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PRATT FOLIO

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Korean Network

World-Changing Design

Passport to Creativity

Empathy for Culture

Pratt Worldwide

EMPATHY FOR CULTURE DESIGN FOR A GLOBAL AGE

COMPILED BY ADRIENNE GYONGY PHOTOS BY ARMANDO RAFAEL PHOTOGRAPHY

For the second consecutive year, Pratt was among six of the world's top design schools chosen to exhibit furniture, lighting, tabletop, and home accessories as part of the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF), North America's singular showcase for modern design.*

Pratt's Department of Industrial Design was selected for its theme "Empathy for Culture," a concept introduced by Adjunct Professors Mark Goetz, B.I.D. '86, Kimberly Snyder, and Tim Richartz, B.I.D. '86, and developed in collaboration with U.S. furniture manufacturer Herman Miller, a respected leader in sustainability and ergonomics. The theme was explored in three furniture courses offered in the spring semester to encourage students to consider the global impact of their projects.

The end results were shown at the 22nd annual ICFF, held at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Manhattan in May 2010. On display in Pratt's 200-square-foot booth were the culturally informed designs of 11 undergraduate and graduate students in the industrial design department, reflecting their insights into how the people of other cultures think, feel, and respond to the world around them.

Describing Pratt as "an international gathering place for talent," Goetz said, "The students had to immerse themselves in other cultures and investigate design's capacity in this global age to serve as a medium for sharing and integrating the unique ideas of a particular culture within the physicality of design. We are grateful to Herman Miller for guiding and advising us in this endeavor."



Stevenson Aung, Hmong Culture: *Dhos*

Stevenson Aung (M.I.D. expected 2011)

The Hmong people, a minority ethnic group in Southeast Asia and Southern China, have for centuries maintained their own language, customs, and distinct culture. After the Vietnam War, many resettled in Canada, France, and the United States. The title of Aung's project, *Dhos*, means "coming together," because the aluminum stools create a sense of community through color, line, and plane. Though different in size and color, the stools remain connected and similar through production, form, and material. As such, Aung sees them as modern symbols of Hmong culture.



Sara McBeen, Middle Eastern Culture: *Aata*

Sara McBeen (M.I.D. expected 2011)

McBeen has traveled to Kuwait, Dubai, and Bahrain, where she experienced the generosity, goodness, and hospitality that are integrated into daily rituals. Her table design *Aata* reflects the joyous socializing so strongly exhibited in Middle Eastern culture. *Aata* is about understanding that two hands cupped together will always carry more water than one and about celebrating the act of sharing gifts with others. *Aata's* form and colors take inspiration from traditional geometric patterns and vibrant colors experienced in the marketplace and the landscape of the Middle East.

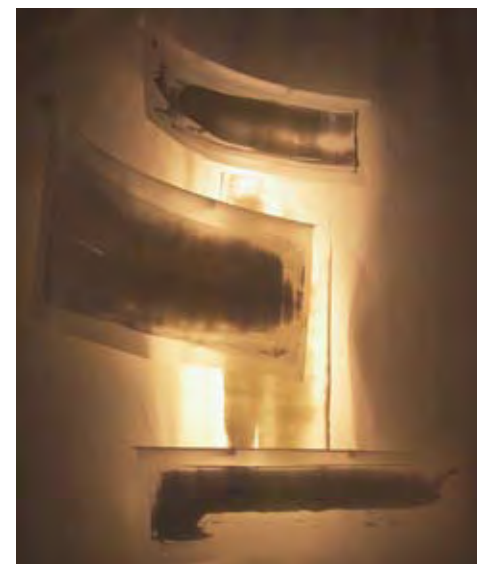
*The others were ArtFuture, Konstfack, Maryland Institute College of Art, Parsons the New School for Design, and Yale School of Architecture.



Sahar Ghaheeri, Immigrant Culture: *Unspoken*

Sahar Ghaheeri (M.I.D. expected 2011)

Unspoken is a collection of acrylic jewelry created by Ghaheeri from "letters that are left behind." These letters are removed from words in many languages, because they are no longer pronounced in the immigrant's new homeland. Though no longer spoken, these letters are at least not forgotten.



Ivey Lian, Buddhist Meditation Culture: *Enso Wall Light*

Ivey Lian (M.I.D. expected 2011)

Born in Taiwan, Lian spent a life-changing 10 days at a silent Buddhist Meditation Retreat in Suan Mok, Thailand, during which she experienced the power of meditation. *Enso* wall light was inspired by Zen Buddhist painting and *enso*, which symbolizes a moment when the mind is free to simply let the body and spirit create. Each of the light's paneled designs is unique, the creation of a moment when the painter and the paper unite; the result shows the expressive movement of the spirit at that time. Lian's design creates calm in the midst of everyday stress.



Laurent Hildreth, Tibetan Buddhist Monk Culture: *Bloom Lamp*

Laurent Hildreth (B.I.D. expected 2012)

The lotus flower, a Buddhist symbol for the soul rising above worldly experience, is the inspiration for Hildreth's *Bloom Lamp*, which draws on aspects of Tibetan Buddhist monk culture so anyone may experience similar feelings of tranquility. The lamplight represents the monks' pointed focus in achieving serenity through spiritual practice. The lampshade is formed of unprocessed wool that radiates a nourishing organic feel to the surrounding area and evokes both a sense of comfort and the monks' practice of living close to the land.



Chia Lin Hsu, Taiwanese Culture: *Caning Chair*

Chia Lin Hsu (B.I.D. expected 2011)

Taipei-born Hsu's project was inspired by the heat and humidity of her homeland, Taiwan. Hsu experienced a different climate during six months in Sweden, learning glass design and visiting six other European countries. Through her research, she found that most modern furniture traps more body heat than traditional furniture. In an era of global warming, Hsu's seating unit uses a laminated traditional woven material to allow for better ventilation. The natural material is placed on a steel frame, creating a visually appealing and lightweight seating option that is comfortable in warm climates.



Nina D'Amario, Global Education Culture: *Parachute*

Nina D'Amario (M.I.D. expected 2011)

D'Amario's marble maze and color wheel learning toys were developed to benefit the 72 million children worldwide who lack the opportunity or resources to attend primary school. She intends the toys to be universally appreciated and not culturally specific. The toys are part of her *Parachute* project, combining the Montessori educational approach with a philanthropic business model. A percentage of the sales of each product will go to a fund aimed at reaching the United Nation's 2nd Millennium Development Goal, Universal Primary Education by 2015.