

In Profile – meet our alumni ↓



Name: Michelle Murphy
Current Career: UX Design
Graduation Year: BA Industrial Design 2011;
MSc Medical Devices - 2014
Discipline: Industrial Design, Medical
Devices
Location: Zurich

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What career path did you want to follow as a child?

I was always interested in design of all types, but particularly fashion, as a child.

Why did you decide to study at the National College of Art & Design?

It seemed like the best third-level option for studying art/design and allowed for focusing on a broad range of subjects before selecting a discipline.

How did you develop your career towards your current job / practice?

I initially studied fine art, leaving after two years, and taking some time out to realise I needed to follow a career in design. Upon completion of industrial design, it became apparent that there were many opportunities in Ireland in the medical field. I did an MSc in Medical Devices at NCAD and immediately found a UX job for a Dublin consultancy, with an initial focus on medical applications. It took a couple of months to transition from designing physical products to digital interfaces. Although I had to learn new tools, much of my training around the design process at NCAD remained relevant.

What is the one experience – during your time at NCAD – that has informed you most in your career / work to date?

There was not one single experience per se.; but learning the critical design thinking process has been invaluable.

If you were chatting with current NCAD students today, what is the one piece of advice you would offer?

Enjoy the course and remain focused on your goals.

Given the global turmoil and change, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, what – in your opinion – are the opportunities for those in creative industries?

We are relying more heavily on digital tools. During lockdowns people are forced to quickly adapt to remote working, online shopping, health and fitness online classes, remote appointments, and socialising via virtual events. Many of these newly formed habits will remain after the pandemic.

Michelle's interview is part of our 'Alumni Stories' series, where some of our NCAD graduates reflect on their time at NCAD. [Explore the full series here.](#)

Exhibitions ↓

The NCAD Gallery continues to host its Graduate Programme 2020 Exhibition Series. We kick off the New Year with an MFA 2020 Graduate Exhibition, 14th - 28th January 2021, followed by a presentation of work from the School of Design 2020 Graduates in February complemented by the forthcoming In Public online events programme, watch out for event updates in January.

We are solitary. was a group exhibition organised by NCAD MFA Fine Art and Rua Red. [More info here.](#)

In Action ↓

Swift Standard for Domestic Masks, a project by Julia Doherty

Julia Doherty is a second year MA student in Product Design. Before enrolling in the programme, Julia ran her own design consultancy. Having also worked for Ireland's leading product design management company, Design Partners, Julia has excellent industry experience and expertise.

Context: The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) has been requested by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission to facilitate the development of a technical specification on barrier masks for consumer use.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, there is increased use by consumers of barrier masks, which are intended to prevent

the spread of disease. These barrier masks fall outside the scope of the Medical Device Directive and the Personal Protective Equipment Regulation, and within the scope of the General Products Safety Directive.

What is it like working on Swift Standard for Domestic Masks project during quarantine?

It's been fantastic to be part of a panel of so many experts, in the fields of design, manufacturing, textiles as well as the regulatory bodies who will be implementing these guidelines.

Working on a project that contributes towards a national effort calls for accurate information and needs to be well researched. This project is about designing accessible solutions, not conceptual future ideas. The mechanics of design in this space must be honest, and representative of the tools and processes which makers (manufacturers and artisan makers) have at hand. The technical and scientific basis for proposed textiles for these masks must be presented in a way that empowers people to make informed and safer choices.

This project called on my knowledge as a designer, maker, and researcher, as well as teleworking, and digital presentation.

What innovative ways have you found to help you function as a postgraduate student and designer during the lockdown?

My role as a designer sits somewhere in the 'squishy interface' of human, product, and technology. I imagine myself to be the advocate for the human body in the space of industrial design. With my practice being so human centric, the lockdown has stilted the development of my current MA project somewhat – I have limited access to human bodies to help in my design process.

While the lockdown has challenged me to find new ways to design with limited space and tools, it has also allowed me to discover aspects to my design practice. The patience needed when designing, prototyping, building and documenting from one body (my own) is a softer pace that allows me to engage with my own design in a more in-depth and communicative way.

I have done a lot of pulling things apart; pulling wire out of things, salvaging interesting metals from craft beer cans, as well as growing my own plants, and bacteria. All of this is outside my usual practice, but still feeds into the designer need to 'fill the creative well'.

What innovative ways have you found to help you function as a postgraduate student and designer during lockdown?

For the domestic masks project, I was well prepared. When lockdown came, I immediately began making masks in a variety of materials and constructions and distributed them to friends and family. I had also had conversations with designers and manufacturers in my network to understand their thoughts on this new product in the space of social hygiene. This was all done to fuel my own interest and practice but turned out to be very valuable for input into the NSAI project.

How valuable is the experience of being able to continue to work on real-world partnership projects?

The experience of working on a real-world partnership is vital to the success and development of a designer. As designers, we are tasked with creating tools and products that solve problems or enhance human function – we need to take these concepts into the real world to have them tested, so we can learn from them.

Working on partnership projects is a great challenge. Being able to communicate the needs of your design area to an industry who might never have heard of them is a great test of communication skills and building shared knowledge resources.



Staff / Student Achievements ↓

In November, NCAD staff won a staggering six awards in the [IDI 2020 Design Awards](#). This achievement demonstrates the high quality of our design education and research, and the fantastic design industry reputation of our staff team. [More information can be found here](#).

NCAD's success doesn't stop there. NCAD

staff also collected 14 nominations - 10% of the total nominations, and NCAD alumni also won several awards and nominations.

[NCAD students picked up 18 nominations in the IDI 2020 Graduate Design Awards.](#)

Congratulations to all the winners and nominees! The winners also featured in a special pull out booklet in The Irish Times on 5th November.

NCAD Product Design 2020 graduate **Jack Canavan** has won two major awards at the [Universal Design Grand Challenge Awards](#). His Flo project won the Enterprise Ireland Universal Design Commercialisation Award along with the Products & Services Award. This follows his success in the IDI Student Design Awards and RSA Design Awards.

Sanaa El Habbash, 2020 Graphic Design graduate has won the [Create Ireland Recent Graduate Research and Development Award \(with mentoring\)](#) worth €2,500, giving her the opportunity to continue her research on Palestinian culture. Congratulations, Sanaa.

[ICAD](#) announced their **2020 Upstarts**, with six NCAD 2020 graduates receiving this prestigious honour. They are:

- Alan Early, BA Moving Image Design
- Grace O'Brien, BA Graphic Design
- Daire Bourke Boyle, BA Graphic Design
- Orla King, BA Graphic Design
- Kinga Strama, BA Graphic Design
- Eoghan McMahon, BA Product Design

The programme aims to foster the next generation of creative talent in design and advertising.

Design for Body & Environment students and graduates have been recognised in the [DCCI's Future Makers Awards](#).

[Shortlisted - Student & Recent Graduate Award](#)

- Sarah Caine, Fashion
- Tom Langton, Fashion
- Megan Nolan, TSD
- Ciara Allen, Fashion Graduate
- Gabrielle Malone, Fashion Graduate
- Deirdre Murphy, J&O Graduate

[Shortlisted - Emerging Makers Award](#)

- Lydia Clayton, J&O
- Genevieve Howard, J&O

[RDS Art Award 2020](#) - seven graduates have been shortlisted for the RDS Art Award 2020.

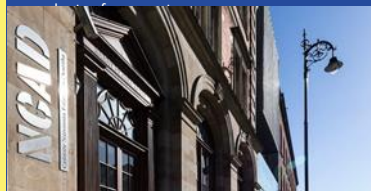
November on Campus ↓



November has continued with a busy month of activity on campus supported by an active programme of remote learning. We are extremely grateful to the great commitment shown by students and staff to following our COVID-19 protocols and working to make sure that we keep our community safe.

We continue to see the work of our graduates, alumni and staff recognised nationally and internationally and some of these recent successes are detailed in this newsletter - congratulations to all of you for these great achievements.

We are looking forward to continuing to showcase the work of our graduates in the new year, with the potential of both physical and digital presentations as restrictions ease and galleries reopen. The MFA exhibition will open on Monday 11th January, followed by a focus on the work of our Design graduates on Friday, 1st February. We will end the series of graduate exhibitions with an open call to our graduates to use the Gallery and NCAD digital space as a platform for new collaborative projects. It is great to hear through our ongoing series of Alumni Stories the great impact our graduates have in the world in a wide range of fields and we are sure that we will be hearing about the work of our 2020



Opportunity ↓

Flipster is a digital magazine app which lets you access Art & Design magazines. It is accessible via the **Flipster** app on Apple & Android devices, and the Kindle Fire tablet. You can download magazines to read offline, anytime, anywhere! Download the app from the iTunes App Store or Google Play Store while on the college wifi. Select the National College of Art and Design as your library.

Zoom session on using **Flipster** on the **Wednesday 2nd December**; book by emailing Maeve on: mcelligottm@staff.ncad.ie