

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan – Flint
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Art and Art History

Benjamin Gaydos, assistant professor of communication and visual arts, Department of Art and Art History, College of Arts and Sciences, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of communication and visual arts, with tenure, Department of Art and Art History, College of Arts and Sciences.

Academic Degrees:

M.F.A.	2007	Virginia Commonwealth University
B.A.	2002	Michigan State University

Professional Record:

2012-Present	Assistant Professor of Communication and Visual Arts, University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan
2009-2012	Adjunct Professor, Lesley University College of Art and Design, Massachusetts
2006-2008	Adjunct Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Gaydos is an accomplished teacher whose pedagogy is guided by three principles: real-world application, collaboration, and civic responsibility. In most all of Professor Gaydos's classes, he provides opportunities for his students to interact with professionals working in the field. Soon after his arrival at UM-Flint, Professor Gaydos participated in the TCLT *Course Catalyst Design Program* to develop a course based on the concept of socially responsible design. The project entitled *Design for Good* is rooted in his deep commitment to civic responsibility and the principle that socially responsible design can improve human well-being and livelihood. Since this project, Professor Gaydos has integrated his students in numerous UM-Flint civic initiatives (i.e., Curiosity Academy and the Earth Matters Earth Day celebration) as well as local non-profit events (The Neighborhood Engagement Hub, Flint Film Festival, etc). Professor Gaydos constantly takes every opportunity to grow as a teacher – as recently demonstrated when he parlayed his experiences teaching online to enrich his face-to-face pedagogy. His commitment to teaching socially responsible design has had powerful impacts on his students and the promotion of their learning.

Research – Professor Gaydos' research and creative activity focuses on three areas: Ethnographic Design, the practice and implementation of Social Impact Design, and Experimental Media Production. Drawing on his work in cultural Anthropology, Professor Gaydos's approach to Ethnographic Design emphasizes a multidisciplinary and time intensive process that involves observation, dialogue and interaction. Through his scholarly and creative work, Professor Gaydos has firmly established himself as an important leader in his field. Since joining the faculty in 2012, Professor Gaydos has participated in five juried exhibitions, one of which was international, had four commissioned performances, two solo film screenings, five publications, delivered thirteen papers, facilitated eight workshops, curated five exhibitions, as well as curating monthly screenings at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. Professor Gaydos has been invited to speak at such prestigious institutions as the Sichuan Fine Arts

Institute, the University of Michigan, the Rhode Island School of Design, College for Creative Studies, Brown University, Pomona College, Case Western University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Tennessee: Knoxville. Professor Gaydos' work has garnered national accolades – his *Media Archeology of Boston* won the Regional Design Award from *Print Magazine*, and his other designs and writings have been featured in *CORE77* (a global outlet for industrial design that publishes articles, discussion forums, hosts design competitions and lecture series), and the The Design Activist's Handbook.

Recent and Significant Scholarly Activity:

Awards & Honors, Fellowships & Residencies

2018, marra.tein Residency, Beirut, Lebanon

2016, Provost 60th Anniversary Research Grant, University of Michigan – Flint, for *Explorations in Augmented Print Media*

2015, DEPE Space Residency, as part of *DesignInquiry*, MOCAD, Detroit, MI

2014, *Print Design Annual Award*, Best of Region: East, for *Media Archaeology of Boston*

2014, McCracken Research Resident Fellowship, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, with Julia Yezbick, Liza Bielby, and Richard Newman, for *Manifest Destiny*

Exhibition, Performance, Screenings, & Curation

2018, *Flint Magazine*, Publication and Exhibition, co-curated with Maia Asshaq (forthcoming)

2017, *People's Press*, "Vital Signs for a New America," Group Exhibition (with The Hinterlands), Stamps Gallery at the Stamps School of Art & Design, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, September–October 2017, Curator: Srimoyee Mitra, Stamps Gallery

2017, *People's Press* and *Mare Cognitum*, "Inside/Outside: Working Our Way Out of the Damaged Now, Design as Dialectics" Group Exhibition, San Francisco State University Design Gallery, February–April 2017, Juror/Curator: Joshua Singer and Virginia Tassinari in collaboration with LUCA Arts DESIS Lab

2014, *Urban Acoustic Ecologies*, "Design Inquiry," Group Exhibition/Residency, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD), November 2014, Juror/Curator: By Invitation (MOCAD/DesignInquiry)

2014, *Substrate: Printed Matter from the Rust Belt*, "Curation/Exhibition, Scene Metrospace, East Lansing, MI, October 2014, Curator: Benjamin Gaydos

Publications as Author

Benjamin Gaydos and Julia Yezbick, "The Artists Resonating Detroit: An Ethnographic Report on 5 Art Organizations," Resonant Detroit, June 2017. <http://www.creativemany.org>, commissioned by Creative Many Michigan for the Ford Foundation

Benjamin Gaydos and Sloan Herrick, "Community Vision + Action Plan for Banglatown," Global Detroit, January 2017. <http://www.globaldetroit.com>, commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Kresge Foundation

Service – Professor Gaydos has provided both consistent and important service contributions to the department, college, university, community, and his discipline. At the department level, Professor Gaydos designs beautiful promotion materials for its events, and is a committed colleague who fully participates in all departmental business, whether that is attending meetings, participating in strategic planning, redesigning the curriculum, representing the department at open houses or visiting artist events, or organizing the annual student show. For the college, Professor Gaydos is currently serving on the Nominating Committee and has been a member of a LEO review committee. The most visible evidence of his service to the university is through his work on the Publication Board where his work

has resulted in significant design enhancements to *Qua* (the University of Michigan-Flint's biannual student-run literary and fine arts magazine) and the *Michigan Times*. Professor Gaydos has also served on the university's Graduate Advisory Board and the Auxiliary and Recreation Board and is currently serving as an Innovation Incubator Mentor.

Since his arrival at the University of Michigan-Flint in 2012, Professor Gaydos has formed community partnerships with such local organizations as the Flint Public Art Project (FPAC), the Christ Enrichment Center (CEC), and the Friends of Max Brandon Park. Professor Gaydos also serves as the secretary of the Flint Public Art Project board of directors as well as the design advisor for the Neighborhood Engagement Hub. Professor Gaydos is deeply committed to serving his community through such projects as "Banglatown," *Mothlight Microcinema*, and *Friends of Max Brandon Park*.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): "I must say that upon reviewing his tenure dossier, how deeply impressed I was by the caliber and pervasiveness of his work and area of research focus. Not only was I struck with the integrity of his work, but also with volume of his achievements. ... *A Media Archeology of Boston* was one of the pieces in Prof. Gaydos's dossier that I considered to be outstanding. The scope and magnitude of this work, as well as its diverse components (print, web, film) displayed his skill in being able to gather tremendous amount of data and synthesize information and then to visually design a set of systems for an audience to understand that data is a valuable asset. The quality of this work is apparent in its being included in *Print Magazine's Regional Design Annual* in 2014. This is a one of the industry's most prestigious awards that can be bestowed upon a design firm."

Reviewer (B): "This work seems authentic and with a thread of true commitment and expertise to make change evident and expansive. From the *Banglatown Vision + Action Plan* to the *Designers & Forests to East Iceland* Gaydos is able to articulate and update a careful design methodology that he adapts with different audiences and content. ... Overall, I am impressed with Mr. Gaydos' clarity of where his passion in design lives and how he puts this into action. He is exercising his knowledge and lending his expertise across carefully curated professional studio work to experimental searching form-based opportunities of performance and publication design. His research appears to up the ante with thoughtful depth..."

Reviewer (C): "Mr. Gaydos appears to be at the cutting edge of this trend: Virtually all of his projects—whether at his firm, *goodgood*; his student-led studio, D&SIGN Studio; his Design for Good workshop, his Banglatown project, or his Urban Acoustic Ecologies project—embody this new design paradigm. Likewise, his talks and workshops at RISD, Brown University, Pomona College, Case Western University, and elsewhere demonstrate his status as a thought leader within the academic/design community. ... Among Mr. Gaydos' scholarly and creative works, I was especially impressed by his designation as design lead for the Banglatown project, his various curatorial projects which engage the local community, and his *Media Archaeology of Boston*, which garnered a *Print Magazine* Regional Design Award. ... As far as the candidate's standing in relation to others in his/her peer group, I would rank Assistant Professor Gaydos in the top 10% (nationally) of tenure-track design instructors."

Reviewer (D): "One of his greatest contributions to the design field is his research in Ethnographic Design. Many leading design schools, with innovative and highly regarded research standards, have invited Mr. Gaydos to present his approach to design methodology and practice. It is also impressive that Mr. Gaydos practices his design theories/methodologies and has also been invited to work on Ethnographic Design case studies funded by notable national and international organizations such as, *The Kresge Foundation*, *NEA*, and *The Ford Foundation*. ... His design work is outstanding and

definitely raises the bar aesthetically. It is great to see that he remains active in client work that not only ties into his research interests of Ethnographic Design and Social Impact Design, but is winning national peer recognition for this work as well. His designs have been featured, on more than one occasion, in top Nationally/Internationally recognized publications: *PRINT magazine*, *CORE77*, and the book *The Design Activist's Handbook*.”


Reviewer (E): “...not many are willing to go to the depth that Professor Gaydos does in his qualitative and quantitative research when uncovering community problems. The foresight on his part to coordinate teams of people with separate competencies is what makes him a natural leader. ... In Professor Gaydos, I see a designer with an already established voice—one that will only get stronger with time. I applaud the breadth and depth of his work and look forward to being inspired by his future research.”

Reviewer (F): “The role of a designer is to translate complex information and critical inquiry into compelling and legible form. Ben Gaydos accomplishes this intricate task through work that is smart, human and humane, and provocative. His sources and inspirations reveal an inquiring mind, and a sophisticated hand that produces design work that is literary and intellectual without being overly didactic. ... It takes both the spirit of a pirate and the energy of a cheerleader to produce work like Ben’s. These are not easy subjects to comprehend—from water rights to the territories and identities of ethnic enclaves—and Ben’s work communicates both the depths of his empathetic practice and the innovation of his visual skill sets. These social impact design projects—for Creative Many and Global Detroit—are among the most articulate design work I can point to today. ... Ben Gaydos has achieved a rare synchronicity of a rigorous scholarly and creative practice that is accomplished and joyous. His high level of thought, engagement and imagination clearly serves as an exemplar, and Ben is clearly a strong role model for students as evidenced by the consistently ambitious work of his students in Design Studio.”

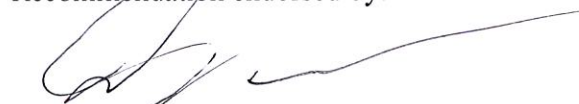
Summary of Recommendation:

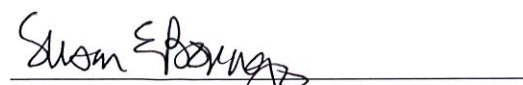
Professor Gaydos has demonstrated the requisite excellence in teaching, creative and scholarly achievement and recognition, and service to his community, university and department. I am pleased to recommend Benjamin Gaydos for promotion to associate professor communication and visual arts, with tenure, Department of Art and Art History, College of Arts and Sciences.

Recommended by:


Susan Gano-Phillips, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

Recommendation endorsed by:


Douglas G. Knerr, Provost and
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs


Susan E. Borrego, Chancellor
University of Michigan – Flint

May 2018