

The Billboard Project

Gallery 400

Chicago, IL

November 20, 1992–January 23, 1993

Opening Reception: November 20, 1992

Thanks to one of the nation's largest providers of outdoor advertising, the winners of a recent contest at the University of Illinois at Chicago are going public in a big way. Eleven students, faculty, and alumni from UIC's School of Art and Design will have their messages—on AIDS, education, safe driving, and art, among other topics—displayed on billboards for a month, courtesy of the Patrick Media Group.

The ten billboards (two of the eleven winners collaborated on one design) will go up the first week in November and will remain on display for about a month. They were chosen from among some seventy entries submitted by current art students, art and design faculty, and graduates of the school.

The School of Art and Design is holding a reception on November 20 at the GBU Gallery on campus to display all the competition entries. Lynne Sowder, a curator who has worked on public art awareness campaigns in Chicago and San Francisco, is speaking. An alumni-sponsored bus tour of the billboards will follow her presentation.

According to Karen Indeck, curator of UIC's Gallery 400, the project grew out of a discussion earlier this year about how UIC artists could exchange ideas with the community. John Terdich, a UIC graduate working at Patrick Media Group, suggested bringing his employer into the project.

The results include two entries on AIDS and safe sex, one with an anti-gang message, one about Native Americans, one promoting literacy, and the remaining four expressing artistic concepts.

"We feel that this program can create an important intersection and artistic exchange among businesses, education, and the city and can benefit a wide metropolitan audience," Indeck said. "The billboards provide an avenue into communities and a frame in which artists can address those communities in a vital new way."

Patrick Media Group, headquartered in Chicago, is a national outdoor advertising company that offers coverage in more than twenty markets, nine of which are among the top twenty-five in the nation based on population.

According to Paul V. Sara, vice president and general manager, "Patrick's billboard donation provides the artists with a means of expressing their creativity to the community in a larger-than-life format. The billboards become an extension of the artists' canvas."

Competition winners include undergraduates Diane Lea, Brooke Multack, and Veronika Romero; graduate students Yvette Brackman and Sungmi Naylor; School of Art and Design alumni Arturo Herrera and Bonnie Hughes; UIC associate professors of art and design Michael Glass, John H. Greiner, and Susan Sensemann, and UIC adjunct assistant professor Iñigo Mangolano-Ovalle.