The School of Visual Arts prepares students for career success with new content and communication skills, powered by Adobe® Digital Publishing Suite

Who can take an elegant design, blend it with critical thinking and passion, conceive a product, and successfully bring it to market? A design entrepreneur. The School of Visual Arts’ Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Designer as Author + Entrepreneur program is one of the best places to become one. Now entering its 15th year, the program is the first in the United States to pursue this discipline. MFA students experience firsthand the potent combination of design and entrepreneurial business skills. They showcase their innovative, product-based thesis work through traditional exhibits and on-stage presentations, as well as new media through an iPad app, created using Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Single Edition.

“When I saw the Martha Stewart Living magazine iPad app created in Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, I was frankly blown away by its elegance and immersive interactivity,” says Ron Callahan, director of technology for The School of Visual Arts MFA Designer as Author + Entrepreneur program. “I knew immediately that with Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, our MFA students could add a new dimension to their theses and bring their projects to life—all while learning highly marketable publishing skills for the tablet generation.”
Applied design ignites creativity

In the world of design, creative ideas and an eye for typography, form, shape, and color are essential, but to succeed in today's competitive world, designers need to be market-ready. In The School of Visual Arts MFA Designer program, students are fluent in Adobe Creative Suite® software such as Adobe Illustrator®, InDesign®, and Photoshop®. Then, drawing on students' acumen in design and industry-standard creative tools, The MFA Design program encourages entrepreneurship across a broad range of media.

Student projects are the cornerstone of the curriculum. MFA graduates must define their goals in terms of creating real products designed to enter the marketplace and serve a specific audience. In 2011, 20 MFA design entrepreneurs created projects focused on the theme 'Ideopolis', the city of ideas. Students were required to create an actual product—a website, app, campaign, brand, or even a restaurant design. One student created 11:11, a mobile app and emotion-based social network that prompts young adult cancer survivors daily to reflect upon, express, and track their emotional variance within a private community of other survivors. Another devised Fuzz Bucket, a retail yarn store housed in a vintage Airstream trailer that travels around the United States and sets up shop in public spaces.

This year, the class of 18 students demonstrated the many roles that a designer plays in the real world for their exhibition entitled "Designer As___". Themes such as Designer as Architect or Designer as Social Activist were explored in a showcase of proposals for products, campaigns, apps, and more. Students presented their ideas, reflecting the multitude of roles designers play to offer entrepreneurial solutions for today's complex social and commercial marketplace. Students also presented design-centric theses and marketable products and services on a variety of areas. One student produced Nahi, a line of soft goods such as pillows, inspired and designed by Native Americans. Another created everything from plates and food styles to flooring for a gourmet sandwich shop called The Brooklyn Sandwich Society.

"In today's world, designers wear many hats," says Callahan. "What's rewarding is that Adobe software helps students realize their ideas, no matter where they want to go."

A skilled path for career success

At the School of Visual Arts, entrepreneurship has now been extended to learning the invaluable skill of publishing to tablet devices. The class of 2011 contributed to an iPad app, Ideopolis, developed by Callahan using Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, and available on iTunes.
After the success of Ideopolis, which was exhibited in both New York City and Tokyo in 2011, the school saw the value in teaching students to produce digital publications for digital tablets. A new course, the first in the nation, focused on how to use Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, empowering students to be versed in the latest tablet publishing tools.

Adobe Digital Publishing Suite integrates with Adobe InDesign software—already familiar to all MFA students—giving the school and its students the tools they need to create, distribute, and optimize digital publications for a wide range of tablet devices, without a steep learning curve. Once the apps were completed, the class of 2012 presented their digital magazines to Condé Nast publishing experts.

The Condé Nast presentations are part of The School of Visual Arts’ goal to provide graduates with real-world feedback on their work and prepare them for future success. Companies around the world want to hire graduates with digital content-creation and communication skills. In particular, they need graduates who know how to create and deliver digital content for the tablets their customers are adopting at an ever-increasing rate. With InDesign and Digital Publishing Suite, The School of Visual Arts is equipping students with these in-demand skills.

"Tablets are a part of our lives now, and they are not going away any time soon," says Callahan. "People are increasingly using tablets to consume content and be entertained. Tablet-based content and Adobe Digital Publishing Suite are the future of publishing, so we know we have to equip our students with the right tools and skills."

**Shaping the future**

The journey into digital publishing not only helps bring student ideas to life on an increasingly popular platform, but also presents projects in ways that helps attract clients. "Adobe Digital Publishing Suite amplifies traditional design skills to put students on the cutting edge," says Callahan.

Since introducing Digital Publishing Suite into the curriculum, several students have created apps and digital magazines on a variety of topics. Some people may want to know how to communicate better with a dog. Others may seek to learn more about the history of Chinese music, or explore the unique ethnic neighborhoods on the New York City’s No. 7 subway line. The School of Visual Arts MFA Design students can help with one of their many apps available for download.

So, what’s next in the world of relevant, beautiful new products and services? For MFA Designer as Author + Entrepreneur students at The School of Visual Arts, the future of design, entrepreneurship, and digital publishing is theirs to shape.

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Director of technology, MFA Design program,
The School of Visual Arts

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