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ADVERTISING

## Promotion Is Not Just Another Brick in the Wall

By [MARIA ASPAN](#)

[ADOBE](#) software is a well-established tool for anyone working, or even dabbling, in computer-based design. But in order to market its new Creative Suite 3 software package — which includes well-known design software like Photoshop and Illustrator — Adobe has temporarily abandoned the computer screen in favor of a busy Manhattan street.

Adobe will unveil an interactive wall of projected animation this morning in Union Square, along the 14th Street side of the Virgin Megastore. As pedestrians walk past the wall, infrared sensors will lock on to the person closest to the wall, who will then be able to control a projected slider button at the bottom of the wall.

As the selected pedestrian continues walking and moves the slider along, the wall will start displaying colorful animation and playing music, effects that will grow or recede at the pace that the person advances or retreats. When each selected pedestrian reaches the end of the wall, his or her design will be in full blossom, above the campaign's message: "Creative license: take as much as you want."

The wall, which is 7 feet high and 15 feet wide, will be recreated in London in early August, at the Piccadilly Circus Virgin Megastore. Each will be there for a month.

The walls were conceived as part of an online marketing campaign that began last month after six months of development by Adobe and Goodby, Silverstein & Partners. The agency, which is part of the [Omnicom Group](#), has worked with Adobe since 2001.

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Adobe has already placed ads on the Web sites of publications like Wired, AdWeek and the e-mail newsletter Flavorpill to introduce the concept of the sliding bar that allows users to control how much — or how little — creativity they can unleash using Adobe products.

"The best way to experience this is through an interactive medium," said Ann Lewnes, the senior vice president for corporate marketing and communications for Adobe. "You want to be able to engage your customers, and the campaign itself actually allows you to create your own engaging experience."

The campaign is Adobe's first major marketing effort under Ms. Lewnes, who joined the company in November after 20 years at [Intel](#), where she oversaw the "Intel Inside" campaign. The amount spent on the "creative license" campaign was not disclosed, although Ms. Lewnes said that it was Adobe's largest digital media effort.

Creative Suite 3, which has been released in stages over the last few months and constitutes Adobe's largest product introduction, compiles stalwarts like Photoshop and Illustrator as well as programs that were inherited — like Dreamweaver and Flash — when Adobe purchased Macromedia.

While graphic designers, Web developers and other creative professionals rely heavily on these products, many Adobe users are amateurs who use Photoshop to spruce up their Facebook photos, or Premier Express to edit their YouTube videos.

“Social networking has spawned a lot of people creating personal content,” said Ms. Lewnes. “We're pretty high on user-generated content.”

That sort of content is the primary element of the campaign, which had to convey both the professional sophistication and amateur ease of Adobe's software.

“There was an interesting problem here; because we're at the highest level of creativity, we aspire to the very best, but you want to bring new people into the creative world,” said Rich Silverstein, co-chairman of Goodby, Silverstein.

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He pointed to the ubiquity of Photoshop as a sign of the company's reach beyond the professionals who can spend up to \$2,500 on some of the new Creative Suite 3 packages. “How do you launch a product where you don't talk down to professionals but you allow people to come into the field? So we came up with the idea of the slider,” Mr. Silverstein said.

And, he added, an opportunity to develop a campaign for programs essential to his business was a rare challenge.

The wall was created using Adobe tools, by Brand New School, a directing collective that designed the animation, and Obscura Digital, a San Francisco-based technology and video design agency which had previously worked with Goodby, Silverstein on campaigns for Saturn and [Hewlett-Packard](#).

While Obscura has created similar video projections in the past, this was its first foray into the uncontrolled environment of a busy street. The wall is intended to switch its attention, and control of the slider, to anyone who gets closest to it — but even the activity and movement of people in the background will affect some of the incidental animation.

The idea was to make the wall “a single and multiuser experience simultaneously,” said Travis Threlkel, creative director and co-founder of Obscura. He added that the finished product combined audience participation and “ideas about how people could interact with artwork in public spaces.”

Lisa Bradner, a senior analyst at [Forrester Research](#), said that interactive displays like the Adobe wall “have a great deal of value” if they generate interest. “If you look on the Web or in stores, what you see is marketers trying to create more immersive experiences,” she said, pointing to recent New York efforts like [Procter & Gamble](#)'s providing Charmin for the public restroom in Times Square.

But only if they immerse the right people. Ms. Lewnes said that Adobe never seriously considered placing the wall in Times Square, despite its greater human traffic, because that location would be less aimed toward the company's audience. Union Square draws fewer tourists, but is closer to the concentration of graphic and Web designers who work downtown.

"The buzz we wanted to create among the target audience was the goal for us," she said. "It was pretty important for us to get the right people, rather than more people."

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