



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Alessi Sponsors Building Product Design Class at
University of Pennsylvania IPD and Penn Design**

“You see things, and you say: ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were, and I say ‘Why not?’”

—George Bernard Shaw

Crusinallo, Italy – Alessi is going back to school by sponsoring an interdisciplinary workshop that will guide students at the University of Pennsylvania through every stage of the product design process. The fall semester course will focus on the creation of a stand-up workstation, taking students from design brief to scaled prototyping. The class, conceived and taught by Jordan Goldstein, AIA, IIDA, LEED AP, Principal and Managing Director of international design firm Gensler’s Washington, DC, office, will work firsthand with Alessi, the renowned Italian product manufacturer, through every step of product development to gain direct insight into the strategic design process that drives the creation of new retail goods. In turn, the academic setting will expose Alessi to a range of new ideas and a creative process that lies outside of their commercial business.

The workshop begins with a question: “What would a next-generation standing desk or workstation look like when manufactured by an innovative manufacturer like Alessi?” This introductory challenge will provide a platform for discussion of how design solutions can change the way we live and work. Lectures will explore a range of related issues: What happens when desk surfaces are adjustable, adaptable, and changeable? How do new materials, new processes of fabrication, and assembly change the evolution of product designs? In what ways do ergonomic concerns and sustainable strategies inform our design process?

“Over the last year, I’ve had the pleasure of working with Alessi to study the workplace accessory market,” says Goldstein. . “We recognized a mutual interest in a few workplace product typologies that would benefit from some blue-ocean thinking, and my classroom at the University of Pennsylvania seemed like a great laboratory to experiment. Alessi isn’t known for workplace furniture, but their fresh thinking, craftsmanship and attention to detail make them an ideal partner to tackle a product category that is clearly in need of innovation.”

Students will present market analysis, design concepts, and prototypes to members of an Alessi review panel throughout the semester. “Working with students has always been an important component in the design process at Alessi,” says Paolo Cravedi, Managing Director of Alessi USA. The company has organized workshops with students in collaboration with schools and universities across the world, including recent work with ECAL in Switzerland and Cranbrook Academy of Art in the United States. “We believe in the fresh perspective that young designers can bring to product design, especially in consideration of their different cultural background and their different curricular experiences,” says Cravedi. “And many of these workshops have been behind quite successful and meaningful product introductions.”

At the close of the semester, students will have the opportunity to travel to Alessi’s Italian factory and present their work to Alberto Alessi.

About Alessi

With a vast product line that includes everything from an iconic, whistling teakettle to a designer fly swatter, the Alessi company, founded in 1921 by Giovanni Alessi, has long been at the forefront of innovative and inspired product design. The company has created a dynasty out of not only offering products geared towards the mainstream – serving trays and everyday cutlery among them – but by also creating some of the most celebrated cult objects of our time. Alessi has been able to develop a policy of design excellence which has made it one of the leading internationally renowned Italian Design Factories. It has reconciled its typically industrial needs with its tendency to consider itself as a 'research laboratory in the field of the applied arts'.

About Gensler

Gensler is a global design firm grounded in the belief that great design optimizes business performance and human potential. Our 4,500 practitioners networked across 46 offices use global perspective and local presence to innovate at every scale. Whether refreshing a retailer's brand, planning a new urban district or designing a super tall building, Gensler strives to make the everyday places people occupy more inspiring, more resilient, and more impactful. Recent accolades include being named the #1 Most Admired Firm in 2014 by *Building Design* and one of the Top 5 Most Admired 'Global Firms' by *Interior Design in 2014*; 'World's Biggest Architect' on *Building Design's* World Architecture 100 in 2014 and 2013; AIA Institute Honor Awards for Architecture in 2014 and 2012; and for the 33rd consecutive year, Gensler tops *Interior Design's* Top 100 Giants list.

Media Contacts:

Emily Levin, **bde**
Emily@bdeonline.biz
212-353-1383

Beth Dickstein, **bde**
beth@bdeonline.biz
212-353-1383