

INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE

By Debra Gibson

Design interns expand portfolios, gain professional skills

Scurry to Starbucks. Camp out at the copier. Clean the storeroom.

Thankfully, ISU College of Design students bypass the stereotypical internship experience and spend their preprofessional stints designing right alongside their new mentors.

Often those workplace gurus are CoD graduates themselves, now successful designers. They help guide the soon-to-be alumni through their first forays into professionalism.

Interior design students spend two months after their junior years interning in a professional setting. Industrial design students may choose to study abroad, work on an industry-sponsored project or take on an internship following their junior years. Landscape architecture students can select among internships, study abroad or a university exchange program during the spring or summer of their fourth years.

Here's how three talented undergraduates banked on internships to expand their portfolios and gain practical experience attractive to future employers.

Tatiana Tien

Tatiana Tien's parents were either very brave when their daughter was growing up or simply liked to live on the edge. For years, they gave their aspiring artist carte blanche over her bedroom's décor. And did she take advantage.

"I was always going through a new color phase," Tien, a senior in interior design, remembered recently. "If anyone would have ever chopped through those walls, they would have discovered a good six inches of color—canary yellow, mint green, baby blue. I was always trying out new fabrics for window coverings—there's just always been that design quirk in me."



Top: Fabric scheme for an area rug, accent chair and two sofas that Tien helped develop for a Trans-Pacific Design client's condo on the Hawaiian coast. **Above:** Tien in a client's kitchen. *All photos courtesy of interns.*

Couple that with the Chicago native's quest for new summer surroundings, and as soon as you can say "color swatch," Tien had surfed her way into an interior design internship with Trans-Pacific Design in Kamuela, Hawaii.

Owned by Iowa State alumna Susan J. Moss (BS 1972 Interior Design), the firm specializes in residential, commercial and hospitality interior design. Its projects include residential homes, hotels, offices, chapels, restaurants, stores, spas and boats. With Moss working as the firm's sole designer, Tien was thrown into myriad projects as soon as she set foot on the Big Island.

"One of the best things about working for a small firm is that I've experienced more aspects of the business," Tien said. "I've attended client meetings, luncheons with fabric reps, photo shoots and a day following an architect. We worked a lot

on interviews and client meetings for new office spaces, so I packed a lot of fabric books, binders, concrete and stone samples and headed down the coast to present to potential clients."

Many of Moss's clients live on the U.S. mainland and have purchased second homes in Hawaii. Tien learned firsthand the challenges of designing long distance, via Skype and phone calls.

"I worked on a project for a Texas couple whose new vacation home was already fully furnished," Tien said. "The Hawaiian style often means a lot of koa wood, which can be heavy and overbearing. Our clients wanted something more minimalist, so we stepped in to create a more contemporary look with a Hawaiian vibe."

Dealing with the firm's fast pace and ever-changing client requests were Tien's greatest challenges as an intern.

"This isn't like school, where everything is a hypothetical situation," she said. "I'm actually here to please the client—I'm working with real money now."

Hannah Luloff

When your internship office sits on a coffee shop patio with the Rocky Mountains in the background, life is good.

So Hannah Luloff learned this past summer as she interned for not one but two Denver, Colo., design firms. Alumna Angela Feddersen (BArch 1994 Architecture) hails from Luloff's hometown of Denver, Iowa (seriously), and owns Elevate Architecture, a high-end residential architecture firm.

Luloff spent 20 hours weekly at Elevate tackling floor plans, construction documents and electrical plans. And to feed the fourth-year landscape architecture major's zeal for outdoor design, Feddersen assigned Luloff a few landscape projects surrounding homes she designed.

The rest of each week, Denver's Blu Design Group contracted with Luloff to create three-dimensional models of prospective plans for both commercial and residential clients. One of her favorite projects allowed her to "put my spin" on a design plan for an automotive shop.

"My dad used to drag race, and our whole family was always big into automotive," Luloff explained. "It was great to help with this retro style show for the client's old hot rods."

The company's foray into rooftop terrace design also challenged and attracted Luloff, whose favorite such project sits atop a Denver penthouse. In fact, she continues to create these 3-D models for the company, using SketchUp, now that she's back on campus.

Luloff considers her dual internship experiences "the best of both worlds."

"It was great to work in a formal office with my own studio space, being a part of a lot of collaboration," she said of her work with Blu Design Group, "and then going to meet with my other boss [who works out of her home] at coffee shops to discuss my work on her projects. And from both, I learned I enjoy the conceptual side of architecture much more than the technical side."

Derek Huenecke

He's required to wear white gloves to perform his job. He can fold a shoebox in less than 25 seconds. He spent an hour one day at the office just hanging out with the Chicago Bulls' Derrick Rose.

For a sports fan/aspiring shoe designer, a six-month gig in the history management department at Adidas World Headquarters in Herzogenaurach, Germany, might represent the pinnacle of Internshipdom. Just ask Lisbon, Iowa, native Derek Huenecke, who graduated in August as

part of ISU's first industrial design major cohort and is working until late November preserving, archiving and describing each shoe in the entire Adidas basketball collection.

"Well, it's a lot bigger than I ever expected," Huenecke said during a recent Skype interview. "I've met the designers of some of my

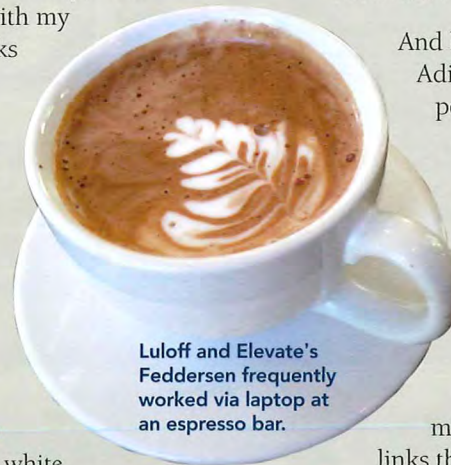
favorite shoes, and I've gotten to see products before they're released to the U.S. And I've met a few teams and some athletes."

And he's gotten to know Adidas shoes, up close and personal. On a typical day, Huenecke removes shoes from their boxes, wearing gloves because the shoes' materials may be brittle from acids and age. He weighs the shoes, documents their sizes, cites their materials and years and links them to archived catalogs.

Huenecke identifies their construction, indoor/outdoor usage and who wore them. He writes product descriptions and enters those into the computer.

His best brushes within the Adidas annals? Jesse Owens' Olympic track shoes from the mid-1930s, and the 1971 Adidas Superstar. At the time he was interviewed, Huenecke had catalogued nearly 200 individual shoes from the 9,500-plus items in the Adidas archives.

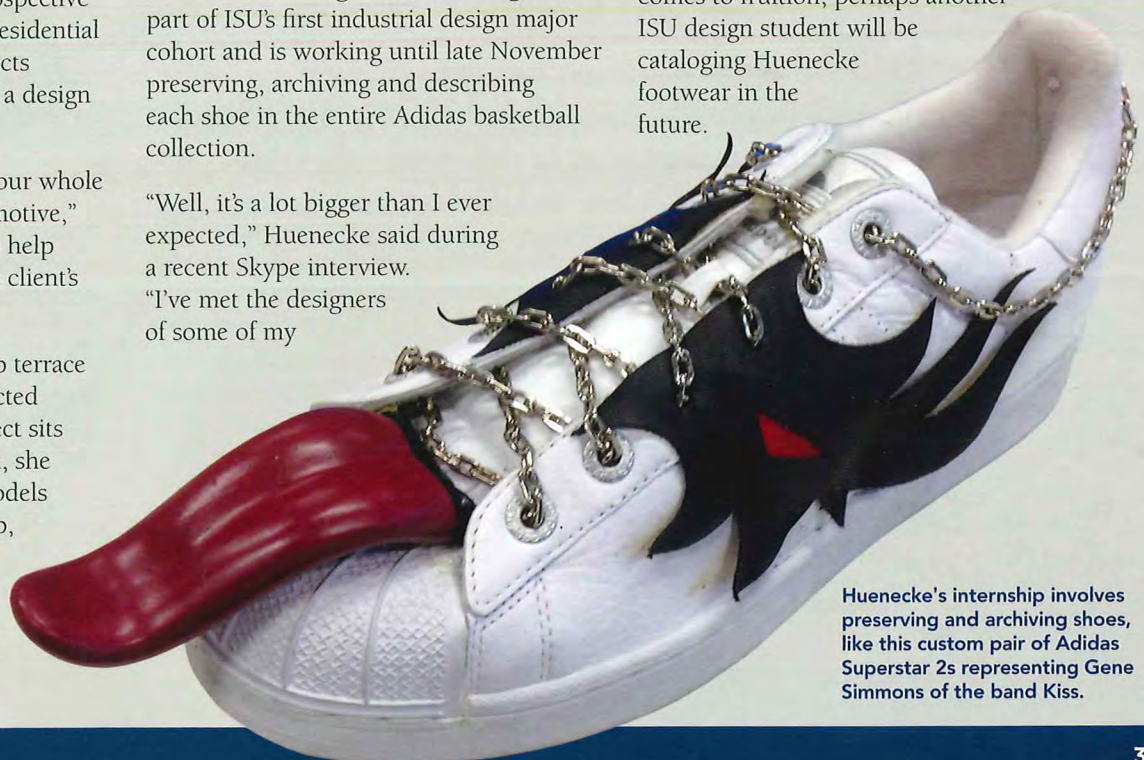
Huenecke's own sneaker collection totals around 50 pairs. His design for a signature racing shoe for a New Hampshire rally car driver is being considered for production. And if his goal to design shoes in the U.S. comes to fruition, perhaps another ISU design student will be cataloging Huenecke footwear in the future.



Luloff and Elevate's Feddersen frequently worked via laptop at an espresso bar.



Luloff with the design principal's dog, Sammy, in the studio at Blu Design Group.



Huenecke's internship involves preserving and archiving shoes, like this custom pair of Adidas Superstar 2s representing Gene Simmons of the band Kiss.