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Martin Fitzpatrick (BA ’90) designed publicity materials including invitations and the program for an event last fall in Manhattan celebrating the achievements and contributions of former Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz and the creation of a Notre Dame scholarship in his name. Having been a student at Notre Dame during Holtz’s national championship season, Martin enjoyed working on an event with which Holtz was connected. “It was a thrill to see Regis Philbin (’53), who gave the champagne toast, talk about the event the next day on air while displaying the program I designed,” Martin said.

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How To Get Your Dream Job
Earlier this year the design program hosted Maria Scileppi, the Director of Chicago Portfolio School. Maria’s presentation helped Notre Dame students uncover the mystery of landing their first job in the creative industry. While acting as a self-described “tour guide” for this daunting process, Maria allowed for open discussion and shared examples of past students’ work. The Chicago Portfolio School prepares students to get a job in the creative industry by taking a year to put together a portfolio. Scileppi has helped hundreds of students break into the industry, and there is no doubt that her presentation in Riley Hall has helped many more.

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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.
Returning to Notre Dame to speak on campus and work with the next generation of change agents was both professionally and personally gratifying. At Worldstudio, we believe we can do well by doing good in the world, values that were nurtured in me through my experiences as a student at Notre Dame.” — Andréa Pellegren, ND ’85

WORLDSTUDIO IGNITES SOCIAL CHANGE AT ND

Worldstudio made quite an impression on Notre Dame’s campus following Mark Randall and Andréa Pellegren’s (BA in English ’85) visit in 2014 to speak about design for social good. Their message was simple: designers can ignite change for the common good, and designers have a long and successful history in doing just that. Take, for example, the influential nature of Shepard Fairey’s Obama poster or Milton Glaser’s I Love NY logo, two works embedded in history and instantly recognizable. They illustrate that design can be an extremely effective way to raise awareness of an issue or aid fundraising efforts for projects.

Worldstudio, founded by Mark 16 years ago, proves that a firm committed to doing good has a profitable and sustainable business model. The studio accomplishes this by balancing traditional design work for clients and businesses with social projects for the common good. For example, the studio’s Urban Forest Project turns light pole banners into a public art initiative and challenges designers to creatively use the form of a tree to express a pressing environmental problem. Worldstudio found an effective way to take advantage of an abundance of unused yet visible space and employ designers to both show their work and promote environmental responsibility.

The firm also highly values educational initiatives and seeks to teach designers ways to fund social projects. Design Ignites Change is a collaboration between Worldstudio and their client, the Adidas Foundation, to encourage and enable students and professionals to pursue projects to positively affect social change. The program offers support for design educators and college students who want to make a difference. Recently, Notre Dame has become one of the participating schools, hence Worldstudio’s invite to campus to facilitate their “Funding Social Change” workshop. Since coming to present at the Studio Museum of Art last September, Worldstudio has also started work on a community engagement project with Notre Dame’s Office of Public Affairs and the Center for Social Concerns.

Andréa led the day-long workshop whose goal was to explain how non-profit organizations secure funds for large-scale projects. After Andréa’s presentation on networking and fundraising in this business, students broke into teams and used her template to think about how they could secure their own social awareness projects. The workshop sparked an interest in design for social change on campus, and long after the workshop, the results of students’ hard work with the help of Worldstudio are still being realized.

Students learned that projects related to social responsibility require specialized marketing strategies and techniques, especially when they are low-funded or not-for-profit. By learning the skills of carefully developing ideas, creating realistic timelines, estimating costs and understanding budgets, exploring different funding options, and being as smart and realistic as possible when taking on a socially-responsible campaign, students were able to pursue their own projects in a more effective way.

Kristen Grosw (BA ‘11), a senior design major, was inspired by Worldstudio’s mission and took the workshop opportunity to further develop one of her existing projects, an alphabet book addressing the low number of black students at Notre Dame. With Andréa’s help in publicizing the project, it caught the attention of important administrators on campus. Currently, her project is being considered as a tool to spark a larger discussion about diversity at Notre Dame and may be featured in an exhibition in the spring next fall.

At the time of the Worldstudio visit, the Graphic Design 3 class was creating a social awareness campaign on the topic of women in the Catholic Church. MacKiley Allen, Jane Obringer, and Julia Ro decided to promote the positive roles women play in the contemporary Catholic Church by highlighting women in the local community who are simultaneously well-versed in their everyday sacred liturgy and who serve as a critical component within the Church.

Their experience with Worldstudio provided them with a model to attempt to procure funding for their campaign. They transformed a list of people and organizations who might be willing to take an interest in the project and then contacted them with a description of the campaign and its goal. Because of their efforts, they were generously provided with enough funding to launch a poster campaign, a website and a video gallery, all of which helped to open a dialogue on Notre Dame’s campus about the many possibilities for involvement in the Church available to women.

Worldstudio’s practice of balancing client-based design work with social change projects in the workshops proves that their business model is a sustainable one. With their help, students at Notre Dame were able to implement their strategies and expand the scope of social design projects on campus. The immediate impact of Worldstudio on campus has been noticeable, and student commitment to design for social good suggests that we will only see more of these projects in the future.

One of the things that separates the design program at Notre Dame from other universities is its commitment to providing professional design experiences after graduation. Armed with the skills developed during the Graphic Design 4: Professional Practice course, students are ready to take on either a full-time design position or freelance work.

GD4 is an advanced course in visual communications for students who intend to pursue the field of graphic design after graduation. The course’s focus is four-pronged: (1) it is designed for professional practice, (2) it addresses the social, global, environmental, and humanitarian aspects of design, (3) students are involved with client work, and (4) the class allows for the art of creative collaboration and process in team-based work. Through projects that embody these concepts, students have the opportunity to strengthen professional skills such as creativity, leadership, time management, and presentation abilities.

The course already has a reputation for creating successful projects with real clients and producing high caliber work. Paula Badner Schmitt taught the first semester of GD4 in the fall of 2007. That semester, her class tackled a new identity for The Inn at Ivy Court, a historic boutique hotel on South Bend’s Main Street. Also, for the Los Angeles Fashion District, the class was involved in a cross-disciplinary, collaborative effort between graphic design, industrial design, and architecture that focused on urban revitalization and creating an updated identity system for the established downtown commercial neighborhood. During the spring 2008 semester, under Paula’s direction, the class created identities for the new Arts District of Benton Harbor and for the South Bend Museum of Art.

As the primary architect of the class, Paula’s goal for GD4 was not only “professional practice,” but also to bring awareness to research, social responsibility, creative collaboration, and the designer’s role in business and in the world. To achieve the well-rounded approach she intended, the class formed included both reading from texts geared towards professional development, and independent projects, and group client-based projects. From the beginning, the student work was carefully selected for all projects, and this model has continued.

Following Paula, Ingrid Hess taught two spring semesters of GD4. One of Ingrid’s additions to the class was to assign the creation of a portfolio as an assignment. Because the purpose of the class is to prepare students for professional practice, Ingrid mandated that each student complete the semester with the three main projects: a physical portfolio, an online portfolio, and a series of three to five pieces that could easily be emailed to prospective employers. Ingrid also added to the class a project of the student’s choice that filled a void in their portfolio. The only requirement of this individual project was that it help them get the job they wanted. Students began by identifying which industry interested them the most, formulated a list of potential employers in that industry, and then outlined a project that would make them attractive hires to those companies.

During Ingrid’s first semester, the class worked with Hannah & Friends to design an identity system for the non-profit organization, The Mark (a new restaurant in Benton Harbor; a community development organization), The Mark (a new restaurant in Benton Harbor, and Simply Amazing (a candy company in Valparaiso, Indiana, that employs mentally-challenged adults).

The spring 2011 class was team-taught by Mark Cook (MFA ’80), and Brian Edlefson, principal designers at Thesis, located in Three Oaks, MI. The class had the opportunity to collaborate with industrial design students to create innovative luggage for Kenneth Cole that respond to changing air travel restrictions and to design graphics to sell the new product. The class also worked with Skyline Design to create promotional materials for their new line of mirrors to be sold to retailers in the spring.

The GD4 class is an invaluable part of the graphic design major because it is specifically geared towards getting students ready for the job market. It offers a transition between being a student and being a professional because of the format of the class, it is run less like a traditional class and more like a design studio. All the projects are rooted in professional practice, and there is the opportunity to work with clients. The class develops every spring semester as each professor brings in his or her expertise to the curriculum, and it is invaluable for senior designers as they prepare to graduate and enter the workforce.

Ingrid Hess designed the campaign in Tacoma, Washington, to increase the city’s awareness of an issue or aid fundraising efforts for projects. The immediate impact of the GD3 “Women in the Church” poster campaign was inspiring for Worldstudio’s mission and took the workshop opportunity to further develop one of her existing projects, an alphabet book addressing the low number of black students at Notre Dame. With Andréa’s help in publicizing the project, it caught the attention of important administrators on campus. Currently, her project is being considered as a tool to spark a larger dialogue on Notre Dame’s campus about the many possibilities for involvement in the Church available to women.

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ELEPHANT WALK DESK

Stephen Pennington, a second-year graduate student, went to Copenhagen, Denmark, for a design competition to aid education in developing countries.

With this inspiration, Stephen created the Elephant Walk Desk, a unique classroom desk, “a locally-manufactured and sustainable solution that targets primary school children in Nepal to create a more collaborative and engaging classroom environment.” Stephen’s solution is not only low in cost, fair, and functional, but also it draws upon the cultural importance of elephants in Nepal. Hylæa is a symbol of strength and respect in Nepal, integrating perfectly into the challenge. Consulting with a variety of advisors, Stephen entered the contest individually and competed against teams of engineers, architects, and manufacturers. Although his design did not win first place, he gained experience, perspective, and knowledge.

Stephen is currently in his second year at Notre Dame, pursuing a Masters of Fine Arts with a focus in industrial design. After graduating from Purdue in 2004, he moved to Chicago where he worked at DesignBike, a product design consulting firm. There he designed housewares and hardware products. After five years, he started to explore ways in which he could apply design beyond the commercial context. For Stephen, graduate school was the answer.

Norte Dame appealed to him because of its socially-driven program. The program not only attracts design graduates, but also non-designers, prepared to address the social, ethical, and political circumstances influenced by the design profession. It is clear that Stephen has taken this challenge head-on with this work for this competition and his continued dedication to improving the world through design.

Top left: Stephen Pennington’s prototype Elephant Walk Desk. Bottom right: Stephen in his studio with various concepts in the background.

MBA, THE NEW MFA?

Recent design alumni discuss which degree they are pursuing and why. So, is the MBA the new MFA?

From an outside perspective, the path for most Notre Dame student’s education seems pretty simple: get a business education and then go to work. But there is more to it than that. Students pursue a variety of careers after graduating from Notre Dame, and the opportunities are varied. Some take their education and career paths to the next level and pursue an MBA.

To gain a better understanding of the decision-making process, NewsWeek contacted several Notre Dame students who are currently pursuing an MBA. The students are from different disciplines and have different career aspirations. They are all pursuing a degree that will complement their education and career goals.

One student is pursuing an MBA in Marketing and is considering a career in the technology industry. She is currently working at a startup company and is looking to move into a management position. She believes that an MBA will provide the skills and knowledge necessary to advance in her career.

Another student is pursuing an MBA in Social Entrepreneurship and is considering a career in social impact. He is currently volunteering at a local charity organization and is passionate about using business skills to make a positive impact on society.

Overall, the students believe that an MBA is a valuable addition to their education and career goals. They recognize that the degree will provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their chosen fields.
BOOK DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION

If you could teach any class at Notre Dame, what would it be? When Design Area Coordinator Robert Soklad posed this question to Ingrid Hess last year, she replied that it would be in book design and illustration. In the spring 2011 semester, she introduced this class to the design program.

Interested in book illustration since childhood, Ingrid has consistently pursued her love for illustration while working in various design positions since getting her MBA from Indiana University. Because the job market for illustrators is almost entirely freelance, she became a designer at Ktn Abrams Design where she worked closely with illustrators at American Girl. While teaching there and at her next position at Dougall-Limb design studios, she regularly sent her own books and illustration work to publish. Currently, Ingrid is working on her sixth book. For four of the six books, Ingrid was both introduced this class to the design program.

The class addresses both book design and illustration, two closely related yet different fields. While the designer makes conceptual decisions about the layout of a book, the illustrator’s technique brings life to the story’s characters. These two topics can be taught independently, however, they fit naturally together.

The book design projects in the class include a graphic novel, alphabet book, cookbook, and non-fiction informational book. The illustration project is to pick a well-known story and illustrate it in only five panels. While many of the editors to the class have a strong background in design, illustration specifically presumes a learning curve. Ingrid teaches the necessary steps to: illustrate how to approach illustrating the story, how to give a single character multiple expressions, how to illustrate a single character consistently throughout a book, and how to illustrate a scene from multiple perspectives.

Ingrid is looking forward to meeting the students and helping them develop their design background. Because his family had lost everything during the war, he further built all the family’s furnishings. From this, George learned woodworking, metal crafting, leatherworking, and watercolor. Drawing and whitening with a knife was every boy’s pastime, as toys were in short supply. His boys learned woodworking, metal working, and painting with watercolor. His upbringing instilled in him the value of quality over disposal. His upbringing instilled in him the value of one’s surroundings. This focus on quality over obsolescence is more prevalent in the United States than anywhere else in the world, and he was surprised to see the abundance of poorly designed products today; while others continue to rely heavily on design rather than design as their projects.

The popularity of the class reflects a growing interest in book design and illustration in the department and the interaction between design and fine arts. Ingrid’s goal is a welcome addition to the design curriculum and promises the opportunity for students to expand their design skills substantially.

TALKING TO GEORGE TIBSEN

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After serving in the Swedish Army for two years after high school, George attended Notre Dame and quickly identified his interest in the industrial design program. Upon graduation, he worked in the auto industry in Detroit and then received his MFA from the University of Illinois. Since then, George has held numerous teaching positions here at Notre Dame while actively pursuing professional projects.

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George Tibsen (RBA ’70), Industrial Design Professor and ID Technique, brings a unique and indefinable perspective to the design program that bears the dynamic upbringing and design experience.

George was born in Latvia where his father had a contract with a Swedish company to help construct hydroelectric power plants. At the outbreak of World War II, George and his family were forced to relocate to Germany and return to Latvia where his father was imprisoned in a Nazi internment camp. The family’s only real possessions were the family’s red-only passports.

George learned woodworking during his time in Latvia where his father was imprisoned. He learned woodworking from his father and built his family’s furnishings. From this, George learned woodworking, metal crafting, leatherworking, and watercolor. Drawing and whitening with a knife was every boy’s pastime, as toys were in short supply. His boys learned woodworking, metal working, and painting with watercolor. His upbringing instilled in him the value of quality over disposal. His upbringing instilled in him the value of one’s surroundings. This focus on quality over obsolescence is more prevalent in the United States than anywhere else in the world, and he was surprised to see the abundance of poorly designed products today; while others continue to rely heavily on design rather than design as their projects.

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The differences he encountered when migrating to the U.S. highlight his unique perspective on design. Specifically, he noticed that the idea of planned obsolescence is more prevalent in the United States than anywhere else in the world, and he was surprised to see the abundance of poorly designed products made for consumption and immediate disposal. His upbringing instilled in him the value of good design and the importance of taking care of one’s surroundings. This focus on quality over quantity carried over to the European approach of enjoying everyday living rather than always being on the go. With this background, he brings to the design department a focus on quality and purpose over quantity.

In addition to teaching Product Technology, George acts as the technical director, maintaining equipment and supplies for all the program’s courses and helping students construct their projects with his deep technical field experience.

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