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Anand Sheth

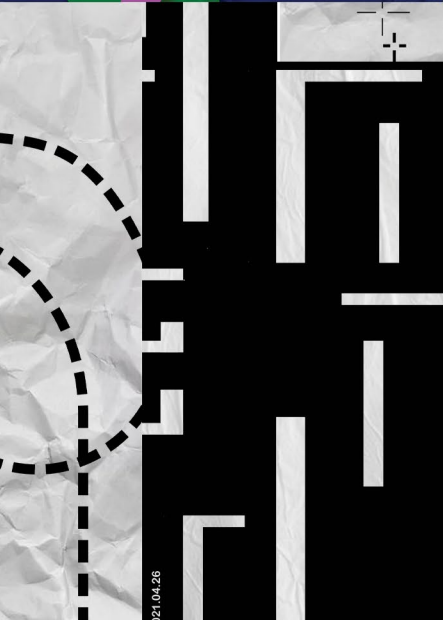
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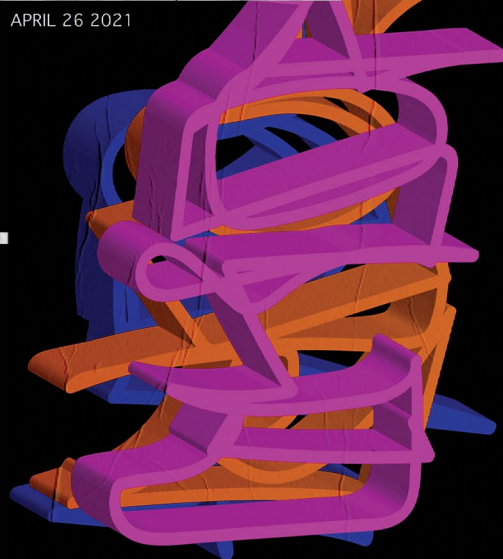
WE ARE ALL DESIGNERS



Moonsick Gang



APRIL 26 2021



CCA COUNSELLING

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WE ARE ALL DESIGNERS

This book was funded by an endowment gift to support The Deborah and Kenneth Novack Creative Citizens Series at CCA, an annual series of public programs focused on creative activism.

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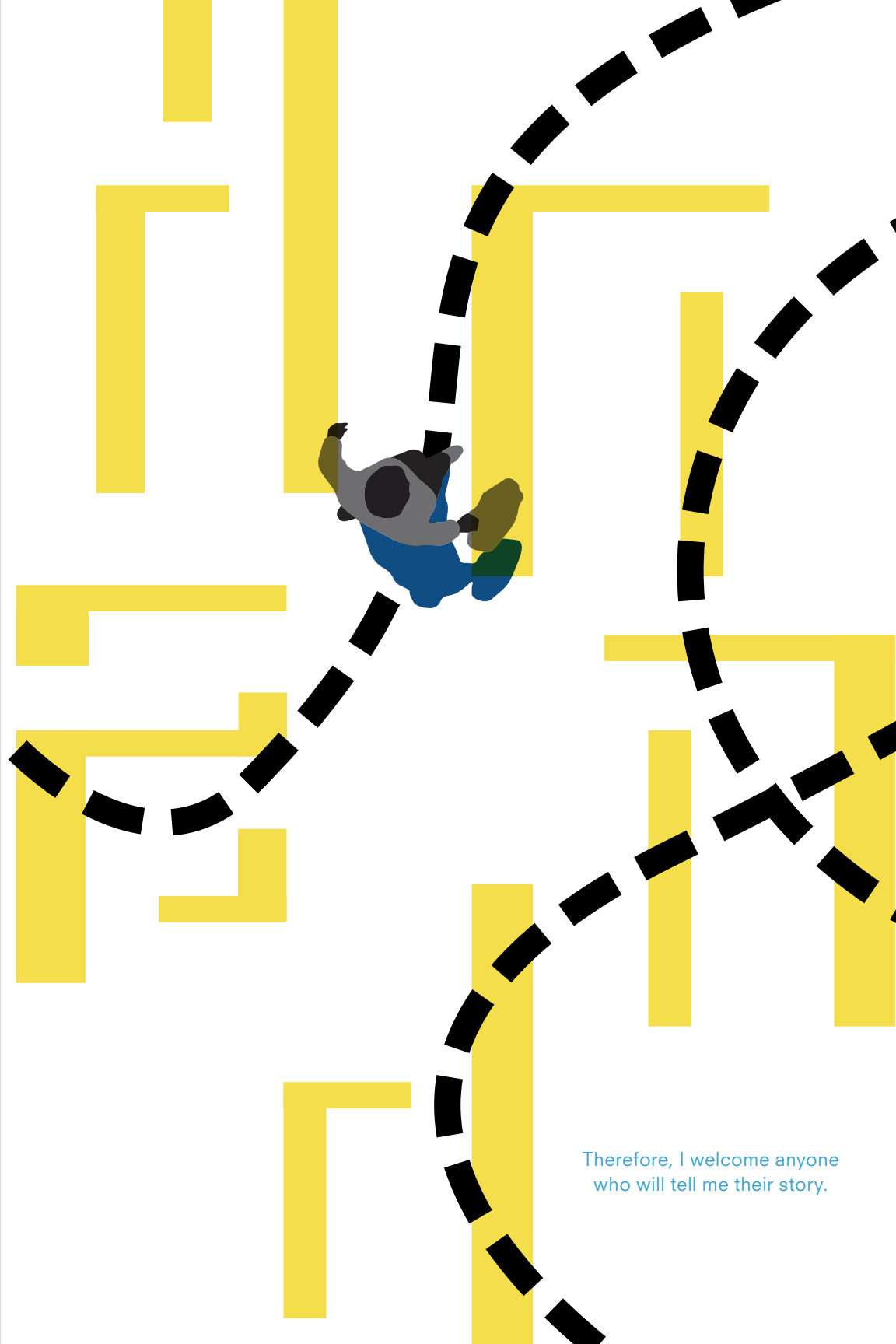
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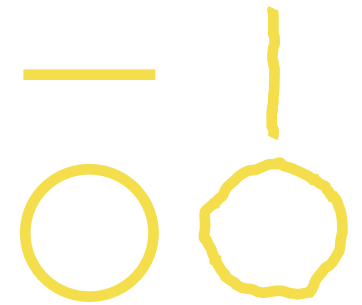
We are excited to welcome you to a special series of conversations in Graphic Design Tools. The idea for this series started at the beginning of the semester when we collectively chose to invite new knowledge into our classroom. We asked: What should we be learning in Spring 2021? Who should we be learning from? How can the tools of graphic design help us memorialize, document, and send this knowledge forward into the future? We did so through a series of conversations with guests selected by students, hosted by students, and this culminating publication designed by the class.

I am interested in pop-up stores, movie sets, boutiques, exhibitions, cafes, and brand shops, as I am majoring in spatial design.

Also, I like to explore places I haven't been to and travel a lot. However, I'm in a pandemic in Covid-19 right now, so I feel so sad since I can't travel to America.

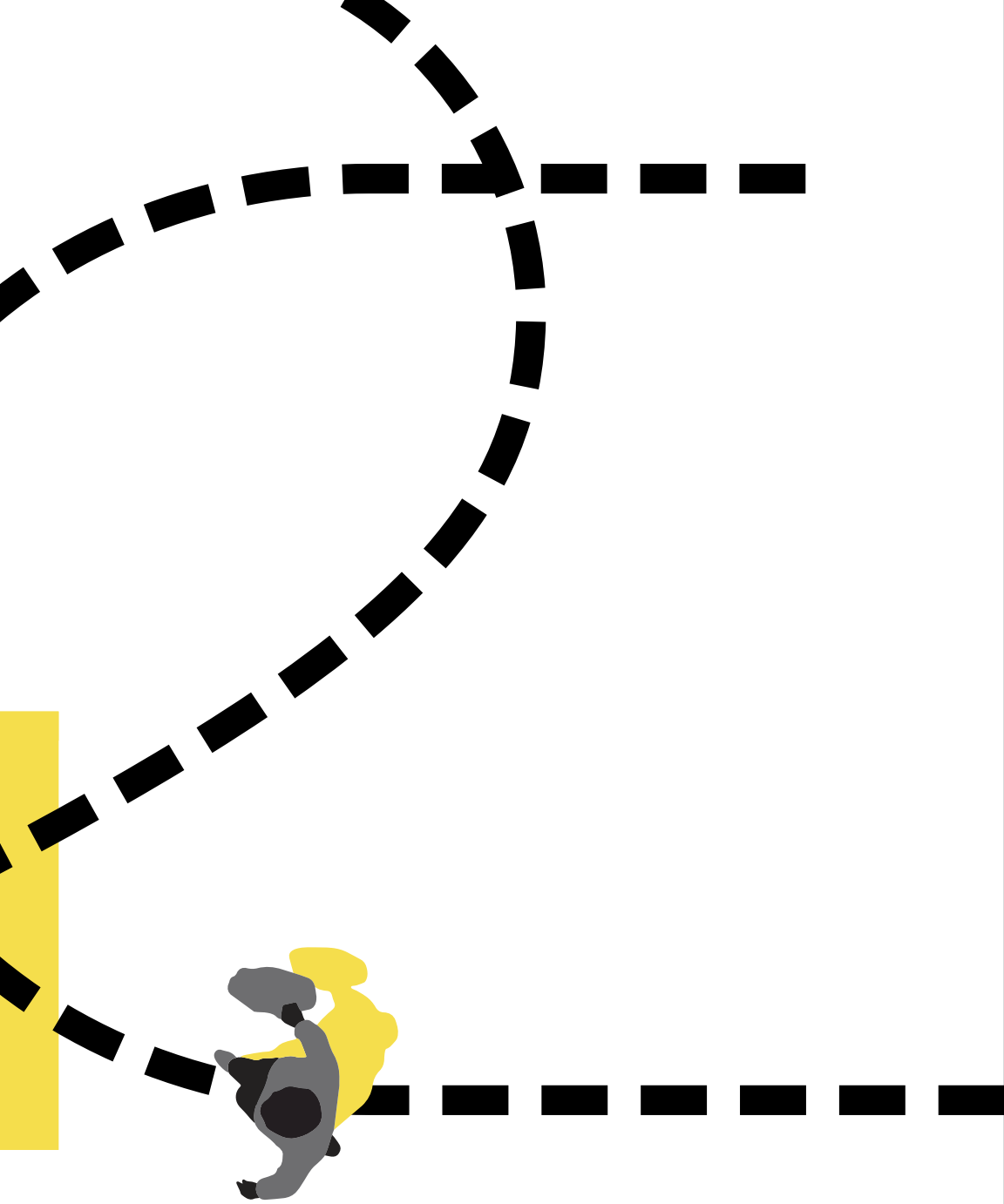
Therefore, I welcome anyone who will tell me their story.





Anand Sheth

Anand Sheth received a Bachelors of Architecture from CCA. During his studies he attended travel studio courses in the Netherlands, Shanghai and Brazil. Anand is a licensed architect and experienced designer of hospitality, retail, restaurant, commercial office and private residential places. In 2021, he launched Studio Anand Sheth and accepted the position of Design Lead for GROUND, a non-profit urban platform for activating formerly vacant lots and buildings to restore Black use. Anand lives in San Francisco.



Alden Gendreau: Thank you to Anand for joining us today on our first journey in a series of conversations. I had time to look over your website and explore a little bit about what you do. Your mission is “striving for inclusivity and strengthening others’ perspectives.” I was curious about how in more formal ways that manifests itself or translates itself into the physical world. And then also, how that might have changed from pre-Covid times to Covid times because I feel like we’re more connected and disconnected right now than we ever have been.

Anand Sheth: Good questions. Thanks, Alden. It’s nice to meet you all. So, inclusivity: it’s kind of a buzzword right now, right? It really was important to me to understand what I meant by that. But also to speak to people who need to hear that there is a *place* (although it’s kind of funny to talk about inclusivity as something that’s out of place)—but that there is a place for the concept of inclusivity, even in something as privatized and as expensive as architecture.

My goal there is to use communication to include people. It’s pretty simple. If I can break down some of the very technical or very convoluted parts of what I’m an expert at for people who speak other technical languages or no technical language at all—clients, the city, your different engineers, your different collaborators, other designers, people I’m training who are just coming out of school, people who are in their 50s and 60s and have been doing this longer than I’ve been alive—communication is going to be really key. How you communicate with people outside of your vernacular bubble matters to me. So, inclusivity is only really possible through this willingness to communicate, and maybe even this willingness to get better at communicating and refining that skill, and really treating it as one of the tools that we use for design.

It’s not all about the extremely shiny bright beautiful object, you know. I think everyone here is kind of a different designer which is really interesting. But when design happens it’s a process. I really firmly believe that. I don’t say “this is designed” (this is my iPhone). It’s not like this is designed, this was designed. But this is an object or work of art or tool, or whatever you want to call it, but it’s not like it’s design—right? Design is the process.

When you’re an architect, you might be really removed from the beginning of your process. The conceiving of this idea to do a project. The funding that it takes to make that project a reality. You might be really removed from that and then you also may be just equally removed from that end product, even though it drives your work. And it’s so important to you and it’s what people know you for. You don’t live in that house. You don’t work at that restaurant. You don’t own that project. And so, really, where we live in is this in-between. It’s this process. And during that process you can speak to people and have them speak back to you, speak their language. Allow them to learn some of your language.

It creates this inclusive process. People don’t feel out of place while they go

through it. And that's been kind of a bigger challenge with my work, but something that—as I start the studio this year—I'm really foregrounding in how I have described my process.

It's about research and it's about sketching on my drawing table and it's about my lived experience. It's about all these beautiful and romantic things. It's also about talking to people about what's going on, being really open and honest, spending the time to explain things, and not assuming that people don't know stuff. It's a lot about communication.

That's really how I see increased diversity molding the process that then drives this physical form that's created or this physical space. It's maybe less literal. But this process changes the product, even if the product looks exactly the same. Even if it functions exactly the same, even if it's identical physically, the process of making it impacts the way that space works. Both how it's psychologically received by the clients, and the owners, and the city, and whoever are the stakeholders.

But also, I think there's sort of this energy that's in your work that we understand as designers, but not everyone's going to get. Yet it matters to them, they sense that when they're in a space: the friction, the lack of continuity, the evenness. There's a lot of hierarchy in the world of design as well, so when things start to flatten out, I think it affects the physical form, but also affects the psychology of accepting that new form. So that's inclusivity for me.

I think it's also easy for me to say I'm inclusive of all different types of people, I'm inclusive of all these different categories or lack of categories that we all fall in. I'm super open to exploring how we can design for some categories—or lack of categories—that are totally under-represented financially, economically, and spatially. That's maybe the more obvious angle. If I open myself to that work, then I get to impact the physical form that's created. But for me it's mostly about the conversation. Making sure that's as open and honest and understandable, as it can be.

Pre-Covid to now my life has changed a lot. I quit my job of 10 years that I started while I was in my fifth year at CCA. I grew at that job from an intern to a licensed architect, to the design director of the firm. It's extremely meaningful. I chose to leave to start a studio that really foregrounded some of these harder-to-describe, almost ephemeral qualities of the work that I was gravitating toward. But it wasn't ephemeral in the sense that no one can understand it. It was actually ephemeral in the sense that it's extremely human to feel left out. It's extremely human to feel unheard. Everyone feels that, regardless of how represented they are in the world.

Speaking to some of those like stickier, crunchier topics, as opposed to symmetry or things that are maybe a little easier for people to get—visual things—is really important to me. I think it's my way into doing this work without becoming that

dreaded cog in the capitalist machine.

So that's how I keep this going. Pre-Covid I was maybe more that cog. I still had my heels dug in. But it didn't make my job better made, it made my job worse. I think that was a signal for me. It's really like: hey we work in this industry, we live in this country we live on this planet, we're all affected by westernization and capitalism regardless of where we are. Does your little fist in the air even matter at work? Or not? For me, I felt like it mattered, but not enough.

Creating the studio was a place for me to keep doing that. I can't raise my fists that high—I have sloped ceilings. But it's really about me just saying yes or no to the things that I agree with.

As people are less connected physically, that's definitely had a spatial repercussion to how we design space, and how we think about space. Maybe some of those are negatives. But how we crave space, how we value space can be positives. Actually, how we define it can be a huge positive. I'm a person who's always felt like pretty much any street could be different. At pretty much every store, every school you go to—I went to three—every door you walk through that experience: on the other side might not be the same as where you just were. And there could be all sorts of reasons why people feel like they are welcome or not welcome.

I think Covid has helped people understand that there really is this dividing line between where people are allowed. Because we all got to feel like we're not allowed to be in that room because there's already four people in there. We're not allowed to go to our places. We're not allowed to do this without a mask. So much of that individualism that really feeds on a certain group of people feeling like they're the only ones—that's all gotten mixed up. Now everyone has to put a mask on and everyone has to be wrong and everyone has to feel awkward and feel out of place.

As unfortunate as that is, it gives people an opportunity to learn. I think my dream would be we get out of this Covid scenario more appreciative and more hungry for spaces that really bring everyone together. Not just who we see, and not just our clique and not just anyone—kind of everyone. That's how I see this transition.

Michael Min: Can you tell us about the concept for designing cafes? How do you choose materials and lighting fixtures? What is your working relationship with interior designers and how do you work together?

Anand Sheth: Those are good questions. The moment when I'm choosing materials and light fixtures, I'm almost done with my process. There's a lot that goes on before that that's super important to me. That's where inclusivity can happen. That's where there's diversity of thought. That's where friction that actually breeds something happens. That's where all that emergent design happens. Before you spec everything out. So when you spec it, it's almost like

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For one of my residential clients, I made a grade school circuit with a battery and a light switch, this tiny little thing that cost \$7 online. And I drilled it into a piece of wood that I had collected on their site and I flipped the switch and we talked about circulation and energy and movement and it's the stupid little dumb thing that's not a work of art in any way, and yet it holds meaningful design intent.

you're translating a book from one language to another. You're not so much writing it all from scratch in that moment. You're translating this entire process that has just happened.

For me, I guess it's worth speaking to the beginnings of that process, and maybe trying to bridge this arc to where the specifications happen. The beginning for me is about a lot of listening, right? That's what we were just talking about—inclusivity requires this communication. There's this period of listening, where I asked certain questions.

I should say my clients have found me so far. I'm not out in the world getting everyone to suddenly trust me. They're people who sort of come to me through either reviewing the website, knowing Tina, and people who knew me when I was working previously at the firm.

These people who come to me expect that we're going to go along a journey together. And that we're going to get to our project. That we don't start with the project, we get there. So we get onto that process through this question and answer period. I call it a homework assignment on purpose, just to trigger everyone's homework anxiety and make them recognize it is the real deal and that the process matters. Even though there's no grade, it's important. If they don't fill some stuff out—there's like five questions with like sub questions in it—that's totally fine. It's actually extremely telling and my goal with that questionnaire is to learn a ton about someone, while also asking them to kind of hold themselves accountable to what they say, because they have to write it down.

I think there's this duality of "I really want to be super honest and open with Anand because he's going to design whatever it is that I'm employing him to work on, I really need him to get me and my personal values" and "I have to write it down." My partner might look at it, or my business associates might look at it. Whatever the makeup of the client is, Anand's going to see, he's going to record it so there's this potential uncomfortable moment of how much do I share? How much do you actually write? How open can I be? I do that at the very beginning. It's not a test. The questionnaire, it's the start, so they get plenty of opportunities to be open and transparent and learn things and express things and unlearn things throughout the process. It's really just me gauging where they're starting.

And then I respond to that starting point. I digest a bunch of information that they share. I digest what I know about the building and what's possible. And I respond with an inspiration thing. It's maybe my CCA nod in a way. I learned all these different art forms and then I went into architecture. The only thing people pay me to do is sit on my computer. I want to actually have a more expansive practice that involves all these other things where I can actually use my drawing table and where I can use *this* and build a model over *here*. Where I can use the tools that I know how to use, that make the project better, but also fit into critical milestones of the work. So I respond with an inspiration *something*. Sometimes it's a photo booklet. Sometimes it's just a reference to a piece of art, a work of art that in some way resonates and holds this design intent. Holds what the building "wants." Holds what the client wants. Holds what I might want. And I present it back to them. There's this vulnerable presentation back.

For one of my residential clients, I made a grade school circuit with a battery and a light switch, this tiny little thing that cost \$7 online. And I drilled it into a piece of wood that I had collected on their site and I flipped the switch and we talked about circulation and energy and movement and it's the stupid little dumb thing that's not a work of art in any way. And yet it holds meaningful design intent. Then it gets elevated so it's sort of conceptual. It's like attaching a unicycle to a stool and making it art. It doesn't matter that it's not what people want to feel

is beautiful. It's really just that it has this deeper concept, and it means something to the group of people it means something to. To everyone else, it's just a science project.

So, I start there. We respond. We talk about it. We create a design language. Every project has its own language. Because communication is so important to me, I created this kind of language for everyone.

For that residential project, we're constantly talking about circuits and energy moving around closed loops and open loops where the energy comes from. We're using these analogies. And it allows people to have their own language, so they don't have to say beams and trusses and foundations and architecture language to speak to me. They can speak to me in an artful language, which tends to be kind of a common denominator, with a lot of my clients. Some people are not artsy or artful. They're business owners and they're running a business and they make food or they make an app or whatever it is that they do, and yet what we all know about art.

It's that it gets beyond that stuff. There's something that resonates with people that comes from this art arena and it's going to work for someone. Sometimes it's a song. Actually, for one of my clients I picked a song. It doesn't have to be art that no one's ever experienced. It can be something that's just really commonplace, but it holds the grounding.

That starts the project and that allows all this emergent stuff to kind of happen, while we're going through it. While we're talking about the budget and the scope and the schedule. While we're talking about if it's a restaurant or a boutique cafe like the question was asking. There's all of this function that's happening there, right? It's got to work. There's equipment. There's circulation. There's ADA. There's energy codes. There's a million things to know. Which luckily I know some of. Enough to get through this and enough to know who to ask for everything else. That's been something that I learned throughout this time. Just working super hard. I don't have another way of summing that expertise up, but you learn a bunch about all of the requirements and then you add something to it to create your design. Every design has requirements. It's maybe part of how we define design. You put those things together. You have your expertise and your insight, and you put them together and you create this thing.

Then, when it comes time to define and specify that thing, and pick out a light fixture, and pick out what wood species is going to make the banquette, and whether that matches the leather—you turn your eyes on and you use your hard-to-explain skill that you have. Where this quality of space either works or it doesn't. You pull inspiration. You rip people off. You combine different things. You do all of that stuff and you kind of make a place.

But those decisions are really driven by that initial concept. All of this

application is just the method to make that concept reality. As much as I value that method—and it's something you have to be really skilled at in order to like be nimble with—once you become that skilled, to not let it bog you down is the next skill.

So that's kind of where I'm at. I learned what I needed to learn, so that people can trust me, so I can sign drawings, and pass tests and do all that stuff that I need to do. And now people trust me because I'm adding this extra layer on. I'm communicating it back to them so that they can know this isn't just framing and drywall and seating. It's not just a room full of stuff. It's a space that responds to this very original idea.

I do work with some interior designers. Most of the work that I have done is not with an interior designer, so I end up really mashing together those two very different fields to create some unity there. It works for me, but it's not the only way to do it. I really don't have any sort of hierarchy of why I do it that way. It's a nice feature of my offerings because there is this continuity of that design language. Again, when I don't know something, I don't make it up. I asked someone. I pay them to help me. I bring them back into the team. I really make sure that the project is served and the project is successful. That's more than my own success or any one person's success. It's really about this thing.

I bring people in to help me as needed. At the old firm, I had a materials librarian. She helped to collect. (Now my materials library is kind of right there and that black shelf.) But she helps to collect all the different samples of all the tiles and wood and materials for furniture and lighting. She would help to collect and create a catalog of that. And she could help you sort through it. She's an amazing resource. When you're at an architecture firm that values interior design—or you're at an interior design firm or any firm—you have a library of books and graphics and all of that. There's somebody who's the librarian of that information, otherwise it's not a library. It's a pile of books.

It's important to use your resources. Not any one person knows everything. I swear to you, everybody you guys respect and appreciate has a team. Even if they don't say it and share it, which I have problems with. But everybody does. That's the way this work happens—finding your team and communicating well with them and having a good time with them, while you bring them along in this process. Maybe you're the leader or maybe you're on the team. Maybe there's no leader. Maybe there's a group activity. You might be spearheading this process as the architect or as the main designer. And everybody's coming along for that ride, so again those communication skills are important. Making things pretty feel pretty lateral and pretty flat is important so that people are doing their best work.

What else do I do? I go to conferences and showrooms and trade events and walk around half a million square foot warehouses, full of stuff. I take pictures

and I record what I think. You live it out and at a certain point you kind of forget that you're doing it. You just catalog that info. Then, when the project emerges in a way that's like “wow I really need a feature armchair under the most amazing light, but also is a great quality of light and it has a yellow background,” it just happens in your head. Because you've been experiencing it and you've been doing it this long time. If you don't have something, then you develop the language to share with an expert that you know or somebody you find for this purpose. And you gather that. So it's a gathering exercise you're always doing and then it's just like harvest when you need to.

Michael Min: I'm a fifth year Architecture student—graduating soon—so thank you for being here today. What's your attitude towards objects, such as furniture? Does the furniture act as part of the poche (meaning mass)? Or does it represent itself, separate from the form of the architecture? I wanted to ask you this because looking at some of the projects that you've worked on, there seems to be this blending between the furniture, the material, the color of it, and how it blends in with the material, the wall, the color as well. I get a sense that you guys are creating a new topography with the space that you are designing.

Anand Sheth: That's an awesome question. Thanks, Michael. I'm going to start with “poche” which was such an interesting term. I was like: yeah, poche. I love it. I love these architecture words and then you explained it, which is great for everyone to understand. It's a really interesting term actually. I wanted to say: is furniture mass or is it object or however you want to describe the sort of duality of what it could be?

For me, it feels a little bit more like we're on a spectrum. It's not so black and white, to get to use other buzzwords of this most recent few years. Walls which are traditionally poche are just like long-term objects. It could be moved. It could be torn down. It often isn't, for all these other circumstantial reasons. For instance, at CCA in the nave those walls move, right? Would you poche that wall? Or would you leave it open? It's really this nuance question. If every wall moved and there would be no poche, and what would that mean for architecture? We don't have to go all the way there, but I'm pushing something. Saying it's permanent, I think, is a disservice a little bit. So I kind of fight the Nolli map and say: all these things are temporary, everything is temporary. This is a 150 year old thing and it's totally temporary in the grand scheme of things. It's less temporary than my desk and less temporary than the light, but there's a spectrum. There's things that are more permanent than this house and so I kind of treat all the different objects and all the different elements of the design equally in a way, and know a lot about each of them, so that I can create this respect amongst the objects.

This is a little too figurative but you want everything to go together, right? You don't want to be like: wow, I'm in this big room and look at these tiny chairs that

don't make sense. That's a simple way of describing that there is this unifying design intent. Maybe it's a design intent that I drive all of, or maybe I'm working with people who make furniture or procure and specify furniture and lighting designers. You're kind of like: (I don't have a good sports reference sorry) but you're like the coach or whatever, you're holding the whole team together so that they can do this one thing and so there can't really be so much hierarchy amongst all these different elements. Each of them is super important.

There's a major for every single thing at your school. They all cost the same. They're all really, really individual and really, really special. Architecture is probably the thing that deals with the least temporary medium. It's this object that's there and has to be used in this infrastructure for life, as well as this art object, as well as this innovation, as well as... It holds all these different categories, and so I think I chose it as a major, for that reason.

My exposure to the arts was actually pretty limited by the time I went to CCA. I was really kind of looking for a crack open. What that gave to me is: wow, actually there's not a whole lot of hierarchy here. It's really just that you go to an architect for a certain amount of things. You go to a furniture person for a certain amount of things. And sometimes people let the architect do these other things. And I enjoy that opportunity. I tend not to take advantage of it and really use my community, as I can, so that the project is successful.

How do I go about all of that? Yeah, sometimes you design the room for the sofa, you know what I mean? Sometimes it's that simple of an example. You know what's most important and then you're nimble with all the different things that you employ into the space. Sometimes the thing that's most important isn't what you are in charge of. But if you lead the design and you want that design to be successful, it can't just be what you do. So yeah, I would say, sometimes I would front load other elements of the space and let the architecture respond.

One of the things you didn't mention, but I think is interesting (and I guess they don't teach very much at CCA), is landscape. Interaction with landscape and urbanism is a big integration point of my work.

As you exit BART, walk across the sidewalk, into a threshold of a building, and then onto a chair, the building and the chair are not the only things you experienced. And they're not the only things that impact your experience of sitting on that chair. The sidewalk and BART and everything else do too. I want to widen all these things that we think about and not dumb it down for my clients, who might be really hyper-focused on the chair they want to put in their room. And really elevate that. I think the conversation around what takes precedent and what takes priority is one of these ways to be inclusive.

And then the fun part: when you get to design something that fits so beautifully into your space. How do you think about it? It's a bit of harvesting from the field

of thoughts and ideas that you created with your client or your project and your team and saying: oh wouldn't this be a nice opportunity. We really need a sick chair in the corner. If that hadn't already emerged, then when you realize you need a chair, you can go back to that same field and pull something back out. It's really important to catalog and communicate about all these different ideas, good and bad, so that later on when you need that object, you can either design it or find it from the resources you've already created. Sometimes we go: oh, we need a chair, let's go find one. It's too hard. I mean maybe if you're really good at shopping, but it's too hard at that point to then invent the need for this thing and invent how it's going to look and invent the purpose.

I would probably say that I spend more time recording things that don't matter in that moment, so that there is this field. Then when you run a business or you work for enough time you go back to that same field for different reasons. And that field can be your sketchbook or your Pinterest or whatever it is you catalog your information in. And don't search for more information. It's a tricky one. You have to cut yourself off.

If you're recording your stuff into a place that's your field. You can continue to go back into that and remember: oh, I was working on this other project and the project went away. Or they wanted a love seat and not a chair, or whatever. The question is that you're finding. And you can pull that same resource and see if it works this time because it's already something that's met your criteria. Just because it didn't make it into one project doesn't mean there's no life for it in a future one. I would keep that field maintained, manicured.

The topography of space is a really, really fun one, because one of the things kind of similar to the BART-sidewalk-threshold-chair is a conversation I've been having with my partner in the organization called Ground. She's an artist in Oakland and she's using and reusing vacant and abandoned places, latent spaces, places that just have this dormancy to them. And reinvigorating them through architecture and construction, through activation, through art installations and exhibits. I'm excited to be the design lead for this organization, because I can do some architectural work. But aligning with my ethos—it's not all that is important. And it's not all that I can do, and help with. The design lead is really this connector place. One of the things we're doing is designing the furniture for the inside of the building that I helped her design, when I was at my firm. It's fun coming back and revisiting. We're designing bleachers-style stadium seats on the ends, which are ubiquitous in tech headquarters. I've designed a dozen of them in my life. But we're putting them in this community performance art event space cafe bar thing that she's created in downtown Oakland. It's really flexible space and we're shrinking these proportions so they're not actually bench height and bleacher height. They're like stairs that go to the wall and they really are meant

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to evoke the openness and the invitation to sit on steps like you would in front of City Hall or at the edge of a BART station or in front of a library. These civic spaces that's a design that really meant to be for everyone. We're learning that there's lots of anti-homelessness in civic architecture. There's lots of neoclassical things going on. There's all this bad stuff. And then, yet there's this openness that civic architecture has to have because it's an inherently public thing that we all pay for it with our taxes and stuff so it has to be open to sit on. And we're kind of invoking that a little bit. Of course this is a private building. We've done a lot with the threshold so it's super porous and extremely open to the sidewalk in this kind of radical way for downtown Oakland.

And then, when you come in, you sit on the steps, just like you would in front of your house or waiting for church to begin or whatever is going on in your personal life. That integration didn't happen overnight. That was really something that we started from by talking about this entry sequence from BART to sidewalk into the space. Then we got to the question: what do you sit on? And it wasn't a chair. I think that spoke to topography. I appreciate that we're sort of changing the plane of that ground floor in a way that cities change planes of ground floor—typically for transit and circulation—but this time just for that pause.

Michael Min: I really liked the idea of scaling down those stairs because stairs can be very nostalgic. Either we're waiting for someone that we care about or it could either be like the first kiss or...

I just want to ask the rest of the students if they have any questions for you. Since everyone is in different majors, it's nice that you have a pretty broad interest, not just only in architecture, but in general. Does anyone else have any questions?

Carolina Stancati: I do. It's a more narrow question. I'm just curious in general about what you did in Brazil? I'm from there.

Anand Sheth: I went to Brazil as a summer study abroad student. Because at CCA it's very, very regimented—that architecture program. You can't easily take a semester off or at least it wasn't easy for me at the time. So I chose this summer studio and I took the one in Brazil with an architect who actually recently passed, Sandra Vivanco. An incredible architect and person that I really respected. While I was at CCA, I never took a class with her because they just didn't fit what I was doing. And then suddenly this Brazil thing came up. And I went. It was a traveling studio so we flew around. Brazil is quite large. We flew around Belo Horizonte and Brasília and Rio and Sao Paulo. We stayed for two or three weeks in Sao Paulo. We lived with the students, so we were like little foreign exchange students for a few weeks.

We created an installation on the Minhocão on the weekend they close it off and create a pedestrian promenade. It's in the center of the city and cuts through this insanely dense place—just like freeways tend to cut through our cities and create all this disparity below and all this separation and segregation on the both sides of it. The Minhocão is this really important artery in Sao Paulo. We got the opportunity to create temporary installations. I made mine out of soda cans.

I bought the cans with the soda in it and I gave them out for free. As people recycled the can back to me, I punched a hole in it and strung them into this big curtain. It slowly built this enclosure. It really excited the kids. Because kids love soda and they can drink like four sodas. Every adult was like: yeah I'm going to sip this for two hours and they walked away with them. They never brought it back. So I had this kid soda hyper party on the Minhocão. And I created this little sort of shelter that faced out to a really interesting vista, facing into people's houses and apartments, facing down this really long corridor, just sort of getting some sun and shadow play through all of the proximity to the buildings.

It was an installation that was quite interactive. I think a lot of other students chose something that you built. And then you can just sit and relax because you've been up for three days building this crazy thing. Whereas I had to drink a lot of soda and play with all the kids. It was a beautiful studio. I haven't been back to Brazil. We all did that pinky swear you do at the end of the trip, where you promise to go back. Things happen. I'm dying to go back when we can.

Carolina Stancati: I think for an artist the most precious thing is to be able to travel around the world and interact with so many different people, so I'm so glad you're able to have so many different experiences. Thank you for sharing this.

Michael Min: What would your advice be for someone like me who's about to graduate? Like you were mentioning before, working for an architecture firm can be quite limited in terms of what you want to do and also how you want to design things. We live in a capitalistic society. I definitely had panic attacks, just being at a firm. There needs to be something more. So what would your advice be?

Anand Sheth: The best way to not work for the man, is to work for a woman. Which is what I did. I had a really lucky experience. It was completely amazing. It's kind of a joke, but it's kind of true. Find the people to work with that speak your language. Prioritize that. Something that's come up in some other conversations I've had with students and even high schoolers—I teach this high school class right now—is there's so much that this entry level person needs from the company. You need money and you need these projects. You need all these different experiences. You need someone to sign off on your hours. You need someone to eventually give you time off to take these exams. Maybe they pay for some of them. In architecture especially: buckle up, you're in it.

This has been a five year period and there will be another five year period. And it'll feel like you're on a few different roller coasters. Having trust in someone that believes that process is important to you as much as it is important to them. They're giving you these things. It's a trade. You're working, committing. Architecture is a hard thing to bounce around between. Projects take a long time and you're often on multiple projects and they're not all ending at the same time. So you tend to kind of keep it going. That was definitely my experience. Which I don't regret. I think it's important to recognize that there's some amount of relationship with the people you work with and for that matters a lot more than the portfolio that follows that name. So find your people. Bounce around to find your people, more so than bounce around to find your portfolio.

The second one is: don't undervalue that hard moment and that hard period of time where not all of your needs are being met. It's important to be your own human too and find your other things. If I had a job that took care of me in every facet of my life, I would have never traveled all these places, I would have never had any other relationships outside of that place. There's an intentional boundary to how much that workplace is going to give you and serve you. Be your own person and then bring that level of amazingness back into the firm.

One thing I would remind my former self is: everything you're asking for is a way to help the firm too. Getting your license and taking time off. That's for the firm, just as much as it is for you. You're learning and growing and you're committing. Every day you're there, you're giving a huge amount of yourself. Just

because it's not quantifiable, doesn't mean that it's nothing. Always know that this is a two-way street. If people start acting like it isn't, you can know you heard it from here. That's wrong. There is right and wrong in this one instance. That's wrong. It is a two way street. You are experiencing things, asking for things in return, giving things in return, over the course of years—potentially.

I would find your people. Then invest in the relationship with them. Once you have all those skills in your pocket, and the tools in your pocket, you'll decide what to do next.

Jun Hee Koh: I wonder how to organize our portfolios as designers?

Anand Sheth: It's a good question. I've reviewed a lot of portfolios, so I feel like I should have some insight on what speaks to me. But I think what's more important is to have a portfolio that's flexible. Is that possible? It's digital so you can mix it up. It might take a little extra work, but you can have one that really speaks to this type of company versus that type of company.

Getting a portfolio that is clearly generic—even if it's beautiful—it's a little deflating. As much specificity as you can put into that project, knowing that you might be applying for 50–60 places. That might not be totally possible, but maybe you create three formats. One that really front-loads the type of work that you think is going to resonate with these types of firms. Chop it up and dissect it a little bit more. You don't have to go and make 50 portfolios, but you could probably find time to make three options of the same exact template and the same exact content.

I always go back to some of that narrative and storytelling and that power. Being as clear about your own story, and your own trajectory, and what has brought you to this point is just as important to an employer as where you plan to go. You don't know where you plan to go yet. You can have a plan, but you don't have that all figured out yet. Figure this part out.

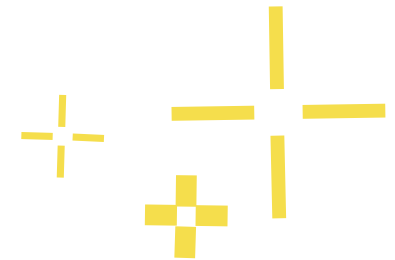
Why did you do this? Why are you committing to this field? What was your exposure like? What was your lack of exposure like? Did you see folks like you doing this work and that brought you to it? Did you not see anyone, and that was super confusing until you found it? Do you maybe still not understand where you fit into this? That level of openness and questioning will allow people to see that you're curious and that you're thoughtful. That you're a strong person, regardless of how much exposure to this industry you have had.

Then I think they'll understand from that what they think you might be capable of. Which is really the ultimate judgment that they're doing. Can this person do X, Y and Z with this company for however much time we want them to? They are going to make that decision, regardless. So just give them some good food for thought about where you started and why you're here. Try to make it specific. Again, if there's a way to just reorganize or have a couple templates where some

things are bigger or smaller, however your graphic process looks. Make sure it speaks to the people you're talking to, so that they feel heard and listened to as well. They're putting a lot out there. They're all making websites. They're all staying up all night thinking about their content too. You read it. Now you're responding with the portfolio. I would feel like it's a response, more than just your resume.

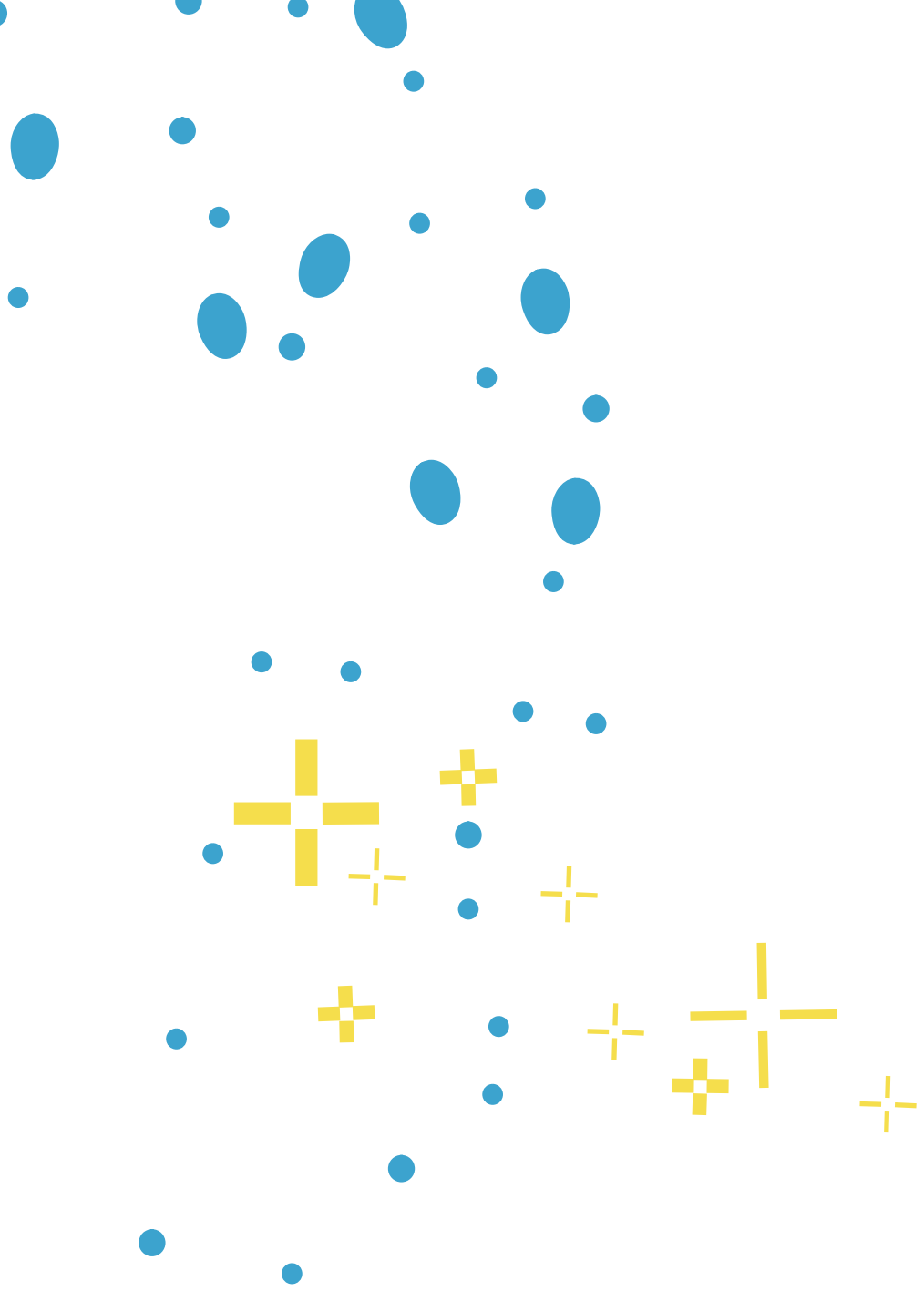
What matters most to me right now?
Learning how to spend time on my
own and taking self care.

We should talk to Counseling
Services at CCA. We don't hear
from them a lot. We forget that they
are part of the school. What's it like
supporting students? We should
give them recognition.



CCA Counseling Services

Counseling Services is committed to personal development and professional advancement of students engaged in an arts-based educational environment fostering creativity, curiosity, and diversity. Counseling Services encourages student success and well-being by providing a broad spectrum of mental health services, including individual and couples therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, referral, workshops on mental health topics, and outreach.



Joy Kong: I'm a first year student. My name is Joy and I am a BFA sculpture major. Thank you so much for sharing your time and being with us here today. What does CCA Counseling offer for students. Also, how is it different from high school? In high school, I went to counseling if I wanted to get emotional support or to skip class sometimes, to be honest. So we were wondering what's the difference between high school counseling and college counseling and what does it offer for students?

Brigette Stump-Vernon: Thanks for that question, Joy. I imagine we'll all have some different ideas and answers. That's an important piece of the team: to have a diversity of ideas and ways of thinking about our services. When we think about counseling services at CCA and in college, there's a separation between kind of the academic counseling that you'll get from your academic advisors around what classes you should take, and then the kind of counseling services that you would get with us, which is more based on thinking about your mental wellness. That can include everything from physical health to mental well being. It's all part of the picture of kind of talking about your identities, how you're showing up in school, how you're showing up in your communities, and parts of yourself that are appearing as an art student. Our motto is to just meet you where you're at. Sometimes it can be just talking about "Oh I'm really struggling with motivation." Or it's "Oh I'm actually feeling really motivated, but I want to grow this part of my art and having somebody to be in conversation with about that who can provide an additional perspective to consider."

Gina Cheng: My name is Gina. I am a student in the Graphic Design major. We are wondering in a situation like this, how we can contact you? Do we go through email or visit your office?

Leah Oliver: Hi Gina. My name is Leah. Hi everybody, thank you for tuning in. I'm one of the CCA counselors and I have some thoughts I can share and then, if anybody else in the team counseling team would like, they can add to that.

Given just the state of the world right now we are offering services solely online. And we have a platform through our Portal that you can access, if you would like to set up weekly counseling appointments. If we were meeting in person, we do have offices that still exist. They're waiting for us. We have offices right now, both on the Oakland campus and the San Francisco campus. If we were to be in person, it gives students some flexibility in terms of what would work best with their schedule.

Because of ethical and legal laws we are only able to provide ongoing counseling services for students who are living in the state of California. But, with that being said, we are accessible to students who are living worldwide in terms of consultation. For folks who want to reach out to us by phone, we can provide consultation and help people to get in touch with resources in their area as best

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Because of the civil unrest happening in the world, a lot of people are coming to Counseling now with concerns around violence and feeling physically safe. Wondering what communities can support them. Which ones maybe aren't as supportive. Just wrestling with trying to figure that out... How can I find safety? Who are my people? Who am I as a person? Has my identity changed over this last year?"

as we can. We can also provide support and connection to online resources or other kinds of referrals that would be most supportive in terms of what people are coming to us for. We do have a wellness library on our Portal page as well. Our staff have written many articles about different topics, including grieving, being an online student, dealing with various mental health struggles. So that is also a resource that sometimes we suggest students turn to if they're wanting more psychoeducation around experiences that they're going through.

Ghazal Abbas: I also wanted to add if you are needing any immediate support, we also have the mental health crisis hotline. That's a way where you can meet with me—it might not be one of us—but it would give you that immediate support

to meet with a counselor and then ongoing services through the CCA Counseling department.

Joy Kong: Another question I feel like people struggle with a lot is: what do we do when we are lacking motivation? I think it's very stressful. For some students, we're doing things right, and then later we just lose all motivation. We get lost and don't know what to do. Sometimes I want to talk to someone about it, but sometimes I'm not sure. I was wondering if we could get some help for that from Counseling.

Erin Hennessy: I'll start with that one. My name is Erin and I'm one of the counseling staff at CCA. Thank you so much for having us here. I'd say that motivation is a big reason that a lot of students come in to talk in the Counseling Center. Motivation is something we can help you with. We can help with things as simple as working on time management strategies, working on routines, or how you structure your day to keep your motivation as high as you can.

Also we can talk about the kind of underlying issues that are coming up for you or what feels like it is getting in the way of your motivation. And to hold this space to talk about whatever is coming up that's feeling like it's a block, how to move through it and what things you might be able to change or areas that you might be able to grow to kind of push you forward.

Brigitte Stump-Vernon: Thank you Erin. I also just want to add that we consider both personal factors, but also the context in which you all are living in. I think so many folks are struggling with motivation right now. It's pretty common to feel often during this pandemic—maybe even beyond that—that you're hitting a wall. Sometimes it can help to have another voice to remind ourselves that this is a human response to a really difficult time. It's part of being a human in the world right now. That motivation is a struggle for a lot of folks and that you're not alone in that.

Gina Cheng: During this pandemic, most of us have stayed at home for a really long time. We have concerns about how to be social. Or how to get some new friends during this period of time. Especially if we are a freshman student and we are going to be a sophomore student in the next year. Can you give us some suggestions about how to say hi to people?

Erin Hennessy: Can I just ask for a little clarification if you're thinking more about how to connect with people while we're in the distance learning format, or if you're thinking more about when you return to some in person?

Gina Cheng: I think it's both of them.

Joy Kong: Because for a lot of first year students, we missed out on being in person in classrooms, etc. I'm so used to being around people, because I was in a boarding school and I was in Korea for this whole year. I talk to people during class, but we don't really have a chance to talk them out of the class. So,

sometimes I forget how I am supposed to even meet people and communicate with them when I get back on campus. First year students are wondering how do students in other majors even meet with each other?

Leah Oliver: I think that's a really great question and I think we're all asking that right now. It's a conversation that's coming up across the board: students, staff, faculty, and different communities off-campus. How do we come back together and feel comfortable and feel safe?

And the anxiety also that can come up with that. We've gotten so used to being isolated in different ways. Maybe waving to an acquaintance as you're walking down the hall felt natural and now it's going to be really awkward.

I think these nuances of how we connect again is a great question. I imagine it's going to be on our minds as a campus for the next least couple of years, if not longer. I want to acknowledge that it will be kind of a shift that I think collectively we will all be going through together. So if there are moments where it does feel awkward or you feel uncertain just keep in mind that you're not alone.

I think that we're all wondering that and trying to figure it out. I know that there are practical things that we can also recommend, but I just wanted to put that out there: you're not alone.

Joy Kong: We are also wondering what are the most common reasons that people go visit the counseling or the most common questions that are being asked?

Ghazal Abbas: Unlike any other time, I think students are really struggling with "how do I navigate a world where I don't really know how the next year or so is going to be?" And I think with that there comes a lot of anxiety, fear, worry, and maybe even some grief about moments that were missed out or lost out. In discussing the pandemic we're hearing a lot of this.

In general if you're wanting support around anything like things happening at home or at school or in your community or even managing work or school/work life balance, we are here to support you in all of those domains. And here to show you ways to just talk about it and just feel comfortable being in a space where you can talk about it in confidentiality, for the most part.

Leah Oliver: Yes, I agree. I think that those things come up every year and even more so now with the pandemic. I also want to add that because of the civil unrest happening in the world, a lot of people are coming to Counseling now with concerns around violence and feeling physically safe. Wondering what communities can support them. Which ones maybe aren't as supportive. Just wrestling with trying to figure that out. So that's something that I've noticed has been a theme in these last months. How can I find safety? Who are my people? Who am I as a person? Has my identity changed over this last year? That's been coming up a lot as well.

Erin Hennessy: I also just want to add that there's so many transitions and

Even if you couldn't get in to see us this year, we will be here when you are able to return to campus. We are still here to talk about how to access what you



Even if you couldn't get in to see us this year, we will be here when you are able to return to campus. We are still here to talk about how to access what you need wherever you are.

adjustments that take place during college. Whether it's moving, adjusting to a new kind of format and the kind of academic challenges that come up that. I think a lot of students find it's really beneficial to just have a place to come and talk about all the different things that are happening in their lives. There's so much newness that happens during college, so it can be useful to just have a space to talk about that with somebody who isn't your friend or family member and to hear a little bit of a different perspective than you might have from friends and family.

Gina Cheng: And we also saw that Alden just added something to the text box. He mentioned that the Makers Commons might also be a really good way to connect with each other, to see other students work or have a meal with other students at CCA.

Brigette Stump-Vernon: I think we'll all be practicing at what it is to be in contact with each other when we start to do that both online and in these physical spaces.

You know, it's a skill that we developed: to be in relationship to other folks. Over the last year, I imagine we've all gotten better or worse at certain pieces

of that skill. I think it'll be really important, just as a general theme, to have self-compassion for those moments of "oh, *that* was awkward." As well as other compassion. It is a transition. We will be relearning what is connection and how to do so in a time where we've had what feels like a lot of risk.

So: how to reconnect. That other piece—like the practical piece of the Makers Commons—but also compassion, is going to be really important for each other and for ourselves in the next year plus. If not aways.

Joy Kong: I know that for academic advising there is a page on the Portal where we could sign up for a Zoom meeting, but in order for us to make a meeting with the counseling is there a Portal page or do we have to email you?

Brigitte Stump-Vernon: Again, we can only make an appointment for us to meet and through our online Portal if you're living in California, because of legal and ethical restrictions. We're all licensed in the state of California, so therefore we can't meet with anybody online as an actual counseling session. However, if you call us or email us, we can set up a time to talk with you about how to access services wherever you are in the world. I really wish it was different. I hope that we can meet with you all in the fall. Or the spring of next year. Know that we will be here for your journey as you progress through CCA and that you'll get 10 free sessions every academic year, so if you miss out this year you'll still have access to them every academic year from now forward.

Depending on where you are in the world, you may be able to schedule appointments with us on our online Portal. If you can't, we provide what we call a consultation and we'll talk to you on the phone.

Alden Gendreau: Does CCA Counseling host any events throughout the semester for all students like places to have conversations or discussion topics?

Leah Oliver: Yes, is the short answer to a long explanation. We have an outreach component to our department. When we're in person, we go into the different halls and offer workshops around various mental health topics. And because we're online now we're doing a lot of Voice Threads and Zoom workshops.

Usually what happens is different departments will reach out to us and say: hey we want to offer—for example—a workshop on self care for first year students. Then with that request we'll develop a one or two time workshop. And then that department will send out a Zoom link for the invitation. I realized that sometimes those invitations can get lost. Not every student is going to see every invitation that gets sent.

My suggestion is if you are interested at all in thinking about wanting that workshop space, feel free to be in touch with us because we're very interested in thinking with you about what you need to create a community. To feel like you can work at your best as an artist and maker. We're very open to collaborating with you about creating workshops.

Not only can staff and faculty reach out to our department, but students can as well. They have in the past and we've been able to provide those spaces. So yes, those workshop spaces do happen, but I think they get lost in terms of a campus wide invitation so know that's an option for you, if you're interested in that.

Brigitte Stump-Vernon: I know we have an international community here. I added a link to the support lines that we've gathered from all over the world. I think I've represented almost all of the countries that I know we have students from at CCA. But if you don't see your home country there or where we are located, feel free to reach out to me and I will reach out to my community and do my best to make sure you have access to those mental health numbers wherever you are.

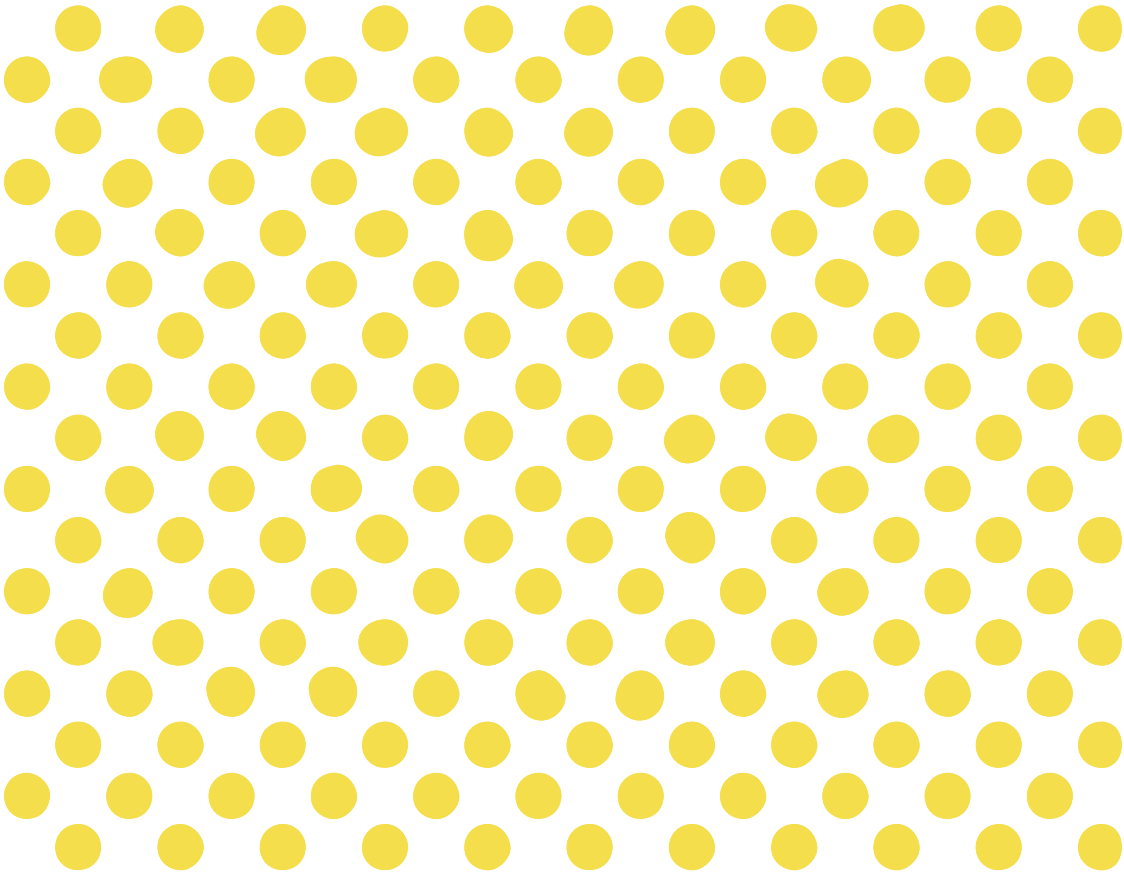
Leah Oliver: I'd like just to reiterate that the counseling sessions are confidential and they remain separate from your academic record. If that is a concern or you're curious: the counseling space is very much a confidential space, even though we're located within the school.

Brigitte Stump-Vernon: We will continue to uphold that and even if you couldn't get in to see us this year, we will be here when you are able to return to campus. We are still here to talk about how to access what you need wherever you are.

Sara Raffo: Well, I know I will be back on campus in the fall and I intend to be very awkward. I will not know how to talk to anyone. I intend to spend a lot of time just trying to be social with people and trying to rebuild our social skills in the fall semester. In the spring, hopefully we can be back to teaching in more of the ways I'm used to, but I just have a feeling in the fall we're going to be learning graphic design tools *and* how to talk to each other all semester long. It's so great to know that you will be there when we return.

I want to repeat again that the idea for this session came out of a feeling of gratitude in this class. While some people have not met you, I know that there are many students in the class who have found guidance and comfort in being able to talk to you. A lot of things are invisible right now, especially the web of relationships between people. It just struck me as we were talking that probably the web of relationships with counseling services is invisible all the time, so I'm glad to highlight it in this moment.

Inspiration? How can we keep our inspiration going and going? How can we promote it to another level? It's hard. How do we feel OK when someone doesn't like our work?



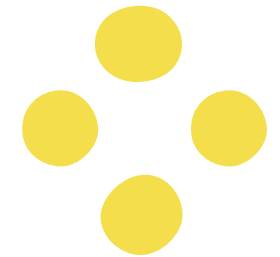
What do people expect from CCA students?

I think conversations about where we want to go in life and what we want to be in life are missing.



In the sense that many of us are still trying to figure ourselves out, and I think conversations about what we think and what appeals to us would help us with getting on a path we're actually passionate about.





Marjerrie Masicat

Marjerrie is a graduate from the CCA GD program (2018). She is visual Designer at YR Media and collaborates with youth and adult colleagues to produce wireframes, user interfaces, prototypes, and visual assets for diverse editorial and client-facing projects. She also functions as a hands-on designer to support the Creative team on assignments including special projects, marketing assets, presentations, email marketing, digital graphics, branding.



Marjerie Masicat: I am currently at YR Media. One of the other things that I do at my job is teach young people. The age range is between 14 to 24. It's kind of crazy to say that I teach someone who is 24 because I am only 24 as well. What we specifically do is we teach and help students produce content that they would like to see in the world and we teach them design and coding. We work together to bring their stories to life on the web.

One of the things that I'm going to be showing right now came out about a month ago. We wanted to come out with a project as an anniversary for shelter in place. Rather than it being just about shelter in place, we wanted to hear from students about their year in virtual learning. This is a project called *Zoomiversary*.

So these are my initial sketches. We use a tool called Figma. It is a very collaborative version of Sketch or Adobe XD. Considering that we've been all on a virtual platform it helps that this platform itself is collaborative—multiple people can be working on the same document at once.

In my sketches it's very reminiscent of Zoom. We really wanted it to look very similar to Zoom. We wanted to use the functionalities that everyone has been so familiar with in this past year of being on Zoom for so long. The idea is that each of these little videos would be 30 seconds of a student or a teacher describing their experience with virtual learning.

I almost always start off with pencil sketches just because it's the easiest way to get your ideas out. Then I start digitizing them into workable wireframes and prototypes. We have a desktop version. We then modify it to be mobile. There is also a little bit of an in-between with a tablet version as well.

I'm actually one of the only designers on my team, if not the only designer. So I worked hand-in-hand and closely with our development person. One of the easiest ways that we've been able to give each other feedback is through Figma. I'll take a screenshot of what he develops and then I'll come in making comments about the minor changes. I personally think it's really helpful to know HTML and CSS and know how to use developer tools on any browser. It makes the relationship between a designer and a developer that much easier, because then you're kind of talking in each other's language.

These were all of the sketches and all of the wireframes. The final product looks very, very similar to Zoom. Once you start your meeting, everything is just a play off of what you see on Zoom itself. We used the chat as a way to show the introduction of the article. When you hover over the videos it starts playing the audio. Currently everything is muted, but I'll hover over something.

Then we used the bottom bar to show all of the things that you normally see on Zoom. Instead of participants, it was contributors from across the nation. We turn the reactions tab into a poll. When you click on it, it actually animates as if it were Instagram live. That was one of the inspirations for that. We have our

credits. Then we have additional coverage for coronavirus.

This was a very fun project. In terms of timeline, I think we released this within less than a month. So it was a big hustle in terms of not just design and development, but also our content team that was putting this all together.

One of the more recent projects that I also wanted to talk about is something called *In the Black Mirror*. At YR media, we are dedicated to talking about and teaching our young people about artificial intelligence which is kind of a big emerging scene, not just for tech itself, but I'd argue, even in design. The kind of images that you see here have been produced and manipulated using a tool called Runway ML, which is a creative tool that uses artificial intelligence to help you create things. This piece in particular was called *In the Black Mirror: What Artificial Intelligence Means for Race, Art and the Apocalypse*. We were able to interview people in the world of AI to really talk about what it all means.

One of the things that I have learned through this journey is I don't think I had ever thought that I'd be designing websites. I had always imagined myself designing editorial in print. I have a passion for observing it, holding it, and really engaging with print. But the future is that editorial is going to have to make its transition into the digital world. So the more you can think about a website as a magazine or as a piece of print, the easier it will be to innovate as well.

This was a multimedia piece. We have our menu that sticks to the top and we have these lovely illustrations also done by a colleague, and you can listen to these interviews and have a little bit of a bio as well. And we also included some polls.

Those are the two projects that I wanted to talk about and I can definitely also leave those in the chat if anyone is interested in reading them.

Yawen Wu: How did you get your start for your school or for work? How did you decide to go to school for art?

Marjerrie Masicat: My specific beginning is actually quite interesting. As a freshman in high school, I was really trying to figure out what interested me. I had applied both for yearbook and journalism. And I had also applied to my school's robotics team. So I had interviewed for both of those positions actually. And I got into all of them, which was a little bit of a surprise because I wasn't quite expecting to get into something artistic, but also into something super technological.

When the day came and they were like "Yo, you got to make a decision. We got to figure out and finalize your school schedule," I kind of went with my gut and decided to go with yearbook and journalism. That pushed the trajectory of my career and my interests.

I knew for a very long time that I had been interested in not only visuals and arts, but also technology. I feel like in design there's a great intersection between tech and arts because you're working almost always on a computer and there's always just so much to learn in that regard. Design is really bringing these ideas

into a way that is much more visual. I feel like I kind of had a little bit of a brain to try and pick and piece at it. I think it is a lot of just curiosity and staying inquisitive about what you're truly interested in.

I'd say in terms of my career and how I ended up at this job, it was really by chance. I think a lot of it is truly luck. I wasn't really expecting to ever get into editorial like I had mentioned or web design, by any means.

But after graduating in May of 2018 I was applying all over the place, without really any regard for what I was passionate about or really any regard for what I wanted in my own workplace and in my own job.

I ended up applying as a graphic design instructor for YR Media at the end of 2018. I think it was December 2018, very close to the holidays. They never came back to me about the specific job. But months later, in March or April of the following year, someone at the organization had reached out and they're like "hey we're not really thinking about a graphic design instructor because, unfortunately, we have already filled that position, but we are interested in potentially bringing you on as an interactive instructor." Considering my experience with HTML and CSS, it became a really good match. So it was very serendipitous and I'm very thankful for that experience and for that opportunity to arise the way that it did.

But in a lot of ways I'm also trying to expand out of all of that and explore what else I can do just for myself. I think jobs in themselves and careers themselves aren't really an end by any means, because your passions and your interests are always going to be changing.

Sara Raffo: I'll ask the next question for Nicki who is not feeling well today. How do you decide on a medium—whether it's for a business or a personal project?

Marjerrie Masicat: I don't particularly believe that you are allowed one medium and only one medium. My current career world is very invested in HTML and CSS and even Javascript and building websites and creating content that exists on the web. But outside of my work, I really like to handle tangible things and tangible items.

I'd argue as well that all of the things that you do—regardless of if it fits within your "career" or your path—they don't have to intermix by any means. Outside of work, I am creative as a crocheter. I've been a crocheter since I was 12 and I love yarn and I love making things and garments. I recently learned how to sew as well. So I consider those my current mediums outside of technology and my work. But prior to that—and I still try to do this consistently—I do love making zines. It's all about what you're interested in and exploring, not just what you are currently making for work. Just really exploring and figuring out what you like to do outside of the current bubble that you're working in.

Nathan Buenviaje: Hi, I'm Nathan. I'm going to be asking the next question. How much of that knowledge that you were saying of personal projects do you incorporate graphic design?

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School definitely teaches you to really hustle and to pull all-nighters every single day and go to class with only two hours of sleep. But getting quality rest is just as important—if not even more important—than pushing yourself to continue creating.

Marjerrie Masicat: In my current work, I am the only designer and I was the first designer on my team. I don't think they were used to thinking in a creative way or creative problem solving. So I kind of integrate my hobbies into the work that I do through proposals. There was this project that was on the last 10 years of gun violence. There had been a lot of coverage through YR Media about gun violence and the past 10 years. There was a reaction about the Oscar Grant shooting and just so much content. They really wanted to separate this collection in three categories. I kind of took a little bit of an artistic route to try and display the background images, instead of it being all of these tragic deaths and tragic images of people who have passed away.

I took a pencil and I took a piece of construction paper and I just started stabbing at it. That's one way to really incorporate your own personal projects through the work that you do. I think it's always regardless of what your medium is outside of work or outside of a job, there are many ways to incorporate it into the work that you do, because it is creative problem solving. It doesn't mean that everything that

you do through work will involve your other hobbies outside of work, but that's a very good way to incorporate it all.

Nathan Buenviaje: Was there a point in time when you had an artistic inspiration that helped you get over a milestone or obstacle? And what was that milestone and obstacle?

Marjerrie Masicat: Good question. I feel like I can't particularly specify the obstacles that have come before me. Perhaps because I have worked through them and I've become so much more resilient because of them. One of the things that I remember being really helpful was using Post-It notes (kind of cliché as it is) to just jot down feelings. One of the things that I have the tendency to do is be too precious with my materials. I'll sit in front of my computer trying to express something and it doesn't come out. Because the computer is too sexy, it's too technological, and there's no way for me to really express what I am feeling. To counter that, I try and use artifacts that aren't as precious, one of them being Post-Its another being crayons, because as a kid you always colored with crayons.

Being less precious with these objects allowed me to curate and bring together a collection of feelings that I had over a past like year and a half. I had this habit of keeping Post-It notes by my bedside. And if I woke up at three o'clock in the morning and I had a weird dream, I just write it down and then stick it on to my desk. Or, if I had pulled an all-nighter because of a class, I will sit down and really jot down what I was feeling or draw something as well. That became a collection and a curation of things.

The things that are most accessible to you will also become the things that you do the most. So it became a habit to do all of these things. Then I put it all together in a little bit of a theme. They became a collection of the emotions and feelings that I was having for a year, when I wasn't quite sure what I was doing in school or what exactly I wanted to be doing in my career either.

Sara Raffo: The flip side of the obstacles question is: what motivates you today? What pushes you to make things right now?

Marjerrie Masicat: Alongside everyone during the pandemic, it was very difficult to stay motivated and inspired. I still struggle with that a lot, just spending time at home. Even though I am a really big introvert and a big homebody, we all need to be outside to actively work our brains.

One of the things that has been very life saving in this moment is going out on walks and finding beauty in the mundane—really keeping my eye towards small things that I wouldn't have noticed prior. I think a big challenge for myself every single time I go on one of these walks is to try and notice and take an image of something that I never noticed before. I'll go on a walk as a refresher and a break, but then it becomes a little bit of a creative challenge. I bring that back and I get to just sit in that moment in the small little detail.

Alongside with the walks, another thing that really inspires me and motivates me is rest. I think there was definitely a time where I had been working like three jobs. And burnout was coming very, very close. School definitely teaches you to really hustle and to pull all-nighters every single day and go to class with only two hours of sleep. But getting quality rest is just as important—if not even more important—than pushing yourself to continue creating.

There will be a point where nothing is going to be inspiring you and that just means it's a signal to rest. Resting, and in my case, I like learning things creatively. I will play around with things that are tangible. I think that's just something that I've learned a lot about myself. I need to be holding things and making things to reset my mind. So whatever it is that helps reset your own mind. It doesn't necessarily have to be creative as long as it helps you get into a little bit of a flow really helps in re-inspire your own brain.

Nathan Buenviaje: Seeing as you have designed multiple websites covering a large variety of topics, some very different from others, are there any key design tips for creating the right atmosphere for those websites and the content they cover? I'm specifically talking about color theory.

Marjerrie Masicat: A lot of it takes research. Researching not only the topic itself, but also the current conversations that are happening within that landscape. A lot of the work that I do is about artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence as a topic keeps changing every single day because there's new stuff that's going. So yes, one it's the research and keeping track of what's currently being said and also what's currently being made around the thing.

I like to make a lot of mood boards in that regard. I think there is a lot of power, not only in mood boards and Googling things, but I think in an ideal world, also researching kind of like a history. I also ground myself in the history of topics and ideas and seeing what has been done archivally. It's nice to check what's in libraries, as well to see what's being said about a topic.

In terms of color theory, it's all about mood and mood perceptions. Even before I decide what color direction or color scheme I'll go with, I kind of sit with the topic. I sit with this prompt for maybe five minutes. I think about all the colors that come to mind. Whether or not those colors are actually related to the project itself, it gives me a framework to continue working for that project.

Almost always you kind of hit it on the dot. I think you are training your eye and you're learning a lot about color through school. Even growing up as kids through adulthood you're exposed to so much content that I feel like intuitively you learn to associate colors with different feelings and different topics.

Michael Min: I'm just wondering, because your job requires a crossover between two different fields—graphic design interaction design—what do you find most fascinating or interesting from this crossover?

Marjerrie Masicat: I think, by trade and even after graduating, I wouldn't have ever considered myself an interaction designer by any means. I did not study user interface, I did not study user experience. So a lot of that was a big learning curve. To a certain degree, it was a little bit of a blessing that I got this job because I was able to learn all of those things and experiment on the job.

What I find the most fascinating in the crossover is the psychological aspect of interaction design. I'm often questioning the sort of efficacy behind the field itself. I don't know if any of you have watched *The Social Dilemma* on Netflix. Highly recommend watching it. I feel like I was already very familiar with the things that they were discussing in the film about interaction design. I say that I question the efficacy behind the field itself, because it feels a little weird to be creating something and always questioning what my users are going to be doing. In some ways, I think the crossover between graphic design and interaction design is somewhat rooted in manipulation.

I think there's definitely beauty in creating things and making things that are very, very pretty. But I'm also questioning: at what cost? That's just how I think about all of these things.

In terms of the crossover, when I think about working with my students and my interns, I think it's important to realize that a lot of people can also do what you're doing. Not in the sense to discourage you by any means. But considering that we're living in a world that's very technological and somebody can just like pick up and learn all of the same things that you are doing. I think instead of seeing it as a negative thing it could be a little bit of a motivating factor and a little bit of a hopefulness.

In some way once we are progressing more into the world. It means we are able to bring our communities and who we are designing for into the conversation itself. I think that's one of the most hopeful things that I've been seeing in this intersection between graphic design and interaction design itself.

Michael Min: With technology advancing, I guess it's requiring designers to learn more software, to get a job and to do their work. What kind of tools do you use to help you learn new software?

Marjerrie Masicat: Through my job, it was really nice because we had access to Treehouse, which is very similar to Lynda.com, which is now LinkedIn Learning. It really kind of sucks to say (because it's a very cop-out answer), but it really depends on how you learn. I'm very much of a reader and a note taker. I like to read a lot of things that are related to the topics that I'm working on or the software that I'm working on. So I'll read a lot of the FAQ content, even before touching the platform itself. But otherwise, I feel like there is more value in exercising creative problem solving because regardless of the software and the platforms that you use for work or school, those will always be changing. I think

it's useless to be like "Sketch is going to be the future of interaction design," but really now people are leaning towards Figma right so those tools are always going to be changing. The truth is it's making sure that you can creatively problem-solve for a problem or a prompt you've been given.

I have a question for everyone here. Sara has given a little bit of background on what everyone studies. But if you can say it out loud or drop it in the chat, I definitely would love to know what everyone else is studying currently. And also what year you are at CCA.

Nathan Buenviaje: I'm a first year Architecture major.

Marjerrie Masicat: I see Architecture fifth year, Architecture third year. I know how it goes, I can call on people. I'm a teacher as well.

I might be a little nosy, but: Stefan? Is that Stefan from Philz? If it is, hello!

Stefan: It is. Hello. How are we doing Marj?

Marjerrie Masicat: I would have never known, but it's good to hear from you. I'm glad.

Stefan: I saw you sent you a message on Instagram but...

Marjerrie Masicat: I don't have my notifications on.

Stefan: You're a good person and you didn't check your phone during the meeting.

Marjerrie Masicat: Well, hello. Stefan and I used to work at Philz together. Wow, Jewelry and Metal Arts. Really cool.

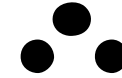
Michael Min: I'm curious about how you will move yourself forward as a designer in the future. I think once we get out into the field, it might be hard for us to have that motivation to push ourselves to try out new things.

Marjerrie Masicat: That's always the question, everyone will always ask. What's your five year plan? Realistically and honestly I don't have a plan for what's next for me. It's really about just staying curious about the things that you are interested in. To say I am 100% invested in studying artificial intelligence, for the rest of my career is a little bit of a lie. I'm interested in it, and I see the value in studying it, especially as we grow more into a technological world where artificial intelligence is going to be more prominent in our lives.

But I think the greatest distinction in the last handful of years and perhaps one of the greatest messages that I could share with everyone is that "designer" or "artist" or "architect," they are not a personality trait. Those are just the things that you do. And whatever you do outside of your job and outside of your career is so much more valuable than the path that you set yourself up on in a career. I think there's definitely a hyper-focus on all of that. And there's a lot of value in that, but there's also a lot of burnout in it. That's been my current path. I'm in a little bit of a resting phase to see what will come for me next.

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Sara Raffo: I keep thinking about your crossroads in high school: robotics or yearbook. Your interest in artificial intelligence makes me think that maybe there is still some crossover. Do you see a connection between those?

Marjerrie Masicat: Yeah, definitely. A little history: as a 10 year old I was really into Hannah Montana and Miley Cyrus—we're getting real close right now everyone—and I decided to teach myself how to code from that day. I was like: I'm going to make a fan website. I moderated a forum. So I'd say that was the first introduction that I had to technology and using it as a medium for my artistic expression was HTML and CSS. At the same age, I had done Lego robotics as a kid through a school program—shout out school—so I had this integrated into my mind that technology is going to be your life.

Then in middle school is when I really learned how to artistically express myself. I was on the yearbook team in middle school. I think I had always had an intuition with technology, and I think that's the case for everyone who's young. It's like the younger you are, the more integrated technology is into our lives, the easier it is for young people to use these things. You'll see three-year-olds who

know how to work an iPad already right. And even though I was at a crossroads, I knew ultimately there was going to be a moment where all of these things would be intertwined in my life. I'm still very interested in STEM. Now I'm at a point where I'm trying to integrate art into it, so STEM to STEAM. I think there's a lot of value in design thinking to all of these science, technology engineering and mathematics fields. For a while I had actually thought I wanted to be an architect—for the architecture students in here—because it really intertwines my interest in the math side of my brain with the artistic side of my brain.

Michael Min: Do you have a particular type of software you like working with?

Marjerie Masicat: Honestly, not currently. As I mentioned, I like to step away from the computer a lot of the time. Especially under the guise of the pandemic, because we've just been staring at our screens for so long. There's a moment where that's literally all I did every single day.

There is this tool that I really want to try getting into soon called Spline. It is a design tool for 3D so you can design 3D objects and integrate it into code. Which I think is pretty cool. I've never really worked with 3D objects before. But I think this is a fun moment to try and test it out.

Youngrok Lee: I have a question. You talk about “rest time.” If you're exhausted and don't have any fresh ideas, that means it's time to take a rest. How do you take a rest?

Marjerie Masicat: Rest for me looks like a lot of different things. With Stefan, I worked at Philz and I used to wake up at four o'clock almost every single day to get to my job in the morning. Then after that I would be working at YR Media part time teaching and designing. I was very exhausted. I hit a point where I was working seven days a week, which is definitely not sustainable, by any means at all. There was a period in which my work became my whole identity. Currently that's what I'm trying to dissociate from and create a distinction from. My work is not my worth.

Rest can look like watching a new documentary on Netflix, going out on walks (as I mentioned before), or reading books. I like to read a lot of nonfiction. Nonfiction gives me a moment to learn more about the world, while also resting. Because I'm reading something and taking my time outside.

Rest also just looks like doing nothing. I think there's been a long discomfort with doing nothing and just sitting around and lazing around. But once you feel like you've practiced it enough it'll come more intuitively and then you'll just feel so much more rested and refreshed.

Youngrok Lee: Thank you. I had a followup question. I started designing in 2014. When I started designing, I was full of inspiration. I was full of ideas, full of passion. Comparing 2014 to right now, I'm not sure that I'm as passionate as

I was in 2014. I don't know if it's time to take a rest, or if I'm losing my passion.

Marjerie Masicat: Yeah. It definitely could be a mix of both. I was all a part of all of these extracurricular activities as a kid. I probably started artistically expressing myself and designing at a very young age as well. And it all kind of catches up to you.

I don't think it's something where you've learned it and then you stop learning it. It's kind of like riding a bike. Once you learn how to ride a bike, you try again after years and you're rusty. But you still know how to ride a bike. I think that's the case for a lot of design and artistic thinking. No matter how much time away you take from studying design or expressing yourself in design or art, you will always be able to come back to it and look at it in a newer perspective.

I think it's important to remember that inherently people and humans are creative beings. That's a big part of our existence. Regardless of whether or not we continue living it in our lives, creativity and creation is something that we can always come back to. So if you're feeling exhaustion right now: yes, maybe you need to take a pause. A couple of years or however long you need. It's okay to do that.

Youngrok Lee: I have another question. I'm looking for a job right now. I'm just wondering what kinds of things companies want from students?

Marjerie Masicat: If we're talking about jobs and what employers are asking of students, it really depends. Again it kind of comes to the question of values. Stick with your values. Think about what you really want out of an employer. Don't ask what an employer wants out of you, ask what you want from the person you are being employed by.

You will learn so much more when you are actually invested in the employer in the space that you are working for. I just happened to align so much more with nonprofit work. Even though it means a little bit of exhaustion, because being part of a nonprofit world and organization you tend to wear multiple hats.

But at the end of the day, that is my value. I want to work for a place that actually has either impact on the world or impact on young people and that's a little bit of a sacrifice that I am willing to take.

When you are trying to look for a job, I think honesty is very important. I still feel like I definitely got my job through chance. As the cliché goes, you network, network, network. But I am a very big introvert and I don't really like talking to people all too often. So it's just when you do network, if you do network, it needs to come from a place of genuineness. So don't reach out for the sake of reaching out. Don't connect with people on LinkedIn just for the sake of connecting. Have a little bit of a purpose and actually be curious about the things that you are reaching out to these people for. In that way, the connections that you make are truly genuine rather than it being a numbers game.


Sara Raffo: Because you are a graduate of CCA, one of your areas of expertise is that you have been a student at CCA. In our class we have students who have never been to CCA campus because they've been learning remotely for a year and then some folks who are getting ready to graduate. I'm curious if you have any advice about being a CCA student? I'm really open to any honest advice that you have about the time you spent at CCA.

Marjerie Masicat: I think one of the more important things that I feel like I lacked was building genuine relationships and friendships during my time at school. It was very easy for me to invest and indulge all of myself into my work. So, if I wasn't progressing in my work then there was no purpose to curate and develop those relationships that are so valuable while in school. At the end of the day, everyone that you spend your time with at school—be it virtual or even in-person—those are the people that you can count on in the future. Despite my feeling as if I had not necessarily built that much of a relationship with my peers, it's always something that I come back to because I'm genuinely invested in where my peers are.

I think another important thing to keep in mind is awards and accolades don't mean shit. If you think about it, awards and accolades really mirror a capitalistic structure. To even apply to be checked out for an award—whether or not your project deserves an award—oftentimes you have to submit a fee. These fees are not accessible by any means. They are like \$150, \$200, \$300 to submit a project to communications awards or whatever. Realistically, as a college student you might not be able to afford it. So all of those titles, at the end of the day, don't really mean anything.

One of the things that I definitely regret—and I feel like people always say this—is not using my extra classes as a way to explore other majors. If I had realized that I really like working tangibly with things I probably would have taken more 3D classes or classes that deal with a physical form. I used all of my elective classes for other graphic design classes. But I think there's definitely a lot of value in knowing and exploring other artistic forms, because in that way it really feeds your own particular practice.





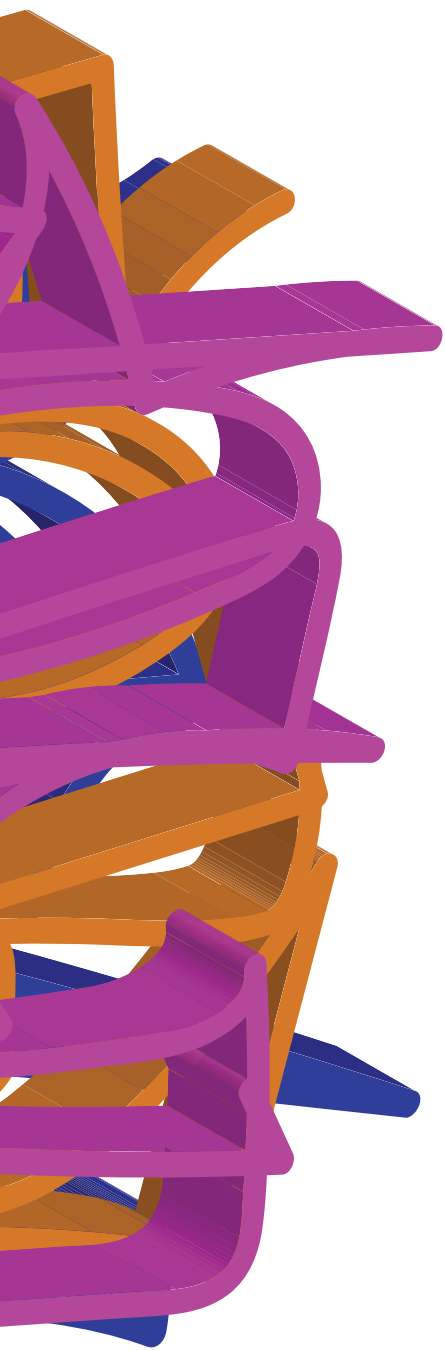
I don't think it matters as much as
where our guests are from rather
I think they should be diverse in
their individual experiences, where
they originate from and the stories
they'll tell.

I think we can invite interesting
people. They are not necessarily
designers or artists, but I hope they
love art and design. They have their
own unique aesthetic ideas and
strong personality.



Moonsick Gang

Moonsick Gang is a graphic designer based in Seoul, South Korea. He studied in Amsterdam and in the United States, and works with curators, galleries, artists and musicians.



Moonsick Gang: I will share a little of my work—less description, more visual things. And then I have three little studios in this building which I have different ways of using. I'll introduce them for a short time. Then we'll go outside. I want to show you the printing area of Seoul. It's a very old area of Seoul. It's the center of Seoul and it's going to be very inspirational. I was very inspired by this area when I came back to Seoul. That's why I have a studio in this area.

First, I'll show you the Keynote.

So this is my name as a studio name. I'm from Seoul. I lived here until 20-something. And then I studied in Amsterdam at Rietveld Academie. The person to the right is Johannes Breyer. He was my classmate and now he runs Dinamo Type Foundry. We were talking about letters.

Then I moved to New Haven for a masters at Yale. I moved to New York for work. And then back to Seoul for work.

Also, sometimes I teach. I have a class after this presentation. This is one of my students. He is also my assistant right now. This is a scene of my class, drawing a poster by hand.

This is a video I made when I was at Yale. It's a good way to explain how I work with inspirational environments. I realized that how I cook is really similar to how I design. So I made a video.

Opening the document is like opening the fridge. Finding a typeface is like finding the ingredients. Putting the olive oil in the pan is the same as the yellow background. Adding a basic typeface, like Times New Roman, is the eggs. A little salt is a little graphic ornament. Pepper. Then composition and putting in very unexpected ingredients and graphics. Done.

This is a typeface I made, an everyday typeface, made through the coffee shop. And the letters.

This is also letters from the Voyager images. And this is also letters made by two people without conversation. Also letters. Letters with my classmate's faces. Also letters which are combining together as one line.

A litter poster. More posters. I'm going to show some work without description.

This is my thesis in resin. With all the data from two years at the school.

I'm also working with the hip hop scene in Seoul. I'm always making posters, every week. This is my first collaboration with Stüssy and musicians. Rappers and producers in Seoul. This is Yaeji from New York. This is a workshop with the fashion brand Nike.

This is a movie poster for *The Eye's Dream* by Sato Hisayasu. Also a movie poster for a Marco Ferreri documentary. Also a movie poster for *Dian*. The website for a Moving/Image. I used an empty background for a design element. This is the book. These works are from museums, exhibitions, and events. Actually, this is my main client from here.

Everyone told me
you are weird.
I stayed in Amsterdam
and New York
America and you
didn't do any drugs
I said yes, that's
I regret. I would
do more, experience



Everyone told me: you are weird. You stayed in Amsterdam and New York and America and you didn't do any drugs? I said yes, that's what I regret. I would want to do more, experience more.

This is a logo/identity for an Amsterdam art space. The website for events. That's it.

Now I will show you my studio. I'm sorry about the mess. I'm just cleaning for the spring. This is my working space. I'll put some music on. This is one of my latest projects. By the artists Minha Park and Ryu Hankil. They are sound artists. They recorded the sounds from humans, but they removed the voice range of human voices. So this is the noise without the human voice. I really like this.

This is the view of the area which I will show you soon. I'm working with art critics and writers. Bookshelf, coffee, posters. There are a lot of different offices. The bathroom. My assistant is working in here. It's very cozy.

I got the most beautiful Korean book price with this book. Then we'll move to the second floor for the other spaces. Actually it's the top floor. I don't need to go to the gym. So many steps.

This is the second floor and the project space. I made all the lights and the works with editors. I'll explain it right now. This is the door. It's the cover. I'm thinking this space is a book. I wanted to make a book. And me and my editor were talking about how we were going to make a book. And then we rented a space and we felt like we didn't want to make one piece as a book. So then we thought: why don't

we make one continuous space as a book. So we rented a space and now we're occasionally making pages. We thought this is the cover of the book and then this is the inside of the book. Here is the back cover of the book. We have the ISBN and this is my publisher's name. And then we produced stories and images.

This is the first page. Every production has a page number. So we will fill the pages in the space. This image is from here: the old window surface. Then we are making a new story here about Recto. We created a new story and new images. No new technology like 3D or video. We keep the old techniques here. This is the second and third page. A map. About two people walking. We made it with a special paper. It's strong paper for the outside. These are the fourth pages about the sunlight. This is a mini library related to the last project. We selected books with the yellow and sunlight. That's it. We're going outside for the city tour. (She's very, very kind. She's one of my very favorite people in the building.)

So, the building looks like this. There's a print shop. This is my bike. Here's the offset print shop. Here was the movie theater that's not open now. Now here's the area that's gentrifying. Here's a taco shop. It's a little messy here. Cars and bikes. That's why I have a motorcycle.

Here's a paper cutting shop. Here's a paper shop. Here's a binding shop. Also, an old paper shop. Here's my favorite street with a little garden. This ugly public art. I really hate it. These old guys are really kind to me. An old print shop with the old machine. I like this garden.

Every street has a different profession. This street is about the little prints. The other street is for stickers and diaries. We're going back to the space for the Q&A.

That space is going to be something. Maybe a restaurant. It's quite calm today. This is a public bath. Paper folding is all made by hand here. This is another district: diaries, fans, shopping bags. Name card printers. Envelopes. And plastic bags, little stuff. You can make anything from here. Furniture or metal stuff. The frames. This area is more about symbols of the Korean movie scene. This guy is the owner of the movie theater. So all the movie stars from here have hand prints. It's like Hollywood. You know about Domino Pizza.

And here is my name. My name is my studio. Some people get confused. Someone drew a drawing about the space. This is the explanation about the space.

Run Li: Thank you for your tour. It was really good. I've seldom had this experience before. I felt like I walked through the Korean streets, which felt very good. Our first question is: where does your inspiration come from? I think you kind of answered this question. At the beginning of the meeting you said you really like to combine daily life with your design. You showed how you cook and how that relates to your design. I think that's very interesting. Can you give more examples?

Moonsick Gang: I feel like all creation is kind of related. I like to discover

something from musicians or even my mom. Whatever. I just try to figure out how it works, then I feel like it's really connected with how I make something as a design. That's why I showed three different studios and the videos and then this space. I wanted to make the space as an opportunity to connect people—to find something inspirational from their conversation or their production or whatever. I'm always open to figuring out inspiration from talking to other people, not like art "art" or exhibitions or something.

I've always tried to figure out the little things even from the street. For example, when I was in New York, I was also trying to figure out something special in New York. And in Seoul it's this totally different scene and people and way of talking. I feel like all those cities and different people have special little things, so that's my inspiration in general.

Run Li: You're talking about your inspiration coming from the environment. When you move to different places—you studied in Amsterdam, in America, and now you're in Korea—do you think your style will change because the environment changes?

Moonsick Gang: Totally. But with the things I do right now, I feel like I moved back to my 20s or when I was your age, 18 or something. I realized that I'm not really changed, but I experienced a lot of different environments that made me stronger. I kept my pureness and my own things, but I can work right now with other people and see. I'm not really changed, but I have a way of looking or way of thinking I learned from the other environments. This is what I realize these days.

I feel like Europe and America is totally different from Seoul. When I studied in Amsterdam, I really hated my Korean scene. I felt like it's rude and it's not clean. But when I studied in America, I realized that all the countries and all the cultures have differences and benefits and interesting points in every culture. That's why I moved back to Seoul, to bring the insights and bring the experience to my own things.

I like to work with little cultural people like musicians. They don't have any money, but I really like to work with them. That's why I talked about how I feel like going back to my 20s. I really like the music scene. When I was in my 20s, I went to the parties and met a lot of DJs and musicians. I can work with them right now, so this is what I'd like to bring back to Seoul. I feel like nothing is changed. My age is different with my insight and experience. That's it.

Stefan: Thank you for taking the time out to talk to us, as well as give us a tour. That was really interesting, especially coming from living in San Francisco. How do you start your design process? Do you like to start with more like hand-drawn or physical mediums or just go straight to digital?

Moonsick Gang: Both. Half and half. It's different based on the project. Actually, it's hard to say. I don't really start with digital or hand drawing. I can say

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it is based on the project so I'm not really studying some specific idiom to make something. Mostly I like to draw with vectors, with a mouse. I have a Wacom tablet and other stuff like VR. I tried some weird ways of working. I tried to draw something in a VR machine—this is a 3D medium making program—but I tried to make letters in there. Or I tried to do something with a mouse and vectors that makes weird results. That's what I like to start with in general.

Youngrok Lee: When I was looking at your portfolio and website, I was thinking you had branded yourself in a good way and you're collaborating with other artists. So do you have any tips for branding yourself or making a brand based on your work?

Moonsick Gang: I don't really like to make promotional stuff myself. It's a dumb answer, but I really liked my work so that is my strong point in promoting to other people.

I think it's very important. I'm not good at it. I always decide to be myself and try to focus on my work itself, not trying to focus on promotional stuff. That's it. I'm not good at it—actually to be honest. I want to be good at it, but I realize I am not.

Youngrok Lee: That's really good to hear. I'm not good at it myself. And I love my work. That really helps me.

Moonsick Gang: That's it. Your client will recognize it. Since I was young, all the people were thinking about the promotional stuff like blogs or social media. I really liked using social media, but not using it as a promotional tool. But people were watching it and recognized little stuff from my social media. Probably then they'll feel like "oh he's interesting" or "I want to work with him." That was not my promotion. I really like to use social media or any medium like a book or poster. I just enjoy it, but that's it. That will help you in promoting yourself I think.

Youngrok Lee: That would be the best for me.

Moonsick Gang: Yeah. That's it. Best work is the best promotion. That's my thinking.

K Lee: Do you have any advice and running a smaller studio? It seems like you're paying rent for three offices right now. I'm really curious to hear about it.

Moonsick Gang: The thing is the little studios are really cheap here. That's how I run the three little studios. I like to keep the little studios because of all the different ways of using them. I run one as my studio and one as my own space. This floor has kind of a showcase of my work. Rent is really cheap here. It's like \$250? \$350? So the cost is like less than \$1000 per month. So it's not a big deal for me. This is the benefit of this area. It's really old, but really cheap. When you go upstairs, the price goes down. That's the good thing about here.

Carolina Stancati: I just wanted to know if you had any piece of advice you would give to your past self? Either in the field of arts or just life in general?

Moonsick Gang: I don't know. I missed the time in Amsterdam, but I only did the work-work. So I want to say to my past self: enjoy things other than work. I didn't do really anything. I didn't do any marijuana or relationship with other girls. I have a little regret about that. I only did my best and only worked. It's the thing I like and the thing I regret. I wanted to enjoy my life. I was a Christian so I felt I needed to work and I didn't want to do the bad things. But I want to do bad things when I go back in the past.

Everyone told me: you are weird. You stayed in Amsterdam and New York and America and you didn't do any drugs? I said yes, that's what I regret. I would want to do more, experience more.

K Lee: Do you have any plans to present in the US again anytime soon?

Moonsick Gang: I'm going to LA this July. For two weeks. Just for a trip. Are you guys in LA?

K Lee: I'm in LA right now..

Moonsick Gang: I'm thinking it's going to be nice to move to LA or somewhere near the west of America in the future. In like five or six years. Let's hang and we can talk about my future to move somewhere else. I get a little bored here in

Seoul. I like the work. But I want to move somewhere else with nice weather and nice people. I visited Otis two years ago and I felt like California is really, really great. I want to go. So let's see.

K Lee: Let me know if you need someone to pick you up from the airport.

Moonsick Gang: Nice. Let's have a beer or something.

Sara Raffo: I know Kaming, and I think that that's a serious offer. He's not kidding. I'm pretty sure he would really pick you up from the airport.

The conversations in this book took place in April 2021. We spoke using Zoom with students and guests calling in from China, South Korea, and the United States. Transcripts were edited for clarity and length.

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