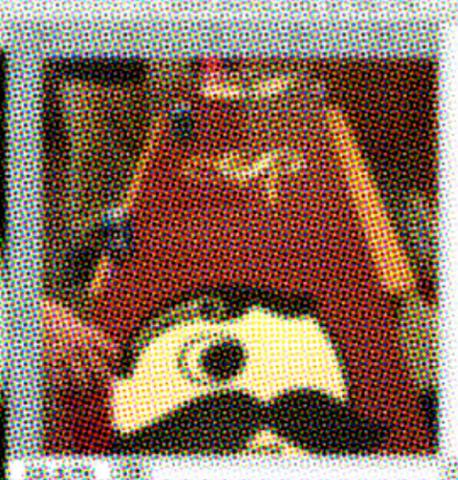
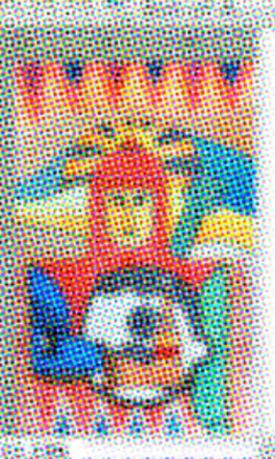
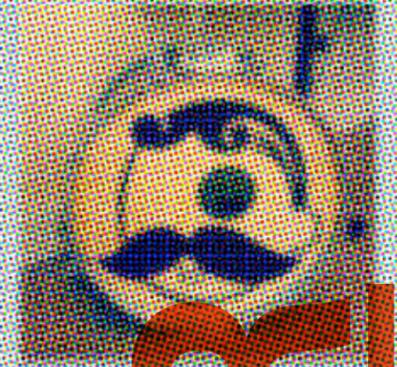




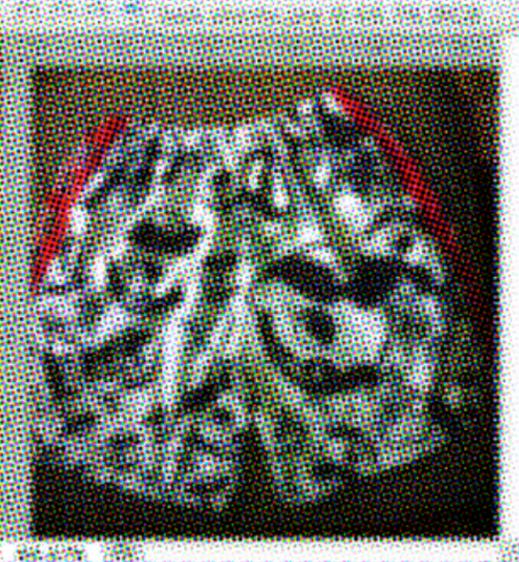
ART/DESIGN/ACTION FROM THE FRINGES



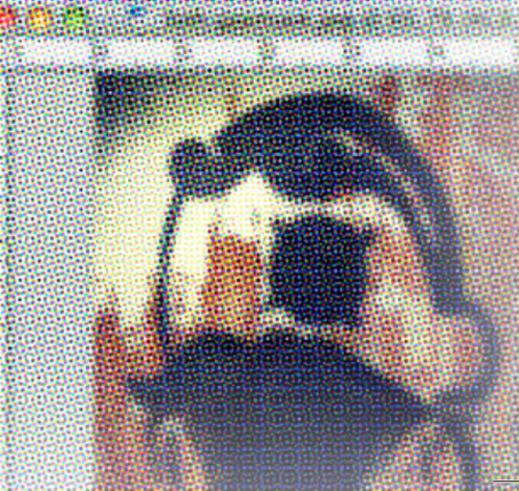
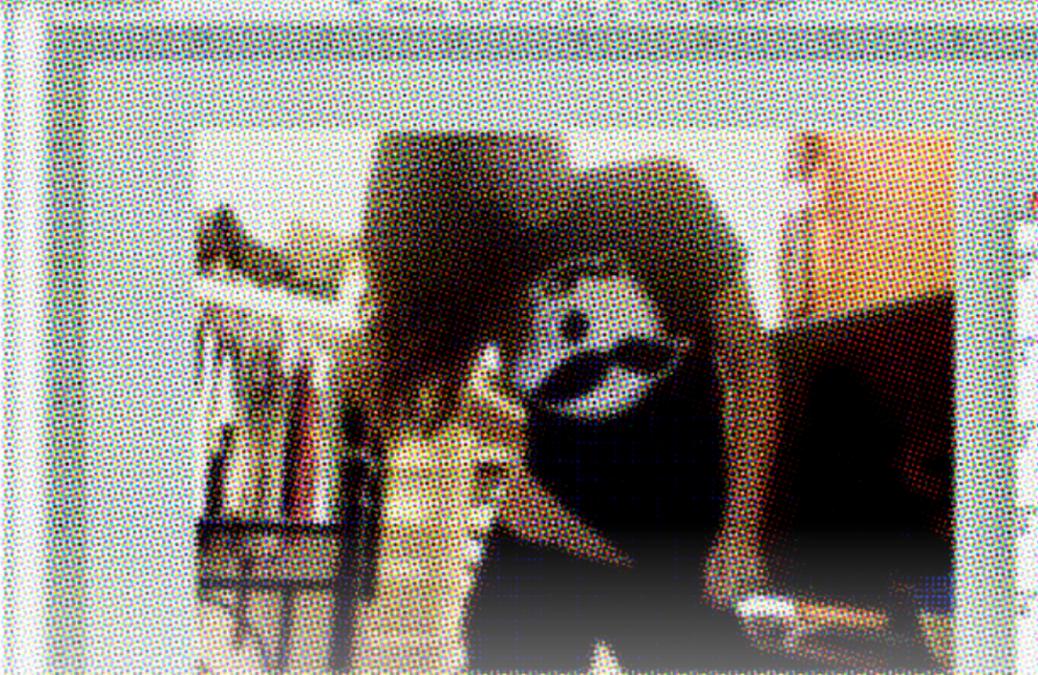
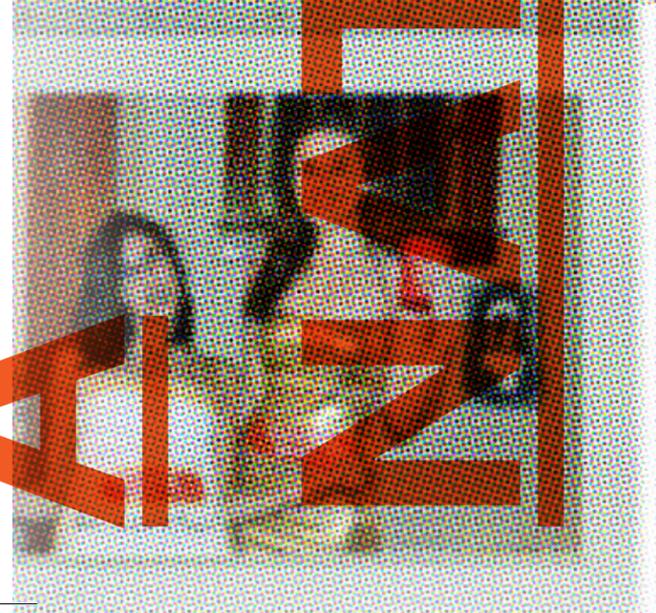
57



COLOR



58



A Cultural Gestalt of Barley Hops and Malt

by Luke T. Baker

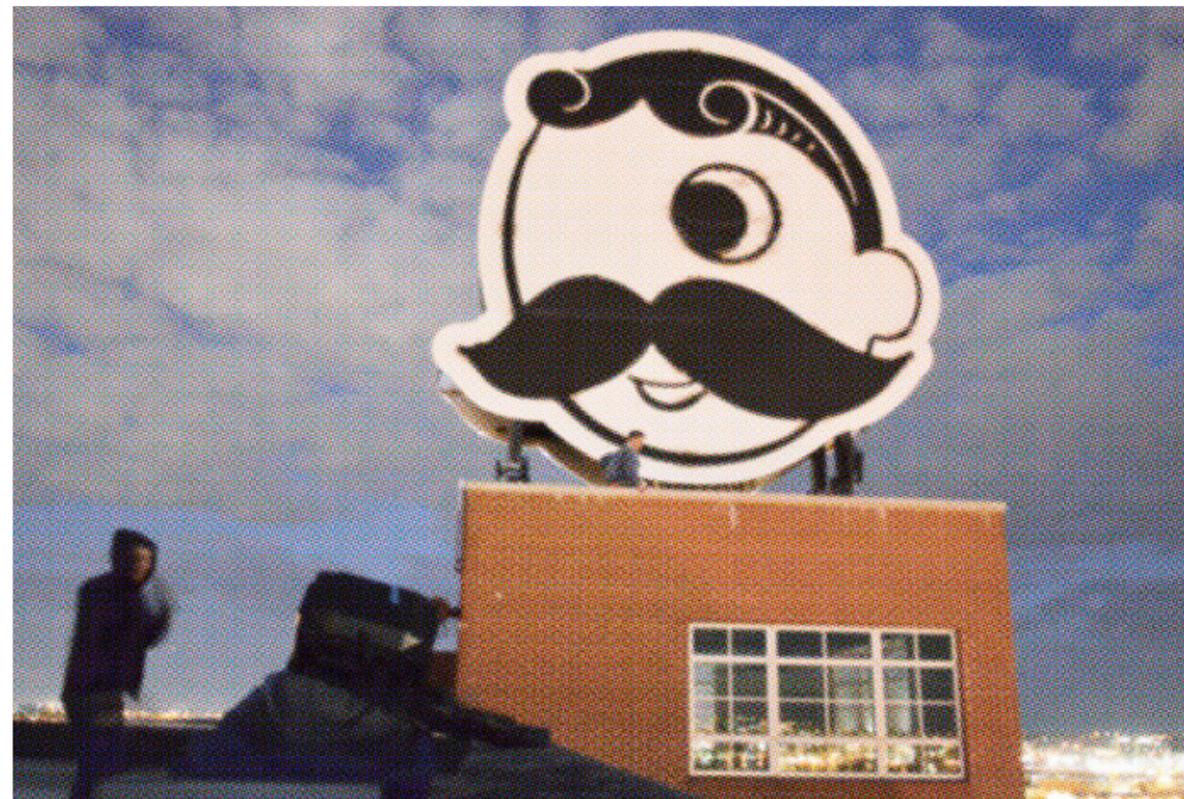
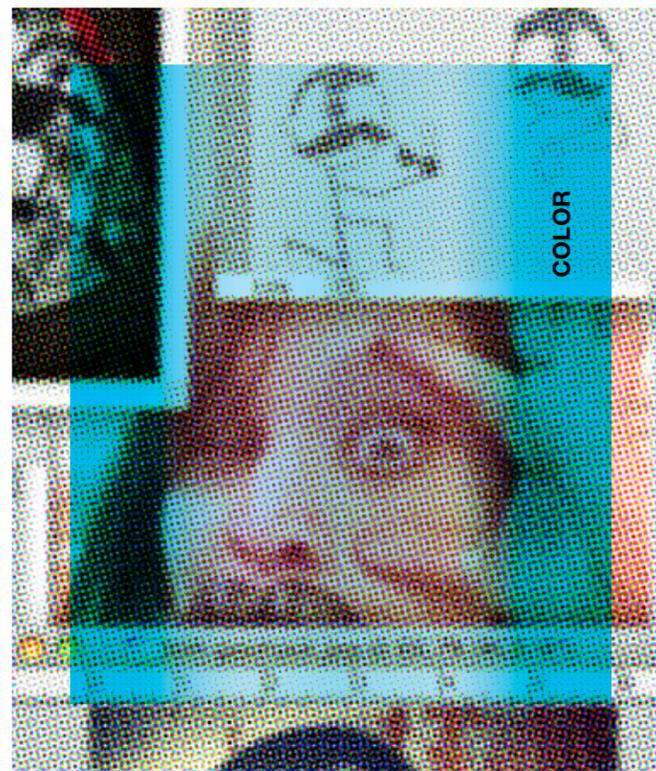
The mustachioed mascot of National Bohemian beer has kept his singular eye on the city of Baltimore and its environs since his introduction in 1936. Originally designed to boost sales of the brew, known affectionately as “Natty Boh,” and to build brand allegiance after Prohibition, Mr. Boh remains a well-known icon in Baltimore today. Despite sharing his well-manicured coif with Mr. Pringle and his monocularity with Mr. Peanut, this jaunty mascot has spawned a fan culture all his own.



Young people have keenly embraced the beer in recent years, attracted by its affordable price point and kitschy, retro appeal. Mr. Boh and his smiling, dipsomaniacal visage has organically ingrained himself in the visual culture of Baltimore and beyond. His face graces shoes, shorts and an endless stream of t-shirts, and has been transformed into an array of cakes and confections. His fêted ‘engagement’ to Sallie Utz (of the eponymous snack food dynasty) and their 2011 nuptials were commemorated on a local jeweler’s billboard advertisements. Homages manifest each Halloween in the form of Mr. Boh costumes, and more permanently still as tribute tattoos. Mr. Boh has been bastardized and blended with other pop cultural icons, such as Robo Cop, and that other famous Baltimorean, Edgar Allen Poe.

The adoption of the brand as a badge of Baltimore pride is a sad irony, however. As is the case with many beers once brewed locally, fermentation operations have long ceased at the old Brewer’s Hill facility, and via a series of mergers and acquisitions, the beer is now brewed in Wisconsin by Pabst. Increased consumer demand brought Natty Boh back on tap in 2011 for the first time in 15 years—perhaps this next generation of beer drinkers can bring production of Baltimore’s official beer back to “the Land of Pleasant Living” in time for their kids to crack open a Boh.

The found images here and on the previous spread naturalistically capture Mr. Boh and his intoxicating, so to speak, effect on the residents of Baltimore and its diaspora. They’re a testament to Natty Boh’s pervasive brand appeal, but also its ethos of pride in a hardscrabble hometown.



“The map marker was born out of my love for the city of Baltimore and the idea that it really is a great place to be. It has caught a bad reputation for some isolated incidents, but I think that it is a place that people need to find their way to. I thought of this being projected in a high place and that it would be really great for people to look over and find another place to search for.”

—Gabe Kelley

Gabe Kelley, Brian Metcalf, and Crystal Hong, 2012. Map Marker Projection Design

Graphic Design students at MICA and the *Outpost Journal* team collaborated to create a temporary, site-specific projection for the Natty Boh Tower at Brewer’s Hill in Baltimore.