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### Getting attention for a ceramic art exhibition: A Case study of a nonprofit's promotional campaign

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The Rochester Institute of Technology

Department of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

Getting Attention for a Ceramic Art Exhibition:  
A Case Study of a Nonprofit's Promotional Campaign

by

Steven R. Bodnar

*A Thesis Project submitted*

in partial fulfillment of the Master of Science degree

in Communication & Media Technologies

Degree Awarded:

October 25, 2012

The members of the Committee approve the thesis project of  
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### **Dedication**

Many people at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) deserve acknowledgement for their support in helping me to complete my master's thesis. First, Dr. Bruce Austin of the RIT Department of Communication is due the utmost credit for the guidance he afforded me as my lead thesis adviser. From beginning to end, Dr. Austin provided the necessary encouragement and scholarly advice that students can only hope to receive from their professors. Dr. Tina Lent of the RIT Department of Fine Arts, who also advised me on this project, offered her unwavering support and provided important insights during critical stages of my paper's development.

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GETTING ATTENTION FOR A CERAMIC ART EXHIBITION:  
A CASE STUDY OF A NONPROFIT'S PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

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Term Degree Awarded: Fall Quarter 2012 (20121)

**Abstract**

A participant-observation case study of a promotional campaign developed and implemented for a temporary, nonprofit ceramic art exhibition. The subject is introduced through a review of both theoretical and practical research examples centered on marketing and public relations for arts and cultural attractions. The present study offers a descriptive and evaluative analysis of the campaign's promotional strategies and tactics. Strategies discussed include promotional objectives, prospective audiences, assessment of available resources, and scheduling and implementation. The tactics include direct mail and email delivery of press releases, promotional materials, and the use of social media. Findings demonstrate that publicity generated primarily was derived from a combination of personalized email communications and timely, unique press releases.

*Keywords:* public relations, promotional campaign, publicity, art exhibition, museums

### Getting Attention for a Ceramic Art Exhibition:

#### A Case Study of a Nonprofit's Promotional Campaign

Nonprofit arts and cultural attractions contend for patrons' attention in a distinctly competitive marketplace. Museums, for example, "are jostling with many other organizations and institutions for a piece of the public's leisure time" (Falk, 2009, p. 186). Libraries, shopping malls, and even corporations are hosting exhibitions and creating museum-like offerings (Falk, 2009). The competition faced by modern-day museums follows an "unparalleled public interest and a building boom that ... produced an explosion of new galleries and exhibition halls and new ideas about how exhibitions should look and communicate" (Lord & Lord, 2001, p. 1). As a result of this intersection of growth and competition, industry professionals have pointed to an increased need for effective marketing and public relations strategies, tactics, and technologies to reach and attract patrons.

Despite a revitalized perspective for arts and cultural organizations, reaching target markets still has its challenges. The arts and cultural sector, in response, has offered support for overhauling the communication approaches that have been used to reach visitors (Schlatter, 2008). Art exhibitions, for instance, have used specially tailored communication campaigns that leverage both marketing and public relations. But little scholarly research has specifically focused on strategic marketing and public relations for temporary exhibitions. Texts published about the arts and cultural industry, however, do provide some insights. By and large, the available scholarly research on marketing and public relations used by arts and cultural organizations evaluates the conceptual framework of promotional communication campaigns.

To extend the body of marketing and public relations research centered on one-time art events, the present thesis project describes and evaluates the strategies and tactics used during the development and implementation of a promotional and publicity campaign for an extensive, nonprofit ceramic arts exhibition held at a large, private university. Presented as a participant-observation case study, and using both practical and theoretical lenses of public relations and marketing, this thesis provides a descriptive analysis of the design and development of a promotional campaign, while evaluating the extent of publicity in print and on social media sites Facebook and Twitter.

Broadly, the campaign's principal aim was to cultivate public awareness by attracting media coverage of the exhibition prior to its opening at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), a sprawling suburban campus located in Western New York. The art exhibition, titled "Frans Wildenhain, 1950-75: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-Century," featured approximately 150 examples of mid-century ceramics by Master Potter Frans Wildenhain (1905-1980). The thesis project's researcher—the author of this paper—assisted in the development and implementation of the campaign from September 5, 2011, through May 24, 2012, which coincided with the duration of a graduate assistantship. The promotional campaign's primary objective was to elicit media attention at local, national, and international levels (Austin, 2011b), while raising awareness of the exhibition leading up to its grand opening (see Appendix A).

### **Literature Review**

The present thesis project principally draws from a wide base of research identifying marketing and public relations as promotional functions used by nonprofits, including museums and comparable cultural attractions. Citing a range of communication research, including case



studies, the review explores promotional campaign development and strategies, as well as communication tactics for publicity purposes. Case studies provide practical insights about how marketing and public relations have been used in promotions for the arts and nonprofits. Moreover, the examples of campaigns used herein do not center on publicity for tangible products, but instead predominantly focus on the promotion of experiences stemming from art and cultural attractions (Abubakar, 2009; *Marketing*, 1992; Runyard & French, 1999) and, in one instance, a humanitarian cause (Herstein, Mitki, & Jaffe, 2008).

### **Promotional Campaign Development: Leveraging Media**

A museum marketing text by the International Council on Museums (ICOM) describes the marketing campaign used to announce the grand opening of a museum that highlighted the *Vasa*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century warship from Sweden (*Marketing*, 1992). Regarding the event publicity, the marketing campaign targeted both local audiences and prospective patrons from overseas. The primary way of reaching targeted audiences was through the news media (*Marketing*, 1992). In addition, a museum brand was created and leveraged by using coordinated identity and visual cues, including logos and graphics on posters, brochures, and cards. The museum's visual communication can prove an important part of the marketing package if created in a way that is aesthetically pleasing, memorable, or distinctive (*Marketing*, 1992).

Findings for this case suggest that the reach of publicity through media does not have to be limited to local publications, such as newspapers (*Marketing*, 1992). The campaign can target specialized media that caters to specific audiences outside the broader market (*Marketing*, 1992). Overall, in the case of the museum, pitching story ideas to media outlets was the most significant investment of time and effort, resulting in higher levels of interest than had been achieved

through advertising (*Marketing*, 1992). The venue also used active promotions to support its publicity needs instead of passively letting its name stand independently without any additional promotional efforts.

### **Integrated communications.**

In general, many from industry and academe over the past two decades have accepted overlapping components and allied strategies of marketing and public relations disciplines. In museums, for example, “marketing can encompass activities such as public relations, visitor services, branding, corporate fundraising, membership, and advertising—basically anything that helps the museum identify its market ... and create strategies to reach and affect that market by determining and meeting their needs” (Schlatter, 2008, p. 39). The integrated marketing communication (IMC) framework demonstrates one such way marketing and public relations are interrelated (David, 2004). IMC is a planned marketing strategy that uses various communicative methods such as public relations and advertising in order to reach target stakeholders (Schultz, 1993). From a promotional campaign development standpoint, particularly for nonprofits, an integrated plan can be an efficient way of using limited resources.

The Israel Cancer Association (ICA), a nonprofit aimed at fighting cancer, is one such organization that specifically used an IMC strategy to its benefit. The ICA adopted an integrated marketing communication strategy in order to switch from a broad marketing approach that used generic messaging to a marketing approach that used carefully designed strategies and tactics to reach specially defined markets (Herstein, Mitki, & Jaffe, 2008). The underlying change within promotions was redirecting focus toward raising awareness for specific types of malignant cancer, as opposed to a broader aim of promoting the fight against cancer. The strategizing

accomplished by ICA for its promotional campaign is relevant to the way nonprofits, such as museums and art exhibits, can specially design messages and select specific communication channels in order to reach target markets.

Overall, the move by ICA enabled the organization to better provide specific information to targeted markets. The joint communication activities included: internal communications, Internet, data banks, professional bulletins, national and sector seminars, individual and group meetings, and public relations and information. Importantly, the integrated plan assisted in the promotion of multiple objectives and the disseminated messages were relevant for target markets (Herstein, Mitki, & Jaffe, 2008). The IMC plan was deemed effective by ICA because it used specialized marketing and communication activities to successfully reach targeted markets, all while moving away from a promotional model that lacked focus (Herstein, Mitki, & Jaffe, 2008).

#### **Integrated communications for temporary attractions.**

At museums, marketing campaigns have been used for the promotion of temporary exhibits (Schlatter, 2008). Marketing plans at such venues might leverage the novel experience of the one-time event in order to attract audiences (Schlatter, 2008). Like museums, temporary exhibitions hosted by independent venues, artists, and shops, have a need for understanding effective publicity practices. For instance, artists who aspire to independently exhibit their work might use promotional activities in new ways. Aside from strategizing well in advance of an exhibit, publicity tactics are being creatively designed by the artists themselves (Smith, 2007).

An example of a temporary event that used integrated marketing and public relations strategies to reach audiences is an exhibit featuring Kazimir Malevich, a Russian avant-garde painter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century (*Marketing*, 1992). Specifically, the

Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Croatia, showcased examples of Malevich's works from the State Russian Museum. The promotional campaign used the same branding for its catalog, invitation cards, posters, leaflets, folder and envelopes (*Marketing*, 1992). Banners and flags also were hung at the museum building. Furthermore, preliminary information was sent to several venues including schools, universities, tourist agencies, and local and foreign press (*Marketing*, 1992). The marketing plan also called for (but did not use because of restrictions) branded logos and accessories utilizing Malevich's motifs as a tool. The logos would have been printed on everything from T-shirts and pullovers to badges and brooches. Diverse promotions backed by brand consistency were part of the driving strategy behind the campaign's efforts. The publicity generated before the exhibition coupled with the event's opening ceremony, fostered greater media attention, which resulted in a "steady flow of visitors" (*Marketing*, 1992, p. 87).

### **Considering the Target Market**

It is important for nonprofits such as museums or one-time art exhibits to consider both the target audience and the public at-large. "In the case of museums, while public relations is responsible for generating favourable [sic] publicity, images and attitudes in relation to patrons, sponsors, visitors and other stakeholders, marketing is responsible for attracting and satisfying the same publics" (Gürel & Kavak, 2010, p. 44). As pointed out in *Marketing* (1992), the news media, including editors and publishers, also is a collective who, like patrons, can be reached by museum marketing. Notably, knowledge of the public "could have a direct influence on the selection and implementation of the different communication tools and techniques," which often are externally oriented (Capriotti, 2010, p. 290). The press release, for instance, represents a

communication tactic geared toward piquing the interest of reporters and/or editors, but also may be crafted for the purposes of direct public consumption.

Understanding the audience or visitors of a museum or one-time exhibition takes careful analysis. Identification of the museum visitor, for instance, may take into account a variety of personal attributes representative of the individual patron. In order to understand why people visit museums (or art exhibits) "... we need to know something about visitors as individuals—their personal motivations, values, and interests; their personal history of museum-going; and their general awareness of museums and receptivity to the museum-going experience" (Falk & Dierking, 2000, p. 71). Museum marketing can be successful if it supports the needs and expectations of each major group of visitors who attends a venue (Falk, 2009). In addition, museums should recognize that a venue or a hosted exhibit will attract visitors representing a range of various identities. Since identities can vary, museums should "communicate multiple messages, each appealing to a different subset of the visiting public" (Falk, 2009, p.189).

In his text on museum visitor identity and experiences, Falk (2009) references the ways in which museum visitors have been categorized and their respective interests classified into groups. Falk (2009), noting research on museum visitor studies, reiterated Marilyn Hood's work on how patrons can be grouped as frequent, occasional, or non-frequent visitors (Falk, 2009). In her 1983 work on why people do not visit museums, Hood found that in order to interest occasional and non-frequent visitors, museums should offer those individuals new experiences that provide some sort of perceived value (Hood, 2004). Additionally, Falk, Moussouri, and Coulson (1998) found that the strongest motivation for visiting a museum exhibition was

education and entertainment. By understanding visitor motivations practitioners better define messages that can be delivered through the various promotional channels.

### **Promotional Campaign Tactics**

As previously stated, knowledge of the target market can influence the communication tactics carried out by an organization (Capriotti, 2010). A museum's primary objective also can determine what types of marketing tools are used to reach audiences (Schlatter, 2008). In order to maximize effectiveness, the channels of communication used by a museum should match its mission or purpose (Schlatter, 2008). For example, certain advertising methods might not most effectively serve a museum's ultimate goal. To better identify the necessary tactics for a given campaign, museum marketers also should be aware of the various levels of service delivery to the customer, including interaction, interpretation, communication, and accessibility within the staff-visitor relationship (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002). Furthermore, by exploring the breadth of the communication channels and messages, as well as how staff and customers interact across media, practitioners can develop the most appropriate strategies and tactics for their respective campaign. Art exhibitions, for example, have a range of promotional tactics and messages at their disposal that might be used to attract attention and achieve objectives.

Case study examples of promotional campaigns carried out in practice for one-time exhibits use a mix of traditional strategizing and creative thinking. For instance, the Natural History Museum in London partnered with a small theatre company and a magazine to showcase a performance in the weeks leading up to Christmas, a time of year which can create a lull in museum attendance (Runyard & French, 1999). A one-time special event presented by the theatre group that year boosted the typically low seasonal attendance figures (Runyard & French,

1999). The performance filled a void in attendance by creatively catering to the perceived needs of the target market during the height of shopping season (Runyard & French, 1999).

In another instance, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art used a creative plan for its 1998 exhibition: “Eternal China: Splendors of the First Dynasties” (Runyard & French, 1999). The accompanying press releases presented brief, short, and long descriptions of the exhibition approved early on for the press office to use (Runyard & French, 1999). A street survey regarding local awareness of the museum and the positive and negative perceptions of the proposed exhibition was carried out in order to assess the target market on a local level (Runyard & French, 1999). Overall, the marketing plan included a traditional SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, target market, branding, promotional materials and distribution, tourism projects, pricing, yield, membership, advertising and media campaigns, monitoring, evaluation, and other promotions (Runyard & French, 1999). The one-time event found the mixed use of press and marketing materials to be an effective course for reaching the prospective base of visitors.

### **Promotional Communication as a Multifaceted Framework**

By exploring promotional activities through this multifaceted framework, this literature review provides a holistic rendering of both practice and theory on how attractions, such as museums and art exhibitions, use strategies and tactics to draw publicity. As demonstrated, the literature closely examines the use of integrated communications by museums and art exhibits, and campaign development and execution through strategizing, identification of target markets, and use of appropriate and effective tactics. Much of the aforementioned literature is represented by case studies, which provide insights for both applied practice and theory.

### **Methods**

A collection of 331 ceramic works by Master Potter Frans Wildenhain was donated to the RIT Archive Collections in mid-2010. The collection includes art pottery ranging from functional bowls to abstract sculptural vessels. It marks a substantial body of work by a Bauhaus-trained ceramist and calls attention to an era of artistic expression and cultural impact at mid-century in the United States. Wildenhain was a ceramics professor at RIT from 1950 to 1970. He was a founding faculty member of the School for American Craftsmen, now School for American Crafts (SAC).

Beginning August 20, 2012, the dual gallery event was presented on the RIT campus at the Bevier Gallery and the Dyer Arts Center (The Frans, 2012b). RIT professor Bruce Austin organized the exhibit that was hosted concurrently at the RIT arts venues until October 2, 2012. A hardcover exhibition catalog, featuring original scholarship and photographs of the exhibited works, was produced to accompany the event (The Frans, 2012a). In addition, a website, [www.rit.edu/wild/](http://www.rit.edu/wild/), featuring large, scrolling images of Wildenhain's ceramic pieces, was developed by RIT ETC Production Services to promote the exhibit and provide information.

### **The Present Cultural Context of the Wildenhain Exhibition**

The exhibit coincided with similarly themed mid-century modern exhibitions running within a two-year window: 2011-2013. These events included "Crafting Modernism," held at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City and thereafter at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, N.Y. There also was an exhibit, "California Design, 1930-1965: 'Living in a Modern Way,'" held until June 2012. The Barbican in London held an exhibition in 2012 titled "Bauhaus: Art is Life," which presented modernist or International Style art examples from



famed Bauhaus artists. At the time of writing this thesis, the Philadelphia Museum of Art intended to host an exhibition on craft and modernism.

### **The Thesis Project's Methodological Approach**

This thesis project is based on the participant-observation case study method. The approach is used for descriptive studies of organizations and has been conducted by practitioners at the decision-making level (Yin, 2003). Research advantages of the participant-observation case study include an internal perspective based on actual practice, as well as the ability to manipulate minor events, thus creating a range of situations that broaden available data (Yin, 2003) and provide practical contextualization for the investigated subject. Scholars critical of this method have pointed out that the participant observation approach brings the researcher too close in contact with the subject matter (Yin, 2003). However, as a thesis project, it was necessary for this researcher/author to have had a role in the development and implementation of the project. Similarly, accounts in this case study use ethnographical reporting by this researcher in order to thoroughly and accurately explain firsthand observations from the field. The following section proceeds with one such ethnographical description.

By and large, the promotional campaign described in this thesis project coincided with my serving as a graduate assistant for the RIT Department of Communication during RIT's 2011-2012 academic year. I was tasked with the responsibility of designing, managing, and implementing some components of the exhibit's publicity and marketing campaign. The duration of the assistantship, September 5, 2011, through May 24, 2012, set the parameters of time in which strategies and tactics of the campaign were implemented for this project. It should be noted that promotional activities for the campaign began well before my nine-month graduate

assistantship (Austin, 2011a) and continued thereafter, including publicity in local press (Austin, B., personal communication, July 6, 2012). The time frame within which most promotional activities are studied coincides with this being a thesis project.

### **Measures**

The thesis project explores promotional activities implemented throughout the time period of the assistantship and examines how associated campaign initiatives were conducted. The primary unit of analysis is the nine-month promotional campaign and the data collection sources are email responses, media attention in print, and the reach of social media publicity, based on “Likes” and “Daily Total Reach” on Facebook, as well as the total number of followers, retweets, and mentions on Twitter.

### **Campaign Design**

The exhibition’s promotional methods are examined at two organizational levels: strategic management and tactical communications. At the strategic, decision-making level, the overarching strategies included identification of campaign objectives, defining prospective audiences, assessing available tactics and resources, scheduling implementation, and monitoring of the publicity and marketing activities and their outcomes. Consistent with descriptions found in literature of promotional campaigns for the arts, the tactical methods used span the subjects of public relations and marketing. Broadly, the implemented tactics were press releases sent by email and direct mail, social media promotion, printed promotional materials, event marketing, advertising, and an exhibition website. Paid advertising was not carried out as part of the thesis project and is not analyzed here.

**Strategizing for publicity and marketing.**

The campaign used strategic management to ensure the proper implementation of publicity and marketing communications. This allowed for making adjustments when necessary. As Leitchy and Springston (1993) explained, public relations and communication campaigns are situational in practice. Public relations theory for museums should ascribe to a situational approach (Gürel & Kavak, 2010). “The issues any museum might wish to address will be peculiar to that institution and its aims and objectives,” and might include attention to the communication approach, mode of communication, communication content, image and design [brand], target market, resources and primary concerns (Belcher, 1991, p. 15). These insights support the use of a specially tailored communication campaign as an appropriate course of action for organizations, and in the instance of this thesis project, for the Wildenhain exhibition.

The initial stages of the exhibit’s promotional campaign included a review of available event information and resources. Specifically, an assessment of the exhibit’s primary objectives was conducted to ensure the alignment of goals set for the campaign’s publicity and marketing efforts. It was decided that a two-pronged promotional approach featuring distribution of press releases and the use of social media would be carried out by me, the project researcher/thesis author. A review of available information for a campaign is analogous to what Belcher (1991) describes as the first two stages of developing a marketing strategy for museums: initiate an audit of resources and clarify their uses by reaffirming objectives. Similarly, emerging artists aspiring to get noticed also are encouraged to do their research and record “marketing ideas, strategies, and goals” (Smith, 2011, p. 32).

For the Wildenhain exhibition, the reviewed documents included the event proposal, a quarterly report, a preliminary sales strategy for the accompanying catalog, the initial expectations for publicity, an outline of the catalog's proposed contents, and background on the featured artist, Frans Wildenhain. The documentation and records illustrated the exhibit's mission and objectives, and were essential in formulating strategies for promotions. Serving as the exhibition publicity manager, I was offered this information in early September 2011 for the purposes of strategic campaign development.

**The campaign's target markets.**

Based on the exhibit's objective to draw media exposure and gain public interest, the promotional campaign was designed to reach news media staff and the public at-large through a far-reaching, yet specialized communication approach. Initial strategies called for thinking broadly about the publications that eventually would receive promotional and publicity materials from the campaign (Austin, 2011a; Austin, 2011b). The reasoning behind a campaign focused on broad-based outreach was twofold in nature. First, it was to afford media the opportunity to explore a topic—mid-century modern ceramics—that was outside their traditional range of coverage. For example, a business-related publication might consider it a novel idea to publish information about a ceramics exhibit with an angle oriented on economics. In practice, the promotional activities not only considered business publications, but also general interest media and those centered on education, as well as style, décor, home and garden, etc. At the strategic level, this perspective initially was enough for the campaign to target publications that cover subject matter outside of arts and crafts. Secondly, this mixed outreach could be achieved

because of the low- to no-cost of email correspondence. Mass emails or even individualized emails could be sent with mostly time-worked as the overarching expense.

Thinking broadly about market segmentation was also used to target audiences across social media platforms. Through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, a communications or publicity manager will have access to public accounts across networks. Locating the users who have specialized interests is a matter of creative-thinking and targeting. Those using social media often join groups on Facebook and LinkedIn or follow “lists” on Twitter in order to socially associate with their personal interests. The promotional campaign accessed these communities and mined them for information and insights about who to direct campaign outreach toward. Social media audiences were both narrowly and broadly targeted, with identified users having interests ranging from art pottery and ceramics to auction houses and nonprofits, including fine and modern art museums, organizations that support the arts, and associations and groups linked to ceramic arts, etc. Strategically, the campaign sought ways to engage prospective audiences by linking their core interests with varying aspects of the exhibit. Creative targeting was encouraged.

#### **Assessment of tactics and resources.**

A marketing audit, conducted by museums for example, calls for an examination of the organization, including the identification of internal resources and communications (Runyard & French, 1999). At the strategic level, the exhibit’s promotional campaign conducted a review of available public relations and marketing tactics in order to maximize the effectiveness of the outreach. Between September and December 2011, the available methods of communication and resources were discussed during scheduled meetings with the exhibition organizer. Additionally,

social media engagement was discussed during two meetings with a public relations and social media expert. Determining the specific communications to be used by the campaign was crucial for planning the structure of promotional activities. Most of the press release development began during December 2011 and January 2012.

### **Implementation of timeline and monitoring of promotions.**

Early schedules of promotional activities were defined more than a year and a half before the exhibition's opening. In winter 2011, a database of publications, venues, and organizations was compiled for the purposes of creating a comprehensive source of contacts that eventually would be sent promotional materials and press releases during the campaign. In compiling the data, the publication frequency of media outlets also was included for each listing so that deadlines for disseminating press materials would be met (Austin, 2011b). By September 2011, additional implementation scheduling set the parameters for crafting press releases, sending press releases, preparing and sending direct mail, and initiating social media activities (Public Relations, 2011). The promotional activities timeline also was amended during fall 2011 to accommodate changes in strategy and availability of resources. Meetings with the exhibition organizer were scheduled regularly throughout RIT's 2011-2012 academic year so that strategies and tactics could be discussed, assessed, and adjusted if needed.

### **Promotional Tactics: Press Release Development and Distribution**

A key tactical facet of exhibition promotions were press releases sent directly by email and traditional mail to media organizations. The aim was to prepare press releases covering a range of topics associated with the exhibition and catalog, with publicity distribution beginning January 2012 (Austin, 2011b). The exhibition organizer initially presented nine press release

ideas, ranging from timely matters to historical contexts (Austin, B., personal communication, September 28, 2011). The campaign strategy for the development of press releases also called for original and creative thinking about publicity angles, as well as in-depth research.

After a thorough review, three of the nine press release ideas were selected. As the practitioner responsible for campaign public relations, I began writing the press releases in December 2011. During press release development, the documents underwent several revisions to ensure clarity for both media and public consumption. The ideas chosen for press release content were wide-ranging: an international dimension of the exhibition, a unique historical connection to the artist, and a business angle linked to Wildenhain's career. Two fact sheets also were written; one about the exhibit and one about the artist. The fact sheets represent a typical component of publicity. In order to ensure brand consistency, the header graphic of the exhibit website was incorporated along the top of the three press releases and a watermark graphic of Wildenhain's signature was placed on the fact sheets. Both images were provided by ETC Production Services. Final versions of the releases and fact sheets appear in Appendices B-F.

Additionally, in March 2012, one of Frans Wildenhain's ceramic murals was rediscovered after a joint search effort between RIT and Lock Haven University in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. It was a notable find that provided fresh, relevant content for two differently prepared press releases. One press release announced the rediscovery of the mural and was prepared and sent to media outlets located in both Rochester and Lock Haven. The second press release was prepared with broader interests in mind and was sent on a larger scale to national and international media. Although the mural-themed press release was not a publicity idea initiated

during strategic brainstorming, the campaign was quick to recognize its importance and it became an integral point of promotions.

In conjunction with press release development, a media and organization contact list was intermittently compiled beginning in spring 2011. Two RIT undergraduates initiated the project and the researcher added to the efforts throughout the duration of the promotional campaign. The contacts were accessed and obtained from publicly available information, media websites, and online searches. Two primary databases were compiled using spreadsheets accessible through the digitally-shared interface of Google Documents, a choice platform for remote collaboration.

The exhibition's Summer Quarter Report anticipated the sequential distribution of press releases beginning January 2012. All of the press releases were disseminated using standardized preparation methods, including press release development, packaging and addressing of direct mail, uniform and personalized message crafting on email, and use of contact databases. The first direct-mailing and emailing of press releases took place in February 2012. In most instances, email communication was carried out about two days after direct mail distribution in an effort to have both print and digital press releases arrive at their respective destinations in tandem.

All emails were written using a standardized format that featured the text of the press release below the body of the message (see Appendix G). Blanket email messages, absent of both the media outlet name and point of contact, primarily were used only during the first round of press release distribution. Strategically, in the subsequent press release emails, the campaign used personalized messaging to elicit responses from media.

Press releases distributed by email were printed and included in each direct mailing. A specially designed postcard was included with every direct mailing. An exhibit logo was printed



on the bottom left corner of each direct mail envelope. The exhibit logo design included text displaying an adapted version of the exhibition's name, the event website's URL, and an image of a ceramic pot taken by the exhibit photographer. The logo also was used on other promotional and marketing materials for the event.

Press materials were distributed to a variety of local, national, and international media outlets. Direct mail was only sent to media organizations that appeared on the contact list with both an available address and the name of a contact person. For a media source to receive an email, only an email address was needed, although the name of a contact person was preferred. Table 1 illustrates the campaign's media release schedule for winter and spring 2012.

Table 1

*Email and Direct Mail Timeline and Distribution Numbers*

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- Feb. 10 & Feb. 24 mailings: PR subject focused on an international link to the exhibit
    - Direct mail sent: 92 pieces and 92 pieces; 184 total
    - Emails sent: 45 messages and 28 messages; 73 total
  - March 29 mailing: press release had timely angle about the “rediscovery” of lost art
    - Direct mail sent: 25 pieces total
    - Emails sent: 28 messages total
  - April 10 mailing: an amended and contextually broadened version of the lost art piece
    - Direct mail sent: 190 pieces total
    - Emails sent: 140
  - April 27 mailing: alternative press inquiries featuring custom letter and all press releases
    - Direct mail sent: 9 pieces
    - No emails sent
  - May 14 mailing: used a business angle tied to modern themes about innovation
    - Direct mail sent: 219
    - Emails sent: 149
-

The campaign's public relations initiative was implemented separately from a press release distribution schedule adopted by RIT University News for the 2011-2012 academic year and summer 2012. Meetings were held between exhibit promotions and University News during September and November of 2011 and January 2012 in order to establish a timeline of implementation. It was decided that three press releases would be sent out by the news services. Additionally, a feature story linked to the exhibition was featured in the fall 2012 issue of RIT's *The University Magazine*. The story idea was initiated during a winter 2012 meeting between the exhibit and news staff.

### **Promotional Tactics: Engagement through Social Media**

In addition to press releases, promotional and marketing activities for the Wildenhain exhibition were carried out across two primary social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. Initial preparations for the campaign's social media efforts began in September 2011. A Facebook Page was created October 11, 2012, under the abbreviated name, "Frans Wildenhain: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century." The exhibit Facebook Page was classified under "Attractions/Things to Do." A Facebook event page also was developed and hosted under the main Facebook page. Around the same time, a Twitter account was established on October 4, 2011, using the handle @WildenhainXibit. The exhibit website hosted links to the Wildenhain social media accounts. The Facebook and Twitter accounts used images of art pottery from the exhibit website in order to extend brand consistency across the Internet.

The principal objective of both the Facebook and the Twitter accounts was to increase publicity for the exhibition. The tactics used to reach this objective broadly included interaction with social media users and broadcasting or "sharing" information about the event. Strategies

were defined in two campaign documents (see Appendix H & I) and the content to be posted was identified through a collaborative development plan with another RIT graduate student.

Furthermore, an aim was to converse with audiences and post messages using a casual yet informative tone appropriate for social media. Dialogue is key on social media, noted Bush in a 2008 article for The Public Relations Society of America: "... if we're talking with humans, we need to communicate as humans, without corporate language that often seems contrived and outdated" (p. 9). As publicity manager, I was responsible for the social media engagement and implementation, which principally took place between January and May 2012. Social media promotions continued during summer 2012 after my role with the exhibition had concluded.

The campaign's social media component attempted to follow a generally outlined plan for posting both prepared and spontaneously generated content. Adapted from earlier strategies, the outline generally called for one post a week beginning in late January 2011 through May 2011. Throughout those months, the focus was centered on generating original content, as well as engaging with various prospective audiences by sharing, retweeting, using "@replies," and using available methods of interaction. It should be noted that due to both time constraints and the real-time nature of social media, aspects of the promotional implementation were amended during the campaign. Specifically, a LinkedIn event for the exhibition was created, but after discussions with exhibit leadership about time constraints, it was decided that efforts should be focused on the cultivation of awareness across Facebook and Twitter. Drawbacks stemming from social media efforts will be further discussed in the results section of this thesis project.

**Social media and event marketing.**

A microcosm of the Facebook and Twitter publicity and social marketing efforts were the social media engagement leading up to a Wildenhain exhibit preview held during the IMAGINE RIT Festival on May 5, 2012. As publicity manager for the exhibition, I acted as a steward of the exhibition during the event, helping to draw passersby to the preview booth. Leading up to the event, throughout the day, and thereafter, I posted messages on social media to elicit attention for sneak peek event, in turn attempting to advance overall notice of the Wildenhain exhibition.

At the festival, samples of Wildenhain's art pottery were on display. Also distributed during the event were promotional and marketing materials including postcards, informational flyers, and buttons that featured an exhibition logo. A promotional banner was hung at the rear of the preview booth and a raffle was held for a free copy of the accompanying exhibit catalog. Three RIT undergraduate students developed and implemented much of the day's activities. I used location-based social media platform, Foursquare, to check-in to the event. Overall, the social media efforts coincided to support the day's promotional activities, including highlighting the participation in the raffle. Appendix J illustrates social media activities carried out regarding the event preview, and by association, for the Wildenhain exhibition itself.

**Results**

To determine the extent of media attention and publicity, the researcher used three data collection sources: email responses from press release distribution, mentions of the exhibition in print, and the reach of social media engagement, specifically Facebook Page views and Likes, and Twitter followers, retweets, and mentions. Categorically, each source of data represents different types of exhibition exposure, and will be discussed separately herein.

This thesis project asks three primary questions: How and to what extent did a promotional campaign use press releases sent by email to draw media attention? How and to what extent did a promotional campaign use social media to draw the public's attention? How effective were messages sent by email and social media, respectively, in eliciting attention?

### **Publicity from Press Releases**

Actual publication of articles based on interest attained from press releases helps to demonstrate the extent of publicity through public relations efforts. In sum, press releases and publicity articles written by the exhibit through this thesis project were published in (9) media sources, including two newspapers, five antiques journals or publications, and two arts magazines. A tenth article is anticipated to appear in a quarterly ceramic arts journal in June 2013. An eleventh article about the exhibit also appeared in *The New York Times* and is assumed a direct result of emails sent by the exhibition to that news outlet. Personalized emails sent by the campaign after the May 14 mailing also elicited interest from (3) publications, which thereafter published articles on the exhibition. Overall, the lost mural press release elicited the most attention from publications desirous of printing information about the Wildenhain event.

Table 2 demonstrates the total spread email responses, including how many media sources printed it or ended up publishing articles as a result of it drawing notice.

Table 2

*Email Responses about the Exhibition*

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- Feb. 10 & Feb. 24 mailings: 73 total emails sent
  - (1) contact who asked to “unsubscribe” to the press releases
  - (4) email addresses were rejected, according to automated Postmaster responses
- March 29 mailing: 28 total emails sent
  - (1) note of mention about the exhibit in a daily paper’s arts blog
  - (2) email responses from media outlets, both revealing interest in coverage related to the exhibit. Correspondence did not prompt either outlet to afford coverage
  - (3) email addresses were rejected
- April 10 mailing: 140 total emails sent
  - (4) publications called for articles about the exhibition
  - (1) international journal published the press release
  - (1) outlet proposed a column about the event
  - (8) rejected emails
  - (4) out of the office replies
  - (2) publications stated the theme was too specialized
  - (1) response said they did not cover the subject matter
  - (1) automated response
  - (1) interested media response that did not result in coverage

- April 27 mailing: (0) emails sent
    - (0) email responses
  - May 14 mailing: 149 total emails sent
    - (1) lead that resulted in coverage by a different publication
    - (1) published press release
    - (1) interested media respondent that did not result in coverage
    - (1) automated response
    - (1) response stated that the subject matter was not covered by the publication
    - (9) rejected addresses
-



**Circulation: Reaching the Public, by the Numbers**

In all, personalized email delivery of press releases directly resulted in (9) meaningful responses that led to the wide scale publication of information about the Wildenhain exhibition. Table 3 illustrates the circulation numbers by publication, which represents the overall reach of the exhibition through gained publicity stemming from press releases sent during the project time frame. The table also indicates that *The New York Times* published information about the Wildenhain exhibition as an assumed result of promotional efforts implemented during the campaign. Based on the total circulation figures, it is assumed that print media attention for the Wildenhain exhibit reached more than 1,063,632 people.

Table 3

*Print and Online Circulation of Press Releases and Publicity Articles*

Publication	Circulation
<i>The Journal of Antiques and Collectibles:</i>	15,000-20,000 print
<i>The New York-Pennsylvania Collector:</i>	3,901 print
<i>New Ceramics:</i>	figures unavailable
<i>The Crafts Report:</i>	5,000-5,200 print
<i>Modernism:</i>	55,000 print
<i>New England Antiques Journal:</i>	15,000 print
<i>Antiques &amp; the Arts Weekly:</i>	figures unavailable
<i>Democrat &amp; Chronicle</i> (Rochester, New York):	170,000 print
<i>The Express</i> (Lock Haven, Pennsylvania):	20,000 print
<i>The New York Times:</i>	779,731 print

**Publicity across Facebook and Twitter**

The reach of social media publicity is derived from two primary data sources: Facebook Likes and Twitter Followers. Data obtained from the entirety of the promotional campaign on Facebook did not appear to offer a significant point of publicity and exposure for the event. Twitter appeared to draw more attention.

Between Oct. 11, 2011, and May 24, 2012, total Facebook Likes amounted to 43. The number appears inconsequential; nevertheless, the “Daily Total Reach” or the number of people who saw content associated with the Wildenhain Facebook page amounted to 3,518 from September 5, 2011 to May 24, 2012, according to Facebook Insights. Likes represent a form of engagement, but reach corresponds to exposure and publicity. Of interest to the campaign’s publicity were the number of followers attained on Twitter, which between Oct. 4, 2011, and May 24, 2012, amounted to 364. Total retweets and mentions were 15 and 34, respectively.

**Discussion**

The results of the promotional campaign indicate that proposing a story idea through personalized email messages was a successful tactic for eliciting media attention. The story “pitch” is a combination of tactics acting in unison. Receivers get both the personalized email message and a supporting press release. Sernovitz (2012), in his marketing text, declares that “email is the fastest, most portable, most effective word of mouth tool ever invented” (p. 131). As observed during the campaign, a personalized inquiry opens the door to conversation, and thereafter to publicity. The outcome of the exhibition’s publicity campaign underscores the effectiveness of personalized email, even though only a few media responses were received in contrast to the total number of emails sent. The scope of publicity resulting from personalized

email messages is understood by further review of email responses sent by media contacts back to the campaign.

Emails sent during the coordinated Feb. 10 and Feb. 24 mass-mailing did not elicit a significant response. As the researcher, I propose a twofold reason for the result. Firstly, the February press release was sent to media contacts six months before the exhibition's opening day. It was not an official save-the-date notice and did not feature a completely timely angle, principally focusing instead on an international/historical theme. In order to provide the most current information to the public, news organizations seek timely events for their coverage. The Society of Professional Journalists lists the delivery of timely information as part of a journalist's mission. Secondly, most of the messages sent during this mailing were not personalized to the individual media outlets. In the age of social media and personalized communication, impersonal emails often are identified as unwanted messages. A personalized pitch ultimately has more appeal than a mass-sent press release (Sawers, 2011). It is assumed that this combination of factors led to a lower number of email responses.

There was an increase in the number of received email responses from media contact during the second and third mass-mailings. During the March 29 and April 10 mailings, the campaign used two similarly crafted press releases that focused on the timely rediscovery of one of Wildenhain's ceramic murals. Collectively, the email efforts elicited 13 meaningful responses from media outlets. The first round of emailing about the mural attracted one meaningful response. Personalized messages were used during email communications and general mass-emailing was kept to a minimum. The timeliness of the mural's rediscovery cannot be characterized as a planned component of the campaign strategy. However, since the beginning of

the promotional efforts, leadership had called for creative-thinking and recognizing opportunities for promotion. The significance of the rediscovered mural, as well as its timeliness helped to ensure that media was interested in publicizing the found mural, and by association, the exhibit.

Personalized emails sent by the campaign elicited seven more meaningful responses throughout the final round of press release mailing. Again, general mass-emailing was kept to a minimum. The press release sent during this round did not primarily reflect a timely angle, but it did draw on buzz in the business world about innovation. In addition, this round of press releases was sent approximately three months prior to the exhibition opening. For monthly and weekly publications, the timing of the May-dated press releases appeared to be appropriate based on the number of responses. In this instance, sending press inquiries three months in advance of a one-time event represented the most important window of opportunity for gaining attention of print media sources. Furthermore, the publicity for the exhibit generated from the personalized email and press release combination eventually reached an overwhelmingly larger number of people through print media sources than did social media. However, social media, as stated, received far less attention during the course of the promotional campaign.

### **Social Media Challenges**

Based on the results derived from this thesis project, social media engagement appeared to have the least significant impact on exhibition publicity. Social media also received the least attention during the campaign for generating publicity online. Overall, Facebook Insights revealed that the total reach of content from the exhibition Page extended to more than 3,500 people, meaning that at least that many people were exposed to Facebook promotional content from the campaign. In addition, Twitter data indicated that 364 accounts proactively followed the

exhibition's handle. Broadly, this thesis project posits that publicity across social media reached a few thousand people. Print fared much better, with total circulation at more than 1,063,632, not factoring in website views.

During the promotional campaign, content aimed at promoting the exhibition was modestly posted on both Facebook and Twitter. There were 36 posts on Facebook and there were 63 tweets on the Twitter account. Throughout the course of the campaign, the exhibit organizer wrote blog articles, which were posted on the event's website. For each of the 11 blog posts prepared between September 5, 2011 and May 24, 2012, link-backs to the blog articles were made on Twitter and Facebook. On Twitter, four retweets were generated and Facebook saw a one or two Likes for linked posts. The results are negligible compared to exposure through print.

The campaign's initial calls for social media engagement called for aggressive publicity efforts beginning January 2012, but that objective did not come to fruition to the extent that the campaign initially had proposed. More time was allocated to other promotional efforts outside of social media, and therefore online media in that regard floundered.

Increased concentration on press release development and email communications, for example, contributed to the decrease in time spent on social media promotions. It was understood that to build a robust social media presence, a significant amount of time would need to be allocated to it for effective development. A meeting in September 2011 with a social media expert revealed that managing multiple social media accounts could potentially require full-time attention from the practitioner, depending on the organizational needs. In principle, the insight, matches the results.

**Situational Planning of Promotional Activities**

Based on case study results and evaluation of the overall campaign, it is evident that customization of design should not be limited to promotional tactics alone. Strategic decision-making, in this case, allowed for the campaign to acclimate as needed. This is significant considering the Wildenhain exhibition was a one-time event, unlike the extensive public relations and marketing data an established museum or nonprofit organization might possess. Arguably, by preparing a customized publicity campaign, the organization can firmly align with its desired outcomes. Successful campaigns will identify relevant best practices and put them into use. In addition, campaigns should design promotional activities around the needs of the organization (Belcher, 1991). One-time events or temporary attractions might benefit most from using a customizable promotional campaign that allows for amending strategies and tactics over time, especially if it is a first-time or first-of-its-kind event without a history of marketing and promotions to support its current publicity efforts.

**Limitations**

The most significant limitation of this thesis project is that it is presented as a participant-observation case study, which does not allow for data generalization. The outcomes outlined in this thesis project strictly represent the case being studied, which is the promotional campaign. In addition, some scholars have been critical of participant observation because of potential of bias stemming from a researcher's close association with the subject matter (Yin, 2003). However, as previously stated, the purpose of a thesis project is to foster a hands-on approach for developing and implementing a particular plan that can stand on well-founded research. The participant-

observation case study also allows for an internal perspective of actual practice, as well as the ability to manipulate minor events for broader data and much richer observations (Yin, 2003).

### **Future Research**

Future case studies on promotional campaigns for one-time, nonprofit art exhibitions, or for this particular event, should consider how exhibit attendance and catalog sales are linked to publicity efforts. As stated, this thesis project's principal objective was to explore the extent of publicity based on press releases sent by email and the use of social media. Sales and attendance would represent the data of a differently framed research project. Furthermore, phone interviews or surveys could be conducted to gather and analyze data related to promotional efforts.

### **Conclusion**

As the public sector increasingly becomes more commercialized, so must museums and galleries (Runyard & French, 1999, p. xiii). Arts and cultural organizations—including one-time exhibitions—vie for audience and media attention within a distinctly competitive marketplace. “To survive and thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, museums, galleries and not-for-profit heritage attractions will have to apply increasingly sophisticated marketing techniques to attract visitors in a sometimes highly competitive environment” (Runyard & French, 1999, p. xiii). A review of discourse on the subject supports the use of strategic promotional campaigns that are specially designed, market oriented, leverage technology, and encourage creativity. Concurrently, such a program might also include persuasive messaging (Runyard & French, 1999, p. xiii).

The essential components of a publicity plan for a one-time arts event, such as the exhibition studied in this thesis project, include having sound organization, setting clear objectives, and using effective communications (Runyard & French, 1999). In their research,



Gürel and Kavak (2010) and Belcher (1991) identified the value of preparing a specially tailored marketing or public relations campaign to match the objectives and mission of museums. In a related marketing sense, individual artists also are encouraged by experts to think creatively and develop fresh ways of promoting their work (Smith, 2007). Based on these assessments and results examined in this case study, this thesis project posits that attracting attention to an arts exhibit requires not only strategic planning and use of essential marketing and public relations tactics, but also the creative and personalized use of those promotional communications.

Thesis project findings confirm that promotional campaigns for the arts should be specially tailored for the effective delivery of messages and best likelihood of responses from recipients. The results of this thesis project also demonstrate two key points about specially designing a promotional campaign. The first is that personalization of messaging for targeted sources is an effective means of exhibition promotions. Whether the campaign is sending emails to media outlets or engaging across social media, the message should appeal to the individual that is being reached and not seen as a generic broadcast of information. The second aspect is that creative messaging issued in a timely matter also elicits notice. Beyond personalization, the promotions manager should consider creativity and innovation in preparing, crafting, and in sending messages.

For modest to mid-size exhibits featuring less-than-celebrity artists or craftspeople, promotional managers should not simply let the content sell itself. Campaign results demonstrate that novel, timely ideas draw attention. The enterprising public relations or marketing practitioner will craft a message that honestly and accurately sheds light on the organization, all while enticing—or even impressing—the media sources. Collaboration amongst staff members,

strategizing at the decision-making level, and research are all significant in bolstering publicity.

Nevertheless, a market oriented, strategic publicity campaign that supports creativity can elicit a range of media attention.

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## Appendix A

### Public Relations & Social Media Campaign Timeline

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**Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century**

Rochester Institute of Technology

Bevier and Dyer Galleries, 20 August – 2 October 2012

#### Public Relations & Social Media Campaign Timeline

##### **Timeline Key:**

- (bullet) indicates publication
- Green indicates possible theme

#### **September 2011:**

Open twitter and Facebook accounts promoting the exhibition. Begin to develop a following and fan base. Potential contacts at [https://twitter.com/#!/who\\_to\\_follow/search/ceramics](https://twitter.com/#!/who_to_follow/search/ceramics)

Create a “badge” (avatar/icon/photo) used across social media. This will help ensure brand consistency for the exhibition. Who could quickly design an icon?

Continue to research and contact publications that specifically focus on ceramics, crafts, and art. This means science, business, education and history publications.

Research and contact publications that are annual, biannual and possibly some of the quarterlies to ensure content can be produced and confirmed before the publication is finalized for press.

Could a connection be made with the Ceramics Annual of America 2011, Exhibition & Fair Oct. 7 – 9, 2011; San Francisco Fort Mason Center? This could be one of our national connections.

National Arts in Education Week (Sept. 11 – 17, 2011). It may be too late for this year. What about next year. Is there a point of entry here?

#### **Publications**

- New Glass (every spring): Did Wildenhain do anything with glass? If there was an entry point with this publication, we’d have to move sooner rather than later to meet press time.
- Ceramophile (spring each year): This is Alfred's publication, so maybe RIT content could not be noted according to Alfred policy. Is there a connection with Alfred?
- Public Art Review (biannually?) Fall/Winter issue is probably close to being finalized for press. Is there time to meet publication for next Fall/Winter in 2012?

#### **October 2011:**

Launch Website [rit.edu/wild](http://rit.edu/wild). Site launch should be fine when there is enough content to fill it out. Once live, the site should continue to post new content through blog, maybe twitter feed.

What will the website blog feature? Begin producing and posting blog entries.

Accounts must always be fresh and up-to-date. Repost blog entries, retweet and mention on twitter, fast facts and updates.

Look for new ways to connect and brand while maintaining the objective.

#### **Publications**

- The Studio Potter (biannually summer/fall): Check StudioPotter.org for the theme.
- Ceramics Art & Perception, UK (quarterly): It has a March - May 2011 issue. Is this an entry point of promotion into the international market?

#### **November 2011:**

Blog about developments and/or progress

#### **Publications**

- Craft Arts International (monthly or quarterly): Check the events and reviews section.
- Smithsonian (monthly):

#### **December 2011:**

Wildenhain and the holidays. *Is there any way to make a connection here? This could be anything: a blog entry, tweets, maybe a short features somewhere.*

Could we get some early TV coverage about Wildenhain? (Rochester's version of *Chronicle*).

#### **January 2012:**

Probably want to target business magazines during the early middle of each quarter to help ensure responses. (end of January/beginning of February for Q2).

#### **Publications**

- Marketing News -American Marketing Association- (monthly): *A press release themed around Shop One; "Marketing and Selling Crafts," Shop One case study.*
- Professional Artist/professionalArtistMag.com (monthly): *A press release themed around Shop One ... "Marketing and Selling Crafts," Shop One as a case study.*
- artsan.com "Showcase, market and sell your work" (online): A Shop One feature?

#### **February 2012:**

#### **Publications**

- neue keramik (bi-monthly): German ceramics, maybe this is the connection to the Bauhaus??



**March 2012:**

**Publications**

- Crafts (bi-monthly): ....Maybe should for its July/August 2012 issue.
- Newsweek (weekly)
- Ceramic Review (monthly)
- The Creative Review (monthly w/ a large annual issue): Appeal to the visual part of the magazine/advertising?

**April 2012:**

**Publications**

- American Scientist (bi-monthly): Maybe the Sept./Oct 2012 issue. [Work on the science theme. Chemistry?](#)
- Ceramics Monthly and/or American Craft
- Sculpture (monthly): What's Wildenhain's relationship to sculptures?

**May 2012:**

Local/Regional media

**Publications**

- The Crafts Report (monthly):
- The Chronicle of Higher Education (weekly): [How the School for the American Craftsmen found its way to an engineering school and what it means for your university.](#)
- Art Education (monthly): Has a section called “instructional resources.” [How kids/students can benefit from art exhibits. What will be the student connection at RIT? Is it let them have a hand in producing it?](#)

**June 2012:**

Contact local/regional media

Could the exhibit somehow be promoted at antique shows like Bouckville?

**Publications**

- Raw Vision (quarterly): Raw has a Spring/Summer issue. Has a "Raw Reviews" section for exhibits, so maybe get a review in the Winter issue. Could be used as a follow up to help foster sales of the catalogue thereafter.

**July 2012:**

Establish a connection with Groupon and/or LivingSocial for the catalogue and event. These are social networks that offer discounts at businesses if enough people sign up for an advertized coupon. Perhaps the pre-order could be connected to this in some way.

Established a foursquare badge for this event. Perhaps even offer a 5% discount for the catalogue if a visitor checks in at the exhibit.

Create a MeetUp (if allowable) event for the exhibit.

LinkedIn Group? Who could be the “Group” manager? Me?

Local/Regional and planned features

**Publications**

**August 2012:**

Local/Regional/State and planned features

Grant limited early access to news crews from local TV stations

Produce a video about or at the exhibits grand opening. Post the video to YouTube and connect it to various social media accounts.

**Publications**

**September 2012:**

National Arts in Education Week (Sept. 11 – 17, 2011). It may be too late for this year. What about next year. Is there a point of entry here?

Local/Regional/State and planned features

**Publications**

**October 2012:**

Local/Regional and planned features

eBay, as noted in proposal

**Publications**

**November/December 2012:**

eBay, as noted in proposal

**Publications**

- Raw Vision (quarterly): Was raw able to right a Raw Review?

## Appendix B Press Release



## Press Release

### **Bauhaus legacy extends to New York**

*Works by Bauhaus-trained Frans Wildenhain on view at upcoming exhibit*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – The global legacy of Bauhaus extends from its roots in Weimar, Germany, across time and space to some of the most unexpected of locations. Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is one such place.

RIT's Western New York campus is where Bauhaus-trained Frans Wildenhain, a Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, taught for 20 years.

Wildenhain learned his craft from Bauhaus masters Gerhard Marcks and Max Krehan, and he shared it with emerging ceramics students. His blended training of artistic and functional design at Bauhaus carried through for the rest of his life in both his art and teaching-style.

A Master Potter, Wildenhain was a seminal figure at RIT during the formative years of the School for American Craftsmen, now named the School for American Crafts (SAC).

In addition to Wildenhain's legacy at RIT, the school now is in possession of more than 300 of his works thanks to a generous donation from one collector.

Approximately 150 ceramic pieces from the collection will be on display at the RIT campus Aug. 20 through Oct. 2, 2012, in the Bevier Gallery and Dyer Arts Center. The exhibition, *Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century*, is free and open to the public.

The Bauhaus association does not end with the upcoming exhibit of Wildenhain's work.

Like the Bauhaus, RIT is of a blended framework: a product of the Rochester Athenaeum, devoted to science and technology, and the Rochester Mechanics Institute, founded to train students in technology and industrial arts, within a humanistic context.

Additionally, across RIT's suburban campus, aspects of the Bauhaus aesthetic can be seen in its design, architecture, and décor. It is here at RIT – perhaps an unlikely setting for the Bauhaus reach – where the work of one of its most gifted students also has come to be on display.

For more information on the Frans Wildenhain exhibition, please contact Bruce Austin at 585-475-2879 or visit, [www.rit.edu/wild](http://www.rit.edu/wild).

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### Appendix C Press Release

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## Press Release

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### **Two New York women dedicated lives to Arts and Crafts Movement**

*Contributions led to RIT crafts curriculum, teaching opportunities for artists*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – The 20<sup>th</sup> century Arts and Crafts Movement, modern design, and their association with Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) are integrally tied to the vision of two extraordinary women from New York: Aileen Osborn Vanderbilt Webb and Susan Bevier.

The efforts of Bevier (1822-1903) and Webb (1892-1979) advanced art and crafts education, strengthened organizations centered on art and crafts, and supported publications that offered discourse on that very subject matter.

Their contributions paved the way for an established art and crafts curriculum at RIT, in turn, affording faculty teaching opportunities, including a faculty position held by Frans Wildenhain, a Bauhaus-trained Master Potter.

Bevier donated her \$70,000 art collection and bequeathed her \$300,000 estate around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the Mechanics Institute, which eventually became RIT. Her gifts were essential to the advancement of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts.

Webb provided a lifetime of unwavering support for craft and craft education. She underwrote the School for American Craftsmen during its mid-century relocation to RIT. After more than six decades, the School continues to prosper at RIT, but under a slightly different name: the School for American Crafts (SAC).

The contributions of Bevier and Webb did not go unnoticed. Wildenhain, a lifelong studio potter and ceramics teacher, acknowledged Webb's support in a 1976 notebook. He wrote she was instrumental in getting him to pursue his life's work at RIT and he loved her for it and her role in American crafts.

Wildenhain's ceramic work, made possible by Bevier and Webb's years of support and contributions to the Arts and Crafts Movement, now is presented in an exhibition held beginning Aug. 20 through Oct. 2, 2012, at RIT. The event is free and open to the public.

Titled *Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century*, the RIT exhibition showcases more than 150 handcrafted Wildenhain pieces simultaneously at both Dyer Arts Center and Bevier Gallery, named after the same, Susan Bevier.

For more information on the Frans Wildenhain exhibition, please contact Bruce Austin at 585-475-2879 or visit, [rit.edu/wild](http://rit.edu/wild).

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## Appendix D Press Release



## Press Release

### **Retail craft store at mid-century was startup company of its time**

*Pottery by store founder Frans Wildenhain on view at upcoming art exhibition*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Shop One, an artists' cooperative that exclusively sold handmade crafts at mid-century, was the innovative startup company of its time.

Unlike today's digital world in which artists sell crafts through online retail or auction websites such as Etsy, Big Cartel, and eBay, the story at mid-century was different.

In the 1950s, only two retail stores in the United States were in the business of selling exclusively crafts. Four entrepreneurial artists operated one of those stores, Shop One, in Rochester.

Shop One was an innovative business venture that lasted nearly 25 years (1953-1975) under the management of craft artists Frans Wildenhain, John Prip, Tage Frid, and Ronald Pearson. Each had a deep-seated passion for handcrafted art, as well as a connection to the School for American Craftsmen (SAC) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

SAC, now named the School for American Crafts, played a vital role as an artistic incubator for Shop One. At Shop One, customers of the pioneering venture could buy works crafted by SAC faculty and from associated artists who also specialized in craft.

At the time, the only other exclusive shop for handcrafted art was America House in New York City. Philanthropist Aileen Osborn Vanderbilt Webb was responsible for the ground-breaking launch of America House, as well as supporting SAC.

Now, thanks to a generous donation from a Shop One patron and longtime collector, RIT is in possession of more than 300 beautifully handmade ceramic works by the late Wildenhain, a Bauhaus Master Potter.

Roughly 150 of those pieces are on view Aug. 20 through Oct. 2, 2012, at RIT in both the Bevier Gallery and Dyer Arts Center. The exhibition, *Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century*, is free and open to the public.

One chapter in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, “Selling Craft in Mid-Century America: Marketing the Merch at Shop One,” investigates the commercial aspects of Shop One’s novel approach to operating an arts and crafts store.

For more information on the Frans Wildenhain exhibition, please contact Bruce Austin at 585-475-2879 or visit, [rit.edu/wild](http://rit.edu/wild).

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**Appendix E**  
**Exhibition Fact Sheet**

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*Frans Wildenhain*  
rit.edu/wild

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**Exhibition Fact Sheet**

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**Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative and Commercial  
American Ceramics at Mid-century**

**Artist:** Frans Wildenhain (1905-1980); trained at the Bauhaus; taught at Rochester Institute of Technology, School for American Craftsmen (SAC); partner in retail craft store Shop One; awarded Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (1958)

**Exhibition dates:** August 20, 2012 through October 2, 2012

**Location of exhibition:** Simultaneously at Bevier Gallery and Dyer Arts Center, both located at the Rochester Institute of Technology campus, Rochester, N.Y. For more information, please visit <http://www.rit.edu/cla/wild/the-exhibition/exhibition-galleries>

**Number of works on display:** About 150, including ceramics, two dimensional art

**Exhibition Catalogue:** Approximately 150 color photographs of Wildenhain pottery and 45 black and white archival photos, approximately 300 pages, hardbound. Five chapters: Biography of Frans Wildenhain; History of the School for American Craftsmen; Wildenhain's Work in the Context of Mid-century Studio Ceramics; Selling Craft in Midcentury America: Marketing the Merch at Shop One; Interview with Collector Robert Bradley Johnson.

**Website for exhibition:** [www.rit.edu/WILD](http://www.rit.edu/WILD). Exhibition details and related information about Wildenhain also available on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#)

**Exhibition organizer:** Bruce Austin. He was organizer and curator for The American Arts & Crafts Movement in Western New York, 1900-1920, an exhibition with catalogue presented in

the Bevier Gallery, Dec. 9, 1991 through Jan. 22, 1992. He also initiated and organized three international conferences on moving image preservation, access and use (Fast Rewind: The Archeology of Moving Images).

# # #

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**Appendix F**  
**Frans Wildenhain Fact Sheet**

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*Frans Wildenhain*  
rit.edu/wild

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**Frans Wildenhain Fact Sheet**

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- Student of the Bauhaus (1924-1926)
- Master Potter (1929)
- Awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship to study the relationship between ceramic murals and architecture (1958)
- Two-time winner of the Lillian Fairchild Award (1953, 1963)
- Fellow of American Crafts Council Collegium of Craftsmen (1975)
- Husband of award-winning, Bauhaus-trained potter Marguerite Wildenhain
- Born 1905 in Leipzig, Germany; lived in Holland, California, and New York State
- Founding faculty member of the School for American Craftsmen, now School for American Crafts (SAC) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), 1950-1970
- Purchased the land for his Bushnell's Basin house from the wife of the inventor of the gasoline powered automobile
- Lived at Pond Farm, a 1950s California artists' "commune"
- Apprenticed as a draftsman and lithographer at age 14
- Created murals, including one at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, M.D., and another in the lobby of Overlook Hospital, in Summit, N.J.

###

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**Appendix G**  
**Cover Letter for Press Release**

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Good afternoon,

There is an upcoming art exhibition that might be of interest to you. ***Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century*** will be held at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Aug. 20 to Oct. 2, 2012. The press release that's included below provides details about the event and the artist, Frans Wildenhain (1905-1980), who was a Bauhaus-trained Master Potter.

Sincerely,

## Appendix H

### Social Media Content: Phase 1

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#### 1) Quotes:

a) This millimeter work of karma gave me an afterthought-like Luther in a thunderstorm with lightning all around him...it was an enlightenment from the messenger of gods, a grace...I changed a bit more. Now I had an obligation-Frans Wildenhain

b) Work is not a frog-it will not jump away-Frans Wildenhain (told to his students often)

c) When I think about the time at Pond Farm and San Francisco, it was like a dream. I was a dreamer and you (Marguerite) were my big dream girl. You gave me so much more than you realized. I am thankful to you. You were dreaming too and always someone I admired...You went your way and I went mine. Nothing can change this' we are each on our town but still part of the unerasable [sic] past"-Frans Wildenhain in a letter to ex-wife Marguerite Wildenhain.

d) They were so strong, had such an intense personality that they immediately became the focal point of any room they were in-Robert Bradley Johnson on Wildenhain's work.

e) It is more important to ready poetry than books about pottery...such manuals are helpful for technical data but they do not provide the essence, the elixir of life beyond God and the wind-Frans Wildenhain on his love of philosophy and poetry.

f) A real experience stays with you, You don't need to bring it into existence immediately. It can linger in your mind indefinitely"- Frans Wildenhain

g) Glazes are like a woman wearing jewelry; they enhance but they also cover weaknesses; (a vessel without a glaze) is like a body before cloths are put on-pure like Mexican and Greek pottery. Perhaps this nakedness makes it appear fragile, tender, unassuming-Frans Wildenhain (on his philosophy on using glazes)

2) Photographs of Wildenhain Pottery





### 3) Article/Blog Posts:

Start with first blog post Bruce wrote and forward.

### 4) Facts about Wildenhain/Pottery or RIT Event

Frans Wildenhain was born on June 5, 1905 in [Leipzig](#), Germany.



1919: apprenticed as a draftsman and lithographer

1924: student at the Bauhaus at Weimar; specialized in pottery at the Dornburg Pottery with Max Krehan. Studied with Paul Klee, Laso Moholy-Nagy, Gerhard Marcks, Josef Albers, Vassily Kandinsky and Walter Gropius.

1925: Bauhaus at Weimar closed; continued work in pottery in the State school of fine and applied arts at Halle-Saale.

1926: Passed the craftsman's examination before the guild of Potter at Halle-Saale.

1929: Passed the Master of Craft Examination

1930: Instructor of pottery at the Folkwang School Workshop "Margarethenhole", Essen-Ruhr' taught at the State School of Halle-Saale.

1933-40: Proprietor of own workshop in Putten, Holland.

1937-40: Received awards at International Expositions in Paris.

1941-47: Moved his workshop to Amsterdam; taught at the School for applied arts in Amsterdam and briefly at St. Lioba, a Benedictine convent in Noord-Holland.

1947-50: Associated with the Pond Farm Workshops in Guerneville, California.

1949: Received award at the Los Angeles Exhibition of Arts, California State Fair for the most outstanding form-pitcher.

1949: Exhibited with wife, Marguerite, at the Portland Art Museum.

1950: Instructor of Ceramics and Sculpture for American Craftsman, Rochester Institute of Technology.

1951: Rochester Finger Lakes Exhibition awards in ceramic sculpture and ceramics.

1952: Names Master Craftsman of the Boston, Massachusetts Society of Arts and Crafts.

1953: Prizes in National Designer-Craftsman Contest, sponsored by the American Craftsmen's Education Council and shown at the Brooklyn Museum, Chicago Art Institute and the San Francisco Museum of Art.

1954: Represented by Bertha Schaefer Gallery-NYC

1955: Designed "The Rochester Medal' for Kodak.

1956: First exhibitor at the Museum of American Crafts- NYC

1958: Guggenheim Fellow

1958: Exhibited at World's Fair in Brussels

1960: Created mural for National Library of Medicine (Bethesda, MD)

1961: Mural for Overlook Hospital

1972: Mural completed for Ingle Auditorium at RIT titled "Allegory of a Landscape"

1975: Fellow in Collegium of Craftsman, American Crafts Council.

1977: Exhibited at Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, New York, "Frans Wildenhain," New York State Artists Series.

1980: Died January 25, 1980, at age 74.

### **Other Facts:**

In 1943, Wildenhain was drafted into the German Army, and in the following year took part in the [Battle of Arnhem](#). In April 1945, he became a deserter and was hidden from authorities by friends in Amsterdam.

Wildenhain married his first wife, [Marguerite Wildenhain](#), in 1930, who was also a famous potter/artist.

In 1950, Frans accepted an offer to join the faculty at the Rochester Institute of Technology where he taught for 20 years.

Frans Wildenhain received numerous prizes for his artwork including (among others) the International Exposition in Paris (1939), the Albright Art Gallery (1952), the Brussels World's Fair (1958), and a [Guggenheim Fellowship](#) (1958).

Wildenhain tended to use black, deep blue and white glazes in his work.

**Appendix I**  
**Social Media Objectives & Strategies**

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**Social Media Objectives & Strategies**

**Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative & Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century**  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Bevier and Dyer Galleries, 20 August – 2 October 2012

**Facebook Objectives (by Dec. 31, 2011):**

*The Wildenhain Facebook page should be used to drive traffic to rit.edu/WILD, interact with the audience (potential attendees), and inform the public about the upcoming exhibition*

- Drive (specific #) of Facebook users to the rit.edu/WILD site
- Prompt (specific #) users in total to comment on the Facebook page or on blog entries posted on rit.edu/WILD
- Prompt (specific #) users to share content from the Wildenhain Facebook page, importantly with a link back to the rit.edu/WILD site
- Elicit (specific #) of Facebook users to “like” the Wildenhain Facebook page
- Get (specific #) of Facebook users to “attend” on the Wildenhain FB events page

**Facebook Strategies:**

*The Facebook page should be used as an interactive communication tool to cultivate an online audience interested in attending the Wildenhain exhibition*

- Use links to rit.edu/WILD in status updates, posts, and relevant comments (when appropriate) to drive (specific #) of Facebook users to the rit.edu/WILD site
- Post unique, engaging, and interesting content; and respond to comments and shared links in order to prompt (specific #) users in total to comment on the Facebook page or on blog entries posted on rit.edu/WILD
- Post unique and engaging content with clear headlines in order to prompt (specific #) users to share content from the Wildenhain Facebook page, importantly with a link back to the rit.edu/WILD site
- Use the Wildenhain Facebook page to like relevant Pages and content, thereby using the “liking” interaction to help elicit a (specific #) of Facebook users to “like” the Wildenhain Facebook page in return

- Send invites to Facebook users and post links to the events page in order to get (specific #) of Facebook users to “attend” on the Wildenhain FB events page

### **Twitter Objectives (by Dec. 31, 2011)**

*The Wildenhain Twitter account should be used to drive traffic to rit.edu/WILD, interact with the audience (potential attendees), and inform the public about the upcoming exhibition*

- Drive (specific #) of Facebook users to the rit.edu/WILD site
- Prompt (specific #) users to follow @WildenhainXibit
- Prompt (specific #) users to retweet @WildenhainXibit tweets, importantly the ones with links to rit.edu/WILD
- Elicit (specific #) of Facebook to mention @WildenhainXibit, importantly a mention that includes a link to rit.edu/WILD – or at least the Facebook page
- Follow 500 strategically selected Twitter accounts (handles)

### **Twitter Strategies**

*The Wildenhain Twitter account should be used as an interactive communication and promotional tool to cultivate an audience interested in attending the Wildenhain exhibition*

- Tweet with links to rit.edu/WILD in order to drive (specific #) of Facebook users to the rit.edu/WILD site.
- Follow people and engage them by using mentions and retweets in order to prompt (specific #) users to follow @WildenhainXibit
- Post unique, engaging, and interesting links (and use hashtags) to prompt (specific #) users to retweet @WildenhainXibit tweets, importantly the ones with links to rit.edu/WILD.
- Respond to certain tweets, mention people’s handles, and don’t forget to be courteous in order to help elicit (specific #) of Facebook to mention @WildenhainXibit, importantly a mention that includes rit.edu/WILD or FB links
- Use search, lists, and possibly twellow to help recognize, review and target 500 strategic Twitter accounts (handles) that should be followed by @WildenhainXibit

**LinkedIn Objectives (by Dec. 31, 2011):**

*The LinkedIn events page for the Wildenhain exhibit should inform the public about the upcoming exhibition and drive traffic to rit.edu/WILD. Simultaneously, personal LinkedIn accounts should be used to support the events page and help engage potential attendees.*

- Drive (specific #) of LinkedIn users to the rit.edu/WILD site
- Prompt (specific #) LinkedIn users to “attend” the Wildenhain event
- Make (specific #) comments or ask (specific #) questions that might lead to interest directed back to rit.edu/WILD or the LinkedIn events page

**LinkedIn Strategies:**

*The LinkedIn events page and personal LinkedIn accounts should be used to engage professionals who might see a relevant benefit to attending the Wildenhain Exhibition, be it networking, inspiration, pure interest or other reasons. Remember this IS NOT Twitter or FB*

- Share information: this might be through asking questions or sending invites in order to drive (specific #) of LinkedIn users to the rit.edu/WILD site
- Share information both in and out of LinkedIn: This might be through asking questions or sending invites in order to prompt (specific #) LinkedIn users to “attend” the Wildenhain event
- Use your network, groups, search, and other events in order to make (specific #) comments or ask (specific #) questions in the most relevant place where someone re-link back to rit.edu/WILD or the LinkedIn events page

**FransWildenhain.com & FransWildenhain.org**

*These websites should redirect to rit.edu/WILD and are used to supplement promotion and further SEO importance in Search around “Frans Wildenhain.”*

## Appendix J

### Social Media Activity Leading Up to the Exhibit Preview Event at Imagine RIT

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Thursday, April 12:

Tweet: “There's a preview of the Wildenhain ceramics exhibition @Imagine\_RIT on May 5! You can add it to your itinerary here: <http://bit.ly/HuYZp7>” Tweet a thank you for mentions, and posted a thank you on Facebook for a shared support by Memorial Art Gallery. Also created a Facebook event for the Imagine RIT festival: “Stop by for a preview of the exhibition: Frans Wildenhain 1950-75: Creative & Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-century. Learn about noted ceramist and professor Frans Wildenhain, as well as mid-century modern design, material culture and decorative art, the Bauhaus, and more. Ceramics of usual and unusual forms also will be on view. For more information or to add this exhibition preview to your itinerary, visit <http://www.rit.edu/imagine/planyourday12/exhibit.php?id=132>”

Friday, April 27:

Tweeted “In just one week, you can catch a preview @**Imagine\_RIT** of the Frans Wildenhain **#ceramics** exhibition! <http://goo.gl/d5G00> **#ROC**” as a means of ramping up the promotion of the exhibition preview at Imagine RIT.

Wednesday, May 2:

Tweeted “Get ready for the Wildenhain exhibit's sneak peek @**Imagine\_RIT** on Saturday, May 5! More info here: <http://goo.gl/SX1uC> **#ROC**” which was a link to a blog post by Bruce regarding the exhibition preview. I also did a retweet about an event at RIT that evening about a sculptor (retweet Wednesday).

Saturday, May 5:

Worked at the Wildenhain exhibition preview booth in the Field House at Imagine RIT. Talked to hundreds of visitors about the upcoming exhibition and the life of Frans Wildenhain. Provided 35 half-page fliers and Wildenhain postcards to attendees of the William A. Kern Conference in Visual Communication. The fliers included the logo that I designed. Also tweeted 6 times about the Wildenhain exhibit preview, including one generic thank you tweet and a thank you @reply.

Wednesday, May 9:

It's Retweet Wednesday: “Cool! 1st scene shows where we were located. RT @**Imagine\_RIT**: Awesome time lapse photo of the festival this weekend: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jdo0JGaE1UE>. Tweeted: “Visit our Facebook page to see a great photo of the Wildenhain exhibition preview at Imagine RIT: <http://goo.gl/GajDT> **#ceramics**”