


The 10 winners of HOW's inaugural Perfect 10 Competition have everything going for them: conceptual and appropriate design married with technically superior production values.

by Jenny Schnetzer-Reising

A decorative border of blue circles surrounds the text. There are 14 solid blue circles in the top row, 14 in the bottom row, and 14 in the right column. The left column has 14 circles, with the second one from the bottom being a patterned circle of white dots on a blue background.

A perfect print piece is one that compels you to pick it up, feel the texture of the paper and ink, and look closer. Walk through a fine stationery store and your hand will naturally reach for a gorgeous letterpress-printed card or a lovely hand-bound journal. It's magic when printing, paper and design work together—and that's exactly what HOW wanted to recognize in our first Perfect 10 Awards.

Out of more than 400 entries, the 10 winners showcase a picture-perfect blend of style and substance. Individually, they possess compelling personalities that come to life only through a marriage of whip-smart conceiving and printer-perfect execution.

The two Cincinnati-based jurors—Rick Conner, design director at Libby Perszyk Kathman, and Mike Fleury, vice president of national sales at design-savvy printer The Hennegan Co.—dismissed props and gimmicks in favor of pieces that delivered spot-on messaging. “What works about all the winners is that there is strong execution, value, aesthetics and synergy, which ultimately provided the desired end effect,” Conner says.

Jurors applauded the use of tactile, interactive elements, including lenticular technology, rubber-like paper and even spray-painting, to appeal to all the senses. One of the stand-outs, The Red Thread Project, earned high praise for highlighting quality paper and a host of printing techniques, including embossing, debossing, silkscreening, die-cutting and spot-varnishing. (The Red Thread Project also picked up Best of Show in HOW's recent Self-Promotion Competition.)

Several of the winners earned high marks for engaging their target audience through inventive storytelling. The Red Thread Project tells a story about whimsical characters, although its greater message is about discovery (not the least of which is discovering a gem of a print piece). Similarly, *Mr. Crumbly Dreams a Tiger* encourages risk-taking, while providing a keepsake that ensures the print promo won't end up in the garbage. A project from Nokia took on a sketchbook format, with perforated pages and a pencil tipped onto the cover, while a book from Hong Kong Polytechnic University's School of Design used uncut pages to convey the raw student work within.

Although jurors felt that close collaboration with printers was the exception rather than the rule in most of the projects, Conner praised the winning pieces' spirit: “There's a simple, maybe not even obvious, synergy between printing technique and design.” And it's this spirit that's celebrated in the Perfect 10 Awards.

Jenny Schnetzer-Reising is a freelance design writer based in Cincinnati. jennyreising@yahoo.com

PERFECT10WINNERS



When approached to create a new capabilities piece for Quality Printing, designers at Indianapolis-based Planet 10 agreed to take it on only if they could steer clear of a standard folder and sales sheet. Intrigued by the work of area model-maker and illustrator Chris Sickels of Red Nose Studio, the design team asked him to contribute to the collaboration. The Red Thread Project takes cues from the 3x3in. mini-book promos that Sickels prints and hand-sews. It contains bits of poetic copy about whimsical characters; the stories are linked by a piece of red thread that's unleashed from a spool.

Textually, the oversized print piece teaches a life lesson in removing oneself from one's "spool" to discover the world. Tactilely, it struts the printer's stuff in a manner that delighted both jurors, from detailed embossed lettering and sewn red thread on the cutout cover, to a host of printing techniques within—silkscreening, lithography, multilevel embossing, die-cutting and debossing. "It's just wonderful," judge Rick Conner says. "I love the paper, the construction, how the printing augments the beautiful photography—everything about it is impressive."

TITLE
The Red Thread Project

DESIGN FIRM
Planet 10,
Indianapolis;
www.planet10.net

ART DIRECTORS
Jennifer Tuttle,
Mike Tuttle

DESIGNERS
Jennifer Tuttle,
Mike Tuttle,
Chris Sickels

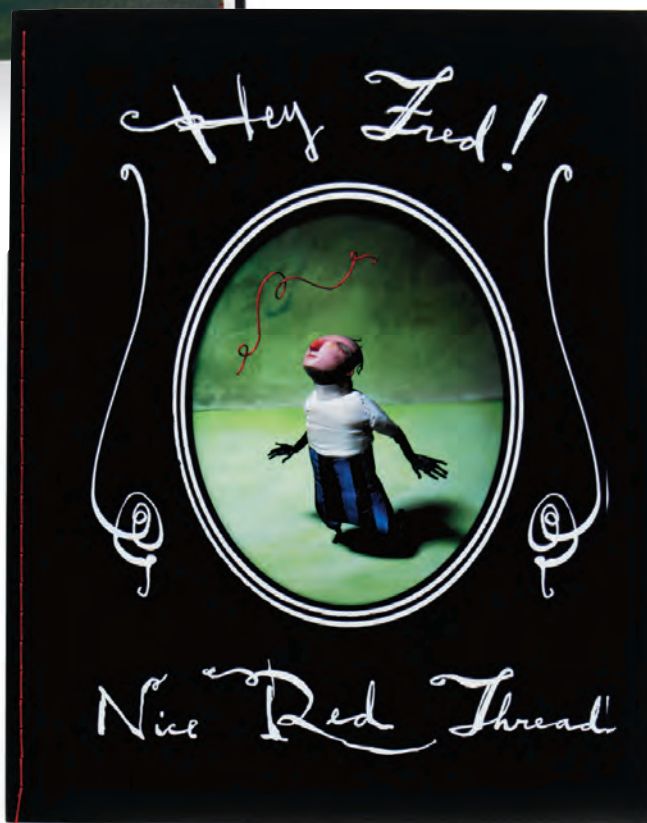
ILLUSTRATOR/PHOTOGRAPHER/WRITER
Chris Sickels, Red
Nose Studio, Green-
field, IN; www.magnetreps.com

PRINTER
Quality Printing,
Anderson, IN; www.quality-printing.com

PAPER MERCHANT
SKH-Shaughnessy,
Plainfield, IN

PAPER
Fibermark Touche
Black, Potlatch
McCoy Silk Text
and Cover

PRODUCTION
Offset printing,
screenprinting,
single- and multi-
level emboss, die-
cut, aqueous coating,
spot gloss UV





1047 Broadway
Anderson, IN 46012

765-644-3959

www.quality-printing.com