

## Design Futures - continued

Adam Marshall

A number of final year students on the BSc Product Design have designed for outdoor play, including swimming pool games, equipment for outward bound centres and playgrounds. Adam was interested in outward bound centres and primary schools, developing equipment educational, healthy and fun.

Playgrounds are now considered to be part of outdoor classrooms. They are required to stretch the mind body and inculcate an appreciation of the natural environment by being integrated with it. He was the Senior Designer on both Racecourse play projects.

This section also features a project just completed by undergraduates; Mapping a form - the Cube.

This year, a three week introductory design project was set for Interior Design, Product Design and Architectural Technology students. During this project, students were asked to transform the basic Platon-solid into a design object or space, following three key steps of their choice and inventing a narrative. The exploration encouraged them to employ a range of media and techniques (analogue and digital) with the design question maintaining a level of abstraction to give space for creative thinking and intriguing debates. The process resulted in three playful designs.

### Global Well-being

This area is in the second part of the hallway and starts with the films. More of the original Bassett Lowke footage has been included showing play in the local community. There is an image of this building, of play at the school next door and on the race course opposite in the 1930's.

The cases contain toys from local manufacturers and publishers, particularly DKL and Buster Books. But also enclosed are toys from Africa made from recycled rubber.

Thanks to New Players

Adam Marshall

MGA Entertainment

Miracle Design and Play

Daniel Screen

Roma Lear

Rachel B Stevens

David Harley

## Catalogue Update for Avenue Gallery Exhibiton 28th October - 15th November 2013

Welcome to the second version of the exhibition at Avenue Gallery, The School of The Arts, The University of Northampton. There have been several additions and a minor changes in the order of the displays.

As in an Elizabethan Country House, we have taken over the Long Gallery as a play space and turned it into a venue for a street party. The Gallery itself is now a giant cardboard box play house which we have filled with toys for all. Huizinga in his writings defining 'ludic' play, argues that play occurs in a defined area or space; and we have tried to create this type of space to illustrate and demonstrate the creative benefits of play for all.

### Playing at the Crossroads

This area is about the benefits of play to the Northamptonshire region and the UK toy industry today.

Two new panels have been added. The first, about the German collaborations in the interwar period, has been written by Artmis Yagou, a researcher working with toy Collections in Munich.

The second features Blossom Toys and MGA Entertainment. Here again there are links to vinyl manufacturing innovation and rotary moulding. Today companies based in the region are working with partners in Germany just as Bassett Lowke did a century ago.

One display case contains a Mettoy Dolls House and a Trix train set not featured in the first exhibition.

A Space Hopper is in the second case, along with an account about how they were manufactured, written by Paul Taylor, who worked for the firm in the 1970's.

### Early Benefits

This area is to the left of the main gallery entrance.

There is space for more examples of Ken Garland's graphics for Abbatt and Galt Toys. He has lent us a copy of his Connect game and allowed visitors to play.

## Early Benefits - continued

Marion Hine, Roger Limbrick's partner, has lent us a number of toys and prototypes of his designs for Galt, as well as examples of his work at the London College of Furniture which feature in the Caring Connections section of the exhibition.

A prototype open-sided dolls house designed for group play and a ride-on truck both sold as Galt products. The glass case features the interslot game, a derivative of which is also in the exhibition; his unusual house brick, which uses different shaped blocks; and also another of his designs, the Carousel of Fantasy where the box is part of the toy.

## Caring Connections

Additions for this section of the show include more work by Roger Limbrick.

RollBahn is a design in conjunction with Mike Ayres arising out of the Design for Disabled Research Project and produced by Kurt Naef (Switzerland). For the same project Roger designed and made a set of Real Things Dominoes, for people who have problems understanding illustrations. The Above and Below Puzzles were created to help people learn to read, and were designed by Roger Limbrick and Marion Hine.

Roma Lear has published extensively on play and has designed a series of toys for children with brittle bones. For their exhibition we have been loaned her dolls house, which is on a turntable to make it easier for the children to use.

There is a new window panel about Rachel B Stevens and her work for Hestair Hope and Kiddicraft Toys, and also her design work for BBC/RSPCA Animal Hospital television series. The case contains examples of these projects, and also design development models by Vicki Thomas for the same charity. Similar toy designs created to raise money for children's charities are showcased by Jessie Eckel's work for Unicef.

The case also contains designs by students on Roger Limbrick's and John Gould's Toy Making Course formerly also run at the London College of Furniture.

## Creative Community

This section now sits in the centre of the Gallery. With its shed and grass it represents play at work and in adult leisure time. We have added Gerry Anderson Toys to the furnishing of the shed, to represent the host of creative individuals who use shed as creative work places.

The case of toys links with the video films shown on the screen and all linked with licensed properties and new versions of old favourites - fashion dolls and war games.

There is also a games area showcasing new technology and the designers we have just started training for the Games industry. A live student project was undertaken with Gordon Murray, the creator of the Trumpton, creating a new app based on his TV characters.

## Design Futures

This area has been expanded to show more undergraduate and graduate work. Dave Harley's Kit Kar and Daniel Screen's Explorer toy prototypes are on show.

A new window has been added featuring Miracle Design and Play. Outdoor play has long been promoted as beneficial for all; with schools, local authorities and housing developers providing community play areas and sports fields.

The design of playgrounds has changed with shifting ideas and changing attitudes. Before the 1960's there was tarmac, metal swings and climbing frames, all very angular in their design. The concept of the Adventure playground, developments in technology and increased awareness of health and safety prompted the introduction of safer surfacing, more exciting sculptural play equipment introducing rope and more robust, durable plastics and timber. The latest evolution in play, initiated by the Government's Playbuilder and Pathfinder schemes, is the incorporation of play into the natural landscape, using more natural forms of timber, boulders and mounding. Miracle Design and Play is leading the new emphasis designing both The Dragon Mounds and Central Play Area on the Racecourse.