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Designing Seniors

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Designing Seniors

Graphic Design Senior Showcase highlights senior majors' portfolios for campus community

Devin Romeo '13 displays a poster from his graphic design portfolio. Image Credit: Jill Rodrigues

May 7, 2013 | Jill Rodrigues '05

BRISTOL, R.I. – Challenged to explain their creative executions and design philosophy through a portfolio of their culminating work, responses from the senior graphic design majors ran the gamut from conceiving a crafty feel to a surfing analogy.

Eighteen seniors presented their final portfolios to roving spectators at Global Heritage Hall – a professional-looking collection of work from their four years in the classroom. While some of the designs were created from classroom assignments and other pieces independently crafted, each body of work was diverse and showcased the strengths of the students.

From business cards to logos, to a magazine spread or an annual report, students were tasked with finding a design solution to fulfill the needs of the "clients" comprised of the students themselves (each created their own business cards) and the RWU Performing Arts Department (production posters). Students also selected actual companies as mock clients, though their work was contained to the campus.

"I love the artsy hands-on approach, so most of these logos I drew, instead of going straight to a computer," explained Elizabeth Garretson. "It's my own little flair."

Garretson described how for a poster, she spelled out the key word "thrilled" with rope and photographed it, giving it a three-dimensional look in her design: "It's more of a crafty feel," she said.

When creating her designs, Svetlana Ivanoff conducts "as much research as possible to see what's been done before, to get inspiration from that or do something completely different," she said. For a number of posters she constructed for RWU theatre productions, she tapped into the emotions of the play through color choice and lighting. Inserting her creative self into each piece comes naturally, she said

"As a visual effect I use a lot of illustrations and drawings. My designs have grown from flat, basic graphics to something more complex," said Ivanoff, who hopes to get an internship at a local historic museum following graduation.

After struggling to incorporate more color into his work – which he credits to living in "very gray and grungy" New York, Devin Romeo began to explore splashes of vivid color against dramatic black or white backgrounds, at the urging of Professor of Graphic Design Sharon DeLucca. Romeo explained: "DeLucca said, 'We have to get you out of this funk – I'm just not feeling it.'"

Romeo relates his newly shaped design philosophy to the fun of surfing.

"I think the best surfer in the water is the one having the most fun – the person who stands up for the first time has a bigger smile on his face than the one who always wins the competition," Romeo said.
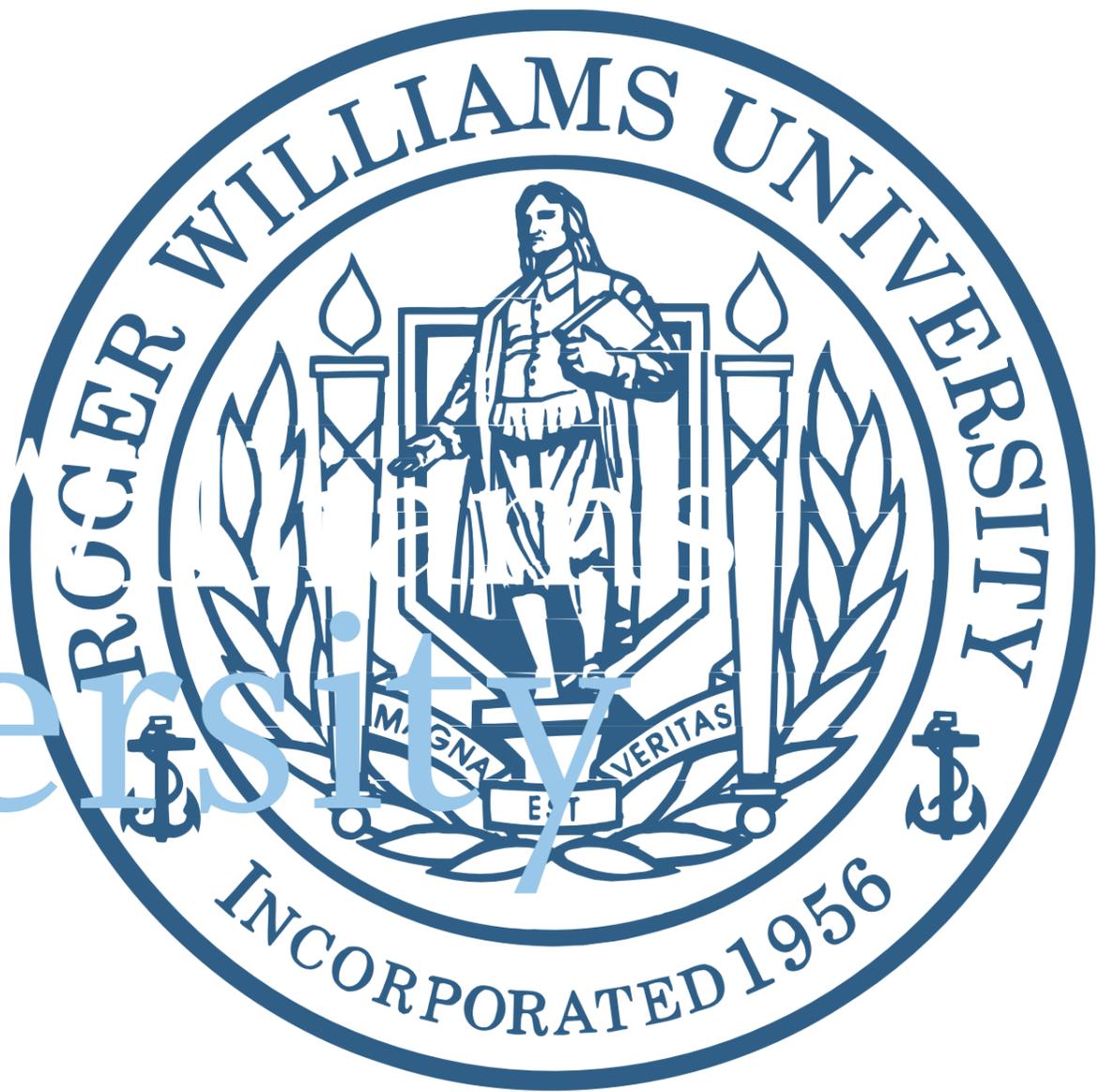
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