

NEW WORLD NAVIGATORS



NAME	Doug Lloyd Tsia Carson
FIRM	Flat, New York
AGE	Both: 28
EDU	Both: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Canada; Ohio State University
FIELD	Interactive media
ADVICE FOR ELDERLS	Next time you see an interactive designer, give them ten bucks and tell them to go buy themselves something fancy.
IF NOT A DESIGNER, YOU'D BE	Doing something, whatever it is, well.
GOALS FOR 2010	Managing waste, the growth industry of the 21st century.
FAVORITE FRUIT	Pomegranates



New York-based interactive design firm Flat holds the distinction of having been launched with an investigation by the vice squad. The year was 1995, the place, Columbus, OH. Doug Lloyd and Tsia Carson, two graduate students of the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design, presented their thesis project: the House of Cruelty, an open-to-the-public, 5,000-square-foot labyrinth filled with myriad installations, performers and an S&M-themed doctor's waiting room. As Lloyd tells it, the House of Cruelty was a "vehicle for collaborative artistic efforts"; he also describes it as being about "abuse and the mechanisms of breaking people down." The House of Cruelty's performers took full artistic license, and after 100 police complaints, the vice squad was summoned. Carson and Lloyd were already notorious at Ohio State University for a media prank the previous year that posited a fictitious drive to "Arm the Homeless," fusing two rather charged social issues. In the uproar that ensued when the prank was revealed, the pair needed the American Civil Liberties Union's help to stay in school.

Carson and Lloyd have parlayed their ability to deliver strong messages into Flat, a 12-person interactive design firm whose work runs the gamut from strategic consulting to interactive design. Their projects include Web sites for the Museum of Modern Art and David Carson's *Blue* magazine; proprietary technology (a line of toys to be unveiled soon);



and the site Getcrafty.com, which touts itself as a "Gen-X Martha Stewart that is all about living cheap and living well, creating art out of everyday life." Flat's reputation for simple design and systemwide thinking extends across a range of media, from informational kiosks at MoMA to the e-commerce site for Urban Outfitters (spearheaded by designer Jennifer Smith and due out this spring). But the Flat team hasn't lost its impulse to make statements, coming up with a series of public-service posters on such topics as "software biodiversity" and a tax on advertising. If they could only agree on a format. "Doug doesn't want any more outdoor advertising," says Carson, "even if it's against advertising."

TOM VANDERBILT

Top: Flat's Web site for *Blue* magazine ushered David Carson's signature graphic style online. Top left: A screen from an interactive kiosk developed for "Modern Starts," the Museum of Modern Art's millennium exhibition. Above: Urban Outfitter's Flat-designed e-commerce site.