


**Agency:** Flat

**Clients:** Reuters, Amnesty International, Microsoft, Cartoon Network, Sesame Street, The Learning Channel, Pfizer, Oxygen, Knoll

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 We have a strong belief in structure and visual hierarchy, but those are just tools to build on – they should not control the end result," says Petter Ringbom, a partner at Flat. "Not everything should look like an airport. That's just mean."

Yet even with its structured approach to design, which has seen it scoop awards such as the American Design Award and a gong at the Society of Publication Designers, Flat is most definitely fluid when it comes to design. It has recently completed work for the 2004 NYC marathon – "before we worked with them, their stuff was invisible" says Ringbom – as well as projects for Knoll and Reuters.

"Our practice is predicated on the belief that good design facilitates the smooth flow of information, and enlivens all forms of social discourse," he says. "In less formal language, I like to say we make surprising things for happy clients."

"I've always been interested in making work with a fluid interaction between type, illustration, and photography," says Ringbom. "The NYC marathon is one of those projects where it felt natural to go beyond the typical advertisement methodology of big type and big image. We wanted the project to fall between an ad and a poster; it had to grab your attention on the street and look good on your wall at the same time. The solution that has really carried through all three campaigns we've done for the marathon was to show the huge mass of the race while highlighting individual achievement."

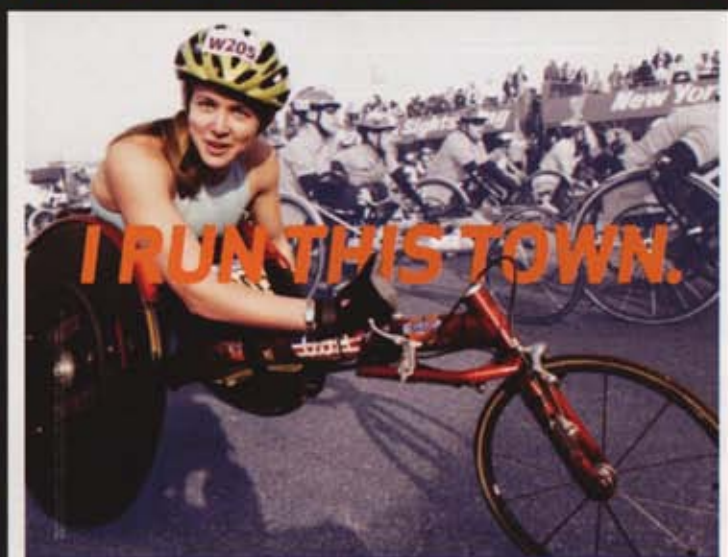
A key element to the campaign's success was Flat's use of InDesign – a tool Ringbom started using in 1999 from version 1.0. "I never liked Quark, and figured that InDesign had to coexist better with Illustrator and Photoshop," he says.

InDesign was used in the NYC marathon campaign to overlay photographs with illustrated details, says Ringbom – with InDesign making it simple to scale and resize the composite for the numerous formats the campaign was destined for. "We took great advantage of the six colour process available to us by printing the illustrated elements in solid PMS ink," he says. "It looked really sharp and the ads got a lot of attention – they basically take over the town for the month of October; they're on buses, in the subway, on phone kiosks, everywhere."

So why is design with InDesign a joy? The secret, says Ringbom, is the fluid interaction between text, shapes, and illustrations as



# Flat



**ING New York City Marathon Nov. 7, 2004**



you compose a page.

"The fluid interchange between Photoshop, Illustrator, and Acrobat is really the biggest benefit. When you work on many different projects at the same time, anything that makes your life easier is a good thing."

"The Story function is certainly a treat," says Ringbom, warming to the subject, "hanging punctuation at the click of a button. Of course, turning type into a vector path and working with that way is cool. I haven't gotten into OpenType yet, but that's next on my list."

As to 2005, things look good for Flat, says Ringbom. "In terms of the economy, I'm more optimistic – we see more work than we did two years ago. In a broader sense, it seems to me this industry is dividing into two categories – the huge branding machines, and the smaller, mostly entertainment-oriented image-making shops. Staying both frugal and interesting, without getting pigeonholed, is really Flat's biggest challenge."

