

probe 

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PRODUCT
DESIGN, UDK
BERLIN

probe 

UDK'S IMPACT
ON DESIGN
EDUCATION

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UDK'S IMPACT ON DESIGN EDUCATION

—

EYES CHANGE,
BY GABRIELLE
KENNEDY
FOR DAMn⁰
MAGAZINE *

“The world is full of stuff and as a designer you are part of that problem,” says Ineke Hans. “So how can you reconcile this if you like to design?” 9

Hans, a Dutch designer, educator and researcher, is addressing this quandary (amongst others) in her new position as professor of the Design and Social Context department at UdK, Berlin, one of Europe’s oldest product design schools.

The appointment comes at a moment when the discipline has extended its definition and influence to such an extent that students struggle to grasp their potential relevance.

“Given the current reality, I think designers need to channel their qualities into more intangible products, into research and getting more deeply involved in strategies,” Hans says. “I often find that designers play too small a role, just a fraction of what a project entails. I tend to be involved in my projects deeply but also notice in my own studio that my role has changed from furniture and product designer to problem solver and researcher and in a broader variety of fields. “Sometimes I think I have to excuse myself for being schizophrenic but this more diverse role is the reality for many designers nowadays.... which makes it even more important to be able to define opportunities.”

The challenge for Hans at UdK is to keep the course syllabus abreast with the rollercoaster changes in the industry. Axel Kufus is Professor for design and development at UdK. He thinks to keep up with change it is important that departments not become too specific. “I like to see students embrace both digital and analogue strategies,” he says, “to marry classical research with innovation and

10 to always be looking to cooperate with companies. I think the key is to know how to be interdisciplinary - how to see roles for architects, urban planners, artists, and engineers within projects.”

At the core of this push to stay relevant, however, is the bigger question of what is the purpose of design education, and what should they be preparing students for?

“It’s very common that people inside (as well as outside) design education try to categorize art schools into either industry-focused or being a creative bubble, an ivory tower,” says UdK (and RCA) alumnus Dirk Winkel. “Often schools are even proud of being seen as one or the other. That’s fine when you want to create a certain external image, but in the end, I think that magic can only happen if schools try to move away from operating in one of these categories and try to span the whole range. Art schools need to embody this rare link, to be a creative accelerator where people are educated about the constraints of reality, but also about the potential of pushing these limits at the same time.”

“And I think the best way to establish this link is to build a context for design thinking,” adds Hans, “because the context we are working in as designers has changed. There are no longer any classic furniture designers who just work for a company and live off the royalties. It doesn’t work like that anymore. More and more I start to see design as a system so knowing how design can work in different social, political and economic systems and what strategies can be implemented is imperative.”

But it is exactly such a context that hardly exists in academia. The foundation of almost every design school in



Dirk Winkel with Alto light in Wästberg stand

II

12 the world is Bauhaus. “And of course we all love it,” says Hans, “but it is an educational system that was built on a very different reality to what we have today, a reality that saw architects designing. We are a century on, a century in which we have seen trained designers working for industry, galleries, on social projects, and on material innovation. Today, graduates need to know not only how to perform in these fields, but also how to find a place for design in new ones.”

Last month on German television art director Mike Meiré gave a fiery attack on the lack of revolution in design education. “Where is the leadership ... where is fashion, where is the museum, where is architecture?” he said. “I see a few prints and posters, but that is not Bauhaus yet. Where are the magazines, where is the inspiration, where is the strategy? ... It is all kind of a comfort zone .“

But at the same time school is not reality, and is one of the few sacred places and moments where fiction, ideas, experimentation and failure can be genuinely indulged. “Yes, but I do think it is really important for students to know the reality behind what they are learning,” says Hans.

Current third year student Ayosha Kortlang likes the mix he has encountered at UdK. “School is a safe space,” he says. “We feel free to be conceptual and experimental, but I also like that we get the opportunity to go out to the real world and check if our ideas make any sense. We work closely with manufacturers in Berlin, for example, who let us know if our prototypes are possible. At UdK there is always the opportunity to check that our ideas are not totally self-indulgent and have some relevance



to a broader public. Of course after that we can go back 15
to the safe haven of school and play deeper. The external
view works as a check and balance, and after graduation
that space to really experiment with new typologies and
ways of thinking becomes much harder.”

Magnus Wästberg, CEO of lighting producers says finding
the right graduates to collaborate with can be a struggle.
“The vast majority of young designers I come into contact
with lack what I need most,” he says. “They are too much
focused on the object as just an object, but I need people
who can solve problems and who can understand the con-
text of a clients’ needs, how the product contributes to a
bigger story.”

Here Wästberg draws a distinction between product and
object. “Graduates are good with objects - a physical thing
with a form, but I find them less convincing when it comes
to products, a thing that exists for a specific reason.”

Most important is that at school designers access the
necessary mental freedom to allow their own personal at-
titudes to flourish. It seems the more context students are
fed, the better chances they will have of working. Because
graduates want jobs, and their parents, who paid for their
education, want them to have jobs.

“Also the job goal really does depend on who’s in front of
you,” adds Dirk Winkel. “There are students where you
feel from the start that they want to follow a very straight
path into industry, and there are those who love to explore
and to experiment endlessly. Sometimes it will be wise to
open up their views for the other side, showing reality to
dreamers and dreams to realists, but in the end, it’s never

16 fully in our hands. Not to forget that in the field of design,
the classic system of employer and employee becomes less
and less important in our era of crowd-funding and glo-
bal networking.”

As the UdK revamps its position in design education it
will be fascinating to watch how this balance is establis-
hed. Hans has the advantage – her background is Dutch
conceptual design, but her current reality is immersed in
the thoroughness and precision of Germany. “As a desig-
ner I need people in my studio who know their history and
who can draw,” she says. “But as an educator I also want
to make young designers aware of their position as inter-
mediates between buyers and the making industry there-
fore they need to be able to think sharply and be original.”

* AN EXTRACT OF THE ABOVE TEXT CAN BE FOUND IN DAMⁿ
MAGAZINE NR. 66 JAN/FEB 2018 (INSERT IMM COLOGNE P7)

THE BA AND MA PRODUCT
DESIGN COURSES OF THE
UNIVERSITÄT DER KÜNSTE BERLIN

EXPLORE

STUDENTS LOOK INTO NEW
MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES
FOR DESIGN. THEY AIM TO
FIND NEW TYPOLOGIES AND
PRODUCTS THAT FIT TO THE TIME
WE LIVE IN AND OUR FUTURE.

THROUGH COLLABORATIONS
WITH PROFESSIONAL PARTIES
THEY INSPIRE PARTNERS AND
- AT THE SAME TIME - BUILD
UP EXPERIENCE THEMSELVES
WITH IMPLEMENTING THEIR
EXPLORATIONS INTO REALITY.

AT IMM UDK BERLIN PRESENTS
THESE EXPLORATIONS
IN FOUR DOMAINS: MATERIALS,
PRODUCTS, CO-OPERATIONS,
REALITY.

MATERIALS 1

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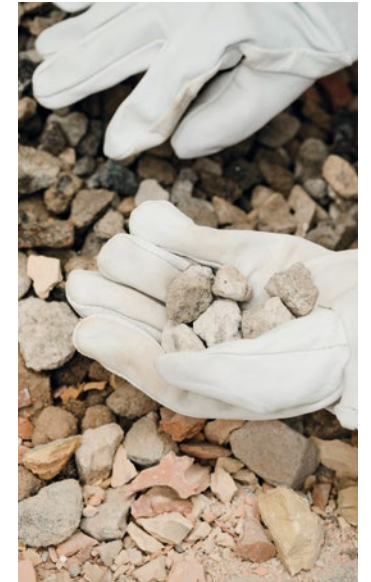
LUISA RUBISCH,
RASA WEBER

—

URBAN TERRAZZO,
MA 2017

*Can we use the piles of waste generated when
buildings are demolished and be meaningful?*

For these tiles the remnants of architectural waste are
turned into a new surface material. With ultra high
performance concrete, unique terrazzo tiles can be
custom made for any building, but also for one that rises
at the location of their origin.



www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/02/luisa-rubisch-und-rasa-weber / www.urbanterrazzo.com / info@urbanterrazzo.com

MATERIALS 2

ERIC ESSER

—

3D PRINTING NEW MATERIALS, MA 2017

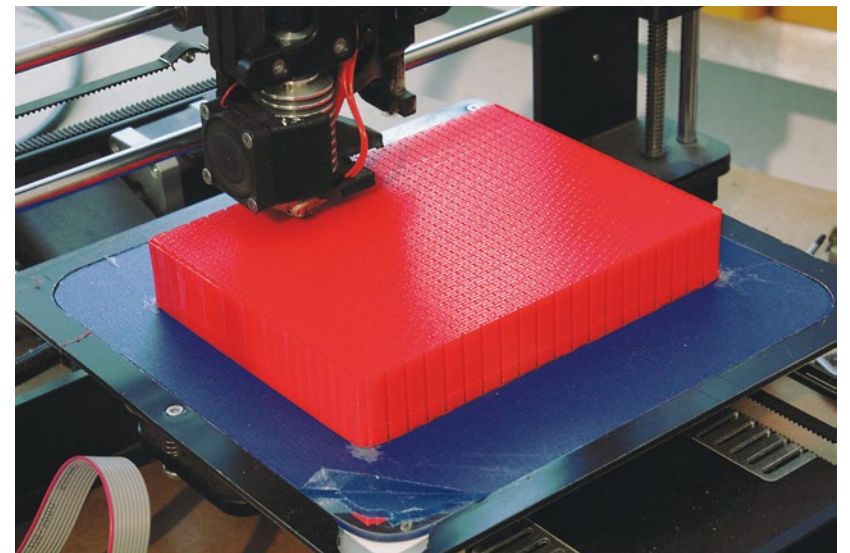
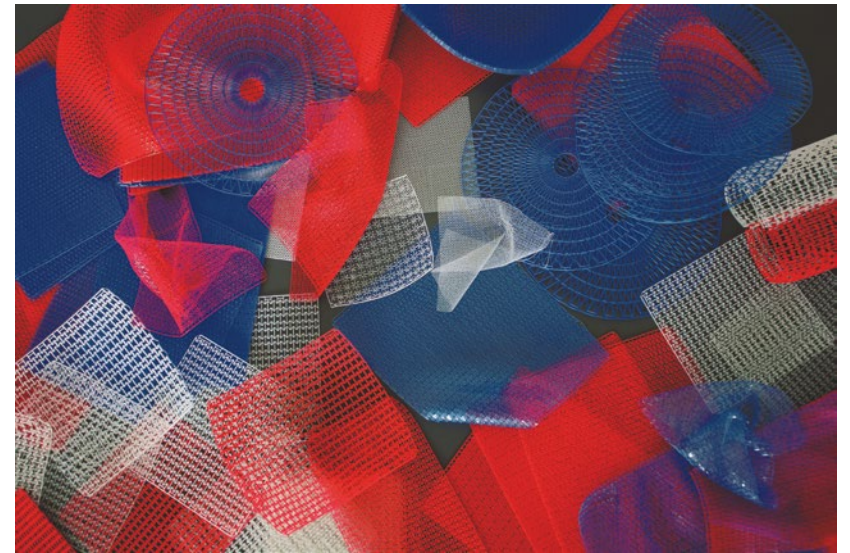
How can we optimally use 3d printing?

These material explorations focus on the advantages of 3d printing as a making method and how this process can be optimally designed.

Efficient printpaths – that relate to the structures of the 3D files and the used FDM (numeric) method – are used to create new interactive materials.

21

22



www.design.ludk-berlin.de/2017/02/eric-esser / eric.esser@gmx.de

MATERIALS 3

23

24

YAIR KIRA

—

THE NATURE OF ART FORMS, BA 2017

Can we use the 3d printer as a crafting tool and co-creator of objects that evoke emotional connections?

PLA (Polylactic Acid) filaments are used on the FFF (Fused Filament Fabrication) printer. Systematically embedded irregularities and errors integrated in the process act on the extruded filaments, similar to processes found in nature.



www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/05/yair-kira / yair.kira@gmail.com

PRODUCTS 1

25

26

SEBASTIAN
GOLDSCHMIDT
BOEING

—

SIMPLE OBJECTS FOR
UNEXPRESSED NEEDS,
MA 2017

New Typologies. What is an object and what is a need?

This product is part of a collection that explored how and when objects turn into utensils and how new use and product typologies arise. Is the object under the window to grow flowers, to scare off pigeons, or an ashtray for smokers banned from indoors?

www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/02/sebastian-goldschmidtboeing



PRODUCTS 2

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LAUREANNE KOOTSTRA

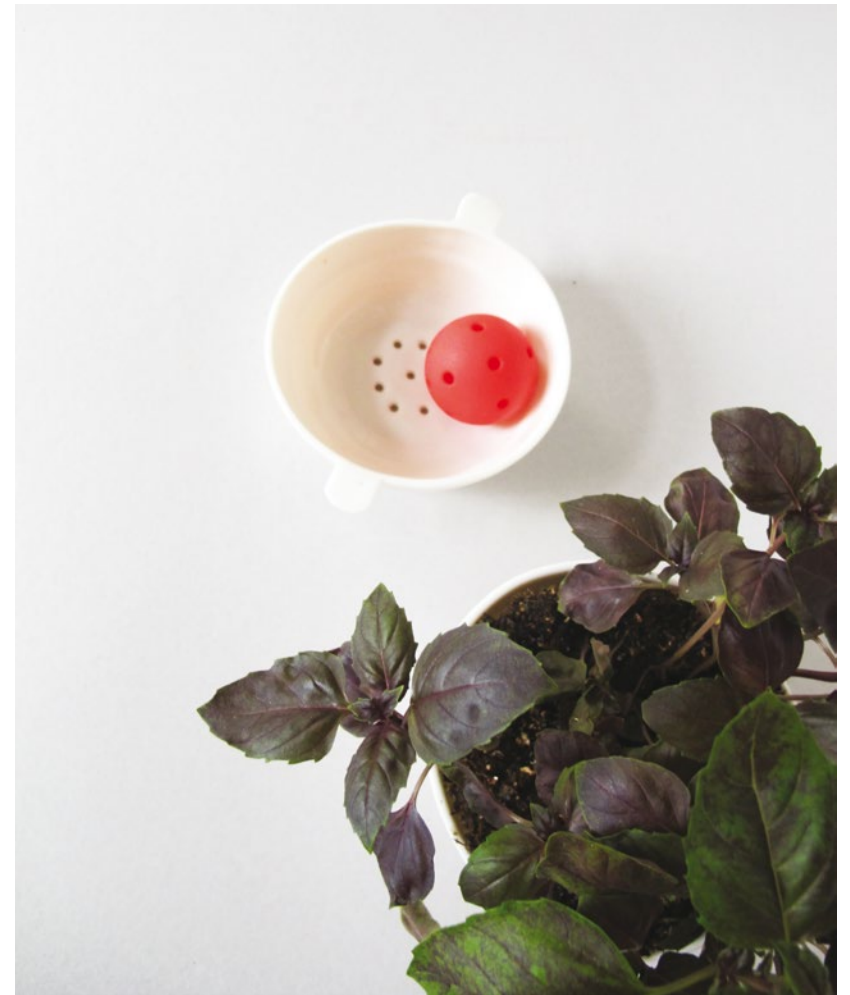
—

RUMINANT ME, 6. SEMESTER SUSE 2016

Speculative. What to do for the more than 10% of the worlds population – 800 million people – who suffer from a lack of food?

Cellulose is the world's most abundant organic compound and is found in cell walls of almost every plant. Cows and other ruminant animals can digest it, unlike humans. Ruminant me is an external stomach to digest cellulose activated by a microbe-filled ball that moves around in it.

www.design.udk-berlin.de/2016/11/ruminant-me-laureanne-kootstra / laureannekootstra@gmail.com



PRODUCTS 3

29

30

CATHRYN
MCANESPY

—

SCREW,
7. SEMESTER WISE
2016 / 17

New Typologies. How to create an ornamental and at the same time mechanical object to use?

Spirals rotate linear into each other and create various containers that screw into each other autonomously.

Initially made with a simple DIY i3 Reprap printer, the spirals and the layer height were developed with grasshopper. The containers can be screwed tightly and click into a conic end.



PRODUCTS 4

31

GRIP TO GRASP

—

3. SEMESTER, WISE 2016/17

*New Typologies. Can our hands understand
what we see?*

Through grip you can get a grip on things and that has
an effect on how products look.

www.design.udk-berlin.de/designprojekte/zum-greifen-nah-id5

32

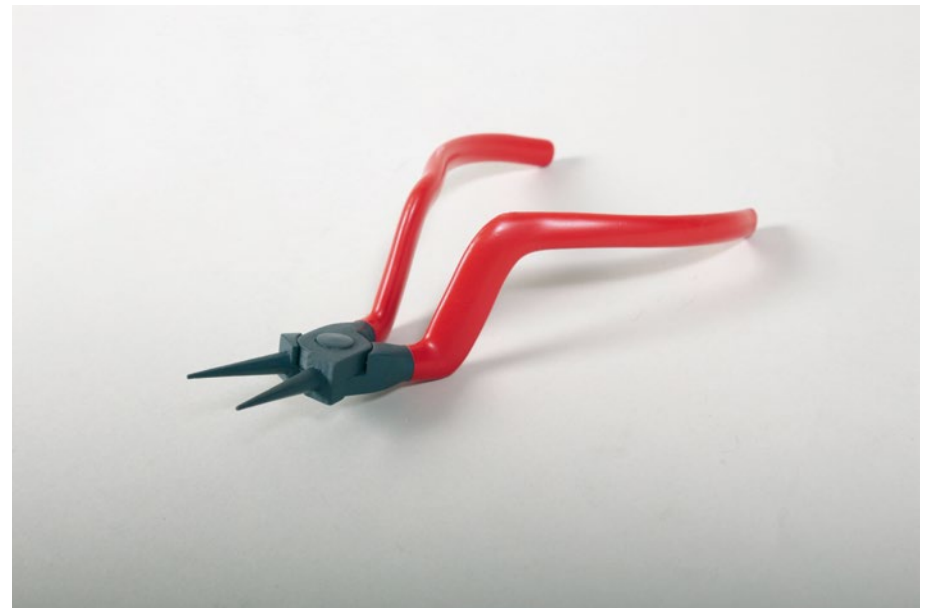
#1 AYOSHA KORTLANG

—

PLIERS

The hands represent a relationship to objects. Tools
are extensions of our hands that shape our environment.

The pliers are a prostheses of self optimisation
of the body.



www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/08/zange-ayosha-kortlang

#2 SASCHA HUTH

— SOLID

33

The aim was to develop a writing aid that gives the recipient a high quality feeling of use. People have different sized hands, so why not the right pen size for a suitable hand?



#3 MARCEL BAUERNFEIND

— PEGPEN

34

When writing a unique hand-eye coordination takes place. A triangular ergonomic relief is developed for prolonged writing. By turning the pen head, the filling disappears into the body, and is thus protected from dust and dirt.



CO- OPERATIONS 1

THE LOVE SCHOOL PROJECT

—

WISE 2016/17

In 2016 a group of UdK students visited the Love School in the Kangemi slum in Nairobi, Kenya. A co-creation project started to explore each other's culture and making methods, to support the school and – for UdK students – to gain experience in working with clients. The students designed products to be sold by the pupils for the acquisition of the school property and taught them how to make it.

www.design.udk-berlin.de/designprojekte/the-charity-pl-project



CO-OP 1, THE LOVE SCHOOL

#1 LOUIS BINDERNAGEL

—

ROPERY

*How can a simple material and rope that changed
boating, building and shop-keeping in the past
play a role today?*

Africa is known for its basket weaving traditions, but the ropes are visually lost in the process. For this project rope was made from plastig bags and - by using the knots and loops of sailors - turned into new carrying/ holding objects: waterproof.



CO-OP 1, THE LOVE SCHOOL

#2 PAULINE SCHLAUTMANN

— BENCHMARK

How to design furniture when materials are expensive or scarce, and when the making options are limited (no power, few tools)?

This project arised from learning from the slum inhabitants and seeing the Love School kids and local craftsmen working with what they had: materials, objects, parts that were already existing and freely available. For the chair, only found material and minimal tools were used.



CO-OP 1, THE LOVE SCHOOL

#3 MARTIN FENSKE

— SHIFT

How to DIY a coffee maker?

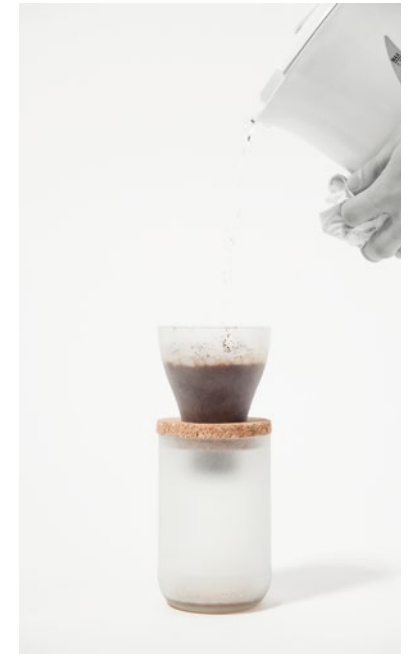
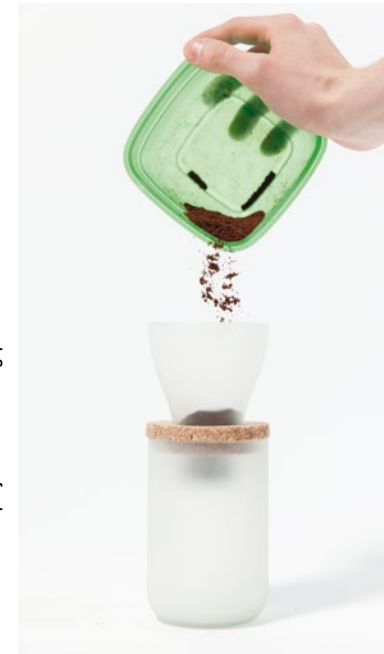
Cutting glass bottles
can lead to fascinating new shapes.

Using preshaped glass in Nairobi that can be found
in the form of screw top jars, glass bottles and light
bulbs led to this coffeemaker made with a simple
glass cutter and sandpaper.

Instead of cork rope can suit as a connector
or for example a ring made out of ropes from the
Ropery project.

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www.theloveschoolproject.org/products/shift

CO- OPERATIONS 2

BETWEEN ON AND OFF, THE OSRAM PROJECT

—

SUSE 2017

Coinciding with their annual Osram Light Art Award, UdK worked together with Osram, one of the world's leading manufacturers of light sources. Part of this is an exhibition of all designs in Munich in winter/spring 2018. An Arduino introduction and working with electronics and sensors was integrated into the project. For Osram, a range of artistic and conceptual products were created that questioned the status quo of light and looked into the potential futures.



CO-OP 2, OSRAM

45

46

#1 KIMIA AMIR MOAZAMI

—

LIGHT CLOCK

How does light define your day?

By shining light on a mirrored rod, a shadow and a reflection are projected on the floor. They move at different speeds and work together as a clock. The Light Clock can be thought of as a further development of the sundial and relates to the influence of light on human beings. First prize in the Osram contest.

www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/04/between-on-and-off-osram



CO-OP 2, OSRAM

#2 DENNIS NGUYEN

—
|S|

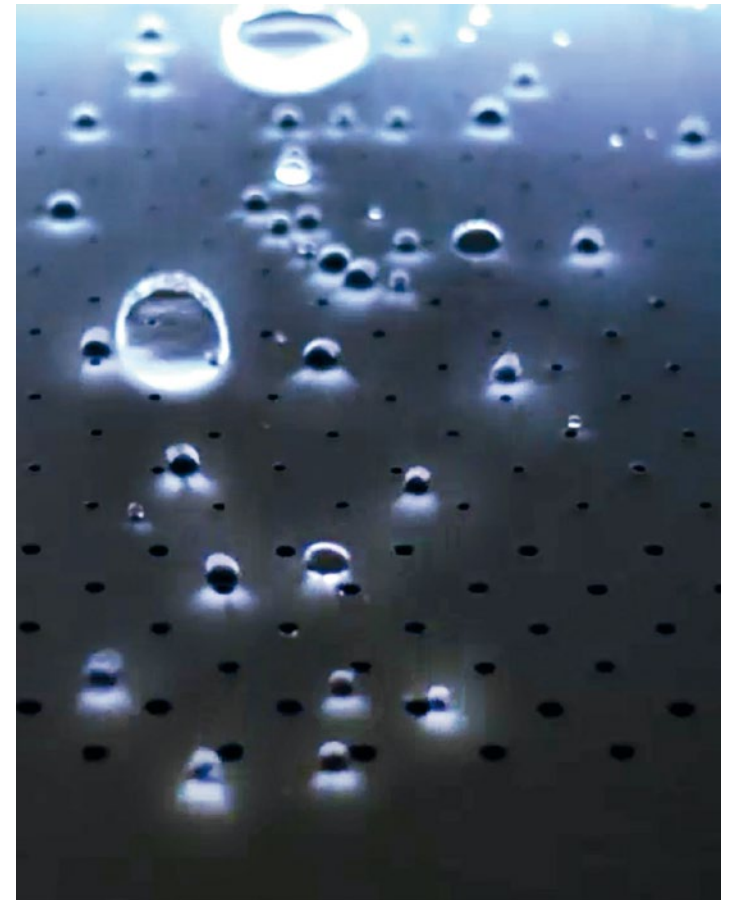
How can light enchant?

A light installation that aims to capture the magic effects
light and water upon each other. A second prize in the
Osram contest.

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www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/04/between-on-and-off-osram



CO-OP 2, OSRAM

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#3 PARINAZ JABIRIAN,
JONNA BREITENHUBER,
ANNA RYZHOVA

—

ANDROMEDA / EKLIPSE /
LYRE OF LIGHT

How to manipulate light?

Three projects explore the change of light. There is no on/off for these lights, but - when you touch - just gradations from dark to light because external effects are applied: + Black structures on inflating balls make breathing lights. + A perforated stretching rubber skin. + Vertical slats to all walls in a room.
A second prize in the Osram contest.



www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/04/between-on-and-off-osram



CO-OP 2, OSRAM

#4 KATHARINA BELLINGER

—

FLINT / MAGIC TORCH /
LITTLE LAMP

How to connect the physical world to the digital world?

Three products invite children to play,
and to become the movers and shapers of light.

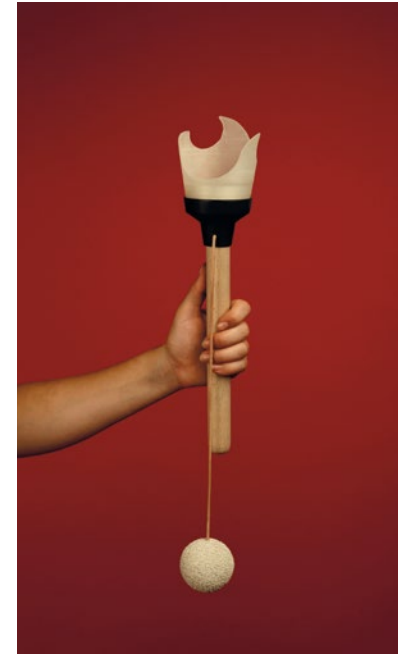
+ Through arduino and microphone sensors
stones come alive. A third prize in Osram contest.

+ Lights become fun, invite you to move
and become active.

+ A small push-light becomes
your night companion in the darkness.

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www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/04/between-on-and-off-osram

CO-OP 2, OSRAM

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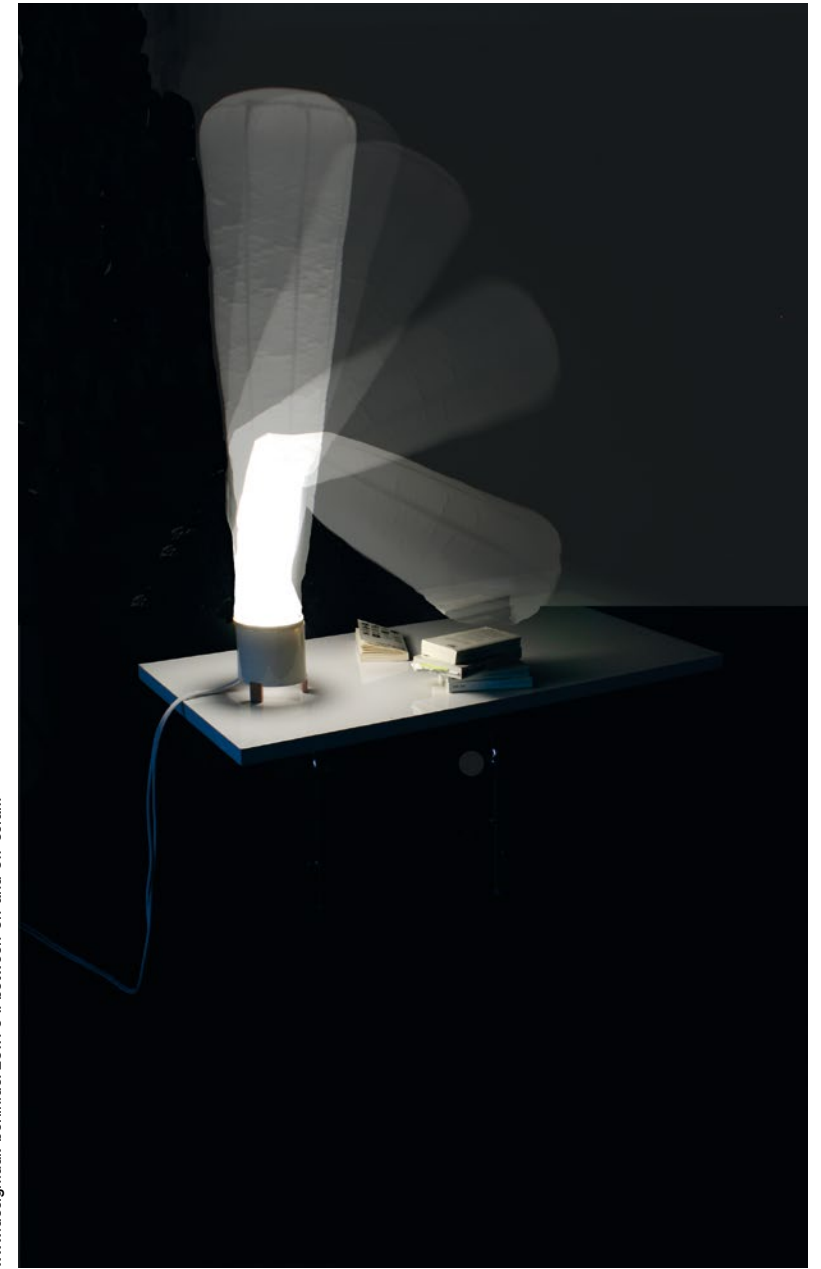
#5 SOPHIE STANITZEK

— FILL

Can a light sense the qualities of a space?

This light object does not only give the quality of light to a room, but also senses the quality of the air in a space. A fan blows up, but when the air quality goes down the light falls down too. A third prize in the Osram contest.

www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/04/between-on-and-off-osram



CO-OP 2, OSRAM

#6 DOMINIK ANNIES

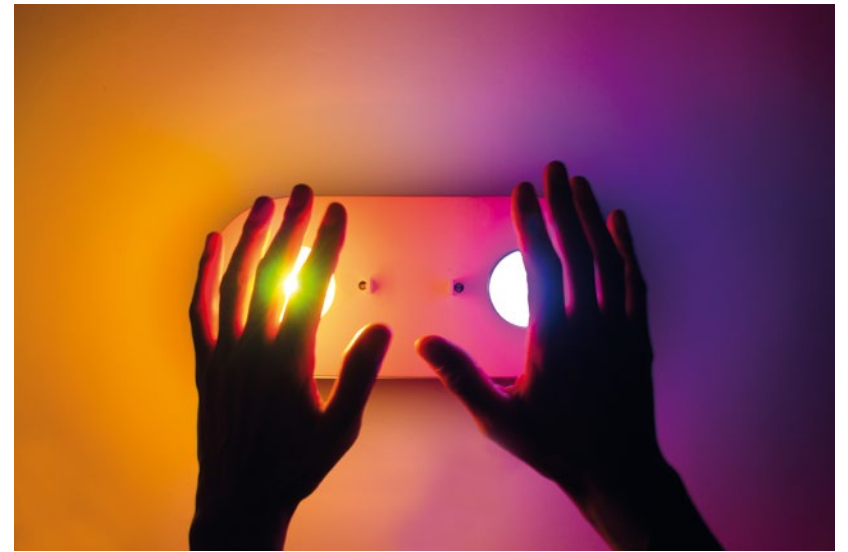
— LIGHT ORGAN

*How to express the feelings that arise when you
,touch' light?*

Whilst playing the beams of this Light Organ with your fingers, the sound and the colours of the light change the mood and atmosphere of a room. A third prize in the Osram contest.

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www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/04/between-on-and-off-osram

CO-OP 2, OSRAM

#7 MORIEL BLAU

—

V-EAR

What if you and your mirror could communicate?

This visual ear stimulates the sentences. The mirror responds to voices with light and, depending on their moods, the mirror chooses its color. A third prize in the Osram contest.

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www.design.udk-berlin.de/2017/04/between-on-and-off-osram



REALITY

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VLASTA KUBUSOVA — CRAFTING PLASTICS!, MA 2015

Vlasta Kubusova and fashion designer Verena Michels explored uses for bio plastics and natural fibers and how to react to today's crises of interaction between ecology and the economy.

To give bio plastics a stage, a platform was set up to create awareness and products. Upon graduation awarded with a UdK grant to explore the real world, Vlasta set up the Crafting Plastics Studio for further research and cooperations and hit off online.



www.craftingplastics.com

ABOUT PRODUCT DESIGN AT UDK BERLIN

UdK is one of the oldest Universities of the Arts, and houses schools for Fine Arts, Architecture, Media, Design, Music and Performing Arts. Its origins are found in 1694/1696 as the Prussian Academy of Arts.

Acknowledged designers like Nick Roericht and Andreas Brandolini have taught design at UdK in the past. Former students at UdK are amongst others, Burkhard Schmitz,

61

62 Axel Kufus, Jasper Morrison, Oliver Vogt, Herman Weizenegger, Werner Aisslinger, Mark Braun, Lukas Wegwerth, Dirk Winkel, Sasha Pohflepp, David Geckeler, Lisa Keller, Hanne Willmann and Silvia Terhedebrügge.

The Product Design program of today has a 4 year BA Course, a 1 year MA Course and an intense exchange programs with (inter)nationally befriended colleges, institutions and companies. It offers strong and cutting edge knowledge transfers on Art & Design, Industrial Design & Technology, Cultural Science & Design Theory and Design Practice.

As Berlin University the UdK is rooted in research with institutes such as Fraunhofer Society and Max Plank Society around its corner. However the Product Design department also houses the reknown Design Research Lab endowed by Telekom Innovation Laboratories.

The Design Practice courses each have their own focus on a specific scope of design, but they all teach and empower the development of conceptual and autonomous design thinking to be applied in products and strategies for our future. During their studies students can choose to enroll these different Design Practice courses, thus developing their own attitudes and field of expertise.

Annually a grants program supports selected BA and MA graduates in establishing their practice after leaving the UdK.

CURRENT PRODUCT DESIGN PROFESSOR- SHIPS AT UDK BERLIN

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Art & Design
PROFESSOR JOZEF LEGRAND
www.design.udk-berlin.de/kunstunddesign

Basis Labor
PROFESSOR ROBERT SCHEIPNER
www.design.udk-berlin.de/projektgruppe/basislabor

Industrial Design & Technology
PROFESSOR HOLGER NEUMANN
www.design.udk-berlin.de/Prof_Holger_Neumann

Cultural Science & Design Theory
PROFESSOR DR. KATHRIN BUSCH
www.design.udk-berlin.de/produkt-design-ba/theorie

Design Research Lab
PROFESSOR DR. GESCHE JOOST
www.design.udk-berlin.de/ueber-das-studium/designforschung
www.design-research-lab.org

Design Practice
Design and Experiment
PROFESSOR ACHIM HEINE
www.design.udk-berlin.de/projektgruppe/id1-prof-achim-heine

Design and Development
PROFESSOR AXEL KUFUS
www.design.udk-berlin.de/projektgruppe/prof-axel-kufus-3

Design and Social Context
PROFESSOR INEKE HANS
www.design.udk-berlin.de/projektgruppe/prof-ineke-hans

Design and Interactive Systems
PROFESSOR BURKHARD SCHMITZ
www.design.udk-berlin.de/projektgruppe/id5

INTRODUCTION:
GABRIELLE KENNEDY / DAMn° MAGAZINE

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