

Training Ground for Myth Busting and Experimenting

What do ugly produce, outdoor workspaces, robot arm night-lights and survivalist kits have in common? How about launching a cabbage with a crossbow, painting with explosives, finding a needle in a haystack, and building and sailing a full-size boat made entirely out of cardboard? The common denominator is Jonathan Lung. The first group is just a sampling of the projects Lung worked on in the MFA Products of Design (PoD) program, where he earned his degree in 2016. The second group highlights some of ►





the challenges Lung faced on the show *MythBusters: The Search*. The show, which aired on the Science Channel in early 2017, was a competition to find two hosts for a new iteration of the very popular show *MythBusters*. Lung competed—and won!—a coveted co-host spot.

Before joining the PoD program, Lung had studied engineering and design, and worked as a furniture designer and in various fabrication shops “building, and teaching others to build,” he explains. Both the diverse projects Lung worked on in the PoD program and the challenges he faced on *MythBusters: The Search* required a multidisciplinary approach to thinking about, designing and building many types of projects. This kind of approach is central to the department. “Two years is not a lot of time, so every

chance we’d get to do something different, we would seize the opportunity,” he says. “It’s good to work on different problems to keep your mind flexible—and I also have a short attention span, so keeping it fresh is really important to me,” he jokes.

He also says that collaboration is essential: “It is almost impossible to complete a project without a team in the real world, so getting used to the collaborative nature of the creative process is integral in developing something that actually works.” And as Lung explains, the people in the program are as diverse as the products they design and build: “from graffiti artists to graphic designers, from architects, to people who work in finance—each bringing his or her own unique point of view and skill to the table. It was a fantastic opportu-

nity to learn from my peers because I spent a significant amount of time with them.”

Given the multidisciplinary nature of the program and the extensive faculty, Lung found ample support and many experiences that influenced his development as a product designer. Most notably, Michael Chung’s Video Storytelling class had an impact on his work, causing him to see his own work from a different point of view. As he describes it: “I have worked in the prototyping and fabrication end of design for many years, but his class allowed

me to work on the visual narrative and stretch a different set of creative muscles. Also Michael is pure energy and excitement, always amping it up for our night classes.”

For now, Lung will be hosting the *MythBusters* reboot, designing and building things we can only imagine. He gives a final piece of advice to anyone in the program: “You get out of this program what you put into it, so I would just go all out in terms of effort and creativity. No holds barred. No ideas are too crazy.”

