

Let's get together and make a free magazine... just as we were being brought together to do that in Southern California this past spring, our friends Dan Murphy and Tony Smyrski were doing the same thing in Philadelphia...

Megawords is the amazing and radical product of a brilliant conceptual artist (Dan) and gifted graphic designer (Anthony); it's heavy on images and content, yet extremely light on text or explanation. As a truly beautiful and mysterious gift for anyone that finds a copy, it is a huge and constant inspiration to all of us here at ANPQuarterly. With their cooperation we are honored to try to shed some light on this super publication for you now.

Text by Brendan Fowler / Images courtesy of Megawords Magazine

Brendan Fowler: Where did Megawords come from? What was the initial idea?

Dan Murphy: The initial idea was to just publish something! We wanted to make the magazine that we wanted to see present in the world. Most magazines are trash and we thought we could do better. At the time we weren't committed to an ongoing project, we just wanted to get something out.

Tony: It's about people surviving. living in 2005, in cities all over the world, down on the corner of your block and maybe even in your house. It's a counter to all the fucking nonsense of contemporary print/media culture (a culture that all of us are a part of and guilty by association in) that perpetuates a false reality that no normal person lives in. It's about real people and real life.

Brendan- I think it has this amazing mysteriousness to it...how intentional is that?

Dan: I guess it may be perceived as mysterious because we never publish our statement or explain who we are or whatever. We haven't found the need to do any of these things. Any mysteriousness is not intentional, but we have tried to set a certain tone with it, maybe trying to keep it out of categories? It is important to me that I try to re-explore the reason why and the way a magazine is produced. The guidelines for producing most magazines are very restrictive and I'd like to see what else can be done. The lack of written info in Megawords is not a rule by any means, if something needs to be written about in a future issue we are certainly open to that.

Tony: It's not intentional at all, but more of a natural result of the subject matter and editorial vision we have. [I think that] taking life and putting it under the magnifying glass isn't going to get you any answers, but things are going to start to look pretty damn strange. I actually hope its not too mysterious, because I like to think it's something that anyone from anywhere can look at and be interested in, and take something away from. At the same time, I do want people to have to step back and actually PAY ATTENTION. Where was that photo taken? In the U.S.A or a third world country? What exactly is going on there?

Brendan: Yes. I think part of it's success is that it is so open ended...anyone could look at it and say "this is a crazy image" or just get excited by anything in there. It's not socially pre-placed like a heavy metal magazine or a skateboarding magazine or any kind of subculture specific publication... and in that sense it functions like a



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Story by Brendan Fowler

lot of good art: no context or explanation is required to enjoy it. How important is it to you that it be seen as a magazine at all?

Tony: We try very hard to make sure that Megawords doesn't get grouped into one narrow genre. That would be a major failure. Like I said, anyone from anywhere should be able to learn something from it. As far as it being seen as a magazine, that doesn't matter to me in the slightest. A magazine may be the current manifestation of our efforts, but...

Dan: It's important to me that it be seen as a magazine in the sense that people hopefully realize the different possibilities within the magazine medium; most magazine producers are bound by advertisers, distributors and larger publishers that place certain confines on the magazine before a single page is even laid out... But [in general] it doesn't matter to me what people call it.

Brendan: How did you two come together to make it?

Tony: Philly is a small town, we knew each other from common interests, common friends. I think the paths that were both respectively on we hurdling towards each other from the start. It was only a matter of time.

Dan: We knew each other for years from graffiti, Love Park, hanging out or whatever. Tony had helped me out on some previous projects and he was doing many things on his own as well. Honestly, though, we came together because neither of us could afford to publish something on our own, and because we shared similar reasons for publishing something. By the time we finished the first issue we seemed to be in agreement that we would continue with the project.

Brendan: I don't want to make mess with any more of your smoke and mirrors, but how are you making it?

Tony: I do a lot of graphic design and art direction work to pay the bills, and the nature of most of it makes me quite angry; so I use that energy and put it towards work that I think actually matters.

Dan: We are just making it, paying for it ourselves, and giving it out. Totally backwards, huh? If someone else wants to pay for it, that would be great but we aren't trying to adhere to their agenda or fall behind their logo.

Brendan: And where can people find it?

Tony: We've gotten it out to a ton of small inside bookstores, corner stores, music venues, art galleries etc, but if you can't find it anywhere, or would like to carry it in your store, go to www.megawordsmagazine.com or email us at info@megawordsmagazine.com

Brendan: YES! Everyone out there, please go to the site and find this thing... it is amazing!