



# MASTER IN VISUAL BRAND DESIGN

## OVERVIEW

MASTER AWARDED BY NABA  
NUOVA ACCADEMIA DI BELLE ARTI MILANO

# DOMUS ACADEMY EXPERIENCE CLUSTER

EXPERIENCE DESIGN is impacting behavior through design. It is a people-centered design direction and a contemporary vision of the design process in which curiosity is the smart ingredient when generating future scenarios and experiences, perceptual spaces, services, strategies, storytelling, identity and brand perceptions. It is when fiction meets reality.

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6 **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

QUALIFICATION

(First Level) Academic Master

PROGRAM TITLE

Master in Visual Brand Design

PROGRAM TYPE

Full Time

HEAD OF DOMUS ACADEMY

Line Ulrika Christiansen

HEAD OF EXPERIENCE CLUSTER

Line Ulrika Christiansen (interim)

PROGRAM LEADER

Elisa Chiodo

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

English

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An integrated vision, the direct combination of design, narration, graphics, identity research, is crucial when it comes to competing in terms of promotion and the reasoning behind the product or service. Branding starts with the understanding of the values of a company and culminates in the ability to visualize a meaningful story with the right tone of voice while building a long-term relationship with the public.

## 8 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Master in Visual Brand Design program focuses on the analysis of user needs to create integrated visions and narrations that will catch the attention of selected audiences, engage them through all touch-points with a company.

Students will be prepared to identify the company's core philosophy, cultivate a deep understanding of their products and services, juggle with different marketing techniques, and design innovative ways to communicate its values to the customers through physical, digital and social media.

Moreover, Domus Academy ensures that students attending the academy become aware of the great opportunities surrounding them, such as the fact that Milan is an international and design-oriented city with a lot of famous design studios and agencies, research labs, trade fairs and companies. Students at Domus Academy come from about 50 different countries and this fact makes it an international school where different cultures can be met; Domus Academy is part of an international network of universities and the faculty of the academy are internationally renowned professionals in their field.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will have:

- Demonstrated an individually driven conceptual research project using design research methods, tools and techniques appropriate to professional standards in the Visual Brand design practices;
- Demonstrated an understanding of the professional field of Visual Brand design and its restraints, and ability to deal with requests as well as being able to interpret their own work in the professional context;
- Demonstrated a critical and personal development in defining and managing advanced process related to the project of visual experiences and brand presence;
- Effectively demonstrated a reflective and evaluative approach

to their own work allowing them to act independently in identifying, implementing and sustaining individual research and practices at a professional level;

- Demonstrated knowledge and critical thinking on design culture and cross-disciplinary approaches related to Visual Brand Design and its interlinking with other design and business driven disciplines;
- Demonstrated personal and reflective thinking on diverse dimensions of Visual Brand design with reference to social, cultural, economical and technological implications.
- Demonstrated the ability of conceiving innovative visual branding concepts, scenarios, and solutions for a variety of diverse companies, industries and organizations at different design scales;
- Demonstrated self and professional management skills in terms of Visual Brand in a multi-cultural domain, teamwork and time constraints at a professional level;
- Demonstrated an ability to effectively communicate concepts, methods and design proposals through a variety of techniques including visual, oral and prototyping.

### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Master in Visual Brand Design aims to form Visual Brand Designers and dynamic Brand Managers figures open to innovations that are visionary and versatile, direct and effective. Designers who have a rich and complex approach that can guide the needs of the company in a new direction, either as freelancers or as employees of medium to large companies operating in the fields of fashion, design, events, trade shows, services, digital media or in public administration.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Criteria for Admission to the Program (including required English language score)

Eligibility conditions for entering the Master Course are:

- Bachelor Degree or Equivalent
- English Language Knowledge: IELTS 5.0 or equivalent

Applicants are required to submit the Application Package, including:

- Application Form (full and satisfactory completion)
- Copy of Bachelor Degree\* or equivalent
- Transcripts of previous study paths
- IELTS 5.0 Certificate or Equivalent
- Detailed Resumé
- Statement of purpose
- Portfolio of projects

\*Degree Certificate

- The program is addressed to candidates holding a bachelor degree in visual and graphic design, design, communication, marketing and other disciplines related to the program's field of study. Admission of students with different degrees or diplomas will be taken into consideration if the applicant is motivated by a research interest towards the programs topics. Upon successfully completing the program the student will receive a Domus Academy Master Diploma.

Participants who are eligible according to NABA rules will receive an Academic Master from NABA.

Students holding a non-Italian Bachelor Degree shall contact the Italian Embassy or Consulate in the country where the degree was issued in order to ask for the so called "completion documents", consisting in:

- a. Translation into Italian – made by a certified translator – of the student's Bachelor Degree.
- b. Translation into Italian – made by a certified translator – of the student's Academic Transcripts.
- c. "Dichiarazione di valore in loco" (Declaration of Value) of the student's Bachelor Degree. The "Dichiarazione di valore in loco" is the document attesting that the study qualification obtained in the student's country of residence is valid for accessing Italian Universities or Academies.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Domus Academy prioritizes an original “learning by designing” approach, that is in continuous development to reflect the fast changing world of today.

Through a series of events, titled Prototyping Ideas, Domus Academy explores new ways of doing design in the XXI Century. The events in the series run four times a year with each event debating a theme that is relevant to both local and global societies, and its perception through design.

The teaching methods employed at Domus Academy are designed to help students achieve their individual professional goals along with the learning objective, while also considering their roles as designers in our contemporary world.

The primary vehicle for the “learning by designing” approach is project work. Emphasis is placed on, learning and applying a “problem setting” approach;

- to ensure that students refine their critical skills and apply them throughout their work process;
- to foster a personal creative style and developing an original way of expression;
- to develop research skills, which will enable students to source relevant materials, assimilating and articulating relevant findings;
- to conceive concepts and visions capable to blend creative languages with the actual needs of end users by interpreting a brief, primarily based on a real design assignment, in order to design a project that can match, or even exceed, the company’s expectation.

Students are exposed to different points of view in the design field, working with designers and companies. One of the purposes of this exposure is to give students the broadest view possible of the design field in order to support them in the selection of the area in which to concentrate their future careers.

All Master programs are workshop-based, supported by seminars, tutorials, lectures, work-in-progress sessions, critiques and a series of tutor led projects. Through a pro-active relationship with

the academic staff, students will lead their project work and be supported through consultative and advisory tutorial guidance by the faculty and by visiting lecturers and designers who each have dedicated roles.

The “Program Leader” is the teacher who has overall responsibility on a specific Master Program, and whose role is to coach students and to support them in the definition of their learning and professional path. The Program Leader sustains students in their workshop activities and coordinates the assessment process.

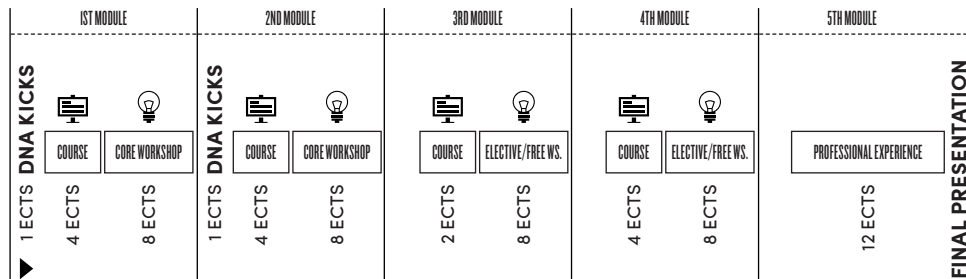
The “Project Leader” is professionals and teachers, chosen among experts of a specific field, whose role is to lead workshop activity, by developing a project brief in collaboration with the Program Leader, inspire and provide guidance to students along the design process, and to take part in the assessment of the projects.

Formal teaching is supplemented by a range of visiting lecturers and visiting professionals where students will have the chance to attend presentations by designers, artists, critics, industry professionals and academics. Lectures are usually used for the presentation and discussion of theoretical issues. They will often be supported by group discussions, which provide an opportunity for interaction between faculty and students, and allow students to extend and examine the issues raised.

Students work in multi-cultural and international teams to enhance their capacity for teamwork, as well as to expose them to a comparison with different backgrounds and cultures. Most workshop activities require students to work in groups. Teams are carefully selected and suitably managed to ensure that all students are aware of effective group processes and contribute to final project outcomes.

## STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT

The program is organized in four main modules including DNA kicks, courses and workshops, followed by a fifth module providing a professional experience period and a final portfolio presentation.



### DNA KICK

The DNA kicks are part of the Prototyping Ideas series and is charged through plenary lectures presenting themes that will be then developed by students in dedicated worktables. Each worktable is led by designers/design thinkers of several fields who support the students in prototyping new concepts and ideas related to a specific chosen theme. The DNA kick prototype ideas that is later used to frame the workshops at Domus Academy.

### COURSES

Courses aim at providing students, through a combination of lectures, exercises and tutorials, with the appropriate tools and experiences useful for the developing of their professional career. They encompass specific topics in preparation for the workshop, and personal branding experiences for the development of the student's professional career.

## WORKSHOPS

The workshops are the main activity of the curriculum. Workshops are project assignments designed to give students a working knowledge of different core subjects. All workshops launch with the presentation of a brief, which outlines the subject, scope, and purpose of the workshop. The brief of the workshops is based on research issues defined by the faculty, in collaboration with external professionals and industrial partners, paying attention to fulfil both educational and professional aims.

In the development of the projects students will be supported by lectures aimed at broadening their knowledge on the specific investigation theme, inviting designers, researchers, stakeholders and representatives of companies to present their work and ideas as a link between the specific disciplinary perspective and the broader cultural/economic context.

The workshop culminates in an open presentation to the faculty and invited professionals. Feedback to students is an integral part of the final assessment provided to students after the presentation. The Program Leader and the Project Leader are available to further discuss assessments with students if needed.

### CORE WORKSHOP

- Identity Design - (8 credits)
- Product Strategy - (8 credits)

### ELECTIVE WORKSHOP - (8 credits)

One to be chosen among:

- Information Design
- Experience Design
- Digital Luxury Communication
- Identity Design

### Free Choice Workshop - (8 credits)

One to be chosen amongst the active didactical offer



## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The professional experience is the final step of a process in which students receive a deep and balanced evaluation of their skills and aspirations, in order to build a career, which fits their aims.

There are three kinds of professional experiences; an internship in a company where the students will be hosted in a work environment developing assigned real projects; a field learning experience as a specific work project carried out on campus in collaboration with a company; and an entrepreneurial journey in order to develop business and managerial skills.

## PORTFOLIO

The Master Program will end with a final exam where the student will present his/her own portfolio in front of an Exam Board composed of internal faculty and external professionals. The portfolio realized by each student, and its presentation, allows the Board to evaluate the projects developed during the academic year as well as the growth of the student.

## ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The main goal of the assessment system is to monitor how students develop the design and technical competencies required to be awarded an Academic Master.

Assessment is done by evaluating each student with a 1 to 30 mark (pass 18 or above) given at the end of every workshop, and through a qualifying examination given at the end of each theoretical course. The admission mark to the final exam is calculated by arithmetic average, which takes in consideration all the marks taken after each workshop.

Students will receive 0-110 (pass 70 or above) as overall evaluation. The Diploma Examination Board may award up to 10 points for the Portfolio. Honors may be awarded on the basis of the Board assessment of study programs, portfolio and presentation.

## STUDY PLAN

Students will receive individual study counselling by the Program Leader to establish a Study Plan that reflects their skillset and professional objectives with the academic offer available.

## WORKSHOPS

### CORE WORKSHOPS - COMPULSORY

#### IDENTITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Branding is much more than just the definition of a visual image. It is the creation of a rich and attractive environment, grabbing the consumer's attention and bringing that person into the brand world, to share those brand values and to become an informal sponsor of the brand. Brands tend to assume a human connotation and personality, whose core values are represented through the visual image, communication style and behaviors, interaction models, tone and language. Furthermore, the identity of a brand and its success is strictly connected to its ability to leverage and exploit the broad range of media channels, both physical and digital, in order to establish and maintain a rich and reciprocal fruitful conversation with the audience, both current and potential clients.

The Identity Design workshop aims at developing the skills for designing the brand identity of a company, or to extend a pre-existent one. Students are asked to create scenarios and concepts, by utilizing a mix of communication strategies and design tools, in order to design the "global brand identity" of a small to medium scale company, a product line, and/or a start-up. The topics covered include visual design; illustration and iconic design; brand identity and corporate culture; communication strategies; and touchpoints.

## 18 PRODUCT STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Over the last decades, the design of products has reached a high level of sophistication and complexity. Different design approaches and perspectives have conceptualized visions in manifestos, and this has influenced the design culture at large. The Product Strategy workshop aims to develop project proposals able to combine different approaches in a new, innovative and surprising way. The workshop explores corporate cases involving the leading design companies, whose ability to innovate does not merely concern products, but all the elements that contributes to shape a truly global offer encompassing: positioning, image, distribution and communication. The application domain can range from established brands (brand extension), to companies wanting to exploit their potentials, to existing companies that want to re-position their business, to new ventures (startups, crowdsourcing). A substantial part of the workshop activity is dedicated to the definition of a business model consistent with the objectives and scale of the project, while exploring the scalability of the solution, feasibility and innovation potential.

### **ELECTIVE WORKSHOP**

One to be chosen among the following:

#### INFORMATION DESIGN WORKSHOP

Since the digital revolution, the diffusion of online services, sensors, mobile devices, user-generated contents and open data initiatives, is giving access to a never-seen-before amount of data. While the importance of such wealth of information is unquestionably recognized by all organizations, the need for visual tools that enable us to analyze, understand and communicate such data to different audiences, is still growing.

The Information Design Workshop will guide students in the investigation of information needs that are critical to companies and organization and in the design and development of visual solutions that transform raw-data into clear and actionable insight. The process will lead students in the ideation, design and digital prototyping of interactive information design projects that tackles real-world needs and complexities, supporting companies

and organizations in their data analysis and communication needs for both internal and user-facing contexts.

#### DIGITAL LUXURY COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

With an exponential rise of digital media platforms and channels, luxury brand managers are dealing with an extremely fragmented media landscape. Luxury brands need to adapt their communication strategies to each of those platforms, which implies declining their storytelling in multiple formats and with multiplicity. On one hand, they need to give their customers and audience a more personal and active role by inviting them to nourish brand-generated contents. On the other hand, luxury brands must guide the creation of those new contents and counterbalance with the production of innovative and authoritative ones.

The objective of this workshop is to support students in appraising effective and innovative digital communication strategies, which can be implemented by lifestyle and luxury brands. In particular, the objective is to design and execute communication concepts and plans focused on generating tangible business results (new customer acquisition and loyalty) and brand image and awareness (customer engagement and advocacy).

#### EXPERIENCE DESIGN WORKSHOP

The Experience Design workshop explores, by way of studio-based activities, the designing process from the point of view of the people (not users, neither consumers) in their day to day life context. Everyday experiences are built upon the interaction and relationship with information, communication tools, relational spaces, as well as interactive objects and services. The starting point resides in the ability to decipher people's needs, expectations and desires. The workshop addresses aspects and contemporary methodologies related to people's activity and context analysis. It also considers, experience scenario development, solution, validation, and assessment. The workshop investigates the main domain of User Experience analysis, exposing students to methodologies and best practices allowing them to extract knowledge from primary research activities. The

workshop activity will also cover domains pertaining to visual representation and the formalization of knowledge garnered. Students are expected to familiarize with techniques for representing activity flows and complex systems.

### IDENTITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Branding is much more than just the definition of a visual image. It is the creation of a rich and attractive environment, grabbing the consumer's attention and bringing that person into the brand world, to share those brand values and to become an informal sponsor of the brand. Brands tend to assume a human connotation and personality, whose core values are represented through the visual image, communication style and behaviors, interaction models, tone and language. Furthermore, the identity of a brand and its success is strictly connected to its ability to leverage and exploit the broad range of media channels, both physical and digital, in order to establish and maintain a rich and reciprocal fruitful conversation with the audience, both current and potential clients. The Identity Design workshop aims at developing the skills for designing the brand identity of a company, or to extend a pre-existent one. Students are asked to create scenarios and concepts, by utilizing a mix of communication strategies and design tools, in order to design the "global brand identity" of a small to medium scale company, a product line, and/or a start-up. The topics covered include visual design; illustration and iconic design; brand identity and corporate culture; communication strategies; and touchpoints.

### FREE CHOICE WORKSHOP

Students are given the chance to select among the active didactic offer in order to end their personal educational path with a strongly autonomous, professionalizing and profiling choice. The student may choose to repeat one of the workshops already developed, enroll in a new workshop coherent with his/her educational path or select a project among the ones offered by the institution as long as it is coherent with the amount of credits

required.

## COURSES

### STORYTELLING AND VISUAL NARRATIVE

Storytelling has become today a fundamental design topic; the ability to integrate narration into the design process is an essential component to attract, engage and expand the user experience. The course responds to the growing need to create and deliver original visual content to varied fields ranging from communication of projects, interface design, management of social media channels, and to micro storytelling. The course provides an intensive exploration of visual and structural elements of storytelling and visual narratives where students engage with the necessary tools to design a user experience and to create user scenarios and storyboards. The course prepares the students for the challenges and opportunities of the digital market, developing basic knowledge on software prototyping techniques of interactive services using static and dynamic representations.

### PERSONAL BRANDING: VISUAL PORTFOLIO & SOCIAL BRAND IDENTITY

The Personal Branding course explores advanced competencies and abilities for the identification, creation, and management of the student's professional identity with different targets: design a portfolio, deliver a speech, prepare and handle a job interview. In particular, this course emphasizes the personal approach of the student's identity for designing and explaining an outstanding portfolio in front of an audience. The course discusses different communication channels for the use of social media tools for managing the student's digital presence. Theoretical classes are alternated with targeted exercises where students can develop and experiment a customized strategy aimed at building step by step a consistent personal identity, aligned with their career development plan.

## VISUAL CULTURES

Visual Cultures explores the fundamentals of visual culture through testimonials and design scenarios. The course offers a deeper understanding of the graphic design process through the management of visual elements. Students will be able to design visual layouts and manage, at advanced level, elements such as text and image. The course explores the current panorama of visual artifact comparing the old techniques of serial production of visual artifacts with the techniques and methodologies related to the use of digital communication tools.

The structure of the course is a mix of theoretical components and hand-on experiences that will lead the students to face the mix of technical complexity related to the creation of communication artifacts. Upon successful completion of the course, the students have developed a deeper understanding of how the visual language associated to a specific era - and/or to a brand - are influenced by the production techniques. This knowledge will lead to a better awareness about how to use each specific language to enhance and focus the visual communication strategy for contemporary brands.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Professional Experience is the final step of a process in which students, thanks to a one-to-one tutorship, receive a deep and balanced evaluation of their skills and aspirations, in order to build a career, which fits their aims.

There are three kinds of Professional Experiences:

- **Internship in a Company/Firm:** the students will be hosted in a work environment developing assigned real projects.
- **Field Learning Experience:** a work project carried out on campus in collaboration with a company and supervised by a project leader. The students will approach contemporary themes and explore a wide range of design subjects in a multidisciplinary environment.
- **Entrepreneurship Module:** an entrepreneurial journey in order to develop business and managerial skills. The students will be given a specific toolbox of frameworks and approaches both in theory and practice.

In all cases during this crucial phase students are mentored on a step-by-step basis, and acquire the fundamental experience of dealing with the real world, with real business and with the people working in the field.