

# metaproject 11

Rochester Institute of Technology | School of Design

This book is dedicated to the  
memory of the many lives lost  
during the tragic events of 2020.

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**“The ripple effects of our creations speak louder than words. RIT’s Metaproject pushed students to reflect on the impact of their designs.**

**As designers it’s important to be clear about what we stand for and why. What we make tells a deeper story of the society we want to live in, and the students in the Metaproject let their designs speak for themselves.”**

## **Designer**

**Shelby Zink**

metaproject 11  
Rochester Institute of Technology

Concept: Josh Owen

Design: Thomas Roberti and Brittany Reyes

Paper: U–Velvet 80# cover

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For more information visit  
[rit.edu/metaproject](http://rit.edu/metaproject)



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## Industrial Design at RIT

At RIT, we believe that industrial design education lies at the nexus of theory, process and practice. Industrial design is a human-centered discipline which requires an understanding of the complex relationships between culture, commerce and environment. Our varied and experienced faculty expose students to the history, context and state of the art, while imparting the skills necessary to compete as contemporary designers. Aesthetic sensitivity, technical competence, social and environmental awareness, and analytical thought are developed in a robust university environment where business, engineering, social sciences and scientific partners exist within arms reach as willing collaborators.

Through hands-on experience in strategic design thinking, graphic visualization, technical drawing, model making and prototype development, graduates emerge with the skills needed to conceptualize, design, and develop new and improved objects and systems with an eye towards a better world-view. Our high profile internships expose students to formative experiences in the field. Our ever expanding international agenda links students to global thinking. The world renowned Vignelli Center for Design Studies is a unique resource that reveals the nuances of design process seen through the lens of some of the world's most masterful projects housed on site in the center's archives. With all of these assets, our students emerge as leaders in the field and our graduates redefine the profession as capable editors of content and 21st century story-tellers.

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## Metaproject

### Meta

from Greek: μετά= “after,”  
“beyond,” “with,” “adjacent,” “self”

is a prefix used in English (and other Greek-owing languages) to indicate a concept which is an abstraction from another concept, used to complete or add to the latter.

### Word Origin & History

Prefix meaning

- 1 “after, behind”
- 2 “changed, altered”
- 3 “higher, beyond”

from Greek. meta (prep.)  
“in the midst of, in common with,  
by means of, in pursuit or quest of,”

from PIE \*me- “in the middle”  
(cf. Goth. miþ, O.E. mið “with,  
together with, among;” see mid).  
Notion of “changing places with”  
probably led to senses “change  
of place, order, or nature,” which  
was a principal meaning of the  
Gk. word when used as a prefix  
(but also denoting “community,  
participation; in common  
with; pursuing”). Third sense,  
“higher than,transcending,  
over arching, dealing with the  
most fundamental matters of.”

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## **The Metaproject Series**

The Metaproject initiative from RIT is now running in its eleventh iteration. In keeping with the Design is One philosophy espoused by RIT's Vignelli Center for Design Studies, Metaproject aims to encourage students to produce design that is "semantically correct, syntactically correct, and pragmatically understandable, but also visually powerful, intellectually elegant and timeless."

### **Metaproject 11: Staach**

The term 'Metaproject' is designed to be used as thematic umbrella referring to an industry partnership which places the student output into a global venue. In the case of Metaproject 11, the partnership is with the Rochester-based design-build operation, Staach, and the venue for the student output is the 2022 New York City design Week. This case study book is self-published in order to chronicle the process and products produced during the course, shedding light on the design process. This item is used strategically to simultaneously present and promote student work and the mission of the program. In addition, various related industry publications and platforms will be targeted as ancillary venues for communicating the student research. The "Design is One" philosophy espoused by the Vignelli Center for Design Studies is overlaid into the conversation of the Metaproject studio in order to both make use of and challenge modernist ideological foundations in practice, learning from archival resources.

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## Introduction

### A Conversation with Seth Eshelman

#### Principal Designer and Founder, Staach

**NARRATOR:** Design must play a critical role as society faces difficult discussions and works to create a new balance in a troubled world. In this episode of Intersections: the RIT Podcast, Josh Owen, director of the Vignelli Center for Design Studies at RIT, and 2006 industrial design alumnus, Seth Eshelman, founder of sustainable design firm Staach, discuss their Metaproject collaboration. In the collaboration, students have designed objects, which in their own unique ways, deploy educational content through their function to demand justice, empathy, sustainability, equity, and inclusion.

**JOSH:** The Metaproject is always a course where the industry partner creates a kind of magnetic interest in the students in leaning into their brand one way or another. And I think in this case of Staach and your collaboration with the Metaproject, there was an instant reaction when we had the big reveal that this was the partnership, because it's always a surprise. Everybody of course knew about Staach. They knew about this home town team that they were rooting for. I think that sort of creative optimism meshed with the brand language that you have done such a great job of cultivating. It really got them super excited to collaborate. But then, here's the interesting thing. The brief that we ended up creating was not the brief that we initially came up with.

**SETH:** Not even close actually.

**JOSH:** Yeah. I mean typically with a Metaproject it's about the core competency of the brand. If they make widgets, we're going to be designing widgets with them. It might be the next generation widget. It might be the unthought of widget. It might be the widget that saves the world. But it's still going to be the widget that fits the brand. And one of the things that, I guess, blew me away – I shouldn't be surprised by this because you're such a thoughtful guy – is after cultivating a brief essentially around furniture, which is a core competency of your brand, the world fell apart. And, Seth, you basically called me and said, "The world is crumbling, and I don't think we should do the thing that we normally do. I think we need to step up and do something to stop the world from crumbling." Like I said, it just took me aback. But I knew instantly that it was the right thing to do. And I think, for me, that moment in our conversation was like the ultimate firm handshake. It was like, yes, we agree this is the right thing to do and we're going to do anything that we could possibly do to make it work.

**SETH:** This is a project and this is an opportunity that the brief should speak to the current time. You know, this isn't a time for Staach to be working with a group of students to create a new product or new solution or this one thing. I thought that in many aspects that would be ignoring a lot of things at hand, and it just didn't seem right. And for me I was like, okay, this is an

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opportunity to use this project a little differently than it's been used before – use it as a platform that speaks to a larger subject matter. These are human questions. These are human problems. So, I was very glad that we ended up taking the approach of shifting from a normal design prompt, and we made it quite a bit larger in speaking to conversations about environmental issues, social justice, other humanistic and other major subjects that we really wanted to explore. And it was just so great to see how that just naturally evolved into what felt and what came to be such a natural project. At the end of the day, it really just fell into place and provided a new lens for not only Metaproject, but also for the students as well.

**JOSH:** Not only did we stretch into incredibly relevant conversations that needed to be had in the world, we stretched the definition of product design. These students are students of industrial design. They are used to solving problems that the answers take the form of functional objects. Right? The Metaproject is meant to stretch minds, so that's a given. But I don't think we've ever addressed problems with such an open-ended solution in mind. We asked students, you and I, to develop answers to complex problems that were to physically teach people about these issues. And so, what that sort of looks like in this cohort of work are an installation of different interactive pieces, different physical installations that visitors can interact

with to learn a lesson about justice, equity, safety, the list goes on. Sort of all the challenges, like you said, that we face in terms of keeping humanity on track. And these are big ideas and big postures that, again, go outside the format that these kids are used to. These are not widgets, they're something quite different.

**SETH:** Yeah, I think there was – when we were working on the prompt and when we were trying to understand what these objects were. We typically for a lot of Metaprojects, and honestly for a lot of product design prompts, you have a goal. It's like, it needs to be a chair or it needs to be a consumer product. You know you have this constraint. You know what the object is going to be. We didn't have that this year. It wasn't even close to that. There was no constraint. It was the constraint of the design challenge itself. So, as we were working on the idea, we were realizing, okay, design and designers and the design process, it naturally wants some kind of guard rail. It wants something to not make it something just so broad that you don't even know where to begin. So, as we were working through this, it was like, well, we want to keep it reasonable in scale, we don't want it to be too massive. It has to be constructable, it needs to be of human scale, so someone can interact with it. You know, we didn't want students to get into building a 40-by-30-foot room. You know, we weren't trying to make it an exhibition design. We're still trying

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to make a product design. And, you know, we were kind of working around what some common objects would look like. And we found a footprint of 3-foot-by-3-foot and as tall as is reasonable. And that was really the only constraint that the students had. So, their object had to fit inside of that box, basically, that imaginary box. One, so that way the student had some kind of restriction on what the object is. But also, we had a very clear understanding of what the exhibition was going to be at the end as well. And we wanted to make sure that the grouping of objects, the curated group of objects, really related to one another in some capacity. That was kind of constraint one. And constraint two, we wanted to keep everything within the design language, the design family of what we do here at Staach. So, we provided the students with restrictions to, you know, certain materials and certain finishes to make sure that at the end of the day when the objects are unveiled, the objects still read as a collection, they read as a series of objects that come from a similar place of design details and aesthetics. They can be different objects but still have a very similar language to one another – all of the objects sharing similar wood or all of the objects sharing a similar finish. And it was really exciting to see how all that came together. And, actually, how all the objects now currently read as a series together is going to be even more impactful when you see that as a gallery exhibition in person as well.

**JOSH:** You know, these are socially-conscious kids by and large. So, they are informed, they are listening to what's happening in the world, they care deeply about their planet. But, you know, we created some

assets to help wrap them in the potential for understanding and for success. As director of the Vignelli Center, part of my task is to create opportunities for people to hear from important voices in the world. So, I think unlike previous Metaprojects, I really cultivated pieces of our design conversations, lectures so that we could wrap students in some perspectives that might be useful. And we saw that from architect and educator Milton Curry, we saw it from Natalie Nixon, a design thinker. We had a variety of interesting voices and others who sort of helped wrap these students in ideas and thoughtful contemplation. You also brought some of your relationships in the community to bear on the students.

**SETH:** It was important for the project to be inclusive, and be representative, and to carry many voices, not only in the professional community, but also just as a community as a whole. It was so great to see Shawn Dunwoody as well as Shelby Zink as two other major contributors to this project. Without their guidance and insight and expertise and story and perspective, I don't think the project would have been nearly as successful, and I will forever be so grateful and humbled for their energy and their efforts and what they brought.

**JOSH:** Yeah, I couldn't agree more. A lot of people who don't understand design think it's somehow, we sprinkle pixie dust on widgets and they become more beautiful and more interesting. But it's being sensitive to people and to conditions and to seeing with different eyes where opportunity presents itself. And I really was so grateful for these incredible perspectives that we had to wrap the students in because they, tangible

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or not, when looking at the output, they're all in this. All those voices are a part of this output, so I couldn't agree with you more. One of the really exciting pieces of this project is that your cohort is transforming these conceptual efforts into real world things. All of them are tangible outcomes that will be built and that you and your team have thoughtfully guided into a language that comports with Staach's brand and that is in itself a magical thing.

**SETH:** Yeah, I think to me that was one of the bigger parts of this. I wanted to see, as a young designer myself at RIT, I always wanted to see a physical outcome, I always wanted to see the product. Model making is great, don't get me wrong. Scale models are awesome, full scale mockups are great. But there's something about a finished form that evokes a much different understanding in relationship to an object. There's a human scale to it, you don't have to apply math to an object to see what it's going to feel like. It's there, it's physical, it's in front of you. For me the physical outcome was always the important part and making sure the students were able to see what something is like from concept to a finished piece. That's often times a limited opportunity within a university setting. But it's important that the students capture that learned aspect of making and designing because there's something learned in that aspect where you're going from a physical piece of paper and then you actually have to envision what this thing is. It's a very different mindset. And you tend to have a deeper respect for the process, the object, the form, the material, because now you're like, oh, I now have to make this thing, I have to understand material.

To process and communicate is the biggest thing, communicate your concept, your idea to someone who's actually producing it. And as a designer, that's such a major part of what you do no matter what your practice is within the creative design industry. So, I think for us, that was such a critical part. And exhibiting them together, you know that was the other really critical part of this project, was this is not supposed to be a standalone product in and of itself. The goal was always to create a curated collection of objects that teach a lesson, and it's going to be really amazing to see everything together in one space that someone could walk through and interact with and actually physically connect with the curriculum that was this year's Metaproject. And I think that's going to be such an awesome part that's coming out of Metaproject 11, is that tangible, physical, connected aspect.

**JOSH:** Yeah, I think you bring up a really important point that this is a little multiverse of voices, and they all benefit from one another. There are 16 of these perspectives, each one addressing a different take on the challenges that we face today. You know, if I sort of hover over this collection at 30,000 feet, it seems to look like a time capsule of this moment. An exhibition of traveling opinions and insights that in some ways ought to remain evergreen. Right? These are not just things that are passing through, they're addressing issues that we need to be mindful of in perpetuity.

Excerpt from:  
Intersections: The RIT Prodcast,  
Ep. 48, a production of RIT  
Marketing and Communications  
<http://www.rit.edu/news/podcasts>

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# Prologue: Pedagogical Context

Josh Owen

Faculty and Metaproject Author

## Course Description

This course introduces industrial design students to a working relationship with a client. The first half of each session presents the history and theory of industrial design as it relates to the sponsor's agenda. Guest lecturers and critics engage at regular throughout the course to share their insights. The goal of the course is to inspire innovation with regard to the typology in question, balanced by real-world parameters. By capitalizing on industrial design theory and process, which encourages the integration of material exploration, engineering, marketing and business concerns along with the experience of human interaction and emotive qualities, students will be encouraged to re-think a utilitarian product or system, delivering original results.

## Project Goals

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that while we humans are adaptable, our societies and systems have major flaws. We are at a point when we need to have difficult discussions and work to create a new balance in the world. In this, design must play a critical role. The goal of this project is to generate a collection of objects that make us think and inspire positive and meaningful change towards the better world we all seek. Students will design objects which in their own unique ways, deploy educational content through their function that demand justice, empathy, sustainability, equity, and inclusion.



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Informed by community and thought leaders' knowledgeable insights, paired with the RIT Vignelli 'Design is One' ethos and Staach's design expertise, the investigation behind each object explores what intentional design really is. The Vignellis taught us that design is a systematic framework for solving the world's most intractable problems. In this course students enter the dialogue and move it forward with their works.

## **Procedures**

This project functions as a competition. Final results will be reviewed by a team of Staach representatives. At the time of the final presentation, the jury will decide how many of the projects will be further developed for presentation in New York City as part of Design Week. Staach requires that to properly answer the brief the projects must be well crafted, functional prototypes and be completed by the time of the agreed upon date of the final judging. Unfinished projects may be disqualified. Special awards may be given to selected students. The finalist's project(s) will be brought to New York City by Staach and displayed at the 2022 International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) or in an off-site exhibition as part of Design Week in New York City. Students from the course should plan to be present at the ICFF during the major press days - (TBD for press days), 2022.

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## **Project Deliverables**

Students will each design and produce a high-quality, finished functional prototype from actual materials understanding and utilizing Staach's in-house prototyping capabilities. They will be expected to carefully archive their process and document their final product with design-control drawings, graphically compelling use-scenarios and written word to convey their overall concept. Students will be given the opportunity to art-direct the final documentation of their product using a professional product photographer to deliver press-quality communication materials.

## **Outcomes**

In addition to the considerable media exposure given to the projects selected as winners, the projects will be brought to New York City and exhibited in the context of Design Week. Several may be earmarked for potential further development in order to explore their feasibility as products suitable for manufacture. Each student retains the ownership of the intellectual property of his/her design.

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## Institutional Value

### **The furtherance of a strategic course plan**

As demonstrated by the eleventh generation of the course, Metaproject is a repeatable template to be used as a thematic umbrella. The program of study can be used as a model for other courses to follow the strategic plan of the institute which addresses innovation and globalization. Metaproject 11 successfully fits into a single semester and works well with the rapid output needs of professional collaborators.

### **A partnership with the industry**

In the case of Metaproject 11, the partnership was with Staach. In this project, the company donated materials and services, and provided educational feedback sessions from their members and partners.

### **An exhibition of RIT student work**

Together with students from the course and a support team, which included a graduate teaching assistant and members of the sponsors' groups, an exhibit was designed to showcase the course output in a consolidated vision in the University Gallery of the Vignelli Center in Rochester, New York.

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## A global venue

The venue for further dissemination of the results of the student research in this project was the May, 2022 “Design Week” in New York City, the most visible design-related event in the United States. Central to New York’s Design Week is the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF). During the Fair’s four days, 145,000 net square feet of the Javits Center are filled with more than 23,000 designers, architects, retailers, manufacturers, representatives, distributors, developers, students, educators, curators and media outlets. More than 550 exhibitors display contemporary furniture, seating, carpet and flooring, lighting, outdoor furniture, materials, wall coverings, accessories, textiles, and kitchen and bath fixtures for residential and commercial interiors. Selected projects from universities and design schools are also showcased. Together with the many lectures and presentations held on site during the fair, and the hundreds of off-site events held throughout New York City and Brooklyn as part of Design Week, this assemblage of national and international exhibitors and visitors affords the chance to experience the most selective scope of the globe’s finest, most creative, individual, and original avant-garde home and contract products showcased in one venue. This year’s installation was housed within the offices of Partners & Napier in Chelsea.

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### **A case study book & a project identity**

This book chronicles the methodology and output from the course, shedding light on the project results. The design of the book itself reflects the “Design is One” philosophy espoused by the Vignelli Center for Design Studies which is overlaid into the project, linking the student work and the print collateral thematically to the Vignelli Center. Together with a press-kit of images and information, this book is printed in edition of 1,000 and used as collateral to accurately communicate the course and its representatives to the scholarly world as well as to the media and to the professional sector when it is disseminated during the ICFF. Extra copies are used by the Vignelli Center and the ID department to seed future projects and by the School of Design to promote further, trans-disciplinary collaboration as well as by the Dean’s office and the Advancement office for their purposes.

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**A trans-disciplinary team to focus  
& communicate course output**

Industrial Design MFA student and course Graduate Assistant Thomas Roberti and Graphic design student Brittany Reyes, a third year undergraduate student from RIT's Graphic Design program took the lead this year in developing the graphic materials for this course. Elizabeth Lamark, Photography Services Supervisor, RIT Production Services photographed and processed the student projects together with her team of photography students under the art direction of myself and the students in order to provide press-ready high quality documentation of the work for use in all communications. The Vignelli Center hosted the project's final on-campus event and displayed the student work for the university community and award ceremony. Rich Kiley from RIT's University News Services and Kelly Sorensen, Marketing Communications Director for CAD, and Aaron Garland, Web Content Manager made sure that the University's interests in promoting the project were well represented working in concert with the sponsor's outreach efforts.

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### **A process-oriented support website**

The Metaproject global website was created in 2012. It consolidates the work from all Metaprojects and creates a platform for future iterations of the project. The current website serves as an online portal for the project, however it does not duplicate the efforts of the book. Where the book focuses on project results, the website focuses on the project back-story and linkages to the institution. This site is also used for dissemination to media and other interested parties. Over the past few years, Graduate Assistant Tatiana Ferruccio rebuilt the site for the course to comport with current technological standards that link it to the University's platform.



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### **Bringing in industry luminaries**

The Staach team are leaders from industry and acted as judges for the project. Outside perspectives of this nature are invaluable in selecting the most promising projects to be evaluated for further interest.

Seth Eshelman  
Principal Designer and Founder  
Staach

Brandon Colaprete  
Senior Project Designer  
Staach

### **Building the future**

Efforts like this project require extensive planning and the coordination of many resources beyond the classroom. It is our hope that the above methods of documentation, dissemination and exhibition initiatives will facilitate the generation of more such projects in the future.

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## Student Designers

Ethan Choy  
Jacob DiCicco  
Matt Giuliano  
Julia Hawley  
Hunter McCluer  
Patrick McMahon  
Akachi Okafor  
Jennifer Schroll  
James Sheeler  
Django Skorupa  
Aine Tobin  
Sophia Velasquez  
Tiree Walker  
Molly Warren  
Gigi Ye  
Abby Van Camp

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## Akachi Okafor

### Embodied Balance



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#### Explanation

Embodied Balance is a response to the increasing need for society to practice empathy. One must interact with the distinct pieces of this architypical dinner set on an unbalanced dish to maintain equilibrium. Only by understanding the forms, weights, and sizes of these individual objects can one achieve balance.

#### Lesson

Everyone has a purpose in our collective society regardless of race, age, political group, or social standing. We all need to be empathatic and understanding towards other people in our society in order for it to be “healthy” and to have balance. If one facet isn’t “healthy” we will all be unable to properly function and live our day-to-day lives to the best of our abilities.



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## Gigi Ye

### Double Space



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#### Explanation

Double Space creates a safe environment for people to interact and have conversations face-to-face without masks on. The clear plastic window provides safety from COVID-19 transmissions and allows people to express their emotions and feel less isolated in a time of unease and turmoil.

#### Lesson

Nowadays, clear communication is a real struggle and people refuse to acknowledge or even listen to each other's opinions, ideas, and beliefs. The presence of masks have only made this more challenging. We have realized that we miss out on so much context and emotion when facial expressions are removed from our daily interactions.



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# Sofia Velasquez

## Try Harder



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### Explanation

This project is a reflection on the ADHD learning experience. The slanted back rest and table top, is designed to make a simple task challenging in order to make the user feel uncomfortable and frustrated. This is intended to represent what it feels like to be imposed an educational system that doesn't support you and neglects your needs.

### Lesson

The goal for this project is to validate people with learning disabilities by recreating their learning experience through altered classroom furniture. The expectation is that this piece materializes the different learning reality people with ADHD struggle with due a standarized educational system that is not inclusive to this population.





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## Matthew Giuliano

### Barriers to Entry



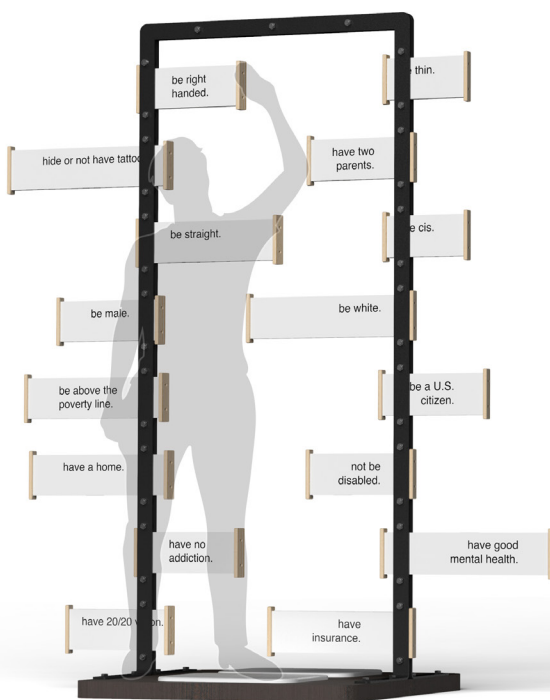
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#### Explanation

“Barriers to Entry” serves the simple purpose of providing an interactive and informative tool for people to acknowledge their privileges. By sliding away the obstacles that the user “has the privilege to” associate with, passing through the portal becomes easier. The size and position of the obstacles reflect how much of an impact they could have overall on someone’s life, with many not directly posing issues unless other barriers are also present.

#### Lesson

People often assume privilege is granted whenever someone receives something they did not need to work for, but in actuality it is more strongly someone’s ability to avoid the obstacles that society stacks against them. With this installation, users will gain a new understanding of not only what it means to have privilege, but also think about their peers and what barriers they may be unfairly forced to struggle through.



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# Molly Warren

## Insentient Surrogate



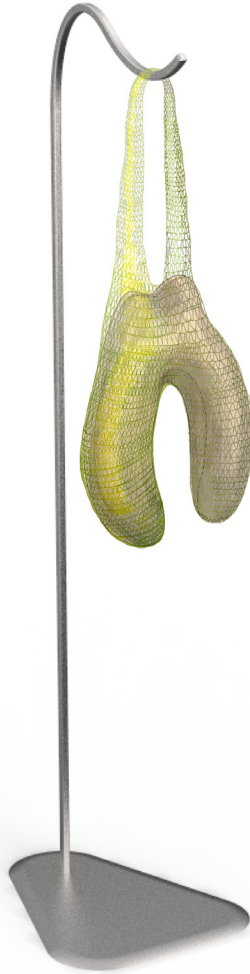
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### Explanation

The Insentient Surrogate provides a “touch-free”, quarantine-safe embrace that drapes over the shoulder and applies pressure to the user’s body.

### Lesson

Due to COVID-19, the intimate interactions between people have been limited and a majority of people’s mental health has been affected negatively. Touch is an important sense for development and the promotion of good mood. I want people to interact with my design and feel comfortable, safe, and the sense of warmth that comes alongside intimate interactions with others that we are not able to have due to the current state of the world.



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## Ethan Choy

### Sinking



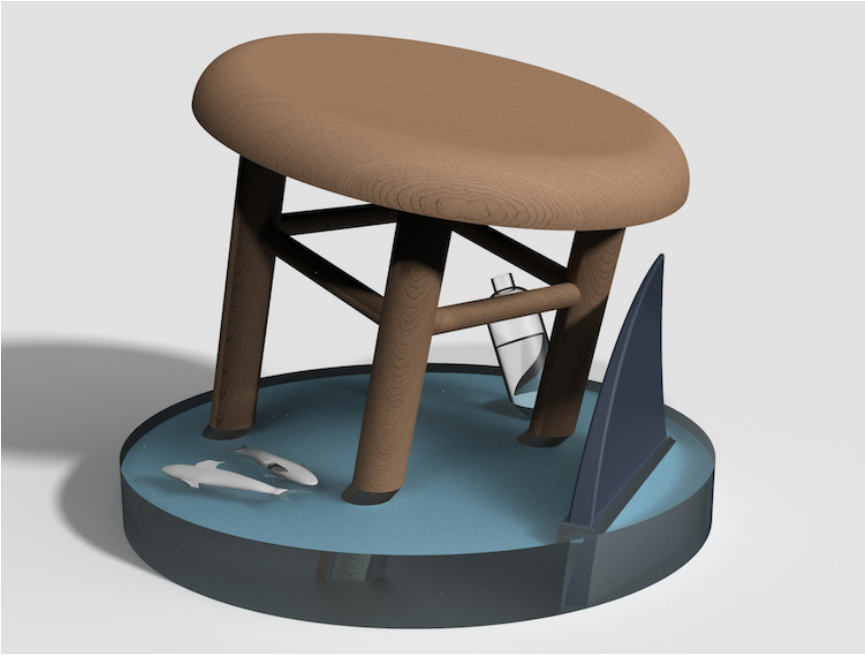
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#### Explanation

“Sinking” is a 15 tall exhibit which shows a stool sinking into an epoxy resin ocean which has dead fish, a floating water bottle, and a menacing shark fin. The stool is placed into the epoxy resin at an angle so it causes the user to slide off the stool.

#### Lesson

Sinking represents a dangerous future where global warming goes unanswered. It gives the user the opportunity to sit on the sinking stool and feel hopeless as they slide toward the shark circling them. The lesson I want people to learn is to take responsibility now before the damage becomes irreversible and threatens our future generations.



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## Jennifer Schroll

### A Bigger World



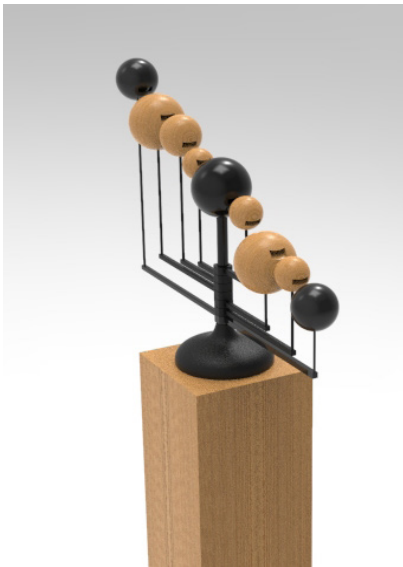
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#### Explanation

When the participant looks through the eye slot in the tallest sphere closest to them they will clearly see the message in the sphere that is farthest away from them and held in line with the first sphere they are looking through. However, as other spheres move into alignment with the two outer spheres, the field of vision is narrowed and less of the message can be seen. This field of vision narrows yet again with each successive sphere moving into alignment until the participant is only able to see a small part of the message.

#### Lesson

This project aims to articulate how one's view of their own future is largely impacted by basic needs many people take for granted every day. Each sphere represents an obstacle in the form of a basic need that is not being met for the person. When aligned with the outer spheres these obstacles create a tunnel vision effect that mimics how hard it can be to see a bigger world of opportunities when facing those obstacles.







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## Patrick McMahon

### Reflections in Time



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#### Explanation

This project is a wooden hourglass, it gives the viewer a sense of living and aging in time. This design will isolate people and have them reflect on the path of time and their place in it, so that they can appreciate elderly people. It is created by a number of wooden sheets, cut and glued together, making an hourglass form. On the bottom of the work is sand, which the person will stand in when they experience this project.

#### Lesson

There are two lessons I aim to teach the user, one is to look beyond the physical about a person and know that we all collectively age, and that just because someone is older doesn't make them any less worthy of respect. The other is that elderly still have value and wisdom to give us despite their age. This hourglass form, I hope, will allow people, by standing or resting within time, to realize that their elders still are useful, and more importantly, are worth their time and respect.





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## Abby Van Camp

### Paths of Privilege



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#### **Explanation**

This free-standing entryway provides an interactive experience for adults and children alike. People will be provoked to try to unlock the door by exploring the paths created by privilege and minority struggle with the embedded moving pieces. Once both the heart pieces have reached the end of their path the lower half of the door will be unlocked creating a entry to a world without privilege for future generations.

#### **Lesson**

I want people to feel that the door is broken and that they need to fix it in order for future generations to pass through. Younger and older generations working together can lead to a better world free of privilege.



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## Aine Tobin

### Universal Discomfort



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#### Explanation

This piece is inspired by classic Shaker furniture. The thin, wooden lines create the illusion of a stool, yet without the solid center and back, it loses all functionality.

#### Lesson

I will convey to the user a lesson on access and ability, and how something as seemingly “universal” and practical as a stool in fact excludes a large group of users. I want the audience to experience discomfort while attempting to sit and realize the seat is not made for sitting.



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# Django Skorupa

## Metta



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### Explanation

Participants enter into a booth where they are alone with a small shrine displaying the faces of random strangers. Once inside, they are encouraged to practice loving kindness meditation towards each face without preconceptions.

### Lesson

Without empathy our social movements fall flat. We do not care for our fellow human beings, and can see them as “others” not deserving of kindness. Practicing metta (Pali: loving kindness) helps remind us that each person we encounter is living their own lives, doing their own work, and in need of their own support. Through empathy we can change the world.







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## James Sheeler

### Uncomfortable Conversation



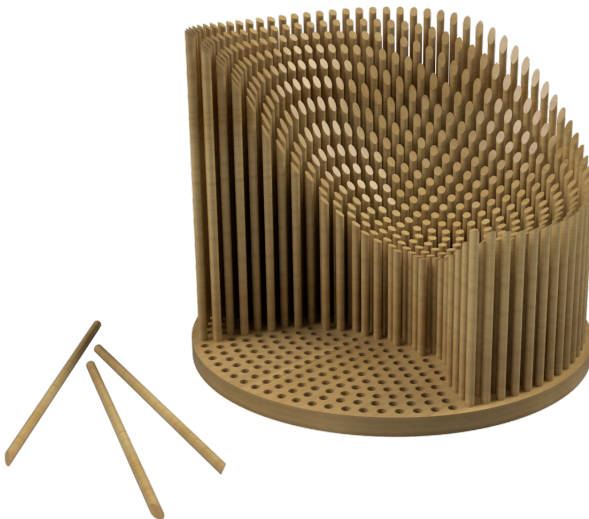
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#### Explanation

In Uncomfortable Conversation, rods can be removed from the chair to demonstrate the impact of the removal of natural resources. While mimicking both tree trunks and logs, Uncomfortable Conversation can help demonstrate and visualize a world with fewer forests.

#### Lesson

Deforestation is happening around the world and at times, it is hard to see or feel the immediate and direct impacts. While efforts in past years have been made to reduce the number of trees that we cut down, it is important to continue to raise awareness of this issue.





**Project of Distinction**  
**Sustain the Flame**



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## Julia Hawley

### Sustain the Flame



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#### Explanation

An assembly of hand-shaped candles stand in a landscape that mimics an urban context. They all begin as a symbolic liberty torch and are in the process of melting away to reveal a protest fist within. The match and candle snuffer suggest conscious action: to put in the work, to avoid the change, or to just stand by.

#### Lesson

Repeated behaviors have compounded into a mass of unequal treatment of certain groups in America. We as individuals and a greater society need to recognize and unlearn old behaviors in order to sustain a long-term fight for change. The slow-burning wax represents the continual action towards standing up to the unfulfilled promises of equal opportunity and liberty.





**Winner**  
**The New Statue**

Fabricated by Staach





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## Tiree Walker

### The New Statue



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#### Explanation

The pedestal engages the community in selecting a statue for a new location by encouraging people to visit the site to share their ideas. By being physically present at a site to submit proposals, individuals can develop a feeling for the locations and determine what figure would be appropriate for the location.

#### Lesson

Today, many statues have received backlash due to what the people represent and the context in which the statues are placed. The New Statue positions individuals in the community to consider prominent figures' legacies—allowing them to drive the conversation about who should be represented in public spaces.







**Winner**  
**Clean Contact**

Fabricated by Staach



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# Hunter McCluer

## Clean Contact



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### Explanation

This concept addresses the tangible distance between people exacerbated by the past year's public health crisis and turbulent political atmosphere by confronting the extreme lengths we must go to even touch each other at the present.

### Lesson

As climate crisis, social division, and public health fears keep us isolated it is more important than ever to be able to connect with each other. Through highlighting the difficulties of social interaction in the present I hope to bring increased awareness to the innate importance of human interaction and connection.









**Winner**

**A Sample of Ocean**

Fabricated by Staach



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## Jacob DiCicco

### A Sample of Ocean



---

#### **Explanation**

This design consists of an accent table top made up completely of human generated waste embedded in epoxy. The epoxy mimicks water from the ocean and the trash represents itself.

#### **Lesson**

The lesson of this design is that Earth's oceans are being consumed by the continued production and disposing of waste products.

















Staach













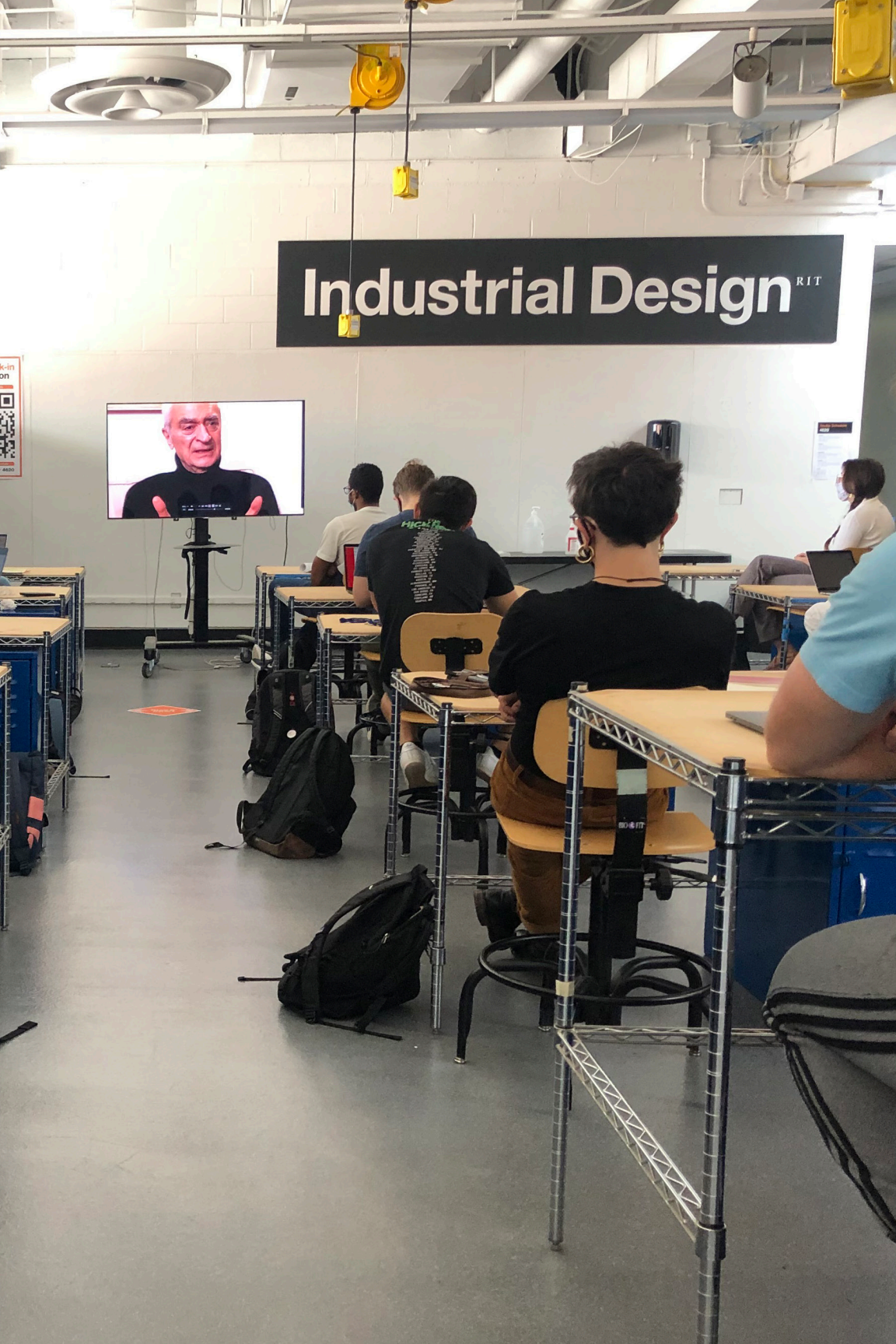








# Industrial Design<sup>RIT</sup>



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## Student Designers' Statement

### Hunter McCluer and Sophia Velasquez

In the first meeting of the Metaproject 11 class Josh stressed a simple tenet to carry with us; be okay with not being okay. In other words, let yourself feel discomfort, uncertainty, risk, fear, doubt, and still trust in your perception and abilities. He reminded us that designers are optimists, and that seeing the potential for better is part of the job description.

Following this mindset, our class started to reflect on the past events that have shaken our society; COVID, institutional violence and political upheaval, gender and class divisions, environmental destruction, etc. What flaws in our systems and thinking have allowed these issues to grow?

How can we create justice, empathy, understanding, and equity?

What new responsibilities do we have to each other, and how can we move forward? These questions and others like them formed the project brief, and Metaproject 11 was off and running.

When Staach was revealed to be this year's partner, the excitement built. Their focus on craftsmanship and simple solutions provided the perfect guidance to what was going to be a very challenging journey. It took a period of transition for our class to adapt to conceptual thinking. Like all designers we immediately started to come up with solutions.

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But with the guidance of Josh, the Staach team and Tatiana Ferruccio, we were pushed to expand our problem solving. Individual projects varied widely in form, construction, and area of focus as all of us struggled to distill solutions out of complex issues. Somehow, we had to fill a 3'x 3' space with our contributions to a global dialogue. All the while however, we were beginning to understand that we as designers are uniquely qualified to tackle these issues;

It was up to us to shape the world that we wanted to see, and by wading into this discomfort and uncertainty and attempting to understand it we could put forth meaningful solutions.

The results of Metaproject 11 are a reflection of the power that design thinking and today's resources can achieve. Our projects denounce social injustices, give a voice to marginalized communities, and cultivate empathy through validation. On behalf of the Metaproject class many thanks to Josh, Tati, Seth, and the Staach team for helping us design a better world. We hope these projects bring you new understanding.

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# Project Team

**Industry Collaborator**

This year, the Metaproject partnership is with Staach who's mission focuses on functional, sustainable design. The company designs and domestically manufactures sustainable products including furniture, interiors, and built structures that can be found around the world.

**Judges**

**Principal Designer and Founder, Staach**  
Seth Eshelman

**Senior Project Designer, Staach**  
Brandon Colaprete

**NYC Exhibition  
Concept / Art Direction  
Product Photography**

Partners & Napier  
Josh Owen  
Elizabeth Torgerson-Lamark  
RIT Production Services

**Process Photography**

Elizabeth Torgerson-Lamark  
RIT Production Services

**Portrait Photography**

Elizabeth Torgerson-Lamark  
RIT Production Services

**Graphic Design**

Thomas Roberti and Brittany Reyes

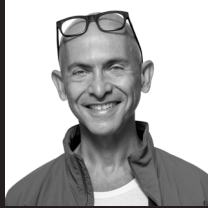
**Exhibition Implementation  
Primary Author  
Contributing Writers**

Tatiana Ferrucio  
Josh Owen  
Seth Eshelman

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## Project Leaders

Faculty, a graduate assistant and leadership from our industry partner guide the students in their project development.



**Industrial Design Professor  
Josh Owen**



**Teaching Assistant  
Tatiana Ferruccio**



**Principal Designer and Founder,  
Staach  
Seth Eshelman**



**Senior Project Designer,  
Staach  
Brandon Colaprete**

---

## Advocates and Influencers

Various invited lecturers and advocates inspire and help to create the context for our students to develop their ideas during the calendar of the course.



**Designers**  
**Lella and Massimo Vignelli**



**Creativity Strategist and Speaker**  
**Natalie Nixon**



**Industrial Designer**  
**Noel Mayo**



**Architect and Professor**  
**Milton Curry**



**Vignelli Archivist  
Jennifer Whitlock**



**Designer  
Shelby Zink**



**Artist and Educator  
John Aäsp**



**Artist and Educator  
Shawn Dunwoody**

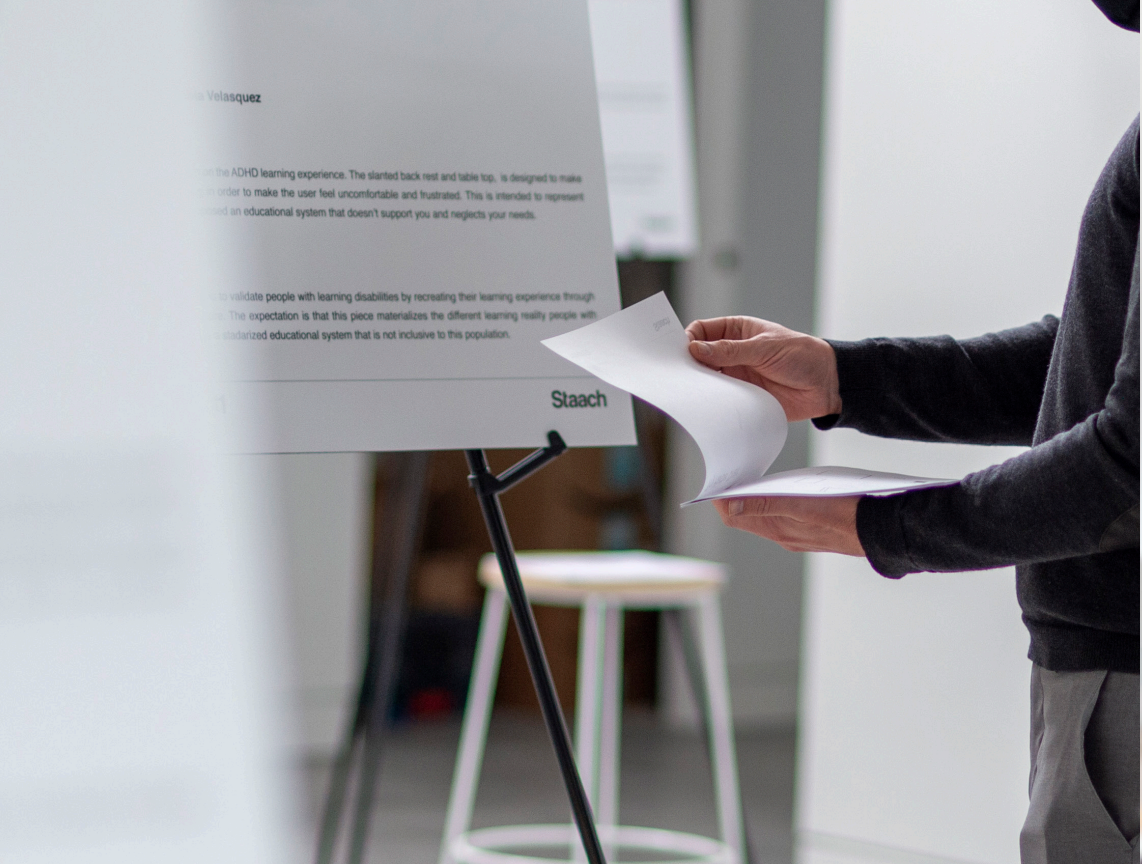




























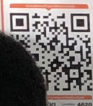






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Spa-Francorchamps  
Monza  
Singapore  
Sochi  
Suzuka  
Mexico City

RYAN LYNCH



# Industrial Design<sup>RIT</sup>











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## Acknowledgments

We offer our most sincere thanks to the following individuals for their contributions to this year's project:

R. Roger Remington:  
Vignelli Distinguished  
Professor Emeritus

Jennifer Whitlock  
Archivist  
Vignelli Center for Design Studies

Peter Byrne  
Director  
School of Design

Todd Jokl  
Dean  
College of Art and Design

Tatiana Ferruccio  
Graduate Assistant  
Metaproject 11

Thomas Roberti  
Graduate Assistant  
Metaproject 12

Brittany Reyes  
Graphic Designer

Fabiano Sarra  
Instructional Support Specialist

Will Tracey  
Operations Manager

Elizabeth Lamark  
University Photographer

Kat Bassney  
Director of Advancement

Lisa Vasaturo  
Director of Alumni Relations

Leslie Wilson  
Associate Director of Advancement

Rich Kiley  
Senior Communication Specialist

Aaron Garland  
Web Content Manager

Kelly Sorensen  
Marketing Communications Director

Wendy Marks  
Director Shop One

Ella von Holtum  
Assistant Archivist

All of the  
industrial design faculty

Our fellow  
students and colleagues  
across RIT

Sharon Napier  
Executive Chair and Founder  
Partners & Napier

Our friends  
in industry

Our friends  
and families

## Metaproject

### Meta

from Greek: μετά= “after,” “beyond,” “with,” “adjacent,” “self” is a prefix used in English (and other Greek-owing languages) to indicate a concept which is an abstraction from another concept, used to complete or add to the latter.

### Word Origin & History

Prefix meaning

“after, behind”

1 “changed, altered”

2 “higher, beyond”

3

from Gk. meta (prep.)

“in the midst of, in common with, by means of, in pursuit or quest of,” from PIE \*me- “in the middle” (cf. Goth. miþ, O.E. mið “with, together with, among;” see mid). Notion of “changing places with” probably led to senses “change of place, order, or nature,” which was a principal meaning of the Gk. word when used as a prefix (but also denoting “community, participation; in common with; pursuing”). Third sense, “higher than, transcending, over arching, dealing with the most fundamental matters of.”

## Staach

**RIT** | College of  
**Art and Design**

*Rochester Institute of Technology*

*Industrial Design Department*

*Vignelli Center for Design Studies*