



COMMUNICATION ARTS INTERACTIVE ANNUAL 26

Brian Rea Randal Ford EP+Co Futura
Sawdust Student Showcase Exhibit



INTERACTIVE

ANNUAL 26

March/April 2020
Twenty-Four Dollars
commarts.com

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CONTRIBUTORS

Features

Ruth Hagopian (ruth.hagopian@gmail.com) is a freelance writer and editor whose profiles of designers, photographers and artists have appeared in *Create*, *Digital Graphics* and *Print* magazines. In this issue, Hagopian profiles Brian Rea, a Los Angeles-based illustrator embracing new opportunities for creative authorship.

Theo Inglis (theoinglis.co.uk) is a British freelance graphic designer and design writer. His debut book, *Mid-Century Modern Graphic Design*, was published by Batsford in May 2019. For this issue, he went to London to interview Jonathan Quainton and Rob Gonzalez, the designers behind Sawdust, who are applying their experimental approach to projects across typography, design and illustration.

Matthew Porter (porterwrite.com) is an Atlanta-based independent writer and creative director with more than sixteen years of experience in advertising. He currently serves as president of Good Thinking Atlanta. For this issue, Porter drove to Greenville, South Carolina, to interview ad agency EP+Co and discovered an idea factory rich with hands-on making.

Leslie Wolke (lesliewolke.com) is a writer and founder of MapWell Studio, a wayfinding practice based in Austin, Texas. Wolke serves on the sxsw Advisory Board and founded the Society for Experiential Graphic Design's annual design and technology event Xlab. For this issue, she spent a day on set with Randal Ford to see how the Austin-based photographer creates his emotionally intelligent portraits.

Columns

Toronto-based **Chris Daniels** (chris@chrisdaniels.ca) writes about advertising, marketing and visual communications for publications such as *Applied Arts* and *Marketing*. In this issue's Business column, he uncovers how designers are fostering community in cities across the United States.

Susan Hodara (susanhodara.com) is a journalist, memoirist and teacher. She covers the arts for the *New York Times*, *Harvard Magazine* and other publications. In this issue's Creativity column, Hodara reports on the unique poignancy of graphic journalism.

Dave Kuhl (davekuhl@gmail.com) is a writer and creative director who's worked for top agencies in Chicago, Boston, San Diego and Los Angeles. He also cofounded a boutique agency and is a four-time Cannes Lion winner. Along with being a contributor to *Communication Arts*, he works as a brand creative director/writer for Bauer Hockey. In the Design Issues column, Kuhl highlights the doers who are working to make ageism old news in the ad industry.

Wendy Richmond (wendyrichmond.com) is a visual artist, a writer and an educator whose work explores public privacy, personal technology and creativity. Her latest book is *Art Without Compromise** (Allworth Press). In her Design Culture column, she complements goal-free play with thoughtful interrogation.

Ernie Schenck (ernieschenck.myportfolio.com) is a freelance writer and a creative director. He is an Emmy finalist, a three-time Kelly nominee, and an award winner at Cannes, the Clio's, D&AD, the FWAs and the One Show. In his Advertising column, Schenck shares how ad creatives can maintain their individuality throughout their careers.

Book Reviews

Amanda McCorquodale (amandamcc.com) is a New York-based freelance writer and former Arts & Culture editor of the *Miami New Times*.

Sam McMillan (wordstrong.com) is a San Francisco Bay Area-based writer and brand strategist, and regular contributor to *Communication Arts*.

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DIRECTORY

Featured in this issue

EP+Co epandcompany.com

Randal Ford randalford.com

Futura byfutura.com

Brian Rea brianrea.com

Sawdust madebysawdust.co.uk

Exhibit

&Walsh andwalsh.com

Block blockbranding.com

DAVID Miami davidtheagency.com

Design Army designarmy.com

formascope formascope.design

Heimat heimat-berlin.com

illo illo.tv

INNOCEAN Worldwide Canada innocean.ca

Metric Design metricdesign.no

Oxide Design Co. oxidedesign.com

Fresh

Ilka & Franz ilkafranz.com

Hokyoung Kim hokyoungkim.com

This Is Not America tina.pt

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Submitting Work

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Writer's Guidelines

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No responsibility will be assumed for unsolicited editorial contributions.

Correction

In the 2020 January/February issue, Yebin Chung should have been listed as the designer in the credits for the House of Electronic Arts project, on page 164, and the surveillance typeface project, on page 174.

BY LESLIE WOLKE

RANDAL FORD

What's your best side, Wiley?" Randal Ford crouches down and cups the chin of Wiley, a sleek bull terrier who raises his distinctive foreshortened face for inspection. Wiley is one of about 150 dogs whose portraits will appear in Ford's second art book for Rizzoli, a follow-up to *The Animal Kingdom: A Collection of Portraits*, published in September 2018 and already in its third printing.

Fifteen years into his photography practice, Ford has earned a reputation for crafting sincere and striking images of his subjects, whether they are animals or humans. Advertising commissions make up the majority of his assignments, and while his clients vary widely, from L.L.Bean to Jdate, Ford consistently illuminates the warmth and humanity of individuals within artful, arresting compositions.

It's a safe bet that Ford was the only business major at Texas A&M University with the goal of becoming an advertising photographer specializing in conceptual portraiture, but that is indeed how he described his intended career at the time. He says, "Looking back, I did a lot of things right without knowing it. It was so beneficial for me as a young photographer to have that sense of clarity; it made it easier to break into such a tough business."

Ford grew up in Dallas, grandson of Creed Ford, Jr., who gave him his Nikon film camera when he was a teenager. After taking a darkroom photography class in high school, Ford nurtured his fledgling love of photography during his college years at both the *Battalion*, the university newspaper, and the local paper, the *Eagle*. Shortly after graduating, Ford

visited the Amon Carter Museum of American Art and was struck by Richard Avedon's portrait series *In the American West*. "I still get chills thinking about Avedon and that series," Ford recalls. "I know I'm not alone, but the way he composed those portraits of people and the way he framed them really spoke to me."

In college and afterward, Ford cultivated relationships with mentors from the advertising communities in Dallas and Austin. With a fresh degree in small business and entrepreneurship from A&M, Ford moved to Austin in 2004 and quickly earned a position with Jack Hollingsworth shooting stock photography. Soon, he was using his dad's FedEx account to send his portfolio to local agencies. "I thought FedEx gave me credibility," he remembers.

One of his first major assignments came about two years later from Roy Spence, one of the founders of acclaimed Austin advertising agency GSD&M. Spence didn't hire Ford for an ad shoot; instead, he commissioned Ford to document 50 Texans and their places of worship for his book, *The Amazing Faith of Texas: Common Ground on Higher Ground*. Ford traveled the state for three months documenting facets of religion, from a cowboy preacher in Marathon to a chapel in Ruidosa. At age 25, Ford had burst on the scene with a three-pound coffee-table book.

Ford, having captured Wiley's good side, kneels to get eye to eye with a shy Weimaraner. With twelve dogs on the call sheet, one producer, two assistants, a digital technician and

Right: "Perry the sloth, photographed for my book *The Animal Kingdom*. Most of my subjects could either stand on their legs or sit upright. Sloths, on the other hand, do neither. They lie or they hang—that's it. It was impossible to create a shot of Perry lying down because he just melted into the floor. However, once I saw him hang, the light bulb went off. He moved constantly, though, literally spinning, which made it super challenging for me to capture just the right moment. I laughed at the irony of my hyperactive sloth, and after working patiently with him, finally captured a shot I was happy with." Randal Ford, art director; Carla Delgado/DJ Stout, designers; Pentagram, design firm; Rizzoli New York, client.





© Randal Ford

a table full of dog treats, Ford has a busy final day of shooting for his upcoming book, *Good Dog: A Collection of Portraits*, out this fall. After welcoming each dog and their companion, he directs longtime collaborators Jason Griego and John Dougherty to adjust a carpeted platform, lights and, for some long-haired canines,

a fan for that windblown model look. Squeaky toys (tip: crinkly water bottles captivate almost every dog) and treat-skewered sticks swirl behind Ford's head as nearly everyone on set growls, yelps and even meows to cajole the subject. Ford is patient and unruffled, shooting a Nikon D850 tethered to a Mac Pro and a 5K monitor on a utility cart to his left. Every so often, Ford stops and asks an assistant to "pay" the portrait-sitter with a finger of peanut butter or a Vienna sausage while he zooms in on his recent shots on the large screen, scrutinizing whether he's captured the animal's eyes with the precision and empathy he seeks.

"It's just remarkable watching Randal on set," says DJ Stout, Pentagram partner and leader of the graphic design firm's Austin office. In 2008, Stout collaborated with Ford on a particularly memorable photo shoot in a chilly, hay-strewn barn outside of Waco, Texas. Stout had earned a reputation for redesigning agricultural trade magazines, and *Dairy Today*, a bimonthly for dairy farmers, sought his services but didn't have a budget for a complete redesign. As Stout recalls in his book *Variations on a Rectangle*, "My solution was the simple convention of featuring a stylized portrait of a dairy cow on the cover of every issue." He remembered seeing a photo by Ford of a man cradling his dog—Stout points out that "the dog is what I remembered"—and commissioned him for a day's shoot. They photographed two years' worth of covers of various cows in front of pastel-colored backdrops in the makeshift studio. That was Ford's first day of animal portraiture, and an unforgettable day for Stout as he jumped up and down on a hay bale, jangling a metal bucket of feed to

enliven the bovines' apathetic demeanors. Stout declares, "Those damn cows don't have much personality."

Over the last twelve years, Stout has watched Ford's technique mature. "He has a head for technical know-how and is precise with his tools. Randal is really great with composition, which is so important for a photographer. And he has a good sense of narrative—all his images tell a story," Stout says.

Take the stories Ford told in images and videos for InnovAge, a company that provides care for elderly people so they can stay in their own homes as they age. Mark Stiltner, associate creative director at advertising agency Karsh Hagan, explains that the goal of the campaign was "to celebrate older people and their independence." For a series of print ads, Ford conceived a portrait of Edna, a ping-pong paddle wielding senior dressed in matching white pearls, eye shadow and terrycloth wristbands. She stands proudly in her wainscoted living room, clutching one of her beloved trophies.

For Edna and the other seniors portrayed in this campaign, Stiltner says, "He brought little touches that place this person in their own world and give us so much context to their story." Every detail in the frame adds to Edna's vivacious countenance. A wider grin or gaudier wallpaper would have tilted Edna's portrait into a caricature, draining the individuality and sincerity from the company's message. "The whole set was built around framing [Edna] and the subtle grace of her smile. One more little push, and it would have gotten really cheesy," Ford says. "In all of my work, I try to find this balance of warmth, humor and sense of reverence for the subject."

Ford doesn't accomplish this alone. As Stiltner says, "Randal is a team. Randal is a brand. When you get Randal, you get this great team of epically talented people who work with him, and that's part of the secret of his success." Ford says, "I am lucky to have surrounded myself with top-notch players who share my personal philosophy of old-fashioned hard work, having a great attitude and simply doing the right thing."

"Herding cats" may be a trite metaphor to describe the interplay of all the various disciplines in front of and behind the camera during an advertising photo shoot. But for Ford, that cliché turned literal when he shot a series of live-action

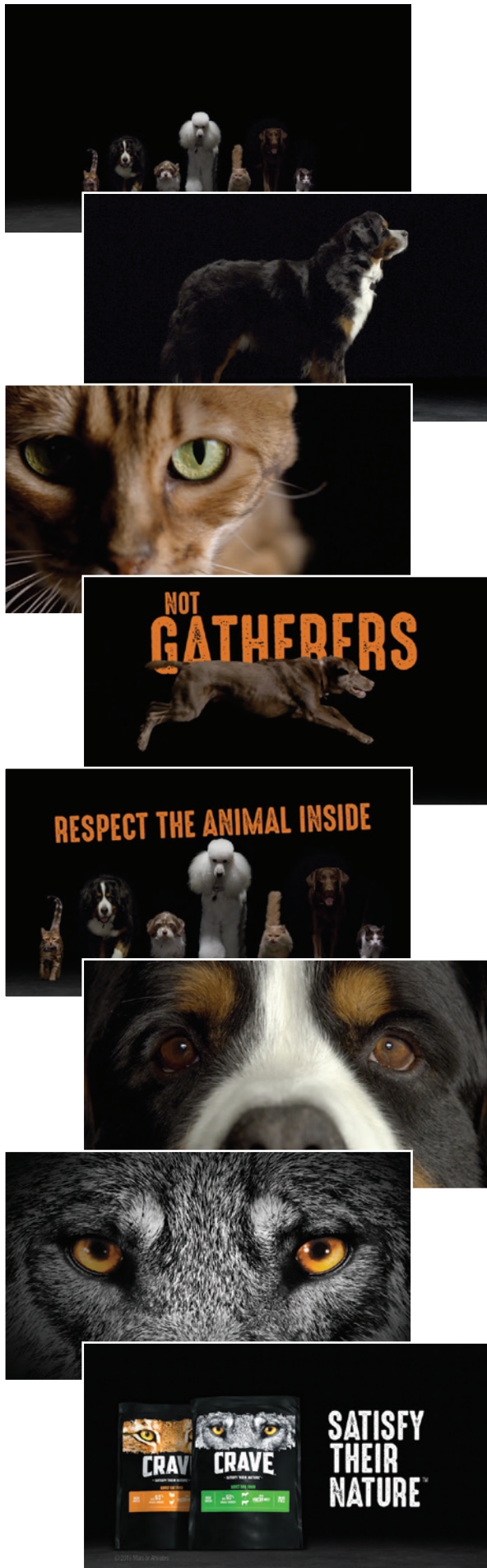
Right: "From a series of portraits photographed for **InnovAge**, an in-home care company that enables seniors to stay in their homes. It was all shot on sets that were meticulously crafted and obsessively art directed by a wonderful team of set designers, art directors and ad agency creatives." Kristine Crawford/Adam Nelson, senior art directors; Dave Cook/Jeffery Martin/Mark Stiltner, creative directors; Bonnie Carheden, art buyer; Becky Ferguson, agency producer; Karsh Hagan, ad agency; InnovAge, client.

"**Getaround** is a user-friendly car-sharing service that's easy, quick and fun to use. We created a holistic campaign to essentially relaunch them in the market. A major aspect of this brand reboot was the photography. Our goal was to create an iconic, ownable look that not only conveys what Getaround is, but also shows how useful Getaround can be in your life." Flavia Gonzales, senior art director; Shannon Roy, writer; Ted Bluey, design director; Analisa Payne, agency producer; Eleven Inc., agency; Getaround, client.





RANDAL FORD



assets for Crave high-protein dog and cat food. Perhaps as a nod to *Reservoir Dogs*, four dogs and three cats swagger straight toward the camera in the signature scene. Ford recalls, “That shoot took a lot of creative minds.” The crew taped off a lane for each animal, and Ford locked down the camera and shot each one individually, compositing in post-production. “Those cats—and they are Hollywood cats—had five days of prep just to walk in a straight line,” he says. On set, three cat wranglers waved toys to coax a single cat down the runway. Ford smiles and says, “Cats are always the hardest.”

He speaks from experience, having photographed dairy cows, dogs and cats. About five years ago, Ford set his sights on more-exotic subjects. “I had been dying to photograph some predators, specifically a lion, a tiger and a bear: the *Wizard of Oz* trifecta,” he says. He worked with trainers in Los Angeles to locate the animals and booked studio time. He became known for his work with animals, and the assignments kept coming. Soon, he had about 30 animal portraits—including Schicka the Bengal tiger and a black wolf named Geronimo—from a variety of commissioned and self-funded projects, and envisioned publishing a larger collection as a fine art book. The result was *The Animal Kingdom: A Collection of Portraits*.

Left: “In my studio portrait work, I’m consistently trying to create a timeless aesthetic while at the same time creating a striking image. I keep my lighting minimal so as not to distract from the authenticity of the subject. This also allows me to focus on the subject’s pose and expression. The portrait of the late **Jane Sibley** (left), who was a philanthropist in Austin, was taken when she was 90 years old for a local magazine called *Tribeza*. The portrait of the **boy** (right) was self-initiated; he is actually the son of Troy House, a photographer I am friends with.” Karl Hugill, retoucher.

“For countless years, old women have played an integral role in bringing single Jews together so they can procreate and keep the tribe alive. The idea was to photograph a trio of 80- and 90-year-old women as if they were the brains behind online dating service **Jdate**, burning the midnight oil to match new couples. This campaign highlights these matchmaking yentas, who’ve been working tirelessly in Silicon Valley to code the best Jewish matches.” Shaun Bruce, art director; David Roth, creative director; Sabine Rogers, agency producer; Lockbox Productions, production company; Hogarth Worldwide, agency; David Roth & Associates, ad agency; Jdate, client.

This page: “Hunters” :22

“**Crave**’s motto is simple: feed your pets like the animals they are. This pet food company makes high-protein, grain-free food for cats and dogs. The concept, developed by BBDO San Francisco, was to have a gang of cats and dogs strutting toward the camera, coinciding with beauty shots and close-ups highlighting each spot’s purpose. In order to create the gang of cats and dogs walking toward the camera, we had to shoot each animal separately, in its respective lane. This was fairly doable with dogs, but not so much with cats! Many thanks to Hollywood Animals for training and providing the fantastic cats and dogs.” Joshua Eithun, senior art director; Aaron Gough, writer; Matt Miller, chief creative officer; Evan Linton, editor; David Wilson, photography director; Randal Ford, director; Artie Peña, Flame artist; Nick Patronella, sound engineer; Jeff Elmore/Keith Munley/Spesh, executive producers; Charlie Uniform Tango, production company/post-production company; BBDO San Francisco, ad agency; Crave, client.

RANDAL FORD

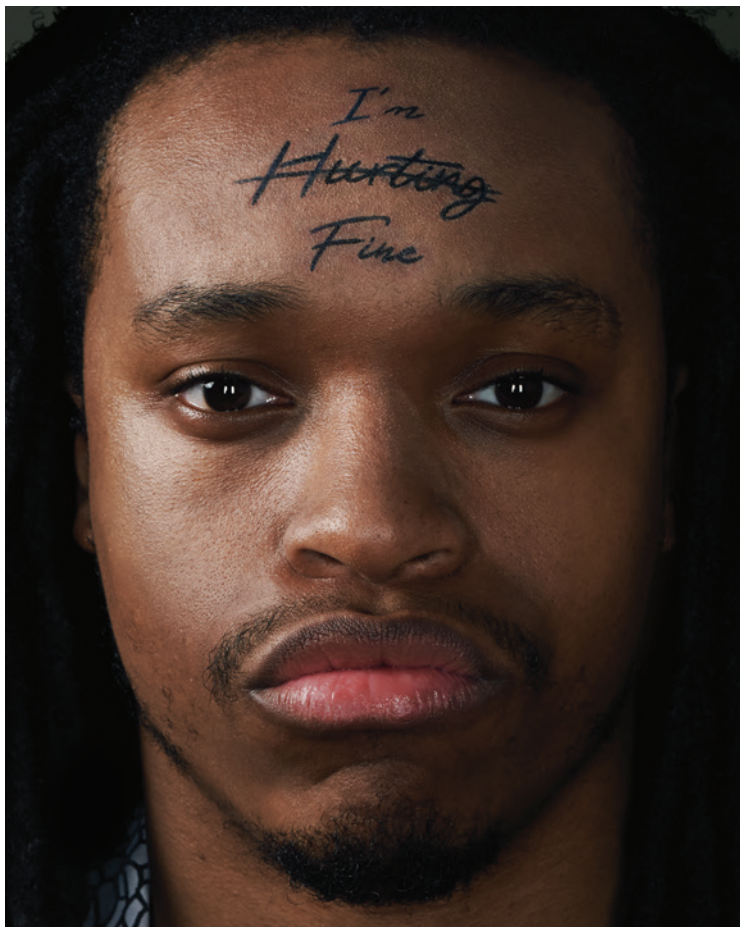
Only two months later, Ford's editors at Rizzoli asked him what he planned to do for his next book. He remembers thinking, "What if we did a whole book of dog portraits?" I wanted to further explore our connection with animals, our love of animals. There's no animal we are more connected with than our dogs." That's how he found himself sitting on an apple box, snapping away at Wiley.

The dogs he's assembled for this book are as varied as the humans who star in his recent ad campaigns, from coding yentas, for Jdate, to couples dressed in the same fabric as their sofas, for CenturyLink. Ford describes his mission as "fostering a portrait. In addition to making an image that is aesthetically beautiful, all the other aspects are the differences that make a difference." 🐾



This page: "When we're asked how we're doing, many of us respond with 'I'm fine,' when in reality, we're not. This is from a new series of self-initiated portraits that was created to connect compassionately with those around us and raise awareness for **mental health**. I worked with a special effects makeup artist to create the tattoos, and the talent chose the descriptive words. I am still looking for the right mental-health partner to bring these to the public eye." Jenai Chin, makeup artist; Karl Hugill/Amber Politi, retouchers; Donna Grossman Casting, casting agency.

Right: "Part of a series of **dog portraits** from my next book, *Good Dog: A Collection of Portraits*. This collection aims to explore our emotional connection with dogs through the lens of timeless portraiture." Stu Taylor, designer; DJ Stout, design director; Amber Politi, retoucher; James Muschett, Rizzoli New York, publisher; Pentagram, design firm.



"Lose yourself in more than 300 high-definition channels with CenturyLink Prism tv'—literally. To bring a simple concept from Boston-based ad agency Arnold Worldwide to life—people who enjoy **CenturyLink Prism tv** so much that they actually blend into their couches—I suggested using specific couch styles. For the sofas and wardrobe, I collaborated closely with a talented set designer and custom wardrobe stylist to build four distinctly styled environments, from midcentury modern to bohemian to dated plaid to 'grandma glam.' From there, it was all about lighting the sets in a realistic manner and directing the talent to keep the storyline front and center. The end result is a feeling anyone can relate to: the bliss of being one with your couch." Wesley Dorsainvil, art director; David Register, creative director; Ingrid Adamow, art producer; Arnold Worldwide, agency; CenturyLink, client.

