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Meet the Man Who Makes the Clio Statue

OCTOBER 7, 2014 BY DANIEL LEFFERTS

Society Awards founder and CEO David Moritz originally trained to be an entertainment lawyer, but no sooner had the ink on his J.D. diploma dried than he realized a career in law wasn't for him. "I like shiny things. They make me happy," he told me recently. It's a sentiment unlikely to come in handy on the bar exam, not to mention in the courtroom, and, in 2007, just six months after graduating from law school, the New Jersey-born Moritz struck out on his own. He started a company, [Society Awards](#), that he hoped would "divert this energy into a productive area," he said.

Seven years later, Moritz has realized his ambition—or, mostly (Moritz is a self-proclaimed perfectionist). Society Awards, which Inc. named one of [2014's fastest growing businesses](#), is among the most prestigious awards design and manufacturing groups around, with a clientele list that includes the Emmy

Awards, Billboard, GLAAD—and, of course, the Clios.

I recently visited Moritz at his trendy offices in Long Island City to discuss Society Awards, the importance of luxury, and the intricate process that goes into making the iconic Clio statue. It turns its elegant design requires pistons, pulleys, and room-size machines—what Moritz gleefully calls “a ridiculous process.”

How did you come to start Society Awards?

A friend of mine knew that I liked design and aesthetics and high-end things. He was in a similar business—promotional products—and he said that, in awards, there’s not any one company that’s *the* luxury manufacturer of awards. They’re all just factories, with nothing special about them. I thought I would start a company that filled that purpose, with the principles that were important to me: customer service, attention to detail, quality, luxury, image. We wanted to create a company [that would allow] our clients to be proud of where their awards came from, instead of trying to hide it.



Society Awards founder and CEO
David Moritz.



The Society Awards offices in Long
Island City.

You design some of your trophies from scratch. How does that process work?

It’s order from chaos. First we’ll ask: what’s the purpose? Who are we awarding? Is it a competition or is it an honor that you bestow? Is your organization lighthearted or serious? Do you want your awards show to be very glamorous and serious or more whimsical? If a client can answer those questions, it’s easier. But a lot of clients just have no opinion.

The biggest thing with clients is anxiety. We’ve done this thousands of times, but no client has ever made a custom award. Even if they’ve done it once, they’re not experts. They don’t know what to expect. If we’re able to say, “Look, it’ll turn out right, and you’ll know it’s right because we’ll decide it’s right,” people feel calm about it.

When did you first take on the Clio statue?

It's been a few years. I didn't create Society Awards and then, on the first day, have it look the way I wanted it to. It took me a while to get it there—to build up all the features and the image and have the client base to match the goal I had in mind. When we were romancing the Clios, it was a several-years process before I could get them to take a serious look at us. We became more attractive over time. Maybe we just wore them down. *[Laughs]*

When you finally got the Clios account, how did you go about improving the statue?

First of all, you have to honor the history a prestigious, storied trophy like this. What I always try to do is bring forward either the original design intentions or the design aesthetic to match current mores of what's good balance, good aesthetics, good quality.

To make the new Clio, we use the zinc die casting process. You take a block of solid tool steel and start digging out the impression, as well as the screws and gateways and channels and other things that are needed. Eventually, it becomes so hard you can't dig anymore. You have to anneal it. This process of annealing it and digging out: it takes place over a period of months, just to make the die.

Once you have the die, it goes into a machine, which gets the molten zinc into a hydraulic chamber and then injects it with a piston under pressure, to fill the mold. It takes all day to set this up; then it's automated casting process after that. You have to make a couple hundred before the mold heats up and starts making good-quality pieces; after that, they come out quickly. It's a ridiculous process. But, at the end of the day, we get this part that's hard, and we can polish it. You end up with a shinier piece that lasts longer.

What I wanted to do with the Clio was make the detail crisper. I wanted to make all parts of it shiny and beautiful. I wanted to make it stronger.

What appeals to you about the Clio statue?

I like how it's an elegant, svelte woman. As a former English major, I'm into classical mythology, so I love that she's one of the nine muses. She's the one whose name you can pronounce! And I love how recognizable and proud it is. In the world of advertising, and in the world of creative honors, it's the one trophy that looks like an entertainment trophy. People sometimes say: I don't want your typical golden trophy. I want something matte white and short and blocky and very design-oriented. But those things are trendy; they come in and out of fashion. There's always a resurgence going back to classic elegance. Timelessness is always in fashion.

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About Daniel Lefferts

Daniel Lefferts is Clio's content manager.



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20

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9:00 am Clio Image Entries Open
(http://clios.com/event/clio-image-entries-open?instance_id=17)

OCT

23

Thu

(<http://clios.com/calendar/action>)

9:30 pm Key Art Awards (6:30 PCT) @ Dolby Theater
(http://clios.com/event/key-art-awards?instance_id=18)

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JAN
30
Fri
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5:00 pm Clio Image Entries
Deadline 1
([http://clioc.com/event/clioc-image-entries-deadline?
instance_id=16](http://clioc.com/event/clioc-image-entries-deadline?instance_id=16))



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