

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ENERGY HARVESTING TEXTILE DESIGNS COMBINE MESOAMERICAN WEAVING TRADITIONS & SOLID STATE ELECTRONICS

Portable Light prototypes for energy harvesting textiles from the Nomads & Nano-Materials Project at the University of Michigan will be exhibited at Nextfest 2005 in Chicago, where the leading R&D labs, companies and visionary innovators from around the world gather to show their work. The Nomads & Nano-Materials Project presents light emitting textile designs for the nomadic Huichol (Wirrárica) people of the remote Mexican Sierra Madre Mountains. Full scale textile designs integrate ancient Mesoamerican weaving traditions with digital light from high brightness semi-conductors (HBLEDs), flexible thin film photo-voltaics and polymer batteries to create completely self-contained, portable, off-the-grid light engines that can be deployed at a global scale where ever energy-efficient electrical power and illumination are needed. Try on a light emitting garment that is a wearable workshop, roll up a reading light, sit on a folding stool that creates its own light, or pick up a portable power plant that weighs less than four pounds.

“By developing a new material medium for digital light, the Nomads project demonstrates the advantages of an energy-efficient textile lighting infrastructure”, said Sheila Kennedy, Principal Investigator and Visting Saarinen Professor at the University of Michigan. “The prototypes produced by our research group are lightweight and easy to ship and transport. These designs offer the production economies of large run textile fabrication and lower installation expenses.” Chairman Tom Buresh of the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning comments, “The success of the Nomads Project reinforces the value of interdisciplinary research in a design school. Knowledge and market solutions produced by the Nomads project will benefit the “third” world and the “first” world, where energy-efficient design is becoming increasingly important.”

Portable Light designs from the Nomads & Nano-Materials Project will be implemented in a pilot project in the Sierra Madre later this year. The Portable Light project was initiated and developed by Professor Kennedy in collaboration with MATx, the pioneering materials research unit of Kennedy & Violich Architecture, Ltd. (KVA), industry leaders and leading academic research institutions in engineering and design. Portable Light applies creative processes and strategic thinking to optimize the performance of existing semi-conductor technologies and create new applications to serve the large number of people—more than 2 billion-- who do not have access to electric light or power. For press kits and more information on the PORTABLE LIGHT PROJECT, please see <http://www.tcaup.umich.edu/portablelight/>

ABOUT:

The University of Michigan

The mission of the University of Michigan is to serve the people of Michigan and the world through pre-eminence in creating, communicating, preserving and applying knowledge, art and academic values, and in developing leaders and citizens who will challenge the present and enrich the future. The University of Michigan Office for Research, seeks to nurture excellent research, scholarship and creative activity by faculty, staff and students and promotes the integration of the research, education and service missions of the University. For more information please visit <http://www.tcaup.umich.edu/> and <http://www.tcaup.umich.edu/arch/nomads.html> .

KVA MATx

Kennedy & Violich Architecture, Ltd. (KVA) is an interdisciplinary design practice that explores new relationships between architecture, digital technology and emerging public needs. The work of KVA has been recognized by National Design Excellence Awards from the American Institute of Architecture, Awards from Progressive Architecture and Architectural Record, Industrial Design Excellence Awards and the Public Work Award of the National Endowment for the Arts. KVA's pioneering materials research unit MATx engages applied creative production across the fields of electronics, architecture and material design. MATx works collaboratively with business leaders, manufacturers, engineers, and public agencies to invent design concepts, products and building systems that advance the real world implementation of energy-efficient digital technologies. Please see www.kvarch.net and <http://www.tcaup.umich.edu/portablelight/> for more information.