

MITPressLog

June 22, 2009

On the Road: Report from the BoNE Show



On June 11th, one of our MIT Press designers, Emily Gutheinz, received a couple of Best of New England (BoNE) design awards. Another of our fabulous designers, Erin Hasley, attended the award show at Massachusetts College of Art (still on view until July 8th!) and writes about the show and the process of design:

The BoNE Show

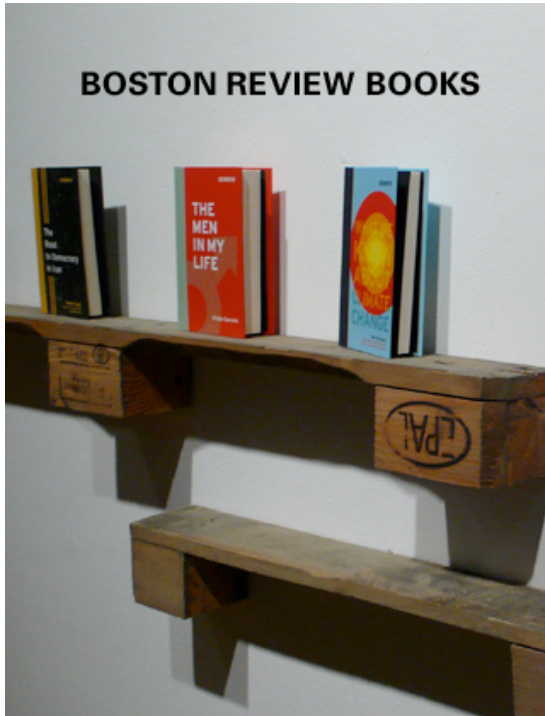
American Institute of Graphic Arts, Boston Chapter, Best of New England Show
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

June 11, 2009

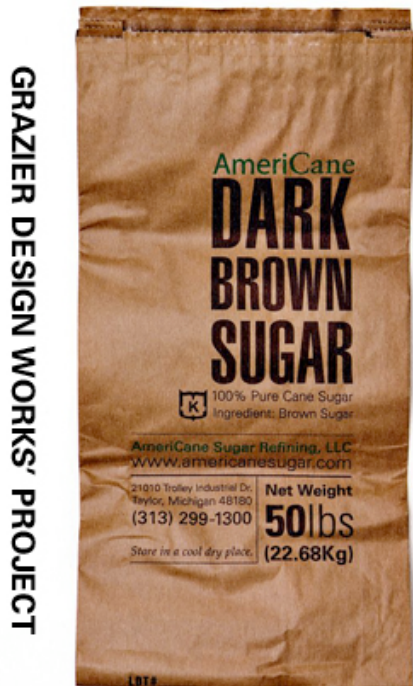
We ran to catch the Crosstown bus from Kendall/MIT, heading toward Ruggles. This bus jostles at an alarming pace, winding through Cambridge to Boston. We weren't entirely sure where to disembark until we caught sight of MIT Press Journals Production Coordinator Katrina Noble. She was on her way to class at MassArt. We followed her. Outside Bakalar Gallery, we waited for fifteen minutes. The suspense was palpable (or was that our impatience?). We were near the front of the line. Let us in!

Making a quick tour of the premises before it filled up with people, we checked out the awards themselves, which resemble oversized dog biscuits (a.k.a. Milk-Bones), cast in solid metal. We gazed at the Boston Review series of books — produced by MITP — and located both of Senior Designer Emily Gutheinz's MITP projects, *I Am a Beautiful Monster*, and *Camps*.

Then we looked at the show as a whole. It represents the work of New England designers, and excellence in this field. Projects range from posters, to books, to multi-media, to site-specific design. Some designers are household names around Boston, Providence, and New Haven, some are professors, some are students, and some belong to newish local chapters of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, formed in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine.



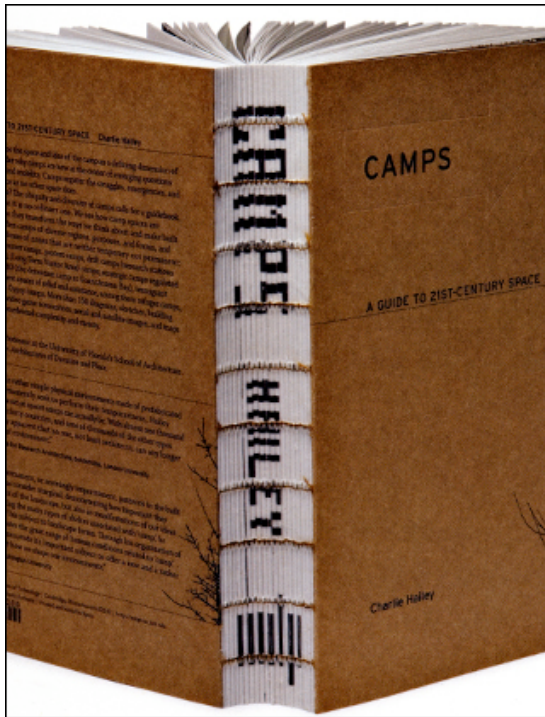
The 2009 biennial Best of New England (BoNE) show has a “green” theme, with signs made out of corrugated cardboard and displays made out of reused wooden pallets. The materials create an understated but warm environment. I wonder if the judges knew, beforehand, about the theme of the show. Their choices might have been informed — in part — by entries representing this theme of sustainability. Many of the pieces (such as Grazier Design Works’ brown paper 50 lb sugar bags) reinforced the aesthetic of the display.



An exhibit’s opening may not be the optimal time to see a show. A show is better appreciated when you’re on your own or with one friend and the gallery is almost empty. Yet an opening is a perfect time to see many individuals interested in the same discipline. It’s a great opportunity to people-watch, and to speculate. Specific to the BoNE show, it could well be a time to check out the work of your mentors, contemporaries, and protégés, all in one room. Observing the diversity of work that exists within New England alone makes the exhibit impressive and unique.

It was great to see my former professor Doug Scott, and the four posters he had in the show. This was a welcome reminder that the fundamentals I was taught are still the things that sustain me in my career, more than a decade later. My first boss after college said, “Tell me what you did and why you did it.” I repeat that statement to myself, now and then. Even better is when the reason for doing something is integral to the piece itself, and there is no real need to explain anything.

The MIT Press's own Emily Gutheinz (MassArt '00) won two awards at the BoNE show, including the highest honor — Judges' Pick — for the book *Camps*. She was deeply invested in both of the winning projects. Bookmaking involves our authors, and it requires the expertise of our colleagues in various departments including acquisitions, editorial, production, and marketing. Designers rely on experience (performing the same skills over and over), intuition (sensing, trying to “get into” what they're doing), and innovation (not being afraid to try new methods, new materials), to present the content as appropriately as possible.



One feature of *Camps* that draws the reader to its utilitarian yet elegant narrative is the exposed spine. Before they are bound, groups of book pages are folded together. These are usually numbered on the individual spines of each grouping (called ‘signatures’), to help keep them in order. Then they may be sewn together. Emily envisioned what a book spine would look like without the normal finishing that occurs when heavy cloth- or paper-covered cardboard is adhered to the book itself, completely covering things up.

With the support of printer GRAFOS S.A. (Spain) and Production Director Terry Lamoureux, black markings were made on selected signatures, where the numbering might normally be. When sewn together, these marks form the title, author's name, and publisher's colophon. The result — seeing the unapologetic materials from which a book is made — seems akin to camp culture. The book is kind of lashed together, and roughing it. At the same time it is organized, clean, and compact — a ‘guide,’ as the subtitle suggests.

...

Partway into the night — when the BoNE Show awards were actually presented — we couldn't hear everything organizers/Chairs Brandon and Jeff were saying, because the place was so crowded with enthusiastic and noisy people. But I did hear one of the organizers say, “labor of love.”

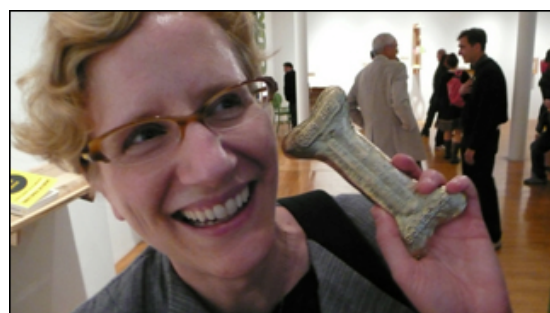
At its best, that's what design work is.

We took the subway home — a less direct but more predictable route. On the way I was still thinking about the show. What made me most happy was to see my colleagues and friends succeed and be recognized. The act of designing is seldom glamorous, and a lot of it can be quite solitary. Hartford's CO:LAB contributed a piece that uses this as its concept: *Design Ain't Pretty*. The second benefit of the show was to know that work can still be made in this era with high-quality materials and to see so many examples of visual information presented both clearly and creatively.

Erin Hasley, Senior Designer, The MIT Press



CO:LAB's PROJECT



Related Projects:

Camps by Charlie Hailey
 designer Emily Gutheinz
 manuscript editor Sandra Minkkinen
 production director Terry Lamoureux
 acquisitions editor Roger Conover
 printer Grafos S.A.

I Am a Beautiful Monster by Francis Picabia, translated by Marc Lowenthal
 designer Emily Gutheinz
 manuscript editor Judy Feldmann
 production manager Janet Rossi
 acquisitions editor Roger Conover
 jacket printer Henry N. Sawyer Company
 text printer Edwards Brothers

Boston Review Series
 designers Alex Camlin and George Restrepo
 manuscript editor Jessica Hosman
 production coordinators Jennifer Flint / Daniele Paulding
 acquisitions editor Clay Morgan
 cover printer John P. Pow Company

BoNE Show Exhibition Dates:

The exhibition of winners is free and open to the public from June 12 – July 08, 2009

<http://www.boneshow.org/blog/show-information/>

Massachusetts College of Art and Design
Bakalar Gallery
621 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA 02115
www.massart.edu

Mon. & Tues., 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Wed., 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Thu. & Fri., 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sat., 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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