



April 2024

Welcome  
Program Updates  
Feature Article  
Briefings

Academy Achievements  
External Collaborations

NEWSLETTER



# WELCOME



April has been a busy month at the Academy. As we gain momentum with projects from all sectors, we reflect on the accomplishments that have brought us to this stage.

The 2024 Semester 1 Interns recently had their mid-semester review. We were thoroughly impressed by the level of work presented at this stage and eagerly anticipate their final projects, which we believe will be even more remarkable.

We even had the chance to witness some amazing accomplishments from our research team. Alexandra shares her journey and recent achievements below in our newest blog.

The Special Projects team has done some exciting work during the month. Allowing them to explore new areas of design whilst also brushing up on their skills.

Of course, this is only possible with the tireless efforts of our dedicated team. We are fortunate to have such a talented and committed group of individuals who consistently go above and beyond to ensure that our projects are completed to the highest standard. Their hard work and dedication are a testament to the values that we hold dear at the Academy.

Enjoy the read!

Dr Rafael Gomez  
Founder + Academy Lead

# PROGRAMS



## INTERNSHIPS

The Internship program focuses on Fostering Design Excellence. It offers high-performing QUT design students an opportunity to advance their learning through real-world projects, and provides a pathway for paid internship placements at BMW Group in Munich, Germany.

### ***Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Academy Internships***

Our Semester 1 2024 Academy WIL interns presented their initial design concepts to us and we were truly impressed by their dedication and the exceptional quality of their ideas.

Lewis and Aalisha are each working on an exhibition booth design for TechOffice Munich that shows off SORDI.ai to the public. Both are required to focus on a specific technology/feature of SORDI (e.g. defect detection in assets, metadata and ageing simulations to predict costs and lifecycle) which has to be presented within the overall booth design. Through this they are learning 3D modeling, texturing, graphics and other key skills that our BMW Group colleagues utilise in their work

Chloe and Avery have been diligently improving aspects of Academy branding. They both produced various concepts, following the guidelines and branching out to new ideas. These include new typefaces, colours, and graphics as well as identifying new trends and styles that can be implemented easily within the Academy. Chloe and Avery have really impressed us so far with their Academy branding ideas, and we already know that we will be deploying their ideas across all of our branding mediums, once their internships have been completed

We want to congratulate Lewis, Aalisha Chloe, and Avery on their remarkable efforts this semester, and we are eagerly waiting for their final presentations.

### Games Design Capstone

Earlier this month, the Games Design Capstone students presented their work to the Academy and QUT team. We were impressed by the quality and level of work these students have accomplished. Although we can't disclose too much at this point, please know that we are thrilled with their progress.

### RESEARCH

The Research program centers on Exploring Knowledge Horizons. We have initiated a progressive research agenda for PhD and MPhil students to conduct world-class research through the Academy.

### PhD Scholarships

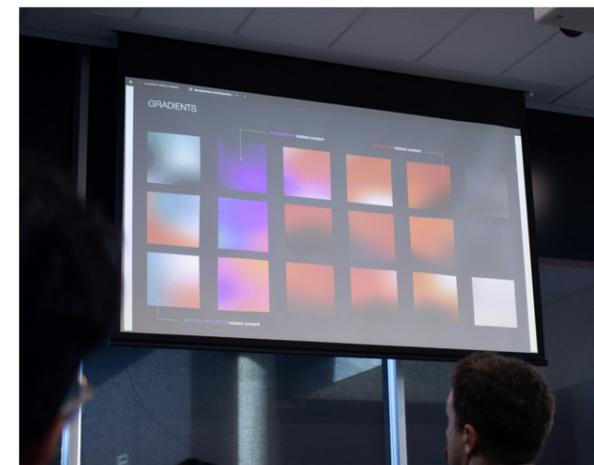
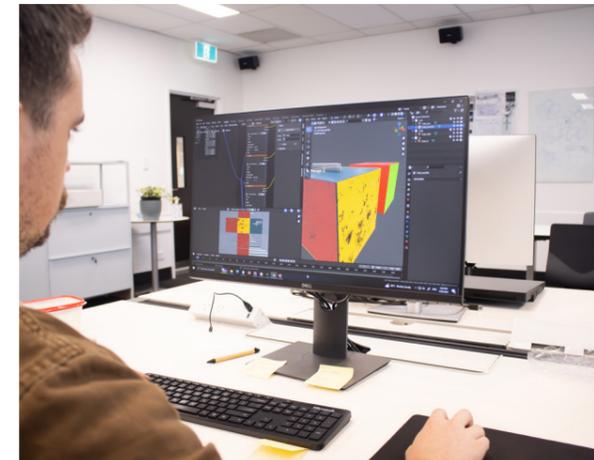
Alexandra Singleton recently completed her PhD confirmation, which marked a significant milestone in her academic journey. This process involved presenting a year's worth of research to a panel of experts from both the QUT School of Design and the School of Architecture & Built Environment. During the confirmation, she defended the significance and methodology of her work and received constructive feedback. After a thorough evaluation, she successfully demonstrated the viability of her study, which has solidified her path for the continuation of her doctoral journey over the next two years. Let's congratulate Alex on her impressive achievement!

### SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Special Projects program pioneers world-first projects by Advancing Cutting-Edge Technologies. It is tailored for professional design graduates to work on advanced R+D projects for real-world applications. These projects are established by BMW Group in Munich and are supported by the Special Projects team at the academy.

### idealworks Project

This month we kicked off a short project with the idealworks team, sparking a keen interest within the team. We are working on design concepts for new hardware which could be added to the idealworks catalogue. We'd love to tell you more, and show you our progress, but like a lot of our projects we unfortunately cannot share further information for now.



# FEATURE

**ALEXANDRA SINGLETON**  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE (PHD)  
BMW GROUP + QUT  
DESIGN ACADEMY



## PHD CHRONICLES: A JOURNEY OF TRIUMPH OVER CONFIRMATION

### ALEXANDRA SINGLETON

Research Associate

Embarking on a PhD journey is an incredibly rewarding opportunity that expands one's knowledge base and provides a unique learning experience. Although I am just over a year into my own PhD journey, I can confirm that it has been a rewarding experience, consistently challenging my perspectives, personal epistemology, and mental resilience. Fortunately, you are never alone on your PhD journey, you have the support of your supervisory team every step of the way. Your team is comprised of experts in their fields who offer guidance and expertise, and in my case, help filter out overly ambitious ideas from a developing researcher's mind. PhD students at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) are also required to complete three milestones throughout their research project: Stage Two (three months), Confirmation of Candidature (12 months), and Final Seminar (36 months). These milestones help break down the PhD journey into achievable goals while ensuring quality, rigor, and reliability in research.

A few months ago, I experienced the privilege and anxiety of completing my Confirmation of Candidature before a panel of experts from the School of Design and the School of Architecture & Built Environment. The process requires students to submit a report that includes a substantial literature review and evidence of research capacity, which is then formally presented to the panel and guests. This can be especially challenging for early-career researchers, as it involves

defending the significance and methodology of one's work to a critical audience. Despite the daunting nature of this process, it provided an invaluable opportunity to receive detailed feedback and guidance on the trajectory of my research project while sharing my efforts with my peers. My research focuses on investigating the role of unconscious cognitive processes in industrial designers working within non-traditional contexts, such as multi-national corporations, with BMW as a case study. While the skill set and design thinking proficiency of industrial designers are increasingly recognised as strategic assets for organisations and governments seeking innovation and a competitive edge, the field and role of industrial designers remains misunderstood and undervalued. My goal is to develop a framework that supports industrial designers and helps multinational corporations and non-traditional design organisations better utilise their abilities. Using qualitative research methods, including autoethnographic and ethnographic methodologies, I aim to deepen our understanding of industrial designers' processes and facilitate their integration into non-traditional design contexts. Thankfully, I successfully presented my work and demonstrated the viability of my study during my confirmation, setting a solid foundation for the next two years of my doctoral journey. However, my pre-confirmation practices might have raised a few eyebrows. Imagine me pacing the dimly lit Beta Lab at QUT whilst muttering to myself, trembling from an impressive amount of caffeine, and simultaneously devouring every sugary treat within reach. It was a spectacle that could be described as fascinating, if not mildly eccentric. But hey, whatever it takes to get the job done right!

As I move forward on this journey, I'm filled with excitement and determination. There's no doubt that there will be challenges ahead, but I know that each step will bring new opportunities for growth and discovery. I look forward to sharing more updates on my progress and insights as I continue my research and explore the fascinating world of design

# BRIEFINGS



## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Alexandra Singleton successfully passed her PhD confirmation
- 2024 Semester 1 Interns midway presentations completed
- 2024 Games Design Capstone Students mid-semester review completed

## EXTERNAL COLLABORATORS

This month, we continued to plan various events to promote our space. We are working closely with the Industrial Design Society to host student-led events that promote and support the next generation of designers.

So watch out for next month's newsletter to see what we have been up to!

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