



the intelligent optimist

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Join us to discover emerging designers and trends at
The Intelligent Optimist exhibition, at Central Saint Martins,
part of The London Design Festival, from 19 September 2015
Press View: Friday 18 September, 12.30-6pm

The Intelligent Optimist showcases the best design work coming out of Central Saint Martins, an institution renowned internationally for asking difficult questions and coming up with inventive answers. Operating across most design disciplines, the exhibition presents shots of hope and canny intelligence. It's set in the award-winning Central Saint Martins building at the heart of London's new creative hub - and entrance is free!



From left, designs by: Hortense Duthilleux, Emil Kozole, Matty Bovan, Caroline Angiulo.

'This exhibition goes right to the heart of everything we do at Central Saint Martins: intelligence and optimism are core values for us. *The Intelligent Optimist* suggests the types of designer needed to achieve positive change: Future Gazers, Material Explorers, Social Agents, and Fixers. These young designers from CSM provide a brilliant riposte to the novelist Howard Jacobson's provocation that he 'has never met an intelligent optimist'. At a time of political and social unease, the need for alternative visions and intelligent optimism has never been more pressing.'

Jeremy Till, Head of Central Saint Martins, Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of the Arts London

'If we're looking for new ways to deal with some of today's key issues, then the solutions require inventive, inspiring, sobering, witty, magical, rigorous alternative visions. I'm proud to say CSM graduates continue to rise to these challenges, and *The Intelligent Optimist* presents their collective spirit.' Anne Smith, Dean of Academic Programmes



STOP PRESS!

Futuro House lands at Central Saint Martins: what could be better than a house in the sky? Futuro House will be a place for public talks, seminars and discourse, essentially a

House for *The Intelligent Optimist* from 19 September 2015 through 2016.

Last year's highly-acclaimed LDF exhibition *Restless Futures* explored the issues in society with which designers are engaging. Our new exhibition **The Intelligent Optimist** presents the types of designer needed to achieve positive change within those issues: Future Gazers, Material Explorers, Social Agents, and The Fixers. Over 50 designers feature from a global mix of key recent Central Saint Martins graduates, and their work is explored through designs, talks, workshops, demos and performances.

The work of the young designers emerging from Central Saint Martins is almost by default optimistic – why design the world as a worse place? – and is always shot through with a canny intelligence. This intelligence takes multiple forms: the rigour of traditional inquiry; the emotional intelligence of empathy; tacit intelligences built through experience; the special kind of touch-based or haptic intelligence where hand meets mind, and so on. In all cases the intelligence is deployed in a productive manner to transform the status quo or to imagine new and better futures.

The Intelligent Optimist has never been needed more than in the current era of political and social despondency. We are all looking for alternative visions, but not naively hopeful ones. In their various combinations of wit, rigour, lateral thinking, sensuousness, ingenuity, social engagement and all-round intelligence, these Central Saint Martins graduates show new and brilliant ways forward.

Meet *The Intelligent Optimists*



From left, designs by: Jaime Tai, Paulina Lenoir Guajardo, Ava Asaadi & Camille Auclair

Future Gazers

These are the designers who project into future worlds, jumping out from the here and now into as yet unfound possibilities. The future speculator starts with a 'What If?' and then follows the trails the question sets up. The best speculation might start in a rather strange place, but end at a point where the project appears almost self-evident, even rational.

Designers include Jaime Tai who worked with Imperial College in the lab to explore how the sugar Trehalose may be developed into products that enable humans to live on less water by reducing water loss through skin surface. Paulina Lenoir Guajardo's *Excessively Long Shoes* suppose a new reality in which people take command of the speed of their lives and deliberately slow down to find their natural rhythm. Asaadi & Auclair's *The Exquisite Corps* is inspired by Stanley Kubrick, botanical sea-mutants and René Laloux's *Fantastic Planet*. Hortense Duthilleux aims to restore a sense of calm and balance by completely massaging the mind with light in *HighLight*.

Material Explorers

These designers focus on the sophisticated exploration of material, often inventing new applications, or even new materials. Material Explorers are at the forefront of the reinvention of craft, taking a term that used to have backward-looking connotations into completely new areas.

Designers include Ana Quinones who has developed an innovative material called Materia Madura, made from waste from plantain and coffee, staple foods in Puerto Rico; Marta Bordes whose Elastic Lights is a collection of articulated lamps that bring movement and play into ceramics, questioning the role of traditional ceramic objects; Natha Khunprasert, whose innovative laser-cutting method in Chasing Colour makes us look at acrylic jewellery in a whole new light; Matty Bovan constructs garments with a wide range of materials including broaches and jewellery, and questions the relationship of function/decoration.



From left, designs by: Ana Quinones, Marta Bordes, Natha Khunprasert.

Social Agents

The designs of Social Agents are rooted in social and political contexts, and aim to transform the status quo for the better. They expand design beyond the object, and into the processes of our designed world.



From left, designs by: Carlotta Novella, Yuxi Sun, Evangeline Pesigan

Designers include Carlotta Novella and her Industrious Neighbourhoods project which looks at retrofitting existing housing to create new spaces for home-working; Yuxi Sun creates jewellery in response to friendships formed with strangers couch surfing at her flat; Evangeline Pesigan, who explores a collaborative making process that connects design to artisan craft cultures such as those in the Philippines to generate new furniture; Emil Kozole, who has created a self-censoring typeface.

The Fixers

Fixers see physical and social stuff as contexts to directly engage with, not so much as 'problems' - seeing the world as a set of problems is rather miserable and so counter-intuitive to the intelligent optimist - but as situations we can make productive sense of. Fixers are deeply practical and very lateral thinking, looking at things from a fresh perspective.



From left, designs by: Pan Wang, Georgia Fleck, Abay Zhumagulov

Designers include Pan Wang and her Memetery, a digital burial plot which uses augmented reality; Georgia Fleck, whose Carpet Everything explores the way discarded materials can be transformed; Abay Zhumagulov, whose Ova is a night-time bedside diffuser to prevent or treat auto-immune diseases; Caroline Angiulo looks at how we can use materials to trigger a state of mind wandering which research shows promotes mental well-being and creativity.

The Intelligent Optimist runs from Saturday 19 September to Saturday 17 October incl.

To RSVP to our Press View on Friday 18 September, from 12.30-6pm; register for an Exhibition Catalogue or access to the Press Dropbox when available: for further information on design works and events; to interview designers or discuss features; for press/photographer preview access please contact:

Lisa Shakespeare, Freelance publicist, 07768 485 272/ l.shakespeare@csm.arts.ac.uk or Jo Ortmans, Head of Press and Media Relations, j.ortmans@csm.arts.ac.uk

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Notes to Editors

About The Intelligent Optimist

- The show runs from **Saturday 19 September - Saturday 17 October** incl at Lethaby Gallery, Central Saint Martins, Granary Building, 1 Granary Square, King's Cross, London N1C 4AA. Website link [here](#). For information on ease of access please call 020 7514 7444. Nearest station and underground: King's Cross St Pancras, Regent's Canal Exit 47
- **Opening Hours:**
From 19-27 September, during London Design Festival:
Saturday & Sunday: 12-5pm
Monday 21 September: 10-3pm (closing early for a private event)
Tuesday - Friday: 10-6pm
From 28 September to 17 October:
Weekdays: 10-6pm
Saturdays only: 12-5pm
- **Talks/workshops/demos/performances:** Events are free, with limited numbers and sign up via Eventbrite [here](#). Designers taking part include Natha Khunprasert, Marta Bordes, Evangeline Pesigan, Caroline Angiulo, Ana Quinones, Emil Kozole, Yuxi Sun, Pan Wang, Jaime Tai, Abay Zhumagulov, Hortense Duthilleux, Paulina Lenoir Guajardo, Ava Asaadi & Camille Auclair.

About Central Saint Martins

- Central Saint Martins is internationally renowned for the creative energy of its students, staff and graduates with an exceptional reputation for educating foundation, undergraduate, postgraduate and research students in arts, design and performance. Housed in a multi award-winning building at King's Cross, CSM opens opportunities for creative collaboration and has provided an outstanding social scene for students. Indeed, 75 years of industrial and product design education at Central Saint Martins was recently awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize.
- Alumni include Alan Aldridge, Sarah Burton, Hussein Chalayan, Matthew Collings, Terence Conran, James Dyson, Michael Fassbender, Colin Firth, Gilbert and George, Antony Gormley, Tom Hardy, Christopher Kane, Stella McCartney, Alexander McQueen, Sandy Powell, Raqib Shaw, Yinka Shonibare, Joe Wright.
- CSM is part of University of the Arts London, an international centre for innovative teaching and research in arts, design, fashion, communication and the performing arts.
- The University is made up of six Colleges: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion and Wimbledon College of Art.
Please contact the Press Office if you would like further information on Central Saint Martins www.arts.ac.uk/csm

London Design Festival 19-27 September, London

- The London Design Festival has established a reputation as one of the largest and most dynamic design events in the world. Now celebrating its thirteenth year, the Festival will run from 19-27 September and aims to celebrate and promote London as the design capital of the world, and as the gateway to the international creative community.
- The official guide to the London Design Festival 2014 will be distributed across London in early September. Over 300 events and installations will be on offer across the capital, with over 250 Partners participating in the nine day Festival.
- The London Design Festival is a key constituent of London's Autumn creative season. Established in 2003 its role is to celebrate and promote London as the world's design capital and gateway to the to the International design community. In 2014 the Festival attracted a dedicated – or direct – audience of over 350,000 people, from over 60 countries.