AIGA YEAR in REVIEW
AIGA Year in Review: 2019

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AIGA brings design to the world, and the world to designers.

AIGA advances design as a professional craft, strategic advantage, and vital cultural force. As the largest community of design advocates, we bring together practitioners, enthusiasts, and patrons to amplify the voice of design and create the vision for a collective future. We define professional standards and ethical practices, guide design education, inspire designers and the public, enhance professional development, and make powerful tools and resources accessible to all.
Our Chapters

Alaska 65
Arizona 343
Asheville 67
Atlanta 509
Austin 514
Baltimore 231
Birmingham 82
Blue Ridge 49
Boston 625
Brand Central 10
Central Coast 43
Charlotte 221
Chicago 1069
Cincinnati 227
Cleveland 224
Colorado 381
Connecticut 179
Dallas-Ft. Worth 361
Detroit 285
El Paso 40
Gainesville 53
Hampton Roads 86
Honolulu 64
Houston 436
Idaho 24
Indianapolis 244
International 584
Iowa 83
Jacksonville 129
Kansas City 502
Knoxville 19
Las Vegas 73
Los Angeles 793
Louisville 146
Maine 64
Memphis 72
Miami 173
Minneapolis 776
Mobile 63
Nashville 155
Nebraska 214
New Mexico 42
New Orleans 90
New York 2267
NW Arkansas 197
Oklahoma 82
Orange County 148
Orlando 178
Philadelphia 338
Pittsburgh 309
Portland 214
Raleigh 281
Reno-Tahoe 39
Rhode Island 135
Richmond 144
Salt Lake City 13
San Antonio 116
San Diego 296
San Francisco 933
Seattle 445
South Carolina 91
South Dakota 31
St. Louis 252
Tallahassee 61
Tampa Bay 132
Toledo 65
Triad NC 86
Upstate NY 191
Vermont 112
Washington DC 1189
West Michigan 283
West-Texas 39
Wichita 63
Wisconsin 173
Board of Directors

AIGA National Board of Directors
Serving July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Dana Arnett, President
Ashleigh Axios, President Elect
Terry Marks, Treasurer
Helen Armstrong

Lisa Babb
Sarah Brooks
Antionette Carroll
Sara Frisk

Richard Hollant
Marty Maxwell Lane
Jamie Myrold
Christine Taylor

Richard Ting
Hugh Weber
Forest Young
Andy Rich, Presidents Council Chair

Find more information about the role of the National Board at https://www.aiga.org/board-of-directors
Financials

**At a Glance**
Over the past 18 months, the Board and our national team have been focused on correcting pressing issues regarding our organizational model—making immediate leadership adjustments, strategically aligning our operating structure and investments, and implementing essential governance and community support structures.

Over this time period, we’ve reduced our deficit spending by approximately $1.9 million dollars, taken a portion of our staff remote, and conducted on-the-ground chapter engagement and research to better understand our problems in support of sharpening our focus on the right opportunities.

Core to this transformation is the 7-point action plan:

1. Implementation of a more efficient national operating structure
2. Realignment and streamlining our staff structure including exiting our national headquarters
3. Implementation of Board and chapter reforms that set the stage for the appointment of a new executive director and a renewed path forward for our task forces
4. Dedication to financial transparency and reporting
5. Purpose-driven governance and financial planning at the National Board level (36 month deficit reduction and balanced budget plan)
6. Installation of new best practices that will help us conduct business better
7. Engaging our chapters in the co-design of a new community driven vision

There’s still work to do, but we’re showing steady progress and delivering on these priorities and others.
You can also view AIGA’s 990 on Guidestar.
From the Executive Director

The last few months have been intense, revealing, and informative. We are in a period of discovery and planning, and while most annual reports tend to recap the previous year, this one will take a new approach incorporating some future planning too. I believe it is more important than ever to share thoughts on how we, as a community, are building AIGA’s future—a future that will emerge as both productive and inspiring.

Our goals remain centered on our mission with a strong focus on meaningful impact for our membership, chapter network, and design professionals at-large.

In the following pages, we’ll summarize 2019 highlights around conferences, awards, and initiatives, but I also want to share our plans for the remainder of 2020 and the work that will continue into 2021.

Membership is the central element at the heart of our professional community. Our objective is to rebuild a more rational approach to membership dues, creating a more sustainable financial model. We are expanding our leadership in this functional area to fill a critical void in our organization—this will strengthen our use and understanding of data and member needs so we can make informed decisions that benefit our entire community.

We are planning to develop a more comprehensive and representative content strategy that cultivates, curates, and distributes professional content from and for the design professional community. Our content strategy will be informed by subject matter expertise, journalistic practices, and creative inspiration to better engage and support our broad design audience universe.

We plan to build a digital learning platform and professional development strategy for the AIGA community and design profession at-large. The initial learning management system launch is slated for the fall of 2020 and will serve as a knowledge resource and learning hub with multiple format courses. The technology platform is secured and content is being created.
In closing, it’s important to note that in addition to the programming work that is underway, we’re also focused on building and funding key initiatives which include our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce and the Design Educators Community. We will be raising awareness and participating in purposeful dialogues and activities to engage and learn. We are committed to diligently and humbly working to build a new future that empowers our community to make positive and lasting change.

Bennie Johnson

Bennie F. Johnson
AIGA Executive Director
AIGA Year in Review

Membership
In the last year, we transitioned from Protech to a new Salesforce AMS database, Fonteva, to make the user experience more accessible. While we cannot deny there were some hiccups along the way, we feel this has improved the overall function of my.aiga.org. Due to the change in database, we don’t have a direct year-to-year comparison to share at the completion of this report. That being said, our community continues to grow. We are seeing nonmember and member engagement on social media, event attendance, competitions, partnerships, and participation with our Design Futures podcast, as well as with the AIGA Commitment to Community resource hub. We are continuing to look at ways to leverage our new platform and create a better member experience, increase engagement with the community, and increase membership.

2019 AIGA Social Media Followers

As of January 2020
Podcast Launch
In 2019, the Design Future Now podcast was launched. AIGA’s design education manager, Lee-Sean Huang, explores questions about how design is changing as a discipline and profession, and how we face these opportunities as a community.


- **6,738** total plays across **13** episodes
- **400–600** average plays per episode

Segments by Age:
- 23—27 year olds: 34%
- 28—34 year olds: 26%
- 35—44 year olds: 23%

**Note:** that the age bands are not evenly distributed, but that is just a quirk of how Spotify (the parent company of our podcast host, Anchor.fm) reports their stats.

- **76%** listeners based in the United States
- 2% – U.K.
- 2% – Australia
- 4% – India, New Zealand, Canada, and Germany (combined)

- **63%** women
- **33%** men
- **4%** Non-binary or not specified
AIGA Eye on Design

AIGA *Eye on Design*, the magazine of AIGA, reports on design community issues and highlights exciting designers and design.

Left to Right:
Eye on Design #4: Worth
Eye on Design #5: Distraction
Eye on Design #6: Utopias

» More than 1,000,000 unique visits to eyeondesign.aiga.org
» Published three new print magazines
» Sent 100 newsletters to our 125,000 subscribers
» More than 500,000 followers on Instagram
» *Design Census*: 10,000 responses

AIGA Conference and Events

**2019 Design Conference.** Held April 4–6 in Pasadena, California, with more than 1,400 individuals attending AIGA’s Design Conference to listen and engage with 83 speakers on topics ranging from ethical AI to why Comic Sans is actually a good typeface!
2019 Leadership Retreat. Sixty-four chapters joined AIGA in Atlanta, Georgia August 23–24 to develop and share chapter leadership skills. Topics ranged from:

» Influence: mentorship & coaching, collaboration, motivating people, persuasion, and relationship building
» Operations: finance & budgets, governance, sustainability, tools and resources, and internal & corporate communications
» Vision and Strategy: strategic perspective & alignment, facilitating design thinking, metrics, analysis, benchmarking, and planning for the future

Awards
AIGA Medal. The AIGA Medal—the most distinguished honor in the profession of communication design—has been awarded since 1920 to individuals in recognition of their exceptional achievements to the advancement of the field of design as a respected craft, strategic advantage, and vital cultural force. Medals have been awarded to individuals who have set standards of excellence over a lifetime of work or have made individual contributions to innovation within the practice of design.
In 2019, AIGA awarded three Medals to the following individuals:

ALEXANDER GIRARD (POSTHUMOUS)

[Image 1] https://www.aiga.org/medalist-alexander-girard

Note: the long edit by Dress Code for AIGA and Herman Miller was a nominee in the Vimeo Festival Awards. The AIGA essay and video are included in the exhibition, Alexander Girard: A Designer’s Universe.

GEOFF MCFETRIDGE

[Image 2] https://www.aiga.org/medalist-geoff-mcfetridge

Note: This video was selected as a Vimeo Staff Pick.

DEBBIE MILLMAN

[Image 3] https://www.aiga.org/medalist-debbie-millman
**AIGA Corporate Leadership Award.** Established in 1980, the AIGA Corporate Leadership Award recognizes the role of perceptive and forward-thinking organizations that have been instrumental in the advancement of design by applying the highest standards as a matter of practice and policy. In 2019, the AIGA Corporate Leadership Award was presented to Microsoft for leading the way around designing for inclusion, and for its philanthropic and employee-focused practices. Albert Shum and Tim Allen accepted the award on behalf of Microsoft.

**Steven Heller Prize for Cultural Commentary.** Established in 2017, the annual Steven Heller Prize for Cultural Commentary spotlights individuals who best exemplify the tradition of prolific writing and boundless curiosity established by Steven Heller—who has contributed and inspired engaging commentary about design and culture for the past three decades. This award celebrates critical thinking about design and the profession, and encourages development in the next generation of design voices through a variety of media such as book authors, editors, critics, reporters, copywriters, bloggers, podcasters, radio/video content creators, or filmmakers.

In 2019, the Steven Heller Prize for Cultural Commentary was awarded to two individuals:

ALEXANDRA LANGE
ELLEN MCGIRT

**Scholarships**

**AIGA Worldstudio Scholarships.** In 2019, 333 applications were received and 16 awards were granted to applicants whose work focuses on social, environmental, and cultural impact in three categories: Illustration, Photography, and Graphic Design.

- Nine AIGA Worldstudio Scholarships, including two chapter AIGA Design Continuum Awards (range: $2,500–$5,000)
- Seven AIGA Worldstudio honorable mentions ($500 each)
- Total: $30,000
- **Join the movement #AIGATogether campaign raised $28,295 for 2020 scholarships**
**Competitions**

**50 Books | 50 Covers.** This survey of book design represents perhaps the longest-standing legacy in American graphic design. Beginning in 1923, the Fifty Books of the Year competition was a yearly mainstay of AIGA. As dust jackets became more common, covers were added to the competition. This time-honored competition aims to identify the 50 best-designed books and book covers. The February 2019 deadline yielded 503 entries (246 entrants total). Winners of the 50 Books | 50 Covers of 2018.

**AIGA Design Census + Research and Insights**

In 2019, 9,429 people participated in the Design Census. The census aims to uncover insights through data, leading to deeper and more informed conversations about where the design industry is now and where it’s headed.

The research approach in 2020 and 2021 will continue to research and create an ongoing and open conversation with the design community through the use of Pulse Checks and focus groups. The insights gained will be used to inform member needs and allow AIGA to build new offerings and services for the community as a whole. Finally, this new approach to research will help our community to create greater awareness of the value and impact of design, enhance professional development and learning, and create content and resources for the broader design community.

**Design Jobs**

Since 2004, AIGA Design Jobs has successfully matched talented candidates with tens of thousands of jobs from firms, agencies and companies across the U.S., including Amazon, Bloomberg, Facebook, Herman Miller, IDEO, Interbrand, MTV Networks and Nokia. This exclusive job board is the first place AIGA members turn to find their next opportunity, and the premier place for employers seeking the most qualified designers. Job listings are displayed for 45 days and may be featured on aiga.org, on local AIGA chapter websites, and in AIGA social media channels. Between October 2018 and September 2019, 1,500 jobs were shared on AIGA’s Design Jobs, bringing in over $130,000 in revenue.