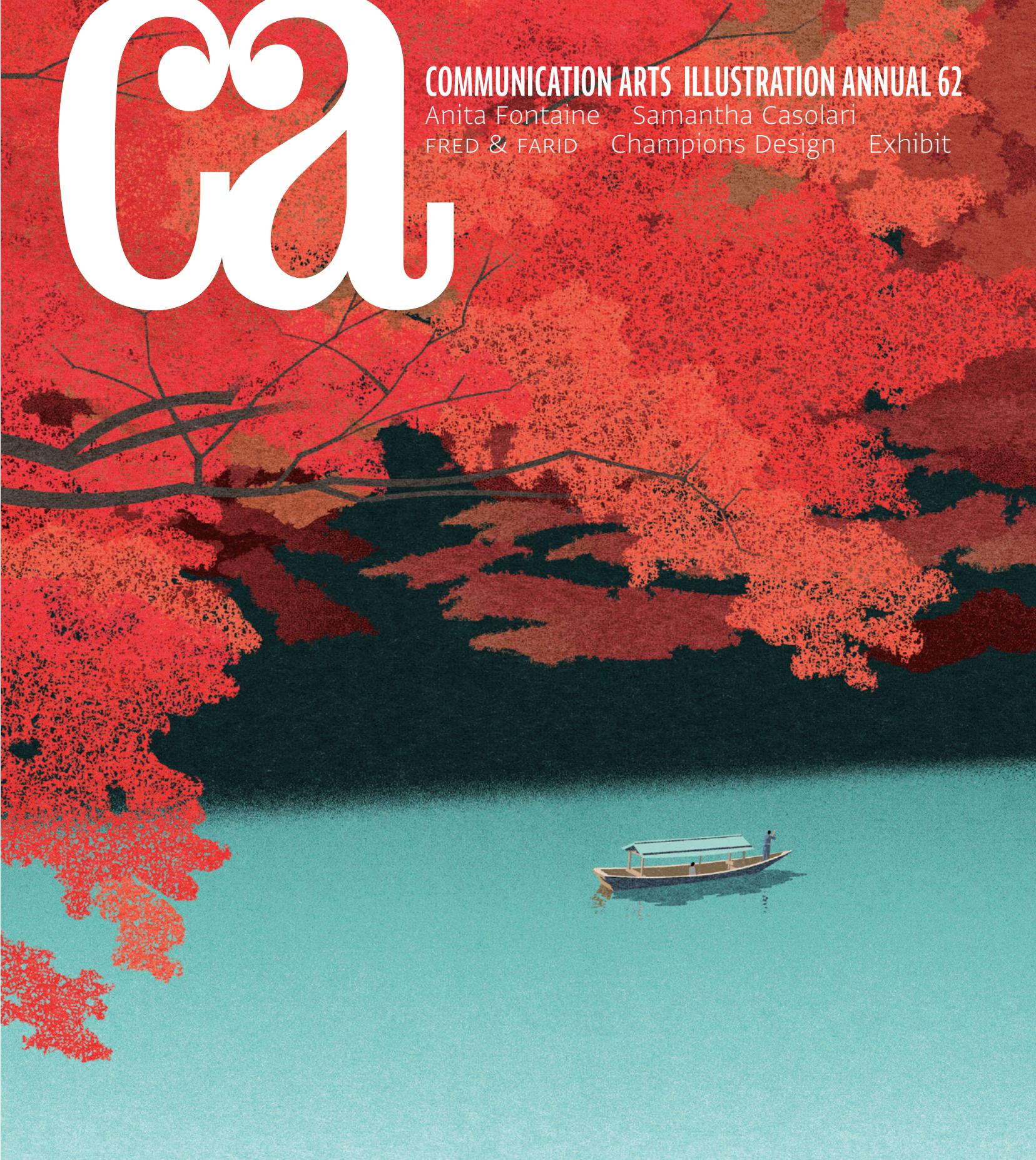


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COMMUNICATION ARTS ILLUSTRATION ANNUAL 62

Anita Fontaine Samantha Casolari

FRED & FARID Champions Design Exhibit

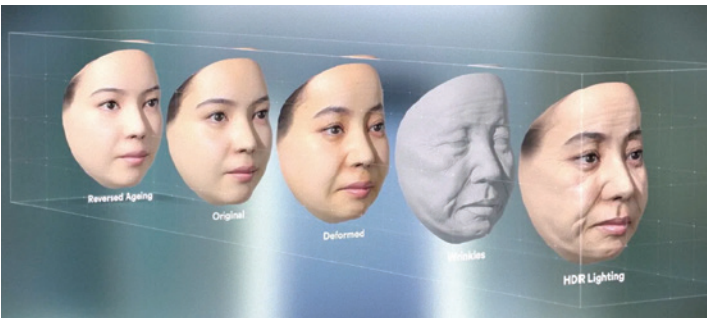


May/June 2021

Twenty-Four Dollars

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The Emotional AI



Beyond Time, by R/GA Tokyo, is an interactive installation that leveraged Shiseido's scientific research on aging to develop a fully 3-D, real-time age simulation engine. Participants can instantly experience the spectrum of aging with a partner, in the hope they may reassess their relationship with time through the lens of their closest relationships.

When it comes to artificial intelligence (AI) and advertising, the writing is on the wall. According to a 2017 prediction from Servion Global Solutions, “by 2025, AI will power 95 percent of all customer interactions.” As AI matures beyond chatbots, ad buying and creating hypertargeted audiences based on massive data sets, savvy ad agencies are asking, “How can we exploit this technology for the aims of our clients? How can we use it to position our clients at the center of customer conversations? How can we harness it to build an emotional brand connection, making customers smile, laugh and perhaps even cry?”

Some agencies are already finding answers.

R/GA creates a time-travel machine

Since its earliest days, when it was creating the teaser trailer and opening title sequence for the 1978 film *Superman*, R/GA has made a name for itself working at the intersection of digital technology, design and advertising. So it's no surprise it would embrace AI. Working with marquee clients like Nike's On Demand fitness program and Samsung's augmented reality promotion *Invasion #withGalaxy*, R/GA is finding new ways to extend brand reach, build loyalty and create emotion using a technology not known for warm and fuzzy feelings.

For Beyond Time, an interactive “time-travel” experience installed in a booth in the Shiseido “global innovation center” in Yokohama, Japan, which opened to the public in 2019, R/GA deployed computer vision technology to scan a visitor's face in real time using more

than a thousand data points, compare it to a vast data set of Shiseido face models, then create a visualization to represent how that person's face would look decades into the past or future. As two friends or loved ones gaze at each other through a digital screen, they can see the other age or grow younger in the blink of an eye. Confronting issues of aging and bias can raise provocative questions, especially in a country with an aging population like Japan's. For Shiseido, the experience turned into a public relations coup, generating press and bringing thousands into the Shiseido center.

To ensure R/GA continues to wield AI for the benefit of its clients, John Tubert, senior vice president of Technology at R/GA, held a workshop recently for R/GA creatives. His goal was to “up-level everyone on the creative team” so they can effectively pitch R/GA's secret sauce combining AI and creativity to prospective clients.

First, Tubert's team provided an overview of AI. “We looked at examples of what had already been done in the world, and also what we've done at R/GA,” he says. Then attendees began brainstorming around briefs for clients in banking, finance and technology. “We asked, ‘What are the problems we are trying to solve, and how can we use AI to solve them?’” During the third part of the workshop, the group selected “the best idea we can solve for, generated the data required to train an AI, then actually built a functioning prototype AI in real time to show [that AI] can work in real time.”

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BRAIVE

BRAIVE guides brands from efficiency to empathy

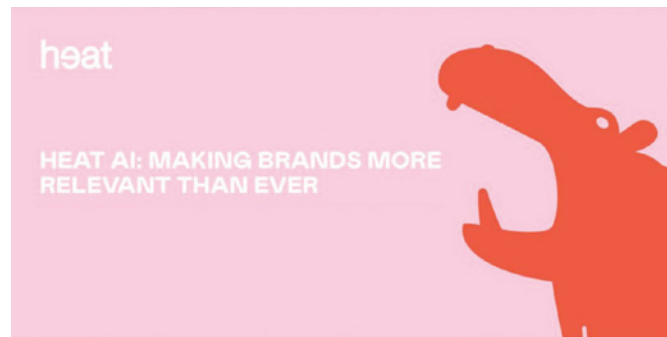
“As good brand stewards of our clients, it became clear that we needed to have AI be a part of our holistic strategy,” says Kate Jeffers, partner and president at Venables Bell + Partners (VB+P). That led to VB+P partnering with Trace Cohen, a strategy expert focused on emerging technologies, and Joe Kleinschmidt, a technology entrepreneur, in 2020 to launch BRAIVE, a brand AI firm that specializes in working with marketers to develop and implement AI experiences that reflect the brand’s purpose and personality, and best serve the needs of its consumers and communities.

The firm offers a series of workshops called the BRAIVE Academy, which convenes a client team of marketing experts, customer service experts, designers and, in Cohen’s words, “a cross section of employees who can provide metaexpertise. We’re looking for real inputs from people who live the brand.” Clients can expect eight sessions—four with the brand’s executive team leader and four with its broader team and key stakeholders—conducted via Zoom over the course of roughly a month. “The promise of the academy is to align on a brand challenge up front, then ideate ways that AI can solve for it,” Cohen says.

Ideation begins early in the process, and once the brand team leader has identified the primary business challenge, Cohen explains, “we identify community pain points, the role that AI can play to solve for the challenge and the authority the brand has to occupy that role. From there, we deliver a recommendation on how we can leverage AI to bring the brand to life, and then build a prototype to pilot the concept.

“Currently, AI solutions are being driven by tech and operations teams and with a focus on efficiency alone,” says Cohen. “For BRAIVE, that’s considered to be table stakes. Instead, we work with marketers to build a more differentiated AI strategy that is aligned with the brand—and ultimately develop AI experiences that can tell the brand’s story on a broader scale.”

Thus far, four clients have completed BRAIVE Academy workshops. For “people and culture” startup Culture Amp, BRAIVE conducted a fifteen-person workshop that revealed how much stress human resources (HR) managers were under in the midst of a pandemic. In response, the BRAIVE team built “Enso,” an AI-driven “knowledge keeper” that facilitates connections amongst HR leaders, and enables them to share their stories and best practices. Cohen says that “instead of a ‘know-it-all’ AI, we built a ‘listen-to-it-all’ AI that holds the collective vision and learnings of this human community.”



Heat AI predicts the future

After San Francisco-based ad agency Heat was acquired by Deloitte in 2016, there was a recognition that Heat’s creativity could be married to Deloitte’s toolbox of cutting-edge technology. In 2019, the agency launched Heat AI. Jocelyn Lee, head of AI, was able to open the toolbox and ask her favorite question: “What if?” As in, “What if we took Deloitte Digital’s risk-prediction tools and used them for advertising?”

One answer has been a pattern-matching tool that Heat AI uses to examine 100 million posts per day from more than 50,000 separate data sources, like blogs and social media. Instead of predicting risk, Heat AI’s algorithms key in on certain words to determine trends and conversations that will peak in the next 72 hours. And, according to Heat AI, it can do this with up to 70 percent accuracy. As Lee says, making air quotes, “This is its ‘superpower.’”

It’s a superpower that Heat AI is using for clients who want to be part of relevant consumer conversations. By using predictive and propensity modeling to look at what customers are discussing online, Heat AI can create content around a topic and, as Lee says, “[place] it in social while [the topic] is trending so we can reach the right person with the right message at the right time.”

Lee says this ability is resonating with entertainment and gaming clients. One example Lee points to is Heat AI’s work for Sony’s launch of the sequel film *Zombieland: Double Tap* in 2019. “We were looking for a new way to engage with the audience, so we looked at what *Zombieland* viewers were searching for: gaming, sports and entertainment. We used the predictive algorithm to look at relevant trends at the time the sequel would launch. Then we created social media posts that tapped into trending conversations and married them to *Zombieland*,” Lee says. “The result was memorable conversations around a title people cared about, a recall-rate lift of 16 percent and a performance that was 41 percent better than business-as-usual ads.”

Today, thanks to efforts from agencies and companies working on the cutting edge of technology, AI is on the cusp of “business as un-usual.” Although that might worry creatives, Tiffany Rolfe, R/GA’s global chief creative officer, doesn’t see AI coming for their jobs anytime soon. “Creatives have a unique advantage that will take AI decades to match: insight and ingenuity, both human traits that are extremely difficult to mimic,” she says. Once the sheen of AI wears off, Rolfe thinks the technology will increasingly be seen as just another workaday tool. “As the demand for more deliverables in shorter times rises,” she says, “creatives will be managing AI processes to support their workloads.” And as the novelty of chatbots and other current AI applications wears off, customers can expect AI to fill the roles of brand builder, soothsayer and even empathy generator. It’s just getting started. [ca](#)