

QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **FALL 2017**

# INNOVATION

## Yearbook of Design Excellence

WINNERS OF THE 2017 INTERNATIONAL DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS





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QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

FALL 2017

# INNOVATION<sup>®</sup>



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

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# BEING FEARLESS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE UNKNOWN

In a world that is constantly changing, uncertainties and fears are ever-present. Some say the greatest fear is the fear of the unknown. But why is that? Especially for a designer, isn't that what design is? Are we not constantly reaching for the invisible—embracing failure—to find that one moment of brilliance?

Throughout life, we the creatives have been daydreamers. Our youth was filled with thoughts that had no boundaries, no limitations, no fears of failure—just the ability to accomplish anything. Even as a little farm boy in the fields of Alabama, I daydreamed about how I could help shape and change the world for the better. Then we grew up and started seeing all the rules the world threw at us. At that moment, the unknown scared us once more.

For most of us, design was the sanctuary that gave us the ability to create our dreams into something tangible and real. But even that's in question—because what we know as design has changed. Ask 10 people to define design. Even better, ask them to define industrial design. Odds are—you will have a wide array of answers with none of them really matching.

How could you expect any different? Certain design disciplines are merging while others are separating into different fields of expertise. We have witnessed the rise of experience over the artifact. Technology is dramatically expanding our capabilities, needs and understandings and reshaping our horizons. All the while, we are rapidly heading into the unknown once again. No matter how we view this change and transformation, design needs to remain fearless.

Fearlessness has been at the core of everything that I have witnessed while having the honor of being an International Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) juror and/or jury chair in the past three years. Every aspect of the IDEA experience—from the amazing jury and IDSA team to the venue at the iconic Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation to the incredible entries from around the world—challenges world design standards as we know them today. By establishing the bar for great design high enough to be almost unattainable, the jury sets the tone for each year's event.

IDEA entries astonished me by being thoughtful, clever and bold while companies pushed materials, manufacturing and technologies to produce the products of today and tomorrow. Those companies do everything possible to stay on the forefront of design and create artifacts and services that leave the masses with memorable experiences. Student entries question everything and make an impact on the design world, bending the rules to be the ones who are redefining design and how we might use it to make a better world. Being surrounded by such determination and courage allowed me to grow personally as designer, educator and mentor—and for that, I am forever grateful.

IDEA winners prove they have the fearlessness to venture into the abyss to capture the invisible, the keen eye for even the smallest of details and the burning passion to create beautiful design. A perfect example—my choice for this year's Chair Award—Sai Flatpack Furniture. The journey of design for these students was remarkable. Not allowing themselves to just research from a screen, or design from their own bias, but rather immerse themselves in the environment and culture, they were able to find the true questions to ask. These students put themselves within the problem they were trying to solve. Every step showed grit, drive and determination to deliver the most comprehensive and impactful design solution that they were capable of. This project and its journey are what design is all about. Industry could learn a thing or two from students like these. Do it with passion or not at all because you can't fake passion.

Years ago, I heard a quote by T.S. Eliot, "If you aren't in over your head, how do you know how tall you are?" Design is in the presence of the unknown. Will fear hold us back? Or will we dive in over our heads to embrace the challenge? Let's be fearless and be the ones who redefine design for tomorrow's generations! ■

—Owen Foster, IDSA, Co-founder/director, SHIFT and Aether Global Education, [owen@aetherlearning.com](mailto:owen@aetherlearning.com)



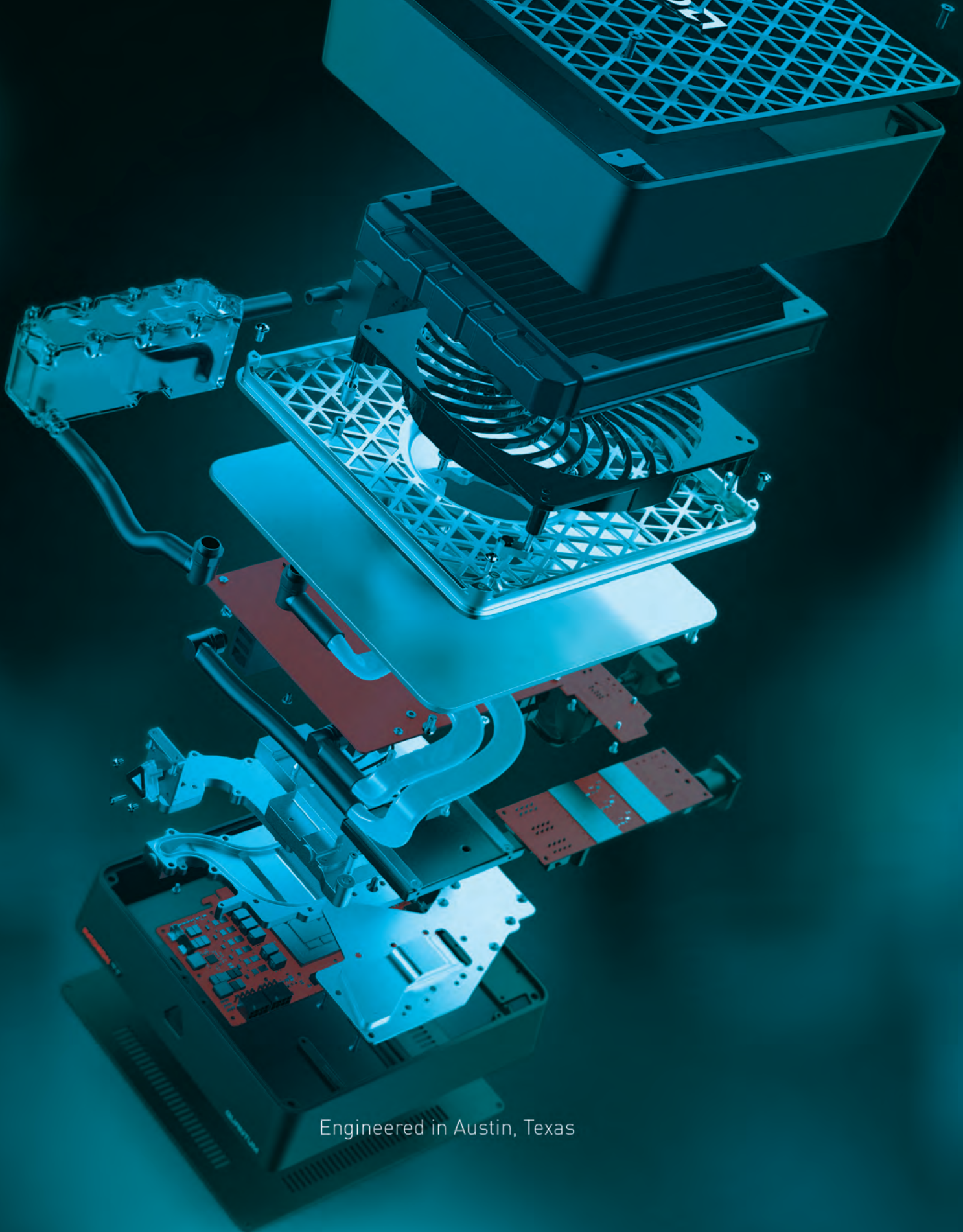


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