

“You have a
chance to
interact with
design.”

Don't just
passively
observe it.”

teaching philosophy

I aim to narrow the distance between design education and practice and build a bridge connecting the two... a direct reflection of my own creative path and journey. I'm a hybrid of industry and academia. There's no question I'm drawn to both sides of design and have always had one foot in each.

My roles as Creative Director and Creative Strategist have armed me with industry experience I've adapted for use in the classroom as I mentor and guide students to set higher graphic standards and achieve industry level design solutions. If advancements in graphic design occur, I discuss this information with students and incorporate the innovation into the course curriculum (via new assignments and proposed courses) to better align design education with our industry's ever evolving demands.

Whether I'm teaching in the classroom or working in the industry as a creative lead, I encourage my creative team to use their own voice, insight, ideas, perspective, illustrations, photography, writing, hand drawn typography, their own... in their designs. Unique and one-of-a-kind means their work has a platform to stand out from the endless parade of other designs that consumers come in contact with. I ask my creative team to embrace spontaneity and hunt for “happy accidents” in their work. Creative exploration can result in the discovery of a single, unique idea they can build an entire campaign upon.

I encourage my creative team to invite the viewer to interact with their designs, not just passively observe them. Focusing on involving the viewer will ultimately help get the message across.

I advocate my creative team using unexpected artistic methods throughout their creative process. I want them to push outside the computer-generated designs consumers are accustomed to. It will surely bring originality and enhance their message.

I must stress that graphic designers can further develop their understanding of human nature and create messages that personally connect with an individual. We're all rather egocentric when it comes to design. Most graphic communication is created on a mass scale; meant to be read by numerous viewers, and yet we engage with it as if the design is speaking directly to us. Successful messages are those that you can relate to, you can laugh along with, or touches you on some level. I firmly hope my work invites the viewer to become involved, gets them to act for a cause, educates, and informs. In the simplest of terms, inspires and motivates the viewer to do something!

Designers have chosen to meld their artistic gifts into the highly developed art of graphic communication. There is power in our visual voice and with this power comes great responsibility. One visual and one word can affect the lives of many. I want to continually teach this vital lesson to my creative team while finding ways to connect emotionally with the consumer.

I'll end with a quote that I absolutely live by: Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail. Ralph Waldo Emerson