

agIdeas 2012 review

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At my age it's rare to get a real buzz anymore. But after all these years I still managed a contact high at [agIdeas International Design Forum](http://www.agideas.net/) (<http://www.agideas.net/>) last week (Wednesday 23 May – Friday 25 May 2012). I can't be sure whether it was mixing with 'designeroyalty', being around all those idealistic students who haven't yet taken out mortgages, or the sheer thrill of anticipating the return of the Ken Cato bow tie (or collarless shirt – I'd settle for either).

But there it was – two sessions on Wednesday and I felt like I (or at least the design collective) could change the world. And, by all accounts, we should according to David Berman – a Thursday morning session I very regrettably missed. Berman is a designer, author of *Do Good Design; How Designers Can Save the World*, fellow and ethics chair of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada and vice-president, treasurer and sustainability chair of IcoGrada (feeling yet like your career hasn't really hit the highs you'd envisaged?).



cb=cc8c564d

Do Good Design by David Berman

Dana Arnett of Chicago-based VSA Partners was my tip for the festival and delivered with an entertaining presentation on the magical outcome of merging your passion and your thinking. A youth spent dabbling in 1960s counter-culture epitomised by Peter Fonda in *The Wild Angels* (you know the one: "We want to be free to do what we want to do, we want to be free to ride our machines without being hassled by the man, and we want to get loaded and we want to have a good time,") led to a cold call to Harley Davidson and a long standing relationship of brand building through authentic storytelling.

Australian illustrator and Academy Award winner Shaun Tan was a surprise delight with his unassuming manner and subtle humour – perhaps not so surprising to those familiar with his work. Tan paralleled his role as storyteller to the central character from one of his short stories in *Tales*

From Outer Suburbia. The water buffalo, although knowing the answer, merely points children in the direction of whatever it is they are seeking so they may discover that answer for themselves.



Illustration from Tales From Outer Suburbia

Also interesting was media artist and computer scientist Jon McCormack and his work in computer code as a medium for artistic expression. McCormack's designation of computers as once tools, then assistants, now collaborators and soon to be artists was exciting and unnerving in equal measure.

But the highlight for me was undoubtedly Possible Worldwide's Dale Herigstad with his talk on 'new television' and the developments in stereo 3D and augmented reality. As one still straddling the divide of Early and Late Majority, merely aspiring to one day make the leap to Early Adopter, I barely understand a word of it – but it sounded exhilarating. Herigstad described the spectrum of passive to dynamic media encompassing print, photography, film and video, big screen, interactive media, virtual reality and stereo 3D, with the tipping point occurring somewhere between big screen and interactive media. He demonstrated with the aid of 3D glasses the three spaces; the traditional surface space, the content space (the space through the screen) and the interaction space – the new territory (the space in front of the screen). He spoke of the current landscape where brands control the content space and the future vision of augmented reality where individual viewers control what they want to see in the interaction space using subtle gestures and, with advancements in resolution, facial recognition detecting mood. That's a television worth early adoption.



Work by Dale Herigstad and Possible Worldwide

I miss the days when agIdeas served up a hot buffet lunch to delegates. The 'deal' at The BoatBuilders Yard was actually their standard menu and they were ill-prepared for the lunchtime influx. But despite the obligatory misses throughout the Festival, agIdeas still delivers an unequalled program of inspiration and information sourcing speakers from diverse backgrounds; the vanguard of innovation. It's a buzz with ROI.

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14 RESPONSES



Rachel A.

May 29, 2012 at 12:39 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65726>)

I can't bear this type of reportage – the sentiment of “How does YOUR career measure up?” with this pseudo-admiration and “staring up at giants”, along with measuring a talk's worth by how aspirational it was. Urgh! Either report the facts or discuss and critique – I had a feeling that this 'review' would just state that 'it happened and it was nice'. C'mon Desktop!!

[REPLY \(/BLOGS/AGIDEAS-2012-REVIEW/?REPLYTOCOM=65726#RESPOND\)](#)



Luke van O

May 30, 2012 at 11:33 am (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65737>)

I can't bear this type of worthless, cynical and infantile critique. If you'd applied that same level of care and balance to your written word as the author has to her own, you might have produced something worth saying. As it is, your opinion only rose far enough above the trough of bile from which you gorge yourself to remind us all that you can never satisfy an wannabe. Take your excessive punctuation, melodrama ('Urgh!' – vom) and poor structure and send it to Grazia instead, where I'm certain the readership will appreciate it more.

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Ollie W

May 30, 2012 at 11:58 am (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65744>)

What's with the vitriolic hate mail Rachel A? How about just appreciating the review for what it is; a succinct personal reflection on AGIdeas? Lighten up.

[REPLY \(/BLOGS/AGIDEAS-2012-REVIEW/?REPLYTOCOM=65744#RESPOND\)](#)



Scott

May 30, 2012 at 12:14 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65746>)

Thanks for a great write-up on the conference Desktop. Rachel A., save your cynicism for the comments section of the Herald Sun. I'm sure there's something on there about cyclists or boat people that you can moan about.

[REPLY \(/BLOGS/AGIDEAS-2012-REVIEW/?REPLYTOCOM=65746#RESPOND\)](#)



To Rachel A from Ratatouille

May 30, 2012 at 12:49 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65748>)

“In many ways, the work of a critic is easy. We risk very little yet enjoy a position over those who offer up their work and their selves to our judgment. We thrive on negative criticism...”

-Pixar's character Anton Ego, Ratatouille, 2007

[REPLY \(/BLOGS/AGIDEAS-2012-REVIEW/?REPLYTOCOM=65748#RESPOND\)](#)



Dan

May 30, 2012 at 11:34 am (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65738>)

We are designers and we need to ad emotion to everything we do, its a shame that some people can't understand it. Maybe its best to go to an engineer's blog and he'll state the facts straight up to you.

Besides the review talks about what was good and bad about the event, thoughts on the best speakers and gives a perspective on the the different industries involved.

Totally disagree with this comment... I enjoyed both the conference and the review.

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Peter Z.

May 30, 2012 at 11:35 am (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65739>)

Thanks Desktop for summing up the talks I couldn't make although desperately wanted to. Like the author, I can't help but admire and be inspired by these speakers. I found Dale Herigstad's vision of the near future mesmerising with huge implications for my design practice.

[REPLY \(/BLOGS/AGIDEAS-2012-REVIEW?REPLYTOCOM=65739#RESPOND\)](#)



Cliff

May 30, 2012 at 11:44 am (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65741>)

Rachel T – from your piece I regret not having made it to the event. Rachel A – it's depressing that the default response from many such as you in the Australian design community is to turn on its own as soon as anyone has the temerity to offer some sincere commentary or God forbid, wish to be 'inspired'.

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William H.

May 30, 2012 at 11:49 am (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65742>)

Congrats to agldeas on another great year of talks. Thanks for filling me in on some of the cool stuff I missed!

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Sam O

May 30, 2012 at 12:02 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65745>)

Wow check out that first comment – what a mole!

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Nunzio

May 30, 2012 at 12:49 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65747>)

Thanks for that great review. Unfortunately I didn't have the opportunity to go, so it was well worth the read. We should all remain inspired and celebrate creativity, both personally and amongst our peers. Share the love.

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Sheila

May 30, 2012 at 12:53 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65749>)

Great article, Rachel T! Clear, succinct, and infectiously inspirational (am currently googling Possible Worldwide). Keep writing!

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Sally Mac

May 30, 2012 at 3:13 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65751>)

Great write up – full of passion. Isn't that what design is all about? Any event that can inspire such a 'buzz' and 'exhilaration' in designers, for what we do day to day, is good in my books – warts and all.

Rachel A. – as they would say where I'm from – Dry your eyes love.

[REPLY \(/BLOGS/AGIDEAS-2012-REVIEW?REPLYTOCOM=65751#RESPOND\)](#)



[Tim Cruickshank \(<http://have-you-met.com.au/>\)](http://have-you-met.com.au/)

May 30, 2012 at 8:42 pm (<http://desktopmag.com.au/blogs/agideas-2012-review/comment-page-1/#comment-65755>)

Great review! Wish I had seen Dale Herigstad! Sounds like it would have been amazing. Opinion posts all the way! yay!

[REPLY \(/BLOGS/AGIDEAS-2012-REVIEW?REPLYTOCOM=65755#RESPOND\)](#)