

FACT SHEET

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WHATNOT 2014

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) is proud to launch the Whatnot 2014 collection at the Salon Internazionale del Mobile (International Furniture Fair) during Milan Design Week, April 8—13.

About Whatnot

Launched in 2012, Whatnot is a collection of affordable, playful objects (“whatnots”) from students within SAIC’s Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects (AIADO) department. The objects provide an experience rich in materiality and meaning, while promoting joy, irrational desire, and simple satisfaction. Whatnot is also a vehicle for experimenting within relevant currents in design and progressive ideas in design education.

Whatnot objects are designed and created by students enrolled in AIADO’s Milan Industry Projects Studio. This year’s class was taught, produced, and curated by Professors George Aye, Lisa Smith, and Jim TerMeer.

About Whatnot 2014 and Milan Design Week

Whatnot 2014 features a series of playful objects that encourage a child’s interaction with the people, places, and environments around them. As part of the Whatnot 2014 collection, eight products and three furniture systems will be exhibited at Spazio Rossana Orlandi and sold in their adjoining design shop during Milan Design Week:

Milan Design Week 2014

April 8–13, 2014

9 a.m.–8 p.m.

Spazio Rossana Orlandi

Via Matteo Bandello 14/16, 20123 Milano

+39 02 46 74 47-1

rossanaorlandi.com

blogs.saic.edu/whatnot

Whatnot 2014 student-designers include: Ilwhan Ahn (BFA 2014), Ceyda Akosman (MDes 2014), Satya Basu (M. Arch 2015), Andrea Chiu (BFA 2014), Katie Chung (BFA 2014), Gahee Kang (BFA 2014), Zewen Li (MDes 2015), Jing Ouyang (BFA 2014), Miguel Perez (BFA 2014), Kevin Suzuki (BFA 2014), and Tyler Willis (MDes 2014).

SAIC AIADO Professor Bios

George Aye is an Assistant Professor in the AIADO department. He brings a background of human-centered design as a consultant at IDEO and as designer of public services from his tenure at the Chicago Transit Authority. He is also the co-founder of Greater Good Studio, which uses design methods to solve social problems, working on issues as varied as autism, water access, early literacy and tenants rights. Aye remains wildly optimistic that, together, we can solve the most entrenched problems of our time.

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Jim TerMeer is a product designer and educator. His teaching centers on the research and practice of the emerging global independent design movement; its connection with the new ideas of making objects, systems, and experiences; and preparing young designers for these new challenges through collaborative sponsored projects and graduate thesis research. Recent collaborations include projects exhibited at the Salone de Mobile at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York and at Neocon in Chicago. TerMeer is a partner at the design studio, giffin'termeer, and has applied a decade of experience in the development of technology products, consumer goods, and product brands into experimental projects that investigate the future of objects and how culture makes and produces them. The work of giffin'termeer has been exhibited worldwide at events in Milan; Tokyo; New York; Seoul; Cheongju, Korea; London; and St. Etienne, France. TerMeer has a graduate degree from the Design Academy Eindhoven and lives and works in Chicago.

Lisa Smith is a co-founder of the small-batch design brand ODLCO and an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Designed Objects at SAIC. Her areas of interest are designer-led manufacturing and distribution and the design of social settings and events. She has been recognized in *Domus*, *The Atlantic*, *Architect's Newspaper*, and *Core77* for her achievements in independent product development and distribution. Smith's work has been shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Chicago Cultural Center, NoHo Design District, and DesignMarketo. Smith holds a Master of Design in Designed Objects from SAIC and a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Whatnot Collection 2014

Soft Cell Table by Andrea Rose Chiu

- Size: 29"x60"x60"
- Materials: cross-linked eva foam, maple wood, Corian, sponges, found objects
- Description: a table where adults can behave like kids

Soft Cell is a gridded foam table that is anything but locked. The constrictive nature of the grid is broken by the opportunity to create landscapes with blocks that plug into the table's compressible surface. Soft Cell encourages interaction, communication, and play by offering a systematic platform that isn't afraid of getting out of line. It seats up to eight people and is accompanied by a set of changeable blocks.

Andrea Rose Chiu (BFA 2014) is a designer and artist working in Chicago, IL. She is pursuing a degree at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she studies designed objects, philosophy, sculpture, and ceramics. She works as a director for the Student Union Galleries and co-director for the gallery Alcatraz Chicago. Chiu's interests lay in making things that are dysfunctionally functional.

Hometown by Zewen Li

- Size: tablecloth: 52"x70"; napkin: 17"x17"
- Materials: digitally printed cotton-linen canvas
- Description: A tablecloth for imagining the future or the past

Hometown is a table linen cartography system. The hand-illustrated map is printed on both tablecloth and napkins, representing possibilities of anywhere and nowhere. Actual cities and sites are re-combined and re-contextualized. Rearranging the napkins on the tablecloth redraws the map, either ruralizing or developing the land. Objects on the table become features of the landscape with Hometown as a backdrop. The illustration is loosely based on the designer's experience and observation of his native China.

Zewen Li (MDes 2015) is a product designer with experience in industrial design, design research and interaction design. Currently at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago pursuing his Masters of Design in Designed Objects, he is interested in the relationships between products, tradition, and society. In 2013, he received a BE in Industrial Design from Jiangnan University in China.

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Whatnot by Katie Chung

- Size: variable up to 6"x6"x6"
- Materials: screen print on paper, polyethylene foam
- Description: An action figure that encourages character invention

Children's' play is their work. Through play, children strengthen their imagination. Whatnot is a product that exercises that insight. Paper cutouts screen printed with illustrations fit into a foam base, with the potential to represent a variety of characters and personalities. The range of imagery encourages children to invent their own definitions for the term "whatnot" and create a new arrangement each time.

Katie Chung (BFA 2014) studies graphic design and printmaking at SAIC. The school's emphasis on interdisciplinary training led her to merge both practices within designed objects. Her time in designed objects has been a sculptural endeavor in consolidating the knowledge gained from both fine art and design.

The Flat Pack by Tyler Willis

- Size: variable up to 10"x6"x6"
- Materials: polyester, polyurethane foam, interfacing, metal snaps
- Description: Now you see 'em, now you don't

An elephant, gorilla, and bat make up The Flat Pack, a series of animal fold-ups. Soft, flexible squares and rectangles transform into the animal figures as they take shape in three dimensions. Each piece is shaped simply by a unique pattern of snaps. They offer children the challenge and reward of discovering hidden forms through tactility.

Tyler Willis (MDes 2014) is a Chicago designer of objects and spaces. Educated as an architect at the University of Michigan, his work investigates the way in which design participates in the psychology of perception. He is interested in design that reveals itself slowly and makes the known delightfully unfamiliar. His work has been exhibited in New York, Ann Arbor, and Chicago.

Hello World by Jing Ouyang

- Size: variable to 11"x4"x13"
- Materials: laser cut paper
- Description: Stories as buildings and cities

Hello World is a drawing surface for sharing stories and experiences. The storyteller populates the interior of a laser-cut card with drawings and folds it up into a three-dimensional building structure. The recipient opens the perforated windows to reveal the drawings within. As more buildings are collected and traded, a community between the imaginations of children and adults is formed. The 31 windows of each card can be correlated with days of the month, if desired.

As a designer, Jing Ouyang (BFA 2014) studies the relationship between people and their surroundings. She is passionate about connecting people and encouraging positive social interaction through design.

Spring by Gahee Kang

- Size: 1" x 1" x 3/8"
- Materials: polished gold steel or sterling silver
- Description: A ring for a spring or summer walk

Spring is a ring that inspires children to go outside and find beauty in nature. The ring's structure is completed by wildflowers collected by the wearer. This project creates an opportunity for friends or family to search for flowers and create arrangements together. The ring is available in two forms—plain or shaped like a flower—and two finishes—polished gold steel or sterling silver.

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Gahee Kang (BFA 2014) studies Interior Architecture and Designed Objects at SAIC. As a designer, she strives to satisfy user functionality requirements poetically, designing well-balanced works that are logical and lovely, pragmatic and evocative.

Argeebie by Miguel Perez

- Size: 3.5" x 3" x 3"
- Materials: cardboard, acrylic, Arduino microcontroller, electronic components
- Description: An additive color discovery tool

Children are increasingly aware of the relevance of color in everyday interfaces. Today, introducing youth to red, green, and blue (RGB) as an additive color model is just as important as teaching R.O.Y.G.B.I.V. Argeebie is a color matching game that introduces children to the RGB color model. The objective of the game is to match a random-generated color by manipulating the red, green, and blue values of the opposing side.

Miguel Perez (BFA 2014) is a Chicago native who is using technology to create social interactions through public installations. Born in Chicago and raised in Mexico, his cultural transitions have influenced him to reflect upon the ideas of communities, technologies, design, and architecture. Miguel Perez is the creator of the Little Village Air Quality Initiative, Activated Storefronts Initiative, and the Mote-O-Bike air quality sensing collective.

Dizzy by Ceyda Akosman

- Size: 14"x14"x19.6"
- Materials: plywood, ring style turntables, paint
- Description: A stool made for spinning

Dizzy is dynamic seating that comes alive through interaction. Users are encouraged to spin, animating the crystal shape with their motion.

Born and raised in Istanbul, Ceyda Akosman (MDes 2014) is a candidate in Masters of Design in Designed Objects at SAIC, with a background in Interior Architecture. As a product and furniture designer, Ceyda's passion for studio-based processes allows her to give form to a range of materials including wood, glass, stone, and metals. She is also experienced in installing large scale, outdoor sculptures.

Grand Prix by Kevin Suzuki

- Size: 4" diameter ring with adjustable height
- Materials: acrylic, acrylic paint, and elastic cords
- Description: the world's slowest race

Grand Prix is a hands-on trellis to foster plants and a little sibling rivalry. Each set comes with two plant "race tracks" and vines are encouraged to climb to the finish line by proper care and pruning. The race is on!

Kevin Suzuki (BFA 2014) is a Japanese American designer who crafts commissioned objects and produces cultural events internationally. In 2012—2013, he worked as a live-in apprentice under the master woodworker Mr. Toshiyuki Sasaki in Toyama, Japan. Kevin is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in the Department of Architecture, Interior Architecture and Designed Objects at SAIC.

Pier Pressure by Satya Basu

- Size: variable up to 74"x46"x29"
- Materials: birch plywood, dowels, nylon string
- Description: Setting up camp

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Children move through a world designed largely by adults, except for the spaces they make for themselves. Like tree houses and forts, all it takes to create a new space is a little invention. Pier Pressure is inspired by the ingenuity of children, who form their own environments using everyday materials and tools. This adjustable tabletop system is suspended from wooden legs held in tension with string. The design is simple to assemble and lightweight to ship.

Satya Basu (M.Arch 2015) is a Chicago designer pursuing a Masters of Architecture with an emphasis in Interior Architecture at SAIC. Satya is interested in responsive architecture and algorithmic design as part of his own small practice in collaboration with other fields and designers. He is a Digital Design faculty member in SAIC's Adult Continuing Education program.

Copy Watch by Ilwhan Ahn

- Size: watch face: 1.7"x1.7"x.5"; wrist strap: 1"x9.25"
- Materials: Corian, Velcro One-Wrap, clay
- Description: A new watch every day

Copy Watch is a clay wristwatch that can be used to capture the unique patterns that surround us. The Corian watch face holds a lump of clay that can be detached from the Velcro wrist strap and used to take impressions of any available surface. This imprint can then be worn as a fashion accessory, used as a short-term physical memory, or a prop for show-and-tell.

Ilwhan Ahn (BFA 2014) is a designer working and studying at SAIC where he is a Merit Scholar. In 2013, Ilwhan worked for Ferrone Design as a participant in its Cooperative Education Internship program, where he created models of furniture and home accessories. He has experience working with Rhino, Solidworks, and Keyshot software. As a product designer, Ilwhan is interested in improving the usability and access of products for a wide range of consumers while delivering a modern and minimalist aesthetic. Prior to entering the design field, Ilwhan earned a B.S. in Biology at Keene State College.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate programs to more than 3,200 students from around the globe. SAIC also provides adults, high school students, and children with the opportunity to flourish in a variety of courses, workshops, certificate programs, and camps through its Continuing Studies program. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC's resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

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