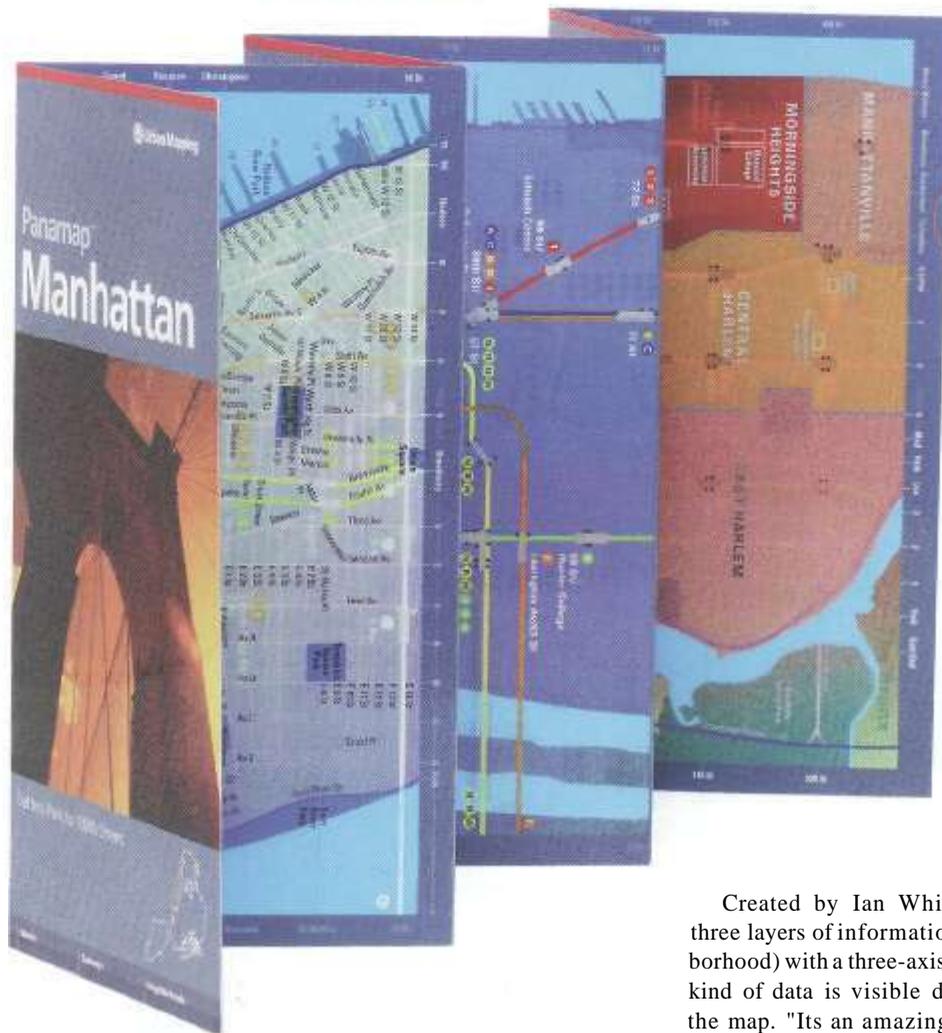


INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AWARDS BEST OF SHOW



1 No sooner had the judges selected the Panamap as Best of Show, than we began considering how best to photograph it. To see a video of the map's lenticular effect in action, visit HOWdesign.com/BestofShow.

Map-tastic

This award-winning project combines the best of print and interactive design in a new tool to help people navigate through cities,

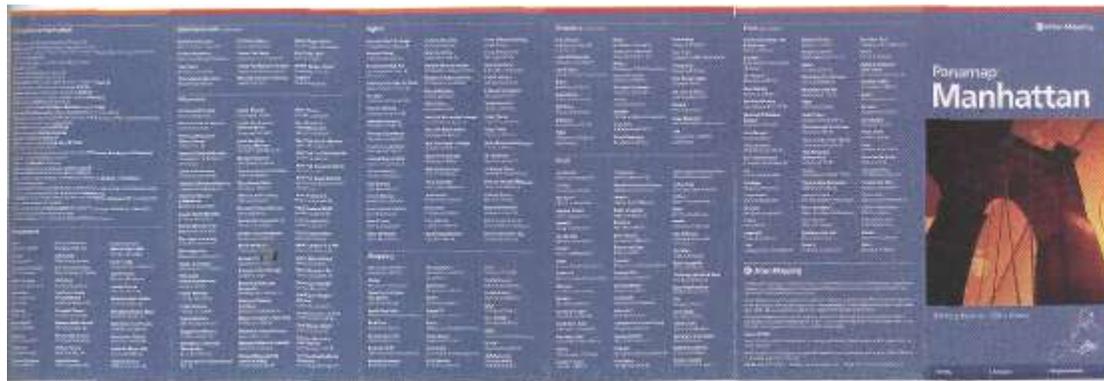
BY BRYN MOOTH

What happens when you take a technology that's primarily been used for entertainment or gimmick, and apply it in a way that adds value and usefulness? You get the Panamap, which elevates lenticular printing from the Cracker Jack box to the Guggenheim. And you get the Best of Show winner in this year's HOW International Design Awards.

Created by Ian While, the Panamap combines three layers of information (street, subway and neighborhood) with a three-axis/lenticular lens, so that each kind of data is visible depending on how you hold the map. "It's an amazing use of design and technology," says judge Shannon Carter. "This technology has always been seen as a toy; here, it's a tool."

Like most good ideas, this one was born out of frustration, when White, on his daily commute in New York City, was annoyed by the general unhelpfulness of the city's subway map system. Represented as a straight line of equidistant dots, the map bore no resemblance to the geography of the real world, "where the stops are spaced irregularly and the train lines crisscross the city."

Seeking a way to layer different kinds of information on top of one another (the subway map, the city grid, the major attractions). White landed on lenticular printing. While he didn't invent the lenticular technology White says he patented its application for "spatially aligned data on an X, Y and Z axis." In 2003,



2 The back of the map lists notable Manhattan attractions, shops, museums and restaurants.

3 Tip the map, and the lenticular effect reveals one of three views: subway, neighborhoods or streets. The subway map (far left and right panels below) reflects geography: Train routes and stops appear on the map as they exist in real life, as opposed to dots on a straight line. The neighborhood view also shows major attractions, while the street view (middle two panels) displays parks.



White launched a business to bring the map to market, but the difficult economics of scale and the challenge of making money on a single product (the New York City map) proved insurmountable and he closed the business. White repackaged all the city data he'd collected and began selling it as an online resource under the umbrella Urban Mapping; this year he had enough capital set aside to bring the map back to life.

A Chicago version joins the NYC one, and White has plans for other cities this year. Specialty retailers like the shops at the Guggenheim Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago carry the products. In addition, he's pursuing a custom-publishing business, creating maps for, say, major retailers (showing their locations) or events (displaying all related activities and nearby attractions and restaurants).

While the optical effects seem perfectly suited for the three-layer map, the whole project presents some unusual production challenges. The complex lenticular lens displays color in unexpected ways (much as you'd see colors shift when you look through a prism),

and it makes text a real trick to set properly. And since the printing process inks directly on the plastic lens material, running accurate proofs was virtually impossible. White worked with art director Chris Cannon of Brooklyn, NY-based design studio Isotope 221; the pair produced countless trial-and-error versions, taking primed proofs and placing them under a sheet of lens material to see if the color and type rendered properly. "There was a whole lot of prepress experimentation that had to be done," White says.

White notes that the product is interactive, even though it doesn't have a circuit board. It's that technology, unplugged though it is, that captured the judges' attention. Carter says the project redefines the very concept of a map: "It feels like it's always been like this, and you can't imagine a map any other way"

TITLE Panamap: Manhattan | **FIRM/CLIENT** Urban Mapping, San Francisco; www.urbanmapping.com | **DESIGN FIRM** Isotope 221, Brooklyn, NY; www.isotope221.com | **ART DIRECTOR** Chris Cannon