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Library Displays Student Graphic Design Posters

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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (March 1, 2011) – When USF St. Petersburg student Thomas Weigel began his first semester in the graphic design program, he didn't know he would spend months studying the image of a spray paint can. Weigel's professor, Matt Normand, wanted him to create over 180 images of a single object that would give him the tools he needed to create a final poster for the Icon and Meaning project on display in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

Normand designed the project for students to go beyond the visual representation of an object and learn how to create a complex theme for a finished product.

“We used so many different types of materials to make the images,” said Weigel, a junior at USF St. Petersburg. “We would have to cut stuff up, photocopy it, scan it back in, draw over that, and even take pictures. It was just so much work and so many different concepts just to realize how much goes into an image or an icon, and it was pretty remarkable.”

Normand allowed students to choose their object at the beginning of the semester, but they had to commit to it until they had thoroughly exhausted all that goes into a making a single image. Through blending different mediums and concepts within the context of graphic design history, the students explored not only the shape and form of their objects but also the connotations and denotations that can be drawn out of their symbolic meanings.

“They essentially start with really studying the object,” Normand said. “They had to create a matrix of words and images, and people started to connect the dots with concepts. They started to see things differently. They had to develop this theme, and out of that theme, create a poster.”

Carol Hixson, dean of the library, liked the opportunity to display the work to enhance the library's public space and support the creative output of the students.

“The posters are beautiful,” Hixson said. “I look forward to supporting this work in the future and displaying more of the students' work throughout the library.”

Five final posters are on display in the library on campus, but Normand said that it was difficult to choose only five out of a class loaded with quality work. Weigel's minimalist design of a spray paint can was selected for display, along with the work of Sergio Linares, Alexa Wood, Oleksandr Rogalnikov, and Joseph Nunez.

“These students are fresh,” said Normand. “They’ve gone through some art classes, but this is their introduction to image making for graphic design. My goal was to provide students with the tools they need to create successful graphic design projects in their future.”

The graphic design program at USF St. Petersburg accepts 20 students each year, after an application process that is built upon prerequisites and a portfolio review. In maintaining a low student-to-professor ratio, the program provides students with personal attention that helps prepare them for working in the field. In working with the university, the design program provides students with an immediate application for their work to be displayed, which enhances their experience.

Visit the web site for the graphic design program to learn more about it.

-USF St. Petersburg-