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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE: Annotations

Information Architect & Design Programs

Information Architect & Design Programs

What I Did

Graphic design programs provide one with solid foundational skills in typography, color theory, photography, drawing, illustration, layout, and visual communication skills.

Portfolio—Experience

These were pieces that I designed, including doing prepress production and press checks, and pieces were printed in-house during my internships, not all of my graphic design portfolio pieces are displayed online.

Graphic design programs stressed the importance of sketching, drawing, as well as having and developing ideation skills. These skills are all very relevant skills for an Information Architect to have for creating wire frame mockups, flow charts, and schematics.

Programs emphasized taking a systematic approach for successfully completing design projects. On design projects, this included research, conceptual development (design and typography), production, evaluation, and implementation (printing and finishing).

Programs

Graphic design studies were accomplished at the California College of the Arts. Other pieces were successfully completed from inception of designs, doing prepress production, to printing and finishing in my design internships.

For each study, I would usually take at least 100 photographs and do about 100 sketches, seeking professional guidance from my graphic design Professors at the California College of the Arts.

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Creating duotones and other pieces, I spent a lot of time working in a darkroom to experiment with film for different effects on various projects. Many of my fine Professors at the California College of the Arts and SFSU were trained at The Basel School of Design, Cranbrook, and Harvard University—Graphic Design Departments.

Pen & Ink Tools

Creating artwork or illustrations should be crafted with pens, ink, charcoal, Pantone markers, or using photography. It is absolutely part of the process—because a graphic designer or Information Architect cannot only use software programs for designing and creating. I do believe in drawing out ideas or concepts before using a computer.

I might use a schematic plastic-template (or do freehand sketching) to create IA and IxD concepts prior to working on my computer. I think that design is a process where using pen and ink tools are required prior to sitting down at a computer, without any plan of action developed.

Adobe Creative Suite & Visio

These computer software programs were used in a Mac environment throughout the duration of doing all my Graphic Design and Information Architecture programs and internships:

- QuarkXPress,
- InDesign,
- Photoshop,
- ImageReady,
- Illustrator,
- FreeHand,
- FTP,
- Dreamweaver,
- BBEdit, and
- Visio.

The graphic design emphasis was created to provide designers with a strong foundation in the fundamental aspects of the designer's art. This helps designers to develop creativity and ideation skills, learn the elements of communication design, and then apply this knowledge to a wide range of design problems. Communication in all forms—visual, verbal and written—is stressed.

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Hands-On Approach

The Graphic Design Programs at City College, SFSU, and the CCA have a unique, hands-on, real-world approach for projects, integrating conceptual design studies with using traditional and digital tools, and production methods. This provides designers with experience working on real projects from doing prepress production, graphic design, printing, finishing, and binding.

The City College of San Francisco Graphic Design program is certified as a vocational training program in graphic design, prepress production, and printing.

All of these design programs are highly regarded in the design community in San Francisco and the Bay Area because Professors work as professional graphic design practitioners, providing designers with high-quality training.

Graphic Design Work Experience

Designers have the opportunity to further develop their skills through an in-house internship program that provides high-quality communication's pieces to the community.

An elective work experience course allows designers to broaden their design vocabulary through supervised work in local design firms or at the college. I successfully completed a hands-on and real-world graphic design internship at City College of San Francisco for about one year. I also did other Graphic Design internships at the University and many Information Architecture internships at the University—over a period of many years.

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Recommendations—

Professor, Mr. White

I have an excellent and high recommendation from Mr. White, a very satisfied Professor, with regard to my work done on projects.

Mr. White, Professor, California College of the Arts, is retired and on vacation in Spain. I received the highest “A” in his drawing class (a six-hour drawing class every Friday in the drawing studio for four months) with an excellent review from him.

When I got the highest “A-grade” in a class, I was the first artist reviewed—what an honor that was—to work with Mr. White. For me, it provided a high-level of confidence because he told me I should consider working up pieces for an Art Gallery Exhibit, which I may do.

He recommended I do graphic design, art direction, or work in any design-related field (information architecture) because he felt I was very professional, dedicated to creating high-quality graphic design pieces, and able to work under time constraints.

He graduated from the Cranbrook Academy of Art and been awarded two graduate degrees from U.C. Berkeley, including professional work experience in New York design studios. He inspired me to continue on with doing graphic design, including being an Information Architect.

The Basel School of Design

Other Graphic Design Professors at the California College of the Arts worked with Professor, Mr. Weingart at The Basel School of Design, Graphic Design Department in Switzerland.

I was honored to work with such excellent graphic design practitioners, who actually work in the Bay Area, San Francisco, and New York because teachers at the California College of the Arts really do work as graphic designers. My Professors at the school were extremely demanding, but having high graphic design standards promotes professionalism and creativity.

The program at the CCA was extremely rigorous, including pushing designers to their limits. Working at the CCA taught me the value of having high standards. This all relates to why I enjoy working as an Information Architect and keeping it straight on the details.

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High Recommendation— From Graphic Design Professor

Another Graphic Design Professor at the California College of the Arts sincerely recommended to the Department Chair that I should continue in the Graphic Design Program at the California College of the Arts.

I had already completed the [IA BAIA](#) and [IA MAIA](#) in Information Architecture and Graphic Design programs from San Francisco State University. Though I was honored by his recommendation, I desired to embark upon a professional career in Information Architecture because it is my specialization.

California College of the Arts

“Universal clarity of communication is the crux of graphic design,” notes Dean of Design, Mr. Michael Vanderbyl at the [California College of the Arts](#). In keeping with this spirit, the Graphic Design Program is both conceptual and skill-based, emphasizing interdisciplinary thinking, theory, and discipline in craft.

Guided by a professionally active and accomplished faculty, students are encouraged to develop their personal voices as they seek a universal message in their work. Courses in typography and digital media complement the conceptual aspects of the program. Graphic Design students have access to a broad range of facilities and can take courses in photography, film, video, bookbinding, screenprinting, and letterpress printing, among other disciplines.

The San Francisco campus offers a complete wireless network and computer labs equipped to handle print, web, and motion production. In addition, the Media Center offers digital audio and video equipment for use on and off campus.

Students have the opportunity to work in a variety of off-site environments, including design firms, museums, publishing and printing houses, technology companies, and nonprofit organizations. Through the required internship and professional practice courses, they gain work experience, make contacts, and refine their portfolios. Students may also work for Sputnik, CCA’s award-winning design studio that creates collateral specifically for the college.

Graphic Design Program alumni work for some of the country’s leading firms and in many cases have established notable practices of their own. Numerous students have won national recognition in the Adobe Design Achievement Awards and in competitions sponsored by the Western Art Directors Club and the Type Directors Club; they have been cited in the Graphis New Talent Design Annual and I.D. magazine’s Annual Design Review.