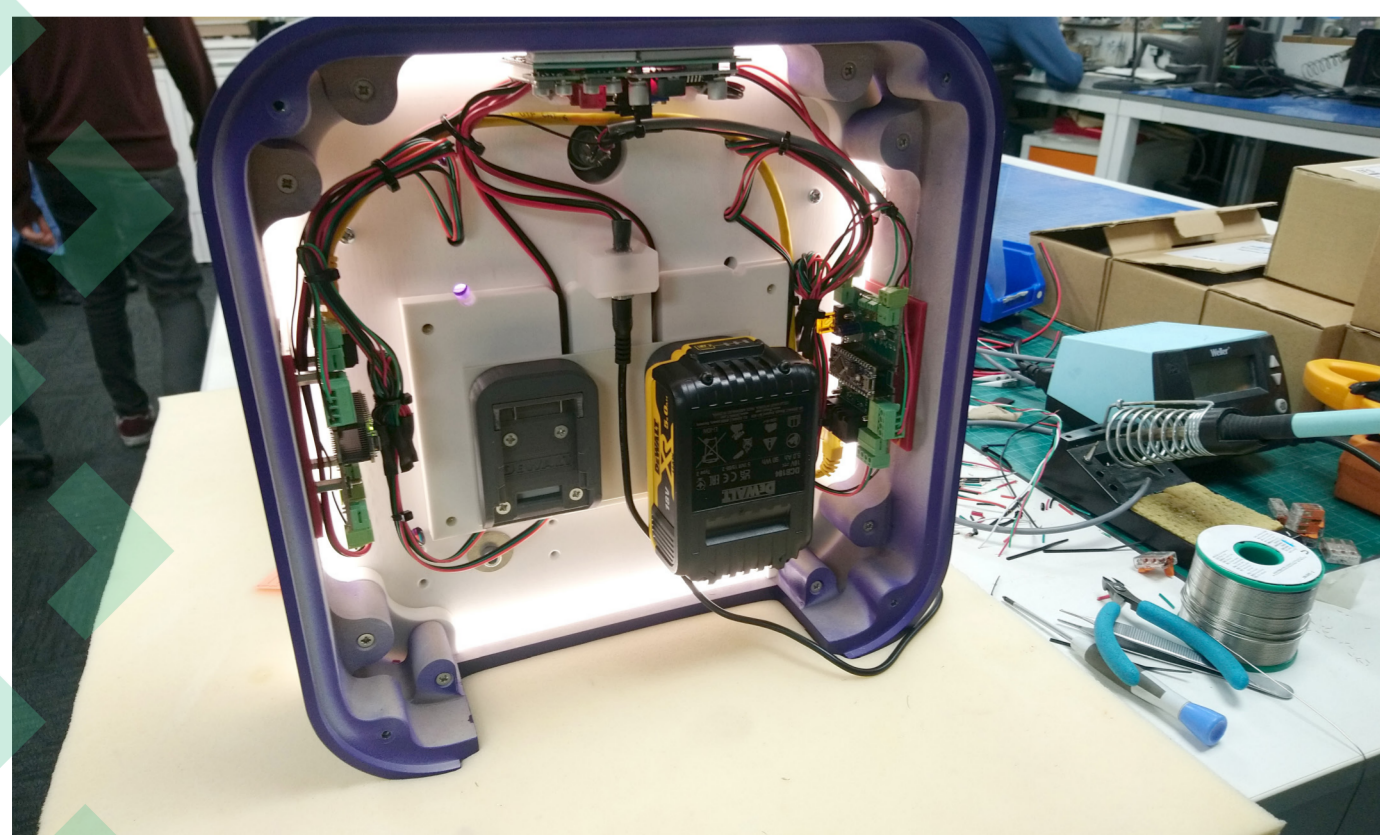


# Design that Connects

Daniel Cane, Designworks

Get a 'behind the scenes' look at how the team at Designworks use storytelling to bring products and ideas to life, from illustrating complex technologies to designing interactive trade show displays. It also highlights their commitment to inspiring future designers through educational outreach and studio visits.



Designworks is a creative consultancy offering design, engineering, and modelmaking services across a broad range of sectors, from medical devices to children's toys.

## Storytelling Through Design

A key part of what we do is storytelling, not the fictional kind, but the kind that helps us explain how a product works, either to clients or to end users. Whether it's an innovative mechanism or a unique user experience, it's our job to communicate those ideas clearly and effectively. We often use illustrations, photorealistic renders, storyboards, or animations to bring these concepts to life.

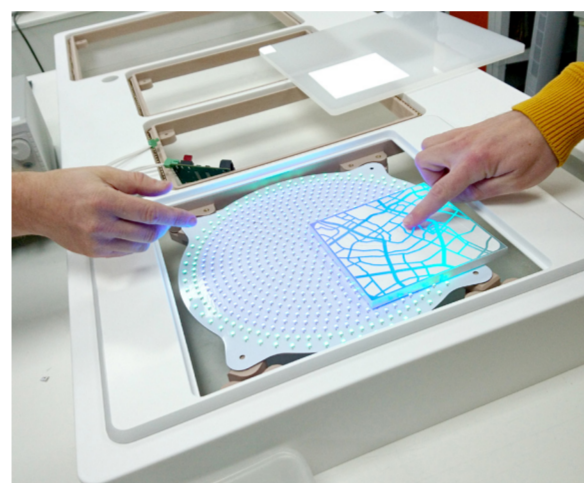
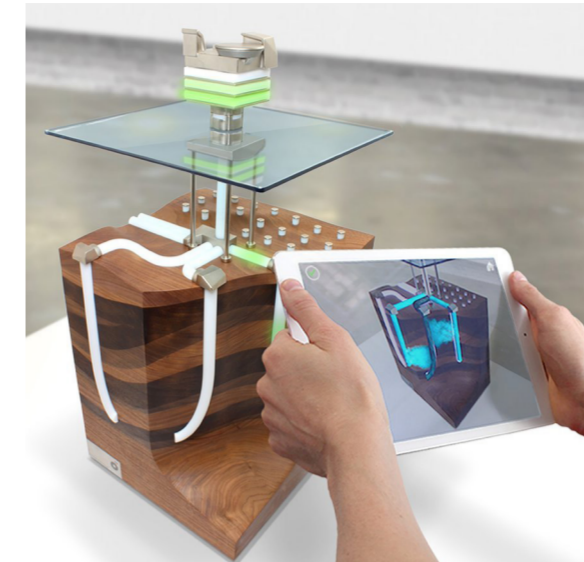
And when a product goes to market, particularly in the medical field, we also develop Instructions for Use (IFUs), documents that are critical in ensuring safe and correct usage. Good storytelling through design removes confusion and frustration and ensures that products are understood, trusted, and used the way they're intended.

## Communication Is Key

Being able to tell stories like this helps designers to communicate with one another, with their clients, and ultimately this translates along to purchasers and end users. A product can only be successful if it is communicated effectively to the correct people.

## Bringing Innovation to Life at Trade Shows

Beyond traditional product sectors, a particularly exciting part of our work involves creating interactive display pieces for trade shows and exhibitions. In these projects, the display itself is the storyteller.



These pieces often demonstrate a client's new technology or product innovations, sometimes showing a 'before and after' effect in side-by-side comparisons to highlight progress.

When we design these installations, our goals are always the same; draw people in, spark their curiosity, and leave them with something that sticks. The design process is a mix of user experience (UX), industrial design, and visual communication.

These projects typically illustrate complex technologies that are both hard to grasp and difficult to understand without prior knowledge of the subject and the initial stages involve the design team becoming 'mini experts' in the subject matter, allowing them to focus on what is key to the story they are telling, removing any 'noise' or unhelpful information.

## Design with Purpose

We also work hard to match the tone and visual style to both the subject and the client's brand identity. Our modelmaking team plays a critical role from the beginning, advising on the best materials and production methods to get that all-important 'wow factor.' For us, the quality and execution of a display speaks volumes, it's a direct reflection of a client's brand and values.

## Creating Memorable Experiences

One of our aims for our display pieces is always to strike an emotional chord with people, helping to encourage the lasting and memorable experience brands are looking to create. In the past we have made this using miniature models, including a tiny Shanghai, Mars Rover, Formula 1 racetrack or with real working wind turbines.

Movement adds further appeal and we typically accomplish this with animated LED illumination or even augmented reality. Comprising integrated LEDs, driven by specially written firmware, we can achieve subtle animations or dramatic effects

in a spectrum of colours; breathing life into a display. All of which help tell the desired story in a light-hearted and easily digested way.

## Balancing Innovation with Practicality

Balancing aesthetics, cost, performance, and deadlines is always a challenge, but it's one we thrive on. Years of experience help, but so does staying curious, using early concept phases to test out new ideas, materials, and technologies.

Of course, this brings new challenges too, which is why we value having a tight-knit, multidisciplinary team working together through a structured, stage-gated process.

At the end of the day, whether it's a product, a display, or a process, we're storytellers. And every project is an opportunity to make the story more compelling.

## Inspiring the Next Generation

Recently, we had the pleasure of welcoming a group of Year 13 students from Langley Grammar School to our Windsor studio as part of their exploration into careers in design and technology.

It was a chance to pull back the curtain on what we do at Designworks, from modelmaking and CAD to product development and storytelling.

The students were engaged, curious, and full of questions that made us reflect on our own practices.

It was especially encouraging to see strong interest from female students, diversity in design is something we're passionate about.

Watching young people make the connection between creativity, engineering, and real-world impact is a powerful reminder of why we do what we do.

## Feedback from the School

Richard Simonot, Head of Department at Langley Grammar School, reflected:

*"We took our Year 13's to Designworks for an insight into the careers of people in the design industry. Everyone was very hospitable and helpful with answering questions."*

*The tour of the workshop went down well, and each member discussed the components or projects they have worked on in depth. Everyone was welcoming and willing to give up some time to talk to us.*

*The trip overall was really informative, I didn't know much about the whole design sector in terms of how they interact with other companies but after the trip, I learnt so much.*

*I found it interesting to learn about all of the roles that different people have within the company, and it really opened my eyes to some different career options related to design, especially how the medical devices bridged the gap between design and science.*

*The visit was a real hit with my students and showcased how visits like this are invaluable, they not only connect classroom learning to real-world applications, but also spark curiosity, reveal unseen career paths, and help students understand how design thinking drives innovation across sectors."*

To find out more about initiatives that you can get involved in email:

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