

At the intersection of graphic communications and desktop technologies

Leonardo was a pretty smart guy, by most people's reckoning.

Also creative, artistic, inventive, imaginative, intuitive, articulate—and not bad looking, either (if we can indeed presume to be able to see him through Mona).

And although he had one or two teachers who helped him along the way in developing that awesome talent and intelligence, for the most part he ended up forging his own path towards greatness.

I'd like to think of myself as another Leonardo.

Well, okay, don't laugh too loud—I said I'd *like* to think it.

The point is, when we start out, all of us love to imagine that we're destined to do something great. But then, somehow, somewhere, we have a tendency to lose that idealistic fervour, until before you know it, we're settling for being ordinary, even mediocre. Somehow that seems more comfortable than continuing to dwell in the fantasy of superhuman achievement, only to be perpetually disappointed.

The great thing about being young (as some of you certainly must be) is that dreams can still seem real. No matter what course you have set out on, you can still look ahead and envision that rainbow just around the corner (do you ever wonder what young Leonardo thought he'd be when he grew up?).

In many respects, assuming a role in the world of modern graphics represents a very powerful opportunity. Graphic communications is the art of interpreting someone else's half-formed thoughts and ideas and translating them into words and pictures in a form and style that will command attention, deliver a message, and

compel total strangers to react to your call for action. More than that, in the twenty-first century, it means being able to leverage technologies to perform that job for you, and using your creativity to exploit these technologies to the greatest benefit with the least amount of time and effort.

Not so long ago that meant pouring your message into a medium called print, which might wind up reaching out to thousands or hundreds of thousands of people; today it can mean expending that same creativity to communicate with millions, perhaps hundreds of millions, anywhere on the face of the globe.

We who work in the graphics industry stand at the intersection of technology and global communications. With the right approach, the right concept, the right style and method of reaching out, we have the ability to influence more individuals with a single message than at any time in history.

But we all have to start somewhere.

Some of you will look to schools and colleges for direction. In this issue we feature our annual *Directory of Graphics Courses in Canada* (see page 19), as complete a listing of facilities catering to the requirements of budding designers, photographers, illustrators, animators and graphic artists as you will find anywhere.

Some of you will be looking for inspiration as you struggle to establish your credentials in computer art or graphic design. For you we offer insights from a top Canadian digital artist (*Let the Games Begin*, page 24), an established Canadian 3D imaging studio owner (*When Old Becomes New*, page 16, by Dinah Tolton), and even a respected Canadian magazine publisher



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(*Profiling the Canadian Graphics Professional*, page 12).

Some of you will be interested in garnering tips on improving your web page design skills or in learning about what new opportunities are in store for the Web. *Hype Your Web Type* on page 40, by veteran Canadian type designer Nick Shinn should provide you with at least a few new ideas on that subject, as should Kirby Ferguson's special report on the renaissance of MetaStream (née MetaCreations) and its brand new 3D streaming technology (*Is the Web ready for the third dimension?*, page 54). Certainly Bob Connolly's report on Adobe's just-released GoLive 5 (*Dynamic links drive data to the Web*, page 60) will be a must-read.

And for anyone who has a passing familiarity with the looming battle between the purveyors of free music on the Web and the recording industry, *Napsterism: The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of a New Religion* by Shane Steinman (on page 26) is a hitherto unpublished report which offers an entirely new point of view on new Digital Rights Management technologies, which will have far-reaching effects not only on the entertainment industry but also on those in graphics and other computer-centric professions.

Of course Photoshoppers of all persuasions will be able to make good use of the tips and techniques which Ben Willmore shares in his third and final installment of *Photoshop Techniques: Type and Background Effects* (page 44). And with the certain knowledge that print is not going away any time soon, Ron Giddings walks us through his experiments with the latest in desktop color proofing tools on page 40, in *Show Me the Proof*.

Finally, for the many Mac users in the audience, we include a special look at announcements from MacWorld Expo New York (*Steve Jobs squared equals Mac cubed*, page 50), brought to you by yer humble publisher.

I don't think there's any doubt that if Leonardo was still with us today, he would be reveling in the technological revolution we have witnessed in the past decade. In fact, I'm sure he would be a leading figure in the development of new digital technologies (while likely painting in his spare time).

And while others might scoff and guffaw at the very thought of building *The World's First RGB Press* (see page 64), Leonardo would probably be murmuring a quiet, "Hmmmmm..." to himself, as he set his mind to the impossible task.

Yes, Grasshopper, we *do* live in interesting times.

A world where other lands and peoples and cultures lie but a few keystrokes away.

The common ground that we share remains the same; we all use words and pictures—the base components of graphic communications—to exchange our ideas, our dreams, our unique messages, just as generations have done before us, right back to the dawn of civilization.

We are at a crossroads in the history of our species. Each of us is invisibly connected to every other, yet separated from the rest of the universe by gargantuan stretches of time and space.

It is a digital Renaissance, where all may be a Leonardo. ■