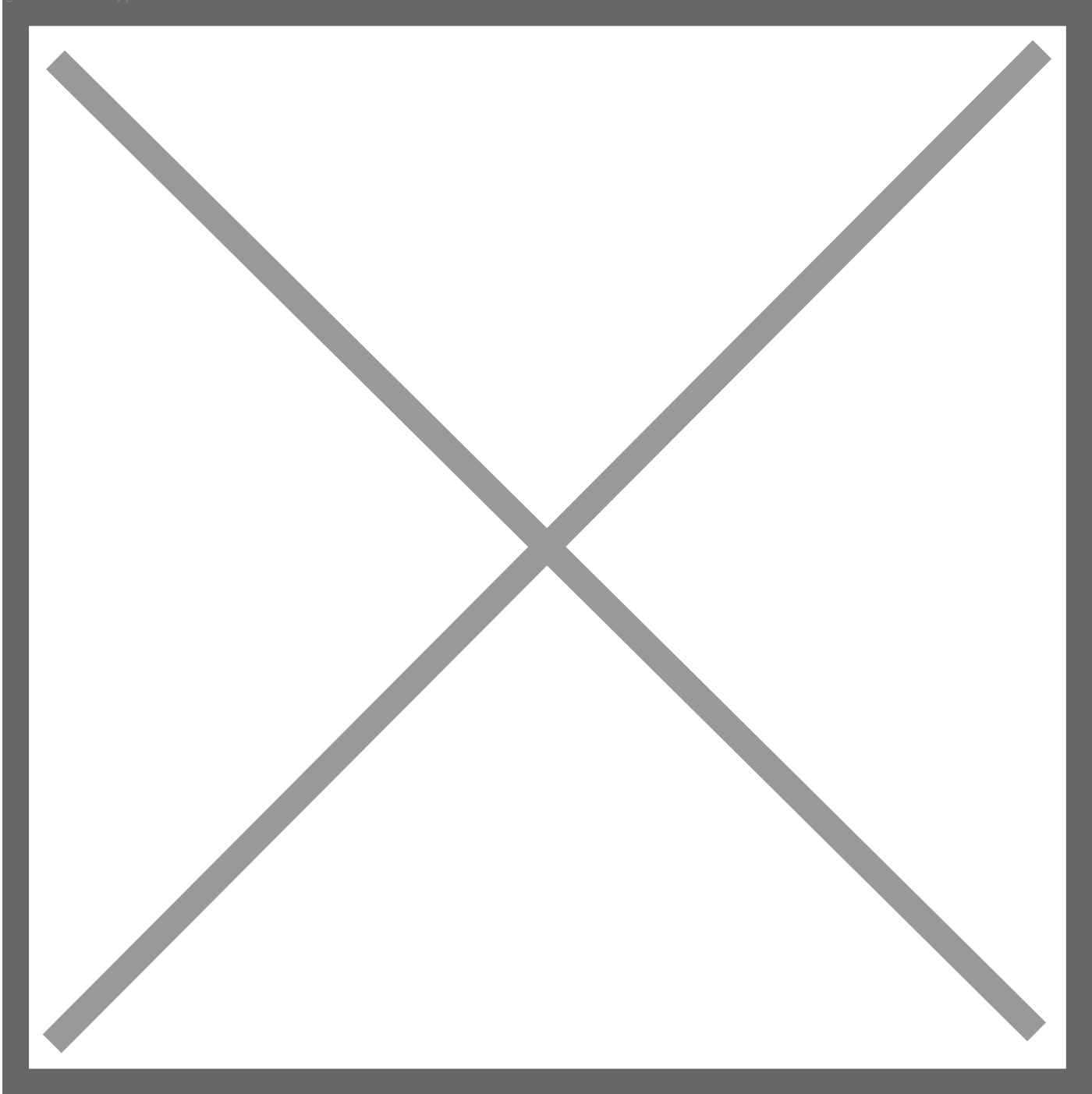


# **CALTY's New Ann Arbor Design Studio Partners with EyesOn Design to Host Open House in Celebration of 50th Anniversary**

August 15, 2024

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The CALTY Design Research (Calty) team in Ann Arbor, Michigan recently opened its doors to invited guests for the first time for an open house event and peek behind the curtain on some inspiring and enlightening projects.

The design studio, which recently underwent a significant expansion and renovation, partnered with EyesOn Design and the Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology to host a two-hour event for esteemed guests to explore and see where some of Toyota's "magic" is made.

Calty is currently celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary since it first established its advanced design studio in California in 1973. Calty eventually expanded and established a production studio in Michigan in 2003. With the redevelopment completed in 2019, the top-secret studio opened its door to further celebrate Calty's 50th anniversary.

"We opened our studio to the local community to give them an inside look at the magic happening at Calty Ann Arbor, Toyota's pioneering overseas production design studio," says Benjamin Jimenez, general manager of Calty in Ann Arbor. "Our passion for the North American market is stronger than ever, and our recent studio expansion is proof of our commitment."



### **The Perfect Vision**

Caltly has been a sponsor of EyesOn Design and the Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology for almost 20 years to support their mission and dedication in the medical field and automotive design world.

“As designers, we are passionate about crafting stunning automotive forms that delight our customers,” says Jimenez. “EyesOn Design isn’t just any car show—it’s a special event with a big goal: to fund eye research and help visually impaired people. By partnering with EyesOn Design, we are able to support a great cause while doing something we love.”

Kevin Hunter, president of Calty Design Research believes EyesOn Design was the ideal partner for this event.

“It’s also important to us to be a part of the larger community in the Michigan area while celebrating design,” he says. “The reason why we also love EyesOn Design is their dedication to vision, beautiful art and design. It’s all about vision health and appreciating design.”

EyesOn Design was just as excited to work with Toyota on this special event.

“Our organization is proud to present occasions for designers to come together and celebrate the beauty and importance of design,” says Kathy Lightbody, EyesOn Design chairman.



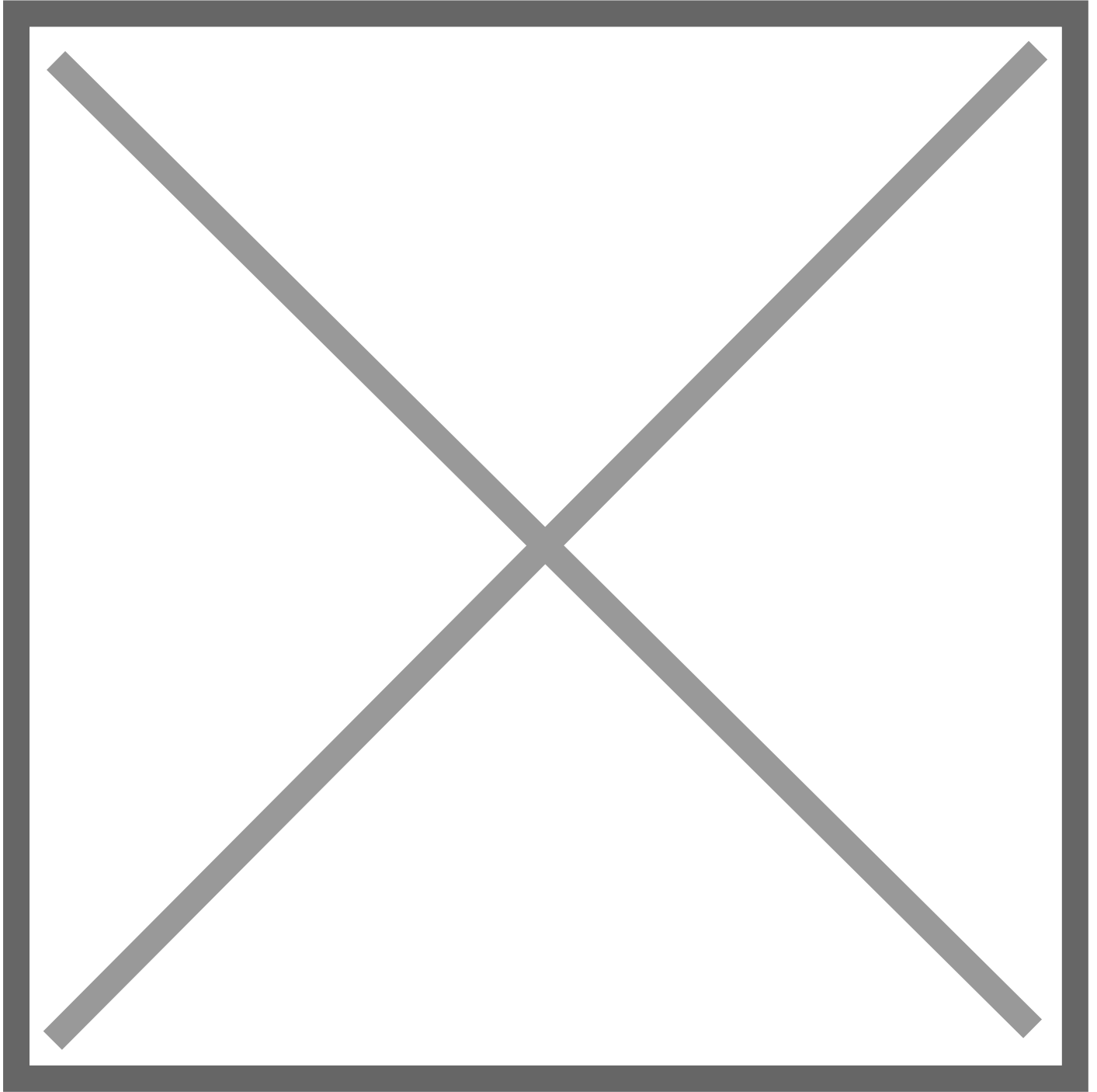
### **The Lay of the Land**

Guests were treated to a variety of eye-catching designs in the modern, contemporary space. The self-guided walking tour was divided into four sections: cars, clay, space and sketch.

“We wanted to show off some of our latest designs and share visual stories of how they came to life,” says Hunter. “Seeing these trucks and cars on the road is definitely different than experiencing them in the studio they were designed and developed in. So, we hope that everyone is able to see these vehicles in a different light and can see the dedication and passion that went into creating them.”

Some of the work on display at the studio included the current gen Tundra, Tacoma, Sequoia, Camry, and the latest addition, 4Runner.

“These vehicles showcase the perfect blend of Toyota’s renowned quality and the creative brilliance of our local team,” says Jimenez.



### **Driving Continuous Improvement**

Designers expressed excitement about the new space where they bring their visions of vehicles to life.

“The expansion has enabled us to do more in our work with the Toyota Technical Center,” says Hunter. “Having the platforms to do big trucks like Tundra, Tacoma and 4Runner is a big advantage for us in the truck market. The expansion allows us to do more in the digital realm because our new VR Room helps us evaluate design and engineering better and more effectively.”

What’s more, the new studio also provides more areas that foster collaboration.

“One of the hallmarks of our new expansion is the ‘One Team’ layout, where all departments work together in an open space,” says Jimenez. “This setup encourages collaboration across different areas, making our focus on design even stronger. With this new layout, communication happens naturally, and we’re finding that formal meetings to gather the team are no longer necessary.”



### **Fueled for the Future**

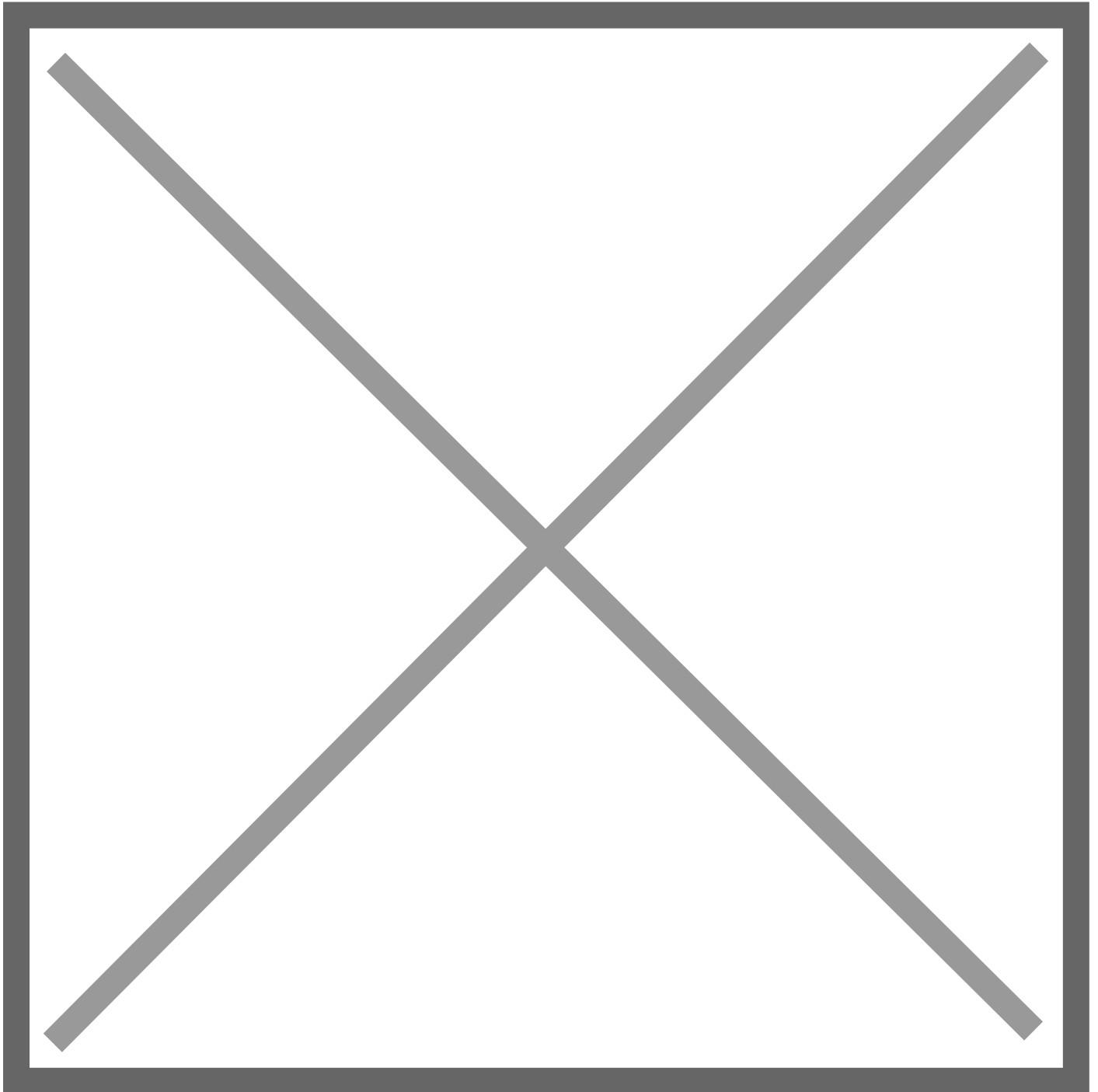
Jimenez said people come first at Toyota and being a part of the community in which the company operates has always been a focus.

“Our new studio shows how dedicated we are to Michigan for the long haul,” says Jimenez. “With this expansion, we’ve created the perfect environment for teamwork, and we’re set for at least the next 20 years and beyond.”



Guests who had the opportunity to experience the new studio included EyesOn Design exhibitors and judges, journalists and design enthusiasts of all ages, including a dozen high school students from across the U.S. Visiting the design studio was an enlightening and exciting experience for the teenagers.

“It was super cool to meet so many experienced designers and talk to them about their careers,” says Rohan Seiber, a high school senior at Crystal Springs Uplands School in Hillsborough, California. “I especially enjoyed watching the full-sized clay mill in action!”



## **Creativity on Full Display**

Having visitors see the behind-the-scenes process makes hosting these types of events worthwhile for the Caltly team.

“I hope our visitors enjoyed seeing our beautiful facility and gained insight into the creative commitment that goes into every one of our products,” says Jimenez. “It’s easy to overlook that the Toyota products we see were once just ideas in the minds of talented artists. Our open house celebrates the creative process behind those designs.”

Although the secretive studio doesn’t open its doors often, Hunter believes this rare opportunity was essential in continuing to tell the Caltly story.

He says, “We’ve recognized that people are interested in our space and what we do, and we want to tell our story because we’re really proud of the work we do at Caltly.”