

Amateur: The Challenge to Professional Design

Design Studies Forum sponsored session

College Art Association Annual Conference, Boston, Massachusetts

2:30–5:00 PM, Friday, February 24, 2006

Hynes Convention Center, second level, room 202

Session chair

Gerry Beegan, Rutgers University

Panelists

Lara Allison

Columbia University , New York

The Bauhaus in Chicago : In Search of Resistance to Professionalism in Design

Laurie Churchman

University of Pennsylvania

Shifting Typographic Conventions: Technology, Perception, and Originality

Debra Parr

Art + Design Department, Columbia College , Chicago

Skatebowls and Bars: What Happens When Artists Become Designers?

Michelangelo Sabatino

Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture, University of Texas , Houston

An "Other" History: Folk Art and Architecture's Contribution to Modernity

Anna Winestein

St. Catherine's College, Oxford , UK

Quiet Revolutionaries: the "Mir Iskusstva" Movement and Russian Design

This session examines the complex relationships between the design profession and the groups and individuals who design outside of institutional and commercial frameworks. Since William Morris, “amateurs” of various types have enriched design and undermined commercial and professional design hierarchies. The last decades of the twentieth century saw a productive engagement with design by many outsiders. Artists created works that celebrated and questioned the role and status of design. At the same time, computers enabled millions of users to make design decisions. Possible themes include: design’s response to nonprofessional, vernacular, and popular design; ways of working from outsider positions, contemporary and historical; the changing role of the nonprofessional with the professionalization of design; analyses of nonprofessional contributions to design culture; professionalism and paternalism: women as amateurs and the exclusion of women’s design activities from the canon.