Perspectives in Contemporary Woodworking exhibition curated by I.M. Weiss Gallery during the 2022 Detroit Month of Design. Photo by Noah Elliot Morrison.
Design Core Saw Big Changes in 2022!

Design Core experienced significant restructuring in 2022. In May, Design Core Detroit announced that Bonnie Fahoome and Kiana Wenzell were promoted to Co-Executive Directors. They succeed Olga Stella, who will continue to provide oversight to the organization in her role as Vice President of Strategy and Communication at the College for Creative Studies (CCS), of which Design Core is a part.

Stella, Fahoome and Wenzell worked to facilitate the leadership transition beginning in November 2021, experimenting and testing new decision making and workflow procedures. Fahoome and Wenzell led the effort to redesign the vacant positions and recruit a diverse candidate pool to fill them.

In addition to these promotions, Design Core restructured staff positions due to vacancies and welcomed new team mates. Ashley Seay-Green, Frances Bernardo and Adriane Zacmanidis are new Project Leads supporting key programs like Detroit Design Network, Detroit Month of Design, and Detroit City of Design. Karen Pegg is the new Marketing Manager. Charlotte Willson continues in her role as Office Administrator, coordinating administrative operations across Design Core’s programs and providing support to the Detroit Design Network, while assuming new responsibilities for data management and reporting.

Overall, the new structure is intended to facilitate a more collaborative and flexible operating structure. It allows both Fahoome and Wenzell to continue leading in their programmatic areas of expertise, share leadership duties between them, empower the new Project Leads to work across programs, and cultivate internal talent for future leadership roles within the organization.
Design Core’s Home is the College for Creative Studies

As a department within the College for Creative Studies (CCS), Design Core helps support CCS’s strategic priorities while fulfilling its mission of positioning Detroit as a global source of creative talent.

Engagement with CCS this year included:

- Working closely with Institutional Advancement on Design Core fundraising efforts;
- Hiring an intern from the CCS visual communications department;
- Participating in CCS strategic planning and CCS-led events such as the Cumulus “Design for Adaptation” conference;
- Identifying ways to engage students, alumni, staff and faculty. This year, the CCS Alumni Association had a presence during Eastern Market After Dark. Several CCS students and alumni hosted events during the Detroit Month of Design;
- Supporting the college’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) goals. Team member Charlotte Wilson is a current member of the CCS DEI Council;
- Engaging the CCS marketing team to align messaging and supporting the college’s Office of Partnerships to identify experiential learning opportunities for enrolled students.
Design Core delivered 750+ member and non-member benefits, which included connections to resources and new business opportunities, educational programming, coaching, promotion and more. Additionally, Design Core organized, hosted and/or delivered over 30 events, programs or presentations to educate, advocate for, or promote the Detroit Design Network. All of Design Core’s programs are aligned to promote the value of Detroit designers.

The Detroit Design Network features a balance of various design disciplines:

The Detroit Design Network is currently 114 members strong.
Design Core drove new business and opportunities to Detroit designers through our business to business matchmaking services.

Design Core shared 56 business opportunities with our Detroit Design Network and we did this by:

- Sharing 22 lists of designers with businesses seeking referrals
- Posting 23 business opportunities to the Design Network
- Hosting 11 design salons

These efforts resulted in circulating $79K back into the region’s design economy through Design Core programs.
“We were impressed with all three finalists from the Detroit Design Network and would have been happy with any one of them. We chose the M1DTW/InSite collaboration for the project.”

–BENJAMIN BAILEY, BUSINESS OWNER

“I connected with a few designers as a result of the Salon but did not hire anyone. A Design Core member agency referred a designer to us through our call for designers and we ended up working with him.”

–LYDIA MICHAEL, FOUNDER BLENDED COLLECTIVE
2022 marked a year of change for the Detroit City of Design initiative. First, Design Core said goodbye to longtime City of Design Director, Ellie Schneider. Design Core also wrapped up the 2021 City of Design Challenge, hired a new Project Lead for the 2023 Challenge and embarked on community engagement to inform the program.

The organization continued to provide inclusive design training and consultation to key strategic partners: Detroit Regional Partnership and World Economic Forum. And, finally, the organization engaged with both the North American Creative Cities network and the UNESCO subnetwork of design cities to promote Detroit design, learn from other cities, and explore best practices related to design education and policy and community and economic development.

**Detroit City of Design Re-engaged Globally, Made Impact Locally.**

In August, Design Core represented Detroit in Querétaro, Mexico at the North American Creative Cities Forum. Design Core sent two delegates to represent Detroit: Antoine Bryant, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Detroit and Matt Chung, Associate Director, Strategic Partnerships and Programs at CCS.
Design Core’s relationships and expertise was recognized by organizations like the World Economic Forum and Detroit Regional Chamber

**World Economic Forum**

The World Economic Forum tapped Design Core to help it think about local engagement for its Centre for Urban Transformation in Detroit. Design Core engaged 2 Design Network members, Henry Ford Learning Institute and Bloom Design Co, to lead a participatory design process to inform the Centre’s development.

**Global Epicenter for Mobility (GEM)**

Through College for Creative Studies, Design Core participated in the regional coalition led by the Detroit Regional Partnership (DRP) to successfully secure $52M in funding from the Economic Development Administration to create a smart, secure, sustainable, and inclusive advanced-mobility industry. Design Core will advocate for and connect partners to Detroit’s design community, to ensure program dollars are spent on local design talent.

In addition, as part of the Phase 1 grant application, DRP engaged CCS through Design Core to organize an inclusive design workshop for coalition partners to prepare for a successful Phase 2. rootoftwo facilitated the workshop utilizing the Inclusive Design Training program curriculum previously developed for Design Core.
In collaboration with the College for Creative Studies (CCS) and Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA), Design Core Detroit hosted the second in-person Design Jam for adaptive apparel and accessories.

At the 2022 Design Jam, eight interdisciplinary teams of designers and entrepreneurs were trained in anti-ableism and human-centered design and then challenged to use an inclusive process to ideate and prototype accessible new products for active people with disabilities.

Highlights from this year’s program include:

- Partnerships with 3 academic institutions, including CCS, University of Michigan, and Northern Michigan University, and 2 economic development partners, including Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Innovate Marquette.

- Over 90 people participated as designers, entrepreneurs, end users, manufacturers, or feasibility experts.

- Eight product ideas with the potential to be manufactured in Michigan were prototyped and presented to an audience.
The Detroit Month of Design saw a return to mass gatherings and Eastern Market After Dark after a two year hiatus.
In 2022, Detroit Month of Design continued to exceed the prior year’s impact. This year’s festival presented 80 events attracting more than 50,000 attendees. Programming shifted away from pandemic considerations, demonstrated by the return of Eastern Market After Dark and only one virtual event on the festival schedule.

The festival is an important platform for supporting independent designers and small businesses. It engaged 175 design businesses and organizations in 18 different neighborhoods and circulated over $60,000 back into the creative economy through stipends and honorariums.

### Design core Produced 10 Signature Events in Partnership with Key Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Design Jam</th>
<th></th>
<th>Eastern Market After Dark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shop and See</td>
<td></td>
<td>Four Drinks x Design events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sneaker House</td>
<td></td>
<td>Craft in the Digital Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shop Downtown Detroit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Month of Design Opening Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Building a Lasting Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td>Month of Design Closing reception</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Design Jam](#)                    [Eastern Market After Dark](#)                  
[Shop and See](#)                  [Four Drinks x Design events](#)                  
[Sneaker House](#)                 [Craft in the Digital Age](#)                  
[Shop Downtown Detroit](#)         [Month of Design Opening Reception](#)         
[Building a Lasting Impact](#)     [Month of Design Closing reception](#)         

---

---
These efforts resulted in:

- A retargeting campaign that reached 279,696 unique users through addressable Geo Fencing tactic
- Outdoor advertising including two billboards, window decals and 90 street grips throughout Detroit
- 35 pieces of media coverage with a listenership and viewership of 237,565,817
- 1,000 new social media followers in two months
- 5 media partnerships with Azure, Design Milk, WDET and Playground Detroit

**PR COVERAGE**

- 35 Pieces of Coverage - Total number of online, offline and social clips
- Viewership 2M
- Audience 106M - Combined total of publication-wide audience figures for all outlets featuring coverage
- Hosted press trip with three national reporters
Drinks x Design Networking Series Returned After a Two Year Hiatus

The popular Drinks x Design (DxD) networking and business development series returned after a two year hiatus and experienced much success. Four DxD events were held throughout the year. Design Core hosted events in April, May, June and November.

Program outcomes included:

- 36 designers showcased at the events
- 3,082 event registrations annually
- An estimated 1,442 attendees annually
- Two corporate sponsors: American Liquor and Detroit City Distillery
- The event helped to recruit 2-3 new members of the Detroit Design Network
Sponsors and partners continue to drive opportunities for the organizations Detroit Design Network and expand the reach of the festival. Through a partnership with Bedrock, Design Core was able to implement ‘Shop and See,’ a program that paired local designers with downtown shops to exhibit their work, drive traffic to the stores, and give people a chance to “See” and “Shop” from the collection of local retailers and makers. Through the partnership, Design Core awarded a total of $40,000 to Detroit designers and local businesses.

Local and national sponsors helped drive small business impact.

30 funders, sponsors and media partners including:

- William Davidson Foundation returned as a title sponsor for the second year
- 9 national brands
- 23 returning funders, sponsors or media partners
- 7 new funders, sponsors or media partners

Shop Downtown Detroit during 2022 Month of Design. Photo by Paul Taylor Films.
Design Core and the City of Detroit are positioned as thought leaders locally, nationally and internationally.
The Design Core team continued to be sought after leaders and partners, both in and out of Detroit. Staff served or presented at conferences, panel discussions, podcasts, radio shows and more in Detroit, throughout the state, and throughout the global creative cities network.

Design Core presented at 10+ engagements including:

- Co-Executive Directors Bonnie Fahoome and Kiana Wenzell received 2022 AIA Detroit Honorary Affiliate Award
- Speaking opportunity at the Sustainable Urban Development Summit
- Curated “Building a Lasting Impact” exhibition with Gucci
- Curated “Craft in the Digital Age” in partnership with Ford House and Lawrence Technological University
- Curated Sneaker House exhibition in partnership with Foot Locker
- Moderated and Chaperoned at Cumulus “Design for Adaptation” Conference
- Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) National Conference
- Showcased at the North American Creative Cities Forum
- Represented Detroit at the UNESCO Creative Cities Subnetwork meeting
- NeoCon & more!
Design Core looks to 2023 with excitement as it enters the next chapter of the organization’s development. The Design Core team will continue to adapt to meet the changing needs of Detroit’s community by:

- Pursuing growth opportunities across all of its programs from the Detroit Design Network to Detroit Month of Design in order to strengthen its support of the Detroit design business community.
- Launching the 2023 City of Design Challenge to explore how the greater community can build social connections in times of turmoil.
- Introducing the inclusive design training curriculum to more partners in business and community.
- Focus on strengthening matchmaking and business service offerings.
- Hosting online an UNESCO subnetwork meeting.
Thank you to our supporters!