

12 Questions⁽⁵⁰⁾

*interviews with **crowdSPRING** designers*



In our 12 Questions blog series, we feature interviews with someone from the crowdSPRING community. For these interviews, we pick people who add value to our community – in the blog, in the forums, in the projects. Plainly – activities that make crowdSPRING a better community. Be professional, treat others with respect, help us build something very special, and we'll take notice.

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12 Questions

Meet Dragan Lončar

(Belgrade, Serbia)



*Dragan Loncar, known on crowdSPRING as “**dragonfly**”, lives and works in Belgrade, Serbia. He studied graphic design at Belgrade University and has worked in the field since graduating 14 years ago. Outside of work, he is interested in Buddhism and human rights works, particularly for gays and lesbians.*

1. How did you become interested in design?

When I was a child, my parents were not really poor, but we lived very modestly. I was never bribed with toys, or I always wanted the most expensive ones which they couldn't afford. I was always inclined toward quality rather than quantity. Since my sister is much older than me, I could be considered as a single child who was often alone. So I spent time making castles of playing cards, or I would recycle any packaging that would come into my hands, and make furniture, cars, or anything that I could resemble or that took my fancy at given moment. Later, I don't see if I really had a conscious choice. It was more an inclination that had to be fulfilled.

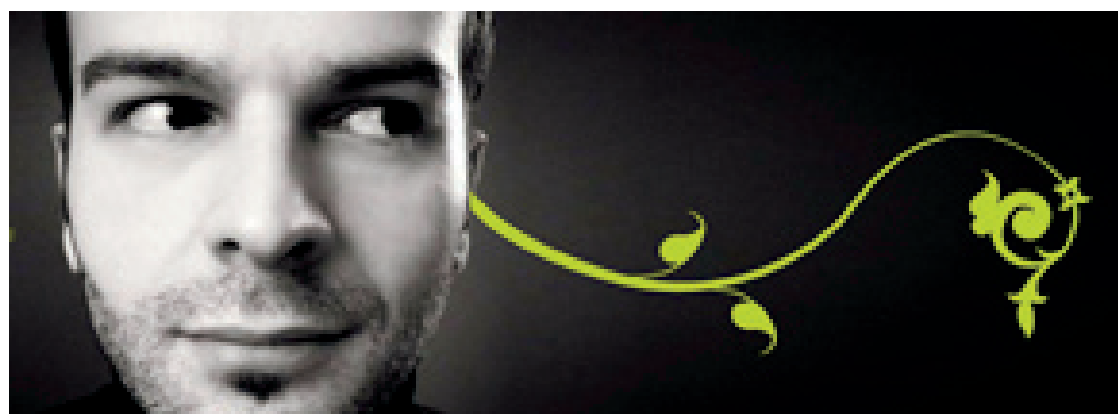


2. Please tell us about your creative process

When I was younger, I used to be a person who would think and think the perfect design and then get frustrated because nothing would later work in reality. Through 15 years of experience I learned that I should try to do at least a little bit, and then through my own self-censorship method check what will actually work.

3. In what ways have you dedicated your life to human rights?

I am a person who has always been sensitive to injustice. Being born left-handed and gay, I was perceived as some kind of freak, despite my calm demeanor and non-conflicting personality. So, when I realized that it is my responsibility to defend diversity, it took me quite a while to see what I could actually do in that area, rather than just sit frustrated because my ideal world is not possible. I was born in the former Yugoslavia, and at the age of 19 I was robbed of my country, being left in Serbia with rising nationalism that I detest. I found myself in surroundings where the whole world was becoming a global village, and yet my country was shrinking into a hole. I tried escaping my responsibility by leaving first to Finland and then to the U.K., but after seven years I returned to



face whatever I was running away from. Although I was involved in London for several years with Pink Singers, a gay and lesbian community choir, and Absolute Freedom Group, a LGBT part of the SGI Buddhist organization that I belong to, somehow I wasn't satisfied knowing that there were still huge problems in the country where I am from. So I returned and found a great organization, Gay Straight Alliance in Belgrade, where I have been very active in the past three years. In the last two years, we were able to shift things from forbidden annual report presentation in the local cultural building, to this year's presentation in the City Hall together with the mayor as the speaker. We organized the first successful Pride parade in Belgrade last year, for which I also did the visual identity and creative direction.

4. Who/what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?



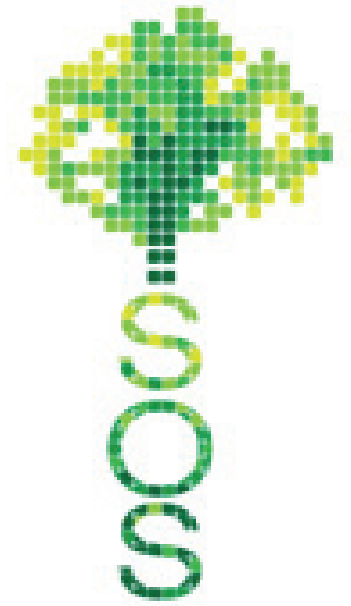
Serbia is still a very politicized country, and since it is still in some form an economic ghetto, there is no real quality-based competition in the market. There are still many people who get jobs just because they are someone's relative or friend, regardless of their capabilities. Therefore there is not much work around, especially not quality work, so designers who were in the position to be fortunate do everything in their power to prevent others from being seen or heard of. On the other hand, for the people who have no idea of the importance of design, they would usually say, 'I have a nephew who is good with computers, so he can do it for 50 euros.'

Small businesses are not encouraged by the government, where you have to pay more taxes than you are able to charge for your work. Everybody is owing money to everybody, and that chain goes on. When I was working in the creative department of one publishing house, so many times I was given a business card to scan the logo because the client had a fight with the designer for not paying, so the designer didn't deliver the original files. Intellectual work is considered something that should be given for free.

5. Please describe your typical work day

Firstly, I never in my life had the privilege of having a typical work day. Maybe for one year when I was working in McCann Erickson advertising agency. But even there I took on some non-commercial internal art project that I was doing in my free time, when I finished servicing L'Oreal, Maybelline and Fanta, as I was an art director in charge of them. Since I became a freelancer, my life is a complete mess, paying

off the mortgage, chasing the clients and doing the human rights activism. So, sometimes, to get myself from immediate financial danger, I hang on crowdSPRING from morning to late at night in hope that I will secure at least a few awards from the dozens of submissions I send. On the better days, when I have secured paid work, I get more relaxed, so I have time for healthy cooking and jogging, to repair the damage of my arse turning into a chair-shaped potato.



6. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

I notice a general lack of risk taking in branding, the opposite of something that was so characteristic in the '80s, something that built the Apple and Benetton brands. Everybody wants to play safe now and to stick out from the crowd at the same time, which is contradictory even in thought, let alone in reality. So, the most rewarding part (of being a designer) is when the client or the buyer recognizes the branding potential and uniqueness that I offer and has the courage to put it in practice.

7. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Become a lawyer, my son! No, really, no matter how sometimes hard it is, I love my profession. There is a sort of urge in some people to create beauty or order, and this is something that is not a matter of career choice, but the choice of life. I never thought I really had a choice.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Angus Griffin

(London, UK)



Angus Griffin, known on crowdSPRING as “[ninet6](#)”. Griffin lives and works in London. He started freelance designing after being laid off by the branding agency where he worked.

1. Please tell us about yourself

I was born in Holland to a Dutch mother and a British father, and having only experienced four years there, was whisked away to the rather greyer, but prettier countryside of Cheshire, in northern England. I lived there for nine years before my father got offered a great opportunity, and we moved to South Africa for a three-year contract. That ended up being 13 years. I actually remember speaking to my parents, soon after my first month living there, and saying, "You know what, you can go back to England, but I'm staying here!" We arrived at a rather pivotal and pertinent time in South African history, just after President Nelson Mandela was brought into power in 1994. Then a good few years later when times had changed, people got older and wiser, I decided to head back to the UK. And have been here now, ooh, five years.

Work-wise I started off studying the print side of things. I always believed knowing and understanding how things get printed would be of huge benefit to the design side. So did that, became an apprentice in a trade-based industry, and soon became a qualified photo lithographer. Then got headhunted and moved into an ad agency, where I made the slow transition across to designer, and never really looked back.



2. What is the design industry like in the UK?

In terms of variety, talent and actual design and ad agencies, you're really spoilt for choice, especially down here in London. Which I suppose on the flip side, will make it hard to find permanent jobs, and especially now. But a prime time for freelancers ... The agencies aren't hiring staff, the staff they do have are worked to the bone, but they still have briefs coming out of their ears. What do they do? Bring in freelancers.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

One of them is definitely my mood and what music I'm listening to at the time. I remember a few years ago I was doing a painting for A-Levels, and I was completely stumped at the time, could not get the brief through into my head. So I just started painting, with something really chilled out, like Ryan Adams, but not. Then half way through someone had changed it to I think Iron Maiden, and the entire theme of the painting changed within the space of about half an hour.

4. Mac or PC?

Mac, definitely. Always have been. When I studied we were taught on both, which was cool, but from the first Repro House I apprenticed at, moved straight onto the Macs. I have a lot of friends who moved back across to PC, but don't think I'll ever do that ... Suppose should never say never. The price of software might leverage the decision. No, actually it won't.



5. What are your favorite websites for inspiration or learning about graphic design

There are a few, but I also (space allowing) love having reference books. Sites are great and instant, but I enjoy sitting on the couch with my pad, and books piled up ready to go through.

6. Please describe your typical work day

Heidi, my partner, and I both work from home, so it's normally me who gets up first and makes the tea. Can't start a day without that one! Then it's usually straight behind the machine in a dressing gown with tea, and checking e-mails. I have clients across most continents, so often trying to get up early to catch the end of the ones out eastwards, and late for the ones in the west.

Then get dressed, by which time it's normally getting close to lunch, and we both have to force our selves to stop and actually get some lunch. So eat whilst watching a bit of TV, then turn that off and turn back on the music. I'd love to say we go to the gym and work out, but you know what, we don't. Then before you know it, it's already 7 p.m. and you're thinking s---, we need to get some dinner! This we normally cook together, after dragging ourselves from the machines. Then unless there is something specific on TV that we want to watch, we normally just "quickly" check e-mails again, which can be five minutes worth or a few hours worth. Eventually we try and chill out for a while, whether it's TV or video games, something to take our mind of work. Then finally sleep ... And then all over again.

7. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

I suppose the main ones would have to be: finding work; money or rather finding it; making sure you keep the clients

and keep them happy; other designers and their talents; and keeping my skills up-to-date.

Rewarding-wise, I definitely have to say seeing your work either published, online, on the side of a building or on TV. Also, having the client love what you've done makes it worthwhile, knowing that you hit the nail on the head for them. I remember when I did a TV commercial for Cadbury's back in South Africa years and years ago, first and last one I did. It was Friday afternoon, and my creative director walked into my copywriters' office, slapped a brief down on the desk and said we needed to come up with ideas by Monday morning. What he failed to tell us was that he'd had the brief for two weeks, Cadbury's had bombed all his ideas and they were on the verge of taking the account away. So we worked all weekend and presented on Monday. They loved it and gave us pure director's scope over creating it.

8. You are the most-awarded creative here on crowdSPRING. What is the secret to your success?

I think the main thing is creating something that's simple and to what the buyer wants or needs. I often see some amazing designs, truly beautifully created bits of work (way better than I could do), but it doesn't work for the client. It comes down to reading the brief, and their needs.

9. What do you do with your free time?

I think that's one thing I lost when I started for myself. If you don't work, you don't get business or paid. However, the flip side to that is that you can, if you want to, do things whenever you want (within reason), during the week, when it's quieter. So we try and get to the movies, or do a day of movies and bit of shopping. Love going for a full cooked breakfast on Saturday mornings, or going for dinner at a nice restaurant. Basically, great food is always a winner, with a bit of video games afterwards.

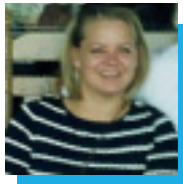
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12 Questions

Meet Ann Lowe

(Ottawa, Canada)



Ann Lowe, known on crowdSPRING as “[solarcap](#)”. Lowe lives and works in Ottawa, Canada. She likes watching CNN, browsing through design magazines and dancing around her kitchen with a “more juice than vodka” martini.

1. Please tell us about yourself

Sorry Toronto, and those of the world who believe Toronto is the capital of Canada, it is not! I live here with my husband and our two teen boys and of course my dog, Jake. All men. The testosterone levels in my home are so high the toilet seat automatically rises. Girl power doesn't live anywhere in my home except my office. Designs, logos, girlfriend photos and organization (not something you will find anywhere else within the walls of my home). I do, however, have a vintage set of leather hockey gloves hanging on the wall, an homage to growing up in a home with three brothers and a dad, all avid players and watchers of our national sport. I grew up all across Canada; my father was a military man. When I moved here and got married, I said that once I had children I wouldn't move until they were old enough to go to university. I never wanted them to feel like the new kid, something I had experienced at least eight times before I turned 18. They have the same friends that they have had since birth. I think that is really cool.



2. How did you become interested in design?

Well, I have had two careers in my work life so far. I was a hairstylist for many years, and then I was the director of operations for a window film company that my husband and I owned for 10 years. That is where I started the design work. We were outsourcing e.p.s. files for cutting frosted window film applications at such a high cost that the profits were being eaten up so rapidly that we felt it was not worth offering that service anymore.

I sat with one of the outsourced subcontractors for a half an hour while they prepped a design and had an epiphany: OMG, I am creative and draw all the time ... I can do this myself. I went to my local Office Depot and bought Adobe Illustrator that day. I brought it home to tell my husband that we could save our money because, I, in my infinite wisdom, would now do it all. I think he was in shock because the program cost me \$750, and at year three we could not afford to spend that kind of money.

For the past seven years I have been designing some unique designs for Ottawa companies, government offices and private residences. In January we decided to close our business. I have been working on my skills as an identity designer ever since. I am going to freelance while I take some classes in other aspects of the graphic industry. I have been working on crowdSPRING as well as doing jobs freelance through word of mouth.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

I would have to say the logo design I made for Broken Island foods. It reminds me of the aboriginal designs that I worked on for (the governmental agency) Indian and Northern Affairs Canada with the window film company. I have a grandmother who was Native Canadian and have come to learn about the culture more over the last two years. It is rich in history and art, which I love.

4. Mac or PC?

I am definitely PC, but secretly desire to be Mac. A few weeks ago my hard drive went, and it seriously felt like someone cut my arms off. It only took three days to get it back up and running ... the longest three days of my life!

5. What is your dream design project?

I guess I should be pumped on a price or recognition of some sort, but that is not usually my motivation in anything I do in life, so why would I start now? I think my dream project is always one that has a fun brief with lots of input from the buyer. If the outcome is that I could whisper to myself, "Wow, can you believe it, I made that," when I see a brand that is recognized nationally, that would be a very cool perk.

6. Please describe your typical work day

Once I get the kids off to school, I have a very simple but odd routine. I have to have a chai tea with cream and brown sugar in my favorite Starbucks mug. I will search high and low in the house for this mug. Then my desk has to be cleaned off completely, tea stains wiped off and everything. Once my space is perfectly clean, my mind can work. Then it is time to read e-mails and respond to possible work requests. Then the day usually moves from one thing to the next, and I tend to find time in there to make a second cup of tea, catch the "hot topics" section of "The View" and let the dog out. By the time I know it, the day is almost over, and I am sick of staring at the computer screen. Oh, and if there is no tea left in the box, I seriously can't function for the day.

7. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Learning something. I would be pursuing something, maybe advertising, talent scout, painter, cake decorator, clothing designer. I know one thing: It would be in the creative vein.

8. What do you do with your free time?

I get my nails done, go to Chapters, walk my dog, let my teenage kids and their friends follow me around in (the video game) Halo and shoot me in the head! Lots of fun things! I like to watch movies and cook. I love to try new foods and learn how much I can change a recipe to make it my own. I am a lover of life and enjoy the simple things around me.



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12 Questions

Meet Cibi Perez

(Sheboygan, Wisconsin, USA)



Cibi Perez, known on crowdSPRING as “[monsterleo](#)”. Perez, 35, lives and works in Sheboygan, Wis. After studying graphic design in college, he put it aside for seven years to sell flooring, only to rediscover his interest when he stumbled onto crowdSPRING’s website during a late night Google session.

1. Please tell us about yourself

My given name is Cibicue Gerardo Perez. But anyone who has met me calls me by my nickname Cibi. Phonetically, it's "see-bee." After I tell people my name, almost always, like clockwork, comes the inevitable question: How did you get a name like that, and what does it mean? Well, it's my dad's fault. He grew up very poorly, and one of the ways he escaped from that was to wander the woods. Somewhere down the line, he started to collect arrowheads. He collected over 3,000 Native American arrowheads through his young years and he started to read about their cultures. Cibicue is a creek in Arizona, it has something to do with Geronimo and the Apache tribe. I must admit, it's a heck of an icebreaker with strangers.

2. How did you become interested in design?

My dad had been an artist all his life. I used to be like any other kid who looked up to and admired their dad. I basically drew because he did. I was blessed to have a wonderful mom who also loved to watch me draw stuff for her. Through my elementary years and high school years, I was always the "artistic" kid. I was the kid who was asked to draw something for someone else. I like to think that I received my 15 minutes of being the coolest kid in high school when I drew a Class of '93 graffiti mural under a public

bridge when we graduated. Thank God my parents never found out, or I would have surely been scrubbing that bridge and repainting it white the following day.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

Allison Fisher is a world famous professional billiards player, and I consider myself lucky to have earned her business and designed her personal logo. I love to shoot pool and am a huge fan of the sport. I used to watch her play as far back as I can remember on ESPN. When the opportunity came to design a logo for her, I was pretty thrilled when I won her contest. After we wrapped up, I was still shocked that I was actually e-mailing and talking to her on a one-on-one basis; I'm a pretty star-struck person. Allison personally autographed a nine ball for me and thanked me for my work. It was a truly special moment for me. This is when I really started to believe that I could hang with the big boys.

4. Who or what are the biggest influences on your design work?

My biggest influence is my dad. He is the one who showed me how to draw. I used to bug him all the time as a kid to draw for me. He used to sketch a flying Superman that I would cut out and fly around the house. He is an exceptional artist. His talents range from pencil drawings to spectacular figure oil paintings. I am very happy that those DNA traits were transferred over to me. And my mom, of course. No matter what I ever design she is the one person I can count on to say, "That's great, mijo!"

5. Mac or PC?

I use a PC. My laptop and I are fused at the lap. Some people cringe when I say I use Vista, but it works just fine for me.



6. How do you use social networking to promote your work?

The only social networking I use pretty frequently is Facebook. I post most of my winning designs and personal favorites periodically. It was an unexpected pleasant surprise how much extra work I have also acquired through this platform.

7. Please describe your typical work day

This is the best part of being a freelancer. I'm still wearing the same jammies I had on from last week. OK, just kidding. (Or am I?) I don't really have a true schedule most days. In fact, it's pretty chaotic. I may be awake from 6 a.m. 'til midnight some days designing, and then the complete opposite the following week. It drives my friends crazy. They still think I don't really "work," but it's useless to explain how much time I actually do put into designing logos. I go on designing spurts where I will stay in front of my laptop for hours, and eating and going to the bathroom become chores. From time to time I wander the house aimlessly like a zombie. I generally stand in front of the fridge gazing into it for no reason at all, just to stretch my legs. I usually design best in the wee hours of the night, when my phone isn't constantly going off from text messages, status updates and pokes from Facebook. When I'm in creative mode, it's pretty hard to snap me out of it; I think most diehard freelancers can relate to that. I have pulled a handful of 48-hour stints on cS, but at the same time I have had a week go by and done absolutely nothing. Pretty cool, huh?

8. What are the most challenging aspects of being a graphic designer?

A big challenge I find is having a bad design month. We've all been there, the dreaded design slump. It's awful to be in one,

and it takes a lot of work to get out of one. I think for me, I get into design slumps when I overwork myself. I try to force creativity versus just letting it come out. Taking a few days off really helps refresh my brain with new ideas and fresh perspectives.

9. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Starving, I guess. Seriously, I would probably be working in some sort of flooring sales job. I liked to get dressed for work with pleated pants and a great tie. I actually enjoyed selling flooring when I was doing it. I remember feeling the same obsession about learning how to sell (as to learn design), and I read tons of books on the subject. The one that significantly changed my approach to selling was Dale Carnegie, "How to Win Friends and Influence People." So yeah, if you ever need advice on what type of carpet fiber wears the best, I'm your man.



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12 Questions

Meet Dennis Wong

(Singapore)



*Denis Wong, known
on crowdSPRING as
“**entz**”. Wong lives and
works in Singapore.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a 27-year-old male, born on the island of Mauritius. I bet you guys don't even know where that place is. It's a small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Mauritius is a pretty laid back place, and yes, that's where the dodo, the extinct bird, lived. It's a great place for a getaway or honeymoon. I'm currently living and working in Singapore. It's been quite a drastic change. The pace in Singapore is 10 times faster. I came to Singapore to study visual communication – advertising and graphic design – and stayed because the design scene and opportunities are better than on Mauritius. I started at an ad agency, am now doing freelancing and I'm loving every second of it. I don't need to apply for annual leave if I want to go on a holiday.



2. How did you start out as a designer?

I learned about graphic design just one year before coming to Singapore to study. I always wanted to be an architect. I dreamt about designing skyscrapers. In 1999 a very good friend came back from South Africa with a masters in design. At first I didn't know what graphic design was. So he tried to help me understand and from what I understood, a graphic designer wears T-shirts and jeans or shorts and goes to work in an office to draw on a computer. That was the career I wanted. So in 2000 I enrolled in Temasek Polytechnic Design School.

3. Please tell us a little about the graphic design industry in Singapore

I think it's quite good here. It used to be better from what I've heard. I think nowadays young designers, especially fresh graduates, don't know how to draw. I mean really take a pencil and draw. I think it's very important to learn how to draw when you start your career as a designer. Young designers now work directly on the computer. I think you need about four to five years of work experiences before you can directly draw on the computer screen. If you want to hire a good illustrator here in Singapore, you'll have to dig deep, and, of course, deep in your pocket as well. But the graphic design scene here is pretty good. Singapore is a cosmopolitan city. So you have a lot of famous brands here and lots of opportunities to design for them.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I actually like to go overseas to clear my mind. That's where you get to see new things and experience new cultures. That's how you get a lot of ideas and inspirations. All work no play makes Jack/Denis a dull boy.

I'm not really an art guy. So I don't really appreciate art paintings like Picasso, Renaissance era and so on. I think they are nice, but it's just not my thing. I'm more of a Zen type. I like simple things; minimalism is my motto.

5. When designing a logo, you always offer a version on a white background and one on a black background. Why do you offer both versions?

That's pretty obvious I think, but some buyers/clients don't really understand the logic behind why I do this. A logo will have to work on both light and dark backgrounds, even though you are just starting a new business and only need it initially for your stationery and website. What if your business grows and becomes famous? Your logo will be used everywhere from posters to other people's websites to (sponsorships) and so on. And those people who will be using your logo will not accommodate your restriction of using a logo on only one type of background. Imagine your logo as a sponsor on a poster where it just blends in the background. You would barely see it! A logo needs to be versatile in terms of applications. To me that's the basic requirement.

6. What is the most challenging part of being a graphic designer?

Today, everyone considers himself or herself a designer. With inexpensive graphic software easily accessible to many, you don't have to go and study design to be a graphic designer. Many are self-taught and are much better than those who spent three years of their life studying. A graphic designer will have to compete with the rest of the world to be able to survive. Many people who are starting a business will say, "Why do I need a designer when I can do it myself? I'll just buy Photoshop and do my posters and logos." But there's a big difference. If you compare what a real designer (whether formally educated or self-taught) to a wannabe, you'll straight away see the difference. A designer has an eye for details and layout. So, to fight the world, you always need to do stuff that ordinary people wouldn't expect or can't create themselves. But we live in a world where almost everything has already been created. So, to me, a designer is an innovator. We take bits and pieces from existing materials, put them together and voila! You have something that is out of this world.

7. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Graphic design is not as easy as it looks. If anybody wants to venture into those waters, then (they should) be prepared for the worst, as it's going to be a rough and bumpy ride. But once you get use to it, it is really a lot of fun.

Always design something with meaning. Even a simple dot can have a very powerful message behind it. It's just how you want your target audience to interpret it. So don't design for the sake of designing. Think first! Think twice even! Meaningless design with a lot of cosmetics will get compliments yes, but a simple, meaningful design will get a lot of praise and recognition.

One more thing that I think will be useful is, don't just flip design books for inspiration. I was taught that the hard way during my internship with a local agency. The creative director asked me to explain my design and I did. But the message my visual carried didn't fit that particular product. He told me that he saw me flipping through a lot of design books for inspiration and asked me what I looked for in those books. I told him, nice visuals and ideas. He gave me two books

and told me to read them. Two books with few visuals and a whole lot of text. But after reading everything, I saw what a difference it really makes to your design skills and the way you approach a problem. You

learn how they manage to find the solution. You learn the process, the thinking behind it, strategies and so on.



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12 Questions

Meet Carmen Tsang

(Markham, Canada)



*Carmen Tsang, known
on crowdSPRING
as “[heyheykermi](#)”.*

*Tsang lives and
works in Markham,
Canada. View her
work at [http://www.
nutscreative.com](http://www.nutscreative.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I was born in Hong Kong and moved to Canada for good about 10 years ago after I completed my degree in education. My decision to move to a country with a whole new culture and lifestyle was tough (start everything from zero?), but I told myself to give it a try while I am still young, so I bought a one-way air ticket and off I went, 'til now, 10 years later still residing in Canada.

Without any local experience my first job in Canada was a home decor assistant. Luckily after two months, on the day of my first birthday in Canada, I got a full-time job offer as graphic designer. In four years time, I gradually worked my way up to the art director level, overseeing the design department and leading a team of four designers and freelancers. While everything seemed so perfect (stable job and income), I, a workaholic, found myself trapped in the imbalance of work and personal life. I felt torn and I made another decision. I quit the full-time job, walked out of my comfort zone and started to work as a full-time freelance designer. At that time, I did not think deep on how to set up a design business, no planning, no researching, no risk estimating, no cost-calculating. I just started doing it ...

Although day one of my business, I only had one client (yes! one!), I gradually built up my clientele for the past six years. At this moment, I am happy for what I have attained: enough business to keep myself busy Monday through Friday, 9 to 6. As a full-time freelance designer working in a home office, I keep myself in a rigid yet flexible work schedule: work diligently during office hours, but try not to work at night or weekends.

2. How did you become interested in design?

When I was young, I never envisioned myself as a lawyer, a judge or big company CEO, and there's no artistic gene from both sides of my parents' family. I was a pretty independent kid when I was young, and I would find myself watching TV most of the time in my childhood. As I was so into TV, I would draw the costumes of the people in the ancient TV series and develop storylines for the characters just as you see on a comic book. I think this was the very first trigger of my imagination and creativity. During summer of my primary school years, I attended a drawing course, and I found myself enjoying it very much as it gave me the freedom to express myself rather than being passively taught in routine school lessons.

After I completed my high school studies, one of my classmates asked me to go for a design course interview with her. I knew nothing about furthering my studies at that time, and I had absolutely no idea about the interview, I just brought with me a few drawings and artwork from high school. During the admission interview, I was surrounded by three or four design professors, and they were asking me questions about 3-D form and balance composition which I had absolutely no idea how to answer. Luckily, they accepted my application.

The two-year design diploma really opened up my eyes; it gave me an invaluable opportunity to see and experience what "art and design" really means. All the art history lessons, design theories, artwork critics, tutor and people I met in there helped me to build my foundation. After the diploma, I continued onto a three-year B.A. in graphic design and communication studies. By then, I had a much clearer picture of how I would develop my interest into my future career.

3. Mac or PC?

I'm a Mac user, not because it looks good or it's trendy, simply because I have been using it for almost 15 years. I did start as a PC user with the monochrome monitor (gift from my mom), but soon after I began to study design, I bought my first Mac. Also, there's always a pencil and piles of one-sided printed recycled paper under my keyboard for brainstorming and sketching.

4. What is your dream design project?

My dream project is not a single one, but to see a single small design project developed into a series of interrelated campaigns. I enjoy seeing myself, my design product and the client interplay and make meanings out of each other.

5. Please describe your typical work day

I wake up around 7:30 a.m. on weekdays, enjoy my breakfast and read the newspaper, then start working at 9 a.m. (Freelancers really need some discipline!) Normally Monday is the busiest day because I need to plan my week's schedule and see if there's any client meetings or project deadlines. I will prioritize all projects and follow up on any unfinished jobs from last week. Work industriously throughout the day; lunch at 2 p.m., coffee break at 3 p.m., wrap up jobs at around 5:30 p.m., prepare dinner at 6 p.m. On Fridays, I will try to wrap up all jobs so the next Monday I can start something new. I don't work during weekends, except rush jobs, because I really want to get a good balance of life and work.

6. What are other ways you use your creativity?

Definitely cooking and baking! Thanks to my high school cookery lessons, I have a firm foundation in both. I like to



explore and twist ingredients to do some experimental dish, but I try to adhere to the basic recipes when I bake, as baking is more like science. There is formula to follow to create a basic genoise.

7. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

If I weren't a designer, I would definitely be a chef. Cooking and design share so many similarities. You apply passionate, creative process to raw materials; after process, you've created a product (a design, a dish) that is synthetic of your technical knowledge, aesthetic sense, presentation skills, a little marketing sense and mostly your creativity.

8. What do you do with your free time?

Eating, cooking, reading, watching movies, traveling, paying attention to small things around me. I enjoy trying out different restaurants. I don't just go to fancy restaurants; sometimes I rather enjoy eating in suburban restaurants, because I actually find I get more out of it as I expect nothing from them.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Chrissy Richards

(Eugene, USA)



*Chrissy Richards,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“lightbox”. Richards
lives and works in
Eugene, Ore. She can
be found at [http://www.
lightboxgraphicdesign.
com](http://www.lightboxgraphicdesign.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay area. I am now 27, living and working in Eugene while my husband of three years pursues his masters degree in music composition at the University of Oregon. (Two artists married – it's scary, I know.) I'm the mother of a 16-month-old boy named Holland. After I graduated college, I worked full time as a designer for a clothing and gift retailer, but after my son was born I wanted something more flexible because I didn't want to miss him growing up. That's when I started Lightbox Graphic Design, which I run from my home office (otherwise known as the desk in the kitchen). Between trying to keep my son from eating too many crayons and cleaning Handi-Snack cheese out of the carpet, I find moments to pursue my business and other design work.

2. How did you start out as a designer?

I started out the way many designers do: drawing. My dad always told me growing up that the key to having a successful and happy career was to figure out what you love to do and then figure out a way to get paid for doing it. I loved to draw and that led me to major in illustration and then graphic design at Brigham Young University, where I received my bachelor of arts. My plan was to have a career that would allow me to work when and where I wanted, and it actually worked.

3. What great designs have you seen recently that you love?

Apple is always superb. I've enjoyed watching them create so many of the looks that inevitably become staples of the design world. They masterminded the white-dominant ultra-clean look, then continued on to develop what I call the burst-collage – it probably has a real name, drop me a line if you know it – where type and graphic elements radiate out from a central point. With the introduction of the iPod, their commercials originated the silhouette trend.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Because I now work alone most of the time, I have to actively seek out the interaction and inspiration that comes by being surrounded by creatives. Getting feedback from designer friends through e-mail, design sites like crowdSPRING, and art scenes like museums and concerts all provide me with tons of ideas to stay fresh.

5. What's the very first thing you do when approaching a new design?

Especially with logos, I try to spend awhile thinking before I do any research or sketching. If I have the luxury of time before a deadline, I try to read a project request or description and then sleep on it overnight. I find that if I let a new project incubate in my brain awhile before starting work on it, I often have ideas come to me while drifting in and out of sleep or showering.



6. When designing a logo, what do you think are the biggest mistakes a designer can make?

A common problem is adding too many elements. My husband calls them “list logos.” We’ve all had that kind of client who says, “I want a dog, riding a wave on a surfboard, wearing sunglasses and swim trunks, holding a bone that says our company name on it.” Being too literal is another pitfall. People too often focus on depicting objects or products, instead of conveying a concept, which is usually more effective.

7. How has technology affected your work?

I work on a PowerBook G4, which allows me to bring my work anywhere in the house, or on trips and vacations (much to my husband’s dismay). I use Adobe Illustrator CS3 for logos and most layout projects. I dabble in Flash and Dreamweaver, but find I like spending my time designing rather than pouring over Flash help forums looking for answers to the millions of problems I inevitably encounter doing any kind of coding. Thankfully, I have a developer who handles that now. But I digress ... I guess technology hasn’t necessarily changed my work because I came of age when it was already in full swing. Sure, I used Iomega Zip disks in college, which now seems archaic, but it’s not like I handset type by picking the letters out of a drawer or anything.

8. When working online, how do you decide whether to participate in a project?

To put it simply, if it inspires me, I’ll do it. I usually take on a project because it excites me, and I can’t stop thinking about it. If I care about the business behind the project, that helps too. I love doing work for environmental businesses, children’s causes, outdoor companies, and nonprofits. A huge award doesn’t hurt either.

9. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a graphic designer?

For me there is nothing like the feeling of expressing an idea through visual media. I love the thrill of pursuing solutions when there are no obvious ones. I grew up playing competitive sports, and I love the growth I experience as a designer when I am forced to improve my work through competition. The first client I had after starting my business said the logo I created for him looked like clip art. It was the most crushing experience I’ve ever had as a designer, and I cried my eyes out. Although it’s extremely difficult, I now try not to take rejection personally, but learn from it instead.

10. What advice would you give a young designer just starting out?

My best advice would be to get a solid art education. Anyone can learn how to use a piece of software through practice, but being a good designer means much more than being comfortable in a certain computer program. Mastering design concepts like typography, balance, scale, color, contrast and composition usually requires training and study and will set you apart from the crowd.

11. What do you do with your free time?

Taking care of and playing with my baby and husband is a major part of my life. I also love backpacking and camping, gardening, thrift store shopping, cooking, music, sewing, soccer and doing projects.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet David W. Nees

(USA)



*David W. Nees, known
on crowdSPRING
as “**DW**Nees”. Nees
lives and works in
Tulsa, Okla. He can be
found at [http://www.
dwnees.com](http://www.dwnees.com) or on
his blog, [http://www.
graphicsbydwnees.
blogspot.com](http://www.graphicsbydwnees.blogspot.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I am never good at trying to describe myself. I am 39, a Pisces, single and loving it. I have three degrees in art: B.A. in art history, M.A. in art history and a B.A. in graphic design from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Okla. I have been teaching as an adjunct instructor at various colleges and universities throughout Oklahoma and am now working to get my career off the ground in graphic design.

2. You are an academic, an artist and a graphic designer. How do you balance all three?

Being underemployed allows for a great deal of balance in my pursuits. After graduate school, I spent four years trying to get an academic career off the ground. This culminated in a change of careers altogether and caused me to return to school to study graphic design. The Bush years have been very hard for my art career ... I was able to teach while attending school at NSU and that was great. Beyond that, I find that my love of art history and the joy of working as an artist and designer forces me to find time for everything.

3. Younger designers might not fully appreciate the importance of art history. Why is it important for designers to study art history?

Most everyone can benefit from studying art history, because art history helps us to understand our visual culture. It allows us to see our cultural values. We can trace our development in the West by our most famous artworks, and if we truly understand what they mean, we have the chance to truly understand ourselves. That is especially important for artists and designers because we are participating in that development; when we create something, we are in a dialogue with so many artists and designers, such as Phidias, Michelangelo and David Carson or Chip Kidd. And like any conversation, you have to listen to what the other person is saying in order to thoughtfully add to that conversation.



4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

In design, the everyday things that influence so many artists and designers influence me. Things such as comic books and popular culture influence me. I am also influenced a great deal by designers who so often go unnamed. Like today, I was at the airport and picked up a city guide that had a very nice cover. My bulletin board gets covered in those types of things. I also love Chip Kidd, possibly more for his writing than his design; "The Cheese Monkeys" is still one of the greatest books I have read, and if you went to school to study design you will definitely see yourself or someone you know in the pages of that book. My academic work is varied and influences my art much more immediately than my design work. I spend a lot of time reading about the classical movements in art, and I am trying to understand whether beauty can be defined as a "universal truth." So there is division in my work between design and art; I see them as two very different disciplines with distinct purposes and goals. Unlike many others though, I do not see one as a nobler pursuit than the other – just different.

5. Please talk a little about the challenges in teaching students about art in today's technology-oriented environment

Technology, in my opinion, only aids in teaching students about art. The vast number of resources, images and information at the touch of a fingertip has made my teaching livelier than some of the more traditional methods of the not-so-distant past. When I was an undergrad in art history, you had series after series of two slides juxtaposed for comparison and the instructor's notes. Try that in the dark for three hours at a time, and you will see why you had to have real passion to want to pursue art history. Now the options are endless. I can think of something on the spot and not worry that I may not have the right slide because it is all there, thanks to Google Images.

Often you have instructors who are so deeply embedded in the past methodology that they fail to see the benefits of the "new" technology. Mostly because they are afraid students will rely too heavily on the Internet and fail to do what many instructors see as "real" work. This fear is a legitimate one, but one that is overcome when the instructors themselves use the Internet and incorporate it into the traditional methodology. Both students and instructors alike feel that it must be one way or the other, that one method is more legitimate than the other, but the truth is they are both needed. Moreover, I find that students are not as savvy as the media and culture seem to give them credit for, but in order to teach them how to use this greatest of resources we must know how to use it ourselves.

6. How has technology affected your work?

In my academic work I feel it has broadened my ability to see the big picture. I am very interested in how images work, from the greatest works of art to the glibbest work of graphic design. Access is power, in my opinion, and never has so much access been available to us. In my art I am somewhat of a technology junkie. I love Adobe's products and I love the digital age. To me, it is evolution. Many may not think of it

as such. There is a real debate going on about the "real-ness" of digital work versus traditional media. But I would never have been a professional artist and especially not a designer, if I hadn't been introduced to this way of working. Having said that, I do have some traditional training in my background. I am someone who in the past relied on a pink eraser, not "Ctrl+Z" to undo a mistake I have cut ruby lith, I am reasonably good at drawing by hand, pencil-to-paper, and I know how to paint (although I hate painting), but I do not see one way as inherently better than the other. I think all artists and designers have to come to their own way of working. That is the point of expression, and for me that predominately means turning on the computer and getting to work.

7. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a graphic designer?

The biggest challenge today in design to me has been somewhat unexpected, in that the market has hemorrhaged over the past year and a half along with the economy in the U.S. It is also hard to not take it personally, especially when my work is rejected, but there are hardships in almost every field right now, not just graphic design.

On the other hand, I have found personal fulfillment in being a designer. I have great passion for teaching, and working as a designer generates almost as much passion in me. I did not expect that. I thought that I might just be able to teach design such as history or some practical aspects, but I find I have a lot of ability here and something to offer, which is great for me. And I know sooner or later it will all come together. As they say, "Hope springs eternal."



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Fred Kylander

(Sweden)



Fred Kylander today, known on crowdSPRING as “fredK”. Kylander lives and works in Sweden.

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm 43 years old, going on 24. Raised in a typical mid-'70s white middle-class suburb, the third of four kids (two sisters on either side, one older brother), imprinted with liberal ideals, learned to read and write at an early age, attended an English-speaking kindergarten and was fluent in English about the same time I was fluent in Swedish. Moved to the big city, Stockholm, around the age of 11. Did sports mostly at this time. Was an incredibly skilled left winger on the football pitch and did OK on the tennis courts. A bum knee put paid to any dreams I had of becoming the next great football pro. My favorite football team is, was and will always be Liverpool FC



2. How did you start out as a designer?

Well, I've always messed with design one way or another, but I never had any real plan to make a career out of it. Mostly because my brother is a great designer, much better than I am, so it seemed pointless to try and compete with him. But I've always messed with design one way or another, and I've always had a passionate interest for typography, and little by little, via a number of office positions, I found myself doing graphic design part time while simultaneously working with customer service at Preem Petroleum, one of Sweden's largest oil companies. Oddly enough, as large as the company is, it didn't have any in-house marketing division until 1996 when I was hired along with one other artist. (Graphic design wasn't really accepted as a profession in the Swedish industry world at the time, unless of course you worked for an ad agency. It's improved since, but the situation still isn't great, something that affects the freelance market.) I guess that's where my "career" as graphic designer began. I say "career" because I still have a hard time seeing myself as a professional designer. It's just something that I do. Like breathing. I am self-taught in graphics design. That may also have something to do with it.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

The single biggest influence? Pop culture, without a doubt. Record covers, T-shirts, posters. If I have to pick one, I'd say that the cover of David Bowie's album "Low" from 1977 was one that really opened my eyes. Besides pop culture, I'm fairly heavily influenced by everyday items: street signs, billboards, food labels, things that we use and see all the time without really thinking too much about them. I think that one reason I'm influenced by these things is that they are usually type driven and, as I said, typography is my real passion in the area of design. I read a book, "Typically Typographic" by Swedish master typographer Bo Berndal, some time in the early '90s, and it confirmed a number of things I thought I knew about letters and words and how they work. There are a couple of other books that have been important as well, but that one was essential to me.

Other big influences, if you want names, are artists like Henri Cartier-Bresson, Andy Warhol, Giacometti, Matisse, Cezanne, Buñuel, Godard, Tati, Fellini, Orson Welles and others of that vein. Mostly though, I'm influenced by the slightly more anonymous art that accompany the works of film, literature, theater and music artists. I'm pretty sure there are only a handful of people that can name the designer responsible for the "Low" cover, for example. I can't. But I love it.

4. When designing a logo, what do you think are the biggest mistakes a designer can make?

Overloading it, using too much detail. Not that detail work should be excluded altogether, but a logo must be able to work without it. It has to work up close as well as at a great distance. The very best logos around are perceived as incredibly simple and can be modified quickly by adding or removing a detail without the overall aesthetics or meaning being lost.

However, in my mind, the biggest mistake in logo creation is often made by the company behind it. The most common mistake is choosing a brand name that is too long or made up of too many parts to work well as a mark, or one that is really hard to illustrate with a simple icon. Again, the best logos around are simple word marks or icons that quickly bring out the brand name. Sun. IBM. Orange. Google. Schwarzkopf. Porsche. Jaguar. Simple, iconic names and words that work as typographic logos and/or easily interpreted illustrations.

5. How has technology affected your work?

Ah, technology! It's set me free! Seriously, though, it has. Modern technology allows me to create stuff that would have

required at least a team of two to three people to do in the old days. It allows me to work anywhere I want to – at the local coffee shop, on the beach, in bed, where ever I please – without losing any quality.

I very much doubt that I would do the things I do now without my computers and my digital cameras. Thanks to the Internet, production costs are ridiculously low. I very seldom do sketches on paper these days, almost never have the need to print things thanks to the quality of today's screens, and I can beam files all over the world, straight through the air. Technology has set me free. Hallelujah!

6. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a graphic designer?

I think the most challenging part is to try and constantly come up with something fresh. Doesn't have to be new, and in truth most things have already been done a thousand times over, but to find an angle or variation on a theme that makes it feel fresh and unused. That's hard. But it's also rewarding, when you feel like you've pulled it off.

7. What advice would you give a young designer just starting out?

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Believe in your abilities. Learn from your mistakes. Be prepared to take on any job, even if you think it's too simple for your skills; you never know what you can learn on the way. Remember to step away from your work every once in a while and look at it from a distance. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Learn the rules so that you know which ones you can bend and which ones you can break. Make time for friends and family. Always, always set aside a portion of your earnings for the rainy days. They will come. They always do, to everyone. And, don't be afraid to ask questions.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Grace Wall Conlon

(Provo, Utah, USA)



Grace Wall Conlon today, known on crowdSPRING as “[gracewc](#)”. Conlon was born in 1921 and grew up in Brooklyn. She currently lives and works in Provo, Utah.

1. Please tell us about yourself

I am in my 90th year and still working as a freelance writer. I do not ever plan to retire. I've written for newspapers and magazines in many places, e.g. as a columnist for Advertising Age in New York; publisher, writer and illustrator for The Sandpiper magazine in Boca Raton; reporter for Greenwich Time and Stamford Advocate in Connecticut; and a columnist for the Daily Herald in Provo, Utah.

2. How did you become interested in writing?

I've been writing all my life – prose, poetry, technical studies, short stories, novels, news stories, investigative journalism – just about any form of writing you might imagine. I wrote my first poem at 7 years of age, and I still write both serious poetry and jingles. I've written three novels, one of which I self-published. I am considering doing the same for the second one. I really write because I need this outlet, I guess. The business end of promoting my work leaves me absolutely cold.

3. Who are some of the biggest influences on your writing?

My freshman year English teacher was very instrumental in establishing the discipline that most writers, including myself, really need, e.g. to write every day, even when you don't feel like writing. Students in this teacher's class had to write a short theme every day and maintain a notebook of them. By the end of the term, even the most uncooperative among us had to concede that this daily exercise really worked. The improvement each of us showed in our work was quite evident.

4. When you were writing columns for Advertising Age about word usage and popular speech, what kind of changes did you see in pop culture over the years?

I wasn't aware of too many changes in English usage during those years, the late '80s. Most of the misuse of English grammar and spelling has occurred during the years in which Internet usage has become popular. What bothers me the most is not what the average person is saying, but what the professionals, such as advertising "experts" are saying and doing in their commercials. For example, adverbs are no longer used, it seems. Incorrectly, adjectives are substituted.

5. When did you first start working with computers?

I was first introduced to computers, way back in 1942 or '43. World War II had started, and my husband had been drafted very early. I was a new mother, and I went to work at Bell Telephone Laboratories on Bethune Street, just off Greenwich Village in New York City. The department I was assigned to was a wartime department that had been set up to support a team of engineers who were working on developing the first computer-fired field artillery piece. Our department came under the auspices of the Office of Scientific Research

and Development (OSRD) headed by Dr. Vannevar Bush. The computer took up a whole room, and I'm certain it couldn't perform as many tasks as today's PC.

Many people have argued with me that computers weren't around yet at that time. However, I just smile and tell them about the Civil War veteran I met back in the late 1920s, or about having read in the local paper that Lindberg had successfully made his solo transatlantic trip, or when I witnessed the first christening of a ship that was broadcast and shown on a friend's newly available television set. The TV was about 7 inches and cost, at that time, about \$1,000. It was possible to buy a new car for less than that.

Sometimes it can be lots of fun to be old and weighty with experience.

6. Can you share some of your experiences with computers?

I was extremely fortunate to have been given training by IBM back in the late 1960s. I was taught COBOL programming and by a happy coincidence, I was also attending Pace College at night and one of my courses was statistics. After completing my training, I was able to apply it by writing some programs that used statistical formulae. I remember designing a COBOL program to produce a line of least squares and being thrilled to have been able to apply my new programming knowledge together with my new statistical learning to respond to an actual forecasting need. In those days, we had to keypunch our own cards, and I sort of liked doing that.

7. How have computers changed writing?

Your questions and comments about computers are very important, perhaps the most important of all. The reason I believe this to be a fact is that the world is experiencing the beginning of the "Third Wave," the wave following the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution, of course, brought the world out of the agricultural age into the era where factories replaced the farm for many workers. ... It is never going to be the same again. As ("Third Wave" author) Alvin Toffler pointed out, more and more people will be self-employed and work from their homes. Group meetings are possible via computer networking. The trend is away from having employers provide pension and medical benefits and more toward employees working on a contractual basis and providing for their own needs, present and future. It is essential for our education systems to acknowledge the need for computer training of youngsters from an early age on through their lifetime.

8. Do you offer advice to other members of your generation who are reluctant to use computers?

I would urge them to seek out some of the youngsters who are so adept at playing computer games and let the kids teach them.

9. What do you do with your free time?

I play the piano for a half hour or so every day. I am strictly an amateur musician but I enjoy playing ragtime piano with its rolling, syncopated bass. This style piano playing was very popular in the 1930s and '40s, and I spent many a Saturday evening playing dance music at our parties. Home parties were very popular during the Depression years; nobody had any money to go out on the town!

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Graham Smith

(United Kingdom)



*Graham Smith, known
on crowdSPRING
as “[imjustcreative](#)”.*

*Smith lives and
works in the United
Kingdom. His work
can be found at [http://
www.imjustcreative.
com](http://www.imjustcreative.com) and [http://www.
grahamsfotos.com](http://www.grahamsfotos.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I live in a small town on the south coast of England. I'm 36 and have lived here all my life. (Something about that unnerves me as well, but I'm not the only one still here.) I stay partly because of the location, which is by the sea, with a nice beach, huge white cliffs, a long river, plenty of hills and a big forest to the back. All of this is a maximum of five minutes from my house.

I live with my insane Lurcher dog, Dylan, and my wonderfully supportive girlfriend Anna, who has three young children of her own, which I seem to be inheriting. Not a surprise in itself, but what it brings is. She is a consultant lawyer, specializing in flexible working issues, representing women who get fired from high-end jobs because they are pregnant, advising companies and individuals about working from home, etc.

My studio has a view of the South Downs and the sea, so I regard myself quite fortunate in this respect; I have worked in some dire hell holes in my life, so am more than qualified to say what makes a great working environment and a not-so-great one. Being self-employed and working from home poses problems but is far preferable to the problems created in an unhappy workplace. My whole career from 18 until now has been in commercial print, design, marketing advertising and high-end drum scanning and repro (pre-press) graphics. ... I was

tempted not to include this next part, but it has been so fundamentally crucial to the last four years of my life that I can't really deny it has happened. Simply, I had a breakdown at work. This triggered many life-changing events, including leaving my career, selling the house, traveling and trying to make sense of what was happening. You could say that I have been starting my life over three years ago at the age of 33. crowdSPRING, has been instrumental in bringing back my sense of self, my self-esteem and motivation to do what I do best, be creative. The success I have had on the projects on crowdSPRING has already spawned more work from the clients, which is just astonishing. To say I am pleased is a understatement.

2. Tell us about the importance of communication with clients and potential clients

This is my holy grail. It's the maker or breaker. Having had a career in commercial print, marketing, advertising, etc., then running my own eBay business, the one thing that has kept me one step ahead is the time I spend communicating. My own advice to all designers (but especially the new, inexperienced folk) would be to present your ideas in a way that the client will appreciate (i.e. not writing everything in capital letters). I see so many entries on crowdSPRING where the only detail a designer has left is "my logo." This will not help people sell their idea.

3. How has technology affected your work?

Just after I finished my three-year apprenticeship in manual paste-up and platemaking at a commercial printer I was made redundant. Apple Macs were just starting to make an appearance in commercial printers, replacing traditional typesetting machines. So this was the start of the end of the manual, not technological part, of the printing and design industry.



With my small redundancy, and a determination not to give up, I purchased myself a secondhand Mac LC and started my six-month self-training mission to learn Quark, Illustrator, Photoshop and anything else useful. The first Macintosh Bible I read cover to cover in a few days, and then spent day after day sitting in my bedroom reading book after book on the wonders of DTP, EPS files, Mac OS, etc.

The greatest technological advance for me is the laptop, which has made the biggest difference to my life. It has given me the ability to be considerably more fluid in terms of where I can and cannot work. You could argue it makes me a slave as I can't really get away from it, but working from home allows me to just get on or to take the laptop to a coffee shop.

4. When working online, how do you decide whether to participate in a project?

One thing will really put me off entering a project: no client feedback. If I see an interesting project with some good entries but no client feedback then I usually leave it alone despite the fact that there may be a good award.

If another designer seems to be on obvious good terms with the client and has already established him/herself with some great designs, that's another cue for me to maybe walk away. I look at the odds and think, "Really, why take that risk and spend all that time?" ... Graphic design is my living and, as such, it's not a side thing or a hobby.

5. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a graphic designer?

Being a designer allows me to have some sense of longevity and an enduring creation. This may not be for as long as a classic painting or a building, but a logo may be around for years, a brand just as long and a brochure possibly several years or longer if someone collects. It's just nice to know that you have made a visible mark on peoples' lives, big or small.

6. What advice would you give a young designer just starting out?

It's not just about creating nice images, it's about the reasons why you are creating these images, and these reasons are not to do with you but someone else. So knowing about how minds work, seeing things from different peoples' perspective, trying to better understand that our ideas are only a fraction of what is possible. Delve into some psychology – it all helps, it really does.

Design, art, etc., are all subjective. You need to understand why this is the case in order to be more flexible with your own designs and not to limit yourself to what you personally like. This includes allowing yourself to appreciate the positives in someone else's view of creative excellence when you find it dog ugly.

At heart you are trying to interpret someone else's dream or idea, something that will be very important to them either emotionally as in a personal logo or brand, or professionally as in a product or large company. If you struggle to see other peoples' views, then it will be harder for you to interpret or understand why someone else does not like your work.

*imjust*creative.com/

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Kai

(Australia)



*Kai, known on
crowdSPRING as “**Kai**”.
Kai lives, studies and
works in Australia.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm 19 years old and reside on the southeast coast of Australia, only 30 minutes or so from the outskirts of Sydney. I grew up on a healthy injection of mechano, cartoons and vegemite. I got my hands on my first computer at the age of 10. I like to think those two influences helped shape my creative flare as a young ankle-biter. (There's some Australian slang for you.) I sleep, eat, design and (try to) study in a grungy looking shared house with a couple of awesome roommates. I'm currently attending a two-year course for an associate degree in communication design through a neat little design school, and I love it.

2. What motivates you to pursue graphics design as a career?

Seeing great design certainly motivates me the most. For me motivation is really fueled by inspiration. When I see an amazing billboard or bus advertisement on my way into the city it really motivates me and pushes me to create something just as good. crowdSPRING itself is a huge motivator as well (especially when it comes to paying my share of the rent). To have a model that allows designers, regardless of academic credentials, to create, learn and collaborate

all from the comfort of (their) computer chairs is fantastic. Especially for someone in my position, who is currently halfway through schooling and doesn't have the necessary experience to snatch up freelance work. On crowdSPRING you're judged on your work, not on your degrees or diplomas, which is ideal for a person in my situation.

3. Tell us about the importance of communication with clients and potential clients

It's vital to have good communication with clients and potential clients. It's important to keep clients updated frequently on what's happening. The best practice to ensure seamless communication with clients is to set up a project management workflow, like 37signal's Basecamp application. Using a project management application keeps (you) on track by reminding you what things need to be done for a client and deadlines for getting work completed. It's also a winner when it comes to impressing a client.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

The city is probably the biggest influence on my design work. I love catching the train into the city and seeing the stunning architecture and atmosphere. I'm also constantly browsing the Internet's blogosphere (usually when I should be working), searching for articles by designers and developers.

5. When designing a website, what do you think are the biggest mistakes a designer can make?

The biggest mistake a designer can make when designing a website is to over-complicate the design with graphics and pictures. Search engines cannot read or index text on images and graphics, and if Google can't index your content, then there's fat chance that you're going to have many users turning up to your site. It's important to design your website so that they can be easily optimized for search engines by the developer.

6. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a graphic designer?

The most challenging aspect of being a designer is staying fresh, original and creative. The beauty of crowdSPRING is that you only participate if you want to; if the brief isn't prompting any ideas or concepts, you can just walk away. This wouldn't be the case if you were at a design agency and were told to work with a client to develop a solution to something that you weren't really interested in or enthusiastic about. The most rewarding aspect is certainly seeing your designs in print form and seeing them used in the real world.

7. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Just do it. It may seem very intimidating at first, seeing these astounding ideas and concepts all around you, wondering how you could ever compete with that. But those people had to start somewhere, just like everyone. They didn't develop that talent overnight; they worked long and hard for it. So just go for it and never doubt yourself.

Working with clients is a challenge and it takes a lot of time to learn how to do so successfully. You need to avoid limiting yourself to what designs you like and to be flexible and open with a client's ideas and propositions. It's important to persevere with a client and ensure that they get a design solution that they think looks good, not something that you think looks good.

8. What do you do with your free time?

Not that I really have much of it at the moment, but I really enjoy my television, especially the American dramas. In my downtime I love sitting back and watching "Heroes" or "Prison Break." When I'm not doing that, I'm out and about watching the latest Matt Damon film or hitting Sydney's bars and clubs with my mates.

9. On crowdSPRING, you've posted a project as a buyer and have also participated as a creative. Having seen crowdSPRING from both sides, what advice can you share with other buyers and creatives?

I recently posted a logo design project for a hobby of mine. I'm sure some people may wonder why a designer would post a design project, but I don't think logo design is my strong point, and after seeing the exceptional talent on crowdSPRING, how could I pass on the excuse to test drive things from a buyer perspective?

It's really clear that creatives can underestimate how difficult it is for a buyer to provide feedback. When it comes to giving feedback, it really helps if the creative explains their design and leaves notes about their submission, rather than just entering "new revision" as the description. A few creatives wrote nice notes to accompany their entries, and those notes really helped me to provide good, constructive feedback.

From a buyer's standpoint, it's really vital that you communicate and collaborate with the creatives participating in your project. The project I held reached an astounding 160 entries, and I confidently can say that it was primarily because of the buyer interaction I had within the project.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Keith Woodruff

(Akron, Ohio, USA)



*Keith Woodruff
today, known on
crowdSPRING as
“**Dayshift**”. Woodruff
lives and works in
Akron, Ohio.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I am an ex-ad agency writer and am freelancing now as gRasShoPpEr Communication. The big and small font is an e.e. cummings thing. My hobbies are, in this order I suppose: reading and writing, fishing, horror movies, craft beer (all hail Lagunitas) and jogging to run off the beer. I have two Border Terriers, Otty and Indy, and am haunted by the ghosts of my cats Katie and Paisley. My first love was the ocean, the Pacific, even though during my childhood there the Zodiac Killer was hiding down every path. One of my favorite foods is Blind Robins. I makes 'em and eats 'em, much to the disgust of everyone around. If you have to ask, you'll be sorry.



2. How did you become interested in writing?

I would have to say reading made me interested in writing. I've always been an avid reader. I read "Of Mice and Men" in high school and was devastated – in a good way, if that makes any sense. I thought, if I could ever write a story this gorgeous, that would be quite an accomplishment. Then there was the whole Stephen King thing.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your writing?

I think the word play of classic comedy had a big influence on my advertising writing. I remember loving the word gags of Abbott and Costello as a kid (and still do), as well as Laurel and Hardy, and I imitated their style of word play whenever I could. Later Steve Martin, George Carlin, Steven Wright, more wordsmiths. I think that love of word play and sense of humor about language helped me with some of my best headlines and also is what makes it hard to get a straight answer out of me – or so I am constantly told.

4. You are a fan of comedians. Do you have a favorite comedy album?

Yikes. The last time I bought a comedy record (and it was a record), I think it was "Occupation Fool" by George Carlin. Probably would pick that as my favorite "album," though I don't buy comedy anymore.

5. What types of writing interest you the most?

Right now, I am lucky enough to be writing quite a few speeches, and I really enjoy that. That's the for-pay stuff. For fun, I like to read poetry, history, ghost and horror stories. Shameless plug: If you have never read "The Willows" by Algernon Blackwood, and you like your fiction dark and scary, you are missing out my friend. Lastly, I love classical Japanese and Chinese poetry.

6. You write ads, ad campaigns, collateral, direct mail, websites, product descriptions and a variety of general communications. What is most interesting for you?

Without a doubt, I think ad concepts are the most fun you can have doing what I do.

7. What would be your dream ad campaign?

That's easy. I would be working on the Naomi Watts account, or perhaps the Satan account. The latter would be a tough sell, but who doesn't love a challenge?



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8. How do you promote your work?

I wear a sandwich board on the corner of Main Street and Exchange and hand out business cards.

9. Please describe your typical work day

Coffee. House and yard work, 40 percent; writing and reading, the other 60 percent.

10. What is your favorite book?

Impossible question. If my house ever caught fire, there's a good chance I wouldn't get out in time because I would be pacing back and forth in front of the bookcase trying to decide which 12 I should carry out. I can think of several stories that mattered to me a great deal over the years. "Flowers for Algernon" was one. "King Lear." "Of Mice and Men." Stephen Crane's "Blue Hotel."

11. What Stephen King story was best translated to film?

Ah, I wish someone could do a decent film version of any King story. Of those in circulation, I suppose "Misery" and "Cujo" come close to being a fairly true rendering of the story. My favorite book was "The Shining," but the whole Kubrick take was way out in left field in my opinion. Scariest book was "Pet Sematary," and I would love to see the remake done well.

12. What do you do with your free time?

Play my drums, answer crowdSPRING surveys, try and elevate my wok cooking skills, look for rallies against corporate personhood to attend.

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12 Questions

Meet Lewis Agrell

(Prescott, Az, USA)



*Lewis Agrell, known
on crowdSPRING
as “lagrell”. Agrell
lives and works in
Prescott, Az.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I was born in Minnesota, but wanderlust struck after graduating from the University of Minnesota. I've lived in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Florida and currently live in Arizona (my favorite spot of them all). I live at 5,280 feet with my wife and our cat, Ellie. We get four seasons. If it gets too cold, we can zip down to Phoenix. If it gets too hot, we can zip up to Flagstaff, 7,000 feet. It's great! I was a double major in college: theater and art. Theater won, for five years, then I went back to art and never looked back. I think that my theater experience makes some of my work a bit theatrical. Sometimes this works great, sometimes it works against me. "Less is more," as they say.

I worked as the chief artist for The New York Times Company in Sarasota, Fla., for 10 years and had the opportunity to work as both an illustrator and a designer. Great experience. After a decade of the daily news cycle, I knew it was time to move on. It was too cozy. What I thought was the dream job of a lifetime turned out to be just another cubicle trap. I needed more freedom. I packed up the family and moved to Arizona. My wife, Kathryn, a professional writer, and I started The Agrell Group, and we worked primarily with the locals. When the Internet was born, it was the perfect vehicle to start to branch out, nationally and internationally. I currently work pretty steadily with two publishing houses, designing covers. crowdSPRING was a wonderful discovery. Not only have I been blown away by the talent, but it is my new college education. I learn something from every competition. It's humbling.

2. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

The Frankenstein Motorworks logo design is one of my favorites. What a great name for a business! How often does something like that come along? The Hollywood Farms project was fun. I didn't win this competition, but I really like the way the rooster came out. Maybe it will be used later, in some other competition. Note the theatrical quality in both logo designs. These types of projects are the most fun for me.

3. Are you inspired at all by pop culture?

Pop culture is unavoidable. A lot of it is very harsh and ugly, and that doesn't do much for me, although I will confess to doing some "grunge" work now and then. In this business, you have to keep your eyes and mind open to everything that exists.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Seymour Chwast and Milton Glaser are way up there. They always create spectacular stuff.

5. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

I have three sketch pads to my left at my work station. That's the quickest and best way. I also have a sketch pad next to my bed. I'm sure that it drives my wife crazy. It's dangerous to sketch right before bed, because the brain can keep working. There have been lots of times that I have gotten out of bed at five in the morning to work out a concept.

6. Mac or PC?

100 percent Mac, all the way. Fantastic computer.

7. How has technology affected your work?

Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop are the tools of the trade. Couldn't live without these two. I used to work entirely on the board. Now it's 95 percent on the computer and 5 percent on the board. I subscribe to HOW magazine.

8. What are your favorite websites for inspiration or learning about graphic design?

Actually, the Brits have some great magazines that provide plenty of inspiration. I need to get away from the computer, once in a while. Computer Arts, Advanced Photoshop and Photoshop Creative are three of my favorites. I grab a handful of design magazines from Barnes & Noble, sit in the corner and soak up the articles.

9. Please describe your typical work day

Normally, I'm at the computer at six in the morning. crowdSPRING takes up most of my morning time. The late morning and afternoon are for my regular freelance work. Sometimes I'll come down in the evening and work a bit on some crowdSPRING projects.

10. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

What's better than being creative? It makes life a much more interesting experience. The most challenging aspect is trying to top yourself. Trying to reach for greater imagination and perfection. It's a long climb up that mountain. Complacency, ego and vanity are the worst traps in the world.

11. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphic design as a career?

Go to art school. A good one. Learn every bit of information that you can from your instructors and from your talented friends. Try to work with the best people in the business, if you can. Never stop learning.

12. What do you do with your free time?

Northern Arizona is the perfect place to escape into nature. With Sedona and Flagstaff short drives away, it's easy to take mini-vacations. These mini-trips are essential to avoid computer burnout. The beauty of these areas are food for the soul, and will have some effect on my work.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Maximilian

(Jacksonville, Fla, USA)



*Maximilian, known
on crowdSPRING as
“[maximiliandesign](#)”.
Max lives and works
in Jacksonville, Fla.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

How does a central European expatriate (yes, that would be me) end up in one of the dullest cities in the USA? (Yes, that would be Jacksonville.) Long story, but I began my exodus to the U.S. as an exchange student when I was still a spring chicken. After my year as exchange student, one thing led to another. I came back for college – in West Virginia of all places – got married, got a job, moved around a couple times. You know, the usual things people do. And despite my wacky self, the U.S. government actually allowed me to stay. Indefinitely. I guess they figured it was best to keep me close by, so they could keep an eye on me. Just in case.

2. How did you become interested in design?

Well, what else is a dorky kid to do? I wasn't any good in sports, so they always made me the goalkeeper, to minimize the damage I could cause to the team. I was also really awkward around the ladies. So those two factors eliminated what the cool kids did while growing up (i.e. having LIVES), which left me to ponder my youth at the easel and the drawing board. It helped that my elementary school teacher recommended I join a school with special emphasis on artistic development. So I spent seven years of my education in Europe with other loonies who enjoy drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, heck, even music. I even dabbled around with some of the early

home computer programs that would let you draw in the stunning array of 16(!) colors. Oops, I dated myself. Strike that last part.

Anyway, when time came to decide how to pay my future bills, it seemed a good idea to choose something less to do with goalkeeping, but something I was not too bad at. After almost picking industrial design, I instead ventured into land planning and landscape architecture with a later specialization in golf course design. It turned out to be an awesome feeling, in a megalomaniac kind of way, to move buildings and other stuff worth gazillions of dollars with the mere stroke of a pencil. The spatial aspects of designing directly on the land are fascinating, and it's great fun to see things you draw actually take shape on the ground. And scary. As in, whoa, what the heck is this thing they just built? Ooh yeah ... I guess that's what it shows here in my plans.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

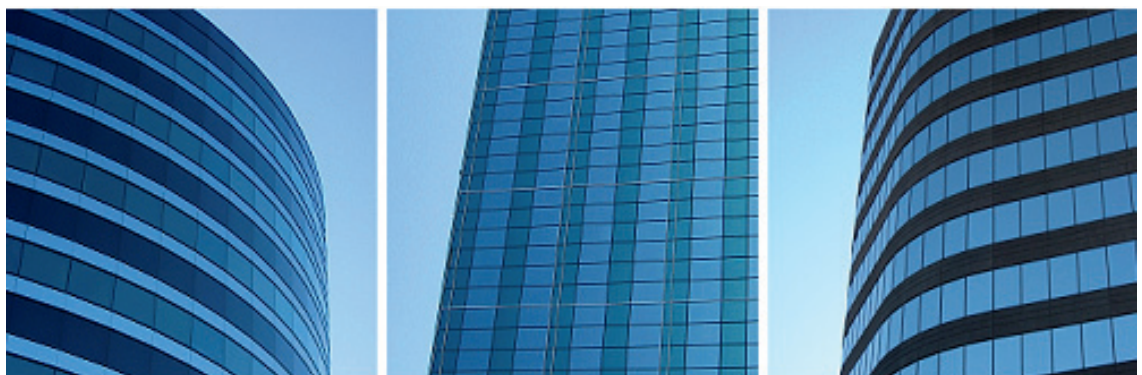
There are so many I thought turned out really great. Then there is nothing worse than getting a shocking two buyer-rating stars on a design you are sooooo in love with yourself. It's absolutely heart-wrenching. They'll instead pick an entry where the designer misspelled their name using Times Roman and surrounded it with an elliptical crescent. Go figure.

4. Mac or PC?

If I tell you what I am using, you'll laugh. Or puke. Or both.

I can't even say for sure when the last time I used a Mac was. Probably back in the college computer lab, when they still had colorfully striped apples as logos and were called "Macintosh." Argh, I just dated myself again. Strike that.

So yeah. I am a PC user. Please shoot me. Not only that, but get this: My primary design tools are AutoCad 2000 and Paint Shop Pro 7. Uh-huh, you read that right. Not even PhotoShop. PaintShop. You laughing yet? Or puking? See it this way: Admire me. I am doing all this killer work with tools older than dirt.



5. How do you promote your work?

Aw, you know, the usual: neon billboards, nude flashers holding up banners while sprinting through crowds at big sporting events, candy dropped from airplanes, one billion spam e-mails sent out by my Russian underworld connections. Or not.

I guess my only kind of promotion is the (hopefully not too indecent) exposure I get from participation in these here contests. Every so often a buyer will send me an invite to their project after noticing some other entry of mine. (Also) I have my design portfolio online at www.maximilian.us.

6. Please describe your typical work day

I work at home, so it's pretty flexible. I tell people: I always work, and I never work. I feel mostly useless in the morning, so it takes me a while to really get going. Seems like my most productive time is in the evening, but it totally varies, depending on when inspiration strikes. Or deadlines. Or procrastination.

I can't say I miss working in an office and dealing with superiors looking over my shoulder. But I do miss the weekly office sports pool or the occasional office putting contest. But it's a very small price to pay for having a six-second commute in the morning! And each day is different. When I reach a good stopping point, I'll go swim or run some errands, take out the puppy or have a bite to eat, just to decompress. But sometimes I keep cranking until I get it out the door. It just depends. Needless to say, some days I also end up just goofing around, if there is nothing on the board. At least I don't have to pretend to be busy when the boss comes looking into my cubicle.



7. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Goalkeeping.

Sometimes I tell people I am a forensic anthropologist just to see their reaction. But most don't really know what that is, anyways. My other career path consideration was commercial pilot, my childhood dream job. Then again, can you imagine a nut like me flying a plane with 400 people inside? It's probably better this way. Besides, being an airline pilot lost most of its glamour since the days when I was a young, wide-eyed airplane aficionado. Nowadays being a pilot has almost as little glamor as being a designer.

8. What do you do with your free time?

Free time? When you work a job you really like, even work can seem like free time – because it's what I enjoy doing anyway. Lucky, huh? I love fiddling with a design and drawing things. If I didn't get paid for it, I would probably still do it, at least sometimes, just for fun.

But other than designing, I like my daily 2K swim. Or a nice round of golf. Arts and sciences of all sorts, especially any design field, and astronomy, hiking, traveling and cultures, going on photo safaris. I like watching auto racing and sumo wrestling. Yes, you read that right. Sumo wrestling.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Michael Irby

(Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, USA)



*Michael Irby, known
on crowdSPRING as
“3squared”. Irby lives
and works in Coeur
d’Alene, Idaho.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I grew up primarily in the southeastern part of the U.S. where I earned a B.S. in industrial design. Although the school was highly accredited, the program focused on quick sketching and marker rendering techniques. While these are formidable skills, I found myself lacking the much needed computer design skill set that employers wanted and the desire to move to the big cities where they were located. Hell, I didn't even have a computer. I moved to beautiful Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, seeking that quality of life we all talk about. Since then I have been a bartender, restaurant manager and cabinet maker. I bought a house with my girlfriend, and we now have two cats and two dogs. We recently purchased a Mac (my girlfriend is studying graphic design), and I started reading her design text books. I signed up for crowdSPRING as a way to challenge myself to learn the software, and it has been a blast ever since.

2. How did you become interested in design?

I became interested in design as a child. I collected comic books and would spend hours trying to draw the covers (mostly Todd McFarlane's work). I could replicate anything I could see, but was not very gifted at creating drawings from scratch. I put the idea of a career in creativity aside and followed a path toward science until my senior year in high school when I was required to take creative

writing and art history. Both reignited the need to do something unique and unusual. When I discovered industrial design at my local university, it seemed the perfect blend of both worlds.

3. Which of your designs are your favorite and why?

My logo design for Via Ferrata was my second project on crowdSPRING and my first win, so there is a lot of love there. It involved multiple variations and additional requests from the buyer until all of the elements came together. The buyer gave consistent feedback throughout the project which made it exciting; communication is so important to the success of any project. (Buyers listening?) I also like the logo for Triple E Productions. It is one of those simple, memorable logos that clients are always asking for.

4. Who or what are some of your biggest influences on your design work?

I get inspiration from good design everywhere. For example, I recently flew into the Louisville, Ky. airport where I had the opportunity to experience the Dyson Airblade hand dryer. Dyson is known for his tenaciousness, and in this design he delivers perfection as usual. I washed my hands twice! My school followed the Bauhaus philosophy of form follows function, so this influences my designs the most. For me, design is about problem solving, and usually the simplest solution is the best. There are many designers on crowdSPRING whose simple, intelligent designs inspire and challenge me. As far as influential designers of note: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Eileen Gray, Charles Pollock, Alvar Aalto, Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer (yes, I like furniture design) and Herb Lubalin, whose "Mother & Child" logo is truly inspirational.

5. How do you come up with concepts after you read a buyer's brief?

After the brief, I peruse the website if one is available. I look at all of the logos the buyer may have posted that they like, to see if a style is relevant. Then I check Wikipedia if there are concepts I don't understand (B2B marketing, angel investors, boab tree, etc). Once the research is complete, I usually let it simmer. Have some coffee, go work out, take a nap, take the dogs for a walk. Then it's

time for pen and paper; usually by now some ideas are starting to percolate. I write out the name of the company and any ideas associated with it. I look for obvious relationships within the name or letters, and among the images or ideas. It is very rare that an idea hits instantaneously, and I go straight to the computer. Once sketches are done, I open Illustrator and get to work.

6. Mac or PC?

Mac. I will never go back to PC. (Sorry, guys.) I am primarily drawn to Illustrator and vectors. (I guess pun intended.) I like the scalability and versatility, and I am still learning Photoshop. Hell, I am still learning Illustrator. I have a basic digital camera which I use for capturing profiles and silhouettes of people when needed. Again, I can only draw what I can see.

7. What is your dream design project?

Furniture design has always been my favorite. In college I utilized "green" design in every project I could; it wasn't very popular 12 years ago and only earned me the nickname "hippie." My dream project would be to design and manufacture modern furniture using non-toxic, environmentally sustainable materials. Now that green is hip, which isn't a bad thing, it seems more achievable.

8. Please describe your typical work day

Let the pups out, play with them, feed them, some time in between have coffee and check my phone for new projects or updates from crowdSPRING. Once the dogs are down for a nap, I hit the computer to work on projects or search for new ones. If there is nothing on the horizon, and I don't have to work my other job, I generally watch tutorials or call it a day, but there is usually something to work on, between puppy naps anyway.

9. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

The most challenging aspect to being a designer is understanding exactly what the client wants – they don't always speak design – and then creating a solution that meets their needs in a creative, never-been-done-before way. Success at this is the most rewarding part.

10. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Bartending is currently my bread and butter, and it gets me out of the house to be around people, so I am not yet a full-time designer. And there is something quite rewarding about not punching a time clock to do creative design work. crowdSPRING has provided this opportunity. But if I were to choose a different path, I would be a professional disc golfer. I am not very good, but what a sweet way to make a living.

11. What do you do with your free time?

I am training two puppies right now, bartending and working via crowdSPRING, so there is little free time. But I like disc golf (obviously), camping, floating the river with friends and cold beer, and generally hanging with my peeps, who are also an inspiration (at least sometimes). I also love being outdoors and shooting photography.



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12 Questions

Meet Rommel Rojas

(Valencia, Venezuela)



*Rommel Rojas, known
on crowdSPRING as
“[rommelrojas](#)”. Rojas
lives and works in
Valencia, Venezuela.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm multimedia designer and amateur photographer/filmmaker. Working as a freelancer for the last six years, I've been involved in various art projects including two major art exhibitions in my country's contemporary museum of art.

2. How did you become interested in design?

Since (I was) young I had two very defined interest: programming and painting. I always was that kid taking summer courses in informatics and drawing the same summer. Always surrounded by older people. The time came when I needed to choose which path to take as a professional career. I chose information technologies, and from that time I was submerged in all things computers, but always found a way to marry art with technology.



3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

One of the most complete and rewarded was the (design for) "Go Dog LA." I really enjoyed it because I appreciate dogs, and the client was very open to ideas. Also, I had the chance to experiment with the presentation of the design to the client. The client was worried about how the presented logos would work on different media including website, T-shirts, location signs, etc. I presented my design on a T-shirt, of course,. but I was able to locate the facade of the actual business via Google Maps Street View and make a composition with my logo on the wall, main entrance and a vehicle in order to show them how it was going to look. After the project was complete, we ended up sharing tips for vacation in California. I won a friend.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Henry Moore, a sculptor; too many photographers; Dali, de Chirico and others surrealists painters; strong visual filmmakers like Ridley Scott, James Cameron and Stanley Kubrick; minimalism in Cezanne's pieces; Zen calligraphy. Special mention to John Maeda. A strong influence. He is always exploring the merge between design and technology.

5. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

In all cases I always research the idiosyncrasy of the client, group or business. The crowdSPRING model is a global model. One day I'm working on a design for a client in Ireland and the next day I'm working with someone from the States or Germany, so I try to understand what symbols and ideas are more meaningful to them.

Before trying to design something from scratch I check my not-approved designs to see if I already have something as a starting point for the new project. There is a lot of blood, sweat and tears on those designs and usually I find something to start with.

Sometimes for me it is faster to work on an idea on paper, sometimes on the computer. When the idea is just words or geometric forms usually I work on the computer. Silhouettes, organic forms, script fonts are worked on paper. Only the best, strongest ideas go to the computer. Sometimes I scan the paper ideas or take a picture with my phone.

6. Mac or PC?

Being a programmer since very young (has given me) a special relation to computers' hardware and software. Especially PCs. I've been able to get inside the hardware and change components. Knowing how all that is related to software performance can give you a very clear vision of what you can do with a computer. After so many years working on both platforms I can say that, at least for me, the PC platform is very powerful creating content, but the Mac is by far the platform of choice when I want to consume that content. I won't change my desktop PC when I need to design with powerful tools (I got the same power as a Mac but half the price), but I'll show my designs on my iPad or iPhone. For me the PC is the artist studio. The Mac is the gallery.

7. Please describe your typical work day

Breakfast. E-mail. Updates. I spend the rest of the morning updating already-won designs with new requirements from clients, finishing files and making sure they are happy with those files. Lunch. Work and research new ideas. Dinner. When everything is quiet and the phones aren't ringing is when I become more creative. This is the time for me to choose new projects and create. This goes usually until 2 a.m. (This is an old habit from my programming/student days.)



8. What are other ways you use your creativity?

Photography. I'm always exploring all styles of photography from landscape to portrait. There is so much knowledge about composition, light and expression. This discipline is a never-ending source of inspiration and a unique form of expression.

Short films and documentaries. As with photography films are an extension of an initial design or idea, from my handmade storyboard to the edited scene.

Cook. I've become attracted to gourmet cooking for my family and friends. My sister says that it is a logical step for me because this requires a lot of ingredients and creativity. I don't know; I just like the holistic idea of making something bigger than the sum of its parts.

9. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Full-time programming or anything science or astronomy related.

10. What do you do with your free time?

The first thing is to get offline as soon as I can. Then my priorities are: girlfriend, family, friends. We created sort of a "wine club" as an excuse to stay in touch and learn about wines from around the world.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Shannon Perry

(Phenix, Va, USA)



*Shannon Perry,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“[shancore](http://www.shancore.com)”. Perry
lives and works in
Phenix, Va. Visit her
website at [http://
www.shancore.com](http://www.shancore.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a 27-year-old freelance graphic designer. I recently just moved to Phenix to be closer to my parents and family, with my boyfriend Russ, and our "little monster" pit bull, Eddie. But before the big move, I had been living in Philadelphia for the past 10 years. I attended Tyler School of Art at Temple University in 2001, hoping to major in graphic design, only to find out that I was more interested in printmaking. So I took up printmaking as a major instead with some fundamental design courses on the side. After several years of running circles around getting my BFA, and juggling a full-time work and school schedule, I decided to take a break. I then landed a job as graphic designer at a small printing company, where I worked my last two years in South Philly. During this time is when I really started to get back into design. It wasn't until then that I thought I could actually make a living doing graphic design as a freelance profession and decided to move to Virginia and pursue a career in freelance design.

2. How did you become interested in art and design?

Growing up with great parents. My dad is into computers, and my mother is a crafter, so I got the best of both. I've always been interested in art since I was kid, and my parents are very supportive, always encouraging me and my

art. They even let me start taking private art lessons with a local artist when I was in elementary school. Even at an early age, I decided that I wanted to be an artist and knew that no matter what I did, I would always be doing something creative.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Everything around me. I'm always randomly staring at things and getting random thoughts and ideas, whether I'm staring out the SEPTA bus window in Philly looking at the new bus stop ad or now driving the countryside in Virginia looking at cows and rusted gas station signs.

4. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

After reading a buyer's creative brief I just have some idea or vision on how I want the concept to look in my mind. If ideas don't pop in my mind right away, I like to revisit the brief, check out any materials they have, visit the buyer's website (if they have one), or do some research on the company until I get an idea. Sometimes, not always, I'll get a pencil and start drawing sketches out and then bring them into the computer. Most of the time I start creating in Illustrator right away.

5. Mac or PC?

I have experience using both, but I use a PC. And so far so good (knock on wood).

6. What is your dream design project?

My dream design project would be to create a famous icon. Or get paid to create art for skate decks or a T-shirt line.

7. How do you promote your work?

Right now, it's basically word of mouth, and doing work on crowdSPRING has really been really awesome. I'm still new at graphic design, and I have a few upcoming things I want to do, but I'm just taking one day at a time.

8. Please describe your typical work day

Usually starts with waking up and drinking coffee. I like to watch the news for a bit, then I check my e-mail, to see what's going on for the day. Sometimes I start working right away if there is work to do, or if there's not much work I'll browse and participate in projects on crowdSPRING or work on other personal projects till about 5 or 6ish and then it's dinner. Then I just relax and hang out with the family till bed.

9. What are other ways you use your creativity?

Definitely in the kitchen. I love to cook. Seven years ago, I would not have been saying that. There were times my friends begged me not to cook anything. I'm way past that now! I especially like baking breads, pastries and cooking on the grill.

10. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

If I weren't designing, I probably would be working in a restaurant industry somewhere. That's what I was doing while I was in school and before graphic design.

11. What do you do with your free time?

If I'm not working, I'm hanging out with the family, walking the dog or reading about how to build websites and learning other new tricks.



BROOKLYN'S
VIETNAMESE POBOYS



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12 Questions

Meet Shubho Roy

(India)



*Shubho Roy, known
on crowdSPRING as
“[shubho_roy](#)”. Roy
lives and works in
India.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I grew up in a small university town called Santiniketan in Bengal, India. It's a pretty place for lazy people like me. Life is slow, nice creative atmosphere. You find musicians and artists and writers around. Lots of trees, and there's also a river nearby you can go down to on a bicycle. I've lived here all my life save a few times when I thought a job in a city like Calcutta would be better – I was wrong. Now I am back in my hometown, living with my wife and my 4-year-old son. I am 29, by the way.

Professionally, I am mainly into broadcast designing, specializing in low-cost solutions for channel packaging (from logos to look-n-feel to channel IDs). And since you don't have TV channels changing their looks every day, I have lots of time to do other things...

2. How did you start out as a designer?

As far as I remember I was always going to be an artist of some kind. I was trained in the art college as a painter in my hometown university. Side by side, I also nurtured a passion for filmmaking and writing. I was doing designing too (posters, cover-design etc.) as student, but was not being paid for it. Still I do a lot of work for nothing more than a grateful smile! I love doing that. But I still have a hard time imagining myself exclusively as a designer. "Artist" is better word.

How I professionally started out as a designer is a minor accident. I made a short film in 2003 in which I, naturally, did the graphics bit as well. It was early 2005, and STAR News, one of India's biggest news networks, was preparing to launch the first 24-hour Bengali news channel. I remember I went to Calcutta to try my luck there as a video editor. An American gentleman called Ken Tiven, a former CNN vice-president, was conducting the interviews in his capacity as a consultant. After talking to me and seeing bits of my film, Ken advised me to join as a graphic designer instead of an editor! At first it seemed crazy. I wasn't sure if I could do design professionally. And there were more experienced designers applying for the job. But Ken was somehow convinced. Secretly, I was excited too, because surely graphics was more fun than editing. Before long I was part of the core designing team.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Among my earliest inspirations, I must mention Satyajit Ray, the filmmaker, who was also a fine graphic designer, typographer and illustrator, who really helped shape the identity of Bengali design, fusing traditional Indian pictorial wisdom with modernist minimalist solutions.

Among international designers I think the works of Paul Rand, Walter Landor, F. Starowieyski, Saul Bass, Herb Lubalin and Milton Glaser, to name a few, should be studied by every aspiring designer. I constantly draw inspiration from sculptors and painters: Matisse, Mondrian, Picasso, Giacometti ... Egon Schiele was a favorite when I was a student. Love watching figurative painters like RB Kitaj, David Hockney, Francesco Clemente, KG Subramanyan – we have seen him up close, working at the college. Too long a list, really. Also, Russian constructivists like Tatlin, Rodchenko, Gabo. Major inspirations for designers! Should be studied by all.

Major ideas often come from other disciplines: poetry, films, music. But finally, as a designer, I always go back to nature. That's essential. Studying stones, leaves, vines, ripples in water, a feather falling endlessly ... absorbing the rhythm and energy inside will reflect in your understanding of forms.

4. What's the very first thing you do when approaching a new design?

Since you have asked, I run to the bathroom! I think it's the excitement when you have an idea. There I sit for about half an hour and think. Smoke and think, trying to capture the fleeting idea, trying to grasp it completely.

5. How has technology affected your work?

The place where I live lagged behind in technology for many years (and still does). People started using the computer late, and still I am probably only one here doing graphic design professionally. But things are changing, more and more people are Photoshop-literate now. So that's good news for the next generation. But there are some major hurdles that we face everyday. In west Bengal, particularly outside the big cities, we have never known what an uninterrupted power supply is! During the summer and the monsoon we can have long stretches of power cuts (they call it load-shedding here), or there may even be many short breaks throughout the day at regular intervals. The autumn and winter are better. But, anyway, that's a real bother for those who are making do with technology. It can drive you crazy. But we just go about doing what we can and try to beat the conditions. So I try never to make myself too technology dependent.



6. What do you do with your free time?

Design. I feel most free when designing or doing something related, something creative. Maybe writing, scribbling ... But that's really how I would define my free time. However, when not designing I either read or spend time with my family or maybe listening again and again to the few songs I like (Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, mainly). But if you are an artist, you cannot cease being one, ever, not even in your "free time." You remain a designer, or a writer, or a musician. Your mind stays tuned that way. Whichever way you look, you see patterns, forms, shapes ... It's a pleasurable curse.



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12 Questions

Meet Allen

(Utah, USA)



*Allen, known on
crowdSPRING as
“vibes35”. Allen lives
and works in Utah.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

Well, I live in Salt Lake City, Utah, where I was born and raised. I enjoy traveling from time to time, especially right within our beautiful state – Moab, Zion, Lake Powell and other fun areas. I really just enjoy life and spending time with family and friends. This provides a great release and break from sitting in front of a computer screen day in and day out (which, by the way, is very easy for me to do).

2. How did you become involved with graphic design?

The closest I can pinpoint the moment when art and design really entered my mind heavily was in seventh grade where I had a wonderful art teacher who spent time really teaching and inspiring his classes.

More specifically I remember vividly where he taught the class about 1-2 and 43-point perspective in drawing. I was hooked; I had always enjoyed freehand drawing and much in those days was art inspired from reading the Lord of The Rings trilogy. But when I began to play with perspective and architecture, a whole new realm opened up in my mind.



The second moment was in ninth grade where I began working on the school computers and learning some basic programming. I enjoyed the WYSIWYG of working with computers. I remember the drawing tools in basic programming were very rudimentary and basically consisted of point and line drawing. Anyway, I remember trying to take what I learned from art classes and work on creating perspective drawings using basic programming. I wish I would have saved some of that work. It was very difficult at times to use basic programming to convey the image or thoughts I had in my head, but this practice forced me to think carefully about each item and line.

3. You've written that "design is truly meaningful when it communicates a clear message." How do you ensure that your designs communicate a clear message?

Wow! This is a big one and what I consider to be at the heart of true design.

Let me begin by saying that there is a clear and defined difference between art and design. What I mean by that is this: Art is very subjective in nature and usually reflects the personal and inner thoughts of the artist. Design on the other hand, when done for a client/buyer, is or should be objective in nature.

Here is where I believe it gets a bit sticky at times: Any image or solution is always subjective to a degree. Even when working with clients. I personally try to focus on creating a visually attractive piece that also communicates and answers the basic needs of a business objective. Does this image or design communicate clearly the message the buyer wants to convey? Does this align with the current culture? Brand? Image? All these questions which speak to the heart of the problem – design is a problem-solving discipline – can and should be a primary focus when designing for a client.

There have been times when the client did not like my design at first, often because they had a different vision in mind. But after spending some time talking about the rationale and theory, and how and why the design or element was handled a particular way, I've often been able to persuade the client to think differently about the design.

I believe that we have to remember as designers/creatives that many times, most of the time, we work with business people who do not understand the creative side of things. They may have ideas, and some of their ideas are good, but we are the professionals. They come to us for our expertise and opinion. If we want to succeed in this field, it is up to us to close the gap of communication and learn to speak to the business side as well as creative when working with clients. The burden is on us. If and when we do this, I really think then that design will be taken more seriously as a business solution, and not considered as just a pretty picture.

4. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

If the briefs are written well – and many are – I look for key words and follow closely if the buyer has asked (designers) to visit a specific website or look at any additional information. I believe that the buyer knows their business far better than I do and I will always take the time to understand them a bit more. I think it also important to private message to ask buyers additional questions as needed.

I really try to use the opportunity when explaining my designs to also educate the buyer about the creative process. This works well and cannot be overstated enough, that when you have the buyer on board and engaged in the process of collaboration, your chances of persuading the buyer that yours is the best design go up tremendously. I am still amazed at times when I see a new project hit the boards and designs are posted that clearly show the brief was not even read, or at least not fully read. I believe that discredits the creative and reflects poorly on the community.

Read the brief, stand behind your design and do not be apologetic!

5. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a creative professional?

One challenge I think we all face here on crowdSPRING, and those who do work in the real world as designers know, is that face-to-face with a client and having the ability to present in person is a huge plus. That is a hurdle when doing work online.

The most rewarding aspect is seeing the real world use of a design come to life, whether it is a logo design, web design, architectural construction or media.

6. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Do not get so hung up on the tools, as that will always change. Look for meaningful ways to express yourself and be unique. If I were to do one thing over it would be to take more business classes to complement my design training. Meaning that I feel the burden is on the creative to communicate effectively the design message and part of that entails understanding and speaking the business lingo.

I have also worked for and with a few agencies and been exposed to and partnered with others. Some of the lessons that have stuck with me are these: Enjoy what you do and learn to work as a team; collaboration is key. Do not get caught up so much in the culture or egoism of design and remain teachable above all else. Find your personal niche, that element about you that separates you from the pack, and run with it!



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Cyrene Quiamco

(Little Rock, Ark, USA)



*Cyrene Quiamco,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“**CyreneQ**”. Quiamco
lives and studies in
Little Rock, Ark. For
more information
about his work, visit
<http://cyreneq.key.to>.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

My name is Cyrene Quiamco – for short. My full name is Salathiel Cyrene Ganzon Quiamco. I find it amusing when school teachers perform role call for the first time and see my name. They would pause, give a confused expression and attempt to pronounce it. I was born in the beautiful islands of the Philippines in Bacolod City. I lived there for seven years before I moved to the United States. I landed in Little Rock, Ark. and have been living here for 13 years now. I've known and lived with myself for 20 years now. I am full-time student, taking the max 18 hours every semester, at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock where I'm working towards a studio art: graphic design degree. I've been doing art ever since I figured out that crayons were art supplies and not food. I won my first art contest when I was in first grade. It was an onsite competition and I made fifth, out of 10 places, competing against sixth-graders. Every time I made art, I found that people would smile. I don't think I understood it back then, but I liked how my creations make people feel happy when I gave it to them. Until now, that still holds true. I like to see clients happy whenever I show them the logo I make for them.

Fun facts about me: I love turtles. I have 10 box turtles. They live in an outdoor enclosure, and I've been caring for turtles for 13 years. I also have hermit crabs. My fascination started four years ago, and I've had some of them for four years now. I'm a picky eater; I don't like ketchup, mustard, pickles, salads, mashed potatoes, peanut butter, cherries, coffee ... the list goes on. I'm your typical

geek; I'm obsessed with the latest gadgets, love video games and am a fan of Asian dramas (Japanese and Korean) and anime. I'm scared of the dark, but I love scary movies. I collect world currency as a hobby.

2. You're studying design at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock. What are some of your favorite classes?

I wake up every morning excited to go to my art classes. I try to sign up for at least four studio art classes every semester to keep me busy. Of course, out of all my art courses, I enjoy my graphic design classes most. Graphic design is the least messy art course.

3. How has technology affected your work?

Owning a tablet PC has made creating illustrations and logos easier and more efficient. I don't need to coordinate the mouse with the screen to create an illustration; I just draw directly on the monitor. And since my tablet PC is small, I can take it everywhere with me and create art wherever and whenever I get inspired.



4. What are your favorite websites for inspiration or learning about graphic design?

I learn by doing. crowdSPRING really helped improve my skills. The competitive atmosphere is my driving motivation and inspiration. I enjoy looking at the winning entries and really examine what made their design successful. I believe this is better than any book or website because I have the opportunity to see live and current examples – the designs that are happening now! The competition also gives me the drive and reason to use the software on a daily basis and improve my skills. cS has helped me get ahead of the game in my design classes.

5. Please describe your typical day

After waking up from being chased by zombies in my dreams (I'm always being chased), I get ready, eat a big breakfast (cereal, eggs, waffles, bacon, pancakes – I have a big appetite), and then I head for school. Since I'm taking 18 hours, and most of them are three-hour studio classes, I'm in school from 8 a.m. in the morning to 7 p.m. at night on most days. I usually try to sneak in crowdSPRING on my spare time at school.



6. When you graduate from college, what is your dream job?

I want a career where I can be financially stable. Of course, doing what I love is important, but my family comes first. I've seen the work and effort my mom had to go through to raise both my sister and I. After college, I want it to be my turn and take care of her and my sister.

My dream job is to be a professional graphic artist. Graphic design is a dynamic field where every day and every client is different. There is no boring day. You are constantly thinking and problem solving. Your creative juices will always have a cup to fill. I would also like to be an art director. I've tried almost every field of art. I've done drawings, paintings, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, photography, digital graphics, 3-D renderings and animation – anything in art is my dream job!

7. What do you do with your free time?

I have a million to-do lists ever growing in my head. I have painting ideas, websites, logos, videos, goals to self-teach myself software programs, etc. One day at a time, I check an item off my list and then add on two more in its place. I aim to check off at least one thing on my list a week.

One thing I like to do is paint. My favorite subject to paint is surrealism, but I also do a lot of self-portraits. I also like to create websites on my spare time. I typically create fan sites for my favorite celebrities or shows. I've not made any website for commission; most of them are for my own learning and leisure. For now.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Edoardo Gioe

(Palermo, Italy)



*Edoardo Gioe, known
on crowdSPRING
as “[kaythree](#)”. Gioe
lives and works in
Palermo, Italy.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

Hello! My name is Edoardo, I am twenty-two years old and I currently live in Palermo, a city that was founded over 2,700 years ago and that now represents the fifth most populated area in Italy. It's a wonderful place of high contrasts where opposites dance together in the strangest, daunting way. Even though I was born here, I spent part of my childhood in Sydney, where I was first introduced to computers at the age of 6. I developed a passion for graphic design during my adolescence and – please don't tell anyone – I collect videogames. As a matter of fact, I actually learned the basics of Photoshop while working on a user-generated modification for a (once) popular game. I'd say my life has progressed on a rather bumpy road which ultimately led me to fall in love with this profession. I currently plan to move and perhaps find a home elsewhere in the world.

2. How did you start out as a designer?

Well, a number of factors ultimately influenced this decision. While I was offered a few jobs in my hometown, none of the jobs offered me the opportunity to work on such a variety of projects as that offered by the crowdSPRING marketplace. After I took a few jobs from a couple of clients here in Palermo, I did some quick math and figured that I could not only find more interesting

work online, I could also make more money out of it. Also, bringing my business online didn't mean I had to completely ignore everything in the city; I still do design work for an advertising agency and a couple of other clients on a monthly basis.

3. Please talk a little about the graphic design industry in Italy

While it's not uncommon for art directors and designers throughout the territory to enjoy a certain degree of success, it's unfortunately rare to see small businesses and firms appreciate and seriously invest in graphic design and advertising. Italy's economic divide between a rich north and a poor south translates into an industry which is flourishing in cities such as Milan and Turin, but is almost absent elsewhere – with perhaps Rome being the only notable exception. Tertiary education for Italian graphic designers is relatively rare too. While there are specialized secondary education institutes which focus around forming “professionally qualified” graphic designers, faculties around the country tend to group graphic and industrial design into a single course of study, leaving prospective students who wish to specialize in this particular field with just a handful of viable options.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

As a designer, I think it's extremely important to pay attention to everything around me at all times. Whether I'm at the supermarket or on a bus, I always take the time to check out what other people in the industry are doing. When I'm not turning heads by studying every inch of a billboard advertisement, I generally turn to online design galleries or read books about graphic design. I'm a big fan of the yearly “Web Design Index” issued by the Pepin Press and I've recently bought a great book by Julius Wiedemann which has a fantastic collection of identity designs and features work by some of the best designers in history.

5. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

I have a bit of a catullian relationship of love and hate with my designs. I'm not exactly sure why, but I am perfectly capable of unpredictably falling in love with one of my designs only to hate it the day after.

6. How has technology affected your work?

I belong to what some people in the industry refer to as the “new generation of digital designers.” I started out as a child by doodling in Kid Pix on a black-and-white Mac when I was 6 years old, and I was sketching and having fun with a very primitive tablet which connected to a TV set when I was 8. Even though I do turn to pen and paper for sketching and planning, most of my work takes place in the digital realm.

7. Please describe your typical workday

I almost start working the moment I wake up. I usually check my e-mails while still drinking my morning coffee. After I’m done answering them, I usually work on crowdSPRING projects and maybe do a couple of revisions for my clients. After lunch, I usually take a small break which I spend browsing the Internet for cool designs and sources for inspiration. After that, I answer more e-mails and get back to work on my designs. I then spend at least 30 minutes promising myself to organize my portfolio, but I really never do it as much as I’d want to. The rest of the evening is spent on sketches, production and brainstorming. I sometimes listen to the Stakhanovite inside of me and work until midnight. This does prove helpful when dealing with the time zone differences between Italy and the rest of the world.

8. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a graphic designer?

As a graphic designer, each project you work on represents a unique challenge. When you build up your reputation, you have to live up to the expectations you set up in the first place. You have to raise the bar further each time you face a new project and constantly learn how to be more productive and creative. When you constantly raise your game, things can get pretty stressful. When you have to deal with tight

deadlines and stress and yet you’re still able to deliver quality work to a client, you’ll find that it was definitely worth the sweat. Actually seeing your logo and designs on the street is also a wonderful, yet strange feeling.

9. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Read a lot. Take the time to analyze every design that gets into your house, closely study the advertisements you see on the street and ask yourself, “What was the designer trying to communicate? Did he succeed? Does this design work, and if it doesn’t, why is that?” Value every tiny bit of feedback you receive on your work. Even if you don’t agree with what other people might have to say about your work, ask yourself why it is that you don’t think alike. Be humble, because that’s the best way to learn. And when you feel your work is great, do not be afraid to go all-in to market it.

10. What do you do with your free time?

I’m a huge video game fan, so I play a lot. I also watch a ton of DVDs and read quite a bit. From time to time, I might enjoy a game of poker or two. I’m not really into sports, so I walk for hours and hours around the city instead. When I feel like it, I might go out for a beer (or two!) with my friends.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Jon Moore

(Indiana, USA)



Jon Moore, known on crowdSPRING as “Jabraulter”. Moore is a student at Purdue University in Indiana.

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a 19-year-old freshman at Purdue University, nestled cozily in the heart of the Midwest. As it stands, I'm pursuing a double major in computer science and mathematics. I have a mom and a dad, a younger brother and an older sister, a girlfriend, three dogs and three cats. Oh, and the fish. But as far as Puma is concerned (our Ocicat), they're just dinner. I just recently scored a cool job with the production company on campus, so I've been doing a lot of web design and coding. It's a fun job and "right up my alley," as they say. Whoever they is. Or are.

2. How did you start out as a designer?

I've always been a doodler. If you're a teacher, you hate my type. You collect the math homework, and there are vortexes enveloping the hole-punches and zigzags decorating the entire blue-lined notebook paper. When I was 13, I started experimenting with Photoshop and had a blast teaching myself all the tricks. I took just about every tutorial offered online and did all I could to absorb the glorious capabilities of the program. I stumbled upon the website Worth1000 and saw that they had corporate logo design contests, so I decided to give a few of them a shot. I was unsuccessful in my attempts, but it was a great learning experience. Fast-forward through high school, more Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash and Maya, and that just about brings you up to the present.

3. You're a full time college student. What's your typical day like?

I won't bore you with my full schedule, but basically I'm up at 8 every morning, go to work from 9 to 11 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, go to some CS classes, do some math, slip in some lunch, go to English, go to work some more, toot my horn in band (I play the French horn, among a slew of other instruments), eat some dinner, waste some more time, then sleep. Rinse and repeat. Oh, and because I'm sure there are some other students on crowdSPRING, I'll keep it to myself that I'm typically on crowdSPRING during classes. But no worries, I'm expecting A's.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I'm one of those young rascals that grew up with TVs and computers and those crazy Internets, so I've been surrounded with images my whole life. I can't pinpoint any one person or thing that influences me more than anything else, but I do know that my inspiration can come from just about anywhere. Candy bar wrappers, movie posters, and amusement park collectible cups ... anything. The last "real" art class I took was in middle school, so the biggest influences come from what I see with my own two eyes.

5. What are your favorite ways to find new clients?

Well, as far as I'm concerned, I still am a beginning designer. I guess the biggest piece of advice I could ever give anyone is to be a sponge towards everything. Suck up as much information as you can, take all the tutorials, participate in hundreds of projects and see every image that crosses your eyes as its own design. I'm an advocate of the notion that one does not need formal schooling or even an art degree to be able to design. So be creative. Be the creative.



6. You’ve previously used the term “market competitive design.” What did you mean?

There are millions of businesses in the world – monopolies, chains, family-owned, etc. Each has a company name and typically an image. I like to think of a market competitive design as spotting your friend in Times Square on New Years Eve. There’s no reason that a family-owned coffee shop cannot compete with the massive monopoly that is Starbucks. So from the buyer’s standpoint, he or she should always be looking for the single most unique design to represent his or her company visually. As creatives, we have a tough job to do. Our designs have to be unique. Our designs have to “stand the test of time.” But our designs should always give the company a chance to compete in the massive, global market, no matter how big or small the business may be. Educational background in the field of graphic design does not matter. As long as you can create something that is “market competitive,” then you’re just as good as anyone.

7. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a graphic designer?

I’ll start off by saying that I’ve participated in 75+ projects, 64 on crowdSPRING alone, and I have not won a single one. Just to clear that up and so you know – I’m not really in this for the money, haha, although that would be very cool. Someday, I’m sure.

The most challenging thing about being a graphic designer is sticking with one idea. I don’t know about other designers, but I usually have a menagerie of ideas swimming in my head when I approach a project, and sometimes it’s hard to just pick one to develop it. The most rewarding part about graphic design is the fact that just about every design teaches me something new. Whether it be a new technique or method, or a new way to approach building a color palette, it’s exciting for me to learn new tricks.

8. What do you do with your free time?

I’m usually browsing the Web, playing or writing music, taking pictures, spending time with my canine friends or watching mindless TV. I love movies but generally can’t afford the \$100 tickets, so for now I’m sticking to Hulu and waiting for new DVD releases.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Jeff Quigley

(Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia, Canada)



*Jeff Quigley, known
on crowdSPRING as
“[jeffquigley](#)”. Quigley
lives and works
in Musquodoboit
Harbour, Nova
Scotia, Canada.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I live in a small coastal community called Musquodoboit Harbour (pronounced musk-o-dob-it) in Nova Scotia, Canada. It's just outside of Halifax, and I moved myself and my family here about two years ago after deciding to get out of Toronto. I've got a beautiful wife and two boys, and I work from a home office, which is just a few minutes away from a fantastic sandy beach.

2. How did you become interested in design?

I honestly can't recall a specific incident that turned me onto "design." I've been drawing since I was a kid in school, and I was the go-to-guy for drawings and illustrations. When I was younger and my mom moved us from the East Coast to Ottawa, Canada, it was my artistic abilities that helped me avoid the "new kid in class" stigma, and I quickly made new friends – some of which I still have today. Later on in high school I volunteered with the yearbook, and in my senior year I got the chance to experience working on the job with co-op education. It was a new concept way back in the '80s, but I was lucky enough to spend time illustrating for the National Museum of Natural Sciences, as well as two episodes working on the CBC television series "The Raccoons."

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

Wow, that's like asking me to choose which is my favorite child! I guess designs that I do for myself or for my family are always rewarding to me because there's never a need to explain the creative process or give a rationale behind the design. For example, just recently I did a logo design for my youngest boy's hockey team. When he presented it to the rest of the team, their reaction was payment enough. Within a week each team member had it on their T-shirt.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I'd have to say it's other designers who influence me the most. Competition fuels my creativity, and I thrive on it. That's why crowdSPRING is such an interesting concept. Put me in a boardroom to pitch my creative to a potential client, and I'll walk out with a win. cS flips that 180 degrees and drops it on its head. Now, my concepts are laid out in a gallery where my 20-plus years of boardroom savvy amounts to nothing. With crowdSPRING, I need to up the ante by creating smarter and communicating better when making a submission. The majority of the time my experience is able to come through to the buyer when I introduce myself and explain my entry. It's just a different process now.

5. Mac or PC?

I use a Mac, although I cut my teeth on a PC. As an illustrator in the '80s, a PC was plopped onto a desk next to my drafting table. My boss said, "Figure this out," and I did. It was loaded with Corel Draw 1, I think. After that my choice was solely based on affordability, and PCs were my only option for the next seven to eight years. I finally was able to buy my first Mac in 1996, and I never turned back.



6. Please describe your typical work day

Because of the cutbacks I've experienced over the past year, I've had to change my day-to-day routine. Now, I'm usually up at 5 a.m. and logging onto crowdSPRING looking to see what's out there. I'll try and enter as many as I can before 9 a.m. when, on Tuesdays through Thursdays, I'm dedicated to my "real job." On Mondays, however, which is my day off, I'm usually 100 percent doing cS things ... and, of course, weekends as well. So it's a juggling act that requires some discipline on my end, and if I'm busy you can often find me working well into the evenings to keep everything in check. Once in a while, though, like I'm sure many others can relate to, I need to just walk away from it all and recharge, usually with my wife and kids.

7. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

That's a good question! In high school I had a job at a butcher shop as well as installing carpet. However, I love doing work around my house, and I'm told I have a knack for it. So maybe I'd be in the trades as builder or something that is hands on. Either that or a chicken wrangler.

8. What do you do with your free time?

I don't have much of it, but when I do, I try and spend time with my wife and kids getting out doing family things. We bought an older beach house, so my wife and I are always neck deep in some kind of home renovation work. Oh, and I also play drums in a rock/metal band, but we don't jam often enough, which is totally my fault due to my schedule. (Sorry, lads.)

9. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

With hardware and software becoming more accessible and affordable, it's introduced the profession to many who are ready to declare themselves graphic designers. I've always said (and some may say "preached") that just because you have the biggest and best shiny pencil doesn't mean that you automatically know how to draw. That holds true for designers. There are a lot of people out there who want to be designers, but the downside is there just isn't enough on-site employment opportunities with agencies. That's where crowdsourcing comes into play, and it's a hugely heated debate these days.

The purists, which once included myself, passionately argue against (crowdsourcing) as bad for the industry because it requires "spec" work from creatives. Over the years spec work has been labeled taboo and is really the rally cry behind the entire anti-crowdsourcing movement. Professional designations in graphic design can be revoked due to breaking the spec work rule, and in 2006 I ended my affiliation with one such association. Our industry is rapidly changing, and regardless of anyone's personal view, will continue to do so at an alarming rate. In the end it's the client, or in cS's case, the buyers who dictate how we continue to do our business. It's confusing right now, as it was in the music industry when it faced the monumental task of reinventing itself, and we just need to ride out the storm. Eventually all the bad things will work themselves out. There will still be advertising agencies, and there will still be crowdsourcing, but I think in time you'll just see better quality creative results and a way that both can work together. After all, in the end, great creative is king.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Constance Semler

(Toronto, Ontario, Canada)



Constance Semler, known on crowdSPRING as “Faustie”. Semler lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm American, Canadian and married to an Englishman. We live in the heart of Toronto, Ontario, on a quiet tree-lined street. We moved here from Montréal last year. Until November 2008 I spent most of my professional life in corporate marketing roles and met wonderful people as I traveled around the world in fairly short order. These days, in addition to writing, I'm helping out with an Internet startup. Sometimes I work with my husband on post-production of UK and U.S. film and TV productions.

2. How did you become interested in writing?

In some ways, writing became interested in me. I remember having college essays returned to me with terse remarks like, "See me," after which the professor would try to persuade me to major in a subject. In graduate school and throughout my career, I recall about a dozen striking moments in which someone pulled me aside to say something like, "Listen, you can really write!" Those lightning bolts had little effect on me. I assumed that writing is part of the package of work and most educated people write well. Why I persisted with this false assumption, I don't know.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your writing?

I was an English major, so even though I don't write like some of my favorite writers, they influenced me. I love the elaborate, finely crafted sentences of Henry James. At the same time, I admire the immediacy of Hemingway's prose. Though I don't always agree with him, Christopher Hitchens is a great writer and thinker – and hilarious to boot. I don't think I could or would want to write with such acid wit. Taming the tongue (and the pen or keyboard) is an important discipline. Hitchens isn't afraid to write complex sentences. Writing for the Web, we writers get used to creating babyfied, bite-sized sentences. It's effective. It's absolutely necessary. But it leaves me needing a fix from writers like Hitchens.

My father and my Uncle Herb encouraged me to be interested in words by playing word games with me as a child. It is so important to stimulate young minds in this way. That's one reason I'm writing a wordplay book for kids. David Meerman Scott's list of widely used "gobbledygook" terms is fantastic and shocking. I must mention Professor Sandra Berwind at Bryn Mawr College. She chopped my writing to bits with her critiques, and I'm glad she did. Everyone should have a professor with that degree of interest in their writing.

4. Please tell us about your favorite projects

There are two kinds I enjoy. One is highly creative, like coming up with a great company name or product name. I enjoy helping other people be creative and say what they mean. Collaboration is very exciting for me. The other kind of project, and one that lets me shine, requires me to learn new things, dig deep into a subject and help the client expand on a creative brief. These are often projects in which I bring my years of marketing and business experience to the table. I don't like to call myself "copywriter" because that term is sometimes limiting. Some people think you're a "wordsmith," as though writing is a last-minute add-on. No way. Good writing is good thinking. If the marketing or business strategy is off-target, no amount of great "copy" is going to save it. The guys that created Ruby On Rails take that point even further in their recent book, "Rework." They say, if you've got a limited budget and can only hire one person, hire the best writer.

5. What types of writing interest you the most?

I like to write white papers, brochures, Web content, tag lines, etc. My husband has recorded dialogue with hundreds of award-winning actors, and it was so much fun to work with him on a voiceover and write a script. I write essays on business and social commentary, but I haven't sought publication yet. Now I'm starting to write highly creative pieces for business. I like the learning curve, so I will always try new things.

6. You love to write. Love it love it love it. Why?

I realized recently that I'd better stop doing things I like and focus on doing things I love. Writing never gets old. Writing brings variety, and it can never be fully mastered. I love starting with a blank page and creating something that has a life of its own apart from me. I love helping clients, which often boils down to helping them answer razor-sharp questions about their businesses. I love words. I'm a bit of a design nut, but I can't focus exclusively on the visual. Words are too important to me, and to everyone – whether they realize it or not.

7. How do you promote your work?

My writing business is fairly new, and I'm in the process of creating my brand. All those brand exercises I've done for other people's companies and products, I'm now doing for myself!

8. Please describe your typical work day

I've had to create structure to ensure that working at home doesn't become too comfortable or too demanding. When I have writing projects, I work from about 9 a.m. to lunch time, taking a tea break or two. (Tea breaks are an essential part of an English marriage.) After lunch I will work all afternoon. I like to end the day at a reasonable hour because there have got to be boundaries on work to protect our relationship and our

health. Believe it or not, it has to be a conscious decision because we both tend to be workaholics.

9. What is your favorite book?

There is no such thing. I love books and lots of them! As a child my favorite books were "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" and "Le Petit Prince." Now, I keep reading things by New Testament scholar N.T. Wright. I'm also reading "The Poetics of Space" by Gaston Bachelard and "Web Analytics 2.0" by Avinash Kaushik. I recently finished "Content Strategy for the Web" by Kristina Halvorson and a book on kumihimo, the art of Japanese braiding. It's always a crazy mix like that.

10. If you weren't writing, what would you be doing?

I have a keen interest in technology start-ups and entrepreneurship. Also, I'd like to design furniture, housewares and clothing accessories. I envision a cottage industry in which I prototype beautiful things to be replicated by artisans, building on my experience in textile printing and dyeing, bead-making, passementerie, Japanese box-making and bookbinding. My mother is a retired interior designer, and I grew up surrounded by beauty, antiques and modern things. My uncle was an illustrator and cartoonist for The New Yorker. My father was a bank executive. Business and creativity combine in me almost by osmosis.

11. What do you do with your free time?

I love to dance flamenco. My crowdSPRING avatar shows me in a café in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. We're becoming increasingly involved in our new church. I like to explore the city and discover quirky little restaurants. I have one of the most ridiculously well-stocked kitchens and cook elaborate dishes. I've got to feed my husband because when he's working, he forgets to eat. I never forget.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Audree Rowe

(Glenview, USA)



*Audree Rowe, known
on crowdSPRING
as “[ArtbyAudree](#)”.*

*Rowe lives and
works in Glenview,
Ill. Her website
is [ArtbyAudree](#).
[blogspot.com](#).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm an artist, a cartoonist, a mom, a lame cook and a trophy wife. (As you can see from my picture.) I grew up in Evanston, Ill., ETHS (Evanston Township High School) class of '84. Are you doing the math? I'm 42. I have a degree in studio art from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and later earned my master's in Teaching here in Illinois. Now I live in beautiful Glenview, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, with my rockin' husband, Anthony (a 5th grade teacher); my amazing daughter, Olivia (13 and yet a pleasure to be with); and my wonder boy Davis (5 and adorable). Oh, and the dog, Lily Snitch Stinky Potter Rowe. I was a sign artist for several years, an art teacher for a few years, a reading teacher for a couple of years and have been working out of my home as an artist for the last 11 years while teaching during the summer (when my husband is off work) and raising the above mentioned awesome kids. I am also working on a children's book. No, I don't have a publisher, but I can dream. My little guy is in school half-days, and I am hoping to get some part-time work when he starts full-time school.

Rather than teaching, I would really like to create. With that goal in mind, I am using my time here at crowdSPRING to learn and grow as an artist and designer. The art I create for clients is mostly portraits of kids, pets and homes. I do not charge much; I want people to be able to afford it. I also have done some graphic design and public art projects.

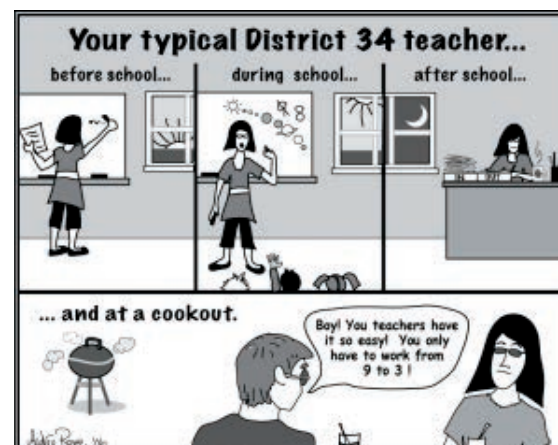
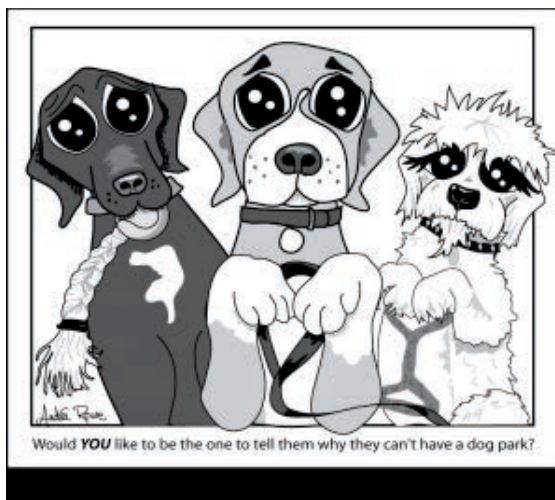
2. How did you start out as a designer?

My first job out of college in 1988 was for a sign and design studio. My boss designed the signs, and I made them. As I learned, I got to do the designing. We had about 10 fonts to choose from. Computers were still in their infancy. It was amazing to see how design changed quickly over a short period of time. I watched as my boss forced herself to learn Illustrator and Quark. She did all of the designing on the computer, but she valued my opinion and taught me all about layout and design – so much more than all my classes in college.

3. You work as an editorial cartoonist. Please talk a little about the challenges of creating editorial cartoons

The Glenview Journal is a newspaper that comes out every other week, and covers news and topics only about Glenview. My feature, "Audree's Glenview," appears on the opinion page of every issue. I started making cartoons for the Journal in 2004. I love the opportunity to have my say about what's going on in my hometown.

My biggest challenge at times is coming up with an idea. The paper is only about Glenview. My cartoons have to only be about Glenview, a village of about 45,000. After four years, I have done lots on the schools, the new library, the weather, the traffic and local politics. Often they are just about my experiences in Glenview. When I really can't come up with an idea, my husband or daughter will usually help me. If not them, I'll ask anyone for a topic. As a thanks, I usually draw them into the toon. I draw myself in there quite often; it is, after all, "Audree's Glenview."



4. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

My favorite design is sappy and corny and emotional, just like me. I have six best friends. I have known most of them all my life. The newest one, only for 24 years. Years ago Mary Schmich, a writer for the Chicago Tribune, wrote a column comparing friends with a big “F” to friends like a little “f.” A couple of examples: A little “f” friend knows almost nothing about your family. A big “F” friend knows the medical history, dietary habits and marital troubles of everyone on your tree. A little “f” friend, when visiting, they act like a guest. A big “F” friend, when visiting, they open your refrigerator, put their feet on the sofa, talk back to your spouse and reprimand your children. My friends and I totally related to the big “F” comparisons, so we immediately started referring to ourselves as “The Big F’s.” A couple of years ago I designed a logo for the “F’s.”

5. How has technology affected your work?

I am a horrible speller. I am thankful every day for spellcheck. I create all of my cartoons with a Wacom drawing tablet. Thanks to crowdSPRING winnings, I just upgraded to an Intuos3 from this little thing I got four years ago. It’s sweet. I haven’t even tried all the pen tips.

I enjoy painting, calligraphy and drawing, but I absolutely love creating on the computer. It’s like magic. It reminds me of when I taught photography and we would watch the image appear as we swished the paper around in the chemicals. I get that feeling every time I create something new on the computer. And I love that I can go back to it and make changes and create something brand new. Plus, I don’t need nearly as much storage space for my computer files compared to my paintings.

6. What are your favorite ways to find new clients?

I joined the Chamber of Commerce. They offer tons of opportunities to meet and talk with other businesses in the community. Everyone helps each other succeed, and it is a great way to do some networking. That’s how I met the editor of the Journal and talked him into giving me a shot at creating an editorial cartoon feature for the paper. They didn’t have one before me.

7. Please talk a little about the client-designer relationship. Can you talk about an example or two to illustrate how you’ve managed this relationship?

I have always had a policy with my portrait art (that) if they are unhappy with their work of art, they can return it for a full refund, and I would keep it to use as a sample. Fortunately, that has not happened. (I did get stiffed once, but such is life. I moved on.) I think, in the long run, I’d rather not have someone who felt disappointed out there. Bad news travels faster than good.

8. What do you do with your free time?

I love playing video games with my family (Nintendo). We also play cards. We go to the kids’ soccer games. I am a news junkie. I love TV. I love going to movies with my Anthony and talking about them afterwards. I love Harry Potter. I’m looking forward to my son being old enough that we can read the Harry Potter books together from the start. Whenever we can fit it in, I get together with any and all of the Big F’s to play.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Tiffany Reed

(Norfolk, Virginia, USA)



*Tiffany Reed, known
on crowdSPRING
as “[iamtiff](#)”. Reed
lives and works in
Norfolk, Va.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a 25-year-old starving artist turned graphic designer, turned web designer. Whew! I wonder what I'm going to morph into next. I'm a Navy brat who was born in Japan and has lived in various places along the East Coast. I now live and work in a small cave in Norfolk, Va. and I'm hopelessly addicted to reality TV (fist pump!).

2. How did you become interested in design?

After getting a BFA in drawing and design, I needed to make a living, and, well, selling my artwork wasn't working too well. So after a failed T-shirt business, I decided to give graphic design a try, which I had really been doing all along, and began making logos for my church, friends and family. Those projects led to other projects through word of mouth. I started studying as much as I could along the way and became very passionate about the industry and community. Then I stumbled upon crowdSPRING one day while searching for design competitions, and the rest is history.



3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

My peers are the biggest influence, I have to say, on my work. Especially the community here on crowdSPRING. There are a handful of creatives who seem to up the ante and successfully complete awesome designs regularly that make the rest of us work even harder to improve our design skills. I also pull inspiration from other disciplines like interior design and music. I sit back and listen and then try to translate these other forms of creativity into what I do. I love it.

4. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

When a creative brief is four sentences long it can be tough to get any ideas. But thank goodness most briefs aren't that, well, brief. After reading them I usually print them out, take a few notes and start sketching out my ideas. This is also a way for me to get away from the computer for a bit. If I can't really think of a certain part of the design or any of it at all I'll go for a drive and blast some music. I get some wind in my hair and usually get some great ideas. Although I wonder if designing while driving is as dangerous as texting. Oops!

5. Mac or PC?

I'm a Mac trapped in a PC's body. I have most Adobe CS products and PC-equivalent software that you can find on a Mac, but alas, I work on a HP Laptop that my parents gave as a present a few years ago. (Sorry, Mom.) I just really want a Mac. By the way, if anyone has an iMac that they don't want I'll be glad to take it off your hands in exchange for a dozen cupcakes.



6. What is your dream design project?

My dream has always been to be able to make a good living and be able to support my family while in a career that I love. I'm living that now.

7. How do you promote your work?

I meet with my marketing/PR team every week to discuss our goals and throw around promotion ideas. Sike. I actually leave my business cards in random places around town, tweet about recently done work on occasion and have my mom mention to everyone she meets about my site iamtiff.com. I repeat, iamtiff.com. So most of the work I get is by word of mouth, but if I could afford a PR team, it would be on like Donkey Kong.

8. Please describe your typical work day

Schedules, schmedules. I go with the flow. OK, not really. If I don't have some sort of order I'll go nuts. I usually wake up at 6 a.m., but don't actually get up until around 6:30 a.m. I work from home, however, I'm also a single mom and the princess has to be at that bus stop on time. When she's at school I make my pilgrimage to the Holy Starbucks for a latte. After that I go home to check e-mails and browse my Google Reader until around 10 a.m. when I'm ready to rock. Before then I'm pretty much useless because I am not a morning person. I just pretend to be. My tasks vary from day to day, but after the princess gets home I go into mom-mode, and when she goes to bed I'm up and working my tail off. It's hard, but it'll be worth it when I have my summer home in Italy.

9. You seem to be experienced in many types of design – which is your favorite?

I'd have to say that web design is my favorite type of design I do. Although I have experience in almost all forms of design, I do get more gratification out of the challenging and ever-evolving nature of designing for the interwebs.

10. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

I'd probably be traveling with various carnivals (I love carnie food), or fixing watches which I was really good at for a few years, or teaching art as a professor. "Professor Reed" sounds awesome. To be honest, I really don't know what I'd be doing, although the professor thing might be something I could do in the future.

11. What do you do with your free time?

Que? What's that? I kid, I kid. Because I love designing so much, I don't really notice how little free time I actually have (until I answer questions like this). In the free time I do carve out for myself, I like to bake, watch Spongebob with the princess, play UNO (another addiction) and attempt to finish a real book.



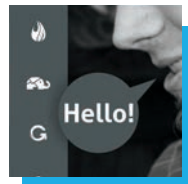
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12 Questions

Meet Mircea Constantinescu

(Bucharest, Romania)



*Mircea
Constantinescu,
known on
crowdSPRING
as “[mircha69](#)”.
Constantinescu
lives and works in
Bucharest, Romania.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I was born and raised in Bucharest in a small country known as Romania. I'm almost 26 years old and currently work as a freelance graphic designer with a major in logos and brand identity. I am fully self taught except for a course I took on Photoshop and Corel Draw, but by that time I was already ahead of the class and just did it for the degree. I'm a happy guy with a good life and with the everyday problems that everyone has and with the exception that I can wear my pajamas to work, and my boss is a really great guy.

2. How did you become interested in design?

As a boy, an uncle of mine was into painting, and he was drawing a lot, and I was always asking him to draw me stuff. So that was a really fun thing for me to watch. Then over the high school years I filled up notebooks

of drawings and caricatures of teachers. Then it all evolved when I found out about Corel Draw, which is still my tool of choice to this day. I started dabbling with it trying to figure out what I could do with it. So one thing lead to another, and here I am.

At first I wanted to go into web design, but as I went more into it I found that it was not my thing. So I got curious about that little thing in the corner that people called a logo, and I first did a couple of logos, then I started looking online for them and the people who made them. After some time I found crowdSPRING, and that was it. I was hooked. I owe 90 percent of my career to crowdSPRING.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I do like most of the work of David Airey and David Pache, but they are just two designers of the top of my head. Bojan Stefanovic (Logoholik) is also a very good logo designer. Overall (it) is the logos that inspire more than the designers. When I look at a logo that I think is good, I try and see how the designer made it good, and how he made it work using something simple to explain all the values and image of that company.

4. Mac or PC?

PC. To me the Mac's price isn't justified by anything it can do, and most times I find it to be a fad amongst people in the industry. Besides, I do logos. If I told you that almost every logo and design I do happens on a Toshiba Satellite (yes, the laptop) that has a built in graphics card, what would you say?

Yeah, Macs look better, and even though I like visually appealing things in this case the price and function ratio of a PC versus a Mac wins.

5. What is your dream design project?

Some might say that their dream project would be to work for a large corporation, but that is not the case for me. To me it would be great to see one of the logos I've done become a worldwide brand. That would mean that the logo did its job well, and I did my job well.



bathplanet

6. How do you promote your work?

Well, I do it a lot less than I should, but mostly I have online portfolios. So you can find me on DeviantArt, that's where all my work is displayed, but I also sell on brandstack, work on upstack and have a logopond portfolio. You can find me almost everywhere as mircha69.

7. Please describe your typical work day

They aren't all the same as I'd wish, but mostly I get up as early as I can. (I can never get up earlier than 10 a.m. Yeah, I'm lazy.) I have a cup of coffee, then browse my usual sites, then get working on the projects I have lined up, and unless I plan on doing anything in the evening I usually work until about 10 p.m. Getting organized is the hardest thing to do when you are working on your own, but I'm getting there.

8. What are other ways you use your creativity?

I like to do some illustration. I also play a bit of guitar, so I do that sometimes. But except art-related things, I like to use my creativity creating all sorts of gadgets – building my own furniture and stuff like that. Whatever keeps me away from the computer; my eyes are rebelling.



9. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Not design? What do you mean? I don't understand this question ...?

I honestly don't know. I'm really tall. Maybe work at a circus?

10. What do you do with your free time?

Everything we can. "We," as in me and my girlfriend, as we do almost all of the free time things together. In the winter we go snowboarding, in the summer we go up to the mountains with the bikes or to do some rock climbing and when we can't get out of the city we go to the park with either our bikes or our dog. We also have a lot of friends who keep us busy, and we try and see them all on different occasions, whether it's going to a bar or up to the mountains. I try to keep myself active as I love being outdoors, which is kind of weird since most of my work is done in front of the computer.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Pam Harvey

(Bristol, Republic Ireland)



*Pam Harvey, known
on crowdSPRING as
“**GlamazOn**”. Harvey
lives and works in
Bristol, R.I.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I am a graphic design professional with over 20 years experience in the trenches. I have lived and worked in many cities, but mostly in California, where I was part of two design firms, one that specialized in private label cosmetics and skin care, and the other was almost completely branding and package design for wine, spirits and beverages. My experience is varied: everything from brand identity and package design, print collateral, and even environmental graphic design, the techy term for signage. And I am now officially a web designer as well.

Currently I live and work as an independent contractor, right next to the ocean, in Rhode Island, the “ocean state.” I am affiliated with local and not-so-local design firms on a contract basis, and also participate in direct-to-client projects. My projects also come from my connection to several freelance websites, crowdSPRING among them.

2. You have a very distinctive design style. How did you develop this look?

I have to say I come by my design facility genetically. I come from a family of designers, architects and artists. Sort of like the musical J.S. Bach family, but we are a much smaller group! And less famous. And less prolific. My “look” comes from a variety of influences. I have a huge love for poster design. If you look at a lot of my work, many of the logos

and branding solutions look like posters. Another key element in developing my look is my dislike for empty space. Through my many projects on crowdSPRING, which require a lot of work in a very short time, sort of like “design boot camp,” I am gradually evolving out of this envelope, but mostly I like design that is contained within a shape – mostly square, rectangular or circular – and that has an even texture throughout, with no holes or vacant areas. The texture can be made up of text plus illustration or simply text, or text plus icon. The down side of this is that my work sometimes gets labeled “busy,” but mostly by those who don’t get the complexity and layers.

I have also out of necessity adapted to the influence of the Internet, where horizontal logo alignment seems to rule.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I am often inspired by historic fabric design, traditional architectural ornament, by posters from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and by furniture design, both traditional and contemporary.

4. Mac or PC?

This dates me, but I was a graphic designer before there were personal computers at every workstation. In the late ‘80s I was working for an architecture firm, and we acquired our first Mac. We referred to “floppy disks” and at the time we thought we’d use it for “typesetting” because all our type had to be sent out to a “type house.” We had to order in different sizes and fonts because who could tell a priori what would work best? It only took a few years, and all of a sudden there actually were Macs at every workstation. This was also the very beginning of e-mail. I remember saying, “You just sent a message through your computer? Are you serious?” At that time faxes were the big techno breakthrough.

So, fast-forward to today, I am and have always been, totally Mac. I use a 27” iMac, in addition to my laptop, and this makes work a breeze.

5. Please describe your typical workday

Well, since I am an independent contractor, my workdays can be quite random, but generally I work from about 5 a.m. until 3:30 or 4 p.m. I am an early riser and later in the day I usually go to the gym, run, walk or ride my bicycle on our local bike path, which is right on the waterfront and goes through many towns, shopping areas, Starbucks (let’s get our priorities straight!), parks and a wildlife sanctuary. Or is Starbucks a wildlife sanctuary?

6. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

I think the most challenging aspect of graphic design is that it's a profession into which you put your heart, soul, blood, sweat and tears. It's not like being a general physician, or a taxman where you see clients one by one, you have an office manager who tells you what to do next and where to go, and you head home at the end of the day. This is not a comment on health professionals or on CPA practitioners; these professionals all provide extremely valuable services, to say the least. But their work is not personal to them, not most of the time, anyway. With graphic design, your work product is a part of you, it's your vision, and reflects the entirety, in small ways and large, of your experience. You are never finished. There is always something more you can do to make any design better, and the end of the day leaves you thinking oh, I "shoulda coulda woulda." It's never done until it goes to press, and even then ... well ... you never hear the fat lady singing.

7. What advice would you offer someone considering graphic design as a career?

As with any profession, there are only a handful of designers who really make it to the world-class level, so I would not enter the profession with an eye to a glamorous life or days filled with exciting, creative enterprise. With the emergence of the personal computer, the development of design software and the overwhelming presence of the Internet, it seems that "almost anyone can be a designer." ... The design profession is both super-saturated and super-competitive, and I would caution anyone who is starting out to really try and get a backbone and to try and get comfy with rejection. Anything aesthetic-related is very subjective, and so rejection goes with the territory. Develop the skin of an armadillo.

Graphic design is also one of the most ageist professions in existence, with a definite demographic that's skewed towards the young. Professions like law, medicine, academia, all have

respect for the grey-haired pony tail set. But not so, graphic design. If you are part of a design firm and your affiliation is less than five years, be totally prepared to be thrown out on your butt the minute you turn 45, or maybe even 40. ... The upside is that you can develop your own design firm. Graphic design is one of the professions that need very little capital investment, and if it's just you and your computer, Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and an Internet connection, you can be a startup for very little money.

So my advice would be to develop a plan B, a day job, as per my previous remarks. With sites like crowdSPRING, you really don't need a huge time investment in order to design a logo or a brochure, though you can and should invest as much time as your concepts deserve. Crowdsourcing appears to be the new business model. No more five- or six-figure fees and dog-and-pony show presentations with champagne and smoked salmon, which were a staple in the Madison Avenue advertising world of the '60s, a prime example of which is the "Mad Men" TV series. Unless you are the owner of a design firm or advertising agency, you will need to have other sources of income because you will not make enough to live on if graphic design is your only job.



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12 Questions

Meet Tiffanie Davis

(USA)



*Tiffanie Davis,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“[TMDCreations](#)”.
Davis lives and
works in Hollywood,
Fla.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I am 32 years old and was born in the Sunshine State in the City of Hollywood. I have a BA in art and graphic design, which I received at Florida Atlantic University (FAU). After graduating FAU, I enrolled in the U.S. Army and served four years. My husband of seven years, Keyno, and I have a 3-year-old daughter named Kayla.

2. How did you become interested in design?

I started drawing in elementary school. I entered numerous contests, consistently finishing first or second. It was not until I entered high school that I gained an interest in graphic design, where I realized that I could combine my love for art with using a PC. This was great because until that point, I did not want to become a full-fledged artist because I have always thought that art was not appreciated unless the artist is famous or deceased.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

Honestly, it is hard to choose just one because I love all of the designs that I submit. I'm not trying to sound arrogant, but I am my strongest critic and wouldn't really submit a design that I do not think highly of.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Having designed on crowdSPRING for a while now, the other designers have pushed me to think more out of the box and grow as a designer.

5. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

Well, first I read the buyer brief at least twice. Then after reading the brief I do a search on certain keywords that they focus on and find images for inspiration. Also, I go to logopond.com and some other sites like this to find inspiration for a starting point as to what I can put in the designs I create.

6. Mac or PC?

I use a PC. The software I use is the CS3 Master Collection. I usually use Illustrator the majority of the time since that's the program I know best. Others would probably be Photoshop, but I really don't know it that well. Usually the ones I don't know how to use I go ahead and find a tutorial on the Internet.



7. What is your dream project?

My dream project would be a project that really got my name out there and that was featured all over the world in different countries, in state and out of state.

8. How do you promote your work?

I usually promote my work that I do by word of mouth and by the website that I created.

9. Please describe your typical work day

Well, my typical work day is going to my part-time job as a cashier, picking up my daughter from school, going home and spending time with her, watching TV and fitting in some design work when I get time.

10. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a designer is seeing your work being used on a website and other media. Also, getting paid to do something you like is a big part of it. I can spend hours designing where I don't even realize how much time has gone by.



11. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

If I weren't designing I don't know what I would be doing because I just love coming up with new ideas. Some people would say I'm very crafty, but I just think I'm very creative.

12. What do you do with your free time?

With my free time I usually spend it with my daughter watching marathons of cartoon and animated movies.



PAMPERING PETS SALON

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12 Questions

Meet Aleksandar Macanovic

(Novi Sad, Serbia)



*Aleksandar
Macanovic, known
on crowdSPRING
as “[awerest](#)”.
Macanovic lives and
works in Novi Sad,
Serbia.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

Got 25 years behind me, born in the city of Novi Sad and stayed there to live and work. My nickname, PZWIZ, is an acronym from a popular cartoon, "Popeye the Sailor." It is from the scene where Olive, his girlfriend, says to Popeye to use his arm as a propeller. A word for a spinning strike here is "zviz" so it's "propeller zviz" or simply PZWIZ.

My experience in design is short; in years I was interested more in music, I even finished music school. After that my wish was to accomplish my goals alone or with some friends. Music was the first big love, next was design. Ten years ago I started working with music and organizing small events. A friend and I are running a small agency for that purpose.

2. How did you become interested in design?

Everything started not so long ago when my friend and I had an idea about ethno camps for tourists during our biggest musical festival, EXIT festival, in Novi Sad. To present the camp's countryside and ranch better, my job was to do marketing, promotions and get ideas for cultural programs and some activities for campers.

That was my first time with Illustrator and Photoshop. Without much sleep I was clicking around for hours. Logo, poster, flyers, website header, flash banner, complete website in Joomla, map of camp and a sea of pictures which had to be edited in, for me back then, unknown formats. Remember your first time with the software? Then it was all new for me; today it takes me much less time.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

In the beginning it was my (designer) girlfriend, but we work separately now. Then there are a couple of friends who are in some kind of design business; they influence on me with quality of their work. Sometimes it just takes someone entering my room and commenting on my work to open the whole new world of ideas.

4. What is the design industry like in Serbia?

This is a very important question for me, to unveil my small but important country. I come from Serbia, land of strange mentality and lots of talented people. Just few years ago Serbia started to get in pace with the rest of the world. Lots of companies still don't have corporate identity. Usually they just wait for a foreign investor to change the situation. There were lots of turbulences here; people migrated and started businesses in strange places where they ended up. It took some time for them to get their companies on their feet. Ignorance of technology and new ways of promoting their work slowed them down. It's mainly because of the fact that almost every company is run by people from the old times, and younger people in management can't push their ideas out. Many started doing freelance work and used their talent wisely.

5. Mac or PC?

It's PC. I use my laptop too because I travel a lot. Design ideas come in at any moment, but the truth is we should all get some time out of this digital world.

6. What is your dream design project?

It's not just one design, it's a whole new world of design projects: to get every company in Serbia a corporate identity.

7. Please describe your typical workday

When you are in the events organizing business, your day never starts at the same time. It mainly depends on events last night. Sometimes you must stay up until the end of event, and they rarely end before midnight. Beyond that my day starts always with a cup of coffee while the computer boots up. Then the mail check comes in; of course they have mainly the well-known subject line (from crowdSPRING) "Project activity." Sometimes in between opening all the tabs in my browser, I play my music. Now the vision is clear enough so I can have breakfast and other usual morning activities. I am back at the computer, say hello to couple of friends on MSN/Skype and start Illustrator. For me there are no time limits. I am usually interrupted with some meeting or invitation to coffee.

8. What are other ways you use your creativity?

As I mentioned before, my first love was music. It won't fade away over time; the unfortunate event is that my piano had to be sold due to the small space available.

About design I was always a perfectionist, so in life the same principles apply. Symmetry is my obsession, and sometimes I strive to it until perfection. Sometimes I play a role of fashion designer or architect and then I comment and criticize too much. Sometimes people get offended with bad critics, but to me it is better to say my opinion as it makes me a better friend.

9. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

20 years ago: an astronaut.

10 years ago: a DJ.

Five years ago: running a club.

Now I am an adventurer making infinite circles around the world.

Cliche.

10. What do you do with your free time?

Movies, hike, cafe, girlfriend. I don't watch TV and have not even one game on my computer. Every opportunity I get is used to visit my friends and relatives around Serbia and neighboring countries. I spend winter days in the mountains, and warm summer days with my backpack on the back in the bus or on the train, sometimes 10 days on some beach.



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12 Questions

Meet Clara Garnier

(Puerto Vallarta, Mexico)



*Clara Garnier,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“**Huntresss**”. Garnier
lives and works in
Puerto Vallarta,
Mexico.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

Hi, I am Clara Garnier, an Argentinian designer living and enjoying Mexico. I live in the small but very popular town of Puerto Vallarta, near the beach, surrounded by ever green mountains and palm trees, oh yes, this place is wonderful. I am also a mom of three boys. Well, I must stop calling them “boys” one day soon. Patricio is 23 and independent, living by his own and doing great; Claudio is 16 already, and Adrian 13 soon to be 14. I am only 40 (yes, I said “only”), but my motto always was live fast, die hard.

As being divorced with three kids wasn't enough of a job, I adopted Minina the almighty cat and the pulling-leash-world-champion Coco, a Doberman/terrier mix from a shelter.

I have this odd habit of quoting old movies all the time, or some old TV shows only a few people remember, so I get many funny looks during conversations and embarrass my teens. I think that's cute and fun; I guess they don't agree.

I got a bachelor degree in graphic design in Argentina, and then one in arts from UCLA, and when baby Adrian was born I went to Boston for (a master's) in digital art. As I was for a long time a traveler kind of person, I have worked in many countries as a freelancer and in a few agencies, living the difference between cultures, languages and ways to translate life to design.

2. How did you become interested in design?

While I studied my first bachelor degree, I was in the music conservatory studying flute, and I was pretty good at it. I studied music since (I was) 5, so I had a long career in the music field, but my parents thought that wasn't too much of a career. So they kind of forced me to choose something else to “complement” my education, and the first thing I thought was, “Hey, graphic design sounds cool.” Not bad, but I wanted more, so (I went) straight to the art school, and then is when I found what I was missing: the web. Motion, real interaction, RGB, 72 dpi, that was heaven!

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Influences, hmmm ... First of all, movies. I am not a movie fan, I am movie-addicted. I use to work watching a movie (dual monitor, God bless you!), so I have an extensive movie collection I use for working, relaxation, entertainment and sleep. (I fall asleep watching “Howl's Moving Castle” every night. Sick, isn't it?) Depending on my mood or the kind of project I am in, I pick a movie and start designing.

4. What is the design business like in Mexico?

Mexico is a very hard country for a designer. I have heard things like, “So, you make those ‘draws’ and people pay you just for that?” or “You chose the perfect job! The computer does all the work for you.” Sure, I just push “Ctrl + Design” on my keyword, and all the job is done. There are great designers, usually underpaid and under-appreciated. The concept people have in general of the design work is that we make “nice” drawing, that it is easy and we shouldn't charge so much for what we do. I have worked in agencies here, and it is more or less the same where a designer usually has to code and take care of the development of the project, be an expert in Java, AS3 and a guru in CSS, and please be younger than 30. Really tough. I don't have clients in Mexico now, I have clients all over the world and I found out is a very good way to work. (Thanks, crowdSPRING.)

5. Mac or PC?

Definitely PC. I am a PC lover, anti-Mac designer. I worked with both for years, and right now I don't find much difference between the two (operating systems) in performance, but it is way cheaper to upgrade a PC. Yeah, Mac computers look so very nice on a desktop, but my RubyRodh PC laptop does too, and even if it's a little moody sometimes, she behaves absolutely great.

6. Please describe your typical work day

My typical day starts at 6 a.m., rushing the teens to be ready for school. I take a walk on the beach at 7 for about 45 minutes and then go for a coffee and check my e-mails to start planning my workday. Coco is ready for her walk at 8:30. She has a clock inside with the walk alarm buzzing, I think. We walk for another 30 minutes and with another coffee I am ready to start working. The first thing I do is answer my e-mails, connect to Skype and see my calendar.

If I will start a new project, I start with a good read of the brief and a research of the audience and the competition. I take a lot of notes and make a lot of lists. (I am a list fan.) Then I am ready to choose the right movie for the project – it sometimes can be the Matrix trilogy, others are “Cowboy Bebop” or “A Bug's Life” – and start sketching on Photoshop. I am very organized with the whole information of a project; everything is in one place: brief, images, material, notes, lists, ideas, drafts, copy of the e-mails and chat conversations. I just don't want to let anything behind that could mean a re-design later.

I work in blocks of 45 minutes straight, with no distractions and no interruptions, and 15 minutes free for whatever I want. I can go read a book, play some online game, clean my bedroom, make some more coffee or train and play with Coco for 10 minutes.

7. What are other ways you use your creativity?

I sometimes draw some characters for a graphic novel I am writing, or write some chapters of the story. I don't know when I'll publish it or how, but this story has been in my head for years now, and I need to let it out some way or another. Another field where I am using my creativity is planning my new home. I love ecological architecture, and I am planning to build a house with that organic, sustainable approach in the next few years.

8. What do you do with your free time?

When I have some free time in the middle of this chaotic “mother of five” life – I am counting Minina and Coco here – I go to the beach, read a lot, go to the movies, alone or with one of the kids, take a walk in downtown or go for a coffee to a small place ocean front with a Jim Butcher's book on my tablet. This is a very relaxed place with excellent weather and many things to do so I always feel I am on vacation. Isn't it great?



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12 Questions

Meet Dana

(Constanta, Romania)



*Dana, known on
crowdSPRING as
“**decenu**”. Dana
lives and works in
Constanta, Romania.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

My nickname, “decenu,” means “why not.” I chose it because when I found out about the crowdSPRING I told myself, “Should I dare? Why not!” I don’t have anymore a classical regular job. For the last three years I have worked at my home. I realized that I knew more interesting people and encountered more bright ideas this way than if I had a normal job. I don’t like undecided, untrustworthy. I’m frank, uncompromising and sullen. Not a very social type, I’d say.

2. How did you become interested in design?

I always liked to draw, since kindergarten, all kind of things, more or less abstract. I applied this in painting and art courses. I grew up, and I stopped for a few years. When I decided to practice a job (that didn’t exhaust me because it didn’t fit), I returned to drawing and transformed the hobby into a job.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I like abstract shapes, strong colors, elegant curves. I like everything that stands out, visual and intellectual. I adore hidden designs because they are surprising and revealed gradually.

4. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer’s creative brief?

When I read a brief, it forms for me a loosely outlined idea – a word that can be drawn somehow or an idea that can be designed in a certain manner or even an assembly of shapes, etc. I start with some drawings, sometimes directly on my computer, other times I sketch by hand. I choose a list of maximum two fonts which I consider would be good for the project and establish the color palette. I bring together these elements and start to build the shape of the icon or logo.

5. Mac or PC?

PC. I’m not very good at technical stuff, and I don’t have the patience to learn such stuff. This is good and works for me. About 95 percent of my work is made with CorelDraw. I use Adobe Illustrator just for preparing the final files, when the design is awarded and has to be delivered to the buyer. I also use Adobe Photoshop, but since almost all my work is vector-based, the Photoshop is more like an appendix that helps me on photo processing when needed.

6. What is your dream design project?

Hmmm ... A few years ago I would have said, “A project that brings me an enormous amount of money!” Now, my dream project is one where a concept designed by me would bring a new path in the graphic domain. (Oh, the vanity!) Meanwhile, since the wheel has been already invented, I like to consider all my design projects ideal ones. I like projects that don’t take “forever,” where the demands are concise.



7. How do you promote your work?

Actually, I don't. It's done by the work itself. Outside crowdSPRING, I'm recommended to my new clients by their predecessors, so it wasn't necessary, until now, to be my own agent.

8. Please describe your typical workday

That hurt. "Workday"? I don't have workdays, in the classical acceptance of the word.

My days begin with a large cup of coffee and cigarettes. (Yes, smoking isn't a good thing, but everybody has at least one vice.) I read my e-mails. If I don't have ideas for the new projects on crowdSPRING, and if there isn't any project on my "other works" list, I go out or find something else to do until the genius rises. Generally, there is design and stuff.

9. What are other ways you use your creativity?

From time to time I create handmade objects for home purposes and quite often changing the interior decoration in my home.

10. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Something not boring, but I can't put my finger on something concrete. I take it like it is, and if someday will be necessary to change my job, I'll decide at that time.

11. What do you do with your free time?

Reading, watching movies, knitting (no, I'm not 70 years old, it just relaxes me terribly), cooking, shopping, hanging out.



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12 Questions

Meet Dave Porter

(Pittsburgh, USA)



*Dave Porter, known
on crowdSPRING as
“**brainstorm**”. Porter
lives and works in
suburban Pittsburgh,
Pa.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I live in a suburb outside of Pittsburgh with my wife, two teenage sons and a pit bull who can't control her licker. I still live in the same community I grew up in, literally one mile from my parents house. Guess I didn't stray too far from home.

2. How did you become interested in design?

I always doodled as a kid, filling up legal pads and any blank piece of paper with my crazy little cartoon characters. I loved MAD magazine and always admired the talent and loved the twisted humor. As a student I was not exactly top of my class and my sketching would drive the teachers crazy.

In my junior year of high school they were offering students the opportunity to go to a local vo-tech trade school on a two year program. I looked at the list of courses and noticed there was a commercial art program, so I signed up. This is where I initially got exposed to graphic design. My instructor had worked in the ad agency business for years – his claim to fame was working on the Nestea plunge ad campaign – and now was now teaching at the school. I couldn't get enough of the class and was now a graphics addict.

Two years later I graduated from high school, and without any clear direction, I began working meaningless jobs for a few years until I decided to go back to school. So there I was, 23 years old and back in school

at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. Whoa, why did I wait so long! I was back doing what I loved. That was back in the mid '80s so everything was done by hand, very old school, markers, pencils, rapidographs. Computers were just starting to become part of the curriculum, so not much exposure to them at that point. Those years flew by fast. I graduated and was now knocking on doors looking for a job in the ad agency biz. I was hoping to become the next Don Draper, or in my case the next Darren Stevens. ("Bewitched" – it was a '60s-'70s sitcom for those of you under 40.) Now, 24 years later and I am still doing what I love. Not bad for a kid who didn't pay much attention in school.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

Boy, that's a tough one. People ask that question all the time, and it's like asking which one of your kids is your favorite.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Frank Lloyd Wright, architecture. Chip Foose, automotive design. Mort Drucker and Jack Davis, MAD magazine. Frank Frazetta, artist painter. Saul Bass – need I say more?

5. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

After reading the brief, I decide if it is a project that I would like to participate in. If it is, I will start the doodling/brainstorming process filling up sticky notes or scrap paper. Then I take the sticky notes and place them around my monitor or on my desk. I am constantly scribbling and refining them until I am satisfied with a direction. I then start the process of taking my rough ideas and turning them into vector art.

6. Mac or PC?

I'm a Mac! The advertising industry tends to lean more towards the Mac, so that's what I learned on years ago, and that's what I use everyday, a G5 to be precise. I work with Adobe Photoshop CS3, QuarkXpress 7-8, and Adobe Illustrator CS3, and I have been dabbling in Adobe InDesign more and more.

7. What is your dream design project?

I would love to design the next generation muscle car. The new Mustangs, Camaros and Challengers are awesome; the designers were able to use elements from the original classics and bring them into their own.

8. How do you promote your work?

I generally do not promote my work. Working 40 plus hours at my regular job and working on CS and iStockphoto keeps me fairly busy. I do pick up commissioned freelance work here and there, but I am very choosy now as to what projects I will take on.

9. Please describe your typical work day

I wake around 7 a.m., get my morning jolt of caffeine, s---, shower and shave, hop in my truck and drive to the office,



which is only a few miles away. I am fortunate to be able to work at a small ad agency which I have been at for the past 14 years. I am exposed to many different projects on any given day. One day I could be working on a brochure design for a Fortune 500 company and the next day be working on a logo for a small company with a minimal budget.

10. What are other ways you use your creativity?

I am an illustrator contributor to iStockphoto.com and have been doing that for a few years now. I enjoy that because it gives me the freedom to draw my cartoon characters again and make a little extra cash in the process. A few years back I started to get into building furniture at a friend's wood shop (tables, shelves, an entertainment center, or whatever the wife wants me to build) and now have a few custom pieces in my home.

11. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

I was thinking about joining the circus or hopping a freight train and riding the rails with the hobos. Seriously, I would love to take historic homes and fix them back up and bring them back to their original grandeur.

12. What do you do with your free time?

A few years back we bought an older home that needs a lot of updating, so I spend much of my free time remodeling. It does help coming from a construction family background, so I know just enough to be dangerous. Also, I watch the Steelers and the Penguins. Hey, I'm from the Burgh. What do you expect?

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Edward Laurin

(Toronto, Canada)



*Edward Laurin,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“LOREWREN”.*

*Laurin lives and
works in suburban
Toronto, Ontario in
Canada. View his
work at [http://www.
lorewrencodesign.
com](http://www.lorewrencodesign.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

Husband. Father. Designer. Working artist. Friend. Cousin to many. Canadian. No-bandwagon-jumping Toronto Maple Leaf hockey fan. Born on the shores of Georgian Bay in an English- and French-speaking small town. My French is limited to a few words and phases, but I can always pull upon my drawing skills when language barriers arise. Live in the inner suburbs of Toronto, Ontario. Started my career doing lots of freelance



after graduating from college as full-time jobs were few and far between at the time. (Mum and Dad were wondering if I would ever get a real job.) I think they honestly thought this career choice involved living in a artist loft, painting still life fruit and nudes. Freelance turned into a full-time offer with my first agency and then a jump to a great client-side opportunity for a 12 year stint as in-house creative director for a technology company. Joined when the company was private and experienced the transition to publicly traded company. Great learning experience and worked with some very creative folks outside the design realm; computer programmers, engineers and product managers are creative people too! If you've been in front of a PC and a red rectangle logo appeared upon start up, then you have seen one of my logos. Now work for myself with direct clients and as a hired creative gun for boutique marketing communication firms.

2. How did you become interested in design?

Always drew a lot as a kid. Give me a pencil and some paper, and I was a happy camper. Sketch books went everywhere with me. Wish I still had them to look back upon. Remember showing my Memère my drawings of Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam around the age of 8. I remember reading the book "Harold and the Purple Crayon" by Crockett Johnson (detailing Harold's) many adventures with drawing as a way to change the world.

My graphic design focus came in secondary school. We had moved to a new city from a really small town, and (we) went to all the secondary schools in the city and asked about their art classes. My dad was in tow, and (he) has commented that he knew then I was serious about my drawing skills, and it would be my career. The high school had not only the typical fine arts offering, but also life drawing, drafting and what was labeled as "vocational arts." An art teacher named Mr. Robinson inspired me (in other words, kicked my butt) to pursue a graphic design college education. I recall my first watercolour lesson with him: two brush stroke swirls and a face appeared.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

My wife. Always tells me the truth and has a great perspective.

Magazines. I used to read everything, but time restrictions have curtailed that activity of late. Always a great deck moment at a friend's cottage, reading a

dog-eared National Geographic with a pint of Guinness. Hope to one day start my own cottage collection.

4. Mac or PC?

I am a diehard Mac user; some would even say evangelical. Worked at a job where PCs were dominant and frankly couldn't do the leap. Not to say Macs don't have issues – they do – but in my experience the Mac community is more willing to assist with a solution.

A MacBook and a MacMini are the current hardware. Adobe CS4 is the software. Filemaker for biz stuff. 8 x 10 inches sketch pad, black with wire bindery, and a yellow HB pencil. No eraser. Stashed in the recently found, almost perfect vertical laptop bag. (Bit of a quest over the past couple of years to find such a laptop bag.)

5. How do you promote your work?

Read a great business book about growing my business through referrals, and its guidelines are working for me. "Get More Referrals Now!" by Bill Cates. (Also) LinkedIn has a online tool for presentations.



6. Please describe your typical work day

I work from a home office, and my hours are dictated by my daughter's daycare schedule and my wife's commuting schedule. I am generally in the office from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and go back at it after 8:30 p.m. when a deadline is looming. I tend to scan e-mails on my iPhone while having my first cup of brewed coffee. I find that doing e-mails during the day can eat up a fair chunk of time so I need a bit of a regime of reading and answering to equal out the blocks of design productivity. Some creative procrastination, in the guise of research, to avoid accounting duties for as long as possible. I work with a sketch book most days – projects in the works or project notes or even phone call doodles. Trying really hard to break the scrap of paper habit for notes. Just adds to the clutter on my desk. Computer work always follows the sketch phase. My idea generation is quicker with a pencil than with a keyboard and mouse.

7. What are other ways you use your creativity?

I paint. It is a completely selfish form of expression that doesn't involve a brief or sales objective. It takes me away from everything and it is good for my state of mind. My paintings are on display for sale at a local restaurant and most recently part of group exhibit at a corporate office. (Also) cooking, thanks to Jamie Oliver. Can't help but modify a recipe if need be to suit items in the pantry or when making dish for the second time. (Also home renovations.) We own a 1920s built home. Always a to-do list in motion.

8. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

I would paint full time.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Ivan Fedorowich

(Canada)



*Ivan Fedorowich,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“**intrepidguppy**”.
Fedorowich lives and
works in Canada.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a 32-year-old male, married six years to my wife, Beka. We have two busy boys, Xander, 5, and Luka, 1. I'm an ex-Army brat, born in Nova Scotia, Canada. One year later we moved to Germany for six years, then to a base north of Toronto, Canada for about 11 years. I've lived in Ottawa, Canada since 1994. Ottawa is home to the longest skating rink in the world and one of the birthplaces of modern competitive hockey. Ottawa also happens to be in the top 10 "Coldest Capital Cities" in the world. When I moved here I was hot out of high school with no plans to go to college or university. I'd always loved art and design but never thought about it seriously as a career. I did a lot of volunteer work in my area with the local deaf community and so took work as a night cleaner for local businesses. It paid well and gave me a flexible schedule.

2. How did you start out doing graphic design?

Seriously ... would you want to be a cleaner for the rest of your life? My personal epiphany came around February 2005. I thought, I'm going crazy. I need a hobby. I love art, why not see if I can make some money doing it too? I started doing some Google searches for logo contest-type sites. Looking at the posts here and there led me to key words like vector (huh?) and raster (double huh?).

I found out that these were just fancy words in the design world for infinitely resizable lines and not infinitely resizable pixels. Next step: What product should I use? Does it match my current budget, i.e. cheap? Is it used by a lot of designers? So I went out and bought Corel Draw 12. For some stupid reason I didn't start doing vector work until about three months after I bought the product. Couldn't get over the fear of the unknown. Go figure.

So, in case you still haven't figured it out, I have zero design school education, which I regret to some degree. My learning curve was quite sharp: sink or swim. I am still learning as projects or boredom push my limits.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

My mom, in a way, inspired my style. (Cheesy, I know.) She loves to doodle and some of her stuff is really cool. Her designs are generally minimalistic but at times can be quite complex. Doodles tend to evolve as you go and can be a great source for creativity. Like my mom, I prefer doing minimalist designs. Seeing artwork, especially logos, that can have equal effect in color and black and white is really appealing to me. It's something I noticed right away when looking through logo books and popular designers' portfolios.

When I first started designing it was quite obvious that I didn't know much, even though at times I thought I did. I made it a priority to analyze why certain designers were successful and worked at absorbing aspects of style while remaining true to the designer I wanted to be. So I guess I'd have to say my fellow designers (successful ones) here and on other communities have had some degree of influence on my work and contributed to my style – if I have one at all.

4. How has technology affected your work?

Without technology I would still be trudging away doing only cleaning and other such work. Technology allows me to spend more time with my family and get work done much faster. Right now I am using a refurbished Pentium 4 PC with 256 MB Nvidia video card, really low-end stuff, but good enough. I use Corel Draw X4 for most of my work and, of course, Adobe Illustrator (CS3 – what a behemoth to learn). I have always hated normal mice so I use a Logitech trackball mouse. ... Oh, and I use a USB hard drive to back up all my work every month or so. Almost lost it all once when my laptop crashed.

5. You tend to be particular about the projects in which you participate. Please talk a little about why it's important to pick the right projects

First and foremost, in choosing a project I start at square one: my personal principles. If a project doesn't align with them, I move on. Secondly, projects that are potential time-wasters are usually a no go; I'd rather spend more time with my family. And, of course, if I think I can win, I'll enter.

6. Please describe your typical work day

I wake up, eat, check my e-mails, check the RSS feeds, and usually check the main pages of my design sites. Once I shortlist a few projects I start picking away at entries; usually I can come up with a few concepts by the time I need to start. I tend to have a very flexible schedule and so sometimes I will stay up into the wee hours if inspiration hits. Having one kid in school half days and the other home all day, with limited space, makes work challenging at times, but I wouldn't change it.

7. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a creative professional?

Being a designer is kind of like being an OB; you help people give birth to their ideas. Getting that baby out can be hard work, but it's worth it in the end. Clients place a lot of trust in you, so giving them something they'll keep for a very long time is a real challenge. But when you give them what they want, and they are really happy, that's such a great feeling, aside from the personal pride of just creating a great design. Even when your offering is refused, knowing that your design is really good is sometimes reward enough. Sometimes, though, I find it hard to not let my "newness" to the design field show. Coming up with great concepts doesn't always

happen ... even when the customer doesn't seem to mind. It can be an internal challenge to overcome. When you look back at older, less quality, work and think, "I did that? Yeah, okaayy ..." you can at least come away feeling like you've improved over time.

8. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

If it's not fun now, don't do it. Being in a job just to make money is useless. Be diverse. Plagiarism is bad; if you think you can get away with it, you're wrong. Cultivate a conscience; don't violate your principles for money. Your respect within any community will not take long to fall if you do too many stupid things. Watch better designers and learn from their success. Learn to take criticism gracefully; some people know what they're talking about, some don't.

9. What do you do with your free time?

Who has lots of that nowadays? Aside from catching up on sleep, I do things with my family and work with my local deaf community teaching people the Bible in ASL. I've been learning ASL since 1994.



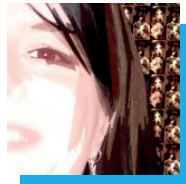
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12 Questions

Meet Jamie Vijayaraghavan

(Indiana, USA)



*Jamie
Vijayaraghavan,
known on
crowdSPRING
as “[jmarfurt](#)”.
Vijayaraghavan
lives and works in
the state of Indiana
(U.S.).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I am 28 years old and live in South Bend, Ind., home to corn fields, Notre Dame and more lake effect snow than anyone could ever want! I live with my incredibly patient husband Nivas, four adorable dogs and one very brave cat. A house full of unruly animals definitely keeps us on our toes. I am an idealist, a vegetarian, a recycling fiend and a foosball enthusiast, among other things.

2. How did you start out doing graphic design?

As long as I can remember, I've had a passion for graphic design. My first love was packaging design, but over the years I've realized that logos are my true calling. I think it's amazing that one simple icon can say so much about a company or an individual.

Once in awhile, I also enjoy some of the more monotonous and tedious work such as large catalogs and price lists. The math geek in me just loves to organize information, work with formulas, create hierarchies of information through formatting and do all sorts of calculations to ensure that everything is aligned just right. I'm also a perfectionist, so I do love to torture myself with all the details being just right.

I think graphic design is a great way to use both sides of your brain. It pairs the logical, detail-oriented side with the creative, risk-taking side. That is what has always drawn me to design – my creativity and inner math-geek can co-exist in harmony.

3. You've said that your two passions in life are graphic design and animal rescue. Why is it so important to have passion about something?

Passion is what keeps me going each and every day. If I'm passionate about something, it doesn't matter how hard I have to work, how many hours I have to put in, how much stress I have to endure, or how many sacrifices I have to make to accomplish my goals. I love graphic design and animal rescue more than anything in the world; they are both challenging, but very rewarding.

4. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

I typically browse through the projects once a week and bookmark a handful that I find interesting, either because I feel strongly about what the company stands for, or because the project brief presents a unique creative challenge. My creative process then depends on each individual project. If it calls for a text-only logo design, I just jump right in with sketching, both on paper and in Illustrator. I'll play with the letterforms until I eventually come up with something visually interesting. From there, I'll continue to fine tune the concept, adding color last. If the project calls for a logo with an icon, then I typically take a few days to let the project stew in my head. An idea will eventually come to me. Depending on the project, I may also spend some time researching similar companies to determine what has been done before so I can ensure that I come up with a unique concept.

5. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

One of my favorites would have to be a series of magazine ads that I designed when I was working for Conn-Selmer. The company was introducing a series of new clarinets, and they wanted the ads to focus on the artistry of each model's construction. As I look back on these ads now, I am still happy with the overall concept – the use of white space, the lack of images other than the product shot and the focus on a specific word and dictionary definition that described each model.

I created these ads when I was fresh out of school, and although I am still proud of them, I can definitely think of a few things I would change in the execution if I had to do it all over again. Hey, designers are always their own worst critics, right?

Another design I am particularly proud of is my thesis project for my final design course in college. I decided to create a safari-themed board game, so I had a semester to come up with the concept of the game and how it was to be played, create a set of rules/instructions and then create all the artwork needed for the board, cards, playing pieces, instruction book, etc. To this day, I still have not been as excited about a project as I was for that board game.

6. How has technology affected your work?

I grew up on computers, so I feel much more comfortable drawing with a mouse on a computer than with a pencil on paper. I do use pencil and paper for really quick sketches, but I always use the computer when developing a concept. Since I mainly do logos, I work primarily in Adobe Illustrator to create vector-based graphics.

7. You have a BFA in graphic design from Indiana University. How important is your formal education in graphic design in your day-to-day work?

A formal education may not be able to teach you how to be creative, but it can give you the tools you will need in the design field. I am very grateful for my education at both the University of Michigan and Indiana University. Both schools taught me the basics I would need to succeed: composition and other design basics, color theory, the importance of brainstorming and sketching and the business skills needed for a freelance career.

8. Please describe your typical work day

During the week, I work a typical 9-to-5 day job in the packaging department at Bayer Healthcare, diabetes division. I coordinate packaging artwork between our graphic design firm, color house, printers and international clients. When I get home from work at 5 p.m., that's when the day really begins for me. I spend another five to seven hours on the computer working on freelance jobs, crowdSpring projects and my animal rescue, Saving Shelter Pets, Inc. I'm obsessed with being productive.

9. What do you do with your free time?

Free time ... what's that? Between a full-time day job, a handful of freelance clients, crowdSPRING projects and running a nonprofit organization, I do not have a whole lot of free time. But I do play in an indoor soccer league once a week, and I am currently trying to start a foosball league.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Marc Köhlbrugge

(Netherlands)



*Marc Köhlbrugge,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“[marckohlbrugge](#)”.
Köhlbrugge lives,
studies and works in
the Netherlands.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm 21 years old and live in a town called Nuenen in the Netherlands. I travel to Breda daily, the city where my school is located. There, I follow a study called "Communication & Multimedia Design" which is focused on everything related to new media. Graphic design, philosophy, technology, marketing, psychology, interaction design, the whole shebang. Basically I'm being trained to be a jack-of-all-trades, but in a good way. Jobs get more and more specialized, which creates a demand for people who can communicate with those specialists and have a good overview of the whole project. Well, that's me. (That's the idea anyway.) I'm expecting to obtain my Bachelor of Arts degree later this year. We'll see how everything works out in the real world.

2. How did you start out doing graphic design?

I started drawing when I was young. When I got a little older, I started taking toys apart and later building weird constructions with Legos. Then, when I was around 11 years old, my brother brought home a copy of Adobe Photoshop. I already knew my way around computer back then so I learned Photoshop pretty quickly from an early age, with a little help from my brother. While other kids had just found out about "Word Art," I was designing my school documents in Photoshop.

It wasn't until a couple of years later when I really started designing new stuff versus manipulating existing photos. At that time I was really fascinated with the idea of hacking into computers. I read an article that said you had to know at least one programming language to become a hacker so I started learning HTML (which isn't really a programming language, but I didn't know that at the time). I kind of stuck with creating websites and never got into hacking. (Fortunately?)

The thing about websites is the combination of technology and design. They go hand in hand. It was great because I finally could combine my technical skills with my design skills. That's how I started out, creating websites. After a while I started creating all kind of graphics and learned about Illustrator, which I then used for all my logo designs.

3. crowdSPRING selected your design for its homepage and interior pages in the first project that was run on crowdSPRING back in the spring of 2008. Please talk a bit about that project and the challenges you faced designing for a new startup

March 4, 2008. The day this whole adventure started. I noticed an e-mail message in my inbox. It was from a company called crowdSPRING I'd never heard about, and I was wondering how they got my e-mail address. I almost trashed the message, but I noticed, when skimming through it, they were holding a design competition with a big cash reward. I also liked the casual tone of the message. You know, that fresh flavor every text written by crowdSPRING seems to have, it's pure awesomeness. I decided to take a look at the website, read about the competition and decided to take a stab at it.

Eventually the deadline passed, and I had to wait for the winner to be announced. I knew that I would be in a meeting the day the winner would be announced. It was a very hectic day, so I couldn't really check my e-mail until the evening I got home. I eagerly signed in to my computer. This is what I found waiting in my inbox: "It is with outstanding pleasure that I'm writing to let you know that the team met, and we have chosen your design for the \$5,000 AWARD! Hopefully that will help pay for some of that school you're working so hard at." We have a pretty solid educational system here in the Netherlands so I don't have to pay for school myself, but I was very happy receiving that message anyway, as you can imagine. I had a really great evening, week and month.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Lucky errors. You have this end result in mind, but achieving it will often (at first) result in something else. Something you weren't trying to achieve but seems to work even better. This happens to me all the time. E.g. you're dragging some layers in Photoshop, and you let go at the wrong moment, resulting in a partly hidden element, which by chance works perfectly. Try to create some kind of regulated chaos, and something you wouldn't expect will emerge. This is a technique I now try to apply consciously and take even further. Not just in graphic design, but in all forms of creation. Take what you've got. Keep punching it 'til it's almost lifeless, and re-build it.

5. How has technology affected your work?

Technology doesn't just affect my work, it makes it possible. Apple iMac 24" is my primary computer. I won't go into the whole Mac OS X vs. Windows debate, but I've tried them both for several years and I like Mac OS X the best so that's what I use. I've also tried Linux quite some time ago, but it didn't offer me anything Mac OS X didn't already provide.

The reason for the iMac 24" was simple: It was the fastest computer I could afford. I would have liked a Mac Pro, but they were just too expensive.

6. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Deliberate practice. We all know practice makes perfect, but that only holds true if you're consciously working on getting better. If you keep designing, sure you will get better over time, but by consciously reinventing yourself, your skills will improve much faster.

crowdSPRING is very useful for this. You can work on all kinds of different projects and try out all kinds of techniques. If

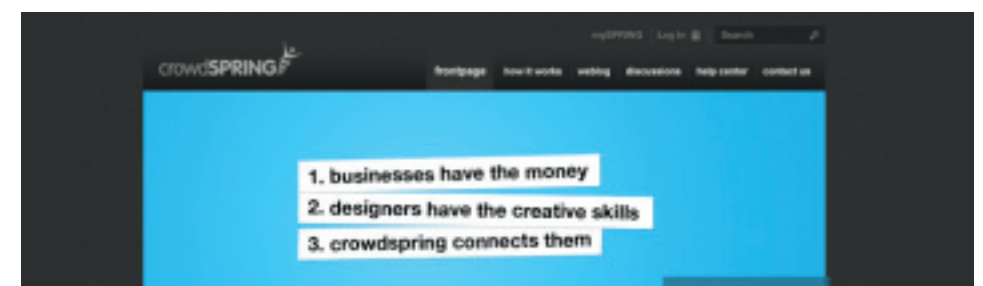
some don't work out, no problem, you're not legally bound to finish the project (unless your work is selected), something that's different in the "real world."

I think that's one of the strengths behind crowdSPRING. You can experiment a bit more, and both you and the buyer benefit from it. You get your practice, including real-world feedback, and perhaps some money. And the buyer gets more original designs.

Also, when putting deliberate practice into practice, remember it's OK to steal ideas. What?! Yes, develop your own style, but feel free to steal good ideas. Don't copy someone's concept, but, for example, if you notice a lot of websites are using some kind of wooden texture as their background image, start thinking where they might have gotten their inspiration. This might inspire you to use some kind of fabric for your next design. Picasso once said, "Good artists copy, great artists steal."

7. What do you do with your free time?

Hanging out with friends, discussing the meaning of life and whatnot. Watching movies. I recently started getting into the habit of reading. Mostly nonfiction like Malcolm Gladwell's "Outliers," which is a book about "the story about success." Gladwell argues that it's not necessarily about talent or your personality, but has more to do with where you came from. Very interesting reading. ... I'm also browsing the Internet a lot. I'm subscribed to about 70 blogs which I scan each day looking for interesting articles. Most of those weblogs are related to either creativity or entrepreneurship. I'm almost obsessed with keeping my digital files neatly organized.



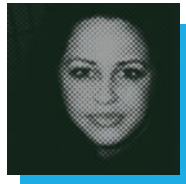
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12 Questions

Meet MJ

(USA)



*MJ, known on
crowdSPRING as
“UpQuark”. MJ lives
and works in the
desert southwest of
the United States.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

My name is MJ. (I'm a female "Junior.") Contrary to popular belief, I was not spawned, but rather hatched in the northeast region of the United States. I live in the desert southwest U.S. and am the youngest of four girls who, oddly and inexplicably, were not hatched. The explanation is classified, even to me.

OK, so random tidbit (or is it random? We'll see ...) I'm ambidextrous. Not in a perfect-handwriting-with-either-hand kind of way, because my handwriting isn't ... oh wait! My handwriting is equally bad with either hand, so there ya have it. Clarification issue solved. I actually do believe that my ambidexterity translates into everything I do, in that my logical and creative sides tend to balance each other out, or slap each other around, depending on what's needed. I'm often frenetically creative and possess hyper-focus superpowers (unless I see something shiny, and not in a girly way, I mean like futuristic spacecraft shiny. Or escaped mercury.) My sister and I can riff on creative ideas faster than a ... something really fast, or get extremely excited about something really geeky. If I get too hyped, there's cheap entertainment to be had. Think SuperBall let loose on a vibrating surface.

So, linear background.

Inside voice: I wanted to be a superhero first, then a wizard, then a land conservationist, astronaut or other off-the-ground profession, vet, psychotherapist, civil rights lawyer, music therapist, community service professional ... ew. See how these just went downhill into reality?

Outside voice, a.k.a. reality: I did actually go to agricultural school to study land conservation. Then I studied ethnomusicology on the West Coast, moved to Boston and attended New England Conservatory of Music, decided I loved music too much to get into the business of it and went to University of Massachusetts-Boston majoring in human service management. Other education includes shiatsu, Eastern medicine, and auricular acupuncture, and that all got woven into my human service career. No matter what the combination is at the time, I mix things I love. My days are filled with design, editing and copywriting, and working as an Apple specialist. And, in this economy, I wake up every day extremely grateful that I'm lucky enough to be working.

2. How did you become interested in design?

That is really hard to pin down, since design is an integral part of daily life. I guess I got interested in applying design techniques when I started receiving requests, and it just kind of went from there. I derive tremendous joy and satisfaction in assisting someone to communicate effectively with words and images, which is why I love jobs involving both writing and editing and design. I started focusing on design as an actual professional service around 2004-2005, after a lot of practice and study.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

The "who's": My mom is an artist (and writer and editor), and all of those elements that bring art together are seeped into my pores. The tactile elasticity of oil paint, the smell of turpentine, the meditative state of bringing something to life and pulling it out of canvas, paper, stone, wood, metal, earth. My sister, who is a writer, is also an artist (although she'll deny it). She'll draw an awesome character off the top of her head, and it'll have an instant personality.

The "what's": absolutely everything. Nature, cities, piles of junk, chocolate stains on a kid's face (Rorschach with a mouth centerpiece). I love clean lines to organic chaos and everything in between. I love grunge, mid-century modern, retro, minimalist; they all have awesome elements. A hand, for instance, is like a landscape for all of a person's life experiences. Those kinds of things are a big influence.

4. Mac or PC?

Mac. When I was a PC person, I used to make fun of my sister for using a Mac. Then I used one, and I shut up. I'm proficient on both platforms, but I prefer Mac, hands down. I use Adobe products almost exclusively, not because I think they're the best, but because they get the job done, and I haven't taken the time to learn new programs. I also use a Wacom tablet pretty heavily.

5. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Do you love it enough to deal with the less fun stuff? Can you handle, or learn to handle, criticism, with regard to your work? Can you weather repetition and tedium to get some jobs done? Can you pull an idea (or usually several) out of your ... head on a deadline? If the ups outweigh the downs, then go for it.

Find your niche. Find what inspires you about design. Are you drawn to mainstream design, where you'll get the largest volume of work? If you lean more toward context, purpose, and artistry, will you be able to make a living at it full time? If you work for a design firm, it is best to be attracted to mainstream design, I believe. That's mostly what you'll encounter. If you work freelance, again, mainstream will get you the most work, but if it's not in your DNA to do it, you've got to think outside the box, and define that outside-the-box space well. Those of us who are not mainstream don't do well when we try to mold ourselves into something we just don't relate to, so define your niche and define it well. And then, persevere until your brain hurts, and then persevere some more. Outside-the-box design doesn't always get rave reviews, so learn to say thank you while trusting your gut and frequent the sites of successful outside-the-box designers. Often.

6. Please describe your typical workday

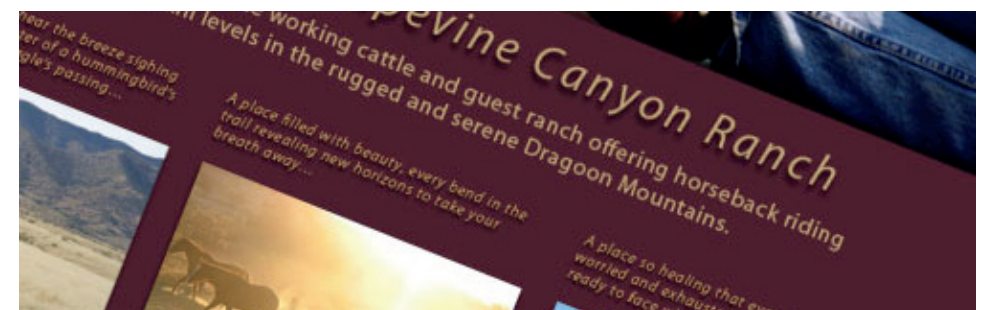
Ooh. Summer or not summer? Those are our two seasons here. Summer mornings start earlier, around 5:30 a.m. I check e-mails, take care of any odds and ends from the previous day, and set up my space. You know, the usual, mundane stuff. This is when I'm in my home office, which is generally Monday through Wednesday. Thursday through Saturday I'm off-planet, doing crazy things with computers and such. I do some work late evening or early morning on those days, but nothing heavy-duty. I always have pens, pencils and paper at my side. The occasional crayon never hurts either. Oh, and a whiteboard on the wall. And my big red Theraball, 'cause sometimes you've just got to bounce those ideas into existence.

7. What are the most challenging aspects of being a graphic designer?

Squeezing creative juice out of my head that's actually applicable to the job. Shifting my 2 a.m. creativity into a more doable timeslot. Dealing graciously with interruptions when I'm hyper-focusing. Remembering to eat.

8. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

I'd probably still go with superhero or wizard. Also, knife-making and sharpening.



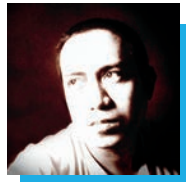
To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Mon Paningbatan

(Manila, Philippines)



*Mon Paningbatan,
known on
crowdSPRING
as “**LoopDloop**”.
Paningbatan lives
and works in
Manila, Philippines.
His work can be
see at [http://www.
loopdloopdesigns.
com](http://www.loopdloopdesigns.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a self-confessed "typo-phile" and iconography aficionado who's been in the design business for more than 15 years. Surrounded by books and consuming extensive amount of coffee, I continuously conflict my thoughts as a creative exercise and objectively review the process afterwards.

My past stints among a few include illustrator for children's books, art director for a magazine, and design consultant at Intellectual Property Philippines. Until I decided to set up my own shop and bite the creative freedom all designers deserve.

2. How did you become interested in design?

There is just something about symbols and typefaces that I consider very interesting. They communicate and identify differently for every individual, and if you observe closely, a strong symbol unifies the thoughts of its audience. It may also lead or repress a person's perception. In this manner, creating a design is comparable to being a leader. You could get to shape minds and have your own Eiffel Tower to show off. Narcissistic, isn't it? It is something you can control, and (it will) reward you at the same time.

3. Do you have an interesting crowdSPRING story?

In 2009 I joined a logo project for Urban Athletics, which I fortunately won. It came as a surprise since there were around a hundred plus entries for the project. I was so excited on the possibilities, on how the logo would work for the client. After a week I got to see pictures of the logo all over the clients' boutique. As I was strolling at the mall with my wife and son, I suddenly saw the logo in all its glory in the boutique façade. It was really funny because neither I nor the client knew each of our nationalities, and we ended up working together in the end.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Paul Rand, Ogilvy, Bruce Mau, Philippine National artist Fernando Amorsolo, Im Henson, Aldous Huxley and the perspective of my 3-year-old son, Gabriel Ray. Not necessarily in that order.

5. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

First, I create a mood board. Then, create a web of descriptions that suits the target audience. I then contemplate on what emotions the design needs to convey to meet the goal of the client.

Coffee.

I then research the client's competition. This creates a new objective from my end, on how could I make the client stand out from the competition. I then sketch ideas, wireframes and specify bullets to strengthen the functionality of the idea.

Coffee.

Apply it to the computer. Finally, ask myself, "If I own the business will I want this design solution to reflect my service/product?" If not, I restart all over.



6. Mac or PC?

I work presently on both platforms and enjoy them all the same. In my opinion, in this day and age, the difference between the two becomes slimmer. Adapting to the industry standard, I use the Adobe Creative Suite and Pantone Matching Systems to keep it tight. I also use a pen tablet (in case a project requires some illustrations or retouching), an old school light box and my good ol' drafting table, which takes a lot of space in the studio.

7. What is your dream design project?

Does it need to be design oriented? I'd like to spearhead a global marketing campaign against child labor in Third World countries and provide long-term solutions which are geographically oriented.

8. How do you promote your work?

I primarily use my website as a point of reference for clients. I also send a monthly newsletter to sustain brand awareness and inform the clients of the developments happening in the studio.



9. Please describe your typical workday

I'm an early riser. I check my e-mails at 5 in the morning. Review my schedule over a cup of coffee. I then review ongoing competitions on crowdSPRING and schedule when to pitch on a project. I then try to keep away from the computer to create eagerness after conceptualizing so I read and find ways to get inspired. That takes up my morning.

After lunch I do designs until 11 in the evening. During a project wrap-up, I see to it that I check my e-mail every three hours. This is just to make sure that if ever the client needs something from me, I could provide in a short span of time. After a wrap-up is when I usually get to sleep more and contemplate.

10. You seem to be experienced in many types of design. Which is your favorite?

I love doing corporate identity systems for it acts as the visual core for every business. It has endless possibilities when you capture it perfectly. It transcends, media-wise.

11. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

I would still probably be doing creative stuff. A writer perhaps, since I took communication arts in college.

12. What do you do with your free time?

Me and my family usually go out to malls and just hang out. I also read and try to learn more about business and finance. I play classical guitar and try to write poetry for personal consumption.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Sarah Urbanak

(Florida, USA)



*Sarah Urbanak,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“29design”. Urbanak
lives and works in
Florida. For more
information visit her
website, [http://www.
twenty9design.com](http://www.twenty9design.com).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm actually 27, not 29, in case you may have assumed. No fast-forwarding towards 30 please! The 29th is my birthday, as well as one of those funny little numbers I use for everything. It has stuck and begun to represent, well, me.

My 27 years launched in Key West, Fla. From there I migrated north to Middlebury, Vt., headed west to Alfred, N.Y., then overseas to Christchurch, New Zealand, back to lovely Vermont, then hopped over to Dunedin, New Zealand, and just recently have parked myself in central Florida (for now). I like to think of myself as a responsible vagabond.

New Zealand consumed four years of studying, living, working (and playing – LOTS!). Karma was on my side and seven months into my masters degree at the University of Otago, I landed a fantastic job at the Otago Museum as the marketing officer. A high profile and extremely ambitious nonprofit organization, the Otago Museum challenged me to no end. I absorbed much knowledge about optimal business practice, strategic planning and in-house design from a gifted and passionate team of innovative business leaders.

My family has drawn me back to the homeland, but my love affair with the South Pacific is enduring, and early '09 will see me returning to the country of extremes. We – my boyfriend of three years is Kiwi – were planning on spending a bit longer in the United States. However, immigration is a battleground, and we're steering clear.

When arriving home to the United States this past year I was faced with the reality that the majority of marketing and design jobs would require quite a commute from where I am living, and with the gas prices as they were at the time (although Americans are completely spoiled in comparison, I know), this was a huge incentive to work from the comforts of my home. So 29design was born and is keeping me busier than expected.

2. How did you start out as a designer?

With my clunky kid scissors I spent hours precisely trimming the most stunning letters out of glossy magazines, wedging them together like puzzle pieces and creating fantastic rainbows of text for birthday, Halloween, Valentine, you name it cards. I guess that was the beginning of my passion for visual communication. This graduated into "designing" my way through high-school creating elaborate poster for any assignment possible. Finally, after a grueling year of art foundation at Alfred University – School of Art and Design, applying myself to a multitude of artistic avenues, I took the plunge into graphic design. It was warm water indeed! A true graphic designer can only handle so much installation art ... I will always remember creating 6-foot hedge trimmers out of a bundle of twigs, chicken wire and Astroturf, realizing then and there I was a computer girl, through and through.

3. You're a big supporter of making design available and affordable for all organizations, including nonprofits. Please talk a little about some of the difficulties nonprofits have with sourcing creative work

Nonprofits by nature are making amazing things happen without a monetary drive, bettering our world in one form or another. These people are gems in my book. But budgets, bloody budgets.

Working at the Otago Museum, a very successful nonprofit, opened my eyes to this widespread business predicament. We were lucky enough to have an in-house design team so this wasn't as substantial an issue for us as it is for smaller nonprofits.

Extremely limited budgets for creative work are driving nonprofits to portray mediocre identities, marketing and promotion. Often it's a secretary whose job description has expanded to cover this work, only to result in unattractive

graphics made in Microsoft Word or Publisher that are hurting, more than helping the business succeed. This makes every designer shed a tear.

I have made 29design's mission to counteract this tragedy. I aspire to offer and provide a higher design standard to smaller businesses and organizations that believe they can't afford professional design services by offering discounted rates to nonprofits.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Living my adult life on opposite sides of the globe has been paramount in influencing my work. I am very intrigued by cultural nuances and how they influence my own work and that of other designers. During my honors year at (college), just after moving to New Zealand, I took it upon myself to investigate cross-cultural design, local vs. global, style prostitution, vernacular representation and how they all impact visual culture. This interest was prompted by placing myself in a foreign country and not feeling nearly as alien as I'd hoped. I felt as though I'd taken a time machine backwards 10 years in America. I know the phenomenon of globalization is driving visual culture, but I was appalled by how Americanized some parts of this little country were. So began my interest in design that speaks a local lingo, steering away from a global design approach whenever possible, and treating cultural trends respectfully and appropriately.

In becoming a member of crowdSPRING, this has been a resurfacing issue for me. It is so easy to become generic with our stylistic manifestations, without being the least bit aware we are doing so. I choose to participate mostly in projects that release the location of the business and allow me to research, understand and touch upon the local. It keeps my conscience

intact, knowing I'm doing my little part to protect cultural identity and promote a visually diverse world.

5. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

One of my favorite designs was created for a new product (the Otago Museum) launched during my time there: a fully immersive, three-story tropical habitat, boasting over 1,000 butterflies from around the globe, lush flora and fauna. I designed a butterfly identification brochure, one the little kiddies (grown-up ones too) picked up on their way into the experience and could tick off the butterflies they encountered while in the tropical forest. What made this design so special was the reaction on the little ones' faces, and being able to see it in action on any day I decided to take a stroll through the tropical forest.

6. When designing a logo, what do you think are the biggest mistakes a designer can make?

The absolute worst (cringe) is misspelling the client's business name. Editing is critical.

7. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Take advantage of internships. There's no better way to find out if you and graphic design are compatible. Pursue a foundation in art. We're talking painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, anything and everything. You won't believe how much having these basics will influence your style, craftsmanship and execution.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Shawndra Renée Cox

(Lodi, USA)



*Shawndra Renée
Cox, known on
crowdSPRING as
“OOPS”. Cox lives and
works in Lodi, N.J.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I was born and raised in Queens, N.Y. I am a single mother, a lover of all things creative and became a registered business owner at the age of 26. I can't say that my path to running my own business was something I knowingly set out on so much as it was a really cool, unexpected place I ended up at after taking a wrong turn somewhere. Well, maybe not a wrong turn. It was more like being forced to taking a detour due to major road construction.

As soon as I graduated from college, I applied for jobs, went on interviews and got rejected by every studio and firm I visited. Over the course of about four years, there were at least 30 places that I went to in person. ... All the while, I was picking up work from random people on Craigslist and friends of friends who were trying to start their own businesses. They were always quick jobs, though, and with my newborn son, I was more focused on finding something steady and stable rather than searching for the next gig to maintain for the moment.

So, finally, I landed in a small photography studio in Queens. It was 17.2 miles away from the Manhattan office I had always pictured myself in, and it was about five times smaller. Still, they liked my work, and I created some really cool things there. That was until they stopped being able to keep up with their expenses, and I ended up without a job. That was when I got hit with the choice (yet again) to get a job that I could somehow convince myself was still “art related” or dig in and fight to do the design work I wanted to, full time. That’s the short version of how my studio was born.

2. How did you become interested in design?

Drawing was always a major part of my childhood. I used to watch "Imagination Station" with Mark Kistler as the host. I would follow along and draw with him probably at the age of 5 or 6. He always had the cutest little cartoon creatures and was really big on foreshortening and shading. I learned how to incorporate both techniques into my drawings early on.

I would also watch the painting guru, Bob Ross. Around that same age, 6 or 7, my mother got me one of his oil painting kits for Christmas and set me up with everything I needed to follow along. He went super fast though! So I always had to stop and pause the video tape in order to keep up with his steps.

I didn't know, however, that design would be a career for me until senior year of high school when I joined the yearbook committee. It was the cropping and laying out of pictures that lead me to realize that there were careers better suited for me than my current major (medical assisting).

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Life, culture, the similarities we all share and the people who bring their projects to me. I am constantly surprised and impressed by so many of the people I meet and do business with. They have such great ideas and creativity that they don't get to make their priority but still want to bring to fruition in hopes that one day it will grow into something. It's understandable to see someone work a 9-to-5 as an executive administrative assistant in Manhattan so that they can pay the bills. However, when that same person comes to me with amazing photographs taken somewhere out in the mountains of Pennsylvania, it's the best feeling to see what's really important and inspiring to them. Their inspiration becomes mine, and I use it to help design what they need. In turn, on a good day, they are then inspired by my work, and go off to do even more great things with a new logo, brand or website to represent them and what they do.



4. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

That's actually one of the tougher things for me with crowdSPRING because I'm very used to meeting with clients, talking casually and touching on everything about what they do, why they do it, and the process they go through. We'll even talk about things happening in their personal lives. A lot of times our conversations reveal more about what the client needs for their business. That connection isn't really possible with the buyers on crowdSPRING, so I try to go after the projects that I can relate to in some kind of way.

5. You were recently awarded a grant. Can you tell us more about that?

The fine folks at Intuit, makers of TurboTax and QuickBooks, decided to give out grants to small businesses that nominated themselves and/or got nominations from their clients and community. I ended up nominating my own business and then immediately gave up on asking anyone to vote for me and simply forgot about it. Precisely two weeks and two days later, I get a call from Laura Messerschmitt trying to explain to me that my one, sad, little vote actually won me \$25,000. Crazy, I know!

6. What is your dream design project?

I love projects that entail working with clients who are building something from scratch and then watching it develop. Branding, to me, is one of the more exciting things that I do because, if you're lucky, you get to see your design reproduced in different ways for different media. Imagine how a true ego maniac feels in a house of mirrors. Branding something that gets really big is like seeing yourself all over the place.

7. What are some of the challenges of being a small business owner?

Money, time and resources for sure. Everyday is another challenge to properly manage your time, find the resources that fit your budget and make somethin' out of nothin'.

8. What are other ways you use your creativity?

Raising my now 4-year-old son brings up constant chances to be creative. I also love cooking and catching episodes of Bravo's "Top Chef." I'll let you in on a little known fact about me. Sometimes when I'm cooking, I pretend I'm in a quick fire challenge and have to get the food plated in an eye-catching way in 30 minutes flat. Sometimes I get a little too into it and catch myself really trying to hustle around the kitchen. Would that count as being creative or just kind of sad and weird?

9. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

If I wasn't designing full time, I'd probably be a disgruntled medical assistant forgetting random doodles in patient charts and studying photography on the side. All I can say is thank goodness for my high school yearbook. My life really could have worked out that way.



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Svetlana

(Sofia, Bulgaria)



*Svetlana, known on
crowdSPRING as
“**Allmond**”. Svetlana
works in Sofia,
Bulgaria. View her
work at [http://www.
allmond.eu](http://www.allmond.eu).*

1. Please tell us about yourself

My name means “light.” There are scattered letters in my left hand and northern wind in my hairs. I imagine the light, I spend my time playing the space clockwise and back, searching for the alibi only for what we’ve done, and not for what we never dare to do. I live in Sofia, Bulgaria, in southeastern Europe.

2. How did you become interested in design?

Do you remember the magic of the dark room, the way the images appeared on the white paper? I have been in love with photography since I was 13. As I graduated MA in fine art photography, I was flying for a private air company and working as a TV presenter for a photography edition. A teacher of mine used to say that living on a peninsula, we’re torn between the water and the land. My heart was torn in few directions, and neither of them was enough for itself. I think that the design gives the best opportunity to envision in the most creative way ideas, visions and traveling.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

First of all, I have two favorite design projects: my daughter Ema, 8, and my son Dimitar, almost 6. They never stop inspiring me, teaching me, showing me how to be more creative. It’s amazing how we can

discover the world through the eyes of the children. About my graphic design projects – certainly I try to give my best for every single design, and I feel happy and satisfied when my works are appreciated. I always say to my clients that they have to be 100 percent happy and comfortable with the result, so this is what matters to me – when a good idea finds the right way to show off. Not everything I like is what the client likes, so what is important is that we meet in between.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

In my background I was lucky to work for and respectively draw on the experience of some of the top agencies like Ogilvy, Saatchi and some others. I would also give my respect to U2, Barcelona, Gaudi, David Ogilvy, Gustav Klimt, Peter Greenaway, Michelangelo Antonioni, Federico Fellini, Art Lebedev, Lois Greenfield, Anna-Lou Leibovitz, Richard Avedon, Helmut Newton. More or less they have influence over my creative mind, but Anne Michaels seems like she’s gathered it all for me in few words: “Find a way to make beauty necessary; find a way to make necessity beautiful.”

5. Please tell us about your creative process

There are no wrong or right solutions in the creative process. Generally I try to create through three different approaches: One for the client, following strictly the brief to meet client’s need; one for the brand, if I feel that there’s something that needs to be distinguished; and one for me, unexpected and alien to the brief. What I certainly do is trying to find out the unique solution, tailored to my specific needs, target audience and style. The process of discovering, it takes heart and mind 24/7, so I live and breathe with the project until every detail is perfect.

6. Mac or PC?

I’m in love with Macs, but I’m a PC user. As a freelancer most of my clients provide PC-compatible logos, fonts, texts, etc. It’s important that the designer does not give extra thought and time for the execution details, but concentrating on creative ideas. So for me the Adobe Creative suite works well. Although I admire and respect the corporate identity projects, I dedicate my time mostly to print designs. I’m just not good at logos. No one’s perfect.

7. Your handle isn't about almonds. What is it about?

ALLMOND CREATIVE is not about almonds. It's about the passion that distinguishes the creative ideas, the ones that don't follow the trends, but invent them, don't explore the media, but challenge them, that provoke, excite, impress, inspire communication. "Allmond" is mixture of several words in a few languages – I wanted it to sound like "nuts," but to feel like "all'mond." I am not sure whether it makes sense.

8. What other ways do you use your creativity?

Creativity is a state of mind, I believe, based on flexibility. You must be creative to meet the tight deadlines, to drive safe and fast in the rush hours, to play with the kids, to manage the budgets – you have to be really creative for all.

9. Please describe your typical work day

As a freelancer I don't have a typical working day. I make my schedule according to the projects: meetings, printing houses, photography sessions – it's all up to the situation. Sometimes I can take a day off and go to the seaside in the middle of the week, but sometimes I have to work during the weekend. However, I guess I like it more than having a regular 9-to-5 job.

10. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

No matter what the project is – corporate identity, print, package, web solution – the design is a communication tool, so it's of crucial importance to use the "right words," to be integral to the brand, and respectful to the consumer. Every project is an opportunity to learn something new; that's really exciting as we're constantly improving and moving ahead.

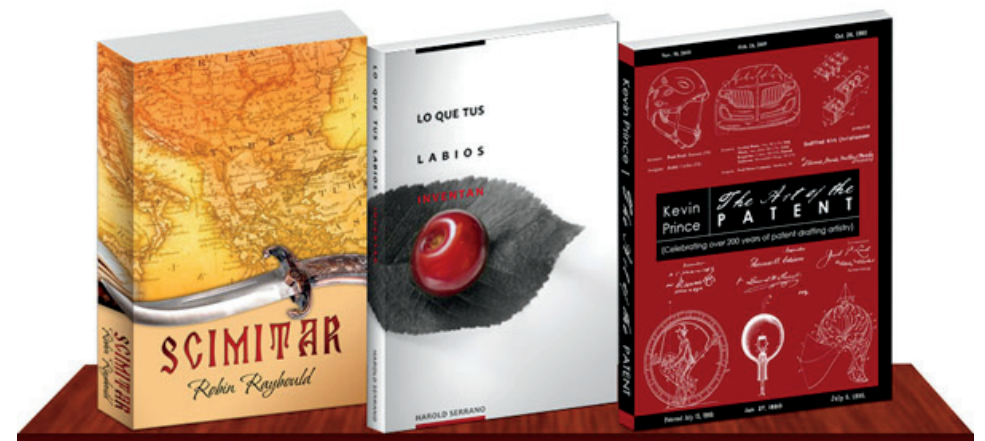
11. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

I found (advertising executive Neil French's) words useful during all my creative work. "A great work has to be impactful, relevant, original, believable, memorable. If you're going to make a commercial make it the best it can be, because you're not going to have a second chance. Never stop improving your work."

12. What do you do with your free time?

"Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea."

The free time – it is the time I want to stay away from the computer. But the project is tickling my brain while I play tennis, travel, attend a concert or (something) else. I enjoy spending time with my children and friends. Just like you!



To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Tammy Collins

(Jackson, USA)



*Tammy Collins,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“moonwelldesigns”.
Collins lives and
works in Jackson,
Tenn.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a 41-year-old mother, wife and grandmother. I live with my husband, and our three interesting and spirited dogs. Two are Catahoula Leopard dogs named Skyler and River, and the third is a little Feist named Mo. I was born in Morganton, N.C., a quiet little town nestled in the beautiful Smokey Mountains. All of my relatives lived within 50 miles of the area. I lived in Morganton with my mom until I was 5, when we moved to Jackson, Tennessee. I've been in Jackson ever since, and I return to Morganton every year.

Over the years I have worked as a medical assistant, then a nurse. After the beloved doctor I worked for over 10 years passed away, I changed professions. I wanted to get back to the great outdoors. I went to work for a local nursery and landscaping center. I started out in the potting shed, planting begonias, getting my hands dirty and loving it. Within a few months, I ended up as the office manager. Great opportunity, more pay, but I was stuck in a little office, with one tiny little window. Then, I went into accounting, working for a national uniform service. Hey, the window was bigger! I wasn't entirely happy behind all these walls, and so I quit and ventured out onto the open road with my husband and his tractor-trailer. I got to see most of the states and some amazing sights during those few years. I wouldn't trade it for anything. But it wasn't home, and that truck was getting smaller by the day. Now I bounce my grandbaby on my lap, sitting at my computer, and create while the squirrels play around outside of the open window. (They know it's safe, it isn't squirrel

season.) My granddaughter is a major part of my inspiration to keep learning, growing and honing my skills, and trying to carve myself a little niche in this profession.

This is where crowdSPRING comes in. I wasn't sure how long I could manage to stay at home so I could take care of my granddaughter, so that my daughter could work without the expense of a good daycare. I struggled to find ways to earn income while staying home. Then I found crowdSPRING. Thankfully I have been lucky enough to win a few projects and new clients over the last few months, and have also received some follow up work, making it possible to make ends meet a little longer.

2. How did you start out as a designer?

Remember that national uniform service I mentioned? We had these nifty 12-color embroidery machines. The salesman that brought in the orders for custom-embroidered shirts for local companies often promised clients whose company had no logo to speak of, that he would create one for them. He had seen me tinkering with Paint, creating images to use while creating the monthly newsletter for our branch in Publisher. He came in one day with a request for a logo design a company had in mind. Luckily for him, I jumped at the chance to create something, anything, for someone else. I did what I could with Microsoft Paint, and the company loved it.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Nature has to be my No. 1 influence. I get more inspiration from a walk in the woods or an afternoon on the river than from anywhere else. Jackson is full of restaurants and shopping centers, and is rich in musical heritage, but isn't known for great art venues. Not that I would visit many art galleries or museums if we had them. I must admit, If I have the time, you'll most likely find me on the bank of the Tennessee River, gazing in awe of the beauty of the water rolling by, the way the deep blue blends with the green of the trees in the distance, while I flip the eggs and turn the bacon on the portable stove. With one little dog laying in the tent, two others sunbathing on the bank and hubby out fishing, it's my favorite time to soak up the aesthetics of everything around me.

4. What's the very first thing you do when approaching a new design?

Refill the coffee cup.

5. When working online, how do you decide whether to participate in a project?

The major deciding factors for me are the brief and how much time I have. A great brief will draw me to a project. A brief that says, "We need a logo," just doesn't cut it for me. ... (Also) I read the activity and the buyer feedback in a project I am considering entering. If there is feedback, but it's just plain rude, I won't enter. There is a difference between a negative review and a degrading insult. It's sad, but it happens. Thank goodness it's rare.



6. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Check your personal feelings about your work at the door. Take a negative review for what it is: Information about what they don't want. If you take it personal, it's likely your mind will be closed about your own work. If you can keep an open mind and try to view your art through others' eyes, you'll have a better chance to learn and improve.

7. What do you do with your free time?

When I do pull away from the computer, I truly love the outdoors. I love to work with wood, from building a doghouse, to carving home décor or welcome signs. I love the water – swimming, floating, fishing or just sitting on the bank watching it roll by with my toes dangling in the water. In the evenings I love a good fire, a good book (Harlan Coben, Dean Koontz, Nora Roberts), or a crochet needle and yarn.

I love to play World of Warcraft; I'm Selita on Greymane for any WoW fans reading this. Though to be honest, my guild misses me since crowdSPRING came into my life. I also love a long motorcycle ride, especially the annual Trail of Tears Remembrance Motorcycle Ride. Imagine 150,000 riders riding together.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Troy Tessalone

(Tessalone, CA, USA)



*Troy Tessalone,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“**TroyTess**”. Tessalone
lives and works in
Redondo Beach, Calif.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a creative who participates in writing projects on crowdSPRING, or in other words, I primarily name stuff. As a 24-year-old I'm nearing my quarter-century age crisis. I was born and raised in the South Bay area of southern California, which is also where I currently live and work. The South Bay is a group of beach cities about 30 minutes to an hour (depending on traffic) southwest of downtown Los Angeles. In May 2008 I earned my B.S. in Business Administration with an emphasis in marketing from the University of Southern California (USC), where I also took some information technology courses, like how to build a website. Needless to say, I'm a USC Trojan, tried and true. By day I work for an online advertising company, where I'm a web production analyst. That's geek speak for saying I work on the technical side of the business, interfacing with systems and dealing with a lot of data. I consider myself a social media junkie and someone who keeps up with technology. I'd rather be busy than bored, so I'm always looking for ways to be immersed in the world around me and enjoy what life has to offer. I believe everyone is a product of their environment, and I'm certainly no exception. "Stay hungry, stay foolish," is the motto I live my life by. I came across that quote while reading the graduation speech Steve Jobs gave at Stanford in 2005. That quote immediately struck a cord with me, and I've strived to live my life based upon it ever since.

2. How did you become interested in writing?

I became interested in writing by accident. It's funny seeing that I don't regard myself as a writer, more of an editor. Writing was not my forte growing up, but for whatever reason, I had no problem editing the work of my classmates. I basically reverse-engineered the development of my writing from an editor's perspective by applying the various styles of the work I would critique into my own. However, I was still searching for a true creative outlet. In my free time after college, I stumbled into naming thanks to the crowdsourcing movement spurred by the Internet. Soon thereafter I was hooked on phonics, I mean, naming, and took it up as a hobby. Prior to discovering crowdSPRING, I was heavily involved in a former site called NameThis.com, where I found a good deal of success. Looking back, I seemed to consistently do well on vocabulary tests during my school years, so perhaps that's where it all took root. My affinity for naming also stems from my interest in the role that marketing and advertising plays on our society. Nowadays I'd deem myself a no-name namer with a knack for word play.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your writing?

Without a doubt, my Dad is the biggest influence on my writing and overall creative mindset. Growing up, not only did he edit all my papers, but he always challenged me to see if there was an alternative way or a more concise way to say what I was trying to communicate without losing meaning.

4. What types of writing interest you the most?

I welcome the challenge to be creative within constraints, much like the projects on crowdSPRING pose. I focus nearly all of my creative energy dreaming up names, domains and taglines. I will say it's easy to come up with a good name, but it takes more magic to find a good name with a corresponding available domain. Taking it a step further, I try to employ various techniques such as alliteration and acronyms or jingles and rhymes. I don't know why, but I get a thrill from working with fewer words. As well, I must admit that I take delight in dabbling with poetry for the reason that it allows me to express a concept in a fuller form surrounded by structure. When word choice matters, that's what I'm all about.

5. Did you enjoy writing in school?

Frankly, no. I had more fun coming up with clever titles for my papers than crafting their contents. I always felt like I could convey more about an assignment via a short conversation about the matter than I could cram into a paper I spent hunched over for hours concocting. I felt the majority of academic writing was too restricting for the styles of writing that I favored. Though I would still consider myself an above average writer. The writing process was never natural and quite laborious for me. That's because I place too much emphasis into trying to write each sentence the best it can be written the first time around instead of just letting my stream of consciousness flow and then editing later.

6. Please describe your typical work day

I spend my typical workday in front of a computer at work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., because the bulk of the work I do is online. It's great, though, as I'm connected to social media at all times, can access any news and sports that interest me and am able to listen to music all day, which is definitely not a drab work environment. That means my participation in crowdSPRING is reserved for weeknights and weekends when I have the time.

7. What is your favorite book?

"Where's Waldo?" because it was the easiest to read. All kidding aside, I can't say that I have a true favorite book. Don't get me wrong, I do enjoy reading and have read my fair share of books. I found a great deal of interest in "The 4-Hour Workweek" by Timothy Ferriss and would highly recommend it. Most of the reading I do nowadays is either online or on my iPhone. I'd consider a blog like Mashable.com to be my information Bible. Plus, sites such as FastCompany.com, Inc.com, Wired.com and the "Silicon Alley Insider" blog from BusinessInsider.com are all sites I frequent on a daily basis for

reading material. One of my favorite offline publications is GOOD Magazine, which is a phenomenal source of real, relevant and rousing writing.

8. If you were to choose a different career, what would you be doing?

I'm happy with my current career, but hypothetically I'd have to say an entrepreneur. Tons of ideas are swirling around in my head, one of which has to be impactful enough to benefit the world somehow. Eventually I will get serious, take the risk and pursue one of them. I'd also entertain the idea of launching a career in advertising or marketing on the conceptual side. My dream job though would be as a voice actor/artist, the ones who do voiceovers for commercials, movie trailers and radio spots. However, I'm nowhere near qualified for such a profession unless my voice magically changes, and puberty already came and passed.

9. What do you do with your free time?

Nothing beats a day at my second home: the beach, whether that be cruising on a bike ride, playing beach volleyball, catching waves out in the water, watching the sunset or even building sandcastles. I'm lucky to be able to live the laid-back beach lifestyle, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Vicky Willingham

(Suffolk, United Kingdom)



*Vicky Willingham,
known on
crowdSPRING as
“VictoriaAnnDesign”.
Willingham lives
and works in Suffolk,
United Kingdom.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

Well, I'm currently on maternity leave from my full-time job as a design manager where I design flyers, brochures, conference material, logos, web advertising and any other print and promotional design items. I live in Suffolk, UK with my partner and our beautiful 6-month-old daughter.

2. How did you become involved with graphic design?

I went to college after school and studied media. I wanted to go into radio. Not long after the course started I discovered that I really didn't like my voice. Part of the course was focused on design elements for magazines, CD covers, etc., and I began to really enjoy that more than anything else.

3. How did you start out as a freelancer doing graphic design work?

This was a long time ago. I was looking around the Internet for a way to earn some extra money and came upon one of those old forum-based design contest sites. I threw myself into it and pushed myself to improve. It was quite a good starting point for someone with no professional experience. Because I wasn't sure whether my designs were good, I found the feedback invaluable.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I would say the environment around me has influenced me more than anything else. When I'm stuck for ideas, I tend to stare out of my office window and gaze over the field past my garden and take a moment of thought. I also love bold colours and design, and have always enjoyed pop art. I remember learning about Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol and thinking how their work looked really modern even though it was created around 30 years ago.

5. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

Sometimes an idea comes to me straight away. Sometimes I go off and look at the dictionary definition of a word and use that as a starting point. Sometimes I have an idea, and just play around with it until it becomes something great. If, after spending time on a project, the ideas still aren't flowing, I admit defeat and move on to something else. Sometimes projects just aren't suited for everybody and the beauty of crowdSPRING is that I am able to pick and choose projects.

6. How has technology affected your work?

Well, I started out with technology so I haven't really known any different, although I have to say that the software I use now are far superior to what I was using back in college 10 plus years ago. I love the Adobe software and can't imagine using anything but Illustrator for logo work.



7. Please describe your typical work day

I am currently working around my baby, so anything can happen. Sometimes I will work into the night when she is in bed. That way I know I can focus.

8. What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of being a creative professional?

Most challenging is definitely being able to come up with fresh concepts each time and making that fit what the client wants. Finding out what a client really means when they say they want a design to be bold but not overpowering, up-to-date but not modern, professional but edgy, etc., is often a challenge. The most rewarding is definitely seeing your logo go live and look fab.

9. What advice would you offer to someone considering graphics design as a career?

Look at work that you like, figure out what it is about it that catches your attention and try to use a little of that style or attitude as inspiration. Practice, practice, and more practice. Learn the software you intend to use for design, know it inside out or at least as much as you can. The quickest way to lose focus is when you need to dig around to figure out how to do something. By the time you have found it, you have probably forgotten exactly what you wanted to do. Take criticism, ask for criticism. As long as it's constructive, try to learn from it.

10. What do you do with your free time?

My days are taken up with the little one. I mostly spend any free time singing nursery rhymes or scraping up pureed cauliflower cheese from the floor. When I'm not doing that I

like the cinema, shopping, cooking, and when the sun comes out, spending time in the garden.



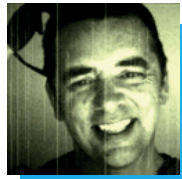
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12 Questions

Meet Rod MacGregor

(Valencia, Spain)



*Rod MacGregor,
known on
crowdSPRING
as “Rodesign”.
MacGregor lives and
works in Valencia,
Spain.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I live in a small mountain village near the Mediterranean Sea, in the community of Valencia in Spain. I was born in England and lived there for the first 40 years of my life. I am married and have a daughter, 8, and a son, 3. We moved to Spain seven and a half years ago for a culture change and have enjoyed every moment of it. I suppose in the back of my mind, I wish I could have started this interview by saying that I worked for a number of top design agencies around the world, and I'm only 28. But that is far from the truth. The truth is I am 47 years old and have worked as a waiter, a shipping clerk, a tug boat skipper (14 years), a builder's mate, an electrician's mate, a pine tree planter in the Spanish mountains, a house painter and a car test driver in South Africa. I don't regret a minute of it. I suppose I would have been bored if I'd have sat in a design office for all of that time.

My artistic work during my life includes book illustration, greeting card design, animation, painting, architectural 3-D visualization, sculpture, video and installation, and I have a first class honors degree in fine art.

2. How did you become interested in design?

I got a good feeling inside from seeing creations and artwork by others. We are surrounded by design in our lives, and it's hard not to be interested in it.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

A public art gallery in the UK commissioned me to choose one of their works by a famous artist and make a contemporary artwork to accompany it in an exhibition. I chose an etching by Pablo Picasso. It was of a rather rampant minotaur (bull's head, man's body) from the Vollard Suite. I made my minotaur come to life with the aid of two televisions, one on top of the other, a video camera and a carefully made wooden display case. The top TV showed a video loop of a bull's head moving about with lots of flies crawling, landing and taking off on it, and the lower video showed another loop of a naked man from the neck down, also with flies landing all over his irritated body. The two videos actually fitted together well (not seamlessly) and gave the impression of a living minotaur.

To record these two videos, I asked a local cattle farmer for permission to film in his bull shed. He agreed, showed me where it was and said that I could film there whenever I wanted, and that there was no need for him to be there. The first day I filmed lots of different bulls' heads. I had got what I wanted and found a nearly perfect loop.

The top part was done, but I realized during my few days editing that the bottom video, the man's body, would have to match almost perfectly with lighting and flies, etc. Back to the shed, this time with my good friend Carl, who was very proud of his role as bull's body and was built well in the right departments. Carl got his kit off, and for lighting and perspective reasons he had to stand on a chair next to a pile of bull's dung while I filmed the flies landing and crawling all over his naked body. The filming was going well until suddenly the shed doors were opened. A rather shocked looking farmworker, who was unaware of my agreement with the farmer, had come to feed the bulls.

"What the hell are you doing in here?" he shouted at us. We were also shocked at his sudden arrival and were momentarily stuck for words.

"We are making a video. The farmer knows!" I told him with an embarrassed look on my face.

"Yes, I can see what you are doing," he replied. I was more stuck for words, thinking that he wouldn't understand if I had told him about the art project. Unashamed of the situation, in his complete nakedness, standing on his chair, next to the dung pile covered in flies, with the sound of bulls grunting, snorting and mooing, Carl explained, "It's not for a porno film, mate, it's art!"

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

It depends on what day it is and what I am trying to draw or design. I like to use different media. I don't always work in two dimensions, sometimes I work in three, and occasionally I like to animate. Some days I want to use traditional media, like pencils, ink, paint and plaster, and other days I want to work digitally. Most days I don't have a choice because I am already directed by a client's brief. I would therefore have to say my

influences are varied, depending on the medium. I love Henry Moore, for his sculpture, Wayne Thiebaud, Francis Bacon and Picasso and loads more artists for their painting or other work, but the list would be too long. I also don't want to say that everything by each artist is an influence, because that's not true, I just like a few of their artworks, and whether they actually influence my work is debatable.

5. What is your dream design project?

I don't dream about particular projects, I just hope that I can survive by creating and being an artist. I am working on a big

project for a client at the moment who hopes that their project takes off on the Internet and becomes very big (i.e. like Facebook). I hope they are right, as I am involved already; hopefully their success would reflect back to me. I am mainly interested in money rather than anything specific; it makes life easier.

6. Please describe your typical work day

I get up early and help get the kids to school, walk the dog, check e-mails and start doing some sort of artwork. We all have dinner

together at around 1 or 2 p.m. The kids go back to school. The afternoon, more dog walking, more artwork, more e-mails. The kids come home from school. More eating, more dog walking, more artwork, e-mails. The evening, I work on my laptop in front of the TV (usually taking no notice of the Spanish program). More e-mails, more artwork, bed. Interesting, isn't it?



7. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

Playing bass guitar for a famous rock band.

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet Tin Bačić

(Zagreb, Croatia)



*Tin Bacic, known
on crowdSPRING as
“**TinBacicDesign**”.
Bacic lives and works
in Zagreb, Croatia.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I was born in a small country called Croatia, somewhere between central and southeastern Europe, with a 5,800 kilometer-long beautiful coast and 1,246 islands. I'm currently living and working in its capital, Zagreb. I guess some of you, like many others, have never heard of my country, and therefore as a designer, I'm trying my best to promote it here on crowdSPRING. As to my work, I have been employed as a full-time graphic designer for about five years now, and my expertise includes brand identity, illustrated logos and print design. Presently I am building up my skills on a daily basis, occasionally gathering some projects from freelance sites.

2. How did you become interested in design?

Even at my early age, I was always drawing something, anywhere and anytime, each day at home or even school. I always managed to find a little free space for some of my original piece of art so that after so much drawing and painting through primary school, it was only logical for me to enroll in the Secondary School of Fine Arts and Design, Department of Painting. Although my first choice was the Department of Graphic Design, I didn't manage to get in. Right about that time when I was around 15, me and my brothers got our first computer. At first I was mostly just playing games, but after awhile I began to study and work on some design programs

such as Adobe Photoshop and Macromedia Freehand. So eventually, as I had designed beginner logos, covers, etc., I was more and more fond of it, even more than of drawing which, at that time, I liked the most. I think that that was the period when the turning point occurred, namely the time when I decided to be more focused on graphic design rather than drawing and painting, which is still proving to be the right move. At least I think so.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I cannot actually point out what influences my design work. To be perfectly honest, it encompasses whatever touches my daily life, from the design of the label on the pâté while having breakfast ... all the way to logotypes of the night clubs I drop by for a drink.

4. Mac or PC?

Since starting secondary school I have worked on the PC only and that love has persevered up to now. But now that I have moved to a new company where all designers have Macs, I myself have to adapt to them. At home I'll have my good old PC, and a Mac at work, so that it's going to be very interesting to switch all the time.



5. What is your dream design project?

Asked right now, my dream design project would be following a great football (soccer) competition, such as the FIFA World Cup (for example, in Croatia), the UEFA European Championship or perhaps the greatest football club competition in Europe called UEFA Champions League. At this moment that would be a great pleasure and honor to design it because, as you can see, I am a big football fan. (Not so big that I would have posters hanging out in my room, but pretty big.) However, if asked the same question a few months later, the answer would probably be different.

6. How do you promote your work?

Basically I promote my work at the freelance sites and on their portfolios, the example of which is being here on crowdSPRING. So for me it is rather helpful in finding new jobs.

7. Please describe your typical work day

I get up in the morning somewhere at 8 a.m. with a swollen face and funny hairdo. I brush my teeth and put on some decent clothes for my trip to work. Around 9 a.m. I arrive at my office where I sharpen and improve my skills all the way 'til 5 p.m. when I'm done with a sometimes grueling workday and start for home. As soon as I get there I have some quick snack for my brain to work and then I usually sit down to watch some TV just to rest a bit. After some time off on my uncomfortable couch, I throw myself to my computer to check my e-mails, see some news, etc. Then I begin to design for some freelance sites (mostly crowdSPRING) until the early morning hours, when I throw myself to bed cheering the very same tomorrow's workday because it's a job that relaxes me the most.

8. In your opinion what is the meaning of creativity?

Creativity is the starting point of any human activity, sometimes being its hardest part. A good idea is what differentiates us, pushes us forward, what makes us special in a way. Creativity is the result of practice aiming at catching the big picture of any situation. Consequently, a creative person approaches a task with the attitude that there is always a better, more effective way to fulfilling it.

9. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

As mentioned earlier I finished School of Fine Arts and Design, Department of Painting, so that painting might have been my choice, though, looking back, I doubt it because in Croatia you cannot live just on painting. So I made a smart move to have chosen graphic design. Another option would have been my childhood dream, being a football player in some world-class club. I still play the game which proves I love this sport very much. As a kid I went to training and practiced for only two or three days, but when I saw the frivolity of my teammates, that was it for me, being, in fact, my failure in a professional football player career. Whatever I might be doing if I weren't designing would not make me so happy as I am right now.

10. What do you do with your free time?

I am a big fan of the Milan football club Inter, so I love to watch their matches over the weekends. Going to the movies, some night clubs or quality concerts relax me, too. I especially like Sunday evenings when we play football here in the neighborhood under the floodlights on the artificial grass. It makes me relaxed and satisfied (of course, if my team wins).

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions

Meet zaxgarner

(North Carolina, USA)



*zaxgarner, known
on crowdSPRING as
“zaxgarner”. He lives
and works in North
Carolina.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm a self-described simple man. '02 grad Appalachian State University – the real ASU in Boone, N.C. I majored in graphic design and marketing in an attempt to balance the business side with the creative. The design department was big on typography and fine art which was a huge plus. I took classes in casting, photography, clays and metals. I think I could have got by with a little less art history though! The marketing courses were awesome; I enjoyed learning how design/creative work enters our marketplace and society.

Former rowdy kid, construction worker, repo man and tattoo artist to graphic designer. Also a converted Christian since '04, attempting to operate under Colossians 3:17.

2. How did you become interested in design?

I started my design career with non-commissioned murals. You know, crayons on walls. (Also) tracing drawing books to keep up with my older brothers. I won a few art contests in kindergarten and found out that this design thing could pay off. The hook was set.

3. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

I really like the in-your-face style and satire of Mark Fredrickson. I used to airbrush a little and received some of his training materials at an early age. He is a master of detail, depth perception and overall craft. I have studied the progression of sport design for several years; I feel that has shaped my creative development immensely. I would also have to list Fredrick Remington as a personal favorite.

4. What is the design business like in North Carolina?

As far as the local design scene goes, I'm really not sure. Most of my freelance clients are scattered abroad. Primarily I work a 9 to 5, running a small design department in a suburb of Raleigh, so the time for side work is usually limited. Occasionally there are the friend-of-a-friend projects that pop up every now and then, but they never seem to pan out the way you would expect. These guys are expecting perfection with a cutthroat deal! crowdSPRING and other design communities have really opened the doors for rural designers such as myself, while eliminating a lot of the hassles designers face.

5. Mac or PC?

All Mac, all the time. I made the switch in '99 and haven't looked back since. My office as well as my home studio contains nothing but iMacs. I also work offsite with the trusty MacBook and just recently picked up the iPad 2, which is great but not too useful for design.

6. What about software?

Adobe Creative Suite. Photoshop and Illustrator are my favorites, though I use to love Freehand. I'm glad I made the switch from the glitchy QuarkXpress to InDesign two years ago; it wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be. I prefer using hand skills in the early developmental stages.

7. What is your dream design project?

I will let you know when I find it.

8. How do you promote your work?

Word of mouth and repeat customers have made up the bulk of my freelance work, I also have a modified/hijacked Carbonmade site at zaxgar.com. Other than that, I don't put a lot of time or thought into promotion. The best promotion is taking care of your existing clients needs thoroughly.

9. You started with crayons – what is your favorite medium work with today?

I got to go with ink on this one. Pigma Micron pens to be exact, Black on white illustration board or other heavy stock. Provides a stark contrast great for two-color logo development. Also Prismacolor markers, blenders and color pencils are great for quick full color renderings.

10. Does pop culture influence your designs?

I think it has to for everyone, especially in this age of mass media. A lot of times as designers and artists we want to feel that we have done something unique or original, but what I have found, is the design process, especially in the business world, is simply building on existing ideas and concepts. A lot of the original stuff is rejected ... which paves the way for the starving artist. Though my thoughts on this subject would probably be different if I thrived in the fine art community.

11. What do you do with your free time?

Spending time with my family, studying the Bible, working with freelance clients and when the conditions are right, all things Outdoors. Which reminds me ... I think the weather is breaking, and the fish are biting. Gotta run!



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12 Questions

Meet Raoul Camion

(Vielsalm, Belgium)



*Raoul Camion, known
on crowdSPRING
as “**Raoul Camion**”.
Camion lives and
works in Vielsalm,
Belgium.*

1. Please tell us about yourself

I'm Raoul Camion. Of course, it's not my real name. I'm 40 years old and I live in Vielsalm, a (very) small city in the Belgium Ardennes with my wife Cindy; my little son of 9 years old, Toto; and my two cats. (One is a complete psychopath; he's the Charles Manson of the cats.) I started to work 20 years ago as an image setter operator (Linotronic). I then carried out several trades in the "traditional" photoengraving (scanner operator, phototypesetter) before working as a freelance graphic designer. I thus learned the trade "on the heap" without having particular formation.

2. What is the design industry like in the Belgium?

Design industry in Belgium is mainly based in Brussels, the capital, and also in the North, the Dutch-speaking part of the country, far away from where I live.

3. Which of your designs are your favorites and why?

I like logos that are not too serious. I like also the logos with 3-D, which keep (with) them an aspect of depth even when they are reduced to only one color.

4. Who or what are some of the biggest influences on your design work?

Rick Griffin, Neville Brody, David Carson, Gilbert and George, Joshua Davis, John Maeda, 123Klan, Designers Republic, Eboy, David Lanham. One of my favorite images remains the cover "Unknown Pleasures" from Joy Division. Designer Peter Saville is often credited to have created it, but, in the fact, it's the drummer, Stephen Morris, who suggested to use this image. It's a representation of the first discovered pulsar wave. I really like the cold, mathematic aspect of this picture.

5. How do you come up with ideas for concepts after you read a buyer's creative brief?

Ideally, that has to go very quickly, by association of ideas. Also, I have always a synonyms dictionary by the hand to find an unexpected angle for a specific term. I also like to work with combinations of simple and, yes, expected symbols to create something new, even if that reduces the field of possibilities.

6. Mac or PC?

Mac, of course, but I don't want to create polemics with that.

7. What is your dream design project?

I like to work on a series, like icon or pictogram collections, with a specified format, a reduced color scheme and restrictive guidelines. The main work is then to define a process, strict rules that we tend to apply to the whole series. After, I wrack my brains to put all elements into those pre-established canvases. It's like resolving a crossword puzzle or sudoku.

8. Please describe your typical work day

When I'm (really) courageous, I wake up at 6:30 a.m., and I do a half hour of sport, I press fresh orange juice, I set the table for breakfast and then I start to work, serene, motivated and trusting. The rest of the time (about 28 days per month), I wake up too late, I drink too much coffee and then I groan because coffee makes me too nervous, and I can't concentrate myself anymore, and I finish the day (having completed) half the things that I previously scheduled.



9. What are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a graphic designer?

Having the feeling of being paid to have fun, and especially, working from my home without the stress of big cities and exacting working days.

10. If you weren't designing, what would you be doing?

I would run a toy store, I would learn tap dance and I would disguise as Venom to give free hugs at a beer feast (but I will wear a pink mantle for a better conviviality).

11. What do you do with your free time?

I take coffee with the olds of my village, I'm cooking also from time to time (not every day, please, stop dreaming). When it's a sunny day, I walk to school to get my son. We do also hiking every week as a family. In summer, we go often to the beach to fly a kite. (Also) in the French-speaking Belgium, we have a very cool public utility called "Discobus." It's like an itinerant library bus for music and movies. So I listen to music, and I'm also a fan of U.S. and UK TV show like "Six feet under", "Entourage", "Rome", "30 Rock", "The Office" and "Arrested Development."

To read the full interview, click or follow the QR code



12 Questions⁽⁵⁰⁾

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