BECOMING A GRAPHIC & DIGITAL DESIGNER

A GUIDE TO CAREERS IN DESIGN

STEVEN HELLER & VÉRONIQUE VIENNE

FIFTH EDITION

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Contents

ONE: GRAPHIC DESIGN
1   Inspirations and Motivations

2   Starting A Studio or Working for Someone Else

3   Partners on Partnering

TWO: DESIGN GENRES
4   Letters and Type

▶ Online Content

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The companion website contains exclusive online video interviews.

If your access code is not working, or you have not received one, please contact Wiley Customer Service at http://support.wiley.com for assistance.

16 E-Commerce with a Soul

17 User Experience Specialists

18 Geeks, Programmers, Developers, Tinkerers

FIVE: DESIGN EDUCATION
19 Making Choices

Foreword

This is not your grandmother's graphic design. Nor is it your older brother's or sister's. The rate of speed at which the practice moves is cyclonic. All you have to do is look around to see that the world of design involves media that were inconceivable when grandmas were starting their careers.

– From the Preface of 4th Edition

This brand new edition represents a brand new era of graphic design, which is part graphic, almost entirely digital, and decidedly transitional. One of the proposed titles for this book was *Becoming an Integrated Designer* because traditional graphic and relatively new digital design are indeed merging into one practice. Likewise, it could have been called *Becoming an INTEGRAL Designer* because it is integral for practioners to be prepared for the present and the future, having fluency in a variety of media and platforms—those that exist now and those yet to be discovered.

Building on the past successes of *Becoming A Graphic Designer* with Teresa Fernandez and *Becoming a Digital Designer* with David Womack, this new edition addresses the demands of starting a design career in the early twenty-first century. This new volume is not a revision but, rather, a complete restructuring of form and content. All the interviews were done specifically for this edition, and the international coverage is unique as well. Starting with a new definition of *design* as a multiplatform activity that involves aesthetic, creative, and technical expertise, this edition will guide the reader through print and digital design, emphasizing the transitional and improvisational methods so prevalent today. Through over 80 interviews and essays that address inspiration, theory, and practice, the reader will come to understand that field once narrowly known as "graphic design" is much richer and more inviting of thinkers, managers, and makers.

Traditional graphic design and typography platforms (i.e., print) are important yet now comprise a smaller portion of this book. After all, many of the print platforms are now gone, near obsolescence, or subsumed. Digital is, however, an umbrella term for all manner of graphic design, information design, interaction design, and user experience, where the computer is the tool of today. Every "communication designer" must be able to use digital tools whether he or she designs for print magazines or iPhone apps. Also, since the 4th edition, the fact of design entrepreneurship—or "start-up" culture—is now reaching new levels of ubiquity and accessibility. Education is changing to better

integrate new technologies: graphic, typographic, product, interaction, branding, and other subgenres. This excerpt from the previous edition still resonates:

Becoming a Graphic & Digital Designer is not going to teach the neophyte how to use the computer. Scores of books and thousands of courses offer basic, intermediate, and advanced instruction. Rather, this book is an introduction—a navigational guide, if you like—to what in recent years has become a complex profession comprising many print, film, and electronic genres. In the music business, it is not enough to play a few chords on the guitar; it is useful to be proficient in R&B, folk, reggae, punk, hip-hop, and so forth. Likewise, graphic design is not simply about the exclusive practice of editorial, book, advertising, or poster design; all these forms can (and even should) be practiced by individuals depending on their relative skill, expertise, and inclination. More important, with the recent development of desktop publishing as well as computer-driven multimedia, the field has expanded to such an extent that entirely new divisions of labor, unprecedented collaborations, and specializations have emerged. This book describes both traditional and new disciplines.

And this quote from Milton Glaser in the previous edition balances the reality of being a designer and an artist with the disciplines necessary to practice effectively:

One of the great problems of being a designer is that you get parochialized and you find yourself increasingly narrowed, doing more and more specialized things that you've done a hundred times before. For me, the way out was to broaden the canvas, to try to do things that I was not very experienced doing, to try to develop a range of activities so that I couldn't be forced into a corner and left to dry. While that is not the solution for everyone, that is a consideration people must at least examine before they embark on a course, for once they have mastered the professional requirement, it may no longer have any interest in it for them.

So, you learn the "lay" of the present landscape and perhaps the future, too. Advice through interviews with designers, design managers, and design educators, each with a distinct practice, will help the navigation. There are so many options for employment today in so many different venues that it is easy to lose track of why one becomes a designer in the first place—to make inventive, imaginative, and useful things that will have value to both the user and the maker.

Glossary
Job Opportunities

The field is changing quickly, and with this comes an entire glossary of new job titles. This is a selection of some of them, but don't be surprised if you come across others in your job hunt.

Job Divisions

Graphic designers are employed in virtually all kinds of businesses, industries, and institutions. Here are some of the typical terms used interchangeably for "in-house design department." (The words *group* and *team* are also commonly used).

Different companies are organized differently, depending on their focus and goals. A large corporation may distinguish package design from promotion design, or editorial design from advertising design; a smaller business may keep all design activities under one umbrella, such as Design Department.

Likewise, proprietary or independent design firms, studios, or offices—design businesses that service large corporations and small businesses—may or may not distinguish among design functions, such as having a print design department separate from a multimedia design department, or promotion and collateral separate from editorial departments.

Art Department

Art and Design Department

Art Services Department

Design Department

Design Services Department

Creative Services Department

Creative Group

Graphics Group

Interaction Group

Research and Development Department

User Experience Group

Job Titles

The titles given to specific jobs and tasks throughout the design field vary according to the hierarchy of the specific company, institution, or firm. For example, an art director for one company may be a design director at another; a senior designer at one may have different responsibilities than a senior at another. Starting from the top, here are typical job titles as used by in-house art departments in publishing, advertising, corporations, and proprietary design firms and agencies.

The managerial level, where jobs may or may not involve hands-on design work in addition to the oversight of the designers:

Creative director

Design director

Corporate art director

Creative service manager

Design manager

Brand strategist

The support level, which involves working directly with the seniors in both design and production capacities:

Junior designer

Assistant designer

Deputy art director

Associate art director

Assistant art director

Production artist

Art associate

The creative or design level, which involves directly serving clients. These titles embody different responsibilities, depending on the organizational hierarchy of the particular business:

Senior designer

Designer

Senior art director

Art director

Graphics editor

Entry level

Assistant designer

Junior designer

Intern (This category is temporary—a stepping-stone, perhaps—and is often unpaid.)

New Jobs

Since this book was first published, interaction design has become a dominant career choice for designers. Although communication is the common denominator between the graphic designer and interaction designer, there are profound differences. For more detailed information, see *Becoming a Digital Designer* by Steven Heller and David Womack (Wiley, 2004). In addition to familiar titles, like "art director," new jobs in this field (see page xi for list of titles) include the following:

Information architect

Interaction designer

Service designer

Web designer

UX (user experience designer)

Freelancer

Freelancers, as opposed to principals of proprietary studios or firms, do not manage businesses with additional employees (although they may hire assistants as needed). They often take on individual, finite freelance projects either on the premises of the client or in their own studios. Freelancers usually do not use titles but, rather, advertise themselves as "Jane Doe, Graphic Designer," or "John Doe, Design Production."

Job Seeking

Social media have revolutionized our interpersonal and professional interactions. Now, not only are graphic designers expected to have a well-crafted resume and online portfolio, but they must also be part of networks like Facebook and LinkedIn. Increasingly, message apps like Twitter, Instagram, and Pintrest are promotional tools for designers.

Of all the new social and professional networks, LinkedIn is quickly becoming a way of connecting with future employees for an increasing number of recruiters and hiring managers. In a segment on NPR, Yuki Noguchi wrote, "Not having a profile on the social networking site LinkedIn is, for some employers, not only a major liability but also a sign that the candidate is horribly out of touch." Monica Bloom, a design industry recruiter for Aquent in Los Angeles, says that it is essential for graphic designers seeking employment to have a LinkedIn profile—more so than Facebook, although that is debatable.

And what about a designer's Google factor? Take a minute, open your Web browser, and do a search on your own name. What comes up? Are there any pictures that come up when your name is searched that you wouldn't want a future employer or coworker to see? What about things you may have said online? Prospective employers, like prospective blind dates, use the Web as reference. So be sure that you are aware of what others might find when they search for you in digital space. As the design industry has become more and more digital, the portfolios are more interactive. Samples alone are not enough. Linking to successful projects increases credibility. While, in most cases, designers should still bring a physical copy of their portfolio to a job interview, an increasing amount of legwork is done when designers have their work posted online at all times for anyone interested to see.

Since many recruiters, headhunters, and employers reach out first to their online contacts with job openings, it pays to get on board all major networking and portfolio websites. There are many portfolio-hosting services, which gives designers an opportunity to circulate their work online for little or no cost. Check out Coroflot.com, Behance.com, DesignObserver.com, and CreativeHotlist.com for portfolio hosting and job notifications. Some employers also use Facebook and Twitter to announce job openings. Be sure your profiles and portfolios are up to date and professional.

When posting online or sending portfolio samples as an email attachment, it is easiest if the files are PDFs and not more than 2 MB in size. In many cases, if the attachment is larger, it will take too long to open online or clog up the recipient's inbox if e-mailed.

The Optimum Portfolio

Portfolios are now mostly online either on your own site or on a service, and/or stored on your tablet or laptop. You can have an analog version, but the days of bulky books and oversized cases are over. There are specific requirements for each discipline, but, on average, the idea is to show no more than 15 examples.

Entry Level
Most entry-level portfolios include a high percentage of school assignments and often one or two redesigns of existing magazines or fantasy magazines. This work exhibits original thinking, unfettered by the constraints of a real job, and yet the solutions are realistic.

Junior/Senior Designer
By this stage, portfolios should include a large percentage of published (online or printed) work. The junior may continue to include school projects, but the senior should jettison them. The samples should be of high quality. Not everything that has been published rates showing in a portfolio. Through these samples, the important thing is to show your taste, talent, and expertise.

First Impressions

Often your first impression will be made through a letter or e-mail sent to a potential employer. This is an opportunity to let them know who you are. So your letter should be simple and straightforward. Avoid flourishes and eccentricities. Be professional. This is an example of how familiarity can be too cute (note the critical annotations):

Hello
(To start, this is too informal; stick to "Dear Ms. Jones")

I'm sure by now, you've received my little mailer from sunny . . ., where I was working for . . . . studio. I've since returned to the good ol' US of A and I am looking for full-time employment! (Never assume anything. Never send your work separate from your introductory letter. And watch out for sayings like "good ol' US of A." It may be fine in speech, but in a letter, it is an annoying affectation.)

I'm looking to work in a place where I can implement all of my creative and professional skills to create high-quality work. That's why you've received a little mailer from me—You've been hand-picked! You're obviously talented, and I'd love the opportunity to work with you.
(YOU'VE BEEN WHAT?!!? Never suggest that you are doing a prospective employer a favor.)

Please see attached resume; I look forward to hearing from you! Kind regards,

(This letter will ensure you will be ignored. Remember, the quality of your work will get your foot in the door. The brevity and sincerity of your request to be interviewed will get you the appointment you need.)

Graphic Design

What is graphic design? That question has vexed most practitioners who were compelled to answer when a parent asked, "What is it you do again?" Graphic design was once enigmatic—a specialized field that was visible and yet a mystery. Then the computer revolution of the late 1980s brought enlightenment. Apple Computer ran a TV commercial showing a pair of hands doing a pasteup. To paraphrase the voice-over: This is what a graphic designer does. With the Apple you no longer need a graphic designer. With one 30-second spot, the world was introduced to graphic design and told it was obsolete—anyone with a Macintosh could do it. That was the age of "desktop publishing," a moment in time when it seemed that graphic design was about to be devalued. But clear heads and machines prevailed. Instead of taking over the field, the Mac became its foremost tool. What's more, graphic designers became culturally significant as communicators, aestheticists, stylists, and even authors.

The world became aware that all those beautiful (and not-so-beautiful) books, book covers, posters, magazines, record covers, typefaces, signs, packages, exhibitions, trademarks, and information graphics were all components under the graphic design umbrella. Graphic design is not just about making pasteups and mechanicals or the equivalent on computer using InDesign; it is about conceptualizing, conceiving, imagining, constructing, producing, managing, and realizing an aesthetically determined functional piece of visual communication. Once it was primarily paper; now graphic design affects screens of all kinds. But the fundamental definition of graphic design as a way of organizing, "formatizing," and functionalizing word and image remains constant. Graphic designers all speak the same basic language (and use the same jargon), but graphic design is not an intuitive endeavor: Some designers are more adept at fine typography than others, who may be better skilled at sequential narratives or information management. It cannot be done without knowledge of the task, genre, or medium in question. Graphic design must be studied, learned, and continually practiced to achieve even basic proficiency. To go further, to transcend simple service and craft with inspiring work, graphic design must be totally embraced—body and soul.

This section offers a brief survey of some of the current design specialties and hybrids. Some of the viable opportunities discussed in the previous edition have disappeared or are now marginalized. Print work is increasingly being integrated with digital (online or handheld). The following interviews provide insight into and wisdom about the overall graphic design experience—how people became designers and how their careers evolved—with emphasis on each designer's unique specialties.

1 Inspirations and Motivations

The decision to become a graphic designer can hit you on the head like a wave on a beach or sneak into your consciousness like a fragrant aroma. Whatever the reason for joining the ranks, inspiration and motivation must be present. This is not just a job—graphic design is a passion. In these next interviews, designers reveal the various ways they were drawn into the vortex by inspirational yet magnetic forces.

Michael Bierut

On Being a Graphic Designer

After graduating in graphic design at the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning, Michael Bierut worked at Vignelli Associates, ultimately as vice president of graphic design. "I had learned how to design in school, but I learned how to be a designer from Massimo and Lella," he says. In 1990, he joined Pentagram, where he designs across disciplines for a wide range of clients. His awards and distinctions are countless: president of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts from 1988 to 1990; president emeritus of AIGA National; Senior Critic in Graphic Design at the Yale School of Art; coeditor of the five-volume series, Looking Closer: Critical Writings on Graphic; cofounder of the website Design Observer; author of *79 Short Essays on Design*; member of the Alliance Graphique Internationale; elected to the Art Directors Club Hall of Fame; awarded the AIGA Medal in 2006. Last but not least, he was winner in the Design Mind category of the 2008 Cooper-Hewitt National Design Awards.

When did you know you wanted to become a graphic designer, and how did you achieve that?
I did a lot of art classes in public school in suburban Cleveland where I grew up. I liked going downtown to the art museum, but I liked looking at the covers of 12-inch records even more. Finally, in the ninth grade someone recruited me to do a poster for the school play. I did something entirely by hand and turned it in on a Friday. By Monday morning it was all over the school. It was thrilling, seeing something I had drawn at home on my kitchen table, out there in the world,

seen by everyone. It was also fun to work with the drama people, who were entertaining and dramatic, unlike the art people who were usual circle. Without knowing it then, I decided that Monday morning to be a graphic designer. This combination of entering other private worlds and interpreting for those worlds for a broader public, was what excited me then, and it still excites me now.

Did you have a clue you were doing graphic design?
At that point, I still couldn't figure out what the connection was between the

famous artists who had paintings in the Cleveland Museum of Art and the less famous people who were credited on the covers for my favorite bands. Right around then, and pretty much by accident, I happened to find a book in my high school library called *Aim for a Future in Graphic Design/Commercial Art*. It was by a man named S. Neil Fujita, whom I would eventually learn had designed the Columbia Records logo and the famous cover of the 1972 novel, *The Godfather*, by Mario Puzo. It was filled with profiles of designers and art directors. All of them were doing exactly what I wanted to do, and it was then I found out that this aspiration had a name: graphic design. I went to our neighborhood public library and looked up "graphic design" in the card catalog. It turns out they

had a book by that name. For reasons I cannot fathom, they had a copy of [the] *Graphic Design Manual* by Armin Hoffman. I'm not sure anyone had ever taken out this book, which was the cornerstone document of design as it was then taught at the Kunstgewerbeschule ("school of arts and crafts") in Basel, Switzerland. I was enthralled. My parents asked me what I wanted for Christmas, and I told them I wanted the Hoffman book. Of course, there was no Amazon, so they called every bookstore in town before finally someone said they had it. It turns out this was the wrong book: *Graphic Design* by Milton Glaser, which had just been published. My parents thought this was close enough and bought it for me anyway.

I ended up going to the College of Design, Architecture and Art, at the University of Cincinnati, which coincidentally had several instructors who had studied under Hoffman in Switzerland. It was a great experience. Right before my senior year, I took a trip to New York and dropped off my portfolio at Vignelli Associates because someone I had interned with had gone to school with someone who was working there. I never expected Massimo Vignelli to look at my portfolio, but he did, and he liked it, and he offered me a job.

You worked for Massimo Vignelli for 10 years. What did you learn from that experience?

I started working for Massimo and Lella Vignelli the week after I graduated from college. It was an amazing experience. Everything there was at the highest level: not just the design work, but the clients, the everyday life in the studio. It's not enough to do great work. You have to get clients to hire you, and then you have to get them to accept your recommendations. This is hard to learn in school. And, to be honest, it was hard to learn from Massimo. Not that he wasn't a great teacher, but the way he worked with clients was so unique that it wouldn't really work for anyone other than him. I had to take what made sense for me and combine it with my own style. That's really what happens with every one of your mentors.

When you were invited to become a Pentagram partner, how did you know you were ready?

I worked at Vignelli Associates for a little more than 10 years, which was probably 3 years too long, to tell you the truth. I had gotten past the stage where I had a fantasy of having my own thing with

Yale School of Architecture Spring 2014 Poster
Yale University School of Architecture
Designers: Michael Bierut, Jessica Svendsen
Illustrator/photographer: Pentagram
2014
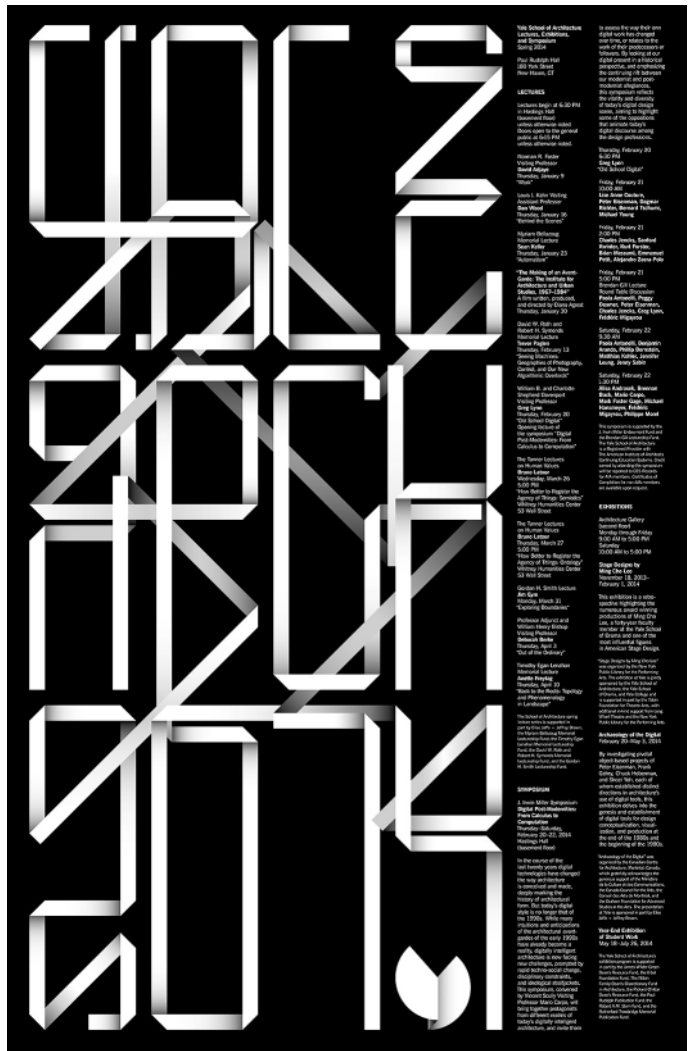
my name on the door. I liked being around people, I liked the buzz of a bigger office, and working on my own had very little appeal. Massimo was very generous with me, always giving me credit for my work, allowing me to do a lot of extracurricular activities. As a result, I had begun to build a small reputation as an up-and-coming designer. So when Woody Pirtle asked me whether I would be interested in joining Pentagram as a partner, I was ready. Still, to go from a nurturing and very disciplined environment like Vignelli Associates to Pentagram was

a shock. At Pentagram, each partner is autonomous. No one tells you what to do. You sort of have to figure it out on your own. It took me a few years to start to find my own voice. It was my second job after graduation, and I've never had another one.

As a designer, what is your greatest strength?
I think I'm a good listener. I enter every project with an open mind and wait for someone or something to say that special, unpredictable thing that will lead me to a solution.

And, conversely, what is your weakness?

I have a short attention span and a low tolerance for ambiguity. As a result, I tend to rush to a solution and settle for the first thing I come up with. As a result, I'm always grateful when I'm forced to slow down and think again.

You are one of the most articulate designers in an increasingly literate field. How does this work as an advantage in your work life?

I think that designers tend to expect the rest of the world to be as visually sophisticated as they are, and they're disappointed when they aren't. Why is that? It's not like the whole world is born with four years of design training. So often there's a gulf, sometimes a vast one, between the designers and the people they work with, or collaborate with, or work for. I learned early on that conversation was the best way to bridge that gap. I listen carefully

and then try to explain design in terms that will connect with the person I'm talking to, on whatever the level they're on. I am articulate, and I'm a good and enthusiastic salesman. But I learned early on that the sooner I stopped trying to sell the other person something, the sooner I'd learn something that might genuinely help me.

Is writing like designing?

Writing is like designing in that you need a structure, you need an idea, you need the technical skill to execute that idea, and you need to do it with some style that will give pleasure to the person who's going to read it. These same four elements exist, more or less, in every design project. In both cases, you're trying to communicate something, often to someone you've never met. And both disciplines are such fun ways to learn about the world.

How would you define a good client?

A good client is smart enough to know what he or she thinks about my work, and brave enough to tell me. (My least favorite reaction is something noncommittal like "Hmm . . . you've given us all a lot to think about!" I have been really lucky to have many clients who have been smarter than me. I have never missed an opportunity to learn from them. The very best are inspiring and are really just as responsible for my success as I am.

How would you define a designer who is well suited for Pentagram?

Each partner here is responsible for hiring the designers who will work on his or her own team, so there's no one answer to this. Some of us hire almost entirely on portfolio and craft skills. Others look for designers who can work with clients and take on project management roles. So the designers are different. Because we work in an open-plan office—no one has offices, not even the partners—everyone has to get along and work well with others. Because the teams are small, we all tend to work quickly and look for people who can do a lot of different things. This is not a place for those who want to close their office door and work quietly on one thing all day.

Windham-Campbell Prizes Program
Yale University, The Donald Windham-Sandy Campbell Literature Prizes
Designers: Michael Bierut, Jessica Svendsen
Illustrator/photographer Pentagram
2013

What do you look for in an assistant or associate designer, given the current requirements?
I look for people who love typography, who love to read, who have a good sense of humor, and who just plain love graphic design as much as I do.

What job that you've recently completed would you say is the most satisfying and challenging?
Last year we did a series of projects for the New York City Department of Transportation that included a city-wide pedestrian wayfinding system, maps for the city's new bike share program, and redesigning New York's parking signs. All of these are being rolled out now, and I have to say that every time I see a new one out on the street—and I usually just encounter one by accident, or someone on my team does and takes a picture—it's just a great surprise. This kind of work is really complicated. We were part of a much larger team of planners, cartographers, product designers, and engineers. Yet the results of the work are simple: every day, for instance, I see someone looking at one of those maps to find their way around town. Being responsible for something that is playing a role, a positive role, in people's lives is really satisfying. The fact that most people can't even imagine that they are looking at the final outcome of a tremendously complex design process makes the whole thing even more gratifying.

Graphic design is no longer just graphic design. How do you explain today's profession?
I know that people tend to have an expansive idea of what graphic design is, but I tend to come back to a definition that isn't that different than what it would have been when I first picked up that copy of *Aim for a Future in Graphic Design*, 40 years ago: graphic designers combine words and pictures to convey a message. The way we combine them has changed, and the messages are always changing, but I still think the basic challenge is the same.

What's next for you?
I don't know, but I hope it will be a surprise.

A Wilderness of Error
by Errol Morris
The Penguin Press
Designers:
Michael Bierut, Yve Ludwig
Illustrator/photographer
Pentagram
2012

Cathedral of St. John the Divine Signs
Cathedral of St. John the Divine
Designer:
Michael Bierut, Jesse Reed
Illustrator/photographer
Pentagram
October 2013

Stephen Doyle

On Being Selfish—in a Good Way

Stephen Doyle, proprietor of Doyle and Partners in New York, admits that he began studying graphic design because he got thrown out of his painting classes at Cooper Union and needed more credits to graduate. "But I liked it," he notes. "The idea of design as a storytelling medium was much more appealing than painting as a means of self-expression, especially since my version was not being tolerated by the guys deciding pass or fail." His first job was as a designer at *Esquire* magazine, under his teacher Milton Glaser. "I think he hired me because he confused me with another kid, but I loved reading articles and then translating them for the reading public by making layouts that were responsive to and expressive of the content." Thirty-five years later, Doyle is still telling stories, but now in more public ways and in a wider range of media.

Truth
Illustrator: Stephen Doyle
Client: The *New York Times*,
Op-Ed
Art Director: Nicholas Blechman
2001

**You've had your own studio for close to three decades. What is the key distinction between then and now?**

Having run a studio for 28 years, it is interesting to observe that even though our media and processes have changed exponentially, we are still working within a conceptual sensibility that is true to our starting point. Our work tries to hover in a zone of humanism and sparkle, never addressing vast audiences or demographics, but rather seeking to engage just one person at a time, with a wink or a gesture, or, if we're lucky, a little moment of wonder. Having a small studio allows us to be selective about the work we take on, and one of our mantras is to try to take on projects that only we can perfectly solve. We are less interested now in graphic design per se but chase the grail of engagement and pleasant surprise.

Are you in fact freer now to do the projects that most appeal to you, or do you have to keep the studio fed?

Another advantage of a small studio of 10 is that we get to consciously push away from work that might lie in our comfort zone. If we have a track record of breakthrough mass-market packaging, our instinct is to search out projects that need environmental graphics or to create a video for a conference. That's what makes it worthwhile—and scary to get up every morning. Frontiers!

Is the studio a creative expression of your sensibility or not?

Someone who I'm married to once commented that my way of practicing design was completely "selfish. But, um, selfish in a good way," she backtracked. Pressed, she clarified that I had a way of hoodwinking my clients into being "patrons"—people
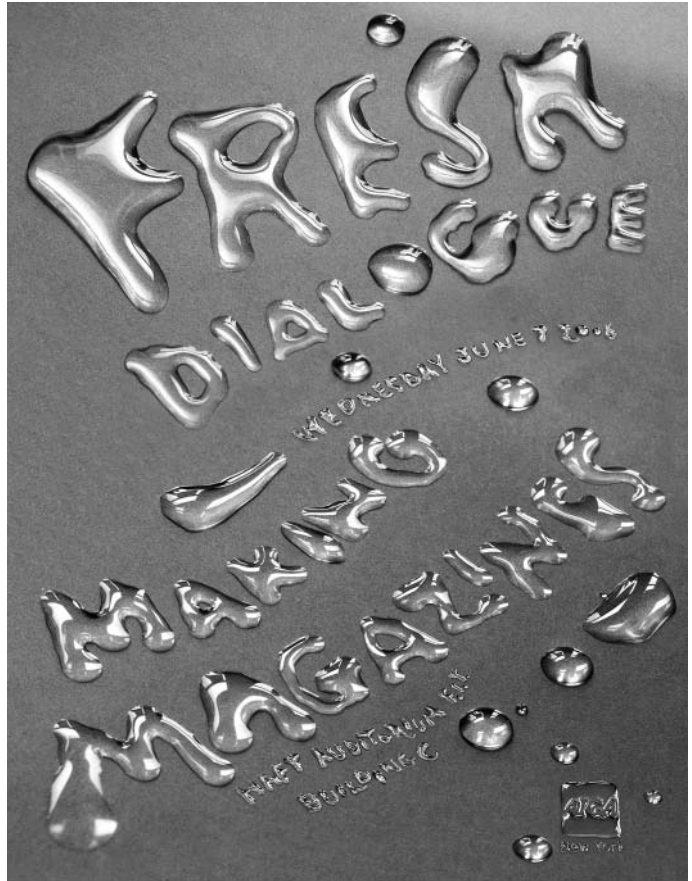
Fresh Dialogue Poster
Designer: Stephen Doyle
Client: AIGA
2009

Teaching Grit (Opposite)
Designer: Stephen Doyle
Client: The *New York Times Magazine*
Art Director: Arem DuPlessis
Photographer: Stephen Wilkes
2011

who finance my explorations into art and unwittingly sponsor my personal fulfillment as part of the design process. Ultimately, this means that my interests and sensibilities infiltrate the studio and the projects we take on. Aromatherapy!

You do your own art—3-D objects,— often using books. How did this come about?
The sculptures that I make from books spang from a satire that I was making about the subject of "hypertexts." I was trying to illustrate the ridiculous notion that one message might lead to another (via hyperlink) regardless of sequence. However, this exploration of setting text lines free of the pages that held them jumped up and bit me with the bug to set lots of ideas free from their books and to explore sentence structure in a whole new light.

Is there a problem or not in retaining boundaries between Stephen Doyle designer and Stephen Doyle citizen?
As a designer, it's very hard to separate work from life, travel from research, real from Memorex. It's actually the blurring of the borders that keeps things interesting for me. When something as private as a sculpture can invade my professional work, it is thrilling. It's the curiosities and passions that fuel a creative life, so why wouldn't one try to allow those to flourish in one's design practice? When a paint color that my wife and I mix at home becomes a part of a color palette that others can buy, it is gratifying. My wife and I have turned our home life inside out so that others can share our taste and style and ideas, so public and private, art and design are all woven together. One rule, however, has proved helpful: Never talk about work . . . in the bedroom.

What is your creative management style around the studio?
My motto is never to ask if it's okay to do something. So, in the studio, the designers are encouraged to do everything they want to do. There is nothing off-limits, and there is no creative ceiling for creating work or experimenting. Not all experiments see the light of day. They have to work, hold up, and communicate. We do not have any special regard for reason, if abandoning it can lead to a solution that has lift. For us, levitation is the better part of design valor.

When hiring, and I presume you do the hiring, what do you look for?
When we look for a designer, we consider the usual qualifications: smart portfolio and good footwear. In a small studio environment, a personality match is really critical.
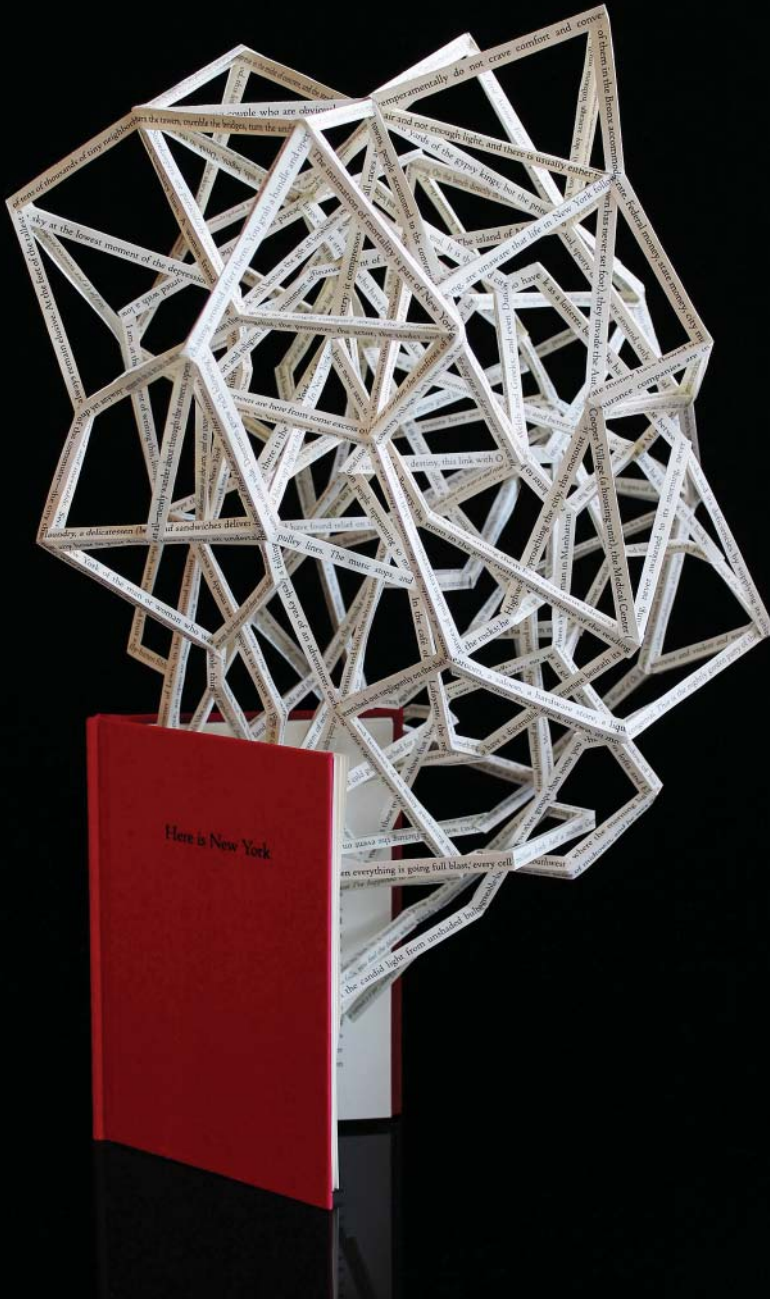
We like designers who read the paper and whose work is an invitation to get closer. We are not wowed by style but by thoughtfulness with an occasional spark of brilliance. We try to keep our team diverse, having some members who lean toward science, and some who lean toward art. I look over shoulders a lot, and shape a direction in tandem with a designer. I help them craft the details and sharpen their intuition.

Do you see the studio as expanding or remaining constant?
It is delightful to have a small studio —we are 10, and we have been about this size for over 25 years. It is a scale that allows designers to be thoroughly involved in their projects and the execution of them, but it allows for a diverse range of clients and wide exposure to the designing arts. Too, it allows our relationship with our clients to be intimate and earnest.

Here Is New York Hypertext
Designer: Stephen Doyle
Personal work
2012

Stefan Sagmeister

On Being Self-Motivated

Much has been written over the years about Stefan Sagmeister, the Austrian-born, New York–based graphic designer and international speaker. His promotional antics have earned him lots of attention, too. He worked for Tibor Kalman at M&Co., a conceptual studio, and then moved into advertising in Hong Kong, and currently, after having a small solo studio, he has a partnership with a former employee, Jessica Walsh, "because she was uncommonly talented." He is known for unconventional work that balances function and aesthetics—and for taking a sabbatical every seven years, leaving work to his colleagues so that he can pursue new ideas.

You began seven-year cycles interrupted by year-long sabbaticals. Aside from being a civilized way to do business, what has been your goal?
As with many big decisions in my life, there were several reasons: One was to fight routine and boredom, but there was a second one, more complex. I had the insight that I could come up with different kinds of projects when given a different time frame to spend on them. I also expected it would be joyful. What I did not expect was that these sabbaticals would change the trajectory of the studio, and I did not dare to imagine that they would be financially successful. But they were.

You've done some juicy promotions through the years, including baring yourself for the world to see. What motivates this? What do you hope the result to be?
I had opened the studio with a card showing me naked. That card turned out to be highly functional. Not only did our then only client love it (he had put it up in his office with a note saying, "the only risk is to avoid risk") but it also attracted more clients who were likely of a more adventurous nature. The card that announced the partnership between Jessica Walsh and me was intended as a little joke on that opening card and turned out to have worked just as well: Everybody anywhere seems to know about that partnership (and that card).

As studios go, yours is very modest. In fact, you don't have a conference room for clients. What is your rationale?
I always wanted to keep our overhead small so we could luxuriate in the luxury of choosing our jobs on merit. This satisfied us more than luxurious offices.

The Happy Show
Creative Direction:
Stefan Sagmeister
Art Direction & Design:
Jessica Walsh
Design: Verena Michelitsch,
Jordan Amer, Simon Egli,
Martin Gnadt, Santiago
Carrasquilla, Esther Li

SVA Poster (Left)
Art Director: Stefan Sagmeister,
Jessica Walsh
Designer: Stefan Sagmeister,
Jessica Walsh, Santiago
Carrasquilla
Photographer: Henry Leutwyler
Creative Retoucher:
Erik Johansson

When I was visiting your studio, I saw your partner, Jessica Walsh, and six or so other workers. What do they do? And do they do their own work, or only your work?
When you visited, we were at our busiest; unusually, we had three interns working at the same time. Among the designers who work for us, usually every job is owned by an individual and everybody else chips in.

What qualities do you look for when you hire or chose an intern?
Good ideas well executed.

You are known for unpredictability. What is it that you haven't tried that you'd like to do?
I have found that it is not so helpful to talk about things I have not tried yet, as the act of talking about it removes some of my desire to actually do them.

Arnold Schwartzman

Still Designing after All These Years

Arnold Schwartzman is a graphic designer and an Oscar®-winning documentary filmmaker. As a young child during WWII, he survived the enemy bombing of his home in London; consequently, he was sent to the countryside and to the village school there. Because he was not able to catch up with the much older pupils in his class, his teacher gave him cards and foreign stamps to keep him busy. "It was a blessing in disguise," he notes, and "as a result, I grew up in a visual, nonliterary world." He ultimately enrolled at the local art school to learn to be a commercial artist. Schwartzman began his career in British network television, moving on to become an advertising art director, and later he joined the board of directors of Conran Design Group, London. In 1978, he was invited to Los Angeles by Saul Bass to become the design director for Saul Bass and Associates. Later, on the recommendation of Bass, he produced and directed the 1981 Oscar-winning documentary feature film, _Genocide_. Since then he has designed Oscar posters, programs, billboards, cinema trailers, and related collateral print for the annual Academy Awards; created two murals for the grand lobby of Cunard's Queen Elizabeth; and designed the UN Peace Bell Memorial for South Korea.

You've been practicing graphic design for almost six decades. How has it changed, and how has it remained the same?
Apart from the craft's ever-changing nomenclature, my thought process has not changed. I believe that the concept must come first, form later. My first job in 1959 was as a graphic designer for a British television station, where all programs where transmitted in black and white and went out live. Apart from my not too perfect hand-drawn lettering, the only other method available to me for producing text was the limited fonts of Letraset. This was before the introduction of rub-down type. Each letter had to be cut out from a sheet and laboriously transferred onto a cotton screen, then pressed down onto the artwork.

Do you actually consider yourself a graphic designer, or is there another rubric?
Yes, I consider myself to be first and