

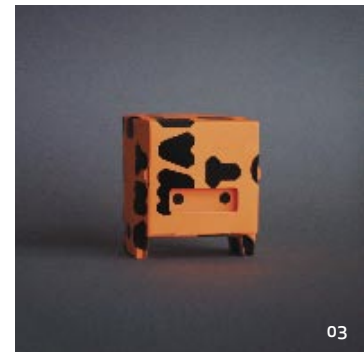
5 minutes with chris jones, director of switch

Interview Louise Lawton

01 | An example of Switch's work for men's fashion retailer Barkers.

02 | Part of a new branding campaign Switch has completed for Max.

03 | The Pimp my Paper promotion for Spicers Paper features Cardbots such as the one pictured.



Q. Who are you, what do you do and who do you work with?

A. I'm the founder and creative director of Switch. What essentially started 10 years ago as just me, has now grown into a busy little design studio with a team of seven. While I'm less hands on designing these days, I'm still involved in the creative generation and direction – I can't help myself. Clients also absorb a lot more of my time these days, and as time goes on I've really become aware of how important those relationships are for us in terms of delivering design that works for a client and keeping our integrity intact.

Q. What are you working on now?

A. Like any design company we're juggling multiple projects at once. The one that has absorbed us the most over the past six months is the repositioning of fashion retailer Max, which came about following our involvement in the successful rebrand and reposition of Barkers. Max wants to be a design-led business and we've been lucky enough to be involved across all brand elements, instore, online and marketing collateral. What's nice about working on fashion brands is

that the design and thinking can be more fluid and experimental than if it was says for a finance sector client. With fashion, we're not necessarily designing for longevity because the shelf-life is shorter. Design-wise, we can reflect what's happening in fashion at the time and be exactly that - fashionable.

Q. What recent work are you particularly proud of?

A. We have worked with Spicers Paper for many years and have just completed the Pimp My Paper project. The audience for this was the design community, meaning it would be judged by our peers - so, no pressure! Rather than just sending out a printed directmail piece, we wanted to engage with designers, so we thought we'd try and get them to do the designing for us by pimping out the Cardbot we supplied. We threw in a MacBook Air and some iPod Nanos as prizes and waited, hoping a few poor souls would take pity on us and enter. One hundred entries later, we've got 32 finalists that we can use to help promote Spicers Paper. You can check out the finalists and vote for your favourite Bot at pimpmypaper.co.nz.

Q. What's your favourite medium.

A. I have two favourite mediums, which have completely opposite appeal. Print is one because of the tactile and technical nature. The combination of design, paper and print finishing results in some damn sexy designs. The printing craft can get a little lost with people turning to online or digital, but I don't think you can beat a beautifully designed and printed piece. Secondly, I love environmental graphics because of the scale involved. All day we work on A4 pieces of paper and it's not until you work on large-scale environmental graphics that everything changes. You have different materials, another dimension and all of a sudden everything is 20 times bigger. Type takes on a completely different character at that scale. And there's nothing better than seeing your designs bigger than Ben Hur.

Q. Who's your favourite designer?

A. It's got to be Michael C. Place from Build. He was here for Semi-Permanent a few years back and I was lucky enough to meet and have a chat with him. If you don't know his work, go visit wearebuild.com. **pd**