

CIVA Website Press Release

As registration for the CIVA Biennale conference, Transcend 2021, opens, we wanted to tell you about the small team of students from the Department of Art and Design at Judson University behind this year's website and creative materials.

Judson is a private, Christian liberal arts institution located in Elgin Illinois, outside Chicago, which has a decades long commitment to programs in the fine arts, graphic design, and architecture. Every year, Assistant Professor Laurie Culshaw's Advanced Graphic Design course endeavors to partner with a non-profit to deliver a live project. Students, who are in the final year of their BFA programs in Graphic Design, gain the experience of working collaboratively to meet the needs of an actual client, and organizations benefit from expertise that might otherwise fall outside the bounds of their budgets. This year's cohort, Micah Brandt, Michael T. Figueroa, Olivia Jenson, Marissa Joyce, Antonina Pisciotto and Sarah Susan Vattiprolu, developed the designs for Transcend 2021 over the course of eight weeks last fall.

They first brainstormed ideas for the logo and ancillary marketing pieces, then pitched concepts through video conferences with the Executive Director of CIVA, Lawan Glasscock. With this feedback, they homed in on a final theme, and refined their designs. The ultimate direction for the logo and color palette was inspired by "Beauty with a capital 'B'," according to the student's final proposal, in other words, "God's creation." Topographic maps became a central reference due to their ability to reveal various elevations, "thus literally representing transcendence." The soft colors of bread and water further evoke the presence of the Holy Spirit in communion and baptism.

Although the aim was to benefit the CIVA community, the educational value was paramount. After the roll out, students reflected on what they learned from the project. Here are a few of their insights:

1. *What was the CIVA conference project experience like?*

- It was really interesting. I think when redesigning the logo, it was fun at first but started to get complicated when we were moving into the 3rd, 4th, 5th versions. It was hard to narrow down to the best design when we had so many great options. In the end, it was good to keep in mind the bigger picture of the project, so we didn't veer too far away from our goal.
- It was a new experience to work for a client with so many of my classmates, but it promoted growth in all of us. I was able to learn more about my classmates and myself. While we struggled at points, having come out on the other side I can look at the experience with a sense of accomplishment.
- It was a whole new world working in tandem with other designers on a long-term project. I really enjoyed getting to bounce ideas off of other creatives. I think it made my work a lot stronger because my teammates cared about it as much as I did.

2. *What was the high point of the project for you?*

- Seeing everything come together
- One of my favorite parts was when we finally decided on the logo and the theme. We had been churning and fidgeting with the logo for so long but when we presented our ideas with Lawan, it was so encouraging to see her joy for our work. Picking the logo signified a turning point in the project for me and it felt like we were finally onto something.
- Knowing that I was working on something that is going to have a life and purpose outside of my college experience.
- The high was at the very end hearing that Lowan was very happy with everything we worked so hard on for several weeks.

3. *What is the biggest learning you will take away from this experience?*

- I learned how to detach from my personal designs and projects more. I can get really tied to what I'm creating and not want to open up my design and give it to others for their personal touch.
- Working as a team and learning to respect each other's skill and pace.
- The collaborative nature of design was an aspect that was emphasized by working on this project. Having not done much group work previously, we had a bit of a learning curve, but we were able to pull through by the end and create some work that we can all be proud of. We were able to better each other through our disagreements and conversations.
- What I learned most was how to communicate with other designers in a helpful and constructive way.
- Working with other talented designers, molding and twisting our styles, our minds, our attitudes together into something we all can walk away from, feeling very proud and accomplished.

Check out the 2021 Transcend Biennale conference website at: civaconference.org

To learn more about the Judson University visit: judsonu.edu and to learn more about the Department of Art & Design visit: create.judsonu.edu