BMW GROUP + QUT
DESIGN ACADEMY

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SEPTEMBER 2023

NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME

It's exciting to realise that we are almost reaching 2024, with less than a hundred days left! September has been a hectic month at the Academy, with the team busy completing Special Projects and partnering with the Future You Summit. It feels like there has been no time to rest this month.

We have some exciting updates to share! Our team has been making great strides in various areas, including winning an Award of Merit in the Interact Category for the Designers Australia Award 2023. This recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication put in by our team members, and we couldn't be prouder of them. In addition, we're thrilled to share that our very own Emily Boehmer has been featured on NVIDIA's blog. This is a fantastic achievement and underscores our commitment to innovation and excellence.

We're also proud to acknowledge the contributions of our Capstone student and interns, who presented some initial concepts for our upcoming projects. Their insights and creativity have been invaluable, and we're excited to see how their ideas will shape the future of our work.

Finally, we're happy to report that we've completed another Special Project. It's been a challenging yet rewarding journey, and we're grateful to the entire team for their hard work and dedication. We can't wait to see what the future holds for us as we continue to push the boundaries of what's possible.

I have spent the end of September in Germany attending the Automotive UI (International ACM SIGCHI Conference on Automotive User Interfaces and Interactive Vehicular Applications) conference in Ingolstadt to present a research paper and visiting some colleagues at Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt (THI) as well as the CARISSMA Insitute. Of course, I will also visit our friends and colleagues at BMW Group and IDEALworks in Munich. Looking forward to updating you on this when I return!

Enjoy the read!

Dr Rafael Gomez
Founder + Academy Lead

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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.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Academy Internships

The interns participating in our Semester 2, 2023 Academy WIL program showcased their initial concepts to our team. We were truly impressed by the dedication they've shown thus far and the exceptional quality of their ideas.

Sabina is completing our idealworks iw.hub branding package project. She presented 3 concepts that address design opportunities based on the current branding. Chelo presented his concepts for wearable tech for BMW factory workers. He explored ergonomics and usability, which fostered his concept creation. Whilst Sri and Keagan presented their concepts regarding creating STEM-themed in-vehicle entertainment for kids.

Capstone Unit Projects

Mitchell Hoye participating in our Semester 2, 2023 Academy Capstone program, showcased his initial concepts to his cohort and our team. We were genuinely impressed by the dedication he has shown thus far and the exceptional quality of his ideas. After a vigorous research report, Mitchell explored the design opportunities that fostered the creation of his concepts. He presented five concepts relating to supercar interiors. Mitchell was very thorough in his research and the early parts of his project, so we are confident that his final design will reflect this.

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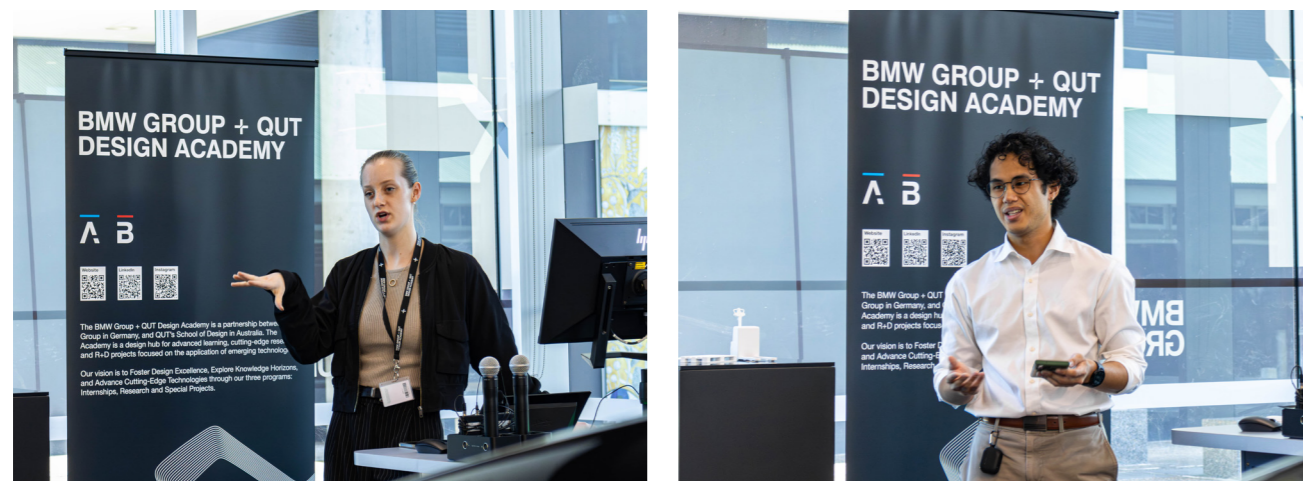
RESEARCH

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.

PhD Scholarships

Currently our Research Program is progressing well, although there are few updates. Both projects are in the early stages of development and will be publishing some short papers in the near future. Keep an eye out for updates very soon!

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 Future Vision Project

Exciting news! We have successfully completed the Hams Hall Future Vision project, meeting our September deadline. It's been an intense month as we worked tirelessly to put the final touches on the video. In the end, we managed to perfect the movement of the people throughout the video, thanks to the Motion Capture system at QUT that we used to record the movements of factory workers and staff, specifically assembly line workers building drive units on a production line, in addition to generic walking, conversation, and idle animations. We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the team and everyone involved in this project. As this year-long project now comes to an end, we couldn't be more eager to get started on our new projects.

FEATURE

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY AND GROWTH: MY UNEXPECTED ADVENTURE WITH NVIDIA OMNIVERSE

Emily Boehmer
BMW Group Intern (Tech Office Munich) 2023

When I first saw the message from Edmar Mendizabal on the NVIDIA Omniverse team, I ignored it for 3 days, thinking it was some mass message sent out to thousands of people inviting them to watch an upcoming stream. On the fourth day I realised that the message was in fact, asking me to be a guest speaker, demonstrating my Blender/Omniverse workflow, not a 'guest' watching a public stream. Edmar had seen the video that I had made about my work at BMW TechOffice Munich and thought I would be a good fit for the upcoming stream about Blender and Omniverse. Despite feeling totally underqualified to be presenting on an NVIDIA stream, the phrase "fake it 'till you make it" echoed in my mind and I knew I would regret turning down an opportunity like this. I quickly replied to the message, hoping it wasn't too late, and was excited to find out that the team also wanted to write a blog post about me.

The next couple of weeks were frantic – I had been using Blender and Omniverse throughout my internship, but the workflow that the NVIDIA Omniverse team were most interested in was one I had only used a few times. I didn't want to present some amateurish workflow and reflect poorly on the SORDI.ai project, so I reached out to the Academy and was grateful to have Tim Lim clarify some parts that I lacked confidence in. The team here at the TechOffice were also very helpful, explaining to me the details of SORDI.ai that I was fuzzy about so that I could pass on the information for the blog post and setting me up with the best webcam and microphone they could find. I worked long hours in the days leading up to the stream to make sure that my presentation would run smoothly as I hopped between 3 different programs and 5 different files.

When the day came, I was pleased to feel more excited than nervous as I waited for the daylight to fade into the evening. Almost my whole office stayed back to support me, which was very sweet, and we ate pizza and played games until it was time for me to join.

My presentation went well and I thoroughly enjoyed hearing from all of the other amazing 3D artists involved in the stream, including fellow Aussie Markom3D who made the YouTube tutorials that I had watched when first learning how to bring assets from Blender to Omniverse. The other presenters and the people in the comments were all so enthusiastic, which made the discussion wonderful.

I'm so grateful to everyone who allowed me to be a part of this experience, from Edmar and the Omniverse team for reaching out to me in the first place, to the BMW TechOffice and the BMW Group + QUT Design Academy for assisting and supporting me in preparation for the stream, and for allowing me to be an intern here in Munich in the first place.

The stream and my internship have really fueled my love for Blender and have encouraged me to keep developing my skills. It really is a fantastic program with such a strong community supporting it, and I would love to keep using it in my career. I feel that I have learned so much over the last few years, yet have only scratched the surface, and I can't wait to keep learning more.
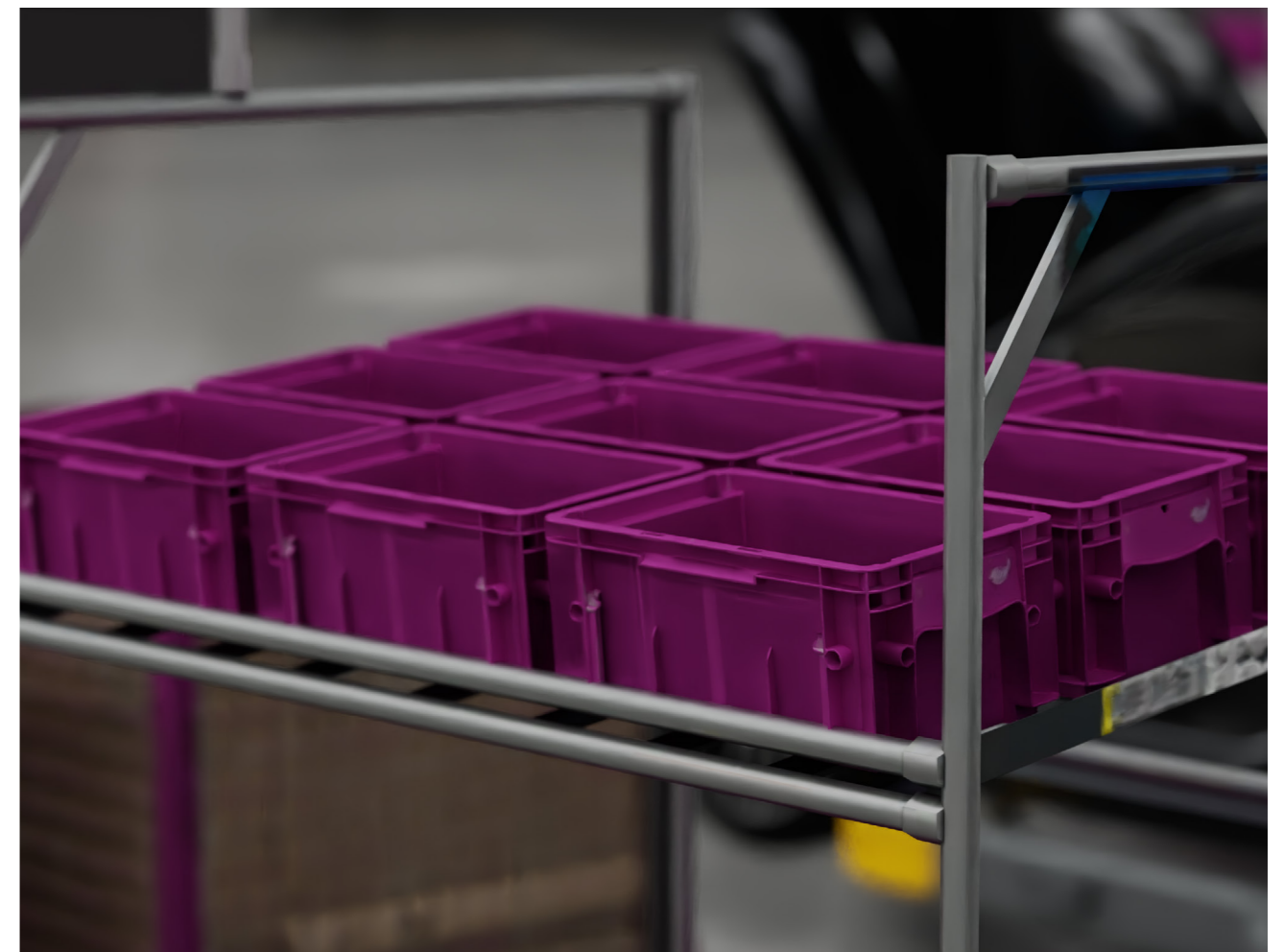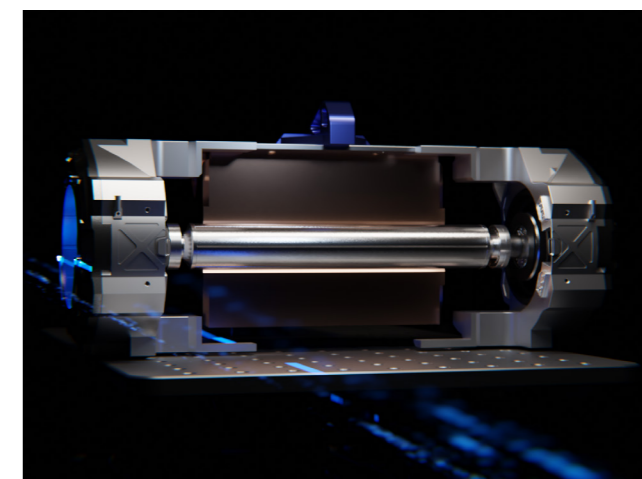
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BRIEFINGS

ACHIEVEMENTS

– Academy wins Award of Merit in the Interact Category for the Designers Australia Award 2023.
– Emily Boehmer (BMW Group Intern, 2023) featured on NVIDIA's blog and live stream
– Initial concepts presented by Capstone student and Interns
– Completion of Hams Hall Special Project

EXTERNAL COLLABORATIONS

During the Future You Summit, we were delighted to host a series of STEM sessions at the Beta Lab, specifically designed for high school students. Through these sessions, students had the chance to gain a deeper understanding of our Academy and the exciting opportunities that await them in the field of STEM.
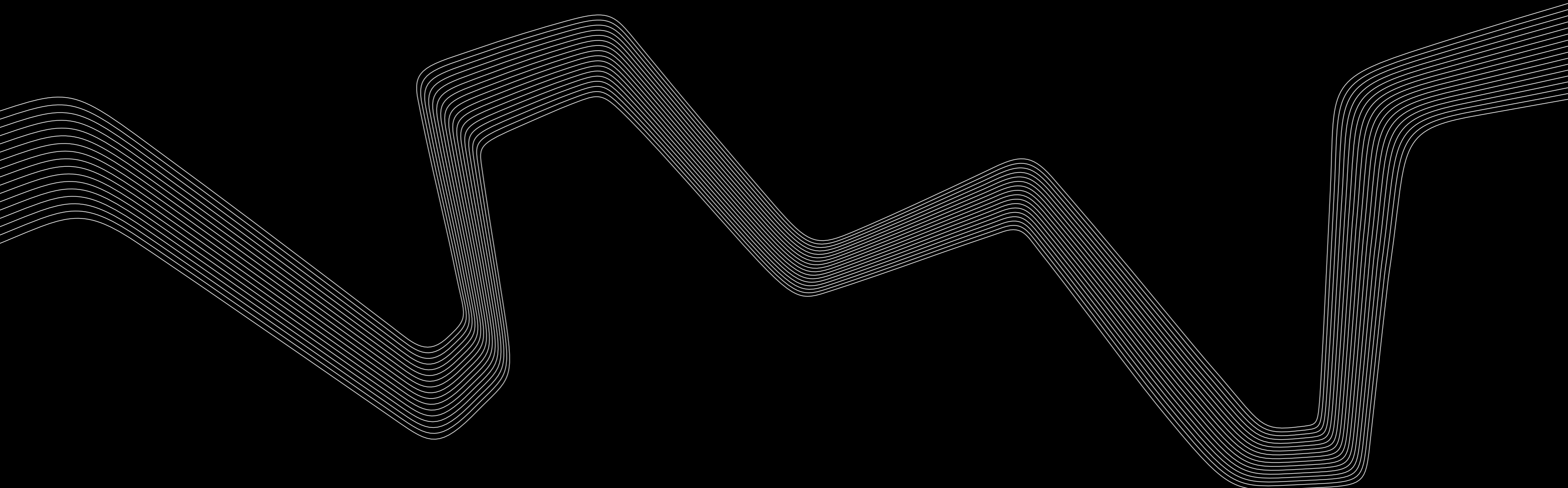
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