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A Museum of Postcards Attracts Top Brands in Argentina

Sold in Diesel Stores for \$100, This Form of 'Graphic Terrorism' Is BankablePosted by [Patricio Cavalli](#) on [10.05.09](#) @ 11:39 AM

It all began in a classroom at Buenos Aires' [Universidad de Palermo](#), when [Adrian Candelmi](#), a graphic designer and professor, was putting his students through one of his famous torture sessions, also known as final semester examinations. But one student, Patricio Crespi, was not only able to escape the session unharmed, but to catch the professor's eye. The idea he presented that evening in 2003, a magazine made entirely of take-away postcards, is now catching the eyes of a widespread audience of people and brands.



To make a long story short, Messrs. Candelmi and Crespi and their associates, editors Fernanda Cohen and Emiliano "Gurí" Pereyra, managed to transform a small and somewhat obvious postcard magazine into the Museo Postal Móvil, or Mobile Postcard Museum.

Its brand, Terrorismo Gráfico (or graphic terrorism), says a lot about what drives them, except, they said, for the part about violence. "Graphic terrorism is a concept used worldwide to relate events such as graffiti, urban art, installations, etc.," Mr. Candelmi said. "We deplore violence -- what we look for

is the concept of subverting reality, preconceptions and established rules in the field of graphic design."

Sitting in the university's "creative classroom" -- which Mr. Candelmi helped create -- among walls covered with print ads, a giant plasma TV, worktables and cushions in the floor, he and Mr. Crespi recalled how the magazine was transformed to a mobile museum.

They began selling the magazine for five Argentine pesos (about \$1) in select and fashionable bars and cocktail houses. People bought it because it was nicely printed, nicely designed and was cheap enough to use the cards to give to their friends. Also, they said, because it came with discount coupons for those bars.

They also promoted Terrorismo with a band of gorgeous young women dressed in black

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heels and goggles. They entered the bars and gave the audience a "shock of graphic terrorism," giving away samples of the magazine, they said.

"We didn't use guys, because at that time, there was an epidemic of robberies to bars and restaurants, and we didn't want to get in trouble with security guards and the cops."

They eventually did get into trouble when one evening a squad of federal police officers searched their car in a checkpoint and found the girls, the goggles and the "terrorism" stickers. "Had it been in the '70s, we'd been shot," they said, jokingly. "Luckily we got away fast, but had to leave a couple of magazines behind. The cops liked them for their families."

And so, one evening, while dining with their girlfriends, Messrs. Candelmi and Crespi realized they had to transform their product.

"We began asking local artists for contributions. But we had no money to pay them. And to our surprise, they all liked the concept, they all contributed for free [local slang for 'free']. Until the day glorious Roberto Fontanarrosa -- one of the country's most

beloved and recognized creative cartoonists, who died in 2007 -- did us this drawing. It all changed," Mr. Crespi said, showing Mr. Fontanarrosa's picture, in which a soldier says "Shit! Another case of graphic terrorism."



After that, artists and creators of all sorts began contributing, including cook Narda Lepes; composer, singer and painter Horacio Fontova; rally driver Marcos Di Palma; and even soccer legend Diego Maradona's daughters, Dalma and Gianina.

"All the topnotch artists were contributing with us for free. "They said, 'Where do you put art but in a museum?'" said Messrs. Candelmi and Crespi.

The museum they devised is a "dynamic form of art," they explained. "It is a collection of works of art, divided in exhibitions and themes, which you can take with you. And you can give it away to others, part by part."

The Moving Museum is not only a self-expression space, it is also a business. It comes with a special packaging, has a \$100 value and is sold exclusively in Diesel brand stores.

Brands have been flocking the museum's halls and entrances. Nearly all of Argentina's top brands, such as Movistar, Claro, DHL, Levi's and Alfa Romeo, are hopping in, be it by creating their own collectible postcards (exclusivity is required) or by sponsoring one of the Museum's "exhibition halls."

Currently, Messrs. Candelmi and Crespi are creating the 2009-II Series, which starts with the story of the 5,000 "Cassatta" ice creams former president and dictator Juan Domingo Perón ordered be taken to him to his exile in Spain in the 1970s. Special refrigerators were created to transport the ice cream across the Atlantic, but got lost along with the dessert. "Some were retrieved from the ocean," Mr. Candelmi said with a wink, "and we will exhibit them this year, filled with the artists' contributions."

One of those artists, it seems, will be me.

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