PhD student in industrial design with focus on gender studies

Background
During the spring of 2016 we announced a PhD student position in collaboration with Umeå Centre for Gender Studies (UCGS). The deadline for applying for this was set to the 14th of March 2016. We received a total of 13 applications from all over the world: South Africa, Malaysia, Russia, Turkey, Brazil, Sweden, The Netherlands, India, China, Latvia and New Zealand. Ten out of 13 applicants were women.

Reviewing and selection process
For the review process we organized a review panel to prioritize among the applicants, in a first stage looking at formal criteria for eligibility, as defined by the Faculty of Science and Technology, Umeå University and the Higher Education Act. The panel members in this part of the process were: Johan Redström, Rector; Heather Wiltse, Director of PhD studies, Maria Göransdotter, Vice Rector, and Sara Eriksson, Staff administrator. The group went through all applications using a matrix where the requirements were listed. We excluded 2 applicants – one candidate who did not send a research proposal, and one candidate without a Master's degree. This was notified to UCGS in March, and the next step of the review process was initiated simultaneously at UID and UCGS to define which candidates to call for interview.

During the review process, we read all the applications, including additional materials handed in (CV, Research Sketch, Portfolio, Letters of support, etc). We each made individual rankings of the applicants based on formal criteria and the assessment grounds identified jointly by the panel (relating to the criteria and formulations in the profile and advertisement) and we then compared and discussed our ranking lists. This list was compared and discussed in relation to the ranking produced by UCGS, which resulted in a joint definition of a list of four candidates of special interest for further interviews:

- Anna Misharina
- Cristine Sundbom
- Doenja Oogjes
- Wendy Neale

For the interviews we prepared a list of questions relating to the assessment grounds and to specific questions for each candidate. The interviews were held on April 21, 2016, with a total of 45 minutes of time with each candidate. Two interviews were held over Skype (Doenja Oogjes, Wendy Neale), and two interviews on location at UID (Anna Misharina, Cristine Sundbom). Members of the interview committee were Johan Redström, Rector; Heather Wiltse, Director of PhD studies UID, Maria Göransdotter, Vice Rector, Sara Eriksson, Staff administrator and Annelie Brändström Öhman, Director of PhD studies UCGS.

During the interviews we also gave the candidates the opportunity to ask specific questions about UID, the PhD programme, and anything else they wanted to ask us. For the interviews we were especially
interested in hearing them elaborate upon their understanding of design research, and their motivation for PhD studies.

**Ranking of candidates**

The interview committee unanimously came to the conclusion that the top-ranking candidates for the PhD student position in industrial design with focus on gender studies are:

1. **Cristine Sundbom.** Sundbom is highly qualified for this position, possessing the quite rare combination of a strong background in both industrial design and gender studies—and their integration. She has used a norm-critical approach to challenge gender stereotypes through design, and has already published and achieved wide recognition for her design/research work. We are confident that she is the best fit for this position.

2. **Doenja Oogjes.** Oogjes has a strong background in industrial design, and her training at TU Eindhoven in the Netherlands (known for its emphasis on embodied experience) gives her a solid foundation for exploring experiential aspects and social implications of designed things. Although she does not have training in gender studies, her interest and ability in addressing more philosophical and critical aspects of design indicate that she could be successful in pursuing this direction, and using it to further develop her already very high level of skill and sensitivity as a designer and design researcher.

**Decision from UCGS**

The board at UCGS decided at their board meeting 2016-05-19 (see attachment) to employ Cristine Sundbom as a PhD student in industrial design with focus on gender studies at Umeå Institute of Design.

Director for PhD studies at Umeå Institute of Design,

Heather Wiltse