EXHIBITOR

TENTH ANNUAL EXHIBIT DESIGN AWARDS

EXHIBITOR MAGAZINE'S

THE WINNERS

THE WINNERS

A panel of four internationally renowned designers selected 11 winning projects for *Exhibitor* magazine's Tenth Annual Exhibit Design Award Competition. Overall, 149 exhibit design projects competed for honors in the 1996 contest – a 6 percent increase from last year. A total of 67 exhibit designers, producers or clients submitted their work – up 10 percent from last year.

The judging panel consisted of Earl Gee, principal, Gee + Chung Design; Tim Girvin, principal, Tim Girvin Design; Steven Skov Holt, visionary, frogdesign; and Lucille Tenazas, principal, Tenazas Design. Their selections range in style from the sculptural elegance of Duncan Aviation, to the brand marketing finesse of Nike Inc., to the playful adventure of Living Books. (For a complete list of winners, see next page.)

Four Gold Awards and six Silver Awards were given. (Judges did not make awards in all 12 categories.) Jurors called out one entry – Mauk Design's creation for Sun Microsystems – for a special award: Special Merit for Creativity, placing it between the Gold and Silver award levels. The free-form "bird's nest" structure that designers Mitchell Mauk and Adam Brodsley created went "far beyond the norm," explains Holt of frogdesign. "It takes a risk, breaks the paradigm. This is what we want to encourage – a larger, (design) world view of what's possible in the realm of exhibitions."

The panel also recognized the steep challenge of designing for the trade show medium, as expressed in this short excerpt:

Exhibitor Magazine: What makes trade show exhibit design so different from other design fields?

Tim Girvin: Trade shows are at some level a "schmoozing" event. There are all these exchanges and deals that are based on handshakes and sitting around and eating sandwiches in the exhibit's coffee bar. When I first got involved with this whole area of communications, I never realized what the whole thing was all about. But it really is a personal, interactive process.

Lucille Tenazas: The process is still basic. Regardless of what happens with technology in the future, you want to shake hands and meet people in person. You can't do that on a computer. It's human instinct. The design has to support that interaction.

Earl Gee: One of the challenges behind exhibit design is that it incorporates so many design areas – graphics, information design, a bit of interior design, industrial design and architec-

ture. It takes a design generalist, one who isn't afraid to delve into areas in which he or she may not already be an expert.

Steven Skov Holt: But let's be honest. The field of exhibition design is probably one of the less prominent ones. There are few if any institutions that offer a BFA or master's in exhibition design. Some organization needs to be setting the standards.

Exhibitor magazine gives exhibit managers and designers "evidence" – something to hold in their hands and show clients or upper managers to say, "Look, here's what other guys are doing. Here's what's going on in other parts of our industry and other industries. We're a leader, we have to benchmark ourselves against this." In that way, the magazine lifts up the status of trade show exhibit design a lot. But there's still a lot more to do.

EG: A lot of this comes down to whether design in general has really proved its value, in all forms. That has to be a basic principle. Have we proven that design makes a bottom-line difference? We're all convinced, but we're the converted. Have we really proven it?

TG: That's the constant argument that we have to deal with in our profession, regardless of what area of design we represent. What is the real benefit? When you consider industrial design and look at some of the things being mass produced, it's apparent the pure function and beauty of an object is not being cared for at all.

You're always going to deal with individuals or corporate entities who don't care about design. You can't convert everyone. Some people get it – they understand how design integration works, they understand how consumers perceive the messages. Companies like Black and Decker or Thermos realize how the total design messaging from industrial design to packaging to identity needs to be carefully integrated. But other companies don't care.

EG: (In the winning Apple design project), the product display does Apple's product design justice. The design is clean, allowing the products to come through nicely.

SSH: The designer understands how to get into the whole mind-set of the product.

TG: The designer's a true storyteller.

SSH: And because of that, the way in which the product is displayed is at once allowed to propel the product forward to the viewer, but also remains seamless with the background.

EG: The exhibit lives up to Apple's products. The designer supported Apple's high-style industrial design with high-style exhibitry. It's the kind of stuff that advances the cause for quality exhibit design. ❖

– By Lois Wallentine, managing editor.

GOLD AWARDS

Client: Duncan Aviation
Designers: Mitchell Mauk, Adam Brodsley
Design Firm: Mauk Design
Fabrication: Ironwind

Client: Sony Computer Entertainment
Designers: Carter Lee, Reggie Amos, Mary Bicker
Design Firm: Color & Design Exhibits Inc.
Fabrication: Color & Design Exhibits Inc.

Client: Apple Computer Inc.
Designers: Mitchell Mauk, Tim Mautz, Adam Brodsley
Design Firm: Mauk Design
Fabrication: General Exhibits & Displays

Client: Nike Inc.
Designers: John Trotter, Greg Hoffman
Design Firm: Nike Inc.
Fabrication: Exhibits International

SPECIAL MERIT

Client: Sun Microsystems
Designers: Mitchell Mauk, Adam Brodsley
Design Firm: Mauk Design
Fabrication: Ironwind, Pedersen Media Group

THE JUDGES

Earl Gee,
principal,
Gee + Chung Design

Tim Girvin,
principal,
Tim Girvin Design

Steven Skov Holt,
visionary,
frogdesign

Lucille Tenazas,
principal,
Tenazas Design

SILVER AWARDS

Client: Western Publishing
Designers: Russ Fowler, Kirk Goltry, Kent Jones
Design Firm: Derse Exhibits
Fabrication: Derse Exhibits

Client: SAP America Inc.
Designer: Jim Bruck
Design Firm: Freeman Exhibit Co.
Fabrication: Freeman Exhibit Co.

Client: Tandem Computers
Designer: Tom McMillen
Design Firm: Exhibitgroup/ Giltspur San Francisco
Fabrication: Gielissen/Matrix

Client: Living Books
Designer: Raymond Kuhar
Design Firm: Exhibitgroup/ Giltspur San Francisco
Fabrication: Exhibitgroup/ Giltspur San Francisco

Client: Electronic Theatre Controls
Designers: Charlie McMillan, Nancy McMillan, John Grasso
Design Firm: McMillan Group Inc.
Fabrication: General Exhibits & Displays

Client: Mobius Inc.
Designers: Peter Craycroft, Craig Wollen, Gena Gloar, Lani Wollwage
Design Firm: Mobius Inc.
Fabrication: Mobius Inc.