Spring is back!
Stay in the Loop

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Kitchen Cleaning

BA

Workshop Cleaning

IDI

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Thanks for your contributions.
Future articles & photos can be sent to: wozzop@gmail.com by Friday evenings.
We love hearing from you!

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Contributions: all the #lifeatuid contributors!

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The week that was Life at UID

Share your projects, fikas and class moments with UID by sending your photos to: wozzop@gmail.com

@chadudrafa Amazing waffles #lifeatuid
@maccjames #lifeatuid paint

@chadudrafa Amazing waffles #lifeatuid
@maccjames #lifeatuid paint

@mimigle Things that make my day -@matthias.karg working hard #lifeatuid

@chadudrafa Amazing waffles #lifeatuid
@maccjames #lifeatuid paint

@themightymont Lego dudes getting down #lifeatuid

@bengisuhanim 1st of May

Thuy thesis
On Wednesday night, in the basement theater of New York’s Rubin Museum, audience members were passed a squat metal cylinder and instructed to take a whiff before passing it along to their neighbor. On a projection screen, an animated movie called Alex and Wonderland followed the daydreams of an androgynous cartoon character as he traveled the world from jungle to beach.

As the hero’s adventures unfolded, the device released a corresponding “scent track”—the sweet scent of pineapple or an overwhelming burst of suntan lotion—that heightened the sensorial experience in a way similar to how a music score would.

The event was a launch of sorts for Cyrano, a “digital smell speaker,” and the latest endeavor from Harvard professor David Edwards. Edwards, a serial inventor, is known for such madcap creations as smokable chocolate, edible food packaging, and inhalable alcohol. But for the past two years, he’s been experimenting with ways to commercialize odor under his company Vapor Communications, which he cofounded with his former student Rachel Field. In 2014, the pair released the company’s first prototype, an iPhone-connected device that could scent-encode emails. The oPhone, as it was called, created some buzz when Edwards used it to send the first transatlantic smell message but never made it to market.

Cyrano is the company’s first product to go on sale, and it looks and functions quite a bit differently than its earlier predecessor. The compact, portable device emits 12 different scents that users can mix and match to create a “playlist” you can control via an app. The scents are divided into smells that are energizing, relaxing, and escapist. Selecting “Get Away,” for example, will give you a tropical melody of Bellini, guava, coconut, and suntan lotion; meanwhile, “Get Energized” will wake you up with scents like peppermint and orange ginger.

While you can share your scent playlists via social media, sending scent messages is no longer the point. Rather, Edwards and his team are focused on incorporating scents into our environments to improve our well-being. He sees it as similar to how sunlight or sound can improve your mood. “From a conscious point of view, our perception of scent is secondary [to light and sound],” he says. “But from an emotive point of view, it is primary. In particular, in relation to wellness, scent is far more powerful than light or sound.”

Edwards’s olfactory experiments suggest smell is grossly underutilized in design.

At the event on Wednesday, Edwards describes Cyrano by explaining how it works in its base use-case: the car. “There’s a lot of data around wellness and driving,” he says, citing statistics that about 14% of driving Americans fall asleep in the car a day. “The car is also the perfect-sized space for containing a scent so that it doesn’t dilute or mix with other smells, one of the major challenges with the oPhone. Cyrano is designed to fit snugly inside a car cup holder and can play “scent melodies” to keep you energized or emit odors that calm you down. The playlist is timed to shift scents every eight minutes in order to avoid olfactory fatigue—the point at which you become so used to the smell that you stop noticing it.

But Edwards has grander ambitions for Cyrano than being a glorified air freshener. As the screening at his event suggests, the device could add an extra sensorial element to entertainment though, as Nicola Twilley points out at the New Yorker, many other companies have tried that and failed. It could have educational value in the food world as well, perhaps as a teaching tool for sommeliers or baristas tasked with memorizing complex scents.

Perhaps the most interesting potential application for Cyrano is medical—and Edwards is already exploring it with the help of Richard Doty, director of the University of Pennsylvania’s Smell and Taste Center. Doty’s research focuses on how scent detection correlates with disease—loss of scent is seen as an early detector for Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, for example—and sees the app as a way to administer scent tests digitally. Eventually, Edwards says, they could adapt scent tests to broadcast public use, so that individuals could check their health in the morning with their own custom scent track.

Sitting on stage at the event on Wednesday, Doty told the crowd that humans actually have a very advanced sense of smell, we just don’t exercise it as much as other animals. Edwards’s olfactory experiments suggest it’s also grossly underutilized in design—but put some proper R&D behind it, and suddenly a lot more is possible.

For now, Cyrano is being released in a limited run of 500 devices—available for $149—with a full product release later this year.

Meg Miller
New Design Incubator Will Have You Building A Shippable Gadget In 8 Weeks

Successful applicants to Nascent Objects’ new program will be mentored by Ammunition on how to bring their ideas to market.

JOHN BROWNLEE
The product development company Nascent has launched a new hardware incubator aimed at helping designers bring gadgets to market in just eight weeks. The typical product development process takes 6 to 12 months.

Nascent is the startup behind Nascent Objects, a Lego-like system of modules that can be combined and recombined to bring new gadgets to market quickly. Nascent has released three products so far: a water tracker by the prominent design firm Ammunition, a security camera, and a Wi-Fi speaker.

From a designer’s perspective, the advantage of using Nascent’s tools is that the modules are plug-and-play, and include everything from cameras and speakers to accelerometers and LED arrays. So if you have an idea for a product, you don’t need to design the hardware from scratch. You just use the Nascent software to tie the components together, and slap them in a 3-D printed housing, called a Shape. As for consumers: Once they buy a few Nascent-powered gadgets, they can actually break out the modules and recombine them into totally new products.

Of course, right now, there aren’t many Nascent products on the market. But this incubator could change that. Successful applicants will take part in an eight-week program that will include access to the Nascent manufacturing platform, as well as experts from Ammunition on how to bring products to market. The incubator is open to both individuals and teams, and is also designed to accommodate remote participants.

If you’ve got an idea for a gadget you’re trying to get off the ground, try applying at: http://www.nascentobjects.com/apply.

Opening: Digging for Fire
Saturday 7 May
Bildmuseet
14:00 - 15:00

This year’s graduation exhibition by students of the master’s program at the Academy of Fine Arts, Umeå University. Welcome address by Swetlana Heger, Vice-Chancellor of Umeå Art Academy. Professor Christoph Draeger presents the exhibition.

Lecture: The designer duo Charles and Ray Eames
Tuesday 3 May
Bildmuseet
18:30 - 20:00

Passion, play and problem solving. About to give shape to an object while creating a design classic. Lecture by Li Pampering, design expert and TV host.
Have a great week and be sure to get some sun!