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National Arts Group Honors Metro Passes for Outstanding Design



By JESSICA TYERMAN

(June 30, 2004) A national graphic arts organization has recognized Metro with a prestigious award for the design of its 2004 transit passes.

Metro's daily, weekly, semi-monthly, and monthly passes received the American Institute of Graphic Arts' "Outstanding Information Design" award. Out of 4,200 entries, AIGA honored only 92.

In previous years, such organizations as the New York Times, IBM, and United Airlines have received awards in the same category.

Neil Sadler, Metro's lead designer for the project, emphasized the significance of the award. "AIGA is kind of like the Academy Awards for Graphic Design."

The national exhibition of the winning passes will travel across the country, next year, to AIGA chapters, student groups and galleries. Winning entries will be inducted into the National Design Archive online.

A group effort

Metro's Design Studio, Customer and Vendor Services, Marketing and Communications, and Vehicle Technologies all took part in creating the passes.

Edith Goff-Youngblood of Customer and Vendor Services was among those who worked on the formatting and technicalities of the passes.

She played a specific role in coordinating the colors of subsequent daily, weekly and monthly passes to ensure operators could recognize when passengers try to use "a pass they had two months ago."

"Having the opportunity to work on this project has been extremely exciting," says Goff-Youngblood. "I feel like I played a part in the history of Metro because these passes will stay behind forever."

More than just a pretty pass

The theme of the passes uses such elements of buses and trains as lights, wheels, seat patterns, and grills in an abstract design to create

quite "good-looking things," Sadler says. "The passes show the customer something that they're used to seeing in a very different context."

The passes' iridescent background and vibrant colors make them hard to counterfeit. Also, the larger numbers are easier for operators to see.

"The goal is to make people and customers notice them more, but there's also a strong anti-counterfeiting role," Sadler says.

The pass series will be of increasing interest to art collectors.

"I think the award will benefit Metro overall because there are already a lot of people that collect our passes," says Goff-Youngblood. "Once people know that the passes have won a design award, they may be even more interested in getting them."

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