thinkahead Awards

The second annual **think**ahead Awards ceremony to announce the winners for 2003 was held in Johannesburg on Tuesday evening, 17 February, at Kilimanjaro in Melrose Arch.

think, The South African Graphik Design Council, established the **think**ahead Awards in 2002 in association with its major sponsor, Sappi Fine Paper. The awards programme was instituted to encourage excellence in design among South African design students and to acquaint them with the quality of work that the industry expects from graduating students who are hoping to join the ranks of professional practitioners.

Sappi marketing manager – specification sales, Simon Grose, explains, "The awards programme dovetailed with Sappi's ongoing advocacy of the power of print and its desire, particularly in this age of the electronic media, to energetically promote a passion for design on paper in our future generations of graphic designers."

The **think**ahead competition is open to final year students from all accredited tertiary design faculties in the country. Each could enter as many of the 13 categories as they wished, but it was at the discretion of the judges whether or not to award winners in every category.

The grand prize, the Platinum Award, is given for the best Portfolio. This requires at least 4 and at most 8 individual category entries from an entrant. It is also possible for the judges to award one or more Gold Awards in the Portfolio section if they feel that the quality of work demands it.

A panel of eight South African design professionals adjudicated the more than 300 entries submitted by 138 students from 20 training institutions nationwide that entered the competition this year.

In his opening address, Veejay Archary, head of design at HerdBuoys McCann-Erickson and Chairman of the Executive Committee of **think**, said, "One of the primary goals of the **think**ahead Awards is to bridge the gap between young designers and the professional world to which they aspire. We also hope that the award process, the winning works and the comments of the judges will assist the training institutions in their task of guiding the next generation of graphic designers."

Winners of the 2003 thinkahead Awards

Top honours at the **think**ahead Awards held at Kilimanjaro in Melrose Arch on Tuesday evening went to Vumile Mavumengwana from the Red & Yellow School in Cape Town who received the Platinum Award. This award is the grand prix of the **think**ahead Awards and is given to the portfolio that shows the strongest range of skills and abilities out of all the student entries.

Two Gold Awards were also given in the portfolio category - one to Benedikt Jordaan of the `Open Window School of Visual Communication in Pretoria, and another to Charl van Wyk of Potchefstroom University.

The Judges considered Mavumengwana's work to be of an industry standard of professionalism while also exhibiting a fresh and innovative approach to graphic design solutions. The portfolio presented a strong individual style that was made up of an eclectic but successful mix of international influences and others drawing inspiration from the local visual vernacular. His presentation was selective, direct and clean and showed that this young designer has a strong underlying understanding of classic design principles as well as fine typographic skills

In addition to the trophy, Mavumengwana received an Apple E-Mac G4 computer from the Core Group and a full suite of

Adobe designer's software from the Adobe Corporation. He also receives a full ticket to the upcoming 2004 Design Indaba in Cape Town. The Gold Winners received Adobe software and a cash award of R1,500 from sponsor and a think founder, Sappi Fine Paper.

The adjudication method is blind – each entrant is only identifiable to the judges by a number. Neither names nor training institutions are revealed to the judges until the entire judging process has been completed.

The 20 training institutions from all around the country whose students participated were complimented by Veejay Archary, Chairman of the **think** Executive Committee, "It is gratifying to see more of the students' own individuality coming through and their place of study not so evident as in last year's entries. Also most exciting was the observation by the judges that the seeds of a national visual design identity seem to be taking root."

"One of **think**'s hopes when it established this awards programme was that, in time, a true South African style would develop spontaneously from the interplay of our many visual traditions that are today converging in our schools and colleges. We will continue to watch and nurture this trend in the future."

Silver Awards and a cash prize of R1,000 from Sappi were given to each winner in eleven of the 13 design categories as follows:

Brochure: Karl Mynhardt (Port Elizabeth Technikon)

Magazine: Vumile Mavumengwana (Red & Yellow School, Cape Town)

Corporate Identity: Laskarina Yiannakaris (Cape Technikon)

Poster: Marcel Du Preez (Pretoria University)

Digital: Jan-Hendrik Burger (The Open Window School of Visual Communication, Pretoria)

Promotional Marketing: Nadja Lossgott (Red & Yellow school)

Promotional Print: Campaign: Crystal Campbell (Cape Technikon)

Photography: Karen Botha (Wits Technikon)

Illustration: Christian Venter (The Open Window School of Visual Communication, Pretoria) **Typography:** Jodi Kroll (Vega School of Brand Communication, Sandton)

Other Information Design: Danielle Vinokur (Vega School of Brand Communication, Sandton)

Logo: (no Silver Award but a Special Mention went to Anthony Maris (Vega School of Brand Communication Sandton)

Calendar: No award made in this category.

About think – the South African Graphik Design Council: Established in 2001 the council assists its member businesses in achieving recognition for graphic design within the advertising and marketing industry and work towards transformation and equality. In cooperation with macro educational institutions think strives to achieve parity with related educational curricula.

It also encourages educational institutions to develop qualified graphic design students who are well trained and prepared for a professional career in the graphic design industry. The annual student awards programme, **think**ahead, serves to promote graphic design as a career choice and present opportunities for winners to fast track their careers.

Editorial contact
Fourth Estate Communications
Gigi Van der Riet
Tel: (011) 781-4079

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