

Abstract - This is a report that documents the creation of an annual catalog for Video Action Sports 2009 bicycle videos. The finished product will be sent out in mailers and distributed at races and other events.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Video Action Sports is the largest mail order video distributor for sports videos. Each year they make annual catalogs that are specific to one sport, what sports are chosen to be featured depends on the popularity of the sport and how many videos are coming out this season.

Statement of Purpose: They currently have a need for the design of their 2009 Bike Catalog. They have a small In house design staff and also contract work out to freelance designers. As one of the freelance designers, I will be creating the 2009 bicycle catalog which will feature roughly thirty videos to be released throughout 2009. The project must be finished by the start of the mountain bike race series which is in the beginning of April 2009. The catalog will be printed in April once VAS has all the cover artwork for the videos.

With this project I am hoping to develop a working relationship with the VAS team. I think that this is a great industry because of the excitement associated with the videos and the fact that the design has to be constantly changing in order to promote the films more effectively. This creates a lot of freedom and few restraints which I will take advantage of.

Objective for this Study: My goal with this project is to create an industry level catalog which appeals to fans of all forms of cycling. There are many forms of cycling represented in the videos distributed each year. The majority of the videos are freeride videos without race footage, but there are also films on road racing, documentaries, and specific events in mountain bike racing. As different as all these forms of cycling are, they are all derived from the same concept of a human powered machine with two wheels. The incredible versatility of the bicycle allows it to be so many different things for different people, all from the same basic idea. There is a lot of things to focus on throughout cycling that can appeal to anyone, no matter what genre of video they are looking for in this catalogue.

Chapter 2: Review of Research

My two favorite artists are M.C. Escher and Chuck Close, who both reinvented themselves many times in their careers. M.C. Escher approached art with surgical precision and an obsession with geometric perfection. I grew up seeing his work which provided me with the constant reminder of what could be achieved with the highest level of skill and focus. Observing his work was essential for me because it was the ultimate evolution of the style that I enjoyed most which is pencil or technical pen on paper. I had never used oils or acrylic paint and I felt inadequate because paint is the medium of all the great masters. But, seeing Escher's body of primarily monochromatic work gave me the determination to pursue art.

When I started taking drawing classes in school I became introduced to Chuck Close because I had an interest in portraiture. I loved drawing a portrait and having it actually resemble my subject, which led to me to use grids and other techniques to create better proportions. When I first saw the photo realist artwork that Chuck Close made in the 1970s and early 1980s I thought they were photos. I researched his work online and found high resolution scans of his work up close that showed the extreme care and skill that went into his work. After I viewed many photos of his work, I began to read about his life after he lost the mobility in his legs. I cannot imagine what he went through when there was a time in his life that he thought he

might never be able to make art the way he did before. As a man who made his career on painting perfection, to not even be able to hold a paint brush would be devastating. But, he was able to invent a way for himself to paint again, not in the photo realist style that had made him famous, but in a completely new style that showcased his amazing mind. Securing a large canvas to a fully rotational mount on the wall, he could reposition the surface any way necessary allowing him to make art again. His new work consists of compositions made of tiny multicolored squares that are painted one at a time. It is a process that is as time consuming and technical as his photorealist portraits, and it created a final product that is even more spectacular.

Finally, my main inspiration for this project is the footage from all recent video releases. To see the progression of cycling documented each year in the many videos that VAS releases, proves that human capabilities are endless. As a designer it's inspiring to see something evolve in that way because it appears that something in its current form is the final evolution simply because it's visible. One thing common between not only cycling and art, but almost everything in this world, is that it's much easier to be a critic than to actually put your work out there. To have the vision to create something new requires not only the knowledge and experience of the past but also the ability to visualize the next level.

In art and design, creating a successful solution is the result of careful planning. Graphic design should not only communicate, but it should also make the viewer think so that the message does not become lost. Realizing what it takes to achieve this level of interest is where the ability to visualize something evolve is key. Just like the cyclist who calculates what it will take to reach the bottom of the mountain first, or at what angle they need to approach an obstacle, designers must also venture into the unknown. Anyone who pushes the limits acknowledges the importance of visualizing success and completion.

Chapter 3: Procedures and Results

My concept for this project is to focus on the qualities and characteristics of cycling that can be appreciated by the most serious road cyclist, or by the most extreme gravity rider. There are so many sub-categories under the umbrella of cycling, and everyone has a mutual respect for one another because of they all ride a bicycle. Whether an athlete is riding off a twenty foot drop or zooming down the road in a pack of riders at thirty miles per hour, they are doing it on a piece of machinery that operates under the same basic laws of physics. There are so many qualities of cycling that unite all riders, no matter what discipline of the sport. This concept led me to find uniting qualities throughout cycling. There are many parts that are found on all bikes, like wheels and brakes, that all cyclists feel a certain connection to. While finding cycling imagery that consumers will associate with, I also am focusing on the environment to unite the different forms of riding. All cyclists have a relationship with the environment.

The process of this project started in fall 2008 when I met Ben Bryan who works in production at VAS. While asking him questions about his job and what kind of responsibilities he has, he mentioned to me that he oversees a lot of the design for their marketing department. He described the design process at VAS and showed me some work that has been published by VAS in recent years. He emphasized that they like to work with a variety of different designers in order to seem like they are reinventing themselves constantly.

As well as working with Ben Bryan, I was also introduced to Geoff Tutko who oversees the design and distribution of the promotional catalogs. He was able to show me some of the new artwork for upcoming films that will be included in the catalog to kind of work other designers are putting together for these releases. I also was able to see all of the new VAS

corporate identity to see what direction their brand is heading in terms of design. After going over the project initially with VAS, I began to work on imagery for the catalog. I came up with three different design directions to show them to let them have an influence in the overall look of the catalog. They choose one comp as their favorite, though it was the one that I had spent the least amount of time making. They still had some suggestions for changes which were very helpful and beneficial to the design.

In the beginning of this process, the design for the catalog was going to be a bound booklet which would contain unique spreads inside with the covers of the videos and some text. As the process went on, the design was changed to a three fold brochure like catalog without any binding in order to save money. The format changed again when the production companies wanted more space to advertise the artwork from their films within the catalog. This caused VAS to go to an 5.5"x8" saddle stitched catalog with a combination of artwork submitted by the filmmakers and unique spreads.

Working with the front and back covers as the main focus of the design, I created a collage of cycling equipment that is recognizable by all cyclists to be on the front. The main image on the front cover is a human hand made out of bicycle and bicycle related parts. The images I used for these designs are a combination of photos that I have taken, and stock photography which I cut up to make the images unrecognizable in their original form. The hand is made up of not only bike parts, but many items which are commonly used by cyclists. The background for the design is a high resolution photograph of the sky to make the design pop off the page. The back cover includes a simple illustration to unite it with the front. The typeface used is Helvetica Ultra Light which is a typeface with an elegant feel to give the text a grand presence alongside the imagery.

Chapter 4: Summary and Recommendations

Throughout this project I have learned a lot about doing professional design work for a real client versus working on a school assignment. I am now much more aware of the accountability of the designer in a project like this. Doing school assignments, there is the freedom of being able to choose your own design solution based on feedback. But, in this process the decisions were made by others who got to view all my work at one time not knowing which comps took more time to develop or which ones I thought were strong myself. This places equal emphasis on all the designs, and allows someone without any bias to make a decision based solely on which design they think is the most effective. The team at VAS was enthusiastic and very helpful in guiding me toward the best design.

My recommendation for future art students and their senior projects is to make sure that the schedule for the project matches up with the art 462 class in winter quarter. My project came down to the wire due to relying on files that had to be sent to me. Everyone is on their own time table, and it is best to plan something that could be completed up to a month before it is actually due in order to provide enough time to put the entire project together.

Bibliography

Parrish, Maxfield: "The Poster Book", Ten Speed Publishing. Copyright 1994

Strassburger Michael: "Modern Dog: 20 Years of Poster Art", Chronicle Books. Copyright 2008

Chen Design Associates: "The Art of Using Hand Made Elements in Graphic Design" How Publishing. Copyright 2006

Crankworx Invitational Website: "www.crankworx.com" Factory Web Design. Accessed Jan-Mar 2009

Sickness with the Quickness Website: "www.sicknesswiththequickness.com" WOT Web Design. Accessed Jan-Mar 2009

Santa Cruz Syndicate Website: "www.santacruz bicycles.com" S5 Web Design. Accessed Jan-Mar 2009