Anton van Maanen
Practicum Work Experience with Knog / Catalyst Design Group, 2012

Anton’s Practicum Story

In 2011, I took part in the Knog Upper Pool Studio offered in my third year of Industrial Design. At the end of the studio I was offered a month’s work experience - this developed into more than a year of full-time work. During this time I had the chance to work on a broad range of projects and tasks, including hands on model making, product testing and market research, right through to designing display stands for international trade shows.

Working at Knog gave me an insight into my strengths as a designer and helped me develop my communication skills; I learned how to effectively communicate ideas, both verbally and through visual cues, with senior designers.

I also learned first hand how a studio and its employees operate together to achieve goals, and importantly an appreciation for how a small business relies on honesty, trust, communication and hard work.

The exposure and ‘breaking the ice’ of professional work experience gave me a renewed motivation for why I chose design as a career path.

Joelene Tee
Studio Manager, Knog

Anton carried out vital tasks relating to product development, from research and design through to pre-production and marketing. Work included concept design, model making, testing, documentation, graphic layouts, technical illustrations and photography.

Anton demonstrated many strengths in a wide array of tasks. He excelled in research, concept sketching and model making, and showed a high level of problem solving ability.

Knog sees a lot of value in the DAP program and would be willing to participate in future.
Benjamin Brayshaw undertook work experience during his third year of Industrial Design studies in 2013. He worked at Oh Yeah Wow (ohyeahwow.com), an innovative design studio specialising in animation, visual effects and film.

Benjamin’s Practicum Story

I had the opportunity to work on a stop motion music video, assisting with many aspects of the production, including storyboarding, building sets and developing technical ideas.

My maker capabilities were recognised as an asset and I was encouraged to use these skills and apply them to the project to help solve problems. In one instance, a surface was needed that was versatile enough to cater for the different methods of stop motion animation. I used my woodworking and furniture design skills to build a table that involved height adjustment features and modular aspects, such as being able to be split into two halves.

Undertaking this project enabled me to improve my knowledge and skills in film production, including concept development and storyboarding, preproduction through to production and editing. This experience also reiterated the importance of proper planning and being concise during the stages of film production.

Coming from an industrial designer perspective enabled me to contribute a different way of thinking about methods of working, and in some cases, to implement ideas that resulted in improved efficiencies.

The passion I witnessed from those who work at OYW full-time is something that has shaped my career aspirations.

Samuel Lewis

Director, Oh Yeah Wow

Ben is an extremely sociable and focused individual with excellent creative problem solving abilities, a keen eye for design and unnatural levels of punctuality.

Ben has been a real asset and played a pivotal role in overcoming challenging technical hurdles. This included constructing a custom set with tessellating floor panels, streamlining the production of the puppet characters, assembling key props and wiring a concealed LED circuit into the heads of the puppets to illuminate their eyes.

Due to his all round awesomeness we are very keen to get Ben onboard for any projects in the future that require his talents.
Bryce Tayleur graduated from Industrial Design in 2013. During his studies he had the opportunity to work at The Social Studio (www.thesocialstudio.org), a not-for-profit fashion school, clothing label, café and community space dedicated to environmentally conscious design and ethical business practices.

Bryce’s Practicum Story

The work I was involved in focused on doing finishing touches to the organisation’s new retail space. I undertook a number of practical jobs that utilised my skills as an industrial designer. These included both design work, particularly to help solve storage issues, and detailing some of the existing work.

The experience gave me a better understanding of working under real life conditions, particularly the importance of communication, prioritising jobs, and being realistic about what can be achieved within time and budget constraints.

Something I really wanted to gain experience in was the consulting process. In my meetings and communications with Grace I learned a lot about this process and gained valuable insights into how I could potentially run my own freelance design work.

I was really excited to have the opportunity to work for such a successful and prominent social enterprise. It was a massive eye opener to come into this space and catch just a glimpse of the dedication and the work being done by Grace and her team.

Grace McQuilten
CEO, The Social Studio

Bryce’s involvement was fantastic. The design work that he completed will certainly be of great value to us, and we are currently sourcing volunteers to help with sourcing materials and carpentry work.

In retrospect I think the initial expectations of The Social Studio, and of Bryce, were ambitious. Bryce needed more support and structure to implement the project. Working independently in a workplace is very different to working within the structured and closely supervised context of a training environment.

We hope to be able to keep working with Bryce to realise some of his great design work.
Clara Tanone did work experience in 2013 during her third year of Industrial Design studies. She worked at The Social Studio (www.thesocialstudio.org), a not-for-profit fashion school, clothing label, café and community space with a dedication to environmentally conscious design and ethical business practices.

Clara’s Practicum Story

The work I did focused on developing some design solutions for The Social Studio’s shop. After years of taking sustainability and system design studios, I’ve accustomed myself with ethnographic research and the importance of researching existing products, but the shop is more than just a retail space, it is a place with quite complex activities going on. So one of the first skills I learned was how to design complying with an existing space.

While my DIY and model making skills were put to good use, in tackling the design tasks I learned how to choose materials based on the circumstance and the particular properties that I wanted to achieve. I also realised that I needed to learn a lot more on my own and develop my skillset to enable me to respond to design challenges in a flexible and informed way.

Working in the real world as part of a team I gained a much better understanding of the different positions and roles of personnel involved in the process of product development and manufacturing.

Before this industry experience, I considered being a freelance designer after I graduate, but now I want to work with a company first and learn as many lessons as possible to become an experienced designer myself.

Grace McQuilten
CEO, The Social Studio

Clara has worked collaboratively with The Social Studio team, and has also liaised with our consultant architect, Joachim Holland of Assemble Studios, to develop some design solutions for our retail space.

Her contribution included the design, production and installation of a new open/closed sign for our shop door, a new hanging/shelving system and a platform for the front window area.

Clara’s work has been fantastic. She has worked within our limited budget and shown herself to be highly independent and resourceful in her work.
Dustin Bailey

Practicum Work Experience with Estelle Dévé Jewellery, 2013

I worked closely with Estelle Dévé on her latest jewellery collection, mostly creating 3D models of her 2D designs. It was an amazing experience to start work at 9 am, have a discussion of ideas or concepts, and by 11 am be reviewing a 3D model on screen, which we could easily print and hold in our hands.

Although I gained insights into the jewellery-making industry, my true development lay in being able to utilise what I have learned in the past three years working on real design projects. The questions, ideas, and concerns that Estelle was having about her newest collection were challenges that I felt I had the skills to resolve, and my skills in 3D modelling and printing made Estelle’s design process much quicker and more agile.

This experience was a fantastic opportunity to reflect upon the skills I have acquired through the course so far and to understand their relevance within a real studio environment. Importantly, I have learned to be confident that the decisions I make are informed, and not just flukes, which is how I used to feel.

My experience strengthened my desire to work in a small studio environment. I loved the intimacy found in smaller and more focused projects, and being able to see the projects from start to finish.

Dustin’s Practicum Story

Estelle Dévé

Creative Director/Owner, Estelle Dévé Jewellery

Dustin was a tremendous asset to our jewellery design business. He was in charge of modelling in 3D the designs I had drawn in 2D, as well as doing rendering and organising the 3D printing. He also turned my 2D hand drawings into computerised industrial drawings, which could be sent to suppliers for the purchase of pieces that couldn’t be 3D printed.

My assistants learned a great deal watching Dustin work, as 3D modelling and printing isn’t something most people are familiar with. I think I might have Dustin work freelance in the near future as he was a great asset.
Elizabeth Bott
Practicum Work Experience with Eco Innovators, 2013

Elizabeth Bott’s work experience with Eco Innovators began in July 2013 and continued across the year, her third year of her Industrial Design course. Eco Innovators (www.ecoinnovators.com.au) is a design studio committed to developing innovative sustainability projects and strategies, which combine design thinking with best practice scientific methodologies.

Elizabeth’s Practicum Story

I was responsible for developing an interactive e-book based on the existing educational material for sustainable design that Eco-Innovators had developed.

The experience you gain from being in a design role puts everything you learn in your degree into perspective. My capabilities in Adobe suite software and my strong visualisation and research skills were put to good use to organise the existing information and identify content gaps for product development. I contributed concept designs, layout and navigation mapping, and developed creative solutions for the e-book, bringing all aspects together.

Working on each stage of the project really extended my skill base, particularly in exploring ways in which to organise and curate information to increase the user experience through digital design; and although I considered myself to have strong visualisation skills, I gained a lot more experience through this project.

This industry experience gave me an understanding of the workings of an independent design studio and first-hand experience of how Eco-Innovators seek out and actualise new projects.

Overall this experience has not only given me an understanding of service system design - a design field I never really knew existed - but has also shown me that I have a strong interest in this area.

Leyla Acaroglu
Director, Eco Innovators

Lizzie was actively involved in the design and development of an interactive e-book on sustainability in design. Her main responsibility was to assist with the reiteration of several years of work into a new interactive format within the confines of PDF. We explored different methods of information design and she worked on ideation and graphic design.

Lizzie developed her graphic design skills, which required several levels of iteration and feedback, which she was very responsive to. She adapts her skills based on new knowledge and I find her willingness to learn an asset to her.
Such passion and commitment to work inspires me to continually improve my skills and learn new ones to augment my profession as an industrial designer.

Glen Tay graduated from Industrial Design in 2013. During his studies he completed a placement at Bless Designs (www.blessdesigns.com.au), a boutique design agency specialising in identity designs, print designs, web designs and signage solutions.

**Glen’s Practicum Story**

From the very first day I was thrust into ongoing projects, including proposing concepts for a logo, developing diagram illustrations for a medical booklet and proposing a new display case for a medical product. All projects were executed using my skills and experience in sketching and illustrations, as well as 2D and 3D CAD.

I was also tasked with handling all signage projects. Each day I was briefed about the requirements and required to complete the work by the end of the day. Besides learning how to prepare the artwork/files for production, in line with the agency’s ‘concept to execution’ policy, I also learned how to make and install the signage. This gave me the opportunity to operate a range of equipment such as a vinyl cutter, laser cutter, large format printer and a cherry picker.

My experience at Bless Designs opened up my perspective of a design agency in Australia. Despite being a small outfit, the agency competes effectively because every member of the team multi-tasks; they not only design but are also very hands on through the whole process.

Such passion and commitment to their work inspires me to continually improve my skills and learn new ones to augment my profession as an industrial designer.

**Darion Teoh**

Director, Bless Designs

Glen was involved in branding, graphic design and signage illustration, and production projects. It was invaluable to have his industrial design skills in producing 3D technical diagrams and illustration for our signage projects.

He is a hardworking individual with great attention to detail. His strong ability in vehicle design and 3D conceptual illustration was evident throughout all his work.

Glen worked well as an individual as well as in a team environment and always has great ideas when it comes to brainstorming sessions. He was always keen to learn and took great urgency in meeting project deadlines.
Kate Fayle undertook a site-based design project at CERES (www.ceres.org.au) as part of her work experience in 2013, during her third year of her Industrial Design studies. CERES, Centre for Education, Research in Environmental Strategies, is a community environment park, which seeks to inform and engage the community about alternative technologies, and demonstrate ways we can live sustainably.

Kate’s Practicum Story

I was given the task of designing an educational interactive display for the solar thermal dish at CERES. My main challenge was to devise a structure to complement the design, while effectively communicating to the public what the dish is, how it works and the potential of this form of harvesting solar energy for domestic, commercial and industrial applications.

I was nervous and a little uneasy about presenting ideas outside the comfort of addressing my peers and lecturers at university, but CERES was a wonderful platform to test the waters.

One of my strengths is exploring a range of different things at concept stage, but I sometimes struggle to figure out a plan to actually make it work. Invaluable feedback from people in education, engineering and site-management, and specific questions concerning mechanisms, gave me an understanding of making a piece like this work in the public arena.

I particularly enjoyed the collaborative atmosphere of the CERES office. In such a space you can expand ideas and identify issues quickly. It has really inspired me to consider cross-disciplinary projects with students from other courses.

The project opened my eyes to educational, impact design work; Installation Design is potentially a pathway I would like to follow in the future. There is something very powerful about creating awareness about issues through art and design.

John Burne
Infrastructure Coordinator, CERES

It was important for Kate to understand the working principle of the solar thermal heat source and to have an appreciation of the social context that such technology has.

Kate was able to methodically approach the project to cover all aspects of the brief. Her folio illustrates a good breadth of exploration and collection of relevant imagery.

Kate’s work will be directly usable to create interest among funding bodies that could help realise this project. The folio also contains documents that can be used to communicate the concept to other specialists.
Lok Yee
Practicum Work Experience with Alfalfa Ltd, 2013

Lok Yee Leung’s work experience during her third year of Industrial Design studies in 2013 gave her the opportunity to work remotely for Hong Kong based Alfalfa Ltd (www.AlfalfaGift.com), a design company specializing in designing and producing original and innovative gadgets and gifts.

Lok Yee’s Practicum Story

My work involved assisting Alfalfa with a large client presentation and included product illustration design and market research tasks, undertaken from Melbourne for their Hong Kong based organisation.
I learned a lot about how the industry operates in the product world from producing prototypes through to manufacturing products that are ready to be sold; I enjoyed seeing how designs are produced from screen to the actual item.
I gained insights about manufacturing in China, from sourcing materials and producing the items, as well as getting tips from other designers and seeing how the company markets itself. I also learned a lot about working with overseas companies and how they communicate.
This opportunity enabled me to utilise what I had learned so far from the RMIT Industrial Design Program, by applying sustainable design ideas to a range of products.
During this work experience I became more interested in the product industry, and it has made me feel like I would like to travel down this path in the future.
Swathi Madike
Practicum Work Experience with Museum Victoria, 2013

Swathi Madike’s Practicum Story

I worked on a science exhibition called Think Ahead - an interactive projection where players build their own future city according to the challenge given.

Ever since high school, I have been curious about how these exhibitions come about so I felt lucky to witness all the action of a major project being created in Melbourne.

The game play for Think Ahead is controlled by placing blocks on an interactive table and my first task was to make rough iterations of these using card. Issues to consider included the complexities of the audience. The assumption that children are ‘out to destroy’ was at first amusing, but now I understand that it’s because they have a natural curiosity about how things work, and it is a science museum after all!

I also designed a small viewing peephole from concept through to fabrication. I’m used to spending a lot of time defining the concept, but I learned that it then takes a lot of effort to make it work in the real world context.

The collaboration involved in this project demonstrated how well resolved and rich outcomes are produced when the team comes from different backgrounds, and for me personally, it was exciting to see that there is a creative space available for the designer.

Kathy Fox
Exhibition Producer, Exhibitions, Museum Victoria

Swathi’s experience was at Museum Victoria’s Scienceworks campus to create a new permanent exhibition - Think Ahead - an exhibition that presents advances in science and technology. She was given a diversity of design ‘mini projects’ and invited to meetings and sessions with external multimedia contractors.

Swathi demonstrated her ability to generate ideas quickly and communicate clearly through sketches and verbal presentation. She demonstrated strong visualisation skills - using model making and CAD to create scale models of interactive and exhibition form elements. This was of great help to the project’s interactive designer, and the whole team appreciated Swathi’s thoughtful approach.
Glenn Stephenson
Internship at Urban Commons, 2012

Glenn Stephenson graduated in Industrial Design in 2012. He completed a placement with designer Justin Hutchinson (justinhutchinson.com), who is also one half of Urban Commons, a consultancy that creates contemporary edible community gardens (urbancommons.com.au).

Glenn's Internship Story

The work I was involved in related to the Urban Commons “Living Laboratory”, a two-day design challenge that explored methods of growing food in high-density urban environments. To contextualise the design challenge I accompanied Justin to the Green Roofs Australasia ‘Greening Cities’ conference.

Within the studio I helped to set up the Living Laboratory workspace; our work focused on the re-appropriation of materials, planter box assembly, planting, and general problem solving.

The pressure of short timeframe group work extracted the essential oils from each concept and promoted a rich conversation.

My advice to other students is ‘Be flexible! Be prepared!’ Unforeseen events may delay daily progress and time frames may be pushed forward or back. Always have some relevant work to continue with.

Also, ‘Don’t sit back!’ Being able to obtain a professional opinion on a personal concept is a great kickback from organisational placements, and an opportunity to showcase your design interests – the relationship is two-way.

I now feel comfortable in approaching Justin Hutchinson Design with any industry related questions I may have while also benefiting from a glimpse into life after university. Witnessing a professional work ethic and skill set has motivated me to seek other placement opportunities.

Justin Hutchinson
Director, Urban Commons

Internships are a valuable way for small consultancies like ours to identify new talent. We are always looking for people with a skill set complementary to our own.

We try to provide interns with an array of activities that draw on their existing skills, while offering them the opportunity to develop new ones.

Glenn proved to be an enthusiastic and passionate designer, who was eager to learn and take on new challenges. His openness to learning and ability to problem solve made the experience a rewarding one for Urban Commons.
Lucy Fraser
Practicum Work Experience at CoDesign & TACSI, 2012

Lucy Fraser graduated in Industrial Design in 2012. During her studies she completed two practicums within social design organisations – one at TACSI (The Australian Centre for Social Innovation), and the other at CoDesign Studio. TACSI (www.tacsi.org.au) was founded to develop new solutions to Australia’s social challenges and is committed to strengthening the social innovation and co-design communities. CoDesign Studio (www.codesignstudio.com.au) is a social enterprise that works with communities to design and implement neighbourhood improvement projects.

Lucy’s Practicum Story

Ella Sayers and I worked at TACSI for two days with the Radical Redesign team. While we focused specifically on producing an educational pamphlet, we were shown the project in detail and sat in on all meetings and discussions.

I worked at the CoDesign Studio for one day a week over six months, as part of a team of volunteers that was supervised by one of the core staff. Working with the client and members of their community, this team was responsible for the entire project design, from concept to construction. I learnt much about working in a team, about how hard communication is with multiple clients, and about how to keep multiple stakeholders happy.

Both of my placements showed me that social and sustainable design, although not yet mainstream, is something others value.

The Industrial Design course taught me flexibility, which served me well during my practicum, and the practicums left me more prepared for the fast and iterative process of design in action – it’s quick and dirty, rather than slow and steady.

Hugh Adamson
CoDesign Studio Architect & founding member

Lucy worked with us on a project to remodel a warehouse and some offices. She was part of a multidisciplinary design team, as the process of cooperatively making knowledge is central to how we work at CoDesign Studio. Lucy demonstrated that the principles of collaboration and design-listening are very well integrated into her professional practice. She also brought practical skills in joinery design.

At CoDesign Studio we find that industrial design processes can produce good outcomes when shared through a co-design way of working.
Ben Landau
Practicum Work Experience with Melbourne Museum, 2008

Ben's Practicum Story

Despite my volunteer role at the Museum, I was involved in real projects and did the actual tasks required of the exhibitions in development at that time, which were decided upon when I arrived each week in the Museum’s basement studio. All my work was done onsite, either in the office or within the exhibition space. I learnt a lot about the detailed process of mounting an exhibition, from concept design all the way to completion.

I worked closely with Exhibition Designer Ingrid Rhule (a former tutor at RMIT), who taught me how to visualize the exhibition space and the possibilities within it. Ingrid guided me in CAD work, model making, laying out of exhibitions, and drawing in Photoshop, as well as how to navigate the complex systems which connect the museum’s collection to their exhibitions.

The experience at the Museum – a non-commercial design environment – led me to understand design as not solely an industrial or commercial pursuit, an understanding that still frames my practice. I would recommend that students keep a diary of the internship experience as it happens – it makes you much more reflective and observant.

I successfully applied for an Exhibition Designer role that became available and worked at the Museum for the next two years. I still keep in contact with museum staff. I think museology, exhibition interpretation and interactivity will continue to feature in my design practice.