Disney Opens Doors For Designers of Tomorrow

Six college teams travel to Imagineering in Glendale, CA, to participate as finalists in Imaginations Design Competition
January 26 – 30, 2015

December 15, 2014 -- Glendale, CA – Walt Disney Imagineering, the design and development arm of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, has selected the top six finalist teams of its 24th Imaginations competition. Imaginations is a design competition created and sponsored by Walt Disney Imagineering with the purpose of seeking out and nurturing the next generation of diverse Imagineers. Started in 1992, the program has grown to include a separate version sponsored by the Hong Kong Disneyland® Resort.

This year’s six teams of finalists represent Art Center College of Design, Drexel University, Ringling College of Art + Design, San Jose State University, Texas Tech University, and University of Nevada, Reno.

Each finalist team is awarded a five-day, all-expense-paid trip to Imagineering in Glendale, Calif., from January 26 to 30, where they will present their projects to Imagineering executives and take part in an awards ceremony on January 30. Finalists also have an opportunity to meet and network with Imagineers, go behind the scenes where Disney magic is created, and interview for paid internships during their visit.

For this year’s Imaginations design competition, students from American universities and colleges were given the following challenge: Take what Disney does best today – from its world-class theme parks, resorts, cruise ships, and other entertainment venues that are globally highly popular with families -- and apply it to transportation within a major city. The team’s Disney transportation experience should include station/stops and vehicle designs that reflect the diversity of the city, and are accessible, energy-friendly, and fun.

A panel of Imagineering judges applies the same criteria to the entries as they would to their own work that includes the team’s ability to collaborate across different disciplines and backgrounds; the mastery of their individual skills; whether the project provides an engaging Guest experience; a good understanding of the local and tourist market in the chosen location; the ability to tell a compelling and engaging story; and knowledge and passion for the Disney brand and Walt Disney Imagineering. Additionally, the project should be unique in that it is not limited to what Guests already experience at Disney parks and resorts.
Imaginations is one of the creative ways that Imagineering uses to search for the next generation of talented theme park designers. The top three placed teams will be awarded cash prizes, with the first place team receiving $3,000. An additional $1,000 grant will be awarded to the first place team, to be equally divided among its sponsoring universities.

The concepts presented by the finalists cover a wide range of concepts and topics including:

**The Wunderkinds (Art Center College of Design)** The beauty of Switzerland’s landscape, Zurich’s architecture, global recognition as a leader in energy efficiency and conservation, along with a deep admiration for the intricacy and integrity of Swiss craftsmanship inspired this project. The Wunderkinds highlights Switzerland’s most famous products: chocolate, the Alps, and timepieces.

**Woollahra (Drexel University)** Woollahra connects the districts of Liverpool, Hornsby and Sutherland to a main station in the central business district of Sydney, Australia. Also an interactive experience, Woollahra unites Sydney, both geographically and spiritually, using the campfire, a long held place of storytelling and culture, to gather people to share traditions from the past, stories of the lives and vision of what is to come.

**New Orleans Double Rail (Ringling College of Art + Design)** The New Orleans Double Rail is a symbol of hope for a city that’s greatest challenge is its location below sea level. The lower train uses modern-day projection technology to tell the story of the city of New Orleans by creating a magical and unforgettable sightseeing experience as the guests soar over the city aboard the suspended Double-Rail train.

**Aether (San Jose State University).** Aether provides a breathtaking journey by lifting passengers aboveToronto to transport them to commuter and tourist destinations. While on-board, guests are entertained by 3D projected artificial intelligence tour-guides, smart glass projections, interactive seat-backs, and automated photo stops, all of which provide for a unique experience immersed in the imaginative realm known as steampunk.

**La Grand Masquerade (Texas Tech University)** The Great Masquerade takes adventurers of young and old on an immersive, role-playing experience through the city of Venice to uncover magical mysteries of villainy, explore hidden treasures of the past, and discover new imaginative challenges on a whodunit mystery tour. Alongside “living characters”, “agents” will fight villainy, solve ancient mysteries and encounter tales of illustrious magic whilst discovering the city’s rich cultural history.

**Line 55 (University of Nevada, Reno)** Line 55 is an entertainment underground transportation system set in the city of Chicago, featuring four distinct, adventure-filled routes to various themed locations throughout the city. Guests will be able to “travel” into classic literature plots including a sci-fi space mission, a far-away jungle expedition, a deep ocean dive, and a historic Chicago adventure with corresponding themed destinations within the downtown area.
**Walt Disney Imagineering**

Walt Disney Imagineering is the unique innovative organization that creates – from concept through construction – all Disney theme parks, resorts, attractions, cruise ships, real estate developments, and regional entertainment venues worldwide. The name Imagineering combines imagination with engineering.

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