

# Toy Design and Sustainability Assaf Eshet

This design course introduces the students to the different aspects of sustainability and it's potential in the design of toys. From the personal throughout the social and environmental impact the challenge of using the natural surroundings we live in to develop eco-friendly toys is a current challenge of the toy design community. Students learn to use sustainable materials and their advantages, optimize, reduce, save, renew and be conscious of their creations and try to reach a common ground between technology and ecology. It is an attempt to go beyond "green" - to create toys that last and reinvent themselves. How can we simplify, maximize and stretch the play value of a toy? How can a toy be played over and over again and be considered a classic? How do we go beyond globalization and get closer to the power of the "local" and learn more about a kid's needs and abilities rather than limit our creativity for the sake of retail demand and large corporations?

The course will encourage the students to develop their conceptual thinking, view point on sustainability and the importance of play. Throughout the course students will synthesize their thoughts and communicate them using hands-on prototyping.

The class will include two short projects that require physical prototype and a longer final project that will include a presentation of the design strategy along with a working prototype.



# Syllabus

- **Class 1 (January 28)**

- A Short introduction.
- Hands-on assignment; Building a working prototype in class.
- Handing out and going over the Syllabus.

## **Class 2**

- A short presentation of the class assignment.
- Course introduction and discussion about the toy world:
  - An overview on the history of toys
  - The power and value of play
  - Play patterns – fantasy, imitation, skills etc.
  - Introduction to age groups
  - What's out there and how do we know what is a good toy
  - Where sustainability meets toys - what's the potential?
  - Books and articles
- An introduction to the second short assignment.

## **Class 3**

- A presentation of the students working prototypes.
- An open discussion about toys from the students' perspective.
- An open discussion about fundamental ingredients of a good toy- magic, surprise, cool, play value etc.
- Group research topics focusing on sustainability.

## **Class 4**

- Group research presentations.
- An introduction to sustainability– presenting a bamboo toy workshop held in Anji, China.
- Introducing the final project.

## **Class 5**

- Group research presentations.
- How does a toy designer/inventor work? Design thinking, prototyping process, sketching, 3D, safety and engineering.

## **Class 6**

- Proposals of initial toy ideas. What is the student's stand on sustainability? What is the potential?
- A one on one discussion on the students work.

## **Class 7**

- A one on one discussion on the students work - basic prototyping, sketches and selection of materials.

## **Class 8**

- Presenting the concept to class and collecting feedbacks; play pattern, core values, design potential etc.

## **Class 9**

- Design workshop

## **Class 10**

- Prototyping / design workshop / Testing with kids.

## **Class 11**

- Prototyping / design workshop
- Presenting design conclusions from observations.

## **Class 12**

- Prototyping / design workshop

## **Class 13**

- Prototyping / design workshop

## **Class 14 (May 6)**

- Final presentations with working prototypes.

## Class Schedule:

### **FRIDAY**

- January 28
- February 4
- February 11
- February 18
- February 25
- March 4
- March 11
- March 25
- April 1
- April 8
- April 15
- April 22
- April 29
- May 6

## Grading:

- 20% Class Participation/Attendance
- 10% Short-project 1,2
- 20% Group presentations
- 20% Personal progress and participation
- 30% Final Project

## Textbooks:

- Design For The Real World - Victor Papanek
- The Green Imperative - Victor Papanek
- Cradle to Cradle- Remaking the Way We Make Things - William McDonough, Michael Braungart
- Emotional Design - Donald A. Norman
- Super Normal - Sensation of the ordinary - by Naoto Fukasawa and Jasper Morrison
- Design For The Other 90% - by Cynthia E. Smith

- In the Bubble: Designing in a Complex World - John Thackara
- Kid Size - Alexander Von Vegesack
- Tool Toys - Alexander Manu
- The History Of Toys - Deborah Jaffe
- Dutch Design meets Bamboo - Pablo Van Der Lugt
- Materials & Design - by Michael F. Ashby and Kara Johnson
- The Eco-Design Handbook - by Alastair Fuad-Luke
- Transmaterial 1,2,3 - Blaine Brownell
- Manufacturing Processes for Design Professionals - Rob Thompson

## Office Hours:

Fridays from 12:30-01:30pm.

### **Contact:**

Assaf Eshet

email: [assaf.eshet@nyu.edu](mailto:assaf.eshet@nyu.edu)

Mobile: 347 5673671

Good luck and have a playful semester,  
Assaf