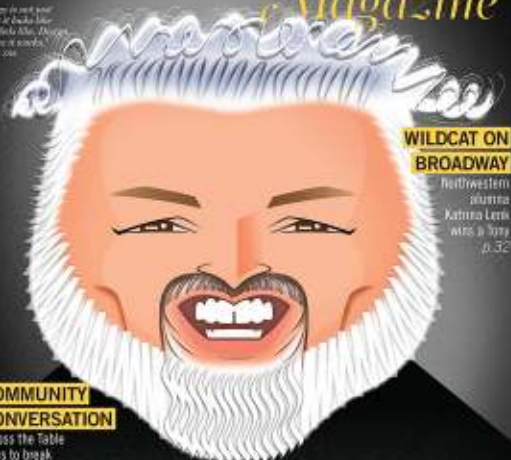


# EVANSTON

EVANSTON'S MEANINGFUL PURSUITS

## Magazine

"Design is not just about what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works." —Steve Jobs



**WILDCAT ON BROADWAY**

Midwestern alumna Katrina Letts wins a \$175K prize

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

Across the Table aims to break down barriers

## CHANGE AGENTS

BRUCE MAU AND BISI WILLIAMS ARE TRANSFORMING THE WORLD'S VIEW OF DESIGN

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR EVANSTON MAGAZINE

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MCN Illustration/Photo courtesy of Measure Change University

## CHANGE AGENTS

Bruce Mau and Bisi Williams are transforming how the world views and uses design, teaching a new paradigm of sustainable, ecological business thinking.

PHOTOS BY SHANNON JAMES ROYACRE

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hen Evanston-based designers Bruce Mau and Bisi Williams were invited by Coze-Cole to develop the company's "Live Naturally" sustainability platform and new brand look, the couple had a goal in mind: Measure Change. The years and sometimes awkward FKT Color border lines, Coze-Cole is using design to lead change from the inside out, sweeping away from the old industry models of production, to become an industrial ecosystem capable of prosperity.

"The days of 'build it and they will come' are over," says Mau. "The old approach to business was to look for a singular solution to a single problem and create a product. That's no longer good enough because that was a one approach of problem to solution didn't deal with the impact of your solution. We helped Coze-Cole to understand this."

With the world growing at the rate of 200,000 new humans each day, it became more needs to think of itself as an ecological system, says Mau. "There does not exist business in such other business? How does it fit into consumer imagination? Into the actual world?"

To create the future, businesses need create not only about the individual user but about that user's community and ecosystem. And this all happens by design.

"It's not just a paradigm of ecological business thinking defines problems and opportunities at higher order of complexity," Mau explains. "Solving challenges on an ecosystem level, and not just a product level means that design is central to business."

Starting the subject on how the world views design, and teaching corporations and governments to use design to lead change, and



Photo by Shannan James Royacre

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before announcements, but here the driving force behind Mau and Williams' Measure Change Network (MCN) was the couple—who has been married for 28 years—was invited their firm to Evanston in 2009.

"Design is not just how things look," says Mau. "Design is leadership. Design is not how things look, it's how things work. Design is the ability to envision a future and systematically create the future. And Measure Change Design is leading by the same word—envisoning it from that is a creativity, ideation and capabilities, and building a platform for sustained innovation."

That idea coupled with the changing culture of an world propelled Mau and Williams to form their Measure Change Network after 25 years of design work in Canada. "This evolution happened very organically," says Mau. "In the beginning, people were coming to us saying, 'Can you design this business card or this logo?' And then it was, 'We are being presented in the right way, can you help us with our mission?' And then it was, 'What should we be doing to be relevant today and in the future?'"

To solve this increasingly complex set of challenges, Mau and Williams developed a business that evolved but to a set of 14 guiding principles—the MCN Principles.

"With the MCN, we're creating a model, so that when you are working on a problem, you have these essential models that you can roll out to solve problems," says Mau. "We'd like to be having a book of it, because you don't design in the hammer and then the model and then the model is a set of solutions. In the creative process, at first you create a problem, you say, 'What does this call for this and, or that and that.' The MCN we've developed allows us to find a very diverse set of challenges."

MCN applied the ideas behind these tools to help Coze-Cole find a way to look at billions of PET bottles as a resource rather than trash. It used them to help Patagonia develop the first ever Museum of Sustainability with outdoor gear, Coze-Cole, and it applied them every day in ongoing work with the Evanston company, which produces more than half of the major trails shoes and sandals in America.

Committed to ensuring real plastic bottles from the waste stream, Coze-Cole wanted to help create a sustainable circular economy—the creation of the newly introduced New Chair at the Second World Museum—create a new plastic material using Coze-Cole bottles recycled with other materials, to make the 111 New Chair.

"I've learned that because a single 111 recycled Coze bottle is made the chair," explains Williams. "Now the chair looks like a chair, it's made from plastic, and now it's made from Coze bottles that used to go into the waste stream, are now being recycled." Even more boldly, MCN helped Coze-Cole open up to bringing design thinking into problem solving at an on the high-school level, in a different level of design.

"The creative algorithms," explains Williams. "The method they provide makes us then overcome in growing a common language and then it's then a common understanding in how



you can use design to solve things specifically. The different parts of the company are able to share hands across the industry to create necessary communication tools so that the whole company can then get to various specific goals."

In creating the Evanston Museum of Sustainability, communication was also key.

Says Mau, "Frank Gehry came in and said for the Museum wanted him to build a museum of Sustainability Frank called Patagonia. 'What's the point of that?' and Patagonia responded, 'We were hoping you would tell us.' So coming to help with this, we had to design not just the museum, but the museum first in figuring out the 'Why we are doing that?' and 'What are we trying to accomplish?'"

"The mission of the museum—which they still see as their product 15 years later—is to educate, to change minds, to work in education, and declare their commitment to biodiversity as an important goal for the world."

"We are excited from the inside out, from the core and then of the exterior, to create the museum, with the story of biodiversity, and build the experience in a beautiful Frank Gehry museum that corresponds and supports that path-way," Mau concludes.

Beyond these projects, Mau and his work with Patagonia is the most comprehensive that MCN has ever done. "We

design and is potential to change the world. Two groups of students worked on two years on projects that included the exhibit, a radio program, an online program, and a live online book called Measure Change produced by Patagonia.

When the Measure Change exhibit came to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Mau and Williams had such an extraordinary experience, that they began to think about making the exhibit last.

"I was given an honorary doctorate by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago," says Mau, "and delivered that commencement address."

But even this, Mau and Williams said Bill and Stephanie Rich, longtime supporters of the art, who described their own adventures living in 14 different global cities, before ending in Evanston. The Rich created the Bill and Stephanie Rich Distinguished Visiting Professorship at IUPUI and invited Mau to be the first recipient, which would also be the last on bringing MCN home.



Photo by Shannan James Royacre

Looking ahead, Mau and Williams say the biggest challenge in progressing with design thinking change, continues to be about team thinking.

"It's essentially a series of 100,000 ideas that make—generally monthly, daily and more hourly—then it distributes into various making and projects to find doing the things that would cause the most results in the most sustainable way," says Mau. "So, it's about work for change. We want about the history of creation. The new challenges we face are what Mau and I call 'Success without' our failure problems. We have more challenges because we succeeded in such. Because we have been both down, ignorance, and change and added global transportation, and communication systems, and close to 8 billion of people like never before in history we have more than of problems."

Ultimately, Mau and Williams have their goals and are very confident that their thoughtful generation in taking the challenge previous generation created.

"I can't imagine telling my daughter that I did nothing, and I was not willing to take on the challenges of our time. She has concluded. Our children provide a long life to us the future. We have to take action. That is the end purpose of everything we do."

For more information, visit [www.measurechange.com](http://www.measurechange.com)

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