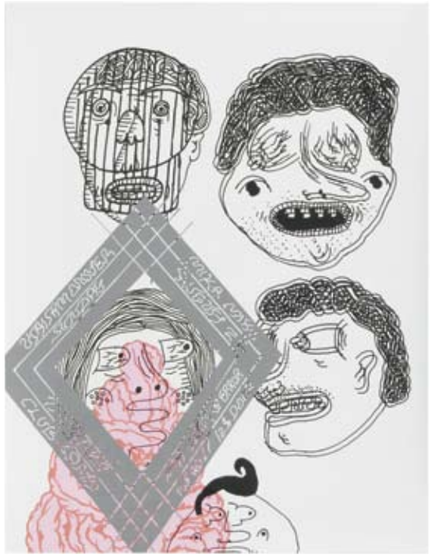
BEST OF SHOW







Poster Children

Style, craft and volume help this campaign by a duo of Montreal poster artists snag top honors.

BY BRYN MOOTH

Ordinarily, the judges' debate about which entry out of nearly 4,000 stands out as the Best of Show is intense but fairly short-lived. Every contender gets a fair shake, but there's typically a quick consensus.

Not this year. Judges Nathan Hendricks, Debbie Millman and John Foster carried on a spirited discussion for about two hours, as they weighed which of the 10 Outstanding Achievement winners would score the top honor.

The project that finally emerged as Best of Show was noteworthy not just because of its magnitude (a series of 16 screen printed posters) but also because of its craftsmanship and style. The Montreal design shop Seripop created, illustrated and printed these gig posters for the underground music promotion company Blue Skies Turn Black. While the judges debated whether a no-creative-limits project for a risk-taking client and a narrow audience truly merited their votes, they agreed that the posters' uniqueness stood out. "This is the culmination of everything that was good about the whole show," says judge John Foster.

Seripop's Yannick Desranleau and Chloe Lum worked with the client, which produces up to 10 shows per week in Montreal venues ranging from tiny clubs to stadiums. The duo and their client go way back; they went to art school with one of the BSTB founders and have collaborated since both firms launched eight years ago. Desranleau and Lum get their pick of all the shows (BSTB also works with other local poster artists), and their musical interests guide which events they work on. "We tend to pick the weirder, more avant garde shows to make posters for, because we like to work with freaky music," the two say.

1 *Yannick Desranleau and Chloe Lum produced the whole series in editions of 120 to 200, using laytex paint and a semi-automatic Lawson Mustang press. The concert promoter wheat-pastes the posters all over Montreal. "The process of screen printing is cheap, and since we control every aspect of it, we're not shy to experiment with different ink densities, transparencies, overlays if the message requires it," they say.*





2 *"The ideas used in the posters to get the message across could be a literal element from the show, have to do with some kind of play on words or just be a total freakout of what we think is visually appropriate for the event," say Lum and Desranleau.*





The designers say their collaborative process leads to experimentation. "Because we work as a team, we have to deal with each other's input," they say. "We work as if we're having a dialog, an argument. This duality in our work forces us to cope with unpredictability almost all the time, and it allows us to keep experimenting with form, layout and printing."

For a group of posters that promote widely divergent music, the series hangs together in a remarkable way. Hendricks notes that the campaign has an almost stream-of-consciousness nature. "These people are clearly able to tap into creative flow," he observes. "There's almost nothing between their nervous system and the work. It just gushes out."

TITLE *Blue Skies Turn Black 2006–07 Poster Series* | **DESIGN FIRM** *Seripop, Montreal; www.seripop.com* | **ART DIRECTORS/DESIGNERS/ILLUSTRATORS/PRINTERS** *Yannick Desranleau, Chloe Lum* | **CLIENT** *Blue Skies Turn Black*