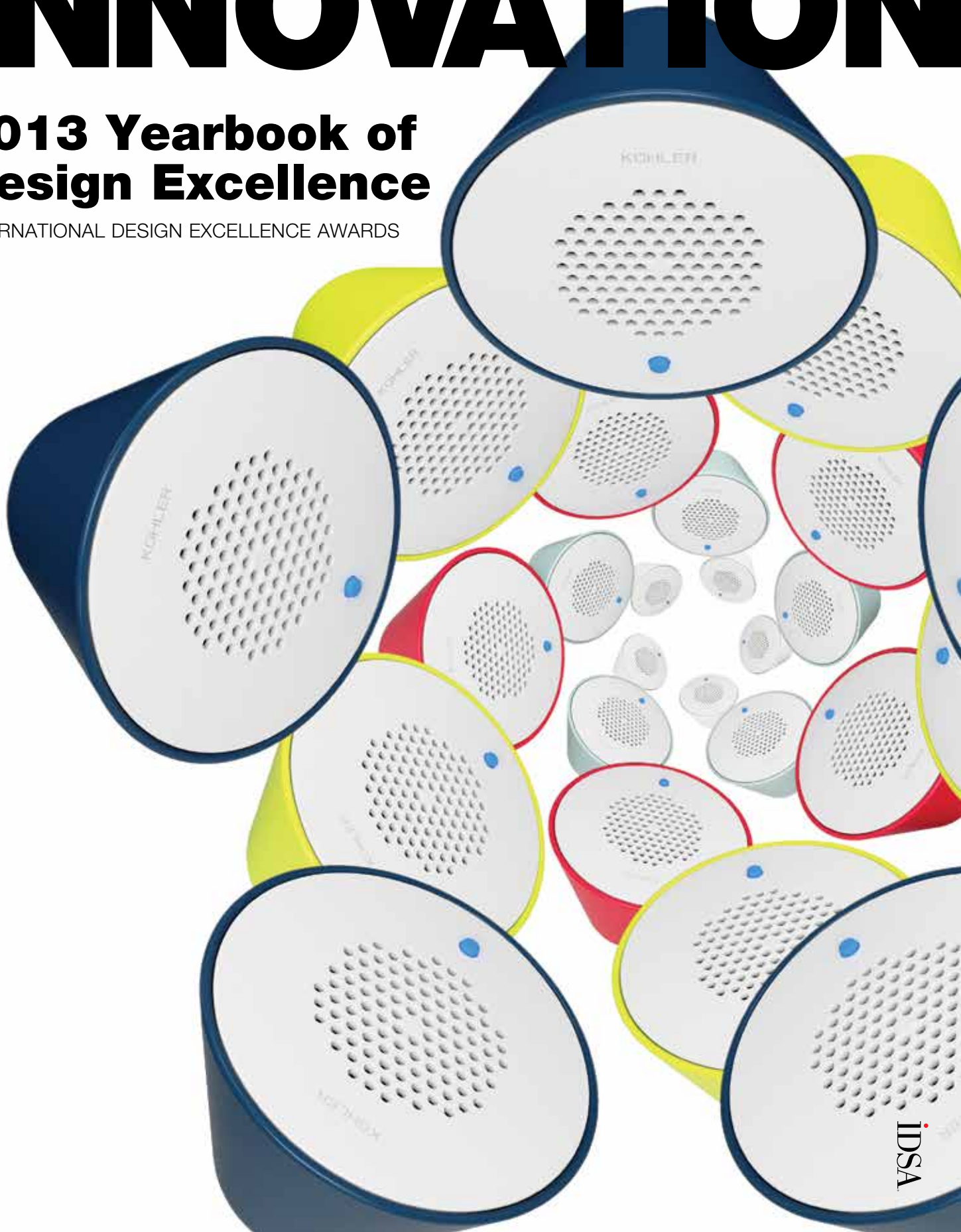


QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **FALL 2013**

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## 2013 Yearbook of Design Excellence

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS



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**Cover photo:** Moxie – Showerhead + Wireless Speaker by KOHLER Co., p. 54.  
**Far Left:** Nokia Colour and Materials Design Strategy, p. 82.

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Above: "Who Are We?" p. 91.



FROM THE EDITOR

# THE OSCARS OF DESIGN

I was reading about George Clooney in *Esquire* the other day. Actually, about George Clooney and Matt Damon both and the kind of charisma and presence people experience when interacting with them. As the reporter from *Esquire* clearly felt, it seems that movie stars possess a kind of attraction that draws people to them. It has a lot to do with who they are, how they look, and the warmth and power they convey when people interact with them. Clooney and Damon are both good-looking guys in different ways; I believe that is where charisma starts. Once you meet them, of course, it just gets better; that's real charisma. Most famous people, actors and politicians seem to have it. Some products do also.

How do you get along with other people? What do they first notice about the way you are, the way you look, your personality? Products have the same kind of relationship with people. Sometimes they are interesting to speak with but not so interesting to spend a lot of time with. Sometimes they are great to look at but terrible to interact with or be around. Human interaction with a physical product can transform an experience that used to be a chore into something special and desired, and it starts with the physical. Just like with people, human physical interaction lies at the foundation of our relationships with products and their promises. While not every product has a digital component, above everything else, all products first have a physical interaction with the user.

Check out the Nest Learning Thermostat, Second Generation, profiled in this issue, for example. Something about a product must grab us in order for us to begin to explore its user experience or digital interface. Nest draws in consumers with a gorgeous simplicity of form and a glowing display that you do not truly appreciate until you are face-to-face with this industry-changing invention.

Another example might be Legos. Legos are one of the ultimate physical interactions for kids and adults alike. The Legos of the future, littleBits, are among this year's winners. The entire concept is built around the actual physical object and how different combinations of these objects create dif-

ferent results and different actions. It is the physical form that signals to the user the purpose of each bit.

Just like littleBits, the Nest Thermostat possesses an engaging physical presence and embodies a very simple and intuitive interface. It is a circular device that provides a new kind of interaction within the old circular thermostat form that was the standard over 50 years ago. This provides a nostalgic take on new technology by creating an interaction that is familiar.

We can see that it is the object's presence, its physical form and the ways that users interact with that form that create original desire. Consumer interaction with the physical form precedes interaction with the user interface, which still requires a physical interaction between the user and the product. The interface may scroll, but it is your thumb or finger that is driving that scroll. The first-generation Nest was very streamlined and attractive, yet the designers still worked on the exterior of the product to make it more appealing and to further minimize the aesthetic. While the user interface is always a significant component, it does not overshadow product design nor will it ever replace product design.

Vacc-Stamp, another winner this year, is a great example of how the physicality and appearance of a product is very important. A syringe frightens babies, making them uptight and difficult to hold still for the vaccination. When

“It is the object’s presence, its physical form and the ways that users interact with that form that create original desire.”

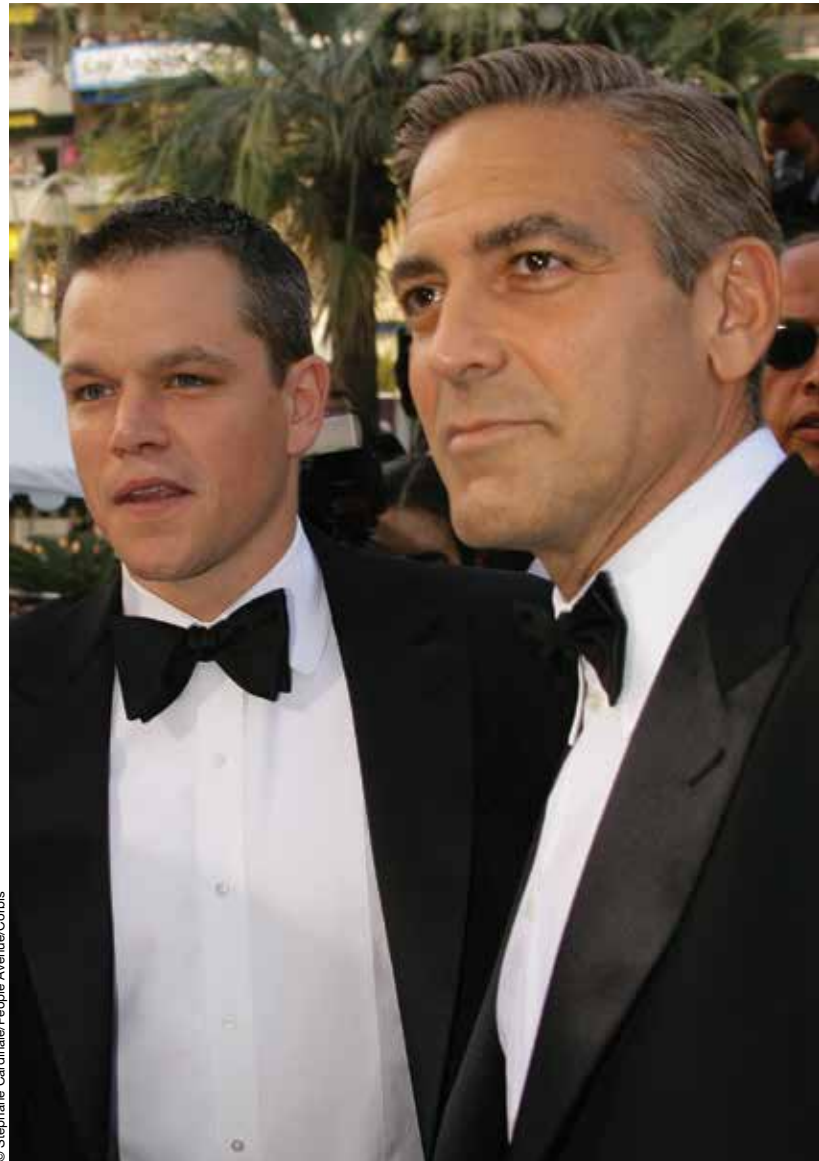
this happens the mother also gets upset, which compounds the baby’s unease. First, Vacc-Stamp does not look anything like a syringe, nor is it scary looking. Thus when it is used to administer vaccinations, both mother and baby are more at ease, making each vaccination more successful and decreasing fear with each use. The device is so simple that a mother can use it in the home, so both the sterile surroundings of the health facility and the unfamiliar doctor or nurse are eliminated.

At LUNAR one day we reinvented the idea of the bicycle—well, actually, the training, or workout, bike. As it turns out, it won Gold this year, so you can see it in this issue, and on the back cover as well. From its conception, the VELA bike was first an amazing object to see and behold. Home exercise equipment is often tucked away in closets, hidden in the basement, or sitting unused and on the waiting list for the next garage sale. To counter this notion that exercise equipment is ugly and must be hidden, we set about to create a beautiful object. The user interacts with its sleek form; it then grabs you with its interface and interaction, creating unlimited possibilities for working out and competing with other VELA racers.

There will always be industrial design and designers. There will always be this *Yearbook of Design Excellence*, and there will always be, in some form, a celebration of the way we interact with things and each other. And just like with people, with products it almost always starts first with the physical and then moves to the interaction. To succeed today, products must have charisma. Movie stars have it, most politicians have it and, in order to draw people to a new idea, products must have it. In this issue you will find the very best of the year’s new charismatic and innovative products—great physical designs that embody the best of design in design’s most important competition.

After reading this Yearbook issue, I trust that you too will be a bit starstruck and that you will immensely enjoy meeting this charismatic red-carpet collection of product designs. They represent the biggest stars of the past year in the *Oscars of Design* that are the 2013 International Design Excellence Awards.

—Mark Dziarski, FIDSA, Innovation executive editor  
mark@lunar.com



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# AN EXPANDED REACH

**T**his year the IDEA program saw a healthy 18 percent increase in participation, most notably in digital strategy (88.5 percent), computer equipment (30 percent) and student entries (20 percent). We also enjoyed a more international group of participants (32 percent). It's good to know that design keeps broadening its influence and that designers and manufacturers are keen to make their work public through participation in well-published and respected design awards.



Thomas Overthun, IDEA 2013 Jury Chair

The 2013 IDEA jury was put together with an ever-more diverse field of entries in mind. The international group of jurors drew its members from consultancies, in-house corporate studios, design schools, writers, designers running their own manufacturing businesses, trend and color specialists, and digital designers from around the world. Together, we made up a somewhat unruly group of people who love design in all its forms and who love to debate about its role in the world. Some of us had never met, and others had known each other for years—and had practiced arguing about design for as many years—all of which was good for a thorough and impassioned review of the award entries.

The judging happened in two main steps. Jurors first reviewed the initial set of entries in its entirety—this year that meant close to 2,000 entries—online over a period of several weeks, consulting with their category co-judge(s). After the initial screening, about a third of the original entries, now already finalists, were invited to send in actual products and/or supporting materials for the live judging. I believe the key to the IDEA program's quality and thoroughness lies in this second step of live judging. The live judging was a three-day event hosted by The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI, which jury members traveled to from all over the world. The jury room was right in the middle of the museum. Every time we left the room we stepped into the awe-inspiring backdrop of the most incredible artifacts from the industrial age. Being confronted with the world's largest locomotives, the Buckminster Fuller Dymaxion House and the much-loved Wienermobile did its part to put the new work into perspective with the best of the past. In addition, The Henry Ford's curator, Marc Greuther, toured the jury through parts of the

All photos: Rob Hart Photo





**Clockwise starting upper left:** IDEA juror Matthew Marzynski, IDSA congratulates IDEA Gold winner Fred Boulton, IDSA; IDEA Gold trophies; LUNAR's Roman Gebhard and Andrew Zee; IDSA Chair Charles Austen Angell, IDSA; Bob Grace, A/IDSA of *Plastic News*; IDEA juror Tad Toulis, IDSA and Dustin Krause of Tesla; IDSA At-Large Director Andrew Hartman, IDSA and Tom Hirsch, IDSA; Conference Chair Paul Hatch, IDSA; and *Innovation* Executive Editor Mark Dzierzk, FIDSA and Jeff Smith, IDSA.

museum's vast archives, with a chance to see some rarely or not yet exhibited pieces up close.

During the three days of live judging, the jurors at first worked in small teams to determine the contenders for Gold, Silver and Bronze awards in their assigned categories. The breadth of the work is always amazing, and every year more so. This time, it ran the gamut from a furniture caster to a car to a political campaign, a span that even The Henry Ford might envy. Here are some trends we observed.

We noticed a continued trend toward design touching more aspects of the user experience; the best entries excelled with a consistent approach to hardware, interaction, digital and packaging design. More and more, the idea that a brand should speak with one voice on every channel is becoming a must, and we saw it done with excellence by large and small companies and even by startups.

Over the past decade, color has been slowly gaining in consumer interest in many segments. We saw bold color statements in consumer electronics, where neutrals used to dominate. Color was used with confidence on the hardware as well as to visually coordinate the hardware and the user interface. Hand in hand with the trend toward color went the idea of challenging established manufacturing techniques and using new ways to make products become an essential part of their beauty and reason to be.

We were impressed by small companies just coming out of startup mode stepping up to challenge large industries, showing the way beyond minuscule evolution-

ary steps. For the first time, the transportation segment engaged the jury with groundbreaking entries triggering lively discussion around how we can be persuaded to change our attitude toward personal mobility.

A growing segment was design with the explicit goal of social impact. We saw design solving problems that years ago wouldn't have been intuitive roles to play for designers, such as making government interesting and engaging, and playing a part in designing a political campaign.

After the initial review of finalists, the juror teams presented their award contenders to the entire group of judges. This served as a last check for the best entries, and led to long and passionate discussions about the entries and the state of design at large as well. It is this part of the IDEA competition that I love the most—being part of a forum engaged in their craft. The final part of the IDEA judging process is to pick the Best in Show, which again triggered more debate and this year, I think, delivered a surprising but well-deserved overall winner.

My thanks go to the hard work of the jury and IDSA, the hosting staff of The Henry Ford and the IDEA sponsors. ■

—Thomas Overthun, IDEA 2013 jury chair



## Sonos SUB

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