

RETAIL

Miami Design District odes regional roots with animated 'Beyond Belief' activation

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Miami Design District presents "Beyond Belief," a new campaign that transforms the 16-acre mixed-use neighborhood into an animated oasis with a futuristic flair. Image courtesy of Miami Design District

By AMIRAH KEATON

Presenting a far-out future for retail, a new campaign from The Miami Design District (MDD) arrives in cartoon form.

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Aligning with the vision of cofounder Craig Robins, the pioneering fashion, art, design and dining center's new "**Beyond Belief**" advertising series proposes an advanced reality for the 16-acre mixed-use neighborhood. Therein, hand-drawn illustrations give way to a mainstay film featuring visuals crafted via a collaboration between London and NYC-based design studio Made Thought and Argentine animators **2Veinte**.

"From vibrant art and culture to fantastic architecture, The Miami Design District is larger than life and unlike any other destination," said Matt Delbridge, creative director at **Made Thought**, New York.

"When we set about capturing that energy, animation and illustration lent itself to futuristic sci-fi world-building in a way that photography never could," Mr. Delbridge said. "It allowed us to create a fantastic, hyperreal environment that transcends merely depicting the neighborhood, and instead seeks to capture the spirit of it."

Drawn in

For "Beyond Belief," an animated film anchors the campaign involves a central character inspired by the only woman to have founded what would soon after emerge as a major American city.

Just one of many references tying the present to the past, MDD's female protagonist was created in the image of American businesswoman Julia DeForest Tuttle, known colloquially by her nickname, "Mother of Miami."

A rendition of American architect Buckminster Fuller's "Fly's Eye Dome" the orb is present on-premise at the South Florida plot, one of many pieces of public art available to the development's visitors marks the start of the digital selection.

The Miami Design District presents a vision for the future in a new campaign video

Before the main female avatar walks through a space-aged world of creativity, the character is introduced to viewers in silo, as she treks through an abandoned pineapple farm. As it turns out, that exact agricultural terrain predated The District more than a century ago.

The audience need not wait long until she is transported to a futuristic take on the MDD landscape, the offline version of which was constructed in 2005.

"As we imagined a futuristic vision of The District, we kept going back to visionary artists who depicted inspiring visions of the future throughout history," Mr. Delbridge said.



An animated rendition of American architect Buckminster Fuller's "Fly's Eye Dome" transports MDD's main character into a futuristic take on the mixed-use space within the campaign video's first few moments. Image credit: Miami Design District

"Whether it was Syd Mead's depiction of the surreal world of Blade Runner, or Rick Guidice's depictions of how humans could live in space, creating the future always begins with a sketch."

Taking in her ultramodern surroundings, a sliver of blue silk suddenly appears before the main character's eyes. Fashionable as ever, the blue-haired patron floats along with force during the spot, dodging traditional methods of travel, instead opting to move about magically to techno tunes.

In the film's final scenes, she continues to contrast the current rules of gravity, boarding a flying bike and riding off into the sunset.



Out-of-home installations include a "Beyond Belief" roadside billboard. Image courtesy of Miami Design District

"The Design District itself is not like any other destination," Mr. Delbridge said.

"Throughout Made Thought and MDD's 15-year history of collaboration, we have always endeavored to reflect that and this campaign further establishes that approach."

Looking ahead

MDD's latest marketing stint succeeds in translating the world-famous neighborhood's dynamic layout into a set of equally-engaging visual codes. In addition to video content, the multichannel effort also features an animated interactive map of the cultural hub.

Available via a dedicated landing page, the colorful city guide integrates real-life landmarks such as the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami at scale. Online, animated elements rest alongside the real-life influences that have inspired their creation.



Available via a dedicated landing page, the colorful city guide integrates real-life landmarks at scale Image credit: Miami Design District

Public art displays also take center stage as far as the digital guide is concerned.

Structures such as Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec's "Nuage," originated in 2017, and French artist Xavier Veilhan's "Le Corbusier" made of fiberglass, the colossal sculpture tributing Swiss-French architect was installed in Miami in 2013 complete the map.

"Made Thought and MDD collaborated to identify the specific buildings and sculptures from The District that should be included and how they should be changed or amplified to reflect the needs of the piece," Mr. Delbridge said.

"Rendering office buildings as hanging gardens, the Bouroullec Brother's 'Nuage' became futuristic floating disks," he said. "The Buckminster Fuller 'Fly's Eye Dome' became a portal, acting as a bridge to the futuristic world of the district."

Out-of-home installations inclusive of a streetside campaign mural and roadside billboard complete the reimagining.



"Beyond Belief" campaign mural. Image courtesy of Miami Design District

In an age of NFT exclusives and AI art, "Beyond Belief" offers a lesson in multichannel marketing through the use of alternate mediums, based on a true story that is, today, still ongoing ([see story](#)).

"Instead of replicating exactly what the neighborhood looks like we sought to reflect what it feels like," Mr. Delbridge said.

"The major landmarks and stunning architecture are represented in the film but act as set pieces for our characters to interact with and further the narrative of the film," he said. "We took liberties with specific landmarks."

"Craig's vision of MDD as a laboratory was key to our creative approach."