

Design@ND

inside...

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Industrial Design Top Five Internationally

With all the awards recently won by the department's industrial design students, it is no wonder that Notre Dame's industrial design program has been ranked among the top five international design programs by *BusinessWeek*. Four Industrial Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) secured this ranking. These include a silver and bronze for **Julia Burke** (BFA '06), and bronze for both **Brad Jolitz** (BA '05) and **Mansour Ourasanah** (BA '07). Other recent awards that Notre Dame's industrial design program has won are a Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award by **Fernando Carvalho's** (MFA '09) and **Kyle Walters** (MFA '07) for AdapTap that helps blind swimmers navigate a pool; a win in the Mazda Design Challenge for **Mallory McMorro's** (BA '08) car design; and a Dyson Eye for Why silver for **Brett Belock's** (BA '08) product which aides in pouring heavy liquids in the kitchen. Notre Dame ID has produced several International Housewares Association Student Design Competition winners, among them **Selim Nurudeen's** (BFA '05) silver, **Michael Elwell's** (BFA '05) bronze, and **Brad Jolitz's** (BA '05) gold. **Laura Reibschleger** (BA '06) and **Anna Scott** (BA '06) also received honorable mentions in this competition.

BusinessWeek Rankings Based on Number of IDEA Wins in the Past Five Years

School	'04-'07	2008	Total
Art Center College of Design	7	6	13
California College of the Arts	3	1	4
Hong-ik University	2	2	4
Seoul National University	2	2	4
University of Notre Dame	3	1	4

Movie Magic **Allen Hemberger** (BA '01) makes film fantasy a reality. As a visual effects artist, Hemberger has worked on such films as *The Matrix Reloaded*, *The Matrix Revolutions*, *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*, *King Kong*, *Jumper*, and the recent release, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Working for WETA Workshop in New Zealand, his efforts earned an Academy Award for visual effects for *King Kong*. Hemberger, sporting a daring "faux hawk," returned to Notre Dame to give a talk about his career path. He described the months of work that go into creating the look of a particular effect and emphasized that it often takes over a year to execute these effects in their final form in a film. Showcasing his demo reel, Hemberger's skills with visual effects are nothing short of magic.

AGI Young Designer Conference In September, the Alliance Graphique Internationale held a conference for student designers in Chicago. Of the many schools in attendance, Notre Dame made a significant showing with twenty-two design students who jumped at the opportunity to hear talks by legends in the design field. Hosted by Rick Valicenti at the Art Institute of Chicago, the conference featured notable speakers Paul Sahre, John Bielenberg, Niklaus Troxler, Michael Vanderbyl, Jennifer Morla, Nicholas Blechman, Steff Geissbuhler, and Christoph Niemann.



Design students beam with excitement during their trip to Chicago for the AGI Student Conference.

Young Design Alumni Lecture Series During the fall 2008 semester, the design program hosted three recent graduates who shared their experiences of pursuing graduate studies or entering the working world. Olympic track athlete **Selim Nurudeen** (BFA '05) presented his graduate work for Arizona State University's ID program. He described the extensive process of research and development in designing a device for preventing hamstring injuries. Nurudeen encouraged current students to develop their design skills further through graduate studies. **Noel Carson** (BA '07) spoke about his position as the Marketing Coordinator at Hickock Cole, an architecture firm in Washington, D.C. His job incorporates graphic design and marketing, and he was able to give valuable insight for current students about design positions available in the architectural world. **Lauren Hallemann** (BFA



'06) spoke about her experiences with letterpress printing for Hatch Show Print in Nashville, Tennessee, as well as LoveLeaf Press of Chicago. Hallemann (pictured) now designs textbooks and educational materials for Three Communication Design, also in Chicago. Hallemann discussed the hectic pace of a design job, as well as unique opportunities in the field.

NOTRE NETWORK

With Tim Legge (MFA '95) at the creative helm of Notre Dame's AgencyND, student interns benefit from the professional experience they can gain working on campus. And who knows how to design for Notre Dame better than one of her own?

Few know that tucked away in the basement of Grace Hall, Notre Dame has its own advertising and design firm, AgencyND. One thing about the office has not changed since recently relocating to this new office space—AgencyND is an agency for and of Notre Dame, bringing together alumni, current students, and other professionals for the common goal of excellence in visual communication that promotes Notre Dame's mission.

Tim Legge (MFA '95) knows this better than anyone. As the creative director for AgencyND, he oversees this team of designers, which includes recent graduates and current students. AgencyND manages approximately five hundred projects each year, representing Notre Dame's Office of Public Affairs as well as the many departments and organizations on campus. Given this clientele, it is important for AgencyND's designers to have a clear understanding of the University. This is no problem for the graduates and student interns. Legge says, "they sing it from the inside."

A prime example is **Tim "Oak" O'Connor**, a designer who received his undergraduate degree in industrial design at Notre Dame in 2002, and is now a junior designer for AgencyND. Legge pointed out that alumni like O'Connor simply have a greater understanding of the University. This is especially the case when it comes to insider experiences like dorm life, the football season, and the undergraduate social scene. Other former designers, such as graduate student alumni Angela Michielutti and Tom Walker, brought their experiences to their design as well. Another senior designer for AgencyND saw his son attend Notre Dame, giving him the unique parent's perspective.

"Legge looks for a strong sense of typography, commitment to work, and reliability."

When asked what he looks for in hiring a designer, Legge has specific requirements. He notes the importance of a well-designed resume as the first step; out of the dozens of resumes he might see when hiring, only a handful will be well designed. He also looks for a strong sense of typography, commitment to work, and reliability. Legge would rather see two or three developed



Design interns Kristina Sinutko (BA '09) and Audrey Marier (BFA '09) with AgencyND Creative Director Tim Legge (MFA '95).

projects in a candidate's portfolio, projects for which he or she is solely responsible, rather than many projects of lesser quality. And the interview is crucial; Legge seeks designers with personality, common sense, and something to share when it comes to design.

Notre Dame students are "so much smarter, there are worlds of difference," Legge points out, referring to the student interns at AgencyND. Having taught as a graduate student at Notre Dame, as well as having held teaching positions at other universities, Legge does not hesitate to make this claim. He cites the vast improvement within the Notre Dame design program over the past several years for this difference, as well as Notre Dame students' broader views due to interacting with classmates from around the world.

Legge's teaching role also reappears when it comes to the student interns. Currently interning at AgencyND are **Audrey Marier** (BFA '09) and **Kristina Sinutko** (BA '09). Legge says that his role as a creative director is much like teaching in that rather than having only his ideas carried out, he gives guidance and allows for the interns' creativity. Their presence in the agency is mutually beneficial—Legge and the other designers need their support, especially during the busy summer months. And the interns gain professional experience. Highlights include responsibility for creative projects, gaining valuable client



Sinutko and Marier hard at work.

interaction experiences, better proficiency with design software, involvement in photo shoots, and exposure to professional design outside of the classroom. Legge considers an intern "equal to any full-time designer" at AgencyND, which is why working there is such a great opportunity for Notre Dame design students.

"I learned a lot about what it's like to work in an agency. The pace of it all was new... how to make things easier, more efficient, and able to start the design process earlier, what to pursue and not to pursue."

Sinutko echoes Legge's comments about improved efficiency in design now that she works for AgencyND. "I learned a lot about what it's like to work in an agency. The pace of it all was new...how to make things easier, more efficient, starting the design process earlier, what to pursue and not to pursue," she remarks. Sinutko states that working at AgencyND makes "you feel part of a team. You need to be there to help out with the projects." The final benefit of her internship: "Tim Legge really helped me (and Oak, too) to transition from being a student to working in the 'real world'. After a few weeks I could do it on my own."

Tenth Annual Alumni Design Conference

Graduates from the class of 1998 returned to Riley Hall for last spring's tenth annual Alumni Design Conference to share their experiences since graduating from Notre Dame's design program. These alumni were invited back to campus to discuss their career paths with current students and to review the state of the program. After the Friday morning presentations, alumni met with students to review their portfolios. On Saturday, a social gathering allowed current students the opportunity to talk with alumni in an informal setting. Alumni ended the weekend by attending the opening reception and awards ceremony for the MFA/BFA show in the Snite Museum of Art.

Charlene (Budd) Tubinas pursued two degrees while at Notre Dame: a BFA in design and a BBA in marketing. After freelancing and ad agency work in New York City, Tubinas moved to Orlando, Florida, where she accepted a job with Walt Disney. Next she worked for the Olive Garden Restaurants' marketing department. In 2001, Tubinas and her fiancé moved to Doylestown, Pennsylvania, where she began working with her father in his real estate and insurance office, with a focus on advertising and web development. Between 2002 and 2007, Tubinas married and had two children, Tommy and Stella. Tubinas hopes to return to a full-time design career one day, but for now she is focused on her family. "I really enjoyed seeing how the ND design program has changed and what current students are doing," Tubinas said of the 2008 Alumni Design Conference.

The summer before her senior year, **Zoe Marin** interned with Phisz Design in Mishawaka, Indiana. Working there part-time during her final year at Notre Dame, she went full-time after graduation. Marin's job ran the design gamut: quoting and pitching, brainstorming, illustration, and design. "I learned my foundation skills at ND, but I learned everything else at my first job," she said. After relocating with her husband to Rhode Island in 2001 and Minnesota in 2004, she continued to work remotely with Phisz and do other freelance work. Now the senior art director at the *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine*, she works in the fast-paced world of editorial design. Marin develops design for the monthly articles as well as for several spin-off magazines. For Marin, the return to Riley Hall for the conference revealed many exciting changes. "The most notable change was in the strength of the student portfolios.

I saw portfolios that were geared toward future employment while maintaining the freedom and creativity you would expect to see in student work. The design program has clearly grown by leaps and bounds and has evolved into an incredible

experience that not only gets students excited about design, but guides and prepares them for a future in design. In one word: exciting!"

After graduating with his MFA in 1998, **Scott Mann** moved to Chicago and joined Pagliuco Design Company, a strategic branding and design agency. He also served as an adjunct instructor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. After more than four years at Pagliuco, Mann left to take a position as an Instructional Assistant Professor at Illinois State University, teaching graphic design in the Department of Art. After two years at Illinois State, Mann left academia to partner with **Bryan Fox** (MFA '00) and start Tangent Design Group, a creative solutions company providing a range of customized design services in product development, corporate identity,

business-to-business and consumer communications. Earlier this year, Mann left Tangent and is currently a design consultant working with such clients as American Express Publishing, Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Hannah & Friends.

Roberto Ansourian returned to his native Fort Lauderdale upon graduating, where he joined Reflex Design as an industrial designer. Ansourian helped develop elliptical machines, stationary bikes, and treadmills. When an opening for an industrial designer and package design manager at Vector Products arose in 2004, he accepted the position. Initially, Vector started licensing the Black & Decker brand for products such as automotive battery chargers, jump starters, power inverters, flashlights and spotlights, but in March 2006 Black & Decker acquired Vector, which officially became Black & Decker's Automotive and Electronics division. Ansourian transitioned back to consultancy when the Florida office closed. Now collaborating with Applica, a manufacturer of home appliances such as blenders, coffee makers, irons, and toasters, Ansourian enjoys learning about yet another industry and its brands. "It was great to catch up with old friends as well as meet new ones at the Alumni Design Conference," he said. "In a sense I was back home, and I'm definitely excited about what's going on in Riley Hall."

After graduating from Notre Dame with a BFA in graphic design, **Beth Albright** took a job in her hometown of Columbus, Ohio, working for a 2D animation studio, Character Builders. She worked there for six years as a color stylist and technical director on several direct-to-video features, short films, and commercials. In 2004, Albright joined several Character Builders alumni to form Hot Donut Productions, where she managed the art direction

department. Her credits include *Space Jam*, *101 Dalmatians II*, *The Fox and the Hound II*, and the award-winning short film *The Indescribable Nth*. In 2006 Albright went back to school to pursue an MFA at The

Ohio State University's Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD), specializing in digital animation. As a graduate student she has taught undergraduate classes in the design department, made animated films, and researched the role of the design process in digital animation. After graduation, Albright will accept a technical direction residency position at Pixar. "I was impressed by the current design students and the work they shared. It was great to be back in Riley Hall and see that while some things have changed, the hardworking, curious, dedicated and creative spirit of the program has not," said Albright.



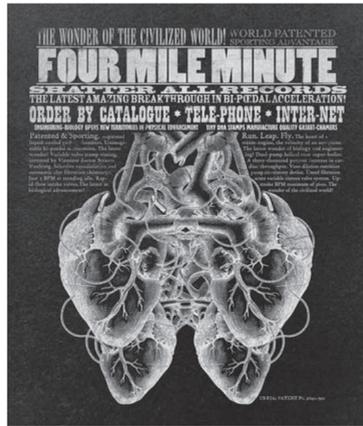
Left to right: the work of alumni Marin, Ansourian, and Mann.

STUDENT EXHIBITIONS

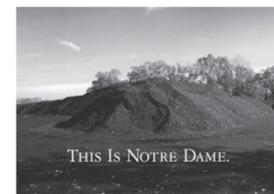
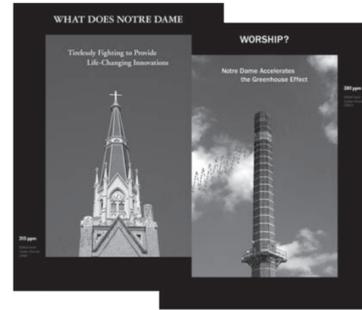
Each spring the MFA/BFA thesis exhibition displays the culmination of year-long student projects at the Snite Museum of Art on Notre Dame's campus. These projects, directed by a faculty member, are exhibited as part of the requirements for graduation. In the first semester of their final year of study, MFA and BFA students present their thesis-in-progress to the faculty, who share a close working relationship with candidates. For MFA candidates, a thesis director and a graduate committee, both selected by the student, guide the student's progress towards a thesis project in the final year. After a juried review of the work, both MFA and BFA students present their theses in the annual exhibition. The spring show includes both graphic and industrial design; this past spring there were two projects by MFA design students and eight by BFA students.



Perdriel: Sustainable Products for the Poor



Warner: Bio-technology of the Future



Brogan: Notre Dame's Energy Production

Michael Perdriel (MFA, Industrial Design) addressed poor populations living in areas of the world with little or no access to water, sanitation, electricity, or fuels. “The challenges of living without access to basic services are enormous, and have the most effect on the poorest, and particularly women and children. With this in mind, I endeavored to design products that most directly affect and are used by women in poor and developing countries.” This includes a stove capable of burning the most commonly abundant fuel: wood. In addition, the stove has the ability to “convert low-grade bio-fuels such as garden waste to charcoal using surplus heat.” Perdriel also created a washer, “designed to alleviate some of the drudgery of washing clothes by hand. By washing more than one item at a time and applying mechanical advantage, the process is less time-consuming.” Perdriel also allowed for adjustments: “The way the stove or washer works can be interpreted and given different forms in response to local environmental, social, cultural, and economic realities. By designing products that can be locally built and that leave room for local interpretation, my hope is that my work creates a space for experimentation and innovation. Finally, this work is meant to contribute to a dialogue on sustainable approaches to development...to shift emphasis from production determined primarily by profit to one that prioritizes human/environmental values.”

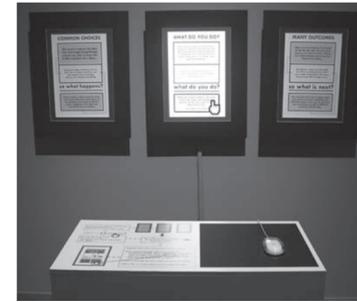
Daniel Warner (MFA, Graphic Design) posited the would-be moral and societal implications of bio-technology in the near future. His thesis, “The Early Years of the Bio-Tech Age, 2000–2025,” imagined various forms of visual media. “Culled from over 150 visual artifacts, each of the 18 pieces in the show reinforces a theme of cultural flux abetted by technological revolution. The ads, fliers, brochures, posters, spreads, and signs making up the exhibit show a world on the brink of new promise and possibility, but also laced with fear and hostility.” Warner’s exhibit, entitled *Utopia/Dystopia*, “lights up the intersections where public debate, occasionally lagging behind consumer offerings, abruptly awoke to a new scientific and ethical frontier. Among the exhibited pieces are early bio-tech ads for ‘designer babies,’ bumper-stickers decrying the same, and samples of visual ephemera from magazine spreads and protest posters. Advertisements for early gen-tech products and services dovetail with visual samples of culture-jamming and protest.”

Evan Brogan (BFA, Graphic Design) highlighted the disparity between Notre Dame’s means of energy production—burning coal—and the inconsistency of this practice with Notre Dame’s mission of the common good: “as the premier Catholic institution of higher learning, Notre Dame should be at the forefront of condemning

(not supporting) fossil-fuel electrical generation, and supporting the United States’ adoption of renewable energies.” Brogan’s thesis drew from religious and energy-related imagery specific to Notre Dame in order to “show a local example contributing to a global problem.” Brogan also directed his messages to people of importance at Notre Dame, “in hopes of creating awareness and affecting change around campus.” Brogan received the Mable Mountain Award for his work.

Matthew Casanova (BFA, Graphic Design) explored the myriad possibilities created by making a series of decisions and the impact of even seemingly small decisions: “no matter what choice is considered, in the long run, it can be important. Using a simple narrative, the project showed a viewer how making just a few decisions over the span of a fictional lifetime can result in only slight changes in the story or can drastically alter the outcome. With over seventy unique endings and hundreds of ways to arrive at each, a viewer can begin to understand that even in a very limited setting, every choice counts.”

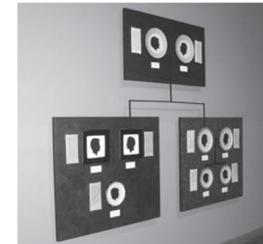
Ashley Cenicerros (BFA, Industrial Design) sought to reduce staggering mortality rates in infants in developing countries due to infection, often caused by unsanitary umbilical cord care. Cenicerros created the Tumbo, Swahili for “belly,” a product which allows clean and safe cutting of the umbilical cord. “The blade is enclosed within



Casanova: Outcome of Choices



Wafer: Sustainable Design



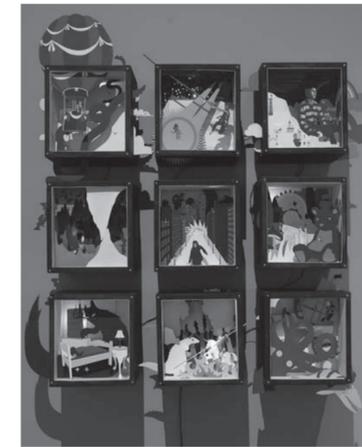
Suazo: Alternative Families

two walls for the safety of the user. The product clamps and cuts in one fluid motion. The clamp can be removed from the device to remain on the baby and thus eliminates the possibility of bacteria entering the bloodstream through the umbilicus.” Cenicerros further ensured sanitation in that “both the clamp and the device are manufactured using thermoplastic. Boiling the device will cause the plastic to become malleable and allow the handle and clamp to be released from the interference locks, therefore forcing sanitation.” For her project, Cenicerros was awarded the Radwan and Allan Riley Prize in Design.

Kelly Gronli (BFA, Graphic Design) created a commentary on the United States’ decline in power and image in the eyes of the world and its subsequent attempt to “rectify its mistakes with an image overhaul.” Gronli satirized the notion of “selling packaged democracy,” by creating five parts to the “American Democracy,” (aspirations, freedoms, rights, civilities, and structures) and packaged them with information about the “concrete numbers of the wars waged to spread democracy.” With this thesis, Gronli demonstrates that “superficial changes do nothing to enhance America’s image abroad because a country cannot be treated like a brand. Policies need to change, not the way we promote them.” Gronli was this year’s Emil Jacques Silver medal recipient for her thesis work.



Cenicerros: Tumbo Umbilical Cord Device



Hirschauer: Childhood Whimsy in Shadowboxes

Amelia Hirschauer (BFA, Graphic Design) meditated upon the whimsical imagery of the “childhood domain, made real by the facility of juvenile imagination.” To combat the receding sense of fancy and value placed upon make-believe as we age, Hirschauer created a series of shadowbox dioramas which “attempt to encapsulate traditionally two-dimensional fictional themes and preserve them in a three-dimensional space more synonymous with reality than a flat image on a storybook page.” Hirschauer received the Radwan and Allan Riley Prize in Studio Art for this project.

Victoria Lane (BFA, Graphic Design) fostered awareness in local area dentists, encouraging them to volunteer their services for the uninsured via a campaign of posters and postcards. “The Sister Maura Brannick Health Center serves uninsured residents of St. Joseph County, but is severely lacking in professional assistance from the dental community. This project was a call to action that identifies the need for more dentists at the clinic, stressed the obligation of the dental professional to serve his/her community, and dictated a response from this specific audience. The ultimate goal was that those who lack accessibility to oral health care plans might receive basic oral health care, which is an intrinsic part of total bodily health.”



Gronli: The American Democracy



Lane: Encouraging Dentists to Volunteer

Miquela Suazo (BFA, Graphic Design) promoted the shifting definitions of the nuclear family in modern society. “While some believe alternative family lifestyles are a threat to the traditional family structure, the increase in diversity within families will make for a more tolerant society.” Suazo focused on the dinner table, a place for the family to come together and “where parents provide nourishment for their children’s bodies and minds. Here, parents can embrace and pass on the idea that the evolution of contemporary families is a positive shift in society. In doing this, a new way of thinking that is more in keeping with the current society will occur, leading to a constant adaptation of the ‘traditional’ family structure.”

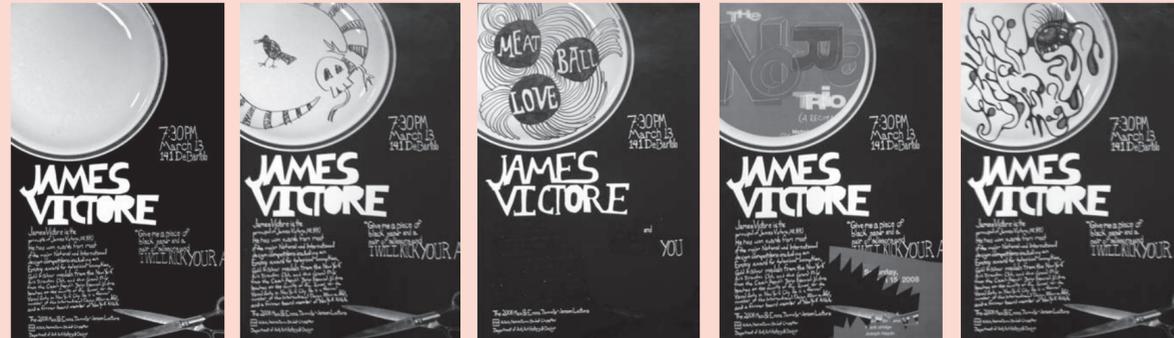
Jarred Wafer (BFA, Graphic Design) created “a designer’s personal exploration regarding how we can create a more sustainable future.” Based upon the concept that waste = food, when waste finds its final resting place in landfills, “resources can no longer be reintegrated into the Earth’s cycle of decay and growth.” Wafer’s project utilized reclaimed waste material “for the purpose of communicating the importance of our efforts to grow towards a more sustainable future.”

SPEAKERS

During the Spring semester, Notre Dame welcomed two noteworthy speakers in the design field, James Victore of Victore, Inc. (NYC) and Marcia Lausen of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

“You guys are f@%#ing awesome. I am not kidding you. You guys are doing a great job,” James Victore declared to more than 120 lecture attendees, the majority of them members of the Notre Dame Design Program. Victore would know, judging from the work of students in his own classes as a teacher for the School of Visual Arts in New York City or when lecturing at various schools. Well known for his unapologetic posters and advertisements on social topics, Victore, of James Victore Inc., came to Notre Dame in the spring. Organized by Notre Dame’s AIGA chapter and made possible by the 2008 Max & Emma Dannelly-Jensen Lecture fund, Victore made a whirlwind two-day visit to campus. To the predominately student audience, Victore gave a talk discussing his influences as well as his own work. The former as as wide ranging as track Olympian Emil Zatopek, *Star Wars*, Paul Rand, Johnny Cash, and Polish poster designer Henryk Tomaszewski. Some of the latter, his most recognizable works, were posters for Columbus Day 1992, “Racism,” and “Disney Go Home.” In addition to showing this work, Victore emphasized his design and life philosophies, such as the importance of spending time with his family. “You become what you pretend to be,” Victore offered as his working mantra, noting that following interests creates opportunities. This has been the case for many, if not all, of his projects. For example, his surfboard designs created an opportunity for production, and his propensity for drawing on dinner plates led to a gallery showing and dinnerware for purchase. In true Victore fashion, Notre Dame’s design students appended posters designed by **Chris Wilkinson** (BA '09) in anticipation of his talk. (Wilkinson’s design, lower left, and the Victoresque embellished posters seen below.)

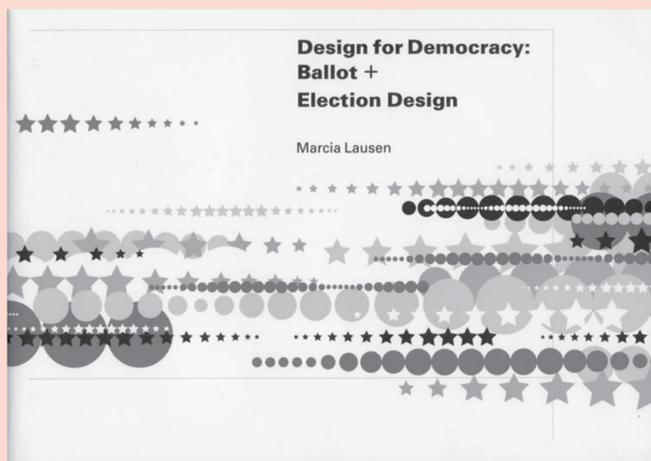
“You guys have got it already. The process you guys are going through now is how to access it,” were some of his words to the students. Due to Victore’s brash style of expression, both in his work and his speech, Wilkinson observed, “He came and energized the design program, and he encouraged people to take chances.” Victore also critiqued **Audrey Marier’s** (BFA '09) portfolio for an audience of AIGA members on the first day of his visit. Marier felt his critique “was honest. He didn’t hold anything back, but it was taken with a grain of salt [given Victore’s] uncompromising style.” Marier stated that, “overall, I think his philosophy is awesome because he’s so particular about how he wants to live his life as a designer. He hasn’t fallen into the profession of design—it’s really his lifestyle.” Victore also provided creative feedback in the form of one-on-one meetings with the MFA design students before concluding his visit with his memorable talk.



vote!

In February, the Director of the School of Art and Design for the University of Illinois at Chicago, Marcia Lausen, gave a talk about her work for Design for Democracy. This AIGA initiative seeks to facilitate the election experience through effective design. Given the punch-card ballot controversy of the 2000 presidential election and the confusing “butterfly ballot” in Cook County, Chicago, she saw the need for significant improvement in ballot design. Lausen volunteered to redesign the Chicago ballot. “We didn’t want to change technology,” she said, approaching the problem instead with the question, “With design

alone, what can we change?” This question resulted in a more legible and usable ballot, a change in the Election Code of Illinois to allow for lower case letters to be used in the redesign, and the development of design principles to be used for election materials in the future. Lausen carried her ballot work into the classroom and into Studio/lab, the firm in which Lausen is the principal. In the classroom, her students worked to support democracy through a voting logo (above), campaigns, voting brochures, forms for the polling stations, as well as a voting supply carrier for polling materials. Studio/lab produced a newly designed Election Judge Manual—the manual used to guide poll workers on election day. Lausen’s talk also covered new polling material for the state of Oregon, the exhibition of her students’ work in Europe, and some of the work she has done through Studio/lab for organizations that include the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies. Lausen’s work concerning the election process was published in 2007 by The University of Chicago Press and AIGA in the book *Design for Democracy: Ballot + Election Design*.



Lausen’s book

What ever happened to...?



When you think of classic albums, you can’t help but conjure images of their unforgettable covers. The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Nirvana’s *Nevermind*, even AC/DC’s *Back in Black*, an album which said everything about how the band was feeling with just one color. Brian Grunert thinks about this all the time—and not just because it’s for work. “I was obsessed with album packaging early,” he recalls.

“My thing in grade school and high school was to do pencil and crayon renderings of the album covers I loved.” Sure, he knew what he loved, but he just didn’t know if he could make a living at it. “I didn’t enter college with this in mind,” Grunert says. “Covers always seemed like something fun but not a practical way to map out your future. I originally had the idea of being all about business, but this interest slowly evolved.”

The first surprise for Grunert was deciding to stay in Buffalo, New York, after graduation, a place he once thought about getting away from when he was younger. “I came back here, and advertising was the best bet for entry-level designers in town,” he says. “I also was in a band with two guys I went to high school with, and my wife and I decided to stay instead of going to Chicago or another big city. I got a job at Travers Collins in 1992 and was there for five years. It evolved from being a low-level graphic designer to working with clients like the Buffalo Bisons [baseball team], doing marketing and collateral ticket packages.” Eventually he found his way to the art director position with the firm Crawley Webb but couldn’t stop himself from moonlighting as a cover designer for local bands. “Even my band, Wisdom of Children, was a good fantasy project that combined my love of music with this cover career I was growing,” he says. “Before long, more bands started seeing my work and asking me to do things for them. It was a lot of fun.” The fun even allowed him to go work for Righteous Babe Records in 2000, doing design for music on a regular basis. “I was living my dream,” he says. But then another dream came along—fatherhood. “When my daughter, Hope, was born in 2002, I had to decide between what I wanted to do and what was best for my family.

Brian Grunert (BA '92) never thought his affinity for album art would turn into a career, let alone a Grammy Award. Beginning in advertising, his love for music and album design slowly crept back into his path, and he now has White Bicycle, his own full-time design gig.

I went back to the agency life as an associate creative director... but at least they still allowed me to work on packaging on the side.” In fact, one of his side gigs was about to pay off big time.

“Ani DiFranco has a label in Buffalo, and someone introduced me to her,” he says. “She’s prolific, so I was doing at least one cover a year, and it turned into more than ten albums. We won the Grammy in 2004 for *Evolve*.” Grunert says he couldn’t believe they even got nominated, let alone took home the most coveted award in all of music. “I didn’t even know the record was submitted for consideration, and then I found out from the printer about the nomination.” With firm accolade in tow, Grunert decided to pitch local superstar band The Goo Goo Dolls. This led to bass player Robby Takac hiring him to do work on his own small label, Good Charamel Records. Takac believes Grunert’s strength was that he took the time to truly understand the business, not just the art. “Brian works in a ‘what does this mean in the big picture’ way some art directors find it harder to work in,” Takac says. “He incorporates the idea of marketing while maintaining the artistic integrity of the package.”

Despite all these side opportunities, Grunert longed for his own full-time company to devote to his design interests after following the responsible ad agency route. In 2006, White Bicycle was born and, most important, with the thumbs-up from his family. And, yes, he never gave up playing the music, still working that bass for crowds.

It’s not always easy to create on the spot or to deal with the pressure of running your own shop. Still, when Grunert looks for inspiration, he just remembers what it feels like that first time. “When I’d get a new record as a kid, I would pore over all the details of the album and feel privileged to be a part of it,” he says. “Lots of fans of the music that I’m a part of packaging do the same thing. The first impression they have of music is that cover, the first thing they see before they start playing it. That moment of something new, it feels terrific to be a part of it.”

by Eric Butterman

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1980s

Kelly (Gore) O’Brien (BFA '88) is now a full-time mom to her three kids. An early job in Chicago was for Bally Manufacturing as a graphic production artist creating artwork for Bally slot machines. She worked for RTC Industries, a point-of-purchase display company in Rolling Meadows, Illinois. O’Brien worked there for almost 15 years, rising to the level of senior designer, creating permanent fixtures for such clients as Timberland, Cover Girl, Toys ‘R’ Us, Sega, Disney, and Procter & Gamble.

1990s

Steve Cozzolino (BFA '93) launched Cozzolino Studio, a full service product design studio located in Manhattan in 2006. He currently works on a wide range of consumer products. Clients include Cuisinart, Dansk, Johnson & Johnson, Nambe, and Oneida. For five years, Steve was Design Director at Karim Rashid Inc., where he worked for clients such as Alessi, Coca-Cola, Dirt Devil, Issey Miyake, Method, Procter & Gamble, Target, Timex, and Unilever. Steve has also collaborated with Eva Zeisel and has taught design classes at both the Pratt Institute in New York City and the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

2000s

Josh Guerra (BFA '00) started his design career in Dallas at the accounting and consulting firm KPMG, for which he produced marketing materials. In 2002 he began pursuing his Master of Architecture degree from Texas A&M University. His academic research took him to both Australia and Spain, and he graduated in 2005. Guerra returned to work in Dallas for RTKL, an international architecture firm. Married in 2008, Guerra now lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife, Christina. He works for Ankrom Moisan Architects, a national leader in designing LEED buildings.

Brian Sailer (MFA '05), a printmaking graduate student at Notre Dame, first moved to New York, where he worked for Urban Attitudes as a print and pattern designer for sports accessories and handbags. Next, Sailer took his skills to Town & Country Living for a year. Afterwards he moved to Ohio to work as the Associate CAD Designer for Abercrombie & Fitch’s boys’ department. Designing patterns for swimwear, woven shirts, and boxer shorts, he achieved a position of full designer within a year. Now the Print Production Manager for the Sourcing Department, he coordinates the print designers and printing mills overseas.

Erin Prill (BFA '06) attended the Chicago Portfolio School upon graduation, studying advertising. There she learned how to write and art direct print ads and online campaigns, finding that her “design skills acquired at ND would get [her] further than anything else.” She was accepted into the internship program at the advertising agency EuroRSCG Chicago, eventually becoming the full-time art director. Her EuroRSCG clients included Citibank, Barilla, ExxonMobil, and Effen Vodka. Prill became the sole art director for Effen in 2008, responsible for writing and art directing all their collateral. In 2008 she returned to her native Montana, where she is now art director for g+g advertising, overseeing Montana tourism advertisements.

Future Alumni

Madeline Nies (BA '09) will graduate with degrees in Graphic Design and Marketing. The Basking Ridge, New Jersey, native finds her double major “has helped me bring a creative eye to the business jobs I have on campus at Adworks (ND’s student-run advertising agency) and *The Observer*.” She wants to merge her two disciplines in a career after graduation. She is currently exploring advertising, digital marketing, and magazine publishing, hoping to work in New York City.

Alumni Contributions

Did you know that when you make a contribution to Notre Dame, you can designate your funds to go directly to the design program? Your gift to the University can help support design initiatives like this newsletter and the annual Alumni Design Conference. All you have to do is note on your correspondence that you want the contribution to go to the “Graphic and Industrial Design Alumni Fund.” It’s that easy. Also note that any gift given to the University is credited toward eligibility for the football ticket lottery. The requirement for each class in order to be eligible for next year’s ticket lottery application (2009) is as follows:

Class of 2009 to 2003 – \$100
Class of 2002 to 1960 – \$200
Classes before 1960 – \$100

The gift must be made between January 1 and December 31 of the current year (2009) in order to make an alumnus/alumna eligible for the following (2010) year’s lottery.

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