



Above: The Media Artists staff in their office in Albino, Italy. **From left to right:** Fabia Pasinelli, architect; Joe Connell, captain of creative team; Tomas Carrara, account manager; Eli Jones, copywriter; Michael Connell, creative director/president; Andrea Santwier, special projects; Eva Martinelli, executive assistant; and Barbara Lussana, office manager. **Right:** Promotional poster for client Vuarnet.

with that, he moved into the production and business end of the projects, becoming part of what he calls a “commercial communication arts business.”

Media Artists soon grew into a full-service design studio with 10 people—a creatively aggressive group of both Italians and Americans. They design for 14 Italian and European clients ranging from fashion to snowboarding. Media Artists produces product catalogs and developed a marketing strategy for the local licensee of Vuarnet. The firm’s other clients include Mammut, a Swiss mountaineering clothing and equipment company; K2; Pertex Textiles; and Agip Petroleum products. Regarding future accounts, Connell says, “Stay tuned for more.”

Staying Professional in Rural Italy

The studio is situated about an hour from Milan in Albino, a small town where the locals affectionately call the

Media Artists staff “Ragazzi Americani,” which means “The Americans.” Finding a location was really a question of finding adequate space. “We had to find real offices,” Connell says. “Finding any sort of space isn’t easy in Italy. When our current offices became available, they also happened to be furnished. Another important factor is that we work very closely with a fashion-design studio owned by one of my partners, Vittorio Giacomelli, situated near Albino. [Connell owns the majority of Media Artists, but Giacomelli and Tomas Carrara, Media Artists’ account manager, also own part of the firm.]

KERRY HENDERSON JOHN ANDERSON VALENTINA HANZOZET

A VOYAGE THROUGH VUARNET

THE CHARACTER OF THE PAST.
THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT.
THE COMBINATION OF THE FUTURE.



A MEDIA ARTISTS PRODUCTION KERRY HENDERSON JOHN ANDERSON VALENTINA HANZOZET A VOYAGE THROUGH VUARNET
A MEDIA ARTISTS TEAM DESIGNER SIMONA CUSTARD MICHAEL CONNELL COPYWRITER ERIK R. SUGO CREATIVES MASSIMO MAROZZI
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY OLIVER MOOSEWILL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NICOLEE LEE PRODUCED BY WAVE CREATIVES PRODUCED BY PENELOPE RUSSELL WRITTEN BY MICHAEL CONNELL FOR MEDIA ARTISTS INC.

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MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO

“Living and working in Albino allows for a very nice atmosphere—minus the hectic pace of a major metropolitan city—but physically close enough that when we need specialized help, it’s no problem. And clients like it, too,” he says. Connell points out that major European cities are easily



Photo: René Russo, Milan, Italy

"I began to enjoy the people, the country, my surroundings, everything about Italy—especially the food and wine," says Michael Connell, creative director/president of Media Artists. So five years ago, Connell transformed a fashion-modeling gig in Italy into a graphic design career, opening his own studio.

focus. Often, there's a lack of focus on the development of modern arts like graphic design. We push to educate clients and staff—teach them what's new, how graphic design can make a difference to their product [their corporate] image."

Media Artists has a unique philosophy Connell calls "creativita precisa"—precise creativity. He defines this as creativity backed by precision in management. The firm's project proposals include all aspects of the job, from concept through production, printing and distribution. This way, Connell says, the client receives just one cost-effective invoice, eliminating a great deal of bureaucracy and paperwork—"the dreaded deadline killers."

Connell defines his management philosophy this way: "Deadlines are deadlines and some semblance of structure and order must be maintained. At Media Artists, we meet deadlines though the use of an open-door management policy [where staff can tug at the roots of their boss' hair and let some of their own grow back.]"

New World Order

"Ragazzi Americani" in tiny Albino are apparently making their presence

known throughout their host country and Europe. In his ambitious global plans, "precise creativity" may well make it to Michael Connell's native country and beyond. And Media Artists' experience may also be a lesson to ambitious designers worldwide. With a great deal of hard work, some sacrifice, a strong point of view, a lot of self-confidence, a little luck and a sharp eye for opportunity coupled with an unshakable desire to succeed, it's possible to excel, even if the road taken isn't exactly straight. **HOW**

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