

STAR quality

PAVE recognizes three up-and-comers in the retail design industry with its annual Rising Star Award By Lauren Mang

For design students and young professionals just starting out in the visual merchandising, store planning, or retail design realms, the Planning and Visual Education Partnership (PAVE) can help guide them to future success. After all, the group's mission is to provide support for newcomers to the industry through workshops, networking events, grants and scholarships, student design competitions, and acknowledgement from industry veterans for creative successes in the field.

One such acknowledgement is PAVE's Rising Star Award, a much-coveted honor that recognizes a budding—40 years old or younger—retail designer or visual merchandiser who possesses serious design chops. "It was introduced to encourage and inspire the young designer who has shown leadership and vision in the retail design field," says Nancy Jackson, president of Architectural Systems, the New York-based distributor of interior finishes. Jackson was part the 2013 Rising Star judging panel and is an emeritus board member of the educational foundation.

"It's always tough to select a winner because the candidates all exemplify innovative retail design," Jackson says. "I feel that all of the finalists and the winner this year are going to have very successful careers in the retail industry."



Andrea Buccasso (center), senior designer for 3D environments at FITCH, is the recipient of PAVE's 2013 Rising Star Award. The two finalists are: Aimee Taylor (left), Gensler, and Doug Bunker (right), FRCH Design Worldwide.



PAVE'S 2013
RISING STAR:
**ANDREA
BUCCASSO**



Last December, at PAVE's annual glittering fundraising gala—now in its 17th year—the Rising Star Award was bestowed upon Andrea Buccasso, a 32-year-old senior designer of 3D environments at the Columbus, Ohio-based design firm Fitch. "Andrea is a powerhouse," says nominator **Christian Davies**, the firm's executive creative director for the Americas. "She is dogmatic in her pursuit of turning out excellent and powerful design." As an integral member of the Fitch team responsible for creating a brand and redefining the in-store environment for high-end kitchen, bath, and outdoor product retailer Pirch (formerly Fixtures Living), Buccasso wowed with her creative ideas, collaborative nature, bold decisions and suggestions, lifelike rendering creation, and material and fabric selections that played a role in the company's Costa Mesa, Calif., location attaining LEED Silver status.

The crisp and elegant Pirch showrooms focus on educating and inspiring customers via "try-before-you-buy" vignettes, meaning a shopper can actually switch on an oven or fire up a grill. Its design also accommodates large community events, such as movie nights and cooking demonstrations. "Andrea cross-coordinated with architects of



record for each project, equipment specialists, engineers, lighting consultants, and material vendors," Davies says. "The store has over 500 pieces of operating equipment and over 2000 pieces of retail equipment that she was responsible for planning."

When working with the retailer, Buccasso didn't shy away from offering grand ideas: Her concept of placing an outdoor kitchen atop a building on a site visit to Seattle was a hit with the Pirch team. And Davies notes that her extensive skill in tools such as SketchUp, Photoshop, and AutoCAD allowed her to create renderings that were spot-on to the actual designs, something the clients valued highly and continued to reference.

"When I reviewed Andrea's work, it wowed me and the rest of the judging panel because it was a really a superior implementation of visionary design," Jackson says. "The kitchen and bath showroom seemed very easy to navigate and you could sense how the consumers could actually envision themselves in their own homes, which is really the success story—when you can create aspiration for consumers and have them ultimately buy the merchandise in the retail environment."

Buccasso's work on Pirch, a high-end kitchen, bath, and outdoor retailer, features "try-before-you-buy" vignettes, inspiring and educating customers. She was responsible for the planning of more than 500 pieces of operating equipment and more than 2,000 pieces of retail equipment in the store.



Competition for the Rising Star Award is high. As such, the judges also chose to highlight two finalists' work: Doug Bunker, a 35-year-old graphic design director in the specialty retail studio at Cincinnati's FRCH Design Worldwide, and 29-year-old Aimee Taylor, an associate/senior designer at the San Francisco office of Seattle-based design firm Gensler.



FINALIST: DOUG BUNKER

Inside Bunker's extensive portfolio of projects is restaurant chain A&W Canada's new urban-style prototype. The eatery wanted to refresh its retro look without

alienating its existing customers, so Bunker and the team created a new brand language that elevated it from a fast food restaurant to a fast casual chain through branding, logo design, branded interior and exterior packaging, and uniforms. "Doug is quietly one of the most creative and strategic designers at FRCH," says nominator **Paul Lechleiter**, the firm's chief creative officer. "His graphic design contributions to A&W Canada were the defining elements for this project and were the key factor in repositioning the brand."



Rising Star Award finalist Doug Bunker of FRCH contributed to the defining elements in A&W Canada's new urban-style prototype.



FINALIST: AIMEE TAYLOR

Barry Bourbon, principal at Gensler, nominated Aimee Taylor for the award because of her skills in computer-generated 3D visualization and hand-rendering, as well as her dedication to innovation in materials and architectural finishes. He cites the originality and resourcefulness of her work for Salesforce, in which she used paint cans from the company's projects worldwide to create an immersive ceiling installation that straddles the world of art and design.

"Her work with Burt's Bees for their international pop-up shops allows the product to be the center of attention while reflecting the brand's personality. The shop's environment is friendly, warm, approachable, real, inviting and tempting. It provokes curiosity and is fun and a little quirky," Bourbon says.

Taylor was also pivotal in reimagining employee gathering spaces for Airbnb, in which she brought retail and hospitality concepts into workplace design. 🌈



front elevation



side elevation

Aimee Taylor of Gensler, a Rising Star Award finalist, helped create international pop-up shops for Burt's Bees, in which the product stands out in a friendly, approachable, and fun space.



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