Four Emerging Designers Receive Prestigious Gensler Scholarships

First-place Brinkmann winner, Cielo Cortes' 'Lindt Chocolates'

CIELO CORTES New York School of Interior Design
Brinkmann Scholarship, 1st Place

An undergraduate at the New York School of Interior Design (NYSID), first-place winner Cortes was born in Colombia and moved to the US when she was 18 years old. She takes her hospitality experience–working in well-known nightlife venues in Chicago, Miami, and New York–which have given her an understanding of these environments in terms of functionality for clientele and employees, into her designs. As a student of the NYSID, she can bring her real-world experiences to the methods, techniques, and theories of design to her studies.

"Our firm is constantly looking to stretch the boundaries of design so that we can provide unmatched value to our clients," says Robin Klehr Avia, Regional Managing Principal for Gensler's Northeast region. "Cielo and Danielle are talented young designers whose work and innovative processes reflect the creative thinking our firm values. We are thrilled to support their development through the Brinkmann Scholarship."

Juror Yishio Kuo, a Design Director in the Houston office, says of Cortes, "the jury was incredibly impressed with Cortes' work which brings an emotive but strong personal point of view to her project while not losing sight of what is important: a concern around sustainability. Very poised, Cortes has the natural ability of story-telling that can be seen throughout her submission."
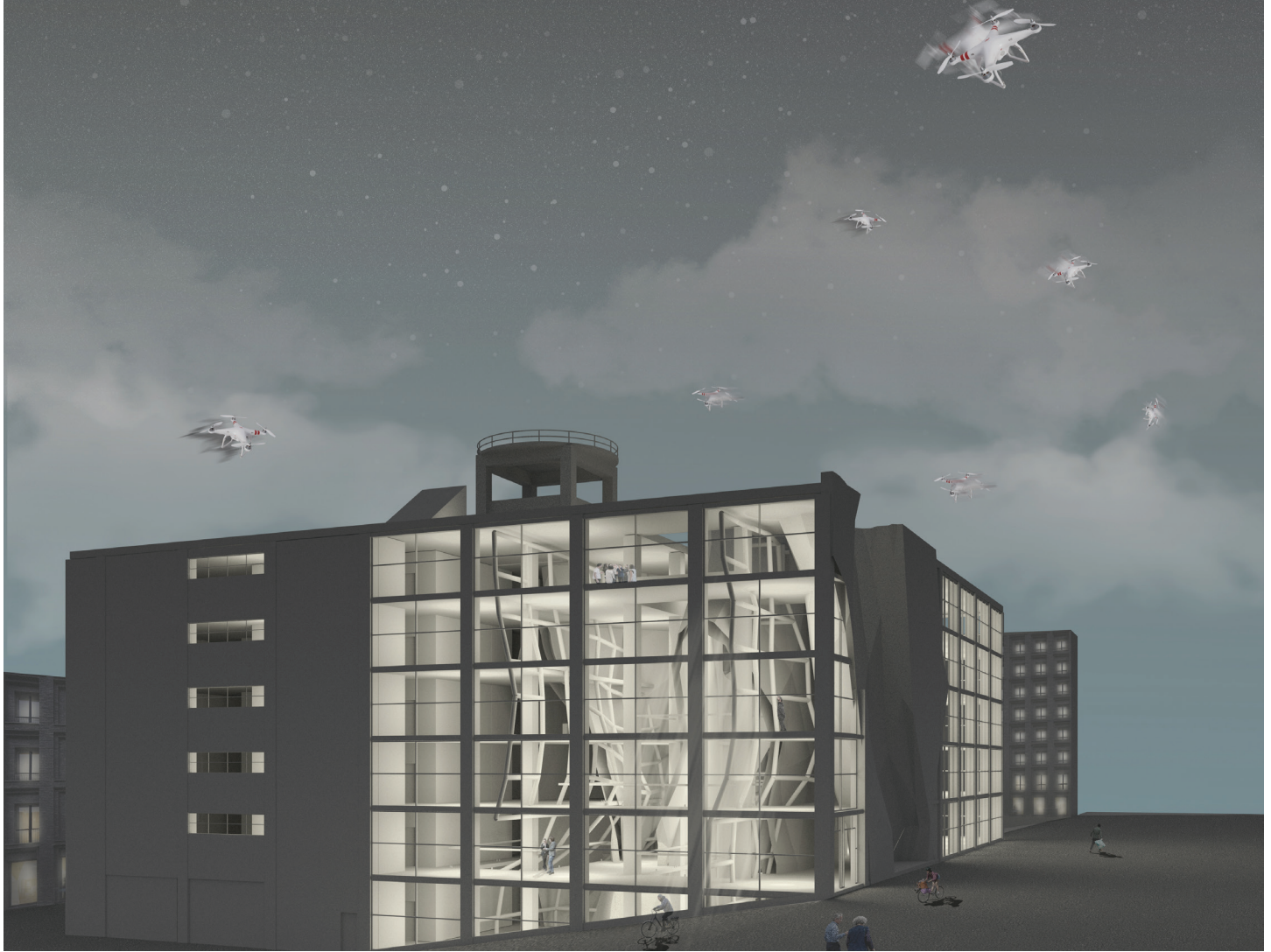

" I believe that the hospitality industry has special opportunities and responsibilities when it comes to sustainable design which can be emphasized for public safety and global health. I want to improve how people experience hospitality spaces while also improving all of our lives. "
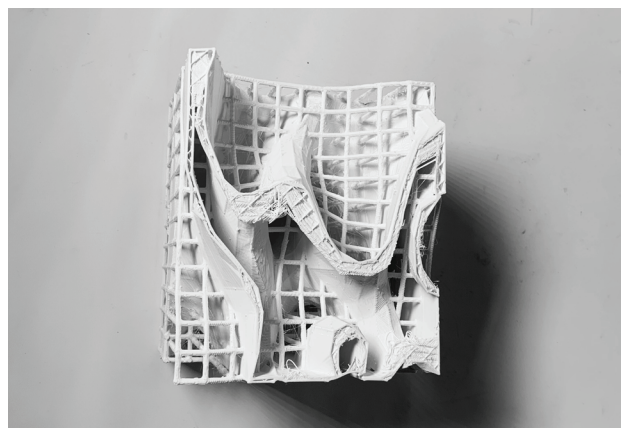
- Cielo Cortes

Second-place Brinkmann winner, Danielle Lanier's 'Amazon Drones'

DANIELLE LANIER University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Brinkmann Scholarship, 2nd Place

An undergraduate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Lanier's childhood curiosity has been a guiding force in the way she approaches the design process. Her emphasis on the importance of "breaking down boundaries and questioning design normatives draws me to challenge traditional ways of thinking about design in order to create a more sustainable future," says Lanier.

Kuo says, "As a jury, we find that Danielle's submission is extremely thoughtful, has genuine style and explores an emerging potential for delivery. The community impact that she demonstrates, based on research and exploration as part of the process makes this a compelling project with a wonderful presentation."

Second-place Brinkmann winner, Danielle Lanier's 'Amazon Drones'

ZIDA LIU University of Southern California
Diversity Scholarship, 1st Place

Liu, an undergraduate student at the University of Southern California, grew up witnessing the construction of the Shanghai Tower and aspiring to be an architect. His experience studying abroad in the United States and the diversity he sees daily inspires his design point of view, using an analogy of a 'salad bowl' to address co-existence versus inter-connectivity and how architects can provide psychologically comforting spaces where people can begin to appreciate diversity.
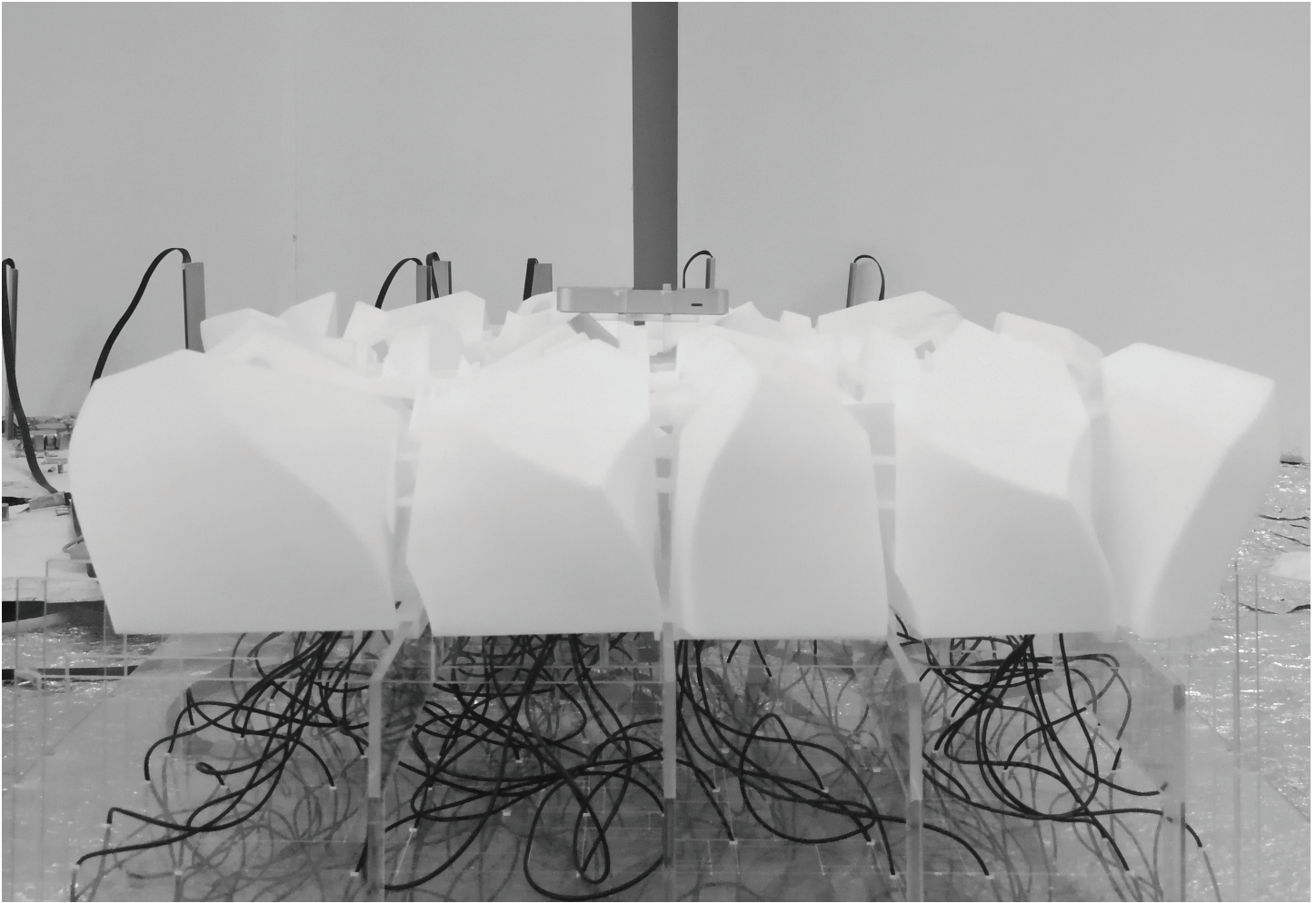
"GAP+" an Architecture of Sound Mixing – Kulangsu Project

YUFAN XIE University of Southern California
Diversity Scholarship, 2nd Place

Xie is in his first year of the master's program, having completed his Bachelor of Architecture in China. His submission draws on the continuous process of discovering and integrating theories from different fields to generate new ideas, incorporating his guiding principal, 'multidimensional thinking and creativity,' into the work he does. The jury enjoyed Xie's work, focusing on interpreting the impact of 'gaps' in spatial and audible experiences.
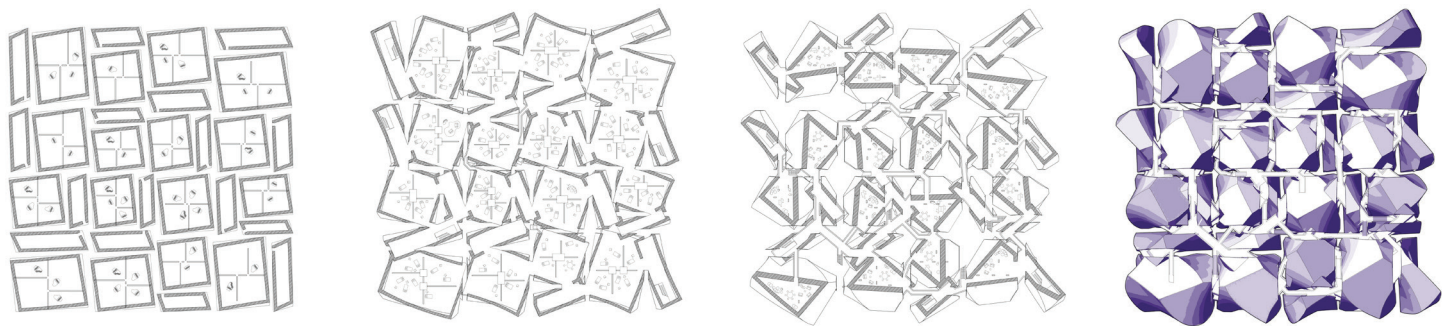
From bottom to the top, aural spaces are gradually opened and mixed together, community is gradually mixed.