

FILM

## Film Street site launches contest

Birmingham-based children's filmmaking website Film Street is teaming up with Warwickshire software house Kudlian Software to launch a filmmaking competition for children.

The organisers of Animate IT '09 have enlisted CBBC's Ed Petrie to invite children under 12, primary schools and after-school groups to make an animated trailer to promote their favourite book.

PR

## Oriental flavour to link-up

Two Birmingham agencies have joined forces to spice up the life of two city centre restaurants.

Moxie Communications and Delicious PR have put together a PR and marketing strategy to drive business for The Oriental, a Malaysian restaurant based at The Mailbox and Thai Edge, a contemporary Thai restaurant at BrindleyPlace.

The agencies' first event was Hot Wok Friday last week, when

a motorised rickshaw, known as a Tuk Tuk, was driven around the city centre selling The Oriental Hot Box offering a tasty selection of Malaysian dishes.

Louise Hulse, of Moxie Communications, said: "With many city centre restaurants facing a downturn in lunchtime trade, companies are having to think of new and innovative ways to keep driving their business forward."

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## Events, dear boy, events

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PR

## Lois Burley lands a diamond contract

Lois Burley Public Relations is celebrating a further appointment with Midland jewellers Rex Johnson and Sons.

Adding to its PR and advertising brief, Lois Burley PR will work with the long-established family business on its innovative online company and internet gold buying service. Lois Burley PR commercial director Lucie Ray said: "It's an exciting challenge and proving hugely successful."

MARKETING

## Madisonsoho take over shops project

Birmingham-based marketing agency Madisonsoho has been appointed by property firm DTZ to help with the rebranding and launch of three shopping centres.

Madisonsoho managing partner John White said: "We are clearly delighted to win this high-profile project as we were up against some strong London agencies and we had not worked with DTZ before."

# Plenty of Plus points come from festival of celebration

**Caroline Archer**, partner in UKType and co-organiser of the design-focused Plus Festival, looks back at this year's event.

There's not much to queue for on River Street, especially in November, but for four days this month cars were doubled parked, coaches arrived in convoy and expectant delegates lined the pavement outside the newly-opened Fazeley Studios.

They had travelled to Eastside from across Europe and the Middle East, from London and around the UK and even found their way from far-flung corners of Deritend - River Street sprang to life.

The reason for this influx was the Plus International Design Festival which had returned to Birmingham for its third year.

Started in 2006 to coincide with the 300th anniversary of John Baskerville, this annual Festival is a celebration of all things graphic and typographic.

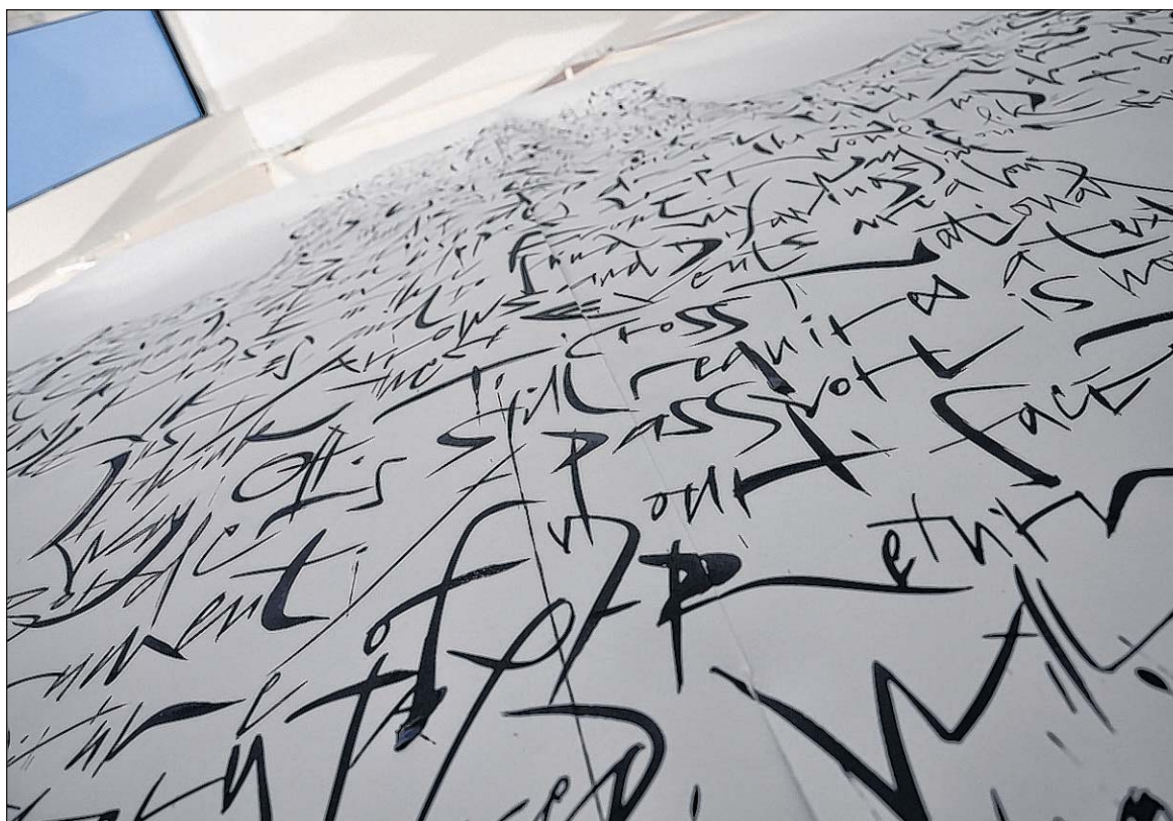
The event serves as an emissary for the graphic industries and a champion for design education and has rapidly become a popular fixture on the annual design calendar.

Plus is a festival of many parts - exhibitions, talks, workshops, demonstrations, walking tours and competitions - and attracts an increasing band of visitors that not only includes students and educators but also new entrants to the profession alongside experienced designers.

This year the exhibitions were disparate and definitely unconventional.

Agencies and freelancers exhibited work that was unproven and untried - not commercial work they had produced for clients.

Two of my favourite pieces included Shanghai-based WOKmedia who showed Between Lines, an extraordinary three dimensional, flexible typographic 'bookshelf'; whilst type designer Timothy Donaldson produced Plus non-Plus a vast canvas covered in letters so



One of the exhibits showcased at the graphics and typographical Plus Festival

large they had to be formed by the whole body with the assistance of scaffolding.

Alongside established exhibitors such as Clusta, Fluid, FSNM and Stereographic was Smile, a trio of exciting young newcomers who are definitely ones to watch in the future.

The lecture series is always the jewel in the crown of the event and this year was no exception. A diverse, eclectic and international line-up of speakers - both known and unknown - held the audience over three days during which time they delivered a series of informative, inspiring and captivating talks.

Jonathan Barnbrook, a current name in the world of type design, commanded an audience that would have been the envy of the Guillemots and which roused as much passion.

However, the festival was not simply about watching and listening it was also about doing and there were plenty of workshops to keep the visitors enter-

**“This year the exhibitions were disparate and definitely unconventional**

tained: book binding, stone carving, calligraphy, cartooning and the ever popular typographic walking tours ran to capacity as visitors explored the typographic complexity of Birmingham's urban environment under the able guidance of local historian, Ben Waddington.

But what was the purpose of all this activity?

For me, exhibiting at Plus 2008 was not about acquiring clients or pecuniary gain: it had a more significant and richer purpose than simple commercialism.

Plus 2008 was about sharing ideas, communing with my compatriots, being inspired and pushing my knowledge of the subject forward - it was also about building a community.

To demonstrate this, it was edifying seeing a stone carver from Devon chatting with the creative director from a London agency who was talking to a young graduate from Birmingham City University who had engaged the attention of an eminent type designer.

This, in microcosm, was what Plus is about - the great and the good mixing with the great unknown in parity.

Plus brings together individuals from across the graphic and typographic world, gives them the opportunity to share ideas and commune in a creative, permissive and egalitarian atmosphere - that is the true value of the festival and one in which I am delighted to have partaken and proud that it happened in Birmingham.

## Midlands fails to make most of creative talents: report

A lack of coordination across projects and initiatives to support the creative industries is hampering growth in the Midlands, according to a report produced by Coventry University.

Researchers in the University's Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration said there was a weakly-developed sense of creative community in Coventry and Warwickshire in a report for Coventry City Council.

The report, Creative Industries in Coventry and Warwickshire, analyses the creative industries in the area and explores their potential to drive economic development and create future employment opportunities.

Coventry and Warwickshire should build on its strengths in the software industry, most notably serious games, performing arts, and the designer fashion sectors to foster a closer creative community, the report said.

Networking and knowledge transfer between higher education and the creative sectors was also a must for future development.

Director of the Institute for Creative Enterprise (ICE) at Coventry University Christine Hamilton, one of the people interviewed for the report, believes the creative industries are vital for prosperity.

"Two million are employed in the sector which contributes £60 billion a year - 7.3 per cent - to the UK economy," she said.

"There is an important creative industries sector in the region but its spread is patchy and it is not growing at the same rate as other English regions.

"The West Midlands as a whole has just a 7.1 per cent share of the UK's cultural firms, sitting in sixth position among English regions.

"The region is also failing to retain its creative talent - 92 per cent of creative students leave the region after graduation - and this has a serious impact on the area's economic strength.

"ICE has been set up to retain these people in the city and provide the kind of support required to nurture their talent."

ICE, which opened in June, provides incubation space and business start-up advice for creative graduates wishing to set up their own business as well as a performance studio, screening room and digital art studio.

Later this month ICE will host a professional development programme for dance-makers, and digital artists.