The gender mix of the student population in the industrial design courses in Australia has been changing over the past ten years with a notable increase in the number of women graduating. However, to date this gender change has not been reflected in the profession – very few women designers are evident in the country’s major award programs. What are the career paths that the women are following if they are not falling within those identified by the profession?

In design, Bruce and Lewis (1990) developed a ‘three-hurdles’ model to explain the factors influencing career advancement for women: 1. getting the qualification; 2. getting the first job in design and 3. becoming a success. Product design is frequently described as ‘technical’, ‘dirty’ and ‘industrial’, with the implication that this profession is not suitable for women. (Bruce 1985) The exhibition explores the ‘third hurdle’. Its focus is on the interpretation of the human experience within a social context to challenge the often-perceived understanding of industrial design as being a ‘job for the lads’. This exhibition presented a selection of fourteen designers who have graduated in the period from 1995 - 2013 demonstrating the scope of their work and engagement in the field.

While women have been included in broad design exhibitions this however is the first exhibition specifically of women with an industrial design education in Australia, financially supported by Women @UTS and the School of Design. Further the exhibition uncovered the wide scope of work that women with industrial design education engage in with both commercial and speculative projects at various stages of their careers.
The first UTS alumni and student exhibition to recognize and celebrate the growing number of women who practice across a range of disciplines whose foundations are in industrial design. We seek to identify and understand the individual, and the circumstances that contribute to the success of their chosen career. (Bruce M. 1985, “A missing link: women and industrial design”, Design Studies, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 150-156.)

Where Are The Women?

Women in Industrial Design
Where Are The Women?
Women in Industrial Design

Banner Designs from Exhibition
Profiles of Designer Works and Experiences

CATHY LOCKHART

The highlight of my career so far had actually been the realization that I am not ready to follow a traditional career path in order to consider myself successful. With forays into accounting, graphic design, industrial and product design, screen printing, fashion, small business and teaching, it has taken me a long time to understand that I am a wife rather than a deep thinker. I want the world to make my fingers in several pies of sizes.
CATHY LOCKHART
Where Are The Women?
Women in Industrial Design

Banner Designs from Exhibition
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Women in Industrial Design

CATHY LOCKHART

Detail of Works Displayed within Exhibition
Cathy Lockhart
Where Are The Women?
Women in Industrial Design

Detail of Works Displayed within Exhibition
Where Are The Women? Women in Industrial Design

An exhibition recognising the growing number of women working within a range of industrial design professions

Curated by Cathy Lockhart, Lecturer, UTS School of Design

21 August - 13 September
Tuesday – Saturday 12 – 4pm (or by appointment)

Carlton Project Space
Carlton Street Chippendale

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Part of Sydney Design 2014, presented by the Powerhouse Museum

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