



FROST

We pull out all the stops with every project," says Vince Frost, CEO and creative director of Frost*. "We're relentless in trying to invigorate, engage and generate positive energy for our clients."

Some of those clients are local to Frost's headquarters in Sydney, Australia; others are based in Asia, Europe and North America. The work is equally diverse: Australia Tourism promotions and museum signage, campaigns for real estate properties in China and Korea, books for publishers in London and New York and branding for hotels in Hong Kong, Bali and Abu Dhabi.

The studio mantra is "inspiring ideas to life," which Frost defines as making a client's theoretical concept for a company, institution, event or product succeed in the real world. "It's all about simplification," he states. But Frost's direct, bold solutions demonstrate that he and his team do much more than simplify. They craft the right mix of concept, word and image to get people in motion: buying, supporting, attending, traveling—doing whatever is needed to fulfill the client's mission. That could mean a redesigned brand identity plus a retail or entertainment environment, a print ad campaign, TV commercials, a clothing line, a book or magazine, YouTube videos, you name it.

Talking with Frost can pump you up, make you want to be part of the action. His conversation is sprinkled with expressions like, "Every day is a new opportunity to do great work!" "I love all of it!" and "Believe in not giving up!" Although his studio is staffed with talented collaborators, you sense that the firm's success has been driven by the sheer force of his personality and convictions. Frost is someone who never gave up, who was neither born into privilege nor received the benefits of a fancy education; his working-class family moved a lot and he dropped out of art school to go to work. He was born in West Sussex, England, where his father was a printer. When he was very young, the family moved to Vancouver, British Columbia.

There, North American design—colorful and immediate—made its mark. "As a boy I took a personal interest in brands," he recalls. "Especially sports teams. The bright color palette, the typefaces, the big bold numbers on the jerseys." The family returned to England, "incredibly gray by comparison," when he

was sixteen. It was culturally different too. "We moved to Brighton, a little town with beautiful countryside, but I was still dressed in my bright blue and green Canuck caps and sneakers, in this place of school uniforms, devoid of color.

"I was always the new kid," he adds, "trying to catch up, behind in academics and distracted by girls." And then he found art. "I did art class in the sixth form, the year after high school, while figuring out my options," he says. "Was it going into the army, or what? Mum and Dad said, 'You've always been good at drawing' and encouraged me to attend West Sussex Art College." The design foundation class was life-changing. There was advertising, product design, packaging, animation, photography and fashion. "I loved all of it but, wow, I really connected with visual communication. Every brief motivated and excited me. I got an amazing buzz from bringing a blank piece of paper to life with an idea." The teachers urged him to specialize, in packaging or editorial, but he insisted on remaining a generalist. He left school and got a job at a local advertising company. "A degree doesn't matter," he still maintains. "What matters are creative output and passion."

His equally ambitious classmate John Powner had gone to London to work for Pentagram, and young Vince, still toiling at the local agency, came for a visit in 1989. "I didn't know what Pentagram was," he admits, but as soon as he entered the Notting Hill studio, he knew that's where he wanted to be. "Design was being lived full-strength. Alan Fletcher was sketching ideas for a poster for the Globe Theatre; I listened to him and the other partners discussing various approaches, and, oh my God, I got it!" he recalls. "I told them, 'I'll work here for free and do whatever you need.'" He made himself invaluable as Pentagram's "good, strong pair of hands," making photocopies and comps, absorbing everything, especially the designer's power to communicate with the public. "I'd been fighting against being a specialist and now I was phenomenally lucky, walking into this office of generalists. I found my home: a place of big ideas." He became an associate partner, primarily on the Polaroid account under John Rushworth, designing Polaroid's P magazine and projects for music and arts clients. He spent his days generating ideas with Rushworth and "trying to beat



Vince Frost is creative director on all projects and the captions were provided by Frost*.

Right: "After hearing of our reputation for design, author Mike Walsh wouldn't have anyone else art direct his new book *Futuretainment*. Art directed by Vince Frost and Quan Payne, the graphic style is a pastiche of '50s modernist design. Arrows are used throughout to emulate the forward movement of time and the progression of the industries documented in the book." Vince Frost/Quan Payne, designers/typographers; Mike Walsh, photographer; Phaidon, client.

"The AIDS Council of NSW (ACON), an organization based in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities, approached us to develop a campaign to reinforce a safe-sex culture. The challenge was finding a way to resonate with an audience that has heard this same message repeatedly. With the tagline 'Slip it on,' our campaign took inspiration from 1960s Pop Art. Australian-grown, waxed-tipped bananas inspired the design referencing safe-sex programs that use bananas to show how condoms are put on. As an extension of this, the tag line adds 'dom' to ACON, creating the line acondom." Anthony Donovan/Vince Frost, designers/typographers; Anthony Donovan, illustrator; ACON, client.

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him at them,” but ultimately didn’t generate enough business to become a Pentagram partner.

“After five years I needed to make a name for myself,” he states. “I was phenomenally naïve. I rented a desk in an un-beautiful building and bluffed it. After two years of hard work, I attracted decent-size projects: newspapers, magazines, charities, cultural institutions, all clients that needed to attract more people, to entertain, to communicate.”

That was 1995, and little by little, Studio Frost acquired the accoutrements of a real business: assistants, a fax machine, computers and the “inspiring ideas to life” philosophy.

By 2000, the work was garnering significant international attention, and a Condé Nast executive offered him a job as art director of Japanese *Vogue*. “You don’t say no to an opportunity like that!” He lived in Tokyo for a year, working with great photographers and expressing the visions of *Vogue*, but found it challenging to work in a language he didn’t understand. Frost reestablished himself in London, and invitations to travel, speak and judge competitions continued to come in. “The Australian Graphic Design Association invited me to do a lecture tour, seven cities. I fell in love with the country.” A year later, in 2003, he was approached by an advertising conglomerate, the Clemenger Group, about joining forces in Australia. “I thought about it for a minute and said ‘yes.’ London was great, but hard and highly competitive.” By then, Frost was married with three children ages seven, four and six months. “I love moving to new cities, to hit the ground running—a fresh new beginning,” he says. His family agreed. After all, there would be wide-open spaces, sunshine, beaches—and Australia’s famously relaxed way of life.

Three years later, along with partners Carlo Giannasca and Ray Parslow, Frost bought the business back from Clemenger. Today, 35 people work in Frost’s open-plan studio, connecting brands and products with their audiences. The studio is a buzz of activity, with work pinned to walls by designers who’ve come from all over Australia, Asia and the UK.

“We try not to have a style. It’s diverse,” Frost says of the work. “We let the solution emanate from the problem, not inflict unnecessary decoration on it. We tend to simplify an idea to its essence to remove any distraction. We’re passionate about the power of creativity in enhancing business. We want to connect with people quickly and positively.”

Right: “*POL Oxygen* approached us to do a special edition with Vince Frost as guest art director. In the initial briefing, it was discussed that it would be all about people who move effortlessly between creative fields. We came up with the notion of ‘stretch’ and set about stretching the boundaries of magazine design. The magazine itself is stretched. At 21%, *Stretch* is double the height of a standard *POL Oxygen* magazine, with a horizontal split down the middle so it folds to fit on a library shelf. The bronzed skeleton sculpture by Marc Quinn used on the front cover, again reinforced the stretch theme. It unfolds to reveal a midjet—a stretch on reality that is only revealed once you open the cover.” Anthony Donovan/Vince Frost, designers/typographers; POL Publications, client.



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The work connects so well that in 2006 he was invited to have an exhibition at the Sydney Opera House. “It was quite a coup,” he admits. Over three months, 60,000 people attended. And there was the companion 400-page retrospective of work from the company’s 1995 London beginnings.

Is this kind of success beyond the hopes of most young designers? “You have great clients, and I don’t,” might claim a frustrated designer who works at a place like that “colorless” agency where Frost started.

Frost’s reply: “Nonsense. Our clients are like everyone else’s. And budgets aren’t great right now. The difference might be that we are focused on stronger ideas, on collaborating with clients to maximize their businesses, getting feedback, making it better. We approach every project with open minds, learning everything we can about the client’s business and taking a global, holistic view. Some people presume they know the answer before they even know the problem. And our projects were not nice projects in the beginning; they were nothing. Every project has potential. It could turn out to be mediocre, or ok or great. Our focus is on adding value, on making it great.”

The talented, committed staff is also focused on making it great. Brand designer Adit Wardhana, who came from Indonesia to go to school in Melbourne, is working on big projects like the redesign of the Sydney Airport communications—projects that have morphed from environmental design into advertising. For example, in-house research showed that airports make people tense and agitated, Wardhana explains. The Frost* team invented a fictitious disease, PFT (Pre-Flight Tension), which Sydney Airport could cure via therapeutic shopping, eating and relaxing. A cheeky “Guide to Easing PFT” campaign has gotten lots of play in the advertising press. Senior environmental designer Natasha Bartoshefski, an Australian of Russian heritage, has been working for the past four years on wayfinding systems and interiors for research centers, recreation areas, primary schools and the National Australia Bank. Graziela Machado, who immigrated from São Paulo, began working at Frost* right after graduation from design school. Now she’s a “mid-weight,” halfway between junior and senior designer, working on projects such as a book about a renovated office building that the studio retitled, *It’s Not About the Building* to emphasize how its flexible workspaces allow for new kinds of collaboration. Partner Carlo Giannasca, a Sydney native, oversees all branding and environmental work. “It’s not good enough to settle



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for an adequate solution,” Giannasca sums up, “it has to be great. That’s what keeps us sharp. Being unsatisfied is what drives us to push harder and dig deeper.”

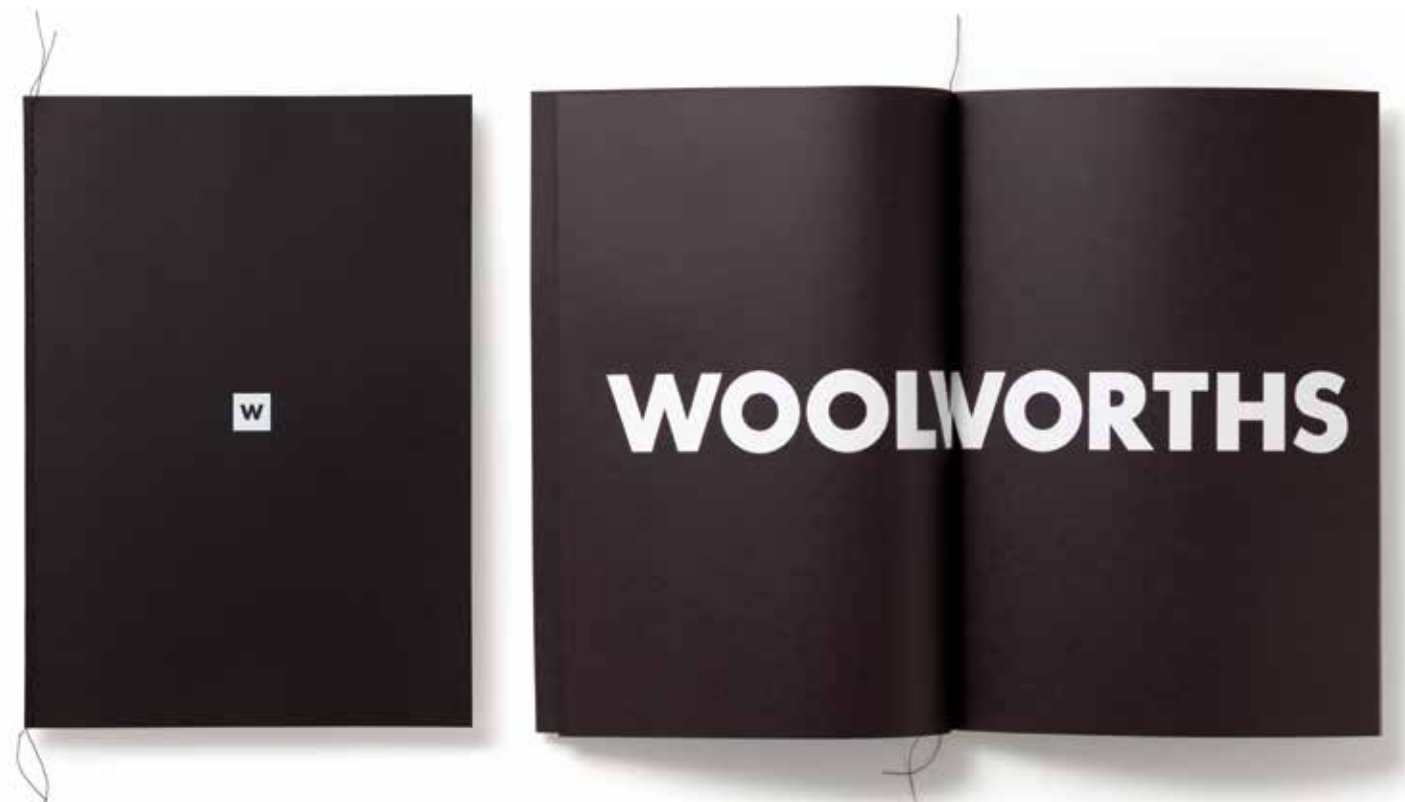
No matter where they were born, these designers find a lot to love about living and working in Australia. “This is a gorgeous place to work,” says Bartoshefski, whose outside-the-office passion is performing in musical theater. She describes the studio as colorful, fun and inspiring; the neighborhood, Surry Hills, an old printing and textile area that is rapidly filling with clubs, restaurants and fashion designers’ ateliers, as a creative hub; and Sydney as a major world city that offers unparalleled natural beauty in the form of beaches and lots of green spaces. “This country is a celebration of different cultures and open and friendly people,” adds Wardhana, who, after hours, plays guitar and sings in local cafés. “It’s pretty laid back,” agrees Ben Hennessey, a senior designer who’s been developing a strategy for Redfern, a Sydney suburb that was previously seen as a dangerous place. “We designed a brand to make people feel welcome, a welcoming spirit symbolized by a friendly smile. Community leaders support the campaign and the T-shirts and bumper stickers are very popular,” is Hennessey’s answer to the question, “How well did it work?”

If there’s one thing about the design business that Vince Frost is not 100 percent positive about, it’s the lack of

This page: “Our brief was to create a brand that would position Matt Moran’s new restaurant, **Chiswick**, as a relaxed neighborhood diner nestled in a unique, historic garden setting. Our solution was inspired by the site’s gardens and the recently planted 1,615-square-foot vegetable garden that will supply the restaurant with fresh produce. Every element of the design has a botanical influence—from the logo design featuring tendrillike typography, through to the soft muted palette, sustainable materials and photographic studies of plants drawn from the gardens. The solution is elegant, sensual and totally grounded in an appreciation of the natural elements that make the restaurant such a special place.” Dieu Tan, photographer; Morsul, client.

“We created a company credentials book for Veldhoen + Company that documents their workplace philosophy. They are the world’s leading consultants in Activity Based Work styles—a new way of working that is revolutionizing global work spaces. *It’s Not About the Building* details the journey behind their project for a leading Sydney investment bank—arguably Australia’s most advanced workplace. The book design is a journey in its own right, bringing the chronology of the project to life and injecting a playful flair that reflects Veldhoen’s own concepts of freedom and expression in utilizing spaces.” Paul McGillick, writer; Graziela Machado, designer; Andrew Curtis/Shannon McGrath, photographers; Veldhoen + Company Ltd, client.

Right: “**Woolworths** in South Africa is an up-market department store chain. They worked with a us brand designer to develop a new visual identity and engaged us to deliver a fresh new brand proposition across multiple touch-points. Our deliverable was an updated version of their brand book, in order to introduce clients and staff to their fresh look and feel. With the theme, ‘what a difference a day makes,’ the brand book and new packaging reflects Woolworths’ round-the-clock commitment to quality in their stores and their communities. The stories provide insight to the care and attention each Woolworths employee brings to making a difference for the company and the people it supports.” Dena Benatan/Michael Newman, writers; Adit Wardhana, designer; Quan Payne (packaging), design director; Woolworths South Africa, photography/client.



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a means to quantify how well design works. “In the digital realm you can measure success by clicks,” he points out. “In design, what is there beyond ‘the client likes it’ or ‘we answered the brief’? Clients don’t demand that design firms prove the success of their ideas. We get business based on recommendations or awards. Wouldn’t it be grand if we could prove how much our thinking contributes to our clients’ success?”

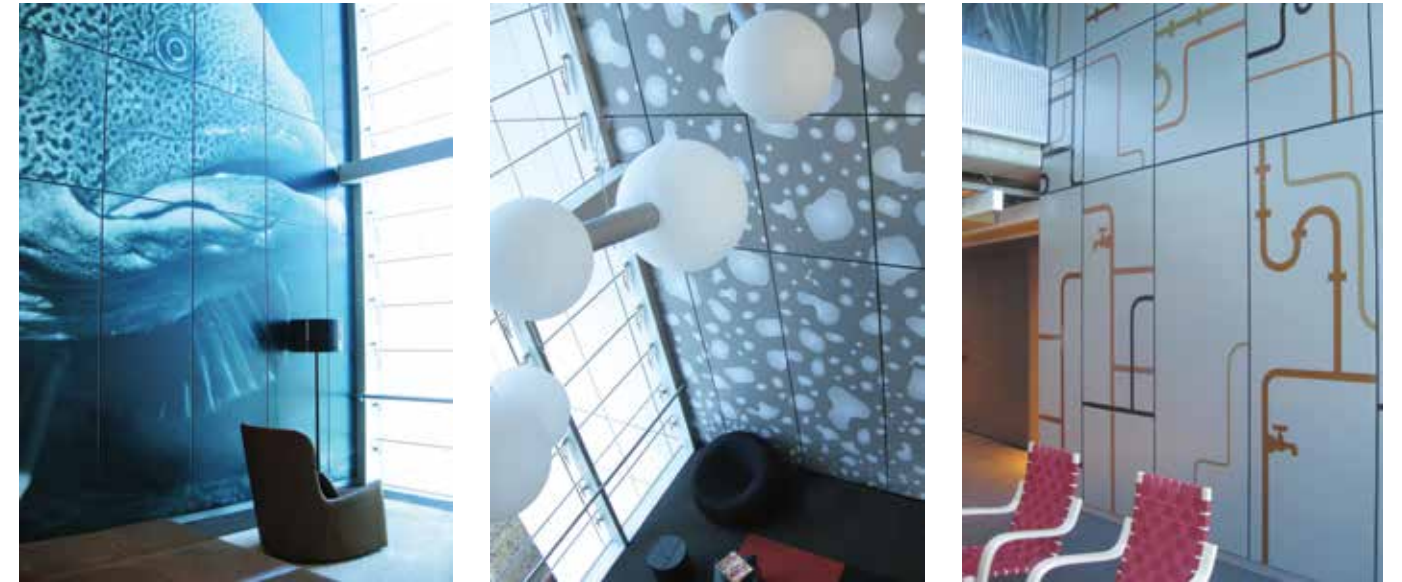
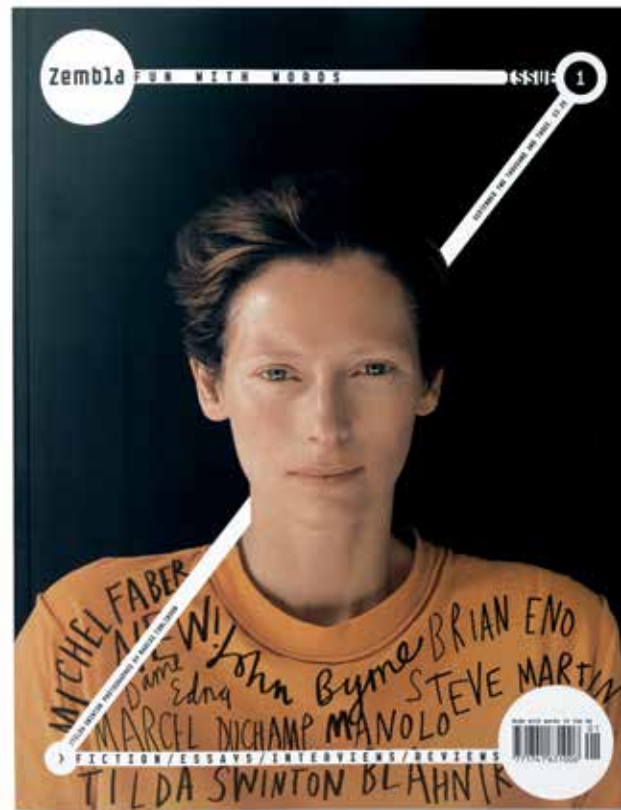
It would be grand. But in the meantime Frost* continues to thrive. “I’ve been working with my team to make sure we grow with the opportunities. You continuously redesign your business to improve the quality of the work and quality of the process,” says Frost. Any new directions he’d like to go in? “Sure,” he says with typical passion, “bigger problems to solve.”

This page: “We created a brand identity refresh to celebrate the **ngv 150th Anniversary**, executed as a poster. The new identity system cleverly creates a framing device that unifies communications, while also giving flexibility to promote individual exhibitions. The frame is a natural extension of the ngv’s logo and promotes easy brand recognition as well as clearly showcasing all information.” Adit Wardhana, designer; National Gallery of Victoria, client.

“**Zembla** combines ‘literary culture interests with the innovation and flair of a style magazine.’ Its editor, Dan Crowe, and publisher, Simon Finch, approached us to design and art direct it. The concept was based on the need for a cool literary magazine that targeted a younger audience, but would also attract high-end advertisers. The brief: ‘Do whatever you want. Be expressive. Have fun with words.’ The confidence of *Zembla*’s design lies largely in its refusal to adhere to the traditional ‘rules’ of magazine design. The letter Z forms the masthead and identity for the magazine, which spans the entire front cover while flexible type sizes and characters and a grid, that appears ‘only when we need it’, characterize the design within. *Zembla*’s strapline, ‘Fun with Words,’ applies equally to both content and form.” Vince Frost, designer/typographer; Marcus Tomlinson, photographer; Marion Deuchars, illustrator; Simon Finch, client.

Right: “For the new **SA Water House development** in Adelaide, we developed a major signage and environmental graphics scheme as part of the interior fitout and building design. The primary objective was to unite all facilities and staff into one site, encouraging interaction and teamwork. Our design approach was based on water, using the water-pipe as a metaphor for connection, and referencing cylinders, circles and translucency throughout the extensive signage package.” Bridget Atkinson/Sarah Estens/Carlo Giannasca, designers/typographers; Giles Revell, photographer; South Australian Water, client.

“We were briefed to reconfigure an existing seating pagoda into an **information kiosk in Chinatown**. Our design was inspired by traditional Chinese lanterns, we worked closely with Pamela Mei-Leng See, an artist specializing in paper cut works, to create a stunning paper cut design for the 2 x 230kg curved walls that encased the kiosk. The paper-cut design represents the residual chrysanthemum flowers in a ceramic vessel after the tea has been steeped and poured, and the ceramic pattern underneath the flowers is intended to bring prosperity (fish) and longevity (stork). At night the pattern is backlit by 4,000 hand-placed LED lights creating a mesmerizing glowing beacon, reminiscent of the illuminated red lanterns” Katie Bevin/Sarah Estens, designers; City of Sydney, client.



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This page: "Our brief was to design the first truly comprehensive collection of Indian recipes, demonstrating the incredible diversity of Indian cuisine. From the furthest corners of India—our task was to find a consistent way to hold the huge amount of diverse foods and locations together. Our inspiration came from a small Indian grocery close to our studio. We noticed that the rice came in a colorful cotton bag that had the same proportions as the India cookbook." Pushpesh Pant, writer; Andreas Pronto, designer; Vince Frost, creative director; Shubhangi Athalye/Ian Cowe/Ian Enkelmann/Indrajit/Meena Kadri/Max Lieberman/Pau Sarradell/Andy Sewell/Karen Stockert, photographers; Phaidon Press Limited, client.



"ActewAGL commissioned us, in collaboration with Canberra-based artist Robert Foster of Fink and Co., to create a sculptural installation for the foyer of its headquarters in Bunda Street, Canberra. 'The Journey' is made up of 37 tusk-like forms that emerge literally through the polished concrete floor, transforming into sinuous light-filled shapes named 'Ossolites.' The name references the concept of 'oscillating' and the Latin word for bone 'osso' combined with light. The Ossolites are programmed to create dramatic and interactive sequences of light, color and movement." Sarah Estens, designer; Bridget Atkinson, design director; Robert Foster, artist; ActewAGL, client.

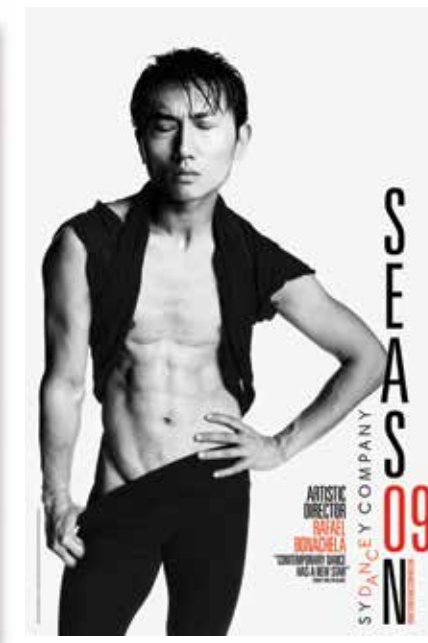


Right: "Australian conductor, **Olivier-Philippe Cunéo**, came to us to create a brand identity and website. Cunéo's new identity is both classic and contemporary. The logo is based on a single continuous line, evocative of the way that a conductor uses his baton to trace shapes in the air to indicate musical tempo and dynamics." Ben Hennessy, designer; Olivier-Philippe Cuneo, client.



"A Zurich-based not-for-profit that connects healthcare patients with art came to us in search of a name and id that captured its essence. 'Art- tonic' says it all." Ben Hennessy, designer; Ryan James/Barbara James, clients.

"We began working with **Sydney Dance Company** in 2005. In 2009 Sydney Dance Company welcomed a new artistic director Rafael Bonachela. We were asked to advertise the new season launch, paring back any superfluous design to visually communicate their fresh start. The focus shifted dramatically from last season's group shots of multiple dancers, elaborate costumes and graphic flourishes, to individual portraits of the dancers shot in black and white with minimal costumes. The dancers used their bodies to create strong shapes in a state of tension to express their individuality and passion. This minimal approach was reflected in the vertically rendered typography that mimics the shape of the human body and the use of negative space to further communicate tension." Vince Frost, designer; Georges Antoni, photographer; Vince Frost/Ayumi Moritoki, typographers; Sydney Dance Company, client.



"We were commissioned to undertake a major brand repositioning project for the **State Library of New South Wales** to address existing perceptions for both users and non-users and the library's vision for the future. The key to the brand strategy was creating a more emotive brand to excite audiences and encourage deeper relationships. The brand essence is designed to have a contemporary quality, replacing outdated and negative perceptions of 'boring' and 'intimidating' with 'friendly' and 'engaging,' the inherent qualities of an appealing and relevant destination." Anthony Donovan/Vince Frost, designers; State Library New South Wales, client.

