

BENJAMIN R. KIRKLAND | CURRICULUM VITAE

School of Design | Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University | Blacksburg, VA 24061

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

I am a professional industrial designer and instructor of design with an enthusiastic bonsai addiction. I have more than a decade of professional design and design-management experience, and I have expertise working with fabricators, vendors, contractors, and firms in a professional setting. My academic interests focus on building empathy for the human condition, critical & speculative design thinking, videography for online learning, & novel applications of engineering for design. I value an institution that will continue my love of mentoring new talent, and an administration that values the contributions of their faculty toward the education of its student body. In addition to formal teaching, I have built a strong educational video presence on YouTube through my bonsai hobby, Appalachian Bonsai. This endeavor reaches beyond the digital realm into adult education programs across the states of Virginia and North Carolina.

EDUCATION

2019 *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)*
Master of Science in Architecture

2003 *Auburn University*
Bachelor of Industrial Design

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

2022 – Curr. *Virginia Tech*

Instructor of Design

Industrial Design Lab III (Junior Studio)

Introducing working aspects of human-centered design, soft goods, & aging-in-place within a studio environment to reinforce design methods, research, materials & processes, and social/cultural responsibilities; advising on manufacturing techniques and professional development

Design Visualization

Instruction on drawing skills, specifically 1-, 2-, and 3-Point Perspective; 3D conceptualization within a drawn space; rendering techniques in pencil, pen, marker, chalk, and paint; Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign; visual communication

2020 – 2022 *Virginia Tech*

Adjunct Instructor of Design

Human Factors

Lectures on ergonomics, anthropometrics, design principles, human development, diversity, aging-in-place, ADA, cognition, and emotion as they relate to designed objects, UX, architecture, urban planning, and HCI; case studies on design & human error; critical & speculative design

Industrial Design Lab III (Junior Studio)

Introducing working aspects of critical & speculative design, corporate branding, & aging-in-place within a studio environment to reinforce design methods, research, materials & processes, and social/cultural responsibilities; advising on manufacturing techniques and professional development

Industrial Design Lab II (Sophomore Studio)

Refinement of skills; introduction to industry partners; incorporation of human factors into design

practice; introduction to design research; deepening the complexity of design process with integration of skill sets, specifically visual & verbal communication of ideas

Summer Studio for Minors

Online introductory course for interdisciplinary minor students to understand how to work during the coronavirus pandemic; general instruction on design research, sketch ideation, prototyping, and final presentation of ideas; Zoom instruction

Solidworks (CAD)

Online instruction of the 3D modeling software package Solidworks to sophomore design students, with skills ranging from beginner to intermediate

Design Visualization

Instruction on drawing skills, specifically 1-, 2-, and 3-Point Perspective; 3D conceptualization within a drawn space; rendering techniques in pencil, pen, marker, chalk, and paint; visual communication

2019 – 2020. *Virginia Tech – [Living Labs: A Big Sticky Project](#)*

Associate Researcher

Conducting interviews and producing video content for exhibition & record; aiding in production of ceramic tiles for large architectural installation; promoted efficiency through assembly line production methods; general labor

2018 – 2019 *Virginia Tech*

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Responsibilities included grading assignments, recording attendance, lecturing during instructor absences, and acting liaison between remote instructors & students during professor's leave of absence

Design Visualization

Human Factors

Design Research

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2021 - 2022 *Principles of Effective Teaching Certificate (PETC)*

Training in contemporary pedagogical techniques, use of technologies in the classroom, student engagement techniques, Canvas platform education

2019 *Graduate Education Development Institute (GEDI)*

Training in contemporary pedagogical techniques, use of technologies in the classroom, and inquiry-based learning

2015 - 2016 *Daley Group, LLC*

Coached in professional career & managerial development; understanding interpersonal relationships in working environments; conflict management; time management

COMMITTEES

2021 - 2022 *Curriculum Committee Member*

Virginia Tech CAUS School of A+D

Member of the Curriculum Committee for the School of Architecture + Design, within the College of

Architecture and Urban Studies. Duties include reviewing curriculum proposals within the school for considerations, amendments, rejections, & approvals

2021 – 2022 *Graduate Thesis Committee – Member/Advisor*

Matthew Reiss, M.S. Arch

Member and Advisor for master's graduate student to guide design thinking in the construction of mycelium-based structures and products

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2016 – Curr. *Appalachian Bonsai – [YouTube](#)*

Founder & Content Creator

Production of online video tutorials about bonsai trees, including tree design, collection of raw materials, seasonal maintenance, care instructions, and soil components; speculative discussion to innovate the art into an American version of a traditional form using native materials.

90k subscribers; 10.5 million views (Jan 2022)

2008 – 2018 *[Crenshaw Lighting](#)*

Lead Designer, Product Designer, Estimator, Fabricator

Designed custom architectural light fixtures; restored & replicated historically important lighting artifacts; managed team of industrial designers and mechanical engineers; oversaw production of all submittal and working drawings; formalized design process through communications, checklists, data collection, and hiring of staff; estimated for quotes; consulted clientele; assisted in fabrication, restoration & installation of light fixtures; operated as shop liaison; proficiency in Solidworks 3D modeling software & Photopia optical design software

Notable Projects with Crenshaw Lighting

[Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, WA – SkB Architects](#)

Facilitated the design of custom ceramic lighting for new headquarters; connected artisans and craftspersons into a cohesive creative unit; converted renderings and mockup visuals into constructive working models for fabrication

[520 Park Avenue, New York City, NY – Robert A.M. Stern Architects](#)

Detailed quotation of custom lighting; preliminary designs for approval & manufacture; sourcing of custom materials; advisement to engineering and fabrication

[Wyoming State Capitol, Cheyenne, WY – HDR, Plan One/Architects](#)

Restoration & replication of historic light fixtures; research of historic glass types & methods in the creation of new custom lenses; assistance in complete lighting design package; consultation to ensure historical accuracy of elements

[Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul, MN – HGA Architects](#)

Restoration & replication of historic light fixtures; design of new historically-inspired light fixtures; modification of fixtures to modern LED technology; assistance in complete lighting design package; design consultation throughout project development, production, & installation; procurement of custom materials; fabrication of custom details

United States Supreme Court, Washington, DC – Architect of the Capitol

Replicated historic elevator light fixture destroyed by fire; enabled in-situ 3D scans & modeling for custom casting; provided on-site consultation; procured custom castings

[Provo City Center Temple, Provo, UT – FFKR Architects](#)

Designed for manufacture of custom light fixtures for historic temple; assisted in lighting design package; facilitated production & installation

George W. Bush Presidential Library, Dallas, TX – Robert A.M. Stern Architects

Assisted in fabrication, finish, transportation, and installation of custom brass and crystal chandeliers; advised on-site labor in troubleshooting install

United States Capitol Building, Washington, DC – Architect of the Capitol

Assisted in detail drawings of custom castings and fittings for Room S-238 chandelier; assisted in fabrication & finish of custom details

Cincinnati Museum & Union Terminal, Cincinnati, OH – GBBN Architects

Restoration and replication of historic Art Deco lighting; identified key details required for accuracy through old photographs and broken fixtures; created custom lighting inspired from original designs

[Thalian Hall, Wilmington, NC – Hanbury Architects](#)

Modeled and provided fabrication documents for historically-inspired chandelier; advised on details for accuracy based upon historic sketches and photographs

The Monroe Building, Chicago, IL – Holabird & Root

Replicated wall sconce fixtures based upon historic photographs; designed custom elevator call lights; designed office bowl pendants with custom bronze staves

2006 – 2008 *Dreaming Creek Timber Frame Homes*

Frame Designer, Timberwright

Converted architectural drawings into 3D timber models; applied traditional and custom frame joinery; drafted documents for clientele, engineers & fabricators; assisted in production of CNC files for Hundegger K2; assisted in fabrication and on-site raising of architectural timber frame structures; proficiency in AutoCAD HSB & Cadwork timbering software

2006 [Chateau Morrisette Winery](#)

Graphic Designer

Designed promotional materials and produced conceptual wine labels

LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

2022 *Visiting Artist, “An Artful Approach to Bonsai Design” (Scheduled for Nov 2, 2022)*

Adult Education Series workshop, The North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville NC

Invited Lecturer “Teaching Aging In Place”

ByDesign Conference, Roanoke VA

Invited Lecturer “Introduction to Bonsai”

Roanoke Valley Garden Club, Roanoke VA

2021 *Exhibitor & Demonstrator*

88th Historic Garden Week Tour, Roanoke VA

2020 *Invited Lecturer, “Sketching Trees”*

Adult Education Series, The North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville NC

Invited Lecturer, "Inspired by a Southern Appalachian Bonsai"
Adult Education Series, The North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville NC

Poster Presenter, "Speculative and Critical Design in Education: Practice and Perspectives"
ACM DIS2020 Conference workshop, hosted by Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland, UK

Visiting Artist & Videographer "Radical Redesign: Curator's Talk & Styling Demonstration"
The North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville NC

2020 *Invited Lecturer, "A Bonsai Program"*
Salem Garden Club, Salem VA

2019 *Invited Lecturer, "A Bonsai Program"*
Hahn Horticultural Garden, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg VA

2019 *Invited Lecturer, "Bonsai & YouTube Content Creation"*
IDS Thought Leaders Series, Industrial Design Program, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg VA

2017 *Lecturer & Demonstrator, "Introduction to Bonsai"*
8th Annual Greater Roanoke Home & Garden Show, Roanoke VA

PUBLICATIONS

2022 *American Bonsai (Book Proposal)*
Domestic History of and Current Approaches toward Bonsai Design in the United States
Timber Press, Portland OR

2019 - Curr. *The Making of an American Elm (a Short Film, premiering November, 2022)*
Bonsai Documentary for The North Carolina Arboretum

2016 - Curr. *Appalachian Bonsai*
50+ Educational Videos, Self-published & Produced, YouTube

SERVICE

2022 [*Empire State Ride*](#)
Paid Volunteer with Two Trees Catering

2021 *Empire State Ride*
Paid Volunteer with Two Trees Catering

APPOINTMENTS

2020- Curr. *Vice President*
Hinoki Bonsai Club, Roanoke VA

2016 – 2018 *President*
Hinoki Bonsai Club, Roanoke VA

2015 *Vice President*
Hinoki Bonsai Club, Roanoke VA

MEMBERSHIPS

IDSA
Hinoki Bonsai Club