

# Design@ND

inside...

Spring/Summer '13 ISSUE NUMBER 16

## 1 News and Notes

Events and happenings with students on campus and alumni around the world.

## 2 Back to the Future

The Isis Gallery featured automotive drawings from industrial design students of the 1950s through the 1970s.

## 3 Design Blitz Connects Students, Community

A fall break project takes design students into the South Bend community.

## 4 Design Program Moves out of Riley to West Lake Hall

A move across campus gives graphic and industrial design newer facilities and much more space.

## 5 Together+ Project Receives Grant

Together+ combats Xenophobia in South Africa and receives \$50,000 SAPPI grant to continue its work.

## 6 Designer Emily Pilloton Visits ND

Emily Pilloton, the founder of Project H Design, speaks to ND students about designing for social good.

## 7 Catching Up With...

Nick Abrams (BA '05) moves away from corporate design to open his own firm.

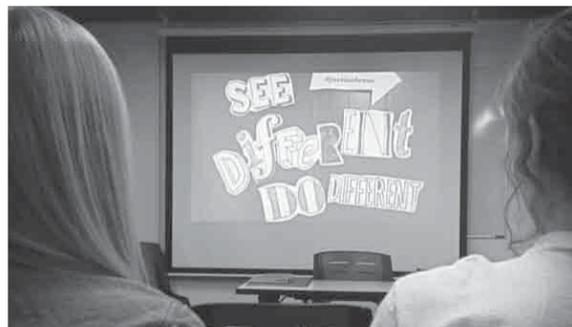
## 7 Keeping Up With Alumni

Alumni notes from graduates around the world, as well as future alumni.

NEWS AND NOTES

**A Riley Romance** Creativity and all-nighters aren't the only things that Riley Hall spurs—the building also has a knack for matchmaking. Alums **Julie Ruffin '07** and **Evan DeWalt '06** met in a design class in the spring of 2004 and grew close over late night LaFortune runs and project critiques. Staying in touch after graduation and navigating time zones, long distances, and strong wills, the two were married this past fall. Their wedding took place on October 12, 2012, and they currently reside in Atlanta, GA. Congratulations!

**Young Alumni Share Secrets** For current students, knowing how to navigate the job market can be a little confusing and hugely daunting. Thankfully, various design program alums dedicated their time this fall to give students a little peace of mind by participating in the Young Alumni Lecture Series. **Takashi Yoshi '10**, **Jonathan Lee '10**, **Dan Jacobs '11**, **Kelly Gronli '08**, **Andrew Paulter '10**, and **Coleman Collins '11** ventured back to South Bend to discuss their career paths, challenges, and secrets to success with current students. These lectures allow current students to see how others have gone from student to professional and to connect with young alumni.



Justin Ahrens, founder and Creative Director of Rule29, came to speak to students about designing for social good this fall.

**Stellar Speaker** This spring, Notre Dame students were treated to a talk by **Justin Ahrens**, founder and Creative Director of Rule29 and an avid Notre Dame fan. Ahrens strives to expand his design capabilities while employing socially responsible practices, a concept that resonates with Notre Dame design teaching. Ahrens is currently creating promotional materials for Life in Abundance, a foundation that works in the slums of Northeast Africa to restore hope and inspire transformation for Africa's most vulnerable families. Megan Malley, a senior graphic design BFA who has heard Ahrens talk on multiple occasions, says, "his talk really resonated with our design community here because he is a professional designer with a job and a family that he needs to support, but still finds a way to use his skills to change the world for the better. It was great to hear the experiences of someone who can balance working for profit with using design to help those in need."



Alums Julie Ruffin and Evan DeWalt tied the knot in October 2012. The two met in a design class and continued their relationship after graduating from ND.

**Approaching the Summit** Over the past year, design professor Andre Murnieks has been working tirelessly to plan (MoDe) Motion Education Design Summit, a summit about motion design and education. The summit took place on the weekend of April 26–27 as a result of the collaboration of the planning committee: Andre Murnieks, Notre Dame; Gretchen Rinnert, Kent State and Brian Stone, Ohio State. The conference brought together over 30 design educators and professionals from all over the world, introduced some of the newest practices in the field of motion graphics, and helped keep the Notre Dame design program on the map. Andre is now working on compiling takeaways from this conference into an interactive ebook, which will serve as a textbook and potentially iTunes U course for students of motion design.

**Award-Winning Design Students** Bre Stachowski and Sunoh Choe recently competed in the 2013 International Housewares Student Design Competition. Bre, a Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Design senior, earned third place in the competition for The Neat Seat, a child's chair that makes for "less messy mealtimes." Sunoh Choe, a senior BA in Industrial Design, earned an honorable mention for his submission, The Rack-Over Bathroom Organizer. Both students' submissions were displayed at the IHA show at McCormick Place in early March.



Bre Stachowski, recipient of the third place award at the 2013 International Housewares Student Design Competition, poses with her product, the Neat Seat.

Creative Director: Robert Sedlack '89  
Designer/Editor: Kerry Sullivan '13

306 Riley Hall  
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Art, Art History & Design  
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556  
Email: design@nd.edu

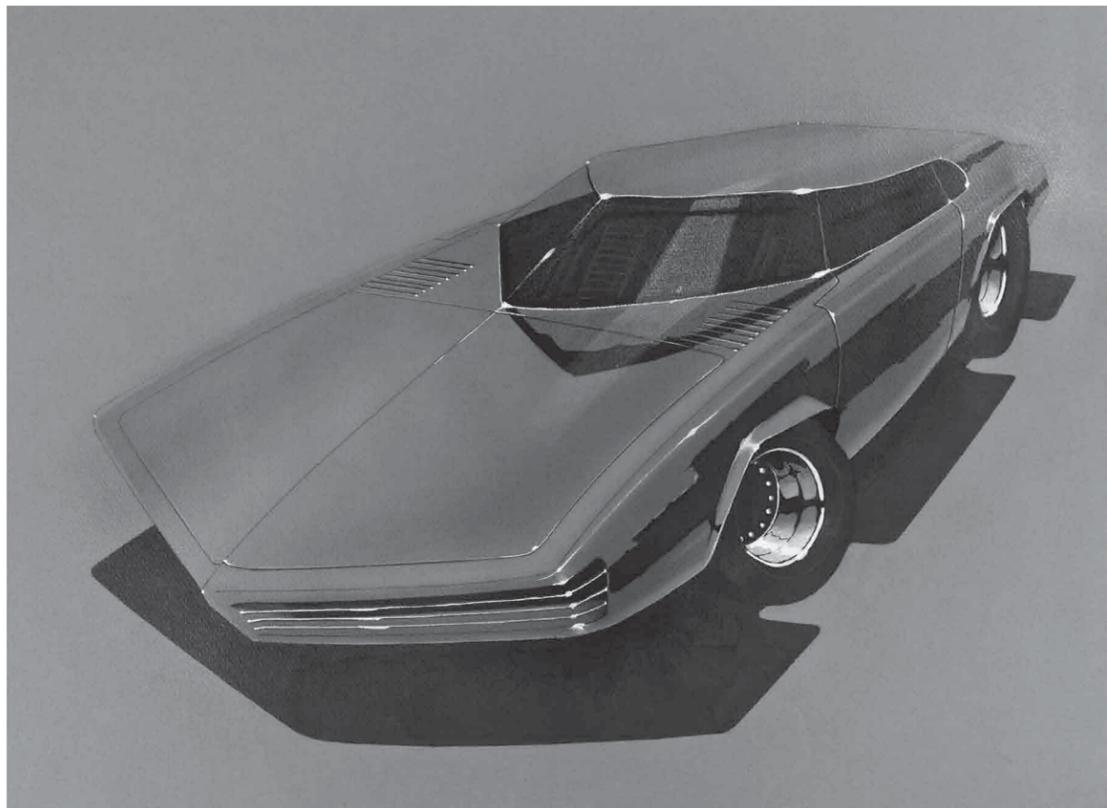
Design@ND showcases Notre Dame's graphic and industrial design programs, illustrates the caliber of both students and graduates, and builds the University's reputation within the professional design community.

# A GLIMPSE INTO AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRIAL DESIGN EDUCATION OF THE PAST

In the fall of 2012, the Isis Gallery was adorned with drawings from industrial design students of the 1950s–1970s. The “Back to the Future” exhibit showcased automotive drawings from past ID students, featuring the work of current Adjunct Assistant Professor George Tisten.

Last fall, the ISIS Gallery went Back to the Future to host an exhibition of automobile drawings created by design students from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. The gallery was full of past industrial design work, showing a glimpse into industrial design education from those decades.

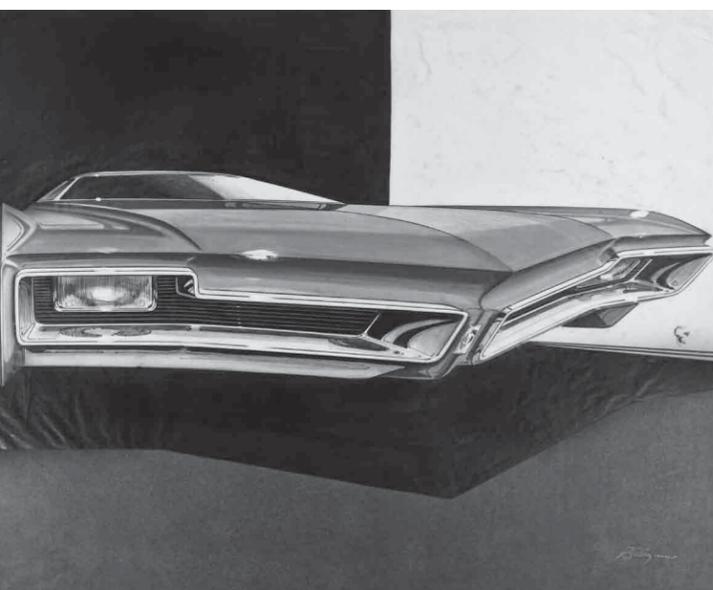
This blast-from-the-past was complete with 30 drawings, including six from current Adjunct Assistant Professor George Tisten (ND Class of '70), which was a pretty amazing feat not only from the amount of work that he was able to showcase—but from the fact that he was able to showcase any work at all. Tisten explains, “after graduation I threw all of my sketches into the trash dumpster behind O’Shaughnessy; I simply didn’t have a place for them, so I tossed in my paintings, car drawings, everything.” Tisten estimates that he threw away over 1,000 pieces of work he had done during his time as a student, and he truly never expected to see them again.



Automotive drawing by Dennis Kristowski '65, displayed in the Isis Gallery's Back to the Future exhibit.



Dennis Luczak '61



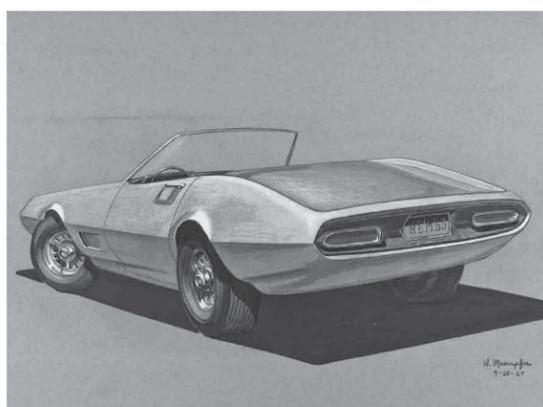
James Bisignano '61

*“Students would have to do a facelift of a car, just as automotive professionals would do when creating a new model of a preexisting car. Then, based off their facelift, students would have to design an entirely new car—their own original design. The entire project would take about three years.” – George Tisten*

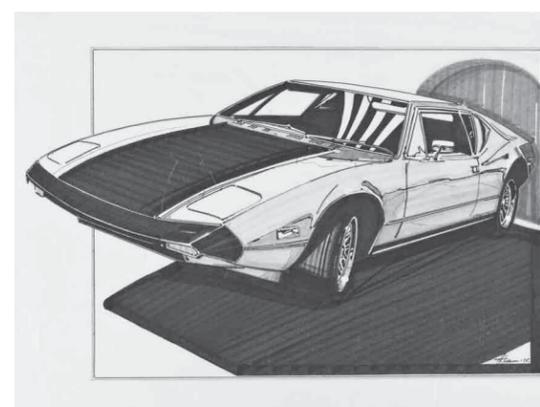
But see them again he did, as a mystery person resurrected his drawings from the trash and gave them to then-professor Fred Beckman. Beckman, who was a professor from 1946 to the mid-1990s, was committed to making Notre Dame industrial design a nationally-competitive program. For this reason, he focused on teaching automotive rendering, a necessary skill for industrial designers at the time. Beckman started a multiyear, three-step project with ID undergrads in order to hone their automobile sketching skills. First, he would present students with a stack of professional sketches of automobiles from Detroit’s “Big 3”: Chrysler, Ford, and GM. Students were instructed to duplicate these sketches. After copying the sketch, they would then update the

car, making slight changes to the headlights, grill, and other parts of the exterior. Finally, the students would design their own car—drawing it from multiple angles and creating a 3-D model of their design.

It was these car designs that adorned the halls of the ISIS Gallery from September 13 to October 12. Students featured include: Virgil M. Exner '56, Arthur Blakeslee '59, Jon C. Siddle '59, James Bisignano '61, James R. Brunette '61, Dennis Luczak '61, Ernest J. Barry '65, Stephen B. Hester '65, Dennis Kristowski '65, William E. Muempfer '66, Joseph Papai '66, James St. Clair '67, Stephen J. Heagan '68, George Tisten '70, and Charles E. Maher '71.



William E. Muempfer '66



George Tisten '70

# DESIGN BLITZ CONNECTS STUDENTS, COMMUNITY

While many students travel over breaks, thirteen design students elected to stay on campus over fall break in 2012 in order to partake in a “social design blitz” led by designer John Bielenberg. During the blitz, they implemented three public art projects in the South Bend community.



Students Jeff McLean, Brandon Keelean, Elizabeth Maurath, and Bobby Reichle employed their creativity to combat South Bend’s transportation problem and constructed a “bus” that they ran from campus to downtown.

Thirteen design majors in the University of Notre Dame’s Department of Art, Art History & Design used their fall break to engage the local community with a “social design blitz.” In a single week, the students brainstormed, conceptualized, created, and exhibited three public, interactive design projects created to help bridge the gap between downtown South Bend and the Notre Dame campus. “It’s amazing what you can get done when you don’t have time to self doubt,” says Alisa Rantanen, a senior industrial design major.

## Confronting the Gap

Robert Sedlack ’89, an associate professor in the Department of Art, Art History and Design, and designer John Bielenberg—who has orchestrated several other socially-minded design blitzes around the country—teamed up to organize the students’ event. To kick off the project, students headed into the city to explore the area and conduct interviews with residents. “We then came back and brainstormed what we saw as the biggest problems the community had—and some way to integrate the community into Notre Dame and Notre Dame into the community,” says junior graphic design major Rachel Brandenberger. “There’s a really distinct separation between the two.”

The students next broke into groups to develop three distinct projects: an interactive chalkboard display, a “bus” made of PVC piping, and a free public viewing of an original YouTube film. They put their plans in motion with help from Aaron Perri, Executive Director of Downtown South Bend, Inc.

## Inviting Participation

The students working on the interactive display used special paint to turn the side of a parking garage into a giant chalkboard and then stenciled

Right: Students Steph Wulz and Airi Kobayashi stencil a parking garage with the prompts “I am...” and “South Bend is...” to create an interactive design piece.

prompts on the wall to initiate discussion. “We wanted to create a place where South Bend community members could be heard in an unusual way,” Rantanen says. The first prompt—“South Bend is...”—received responses which ranged from the philosophical (South Bend is a vortex of self discovery or stagnation) to the literal (South Bend is under your feet). Other discussion prompts focused on personal ideas such as “I am...,” “I dream...,” and “I love...” “It was intended to provoke thought about you and your place in South Bend, your relationship with South Bend,” Rantanen says. “The rain washes the chalk away so it’s always self renewing; it’s always changing.”

Senior graphic design major Brandon Keelean worked on the bus project, noting that “transportation seems to be the biggest struggle students face to get away from campus.” After building the PVC bus frame, the students ran the bus from campus to downtown, depositing balloons at various local businesses, restaurants and landmarks. They also filmed the entire process and created a short video calling for a new bus line between campus and downtown South Bend.

The third group created a 10-minute movie and projected it onto a wall behind the Morris Civic Theater. “It was a goofy mash-up of YouTube videos,” Brandenberger says. “We wanted a form of entertainment to get people engaged in downtown. It was all abstract but under the umbrella idea of collaboration with South Bend.” The response it provoked, she says, was very positive. “People came to watch it and were really excited by the project.”

## Designing Under Deadline

Creating and presenting all three projects in such a short time was grueling and intimidating, say participants. For five days they worked intensely and sacrificed sleep—but ultimately produced well-conceived and interactive design projects. “John Bielenberg pushes you to go for crazy first and figure out if you can refine it later,” explains Keelean. “Through the process of forcing solutions we get a lot of ideas, and every once in a while there’s something really good in one of those crazy ideas.” The combined stress and satisfaction of the blitz experience was also transformative on a more personal level, says Rantanen. “Before doing this, I felt like I was in a design rut, and I wanted to get shaken up,” she says.

Bielenberg, co-founder of the “rapid ingenuity” firm Future Partners, says the Notre Dame design students, “were smart, engaged and passionate about this project. I was impressed at their ability to collaborate with each other under stressful creative and deadline pressures,” he says. “I set the bar pretty high and expect legendary results. This group lived up to the challenge.”

## Staying Engaged

While the design blitz was intended to last only one week, it struck a chord with participants. Inspired by the experience, a number of students are now petitioning for a bus that goes directly from campus to downtown—and discussing future projects. “We’re hoping to make another appearance downtown or use the outdoor projection idea to advertise things going on in the community as a source of entertainment for people,” says Brandenberger.

“I hope the wall will stay,” adds Rantanen. “We just need to figure out how to provide chalk in a sustainable and consistent way.”

— Eileen Lynch



# IND DESIGN MOVES TO A PLACE WITH A LAKEFRONT VIEW

The Industrial and Graphic Design Programs have recently moved out of Riley Hall into West Lake Hall, formerly the Telecom Building, located behind Rockne Memorial. With the move, both programs have expanded due to more space, newer equipment, and facilities that encourage creative collaboration.



Cregg Commons, a gallery and study space, is at the center of West Lake Hall.

Due to the significant growth of the design program, which has doubled in majors over the last decade, the space for the program in Riley Hall became far too small. With the support of the University and the benefaction of a donor, both graphic and industrial design moved out of Riley and into West Lake Hall over the summer of 2012.

West Lake, located on the west side of campus behind Rockne Memorial, includes many new facilities that have enhanced both industrial and graphic design. The new building not only includes bigger classrooms, but more faculty offices, a gallery commons area, student studio space, well-equipped computer labs, and a state-of-the-art industrial shop. These facilities give students and faculty more space for creative thinking, enhance design education, and provide students with a clean, up-to-date space.



Industrial design students work in the new studio. The space is far bigger than the previous studio space in Riley.

One of the most notable parts of the new design space is the Industrial Design fabrication shop. The West Lake studio is significantly larger than the studio in Riley and includes a better clean air system and dust removal system. Not only does this provide students with a cleaner, healthier space, but it also houses some exciting new equipment, including a laser cutter. This cutter includes a computer numerically controlled device, which allows students to transfer their digital 3-D work into a physical 3-D piece. Other notable new machinery includes a stop safe saw, a router table, a band saw, and a motor saw. Professor Paul Down is blown away by the new studio space and believes the size and equipment have greatly enhanced the industrial design program in terms of productivity, safety, and creativity.

Another new element of West Lake Hall is Cregg Commons, a central common area complete with café tables, couches, a conference table, and a gallery space. This gallery displays faculty and student work and showcases the strength of the program. The common space is used as a study space, meeting area, and reception area for visiting speakers and conferences.

The computer labs have been greatly improved as well. Digital Design Professor Andre Murnieks is thrilled with the new computer space. He says, “from a very selfish standpoint, the computer labs are awesome for me to teach in. In Riley, we had no teaching space that was also a technology space, and now we have both combined.” The

labs feature the latest Adobe software, giving students the necessary tools to excel. The ID lab, specifically, includes dual boot machines which host both Macintosh and Windows software, allowing students great flexibility when rendering their work.

Not only has West Lake given the educational facilities of the design program more space, but it has allowed the emergence of a design business venture as well. Lakehouse Design, a student-run design shop, creates work for a variety of clients in the South Bend area and across the country. Laura Laws '13, the current Creative Director of Lakehouse Design, says, “establishing Lakehouse Design has been, and continues to be, a lot of work, but the experience we are gaining is priceless. In addition to working with clients on real-world projects, we are learning about the most effective and efficient ways to run a design firm.” The firm employs a variety of students who work together on client projects in order to gain experience, hone their creative capabilities, build their portfolios, and create work for the community.



A Graphic Design 3 class listens to professor Robert Sedlack as he showcases past student work.

While some students and faculty miss the proximity Riley had to LaFortune and to studio art peers, the move to West Lake has been a success overall and has given the design program a more recognizable, reputable spot on campus. John McGreevy, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, is excited that the move to West Lake has improved the design program, and he hopes that the new building will entice future students to declare a design major. McGreevy says, “I hope it attracts more students who will be excited about studying design at Notre Dame. Since we’re a liberal arts school, we have the unique ability to combine logical thinking and creative design to shape the future leaders of the design industry. I can only assume that the facilities in West Lake will enhance this goal.”

*“Business today needs much better capabilities to innovate—and I believe that design thinking coupled with a variety of other fields is something that the economy demands. The new facilities at West Lake help develop curiosity, communication, and collaborative thinking, which will serve students well as undergraduates and in their careers.” –Benefactor Marty Cregg, '73*

# ND DESIGN STUDENTS' PROJECT RECEIVES \$50,000 SAPPPI 'IDEAS THAT MATTER' GRANT

Students from the Fall 2011 Graphic Design 3: Design for Social Good class undertook a project they dubbed "together+," a campaign to combat xenophobia in South Africa. The students split into teams to create various solutions to the racial problems in this volatile country. Recently, they earned the "Ideas that Matter" grant to continue their work.

Collaboration among University of Notre Dame faculty and students, Sedlack Design Associates, and Notre Dame's Center for Social Concerns has resulted in a \$50,000 Sappi Ideas that Matter grant to together+, a campaign to combat xenophobia in South Africa. The Ideas that Matter grant program is an initiative of Sappi Fine Paper North America, producer of fine coated papers for the print industry. The program—the only grant program of its kind in the industry—was established more than a decade ago to recognize and support designers who donate their time and talent to a range of charitable activities.

The goal of the University's design curriculum, says Robert Sedlack '89, associate professor of design and director of graduate studies in the Department of Art, Art History, and Design, is to develop students who can make a difference—both in business and in the world. "It makes all the sense in the world given the mission of the University." In his class, "Graphic Design 3: Design for Social Good," Sedlack's students spend 16 weeks exploring the intersection of design and social issues.

The idea to develop a campaign to unite a South African community divided by xenophobia was born out of community-based research done by the Center for Social Concerns and its community partner, Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation (KNF), an organization based in a Johannesburg neighborhood greatly affected by xenophobia-fueled violence.

In April 2011, Paul Horn '97, KNF's director of community outreach initiatives, approached Sedlack and Andréa Pellegrino '85, founder of Pellegrino Collaborative, a consulting group that partners with corporations, non-

profits, and educational institutions to develop strategies, actions, and communications for social impact. "There was a critical need in the refugee community for some outside agency to try to address the problem of xenophobia, and I thought it would be a perfect fit for design and communication," Horn says. "I knew both Andréa and Robert had a strong interest in and belief that design could affect positive change and be used for social good."

Sedlack and Pellegrino traveled to South Africa over fall break 2011 to do research and fact-finding. "When I came back, I knew the project wasn't going to stop at the end of the fall semester in December," Sedlack says. Of the 12 students in the class, only two—BFA students with thesis projects due—were unable to continue with the project the following semester.

The class ultimately developed four projects designed to effect change through communication: a book on refugee rights; a campaign for health care rights, written in six different languages (English, Zulu, Sotho, Portuguese, French, and Afrikaans); a replicable community event where people gathered for a cookout and painted over hateful graffiti; and a children's book, "Blooming Together." Sedlack was able to take seven students to South Africa over spring break 2012. "It wasn't a deep immersion, but it was enough to help them better understand the variety of challenges that the refugees are facing."

The trip was critical to the project, he adds. "We put the projects in front of the people they would affect. We got to talk to teachers and students, did in-home interviews—it really changed the way the students thought about their ability to be agents of change through design."



Notre Dame students Lynn Yeom, left, and Amelia Bernier, right, truly immersed themselves in South African culture on their visit.

One student told him that she realized that in her lifetime, she'd moved from bubble to bubble. Meeting refugees is much different than seeing them on TV, or on the Internet, he says. "They realized that design is a powerful tool, that it can really make a difference in the world."

The grant will be used to produce and distribute the various projects that the students created. Plans for the future include expansion of the story and curriculum for older children, impact measurement tools, and scaling the campaign for other South African communities, as well as refining it for other regions of the world affected by xenophobia.

Says KNF's Paul Horn, "This grant takes together+ from a theoretical level to practical implementation. What's really exciting is that because of the committed partners who are part of this program, the project has a major chance to influence thousands and thousands of people and really make a difference in society."

—Carol C. Bradley



Students (left to right) Megan Malley, Brittany Backstrand, Maria Massa, Alex Leonardo, Jacqueline Hull, and Andrea Sherlag travelled to South Africa during spring break 2013 to continue together+'s work.

# PROJECT H FOUNDER EMILY PILLOTON ENLIGHTENS STUDENTS TO DESIGN FOR SOCIAL GOOD

Emily Pilloton, founder of Project H Design, aims to combine sustainability and humanity to design for those who need it most. Through her work with education systems in the US and abroad, Pilloton has fueled students' minds with creative thinking, a collaborative environment, and hands on building.



This fall, the design program at Notre Dame had the opportunity to hear Emily Pilloton discuss the power of design and its ability to do good. Pilloton, founder of Project H, a nonprofit organization that uses effective design to help people who need it most, talked to current ND students about sustainability and the potential they have as designers to change the world.

As a young designer, Pilloton was frustrated with some of the outright ridiculous aspects of the business. After being asked to choose which doorknob was better, Pilloton decided to quit commercial design and instead turned her focus to solving design problems. Luckily, Pilloton realized that she wasn't alone in her quest to do more meaningful work, and she was able to connect with other young designers around the world who were designing pro bono and self-initiated projects. Project H has grown substantially in the last five years, designing projects in Uganda, North Carolina, California, and in various other places around the world.

In Uganda, Pilloton and her team designed “The Learning Landscape,” an educational playground system for elementary school children that teaches core concepts, social skills, and leadership. The Learning Landscape uses a grid of half-buried tires and includes a whole suite of games, based on the geometry of the tires, which are team-based, individual, timed, fast-paced, and fun. The Learning Landscape was originally developed as a low-cost solution for students struggling with math due to a lack of materials, but has since expanded into an outdoor play space that can be paired with games for every core subject. This design solution has since grown out of Africa and has been built in a multitude of other countries, including the US, New Zealand, Thailand, Costa Rica, and many more.

After creating the Learning Landscape, Pilloton was committed to using her design talents to create other real-world solutions. In 2010, she received an email from Chip Zollinger, the superintendent in Windsor, North Carolina, a struggling school system in the northeastern part of the state. Zollinger had read her book *Design Revolution* and had learned about her experience building Learning Landscapes in other school systems. In order to help out this ailing town, Pilloton and her assistant Matt Miller traveled to Bertie County to build Learning Landscapes and to develop a design-based curriculum for high school students in the area. Pilloton began by expanding the computer lab facilities with the

help of Dr. Zollinger; they made it a rich, engaging space complete with angled stations, wire-free capabilities, and quality computers. After overhauling the computer

space, Pilloton and her team turned their attention to the football weight room. Football games in Bertie County were the social center of the town and a huge part of the community's identity. In order to add to the community engagement of Windsor, Pilloton convinced investors to donate new weights and other athletic equipment to the program as she redesigned the weight room space.

While Pilloton contributed to the playgrounds and weight rooms of Windsor, that was not enough for her. She then developed an entire design curriculum for 13 high school students—students learned architectural, brainstorming, creative thinking, participatory action research, woodshop, metal work, and design skills—all while earning college credit. In order to enrich the design curriculum, now known as Studio H, Pilloton used a construction-based program; students first built corn hole sets, then chicken coops, and finally a full-scale farmer's market for their struggling town. Throughout the construction process of each project, Pilloton says she could see the kids pushing through creative struggles, thinking outside the box, and realizing that they could accomplish something substantial.

The main project for Studio H was the farmer's market the students built over the summer between their junior and senior years of high school. After a flood, earthquake, and hurricane nearly destroyed the town, Pilloton and her students wanted to help everyone rebuild, but also contribute something to the landscape of the town

*“This project gave them a reason to be proud of their hometown, see how design thinking and creation can instill change in their community, and believe in their own abilities.”*

that could be sustainable. After deciding that a farmer's market would not only provide a common meeting place for people of Windsor, but also contribute to the economic growth of the town, the students got to work. They began formulating design plans, deciding what materials would be best to use, and raising funds for their 120' x 80' plot of land. As the students started construction in the summer, the community rallied around them and began to anticipate the opening of the farmer's market. On opening day, the mayor and entire community was there to see the students' design come to life, and the students were presented with the key to the city. This project gave them a reason to be proud of their hometown, see how design thinking and creation can instill change in their community, and believe in their own abilities.

After completing her work in North Carolina, Pilloton moved to Berkeley, CA, where she has started a charter school to continue this design teaching. Now Pilloton teaches 75 students, leads the sixth grade girl advisory, and runs the summer camp Studio G, a design and building camp for girls ages 9-12. Pilloton still believes there is work to be done, and that they have only scratched the surface on how this design education can be beneficial across the country.

Below: Students interact with Project H's Learning Landscape, a game made up of a series of tires with education and physical focus.



# Catching Up With...

2005 graduate Nick Abrams has ventured into business-ownership and now operates his own agency, focusing on projects with a social focus.



**Nick Abrams (BA '05)**, whose dad was a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and whose mother and sister were fine artists, clearly had creativity in his blood from the beginning. Due to his family's influence and his experience with Photoshop and Illustrator in high school, it seemed obvious that he would pursue a major in design when he entered Notre Dame in the fall of 2001.

During his time at Notre Dame, Nick pursued a variety of extracurricular activities that fueled his creative capabilities, including dorm apparel design and serving as the Art Director for *Scholastic* magazine. While he devoted much of his time to these design-related activities, he also worked with other students on a book-exchange business within the Notre Dame community. His work designing and starting a business paved the way for his future career, giving him a sound mind for both creativity and strategy implementation.

Nick graduated without a job, but with a desire to expand his education.

Realizing that digital design was the future, he enrolled in a variety of Flash and Web Design classes, which gave him a significant edge in the job application process. His first full-time job was at Forward Development, a small agency with a group of young creative minds. Nick's boss at Forward Development then started Cucker Interactive and hired him and one other employee to start the company. Over seven years, the company grew from three to 30 people and works with major clients like Quicksilver and Sony.

While Nick certainly enjoyed his time at Cucker Interactive, this past January he made the shift to business-ownership and opened his own agency. Nick explains,

"I've had consistency and security for seven years, and all of a sudden I made this decision that I had been praying a lot about. I had the desire to design for good—I realized I may not be making consistent money, but one of the bigger challenges is to realize that sometimes you don't know what's coming and realize that God will provide." While Nick had no concrete clients when he first started his agency, he is currently designing material for a few of his friends' start-up companies, which have a social focus. For example, one start-up is a charitable online shopping app designed to help non-profits generate sustainable funding. Supporters shop online, and the online retailers (like Amazon or iTunes) give a percentage of *their* revenue back to the non-profit without costing the shopper anything.

This new business has presented Nick with a variety of challenges and opportunities, but he is excited to see what's to come. For now, his plan is to continue to grow the business on his own and push himself out of his comfort zone. "My hope is to do good in the world. I want to use my gifts for God and his Kingdom. It's an adventure, and it sure is an awesome one."



The logo for Abrams' agency, Till, which he designed.

## 1980s

**Patrick D. Conboy (BFA/ALPA '86)** started his career in advertising in Chicago at Foote Cone & Belding. Patrick then took a position at JC Penney as VP/Director of Strategic Marketing. His responsibilities included the repositioning of the JCPenney Brand, National and Local Media, CRM/Relationship Marketing, Private Brand Marketing, Public Relations, Multi-cultural Marketing and Packaging. Patrick created an exclusive retail sponsorship with the Academy Awards as a platform to showcase the new fashion launches for the company, a relationship that continues to this day. Currently, Patrick is Founder and CEO of ELDERLUXE and ELDERLUXE.com in Chicago, Illinois, a luxury lifestyle retailer serving older adults with home and personal comforts through their various transitions in age.

## 1990s

**Stephanie Cunningham (MFA '96)** is the Associate Chair of Art and a Professor of Graphic Design at Florida Atlantic University in Fort Lauderdale, where she has spent the last 15 years wondering where her students go for spring break. She continues to work at the intersections of art and design. Recently she has shown work at the Boca Museum of Art, Girls Club

Gallery, Hollywood Art and Culture Center and Florida Museum for Women Artists. She contributed to the Keep Delete book this past summer. She splits her time between sunny South Florida and sunny Santa Fe—clearly overcompensating for too many years under grey midwestern skies.

## 2000s

**Krista (Lehmkuhl) Hayes (BFA '04)** began her career as a Junior Graphic Designer at ProWolfe Partners in St. Louis, Missouri, where she developed corporate communications materials. She then joined Buck Consultants, where she worked on corporate and employee communications materials. Currently, she is a Senior Graphic Designer at Phoenix Creative Co. where she works on advertising, internal and external corporate communications, identity brand development and package design. Most recently, she has been part of a team focused on creating point-of-sale and in-store signage for Anheuser-Busch InBev.

**Alex Lobos (MFA '05)** is an assistant professor at Rochester Institute of Technology. Previously he was a visiting professor at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and an industrial designer at GE Appliances. Alex focuses most of his work on sustainable design, emotional attachment and social impact, and

feels honored to be part of the RIT's ID department, which consistently ranks among the top five in the nation. As a side note, Alex recently got to relive his pre-design life as a professional drummer, joining his former Guatemalan band "Bohemia Suburbana" for a sold-out reunion tour last Summer, playing to over 20,000 people.

After designing for a high-end skin care line in Los Angeles for over a year, **Kristina Sinutko (BA '09)** recently embraced the hospitality industry and accepted a position at a luxury oceanfront resort called Terranea Resort, which is located in beautiful Rancho Palos Verdes, California. She is part of the Marketing Department and is one of two designers who create design collateral for the many departments in this expansive resort.

## Future Alumni

**Nicole Timmerman (BA '13)** is a graphic design and Film, Television, and Theater major who has thoroughly enjoyed her time studying both fields. Through her college career, Nicole has been able to merge her majors to create some extraordinary projects. For example, as part of her Graphic Design 3 class, Nicole began working with the South Bend Juvenile Justice Center and created a short film that explains the programs the JJC puts on. She has also created motion

graphics for a promotional documentary in Cannes, France. Nicole is unsure of her post-graduation plans, but she is definitely interested in pursuing design full time.

## Alumni Contributions

Did you know that when you make a contribution to Notre Dame, you can designate your funds to go directly to the design program? Your gift to the University can help support design initiatives like this newsletter and the annual Alumni Design Conference. All you have to do is note on your correspondence that you want the contribution to go to the "Graphic and Industrial Design Alumni Fund." It's that easy. Also note that any gift given to the University is credited toward eligibility for the football ticket lottery. The requirement for each class in order to be eligible for next year's ticket lottery application (2013) is as follows:

- Class of 2013 to 2004 – \$100
- Class of 2003 to 1964 – \$200
- Classes before 1964 – \$100

The gift must be made between January 1 and December 31 of the current year (2013) in order to make an alumnus/alumna eligible for the following (2014) year's lottery.

[Alumni, remember that your generous contributions help make this newsletter happen!](#)

## RECYCLE



Share the News!

Spring/Summer '13

# Design @ND



in this issue...