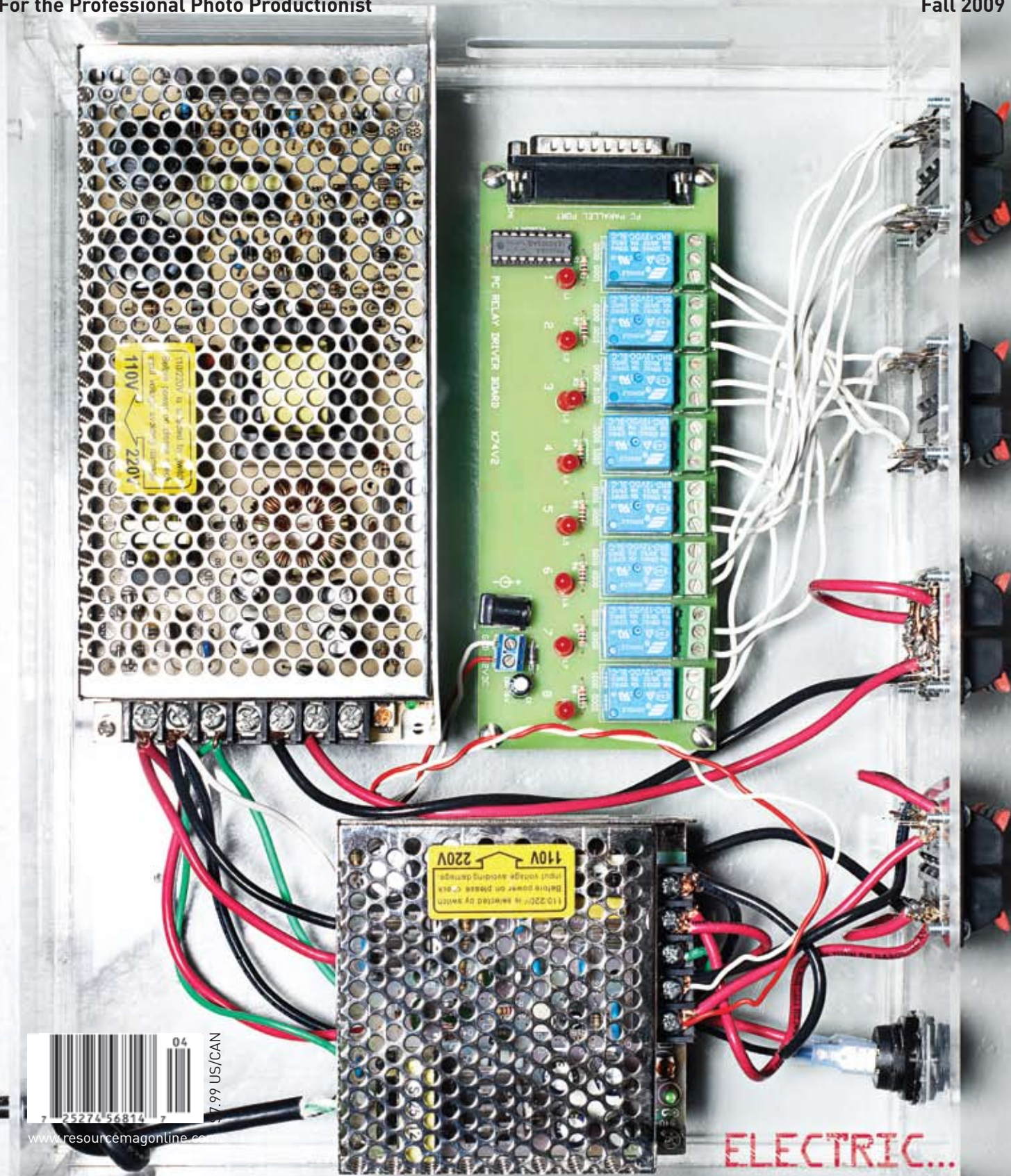


# RESOURCES MAGAZINE

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ELECTRIC...



## INTERVIEW: **Adhesive**

By Justin Muschong | Artwork courtesy of Adhesive

**I**t all began with a blind date.

Wini Alcorn, a Senior Art Producer at McCann Erickson, and Shabnam Azadeh, an Agent at Kate Ryan, wanted to set up a pair of friends. Both were shy, however, so they asked along several other friends in the advertising industry to introduce the two at a group get-together. They met at Tom and Jerry's, a bar in Manhattan's NoHo neighborhood, and drank and talked long into the night. It was casual, it was relaxed, it was a good time. Everyone agreed they should do it again.





"Let's do this again sometime." It's a phrase people say quite frequently, but they rarely actually "do it again sometime." Wini and Shabnam decided to buck the trend and make it happen. They teamed up with MoMA Assistant Creative Director Brian Bergeron and Lockbox Productions Producer Tim Willis to form Adhesive, a group dedicated to holding monthly events in bars and spaces all over New York where creatives can meet, share a few drinks, and get to know each other as real, living, breathing people.

The group's motto is "Sticking Creatives Together" and its ambitions do not stretch far beyond that. "It's getting people together who normally work via phone and over e-mail; getting these people face-to-face in a casual social setting and making better connections," Brian says. While some come with the intent to network-and job connections often do occur at the events-the focus is on maintaining a no-pressure atmosphere where everyone can

People receive one email announcing the time, date, and location of the upcoming event, usually held on the third Tuesday or Wednesday of every month. A reminder email follows as the date approaches. "And those are the only two emails you get," Brian emphasizes. "People are overwhelmed with junk mail and everything else already. We want to keep it simple, and I think that's what people appreciate about us." The simplicity extends to the name tags that have become the group's foremost symbol. Upon entering, everyone gets one with his or her name on it—and just the name. No company information is allowed. The name tags serve not only to help first timers identify the Adhesive participants in a crowded bar, but also allow people who have never met face-to-face the chance to recognize each other. Wini asserts that she's heard statements like, "Oh my God, that's so-and-so from so-and-so. I've talked to him for five years and never met him," more than once. It's that sort of connections that Adhesive is designed to foster.

"People are like, 'Well come and do it at X studio and we can show off our studio and you can have your event,'" Wini says. But so far the group has resisted all overtures. "Part of what's nice about it is that it's not corporate, and it's very kind of organic. Once it becomes more packaged and a commodity, it's no longer as hip or kind of on the down low. It would lose the charm it has right now."

Adhesive has considered growing a bit, maybe by adding a blog or a job postings section on their website. They would also like to include the many images photographers take of their events. "We do need some help to grow a little bit, in terms of volunteering," Wini says. "They could be writing name tags, figuring out how to do this blog thing. The key word is *volunteer*. We don't have any money."

It's a moment of transition for the group, where they could evolve into the next Media Bistro and conquer the industry. But for now, they seem pretty

## THEY HAD ONE THING IN COMMON AS CHILDREN...

finally have a chance to relax. In Shabnam's words, "It's like we go out and have a drink after work, and it happens to be with two hundred people."

Adhesive has tapped into a need the industry wasn't aware it had, and in the two years since its founding the number of people who show up has exploded. At first, the meetings were announced through word-of-mouth, but after three or four sessions, Adhesive created a mailing list and a website where newcomers can sign up. Their mailing list started with eight people—today it surpasses 650.

All the events to date have been held in New York, but word is spreading fast. When Shabnam was in Chicago a few months ago, she met several art buyers there who had heard of a happy hour event in New York they were eager to attend. It took her a moment to realize that they were talking about Adhesive. Another creative in Los Angeles planned to schedule his next trip to New York so that he could show up at the next event.

The increasing popularity of Adhesive has sparked interest from outside organizations looking to cash in on its surprise success.

content to let Adhesive remain a casual affair. That is, after all, why everyone digs it so much.

Wini: "There's not much labor involved. It's very low key."

Brian: "That's the way we like it."

Shabnam: "A lot of smiling, a lot of drinking, a lot of talking."

It's a simple, honest pitch at a time when the industry desperately needs them.

*To sign up for Adhesive's mailing list and receive word of upcoming events, or to volunteer in the group's expansion, go to: [adhesivenyc.com](http://adhesivenyc.com).*