

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO LAUNCH UNIQUELY DESIGNED
PRODUCT COLLECTION AT THE WORLD-RENOWNED MILAN DESIGN WEEK*****SAIC partnered with Chicago-based bespoke foundry and fabricator West Supply
to help students take their products from concept to creation***

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, announced the launch of *whatnot x West Supply*, a collection of uniquely designed objects created by students studying in the school's Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects (AIADO) department. The collection will be revealed at Spazio Rossana Orlandi during Milan Design Week in Italy, April 4–9.

This is the 10th year the school is showcasing work from its students at the annual international design fair. This year, SAIC partnered with West Supply, a Chicago-based artisanal foundry and fabricator of designer furnishings, lighting and fine art, to develop a collection of heirloom-quality objects in glass and bronze. Students worked with form, texture and finish to develop products that respond to light in unique and innovative ways.

Encompassing furniture, lighting and accessories, the projects include:

- A floor lamp that captures the gesture of shaping molten glass,
- A rhizomatic modular candelabra,
- A blown-glass drinking vessel inspired by the eyed-kylix used in ancient Greek symposia,
- A parametrically derived table-top reflector designed to scatter light,
- A color-mixing luminaire that reunites Ludwig Mies van der Rohe with László Moholy-Nagy,
- An undulating and translucent glass funerary urn,
- Colorful cast glass desk accessories to bring out the inner child,
- A faceted cast-bronze hand-held mirror that conveys the inevitable passage of time through a sequence of patinas,
- A cast-glass ghost of a traditional Chinese bowl,
- A glass-and-bronze display tray that references the manipulation of water in roman aqueduct,
- An incense burner in cast-glass and bronze that asks us to contemplate the intersection of man and nature,
- A table-top mirror that exploits the fragility of matter at the scale of molecules and galaxies,
- An illusionistic desk accessory in patinated cast-bronze where 2D graphics and 3D form are intertwined, and
- A wall-mounted cast-glass luminaire that captures the movement of fabric caught by the wind.

The SAIC *whatnot x West Supply* Collection consists of 15 products, each of which has been hand-cast and hand-finished by West Supply's team of skilled technicians, drawing upon many years of experience producing high-quality metal and glass objects for artists, architects and designers.

SAIC is one of only a few American colleges whose students have the opportunity to participate in the annual Milan Design Week. The products created are entirely conceived, designed and produced by undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in SAIC's yearlong Milan External Partnerships class, taught and curated by Professors Helen Maria Nugent and Tim Parsons.

“The School of the Art Institute of Chicago launched the Milan External Partnerships class 10 years ago to give students invaluable real-world experience and the opportunity to show their work alongside some of the world’s most renowned designers during Milan Design Week,” said SAIC Professor Helen Maria Nugent. “Working with West Supply, students were able to pursue their ideas from start to finish, bring product design through the development process and understand the impact of materials and production on the design.”

Milan Design Week runs April 4–9, and SAIC’s *whatnot x West Supply* Collection will be featured and sold at the Spazio Rossana Orlandi, Salone del Mobile, Via Matteo Bandello 14, 20123 Milano. The products will also be on display in Chicago at SAIC’s LeRoy Neiman Center, 37 South Wabash Avenue this spring.

To access high-resolution images and bios of the student designers, or to learn more about *whatnot x West Supply*, visit saic.edu/whatnot.

About the *whatnot Studio*

The *whatnot studio* brings design experiments to life as real products. Positioned as a commercial brand, *whatnot* is also a progressive educational platform focused on creative inquiry matched to iteration, systems of production and the nuances of the marketplace. The yearlong class gives students the space and time to find their voice as independent designers and the resources to produce fully realized, original products that are launched to the public during Milan Design Week. This is the 10th consecutive year in which emerging designers from SAIC will debut new work in Milan.

SAIC’s *whatnot x West Supply* Collection is created through the Milan External Partnerships Studio as part of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects department. The Milan External Partnerships Studio course, directed by professors Helen Maria Nugent and Tim Parsons, takes students through the entire product development process from conceptualization to production.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For more than 150 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leader in educating the world’s most influential artists, designers, and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program consistently ranking among the top programs in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries, and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC’s undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world—as seen through notable alumni and faculty such as Michelle Grabner, David Sedaris, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Hunt, Georgia O’Keeffe, Cynthia Rowley, Nick Cave, Jeff Koons, and LeRoy Neiman. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

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