

The Inclusion of Social Responsibility in the Visual Communications Curriculum

2008

Case Study

Submitted by:

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“Social responsibility is a major concern in all of the design courses in the School of Design at RIT. Students are continually reminded that they are responsible for the messages they put out there and that design does have the ability to affect change.”

Patti Lachance
Associate Professor/Administrative Chair
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Synopsis from official website <http://www.rit.edu/about/vision_mission.html>

The RIT community engages and motivates students through stimulating and collaborative experiences. Our mission is to provide technology-based educational programs for personal and professional development. We rigorously pursue new and emerging career areas. We develop and deliver curricula and advance scholarship relevant to emerging technologies and social conditions. Our community is committed to diversity and student centeredness and is distinguished by our innovative and collaborative spirit.

Internal and external partnerships expand our students' experiential learning. RIT is committed to mutually enriching relationships with alumni, government, business and the world community. Teaching, learning, scholarship, leadership development, and student success are our central enterprises.

Pro Bono Projects

Rochester Institute of Technology Student's Involvement with Pro Bono Work Under the Guidance of Carol Phillip, Visiting Professor Graphic Design:

RIT senior graphic design students were responsible for all aspects of design from conception to completion including but not limited to design, creative writing, illustration, photography, choosing imagery, and production for the clients mentioned below. Their research and development of concepts led to applied solutions for the clients to utilize to help facilitate the recognition and success of their organizations.

Client: Music is Art, Fall 2007

Incorporated in 2004, Music is Art strives to promote and educate music and art within the community and schools throughout the year. The founder of Music is Art is Robby Takac, bass guitarist of the Grammy nominated rock band the Goo Goo Dolls.

Music is Art hosts various programs throughout the year including the Music is Art Festival, which draws 75,000 fans from throughout Western New York and Southern Ontario. A School Awareness Tour and Music in Action program includes mentoring and instruction from the private sector, numerous instrument drives rely on financial and material donations and a Teen Battle of the Bands are also part of its community based program initiatives.

Recent honors and awards for Music is Art include: the Community Gold Award from the Buffalo Alliance for Education as part of their 14th Annual Mayor's Commitment to Education; the annual Community Service Award from the New York State Western Region PTA honoring Music is Arts efforts in trying to make a real difference in the lives of children and the community.

Final Presentation Delivered by Each Student to Music is Art, November 9, 2007

For the final presentations, students were joined by the entire Board of Directors for Music is Art including Robby Takac Jr, president and founder; Robert Mussell, vice president; Robert Takac Sr, treasurer; Bob James, secretary; Tod A Kniazuk, executive coordinator. Each RIT student presented his or her work to the client in a PowerPoint or Flash presentation. Each student was also responsible for making comps, mock-ups and hard copies of their work along with a take away book.

Client: FoodLink / FreshWise Farms, Spring 2007

FoodLink has a 25-year history of feeding hungry people in the Greater Rochester area. Today, the foodbank serves over 550 human service programs in a ten-county service area—especially soup kitchens, shelters and food pantries. As one member of the national association of 213 foodbanks, America's Second Harvest, FoodLink has distributed over 100 million pounds of food during its tenure that translates into \$75 million worth of food in the 1990's alone.

FreshWise Farms is a local hydroponic greenhouse. FreshWise Farms provides the highest quality, pesticide-free greens, year-round, which maximizes access to nutritious food in Rochester and the surrounding ten-county area. FreshWise is a wholly owned subsidiary of FoodLink and all profits go to fighting hunger through FoodLink.

Final Presentation Delivered by Each Student to FoodLink / FreshWise Farms, May 21, 2007

For the final presentations, students were joined by FoodLink executive director Tom Ferraro; Jim Ferrari, general manager, food and nutrition operations; Frances Pesavento, director of programs; and Liz Sanders, manager of FreshWise Farms; Carey Corea, CEO of Rochester communications/marketing firm Idea Connections and a FoodLink board member. Each RIT student presented his or her work to the client in a PowerPoint or Flash presentation. Each student was also responsible for making comps, mock-ups and hard copies of their work along with a take away book.

Client: Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Winter 2006

The Historical Society collects, preserves and researches the written, spoken, pictorial and artifactual records of the history of Western New York and the Great Lakes region while promoting a better understanding of the present by using exhibits, educational programs, publications, media presentations, and other appropriate means.

The Historical Society's main building, the Pan-American Building, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987.

Final Presentation Delivered by Each Student to Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, February 19, 2007

For the final presentations, students were joined by representatives from the BECHS including Betsy Gemerek, Senior Director, Development and Communications; Melissa Wertman Brown, Collections Manager; Tricia Rosen, Education Coordinator; Mary Louise Stanley, Museum Shop Manager. Each RIT student presented his or her work to the client in a PowerPoint or Flash presentation. Each student was also responsible for making comps, mock-ups and hard copies of their work along with a take away book.

Client: Rock Band Club, Winter 2006

George Olmsted, a social studies teacher at West Seneca West Middle School, leads a rock band club for 7th and 8th graders. He started the club because in middle school he felt there was no place for “rocking musicians... because those students don’t fit in the usual ensemble with their Ramones t-shirts”. His program helps to keep students interested in school and excited about learning.

Each student who participates in the band must maintain at least a B average. His music program has been widely recognized and featured on the local TV news and newspaper and has played at small and large venues—some with thousands in attendance.

Final Presentation Delivered by Each Student to West Seneca West Middle School, February 21, 2007

For the final presentations, students were joined by George Olmsted, program director and teacher; Lysa Brewster, volunteer; three parents of the students in the rock band; six 8th grade students in the rock band. Each RIT student presented his or her work to the client in a PowerPoint or Flash presentation. Each student was also responsible for making comps, mock-ups and hard copies of their work along with a take away book.

Rochester Institute of Technology Student's Involvement with Pro Bono Work Under the Guidance of Lorrie Frear, Assistant Professor:

January 10, 2006

To: Dr. Stone, Patti Lachance, Kelly Downs

From: Lorrie Frear

Early in fall quarter, 2005 an opportunity to work with the Susan B. Anthony House presented itself to me, and I decided to have both sections of my Concept and Symbolism courses (41 Graphic Design Seniors) work with this real-world client on a "real" project.

Tamra Brosseau, the Historic Preservation and Conservation Administrator at the Susan B. Anthony House, served as our client. In this role, Ms. Brosseau visited both sections of the course several times to guide the students and to participate in individual and team presentations. This project began in week 3 of the quarter and was concluded by week 11; quite an accomplishment for everyone...

The first part of the project involved the design of a visual identity for the 2006 Campaign of the Susan B. Anthony House which is titled: Susan B. Anthony: the Living Legacy. The campaign will encompass a wide variety of events throughout 2006 to celebrate and highlight the advancements in opportunities for women and minorities which have occurred in the 100 years since Ms. Anthony's death in 1906.

Each student worked on the creation of visual identities utilizing this title and Ms. Brosseau selected the solution which will be used this year on all promotional materials related to this campaign. This solution was designed by Matt Stein.

The next part of the project involved the design and execution of a permanent exhibit for the Living Legacy Room in the Visitors Education Center to "re-brand" Ms. Anthony and to familiarize younger generations with her accomplishments in a fresh, new way.

The two sections were divided into 8 teams of 5 or 6 people on each team. Each team devised a concept and presented solutions to Ms. Brosseau for review. She selected the solution of Matt Stein's team, which was composed of Raina Bahns, James Gilot, David Keefe and Steve Skalocky. This team's concept was to showcase the accomplishments of six living women who they felt embodied some of the qualities possessed by Ms. Anthony. Some women are local and some are internationally known.

Once this solution was selected, this team recruited three members from other teams to assist them in completing the display within the timeframe. The new members are: Maximillian Seifert, Eric Miller and David Fung. Each of these eight team members had specific tasks to complete and skill sets that made a very strong team unit.

The other seven teams continued working on their solutions and each team completed a prototype of its exhibit solution. Five teams exhibits will be on display in various locations in the Rundel Library from January 17 to March 23, and the exhibits of the remaining two teams will be placed on permanent display in the Sibley windows on Main Street downtown. Tamra Brosseau has quotes from each team about their experiences in doing this project.

The public presentation of the Living Legacy Room Exhibit will be Saturday, January 28, at 10:00 am at the Visitor Education Center. This exhibit will be on permanent display.

Concept and Symbolism

Lorrie Frear

Susan B. Anthony Project

The Living Legacy Project:

We have *really* been retained by the Susan B. Anthony House to create the core elements of their 2006 campaign entitled: Susan B. Anthony—The Living Legacy (or could it be The Living Legacy—Susan B. Anthony?)

Why is this campaign happening? 2006 is the 100th anniversary of Susan B. Anthony's death. Also, the Susan B. Anthony House is in the midst of a fund-raising campaign to renovate the house (see below).

The Audience:

General; from school kids to senior citizens. The Susan B. Anthony House attracts visitors from around the country (not familiar with local stuff), both genders, all races and ethnic groups, tours from elementary/middle schools, students doing research on various topics.

The Susan B. Anthony House would like to attract more visitors; and increase the public's awareness of Susan B. Anthony and her accomplishments and those of her peers and *how these accomplishments relate directly to today's world. The House is looking for fresh, innovative approaches (not like what you usually see in museums) that will be exciting and inspirational.*

If you take a House tour, you will see that the House needs a lot of repairs to be respectable and respectful of the memory of Susan B. Anthony. The Board of Directors is currently in the midst of a significant fund-raising campaign, and *what we do will directly affect the campaign's success.* The Susan B. Anthony House is a National Landmark.

The Core Elements:

1. The Living Legacy visual identity/branding
2. The Living Legacy Room: educational and inspirational survey of SBS's impact on today's world
3. Signage/Banner above doorway to Living Legacy Room
4. Display renovation in the room across from the Living Legacy Room

Other Possibilities:

1. Items to be sold in the gift shop
2. Banners, posters, etc, throughout city/county
3. Newspaper ads, print ads in local magazines
4. Website updates/improvements
5. Graphic design internship/co-op opportunities
6. Design/promotion for the upcoming fund-raising art auction in June
7. Interactive program to be taken to schools for educational purposes

This project has far-reaching and enormous potential to become a significant design system. I'd suggest going to any museums/landmarks that you can get to in order to see what works and what doesn't. (Corning, Strong Museum, Planetarium are good ones to start with) Also, look in CA for the best in exhibits, displays, etc. (Nike, Apple are good ones to start with).

General Information/Background:

The main part of this quarter's project will be visual/educational/inspirational graphic applications in the Living Legacy Room in the Visitor's Center. This building is NOT the Susan B. Anthony House. The Visitor's Center houses display areas, the gift shop and the location to buy tickets to tour the House. (See map to locate where the Visitor's Center is in relation to the Susan B. Anthony House.)

The Living Legacy Room is tiny and not very impressive. It presents a good design challenge. (See sketch for a rough depiction of what the room looks like.)

Team Reps:

You are responsible for obtaining photos/measurements of this room for your teams. Look at the work currently on the wall in the Living Legacy Room. This is a perfect example of what they don't want. They want people who enter this room to get a full sense of Susan B. Anthony's legacy. Use your research to find out facts as well as historical imagery (photos/illustrations.)

Possible Topics:

1. Women in politics: Geraldine Ferraro, Hillary Clinton, reps, senators, Secretary of State Rice
2. Women in medicine: cancer specialists, researchers, physicians
3. Women in the military, police, fire department, EMS
4. Women in higher education: professors, college presidents
5. Women in athletics: Title Nine Sports, all school sports from middle school to college
6. Equal pay for equal work
7. Women in space: Eileen Collins, Pam Melroy, Sally K. Ride
8. Women role models
9. Freedom of choice
10. Civil rights
11. Women's right to vote (19th amendment)
12. Cultural diversity, tolerance
13. Local vs. national people/events
14. SBA quotes/writings, or quotes from women about SBA's influence on them
15. Not for ourselves alone

Possible Taglines:

1. Failure is impossible
2. The Living Legacy
3. Other

Ideas for Research:

1. Any library
2. The U of R Library/inter-library loan
3. The National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls
4. The Susan B. Anthony Gift Shop and Archives

Remember to make these visual applications speak to *your generation*. The client and I have no preconceived notions about what form these pieces take. *Use your imagination!*