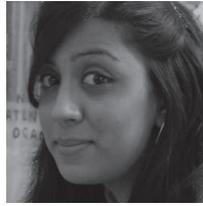


2008/09 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships LAB at Rockwell Group Award

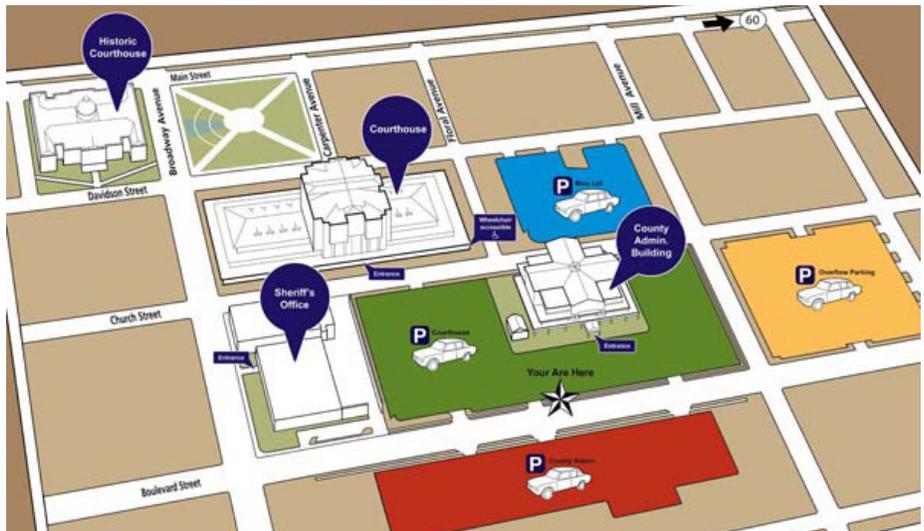


PAYAAL PATEL
Industrial design
Graduate student
Illinois Institute of Technology



Human expression is symbolic in nature and, as such, societies can be defined by the objects they choose to surround themselves with. The two aims of the design process are to understand human behavior and to shape human behavior. I am interested in the former and how it informs the final design solution. I am an industrial designer interested in usability, information architecture, anthropology and the economics of design.

During the latter part of my time at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), I was introduced to interaction design. This field of study was only available as a minor; therefore, it served as a compliment to my focus in industrial design. As a result, I am most intrigued by how the technological aspect of a product informs the physical appearance. As part of my information architecture class at SCAD I participated in the Computer Human Interaction (CHI) '05 student competition, where my group achieved second place. The educational experience at CHI affirmed my interest in ethnographic research and its undeniable role in successful design solutions.



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Having completed my BFA, I decided to use my first job as a chance to explore a design discipline other than the ones that I was familiar with. I joined the community- and urban-planning firm of Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin, Inc., in Orlando, Florida, and have been working for the Wayfinding and Environmental graphics group for the past two years. However, like a classic example of “absence makes the heart grow fonder,” I have come to realize that my true talent and passion lie in ethnographic research methods and designing for emerging markets.

My career goals are also driven by my life experiences growing up in Tanzania. During my time in high school, I worked with two leprosy villages in Tanzania. As a result, I would like to work on projects where culture-specific product development triggers economic prosperity, and access to good design is not dictated by one’s financial status.

As companies plow forward and explore markets in cultures vastly different from their own, a designer that is also an anthropologist plays a critical role of advocacy. I am inspired by products designed by the people, for the people. I would like to use my time at the Institute of Design to develop my skills in ethnographic research and focus on creating a bridge profession between designers and anthropologists that will facilitate design practices.

