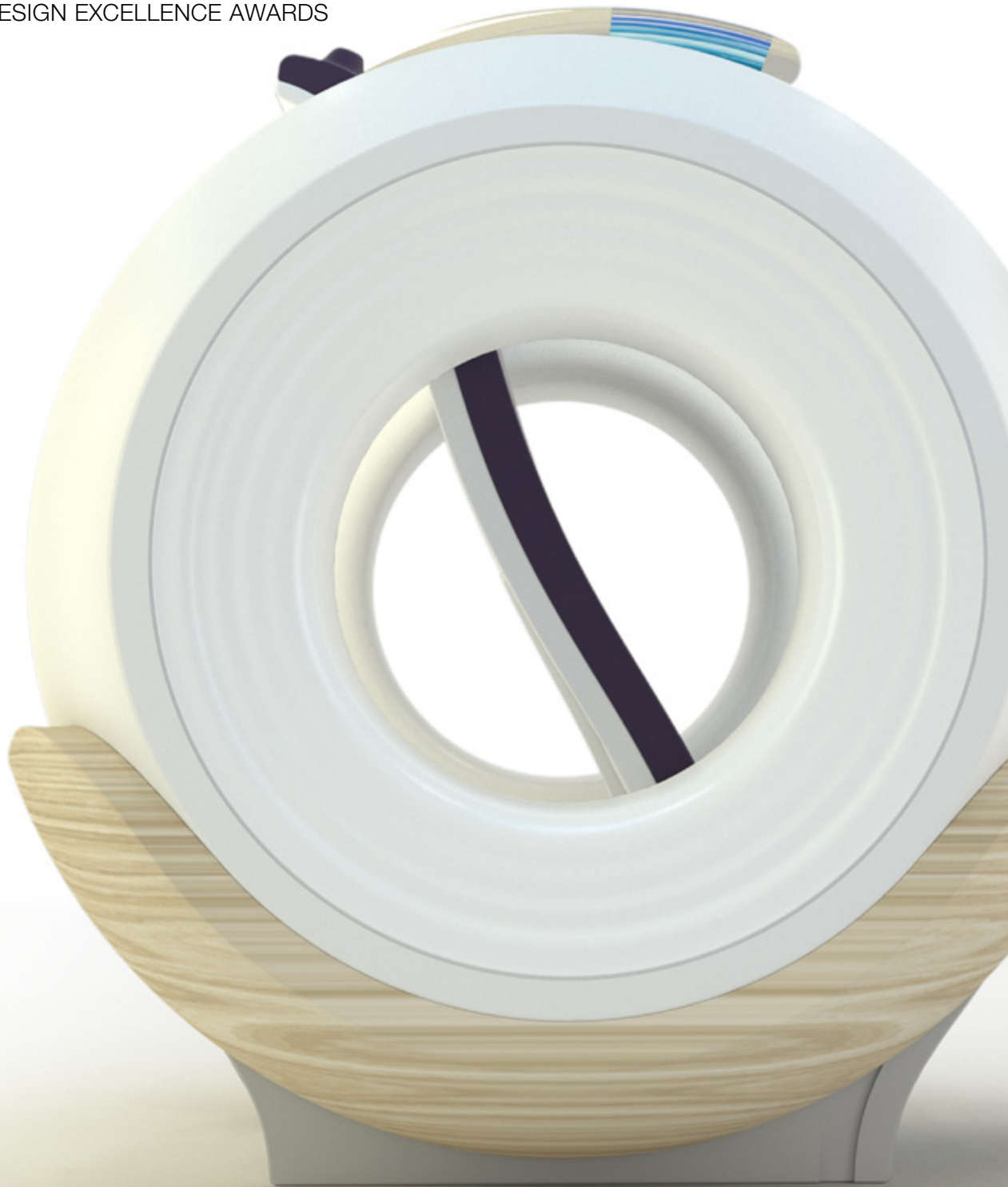


QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **FALL 2012**

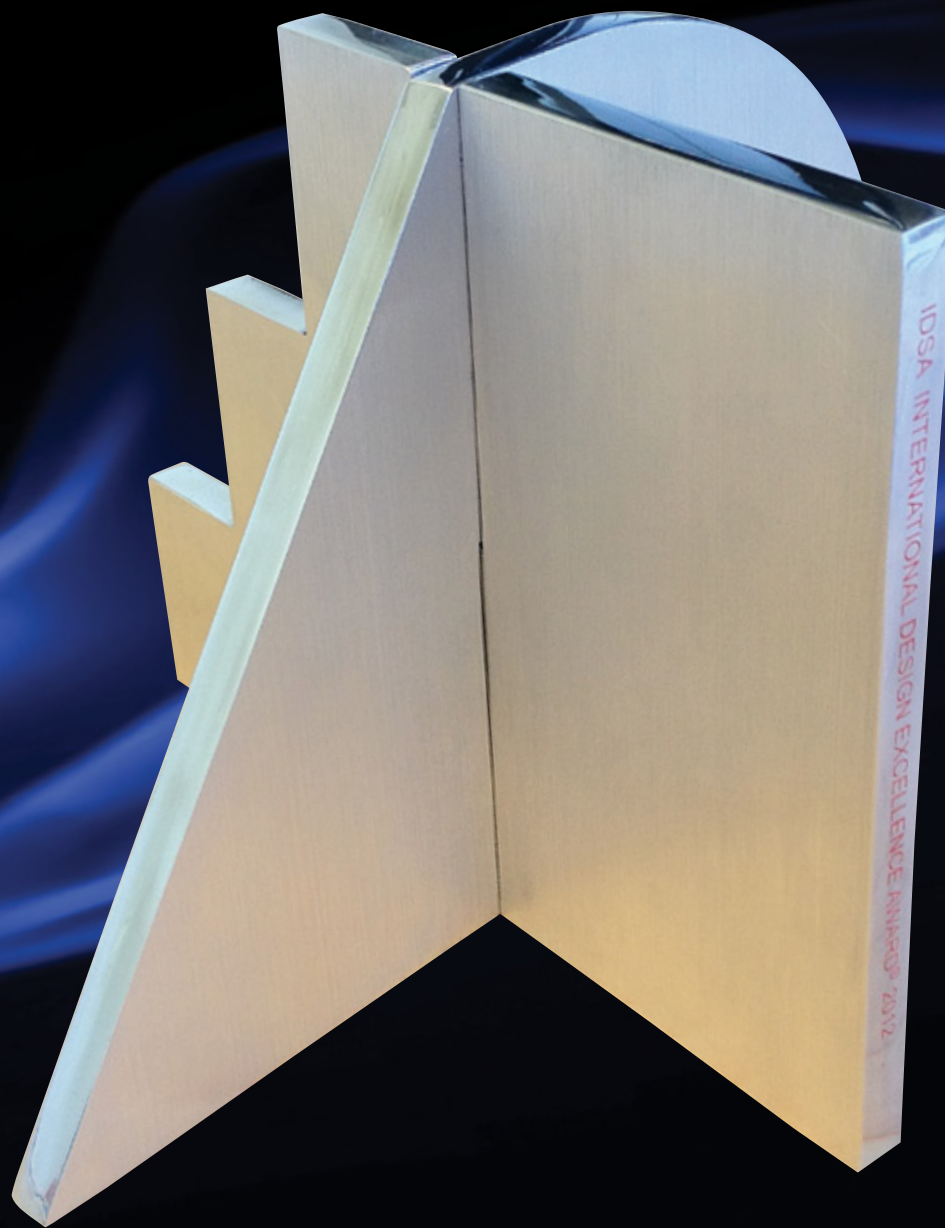
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Cover photo: Gold IDEA winner Cocoon Open MRI Chair by GE Medical (France)

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FROM THE EDITOR

TRENDING TOWARD EXCELLENCE

Welcome to the 2012 edition of IDSA’s International Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) Yearbook. For me it is always one of the true joys of my year and of our modern age of industrial design to see and review these important award-winning entries in the world’s most important design competition—the Oscars of Design—the IDEA competition.

This enormously optimistic collection of winners is a reflection of our current societal concerns and culture as expressed in artifacts and behaviors. At this year’s IDSA International Conference in Boston, where the award winners accepted their trophies, these awards represented, to all who attended, a unique perspective and an increasing focus on human-centered concerns for the made world.

powerhouse consultants were locked out of Gold this year but took a lot of awards nonetheless. Newer and up-and-coming firms like Artefact, Carbon Design Group and Bould made an impression.

You can decide for yourself, as you review this Yearbook, your view of this year’s trends. What stood out to me were all the designs aimed at headsets, which are uber-popular this year, as well as any consumer electronics that create a “lifestyle”

“...this year’s designs have raised the bar in the consistency of great design executions.”

They outlined, in a meaningful way, the impact the products and services we design and make are having on humanity.

The industrial design profession shapes and influences the world that we live in. It also acts as an indicator of things to come. The International Conference attendance was up 25 percent over last year, a good sign for design, especially industrial design and the economy as well. After design gets busy manufacturing, retail will follow suit.

The IDEA ceremony featured great designs and overall buzz. The Best in Show went to the Nike Fuel Band, an innovative makeover of a sports watch into a device to help us all live better. The People’s Choice went to the Embrace Infant Warmer, a humanistic answer for warming babies. Panasonic was recognized for its Clear LED Light, the inaugural winner of the IDEA Sustainability Award. Corporations like Samsung and Crown Equipment took Gold. Some

promise. It also strikes me that medical products are now recognized for an increased aesthetic and conceptual posture as compared to years past. Finally, I think that you might agree, this year’s designs have raised the bar in the consistency of great design executions. From the Nest thermostat to Crown’s stunning Gold award-winning lift truck, it is a collection worthy of the bar for excellence in this age of industrial design.

Next year’s International Conference will be held in Chicago. With the always enthusiastic and brilliant leadership of Paul Hatch, IDSA from Teams Design as the chair, and the Windy City as a backdrop, we will celebrate and raise that bar again next year. So please enjoy this Yearbook, a stunning profile of the designer’s mission and the very best way there is to spend a career, in my view: to make a difference in people’s lives and in the world.

—Mark Dziarski, FIDSA, Innovation executive editor
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IDEA 2012

BEAUTIFUL, USEFUL AND COMPELLING

I think the story of why the Nike+ FuelBand won the Best in Show in the 2012 International Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) is fundamentally linked to the composition and selection of the jury. I have had the pleasure of participating in the IDEA program for three years, the first two as a juror and the last as chair. As much as possible, each year approximately half the jurors return for a second year and half are new. This composition builds continuity and consistency while also refreshes the jury. The selection of these new jurors is the main task of the chair. So when I was nominated as this year's chair, it was my chance to shape the balance and subsequent sensitivities of the jury as a whole.

Other factors are important in selecting the jury: making sure you have a broad set of skills and competencies that cover all the categories and a balance of gender (which is tough). But ultimately my main focus was to build a jury that embodied a fair representation of a broader set of perspectives and competencies—most importantly, digital and service.

Historically, IDSA is an industrial design organization, and that still is the case. There's also a lot of really great, innovative industrial design work going on. But for me, the forefront of our industry and the most exciting work is being done in the convergence of industrial, user-experience, user-interface and service design. Also, tie that to my personal belief that we should harness all this creativity for some sort of good beyond profitable business. So I tried my best to include some designers who may have not been previously included in the jury. Mike Kruseniski from Microsoft and now Twitter, Matt Jones from Berg in London

and Jan Chipchase from frog all helped shape the discussions. You can get a sense of why the Nike+ FuelBand was awarded the Best in Show.

Nonetheless, it was not inevitable that Nike would win. With a strong, opinionated, experienced group of jurors, the discussions were passionate and often contentious—which is as you hope and expect. Other products challenged the Nike entry; the Gold winners were all candidates, with varying degrees of emphasis on great product design and amazing humanitarian or environmental impact. What was good about the FuelBand, however, was that as each juror questioned its individual elements, each found that it was a well resolved product. The (hardware) wrist band is nicely done, the user experience delightful, and Nike's sleight of hand in creating "fuel" as the common unit of measure, as opposed to calories, speed or distance, allowed a lot of the complexities to be resolved. Lastly, and for me more importantly, it's

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a product that gets people moving—literally—which is not a bad thing.

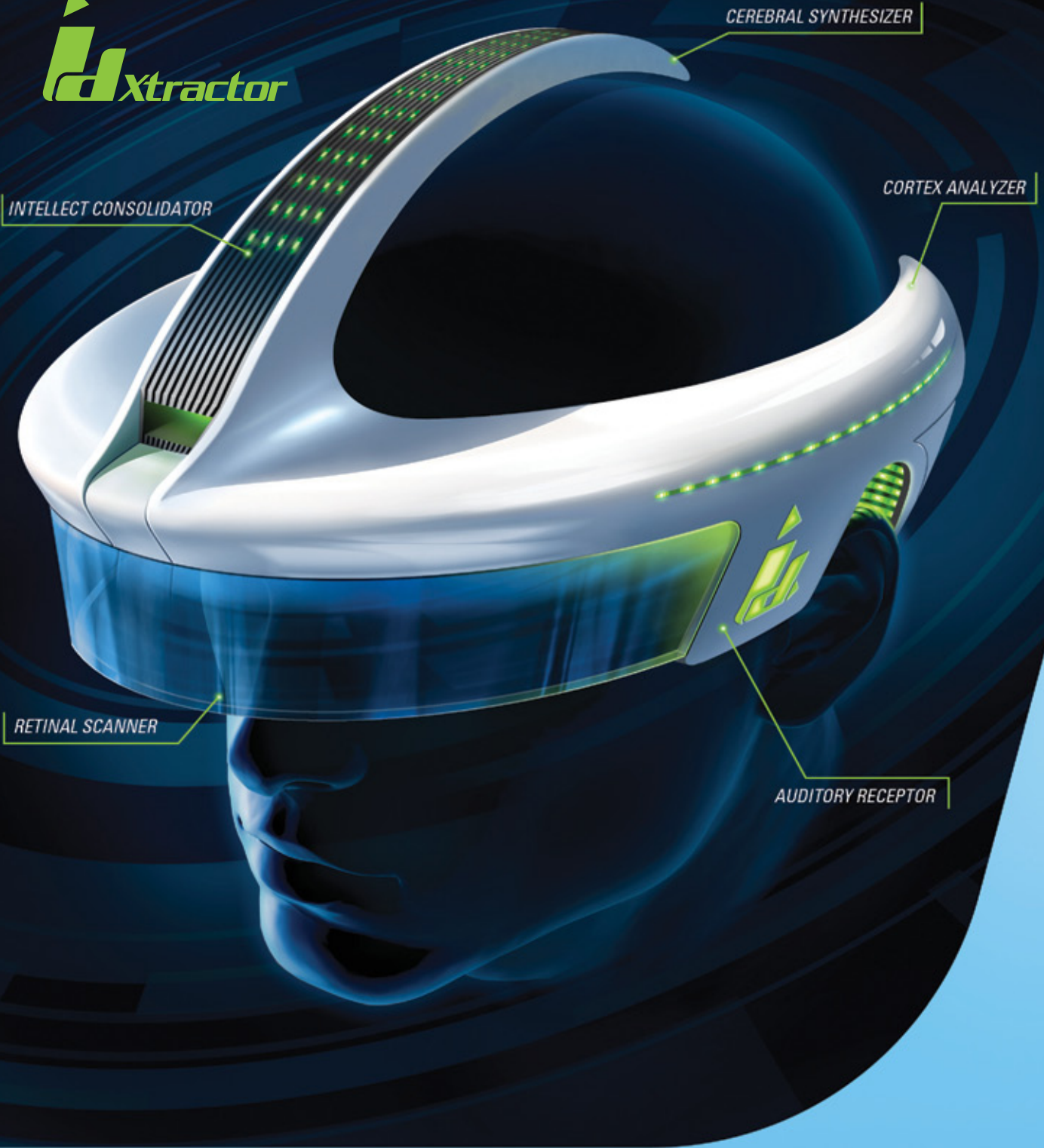
Other standout projects or trends include the quality and valuable student work coming out of the Design Matters program from Art Center—both in terms of the subject areas that the projects focus on, but also in the students' ability to communicate, prototype and realize functional products that make a tangible, positive difference to people's lives. The medical category is always impressive, but this year, we could see the influence of designers really making a difference: humanizing technologies in often dehumanizing experience. GE's winners are a standout example of this trend.

A personal favorite of mine, which is unusual but gained some advocates and a few passionate speeches, was the Gold student winner Digifi: Audionauts. This was a contentious winner; the student category was well represented,

with such mature work. But the Audionaut represents a passion and commitment that I felt was underrepresented in the awards: the seemingly crazy inventors/designers exploring subjects at the fringe of our design schools and discipline.

I congratulate all the winners. It has been a humbling experience to participate in the IDEA competition for the last three years. While I have a strong opinion as to where the future of design may go, it is important to recognize the phenomenal creativity, skill and expertise of all the entrants and winners. It is increasingly easy to make products; the threshold to prototype and manufacture is getting lower and open to more people. While this is exciting for the future, it remains really, really difficult to make beautiful, useful and compelling products. I was impressed by how many beautifully designed products that entered this year's IDEA program. But that's just my opinion. I encourage readers to judge for themselves. ■

—Rhys Newman, IDSA, IDEA 2012 jury chair



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