

The kids are alright #designindaba #daytwo

 By Herman Manson: @marklives

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The group of graduate design students assembled by the 2011 Design Indaba conference, currently being held at the Cape Town International Conference Centre, for its Pecha Kucha presentations yesterday, Thursday, 24 February 2011, (where they run through their work in 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds), make up a remarkable collection of young design talent that represents a broad range of design interests. [[view twitterfall](#)]



[Lindsay Kinkade](#) has her Master's in Fine Art degree from the Rhode Island School of Design, where she also currently teaches. Kinkade, like many speakers at the Design Indaba conference, believes in a collaborative approach to design - also in her classroom. She calls it the open source classroom.

Her class undertook a [project](#) to make the Affordable Health Care for America Act - in which the Obama administration tries its hand at healthcare reform - more accessible and easier to understand to the average citizen.



[click to enlarge](#)

[Source](#)

Camille Blin, a graduate from ECAL/University of Art and Design in Lausanne, showcased bottles he designed with various capacities (75cl, 50cl or 37.5cl). The bottles are of a similar shape but a 'simple removal of material varies their capacity'.



[Source](#)

Christine Goudie made the jump from graphic into medical product design with work on a comfortable, ergonomically designed wheelchair cushion that helps prevent pressure sores. Goudie is from Carleton University in Canada.



It was quite obvious South African participant Laduma Ngxokolo was on his home turf, judging by support from the delegates (he is also at the expo which opens to the public today, Friday 25 February). It helped that he had the wonderful idea of translating traditional Xhosa beading and colours into a range of knitwear for young men designed for those interested in Africa-meets-Pringle.



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Joseph Saavedra, from Parsons The New School for Design, created the amazing SOBEaR, a "responsible robot bartender who knows you better than you know yourself" - oh and it's dressed up as a panda. You blow into the alcohol sensor above the bear's bowtie and it will decide just how sober you are and how much more you are allowed to drink - then pour you the appropriate shot.



[Source](#)

[SOBEaR v02 :: the responsible robot bartender](#) from [j saavedra](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Dutch designer Dirk van der Kooij designs beautiful plastic chairs from material recycled from old refrigerators. A robotic arm 'draws' the chairs from a single long string of recycled plastic.



[Source](#)

[Endless](#) from [Dirk Vander Kooij](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Adding a dash of eccentricity and the unconventional to the day was Nelly Ben Hayoun. She designs experiences, such as the [Soyuz Chair](#), which replicates the launch of a space shuttle in what looks like a Lazy Boy.

"The Soyuz chair accurately reproduces the 3 stages of the Soyuz rocket launch. Reclining into launch position, you face the sky, put on your headset, and use the control panel to select your mode; just a single stage, or the full lift off experience. 5...4...3...2...1....., Which planet will you land on?" asks Ben Hayoun on her website.

Wherever it is, it's rather fabulous.

[THE Soyuz Chair at SHUNT- july 2009-nelly ben hayoun](#) from [nelly](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The confidence to pursue your talents starts well before university, of course, as educator [Kiran Bir Sethi](#), based in Ahmedabad, India, realised when her son was disempowered by a teacher at his former school. Our educational system are failing kids by removing the word choice from the vocabulary of our children, Bir Sethi told delegates. They need to know "they can" build a future for themselves, launching from an educational platform that combines experience for and from the real world with academia.

The grade sevens at the school she founded, Riverside School, recently organised an international education conference, managing aspects as diverse as the choice of venue and speakers to planning the food, drink and even budget. "We did something most adults could not do," boasted one grade seven afterwards. Now that is confidence (and they are right, of course).

Kids that do good also do well

The education plan designed by Bir Sethi has been donated to public schools. As she says, kids that do good also do well; her pupils outperform many of their peers.

With people like Bir Sethi redesigning and fundamentally changing troubled educational systems, a platform is built for a new generation of young designers to emerge with greater confidence in their abilities to solve problems. From the practical (better wheelchairs, better bartenders) to the fantastical (flying to the moon from your living room) - the stage is set for change. It's what we want - isn't it?

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The inaugural Vodacom Social Media Journalist of the Year in 2011, Herman Manson (@marklives) is a business journalist and media commentator who edits industry news site www.marklives.com. His writing has appeared in newspapers and magazines locally and abroad, including Bizcommunity.com. He also co-founded *Brand* magazine.

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