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Cover photo: Silver IDEA winning Fireball. See page 128.

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Silver IDEA-winning YOYOKE. See page 145.

Microsoft HoloLens

SYMBIOSIS OF REAL & VIRTUAL

"Microsoft HoloLens is the first, self-contained, fully untethered holographic computer. Powered by Windows 10, it gives the user a whole new way to see the world on an unprecedented platform for possibility."

—Alex Kipman, Technical Fellow, Microsoft

HoloLens, a Gold IDEA winner in Consumer Technology, also scored Best in Show in IDSA's International Design Excellence Awards 2017. "Microsoft has been on a decades-long journey to make computing more personal, and this is a logical extension of that path," says Kipman. "Bringing computing into the three-dimensional world in which humans have always existed, is the next step in making computing truly more personal."

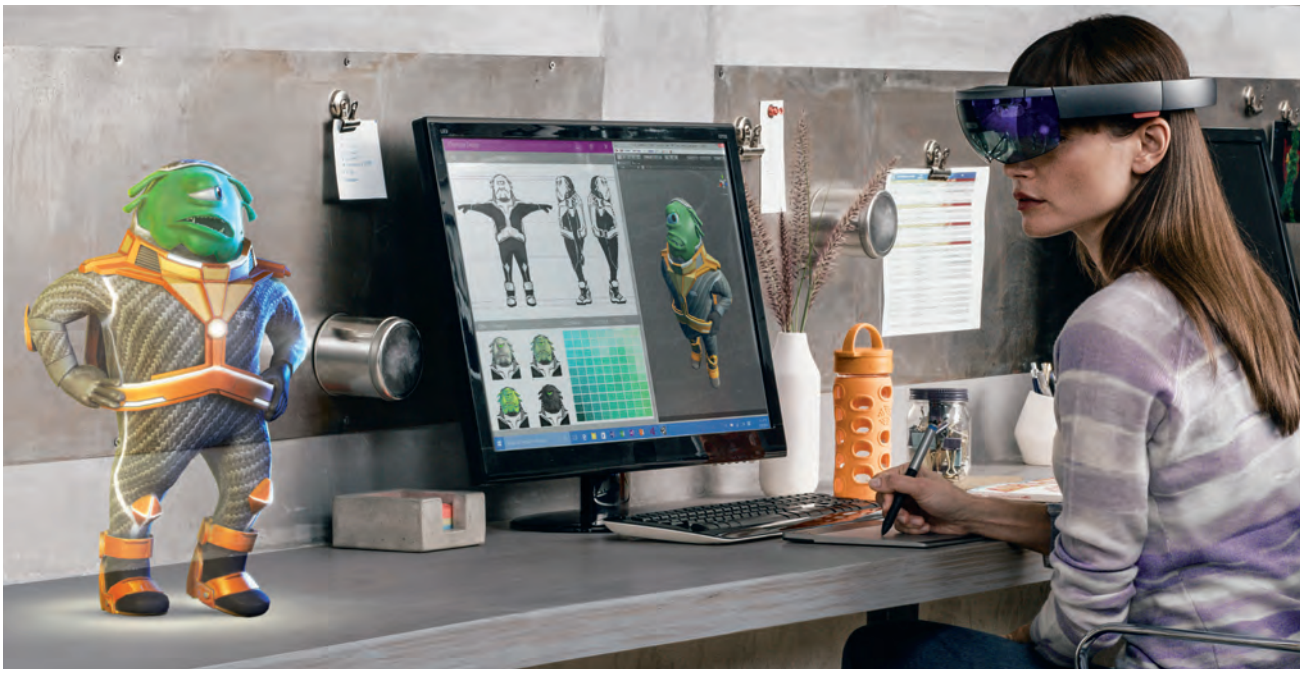
HoloLens puts holograms directly into a physical environment, creating an immersive experience without blocking out the real world. It embeds holographic content and applications into physical surroundings to see, place and interact with as if the holograms are part of the physical world.

Through its hardware and software technologies, HoloLens creates enormous possibilities for people around the world to work, create and communicate. Instead of being mediated by screens, HoloLens creates a sense of immediacy, connection and interaction.

"The potential for mixed reality is limitless," says Kipman. "Microsoft HoloLens is already a revolutionary tool, transforming how companies, designers and creators harness the power of holographic computing."

A gamer using HoloLens can fight robots that are breaking through the gamer's actual living room walls and very real-looking lasers. An architect or illustrator using HoloLens can design in 3D, moving objects from the screen into the

> “This year’s IDEA Best of Show, the Microsoft HoloLens, encapsulates every aspect of industrial design. Demonstrating perfection with its combination of different materials, capturing moments in every little detail, incorporating technology that is at the forefront of the industry and delivering a memorable experience for the user.”
>
> *—Owen Foster, IDSA, SHiFT and Aether Global Education*



real world to visualize and examine. A professor or student can get up close and personal with an area of study, strolling through rock formations on Mars or examining a holographic cross-section of a beating human heart.

The HoloLens team had a vision of something completely new: a vivid, immersive computing experience that seamlessly integrates technology into the user’s world—but doesn’t isolate from reality. This vision came with many challenges. Realistic and uninterrupted interactive experiences had to be ensured. Holograms must be accurately positioned with no lag in the customer’s surrounding environment. The device needed to be elegantly designed and comfortable to wear. And it had to be untethered so users could move freely through their surroundings.

Microsoft industrial designers sought to couple next-generation computing and approachable design. HoloLens hides tremendous complexity in a sleek package. The spherical visor conceals a system of sensors that uses infrared light to track hand gestures and the environment dimensionally. Behind the visor lies more computing power than that of an average laptop, along with microphones, advanced optics and a custom holographic processing unit.

HoloLens is lightweight and adaptable to the infinite variety of human heads. The team conducted 3D scans of 100 different craniums; as a result, the headband is comfortable. The device’s weight is balanced around the crown of the head to remove pressure from the ears and the bridge of the nose. To allow for use with glasses, the optics can be moved away from the face, thanks to a hidden timing mechanism in the headband that ensures symmetrical adjustment.

HoloLens uses spatial sound designed around how the human ear synthesizes sounds and locations, so the user can not only see but also hear holograms from anywhere in the room. Highly stable image placement allows for immersive use without the nausea typically associated with augmented and virtual reality systems.

The team believed industrial design should not be guided solely by aesthetics alone. It worked to balance competing needs to architect a form factor that is simple, intuitive and ultimately disappears. As a result, immersive audio and visuals, speech and gesture capabilities and the power of Windows 10 work together to create an unprecedented platform for possibility. ■

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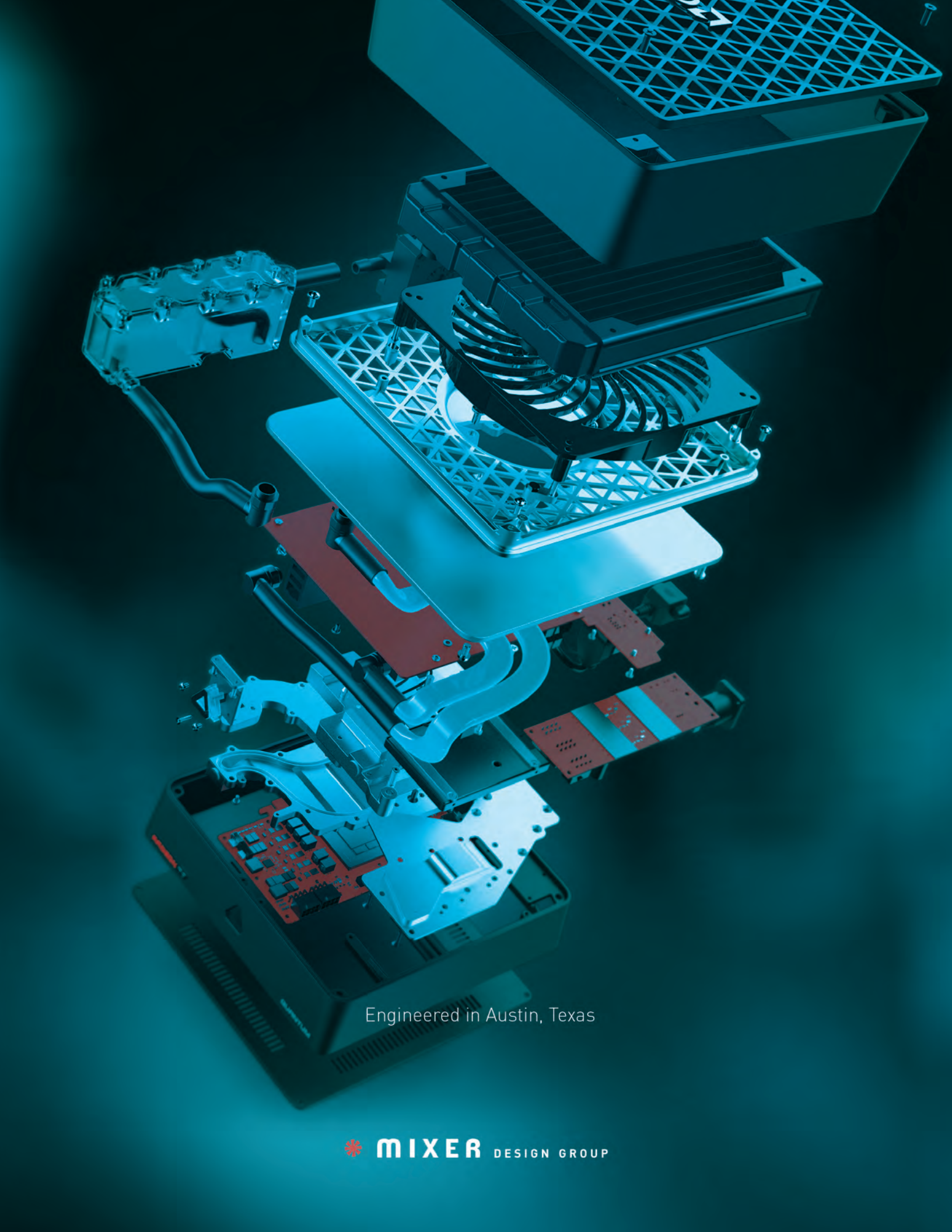

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