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April 10, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hear about the Portable Light project on BBC WORLD NEWS

www.theworld.org/?q=node/9196

ENERGY HARVESTING TEXTILE DESIGNS COMBINE ADVANCED NANOTECHNOLOGY & ANCIENT MESOAMERICAN WEAVING TRADITIONS

An interdisciplinary team of architects, anthropologists and engineers have developed Portable Light textiles that use sunlight to harvest electrical energy and provide light to indigenous Huichol (Wurrárica) people in remote areas of Mexico's Sierra Madre.

Highly adaptable textile designs created by the KVA MATx Portable Light Team integrate ancient Mesoamerican weaving traditions with cutting edge nanotechnology in flexible CIGs based thin film photo-voltaics and solid state lighting. On the BBC WORLD NEWS link below listen to project Director Sheila Kennedy discuss her prototypes and how they are adopted into the daily culture of the (Wurrárica) people. At *Weaving with Light*, Sheila Kennedy will be available to meet Journalists and demonstrate Portable Light—a remarkable and renewable portable power plant that weighs less than 14 ounces.

Portable Light prototypes distributed this winter in the Sierra provide completely self-contained and portable power and light that can be deployed at a global scale where ever energy-efficient electrical power and illumination are needed. “By developing a new material medium for digital light, the Portable Light project demonstrates the advantages of an energy-efficient textile lighting infrastructure”, said Sheila Kennedy, a Principal at KVA MATx and Director of Design and Applied Research. The prototypes created by our team are lightweight, easy to ship and transport and affordable due to lower installation costs and the production economics of large run textile fabrication. The success of the Portable Light Project demonstrates how nanotechnology can benefit not only the “third” world—where more than 2 billion people currently do not have access to electricity--but also the “first” world, where energy-efficient design is becoming increasingly important.” Kennedy’s team is currently working on designs for an energy harvesting curtain for pre-fabricated housing units. The SOFT HOUSE curtain, exhibited at the Vitra Design Museum in Germany can generate up to 16, 000 watt hours of electricity more than half of the daily powers needs of an average household in the US.

The Portable Light Project was initiated and developed by Sheila Kennedy in collaboration with MATx, the pioneering materials research unit of Kennedy & Violich Architecture, Ltd. (KVA). The mission of MATx is to apply creative processes and strategic thinking across the disciplines of design, electronics, the material sciences and architecture to accelerate the real world implementation of energy efficient digital technologies in textiles building materials, and architecture. For more information on the Portable Light project, please see:

www.portablelight.org

www.kvarch.net

<http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20060520/bob9.asp>

<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/briefs/20050725/fabriclight.html>