

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE & PRODUCT DESIGN

IAPD ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Chris Heeley graduated from IAPD in May 2001. One month after graduating Chris moved to Orlando, Florida to begin work as a designer with two other K-State IAPD grads, Aaron Nies and Aaron Fink. "It was exciting starting out my career in a three-person firm made up entirely of K-State grads in their 20's." During the last month of his time at K-State he coordinated the start of the new firm over the phone. "One evening when I was speaking to Aaron on the studio phone in Seaton Hall, we discussed what to call the new firm. I had always been a fan of Greek mythology and pitched Daedalus Design Studio as the name for our new company. I would later somewhat regret the name since very few people can spell it." The firm specializes in residential interior architecture. They do a lot of interior detailing focusing mainly on high-end residential projects. Their clients differ by project and are often builders, homeowners or interior designers. Today, Daedalus Design Studio comprised of Chris, Aaron Nies, IAPD 1997 grad and Heidi Aschenbrenner, IAPD 2005 grad.

While an IAPD student Chris felt that the furniture design and construction courses were particularly beneficial to him. "Those classes challenged us as students to develop designs that could be fabricated with the tools available and methods we learned in a relatively short period of time. A design requiring simple construction techniques left weeks in the semester for continued refining and development of the piece, but might fall short of creating an awe-inspiring final project. On the other hand, a design that pushed the boundaries of what could be accomplished in the shop may result in a new and surprising object, but came at the risk of running out of time in the semester to complete. In the professional world all projects come with limitations of time, budget and construction skill so these classes were helpful in understanding how to tailor a design of work within those constraints."

One of Chris's favorite memories while a student was during his fifth year when they were required to create the exhibit displaying work from their internships. They decided to create a multi-faceted sculpture piece that could be suspended from the ceiling of the gallery. Each student was given a facet of the object to apply their internship material. In order to allow each to compose their board at their desk the inner structure had to be assembled and suspended ahead of time. "I felt the object was a good representation of how we had each gone away to acquire new skills and experience before coming back to work and interact for a final year."



Chris Heeley
2001 IAPD Grad

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IAPD STUDENTS:

Explore all sorts of design possibilities and make mistakes while you are in school. Now is the time to make errors while there are little or no consequences. Have fun with your projects and design objects and places that make you happy!

Also, when interviewing there is a fine line between being confident in your abilities/talents and coming off as cocky or boastful. I doubt there are too many firms looking to hire entry-level divas. Try to show a passion for your portfolio projects and portray yourself as a highly skilled and enthusiastic designer.