

BMW GROUP + QUT  
DESIGN ACADEMY



JUNE 2023

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**NEWSLETTER**



# WELCOME



This month has been one of preparations for the second half of the year. This includes a lot of planning and strategising for the incoming semester 2 Academy WIL interns, as well as the design capstone students across industrial design, interaction design and visual communication who will be employing their design skills on some exciting projects we have on offer. We are also ramping up our research projects and will be announcing two new PhD projects focused on (1) materials for future electric vehicle interiors as well as (2) revolutionary technologies for automotive interactions that domestic and international candidates can apply for in the upcoming round of scholarships. Keep an eye out for the announcements in the coming weeks through our newsletter and social media.

We're very excited to be part of the upcoming Open Day activities happening at QUT on Sunday 30 July at Kelvin Grove campus. We will be conducting special presentations about our connection to the Industrial Design program, what we do at the BMW Group + QUT Design Academy and provide insights into the world-first projects that we work with BMW Group on using some of the latest emerging technologies. At our Beta Lab we will be showcasing the awesome BMW M8 Competition Coupe supercar, posters on some of our industry and student projects, as well as some amazing prototypes and VR/AR experiences. It will be a great day for parents and prospective students. If you are interested, make sure you check out the [Open Day program](#) for more information.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Gomez'.

Dr Rafael Gomez  
Founder + Academy Lead

# PROGRAMS



## INTERNSHIPS

The Internship program focuses on Fostering Design Excellence. It offers high-performing QUT design students an opportunity to advance their learning through real-world projects, and provides a pathway for paid internship placements at BMW Group in Munich, Germany.

### Games Design Capstone Midway Presentation

This month our super talented Games Design students shared their midway presentation with us, plus BMW and MINI staff in Germany. For their capstone unit, Will, Dasha, James and Freya are working alongside staff in Germany on concepts for in-car gamified experiences, for a new vehicle being released in the next few years. We are impressed with their work so far and look forward to seeing the project develop in Semester 2, before their final presentation to BMW Group at the end of the year.

### BMW Intern Blogs

Our current BMW Interns have written blog posts to summarise the first few months of their respective internships at BMW Group, noting their experiences at work so far, settling into life overseas, and what they're looking forward to for the remainder of the year. You can check them out on [our website](#).

Blog posts written by our Semester 1 Academy interns, and our just departed Design Associate Daniel Fisher, are also available and worth a read!

## Semester 2 Projects

While we still have about a month to go, we have begun preparing our Semester 2 Internship projects. We will be taking another intake of students for our normal Work Integrated Learning Unit Academy Internships, plus offering projects for the Industrial Design Capstone unit once again. We are also working towards offering projects for Visual Communication and Interaction Design Capstone units, too.

## RESEARCH

The Research program centers on Exploring Knowledge Horizons. We have initiated a progressive research agenda for PhD and MPhil students to conduct world-class research through the Academy.

## Upcoming PhD's

We have some exciting announcements coming soon regarding newly initiated PhD projects on the "hidden knowledge of design thinking" and "future supercar automotive interiors". We are also announcing two new awesome PhD topics including (1) materials for future electric vehicle interiors, as well as (2) revolutionary technologies for automotive interactions, that domestic and international students can apply for. More on this in the coming weeks so make sure you keep an eye out for this in our socials and upcoming newsletters.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Special Projects program pioneers world-first projects by Advancing Cutting-Edge Technologies. It is tailored for professional design graduates to work on advanced R+D projects for real-world applications. These projects are established by BMW Group in Munich and are supported by the Special Projects team at the academy.

### Hams Hall

There are no major updates this month from our Special Projects program; we continue to work on our Hams Hall future vision project with a submission date in a couple of months. We are seeing progress as each week passes and are getting excited about adding the last few details to it soon. For now, we have some previews of assets throughout the animation that we can share. All of these have been designed and produced by the Academy design team.

# FEATURE



## THE 40 YEAR OLD INTERN: A NEW ADVENTURE

**Benjamin Cornelissen**  
BMW Group Intern (Logistics Innovation & Robotics) 2023

Life supposedly begins at 40, and in my case, it's opened the door to a thrilling career transformation. Trading my supervisor's apron at Bunnings for an intern badge at BMW Group is like swapping the everyday for a rollercoaster ride. This move has seen me exchange the routine of Brisbane for the wild adventure that is Industrial Design at the BMW Group in Munich.

Despite being 16,000km from my home, my wife, and my 21-year-old cat (who's nearly as old as my flatmates!), along with the challenges of settling into a new country, Munich has given me a warm welcome. I've found myself immersed in Bavarian culture, steeped in history and traditions that make even the oldest Aussie pub seem like a newbie. The efficient public transport and beer gardens have been a delightful novelty. With a 49 Euro ticket granting unlimited travel across Germany, weekend getaways have become the norm. From exploring fortresses in Salzburg to hiking in Tegernsee, and marvelling at the magnificent Neuschwanstein Castle, the experiences have been priceless.

Inside the bustling ecosystem of BMW's Logistics and Robotics department, I'm not your typical intern. Instead, I stand as a 40-year-old problem solver, innovator, and aspiring industrial designer. I'm making headway in captivating projects, harnessing innovative technology like the HoloLens 2 and robotic arms while also navigating the high-tech world of Nvidia's Omniverse. Mastering new software initially felt like trying to wrangle a cyclone, but it's since become a thrilling voyage of continual learning and achievement. Throw in the post-lunch kicker game tradition, the gruelling CrossFit workouts after work, and my ability to impress colleagues

with my 3D printing and laser cutting skills, and you've got an average day in my extraordinary life.

There's been a buzz around the plant this year, technically marking 101 years since the birth of the Munich BMW plant — Covid put a damper on the centenary. I'm really looking forward to the centenary celebrations kicking off in July, where one of my projects will be on display. Every day, we're privy to the magic of the BMW 3 Series line as it churns out a plethora of vehicles, including the iconic BMW M3. One of the most exhilarating experiences I've had so far at BMW was walking the assembly line at the plant. To be lucky enough to witness the intricacies of how various BMW cars are brought to life was nothing short of brilliant. Imagine a space buzzing with robotic arms, welding car chassis with pinpoint precision. Then you're striding along the assembly conveyor, observing the complex dance of different procedures, from the intricate threading of wiring to rigorous quality control checks. This immersive journey offers a real glimpse into the marvel of engineering it takes to create a BMW. This iconic car manufacturing process makes one appreciate the sheer complexity of crafting each and every BMW vehicle.

The journey from Australia to Germany has been more than just a physical transition; it's been a full-blown lifestyle overhaul. Tossed into the whirlwind of a new culture, I initially grappled with language barriers and navigated the nuances of Bavarian traditions. The professional shift from a supervisor at Bunnings to an intern at BMW was akin to learning to walk again, but I've embraced this beginner's journey, transforming every stumble into a stepping stone. Now, with the patience of a designer honing his craft, and the backing of my supervisors, Daniel and Firas, as well as my rock, my wife, Carley, I've been able to thrive amidst these changes.

In this personal and professional metamorphosis, I've discovered an untapped reservoir of resilience within me. Whether it's grasping the intricacies of the German language, savouring the unique flavours of Bavarian cuisine, or overcoming the challenges in mastering cutting-edge technology, I've learned that every hurdle is a gateway to growth. As for the future? My eyes are set on bringing this global perspective and newfound knowledge back to Australia. I envision myself either as part of a dynamic design consultancy or contributing as an in-house designer, infusing projects with a unique blend of design thinking nurtured in Munich. Armed with a suitcase of fresh skills and a reignited passion for design, I am excited to explore opportunities with companies that appreciate the dash of maturity and worldly perspective I bring to the table. I may have left as a supervisor from Bunnings, but I'll return as a problem-solver, innovator, and a designer enriched by an extraordinary journey.

For now, you can find me in Munich, soaking up the experiences and challenges that BMW throws my way, from working out with mates at CrossFit Munich, enjoying the sun-drenched English Garden with a Radler in hand, or swimming in the Isar. From attending ice hockey matches to daytime raves, and cycling in this beautifully flat city, Munich has become a playground of experiences. For all the mature-age students and career shifters out there, remember it's never too late for a new adventure.

From one 40-year-old intern to another, cheers!  
Ben



# BRIEFINGS



## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Games Design Capstone students share midway presentation with Academy and BMW Group staff
- Plans underway for Semester 2 projects across WIL and Capstone (Industrial, Vis Comm and Interaction)
- 2022 Photobook complete. Digital version available very soon

## EXTERNAL COLLABORATIONS

This month QUT Alumni and idealworks Digital Design Lead, Dylan Sheppard, presented at the Trade Investment Queensland (TIQ) Germany-Queensland Partnerships Dinner. Dylan highlighted the ongoing BMW Group and QUT partnership and how QUT designers have brought value to BMW through paid internship placements. You can read more information about the event [here](#).

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