

TIMOTHY J. MCNEIL – BIO (EXTENDED)

Professor, UC Davis Department of Design, <http://arts.ucdavis.edu/faculty-profile/tim-mcneil>

Director, UC Davis Design Museum, <http://designmuseum.ucdavis.edu/>

Principal, Muniz/McNeil Design, Davis, CA, <http://munizmcneil.com>

500 WORDS

[Tim McNeil](#) is Professor of Design at the University of California Davis, Director of the UC Davis Design Museum, and a principal with the design firm Muniz/McNeil. His research, teaching and practice explore the exhibition space as a medium for the effective communication of objects, information and narratives, and seeks to define the exhibition design field and its impact on communities and audience engagement. He has 25 years of experience developing over 200 exhibition, signage and interpretive environments, including the J. Paul Getty Museum where he created designs for galleries and public spaces at the Getty Center and Getty Villa. Recent museum projects include the architectural design direction and visual identity for the new [Manetti Shrem Museum of Art](#) at the UC Davis.

McNeil's multi-disciplinary and award-winning research and design studio Muniz/McNeil has designed multiple projects for an array of clients, including the exhibition "Home Lands: How Women Made the West" at the Autry National Center, augmented learning environments for the Huntington Library and Gardens in Los Angeles, the renovation of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Visitor Center, and catalogue and exhibition of the work of photographer Josef Koudelka at the Signet Library in Edinburgh, Scotland.

As co-founder of the initiative [Re-envisioning Exhibition Design](#), McNeil is curating a series of international summits called "Chaos at the Museum" to advance academic understanding and elevate professional practice in the exhibition and experiential design field. McNeil is the primary instructor for undergraduate exhibition and environmental design courses at the University of California Davis, and a thesis advisor for graduate students researching exhibition related design theory, criticism and practice. He also serves as Director of the UC Davis Design Museum, which exhibits national and international design-related materials and serves as a laboratory for experimental exhibition design and interpretation. The Museum collection contains a global collection of over 5,000 ethnographic textiles and fashion related objects, and constitutes one of the pre-eminent teaching collections on the west coast of America.

An authority on environmental sustainability, McNeil has chaired the California Association of Museums Green Museum Initiative, is a founder of the [Green Museums Accord](#), and was inducted into the National Environmental Hall of Fame for his design work on the Natural Resources Defense Council's Santa Monica Environmental Action Center. In 2003, this project held the distinction as the first "green" exhibition and interpretive center in the nation's "greenest" LEED platinum certified building.

McNeil has a BA in graphic design from Middlesex University and a MFA in exhibition design from University of the Arts, London. He has been recognized for design excellence by the Society for Experiential Graphic Design, the University and College Designers Association, the American Alliance of Museums and the International Museum Design and Communication Association. His award-winning design research has been featured in multiple publications and he is a frequent speaker both nationally and internationally on museum and design issues.

1000 WORDS

[Tim McNeil](#) is a Professor of Design at the University of California Davis. He is the primary instructor for undergraduate courses on exhibition design and environmental graphic design, and a thesis advisor for graduate students researching exhibition related design theory, criticism and practice. He was Chair of the UC Davis Department of Design from 2009–14, and managed the department during a time of rapid change and expansion. McNeil's written research and creative practice defines exhibition design in relation to the curatorial process, and explores the exhibition space as a medium for the effective communication of objects and narratives. His creative work focuses on: (1) the contribution design plays in the communication of objects, ideas and information in a museum or exhibition environment, (2) the strategies for meaningful audience engagement with an emphasis on the interpretative exhibition experience, (3) environmental sustainability and its impact on the functionality and aesthetics of exhibition design.

Since 2005, McNeil has served as the Director of the UC Davis Design Museum. The Museum and Collection enhance and support the teaching and research activities of the UC Davis Department of Design, exploring how design shapes, improves and makes economically viable the objects, technology and environments we use, inhabit and experience every day. The museum exhibits national and international design-related materials including architecture, fashion, textiles, graphics, new media, product, furniture and lighting, and serves as a laboratory for experimental exhibition design and interpretation. The Design Museum contains a global collection of over 5,000 ethnographic textiles and fashion related objects, and constitutes one of the pre-eminent teaching collections on the west coast of America. Over 200 objects from the collection were recently published in the Thames and Hudson book "Textiles: The Art of Mankind".

McNeil has over 25 years of professional design experience. He is a principal with Muniz/McNeil a multi-disciplinary design and research practice based. Muniz/McNeil are an award-winning design team who partner with cultural organizations to shape stories and spaces, build experiences and foster audience engagement. Previous clients include the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Skirball Cultural Center, and San Francisco Environment. Selected projects include the exhibition "Home Lands: How Women Made the West" at the Autry National Center, augmented learning environments for the Huntington Library and Gardens in Los Angeles, and the renovation of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Visitor Center. Prior to 2005, McNeil spent 15 years as a senior designer at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles developing over 70 exhibition, signage and interpretive environments. He has extensive museum experience planning gallery and public spaces, working with art objects, and collaborating with a wide range of museum professionals for the new Getty Center (opened 1997) and the renovation of the Getty Villa (opened 2006). For the Getty Center, McNeil provided leadership for the influential gallery interpretive guidelines, his designs for the museums wayfinding and signage system won a design excellence award from the Society for Experiential Graphic Design (SEGD), and the exhibition "Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on the Screen" received accolades from numerous organizations including the American Alliance of Museums (AAM).

Recent projects include the 60,000 sq. ft. [Manetti Shrem Museum of Art](#) on the UC Davis campus which opened in November 2016. McNeil worked with the architecture and museum team as director of special projects, bringing his previous experience building museums from the ground-up to bear on the overall architecture and design direction for the galleries, public spaces, lighting, furnishings, casework, graphic identity and signage system. The museum is a model 21st century campus art museum, effectively integrating museum best practice with accessibility and education, and one of the few platinum LEED certified museums in the U.S. McNeil co-founded "[Re-envisioning Exhibition Design](#)", an international initiative to advance exhibition and experiential design understanding, elevate professional practice, and create a design-centric forum for debate, analysis, future collaboration and exchange. He has curated an international series of summits, the first, "Chaos at the Museum: Designing for Audience Participation" was held in London in April 2014, the second, "Chaos at the Museum: Infiltrating the Urban Fabric" took place in Buenos Aires in 2016. The events convened over 200 thought leaders, strategists and practitioners from all sides of the exhibition spectrum representing the USA, Asia, Latin America and Europe to address and inform this evolving design discipline. Future summits are planned for Washington D.C. (2018).

An authority on environmental sustainability, McNeil chaired the California Association of Museums Green Museum Initiative and was instrumental in leading "[IGNITE: Museums as Catalysts for Environmental Sustainability](#)", the conference and subsequent white paper were recognized with an award of excellence from the International Museum Design and Communication Association. McNeil co-authored the green strategic plan for the American Alliance of Museums, a blueprint for greening museums in the United States. He is the founder of the [Green Museums Accord](#), created to encourage museums of all sizes and means to make a pledge to advance environmental sustainability in their institutions by enacting five main action steps. In 2008, McNeil was inducted into the National Environmental Hall of Fame for his work on the Natural Resources Defense Council's Santa Monica Environmental Action Center. In 2003, this project held the distinction as the first "green" exhibition and interpretive center in the nations "greenest" LEED platinum certified building.

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