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### **Massachusetts Design Industry Thinks Swiss**

#### *Local Design Specialist Takes Study-Tour of Design and Innovation*

Boston, MA – April XX, 2009 – Today Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) announced that Beate Becker, director of the Design Industry Group of Massachusetts (DIGMA) will be participating in *Think Swiss*, a study-tour of design and innovation in Switzerland. Organized by the Swiss Embassy, swissNex Boston and swissNex San Francisco, the tour will take place from April 26 through May 1, 2009.

Becker, along with ten U.S. design specialists from California, New York, and Washington, DC, will visit Zurich, Langenthal and Lausanne to learn about contemporary Swiss design innovation and education. The itinerary includes meetings and studio tours of Freitag, Nose Design, Ruckstuhl and Creation Baumann as well as the Zurich University of the Arts and the University of Art and Design Lausanne. The group will also visit the Museum of Design Zurich, Pro Helvetia, The D's Design Center AG, and Vitra Design Museum.

"Massachusetts has a lot to learn from the Swiss about how to support and promote the design industry," says Becker. "This study-tour will certainly lead to economic collaborations and exchanges between Swiss and American designers."

Since its formation in 2007, digma has promoted Massachusetts as a global design hub through a series of international symposia with designers from Austria, Denmark, Canada, Argentina and the UK. The *Think Swiss* invitation stems from digma's work with swissNex Boston, the Consulate of Switzerland, during the Winter 2009 Swiss Design Award exhibition at the Cambridge consulate.

"There is a natural compatibility between the Massachusetts and Swiss design communities," says digma Co-Chair David Hacin, principal of the Boston-based architectural firm of Hacin + Associates, and himself Swiss-born. "Both operate in economies driven by education, technology and innovation."

Other participants in the *Think Swiss* tour include representatives of *Dwell Magazine* (San Francisco), *I.D. Magazine* (New York), the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (New York), the Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), the Art Center College of Design (Pasadena), the Academy of Art University (San Francisco); University of Maryland (Washington, D.C.), IDEO (San Francisco) and the design collective studio + LAB for experimentation (New York).

For more information on the tour and to follow Becker's experience visit her blog at <http://digmablog.wordpress.com>.

### **About DIGMA**

Digma was founded in 2007 by Beate Becker and Kay Sloan, President of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt), who had worked together on the board of the New England Creative Economy Initiative. Housed at MassArt, digma is led by a board of thirty designers, design educators and public policy leaders including Co-Chairs David Hacin of Hacin + Associates and Frano Violich, principal of Kennedy & Violich Architecture Ltd. In addition to the design symposia, digma is conducting economic research and policy work on the Massachusetts design industry, which encompasses the design specialties of architecture, advertising, graphic communications, fashion and industrial design, landscape and interior design, craft and education. Financial support for DIGMA comes from The Boston Foundation, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the MTC's John Adams Innovation Institute. DIGMA will release design research findings and launch its Web site in early June 2009.

### **About MassArt**

Located in the heart of Boston, Massachusetts College of Art and Design is one of the leading colleges of its kind in the United States. It has a proud 135-year legacy as the nation's first and only independent public art college, and the first art school in the country to grant a degree. The college offers a comprehensive range of baccalaureate and graduate degree, continuing education, and K-12 programs. With visionary leadership and a world-class faculty, MassArt is at the forefront of art and design in the twenty-first century.

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