.

The iconic industrial designer Charles Eames once said about design that “it may (if it is good enough) later be judged as art.” Is it fair to suggest that done exceptionally well, there is no difference between the two, art and design? First, some definitions (from *Webster’s*):

Art: *something that is created with imagination and skill and that is beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings.*

Design: *the way something has been made; the way the parts of something (such as a building, machine, book, etc.) are formed and arranged for a particular use, effect, etc.*

I think a really amazing design is something that is created with imagination and skill and that is beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings evident in the way it has been made—the way the parts are formed and arranged for a particular use or effect.

What distinguishes art from design? According to the above definition of art, one could easily argue that any industrial designer, architect, fashion designer, etc. adhering to best practices is creating art. So what is the key difference between the two? What is their relationship? Is it intention? Is it commerce? When does art become design and design become art?

Perhaps the answer lies in an examination of constraints. If art is an endeavor completely free of constraints, what is a mural? Most murals have a size constraint, and some may have other constraints as well, such as subject matter or medium. Is this art? If murals are art, where does one draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable constraints in order for it to be considered art? Sometimes great sculpture is created within constraints, such as those intended for a specific locale. “The Chicago Picasso,” as it

is commonly called, is an untitled commissioned sculpture created specifically for the Daley Plaza in the Loop. Is it art? Or do the constraints imposed on the artist not fit within the definition of what constitutes art? It seems that constraints do not clearly separate art from design.

Does duplication or production provide a clear distinction between art and design? Is a one-of-a-kind concept car and the production version design? Both the concept car and the production vehicle are created for an intended consumer. There does seem to be general agreement that items created for a specific customer and for production are design and not art.

While a definitive distinction that defines the difference between art and design may not exist, what is important is the relationship between the ideals of art and good design. Ideals, such as a freedom from constraints, reflecting and interpreting culture, evoking emotions, provoking thought for change and embracing the future, inspire both artist and designers, allowing our imaginations to push the boundaries of what we know as possible. A great design should always be influenced by a desire to create art.

The Dutch firm Droog puts it succinctly: “We believe that utility does not have to come at the expense of fantasy.” Their work demonstrates a thirst for dreamy innovative solutions that redefine the practical. The Droog soft washbowl is a sink made of polyurethane that can be manipulated and reshaped for specific tasks or body types. It expresses both imagination and practicality while providing a vehicle for cultural change. This small sink promotes all kinds of new human-sink interactions and expands our view of small wash spaces.

Designers can find art anywhere if they are open to all the possibilities. Ingo Maurer has taken his obsession with the simple beauty of the incandescent light bulb and has created light fixtures that celebrate the bulb by engaging fantasy. His work evokes powerful emotions for an often-ignored object. Maurer’s Birdie chandelier is a *work of design*. Believing that incandescent bulbs represent flight, he imagined the bulbs as objects in flight, literally. Each bulb is given bird’s wings. The bare bulbs seem both modern in their simplicity and antique in our memories. The attention that he brought to the bulb influenced a subsequent trend for incorporating bare incandescents as a focal point of the interiors of hip bars and restaurants, then everywhere else. These kinds of haute couture designs exert great influence and many times define culture.

“[T]hat blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs and it’s sort of comical how you think that you’ve made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry.”

—Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep in *The Devil Wears Prada*)



Chris Moore/Catwalking/Getty Images

The character of Miranda Priestly, played by Meryl Streep in the film *The Devil Wears Prada*, explains how the art of fashion, such as haute couture, influences design as she dresses down Anne Hathaway’s character for laughing about an argument over the right color of blue: “But what you don’t know is that sweater is not just blue, it’s not turquoise. It’s not lapis. It’s actually cerulean. And you’re also blithely unaware of the fact that in 2002, Oscar de la Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns. And then I think it was Yves Saint Laurent... wasn’t it who showed cerulean military jackets? I think we need a jacket here. And then cerulean quickly showed up in the collections of eight different designers. And then it, uh, filtered down through the department stores and then trickled on down into some tragic Casual Corner where you, no doubt, fished it out of some clearance bin. However, that blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs and it’s sort of comical how you think that you’ve made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry when, in fact, you’re wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room from a pile of stuff.”

Interestingly, this sequence also serves to point out some of the problems that face designers who are interested in creating art—issues of mass production and low cost that get in the way of retaining the art in imaginative and innovative solutions. Artistic inspiration cannot be separated from the object no matter how removed from the original influence.

The effect a *work of design* can have on culture is huge, and great design has always been inspired and influenced by art. Today, infusing art into design is becoming more a necessity, a way to exceed user expectations and touch emotions. Art and design can be the same thing. It is a challenge that all industrial designers should embrace. Today designers who are not inspired by art and the ideals of the artist risk failure tomorrow.

This is the inspiration for this issue of INNOVATION. It was Scott Klinker, IDSA, a dedicated artist, educator and director of design at Cranbrook, who brought this topic forward. He, along with an amazing collection of authors, invested a considerable amount of grace and energy to the task of exploring this topic here in these pages, even while faced with the constraints of time and a publication schedule. I hope you will agree with me that Scott and his team have created something very special.

—Mark Dziarsk, FIDSA, INNOVATION executive editor
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DESIGN/ART





By Scott Klinker, IDSA, Guest Editor

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Scott Klinker is principal of Scott Klinker Product Design and 3D designer-in-residence at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI, where he has worked with design-driven companies such as Alessi, Herman Miller, Steelcase and Burton Snowboards. He is an alumnus of Cranbrook and IDEO.

Our Expanding Field

DESIGN/ART/CRAFT

Thirty years ago the field of design was primarily about mass production. Since then, we've seen design discourse expand to include significant areas of overlap with the fine arts, crafts, architecture and fashion. If the industrial era gave us industrial design, then our current postindustrial era has given us an expanded field of *design culture* that offers a wide range of perspectives on the man-made world.

Who are the thinkers and makers who work in the hybrid spaces of design/art/craft and point to ways that a more artistic design culture can build the American scene? How have the boundaries between design, art and craft been redrawn? To what extent do the boundaries still matter? Is it a case of anything goes? And if not, what are the limits? Where is design culture? Is it an American, European, Asian or transnational phenomenon? How does it operate at different scales? And is anyone driving it?

A recent survey asked "How can we make IDSA better?" In a field that is so widely defined—bridging everything from engineering to social science—a consensus response to that question would be difficult. From my perspective, however, the answer is obvious: IDSA, and American design for that matter, needs art!

As our young profession has matured, designers not only look outward to industry, but also to other artistic disciplines and sometimes inward to design itself—to test and stretch the limits of our field. This expanded design culture has fostered a wave of innovative energy throughout the world, seen especially in places like Milan's annual furniture fair where countless young design collectives host pop-up shows throughout the city alongside the bigger, more established brands. In places like these, design not only serves the industry, design is *the* industry. While this energy is beginning to bridge the Atlantic—in places like New York City's Design Week and Design Miami—the American scene

seems to have expanded mostly by looking to the fields of business and technology. These influences have produced a unique set of strengths, but the result rarely seems to match the artful experimentation seen throughout much of international design culture. It would seem useful then to ask, What feeds a healthy design culture? Do we have one? What's missing?

Why is art important to designers? The world of art is a space for us to study the evolution of aesthetics and language and the connections between ideas and forms. Art speaks in a small, individual voice as a counterpoint to big industry. At its best, it asks us to pause and reflect on who we are as a human race. Art reframes the function of things. While the boundaries of art and design are usually drawn at the line between metaphor and use, who would deny that many of our contemporary uses are largely metaphorical? Art attempts to disrupt our normal everyday perceptions with strange signals that can reveal how alternately perplexing or static our normal has become. This disruptive quality is useful for design. While the design profession has learned to translate problem-solving processes into a repeatable service, we often forget that real, disruptive change is *propositional*—instead of solving for existing behaviors, designers can propose new behaviors that ask, What if we live like *this*? Like art, disruptive innovation provokes us to look at the contemporary world in a new way. For example, five years ago who *needed* an iPad?

In my 12 years at Cranbrook Academy of Art, I've come to see that many younger designers are looking for a new diversity in the field of design, where in addition to being a service to industry we can also be an autonomous space for intellectual, artistic and cultural research. Design culture, at its best, is a discursive space that embraces artistic experimentation. If IDSA became more focused on global design culture, what would that look like? What if IDSA's website and this magazine had content more like the websites for Dezeen, Designboom, Domus or Core77? Would you find it more inspiring? More useful? If IDSA made a focused effort to include and promote America in global design culture, how would that change what we teach, what we talk about, how we present ourselves internationally and what we dream about for our profession?

When Mark Dziersk, FIDSA and Karen Berube at IDSA offered me an opportunity to guest edit this issue of INNOVATION, I visualized an IDSA that is hot for design culture. I called on some of my brightest colleagues (and former students) to report to you about new ideas by looking at areas where design overlaps with art, craft, fashion and architecture. Nearly all of these contributors are designers themselves, reporting on what inspires them. We've also enlisted some extra design support from Elliott Earls, one of the most artful graphic designers I know, to add editorial artwork exploring the theme of this issue. I'm so thankful to all of the contributors here; I hope you find their reports as inspiring as I do. I invite you, your company and your community to help us build a more artful American design culture. ■



R H Hensleigh and Tim Thayer

As a student at Cranbrook, Robert Turek integrated his interests in music, furniture and architecture to create these Microstages, which elevate the performers within a crowded audience.

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