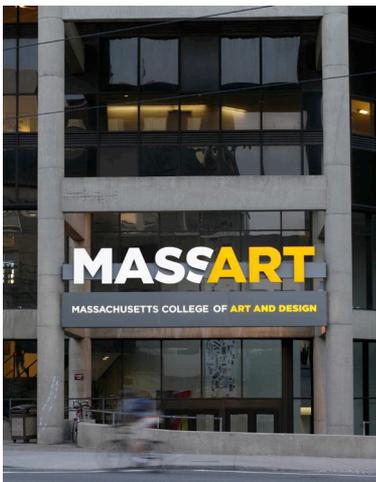


Baseline has always been committed to international academic education within the Graphic Arts. From issue 52 onwards, four pages are now dedicated for a series of inspirational articles, essays, course projects, academic research, etc., from schools and universities around the globe.

Prof. Ian McLaren, distinguished academic and designer, has joined our team as an advisor and editor, to establish this new section on aspects of international design education.



Left: Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt).

Below: Emily Lawes printing at St Brides Printing Library, London.

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What can a short-term study abroad travel course experience offer US based graphic design and illustration students?

Short-term study abroad courses offered by colleges and universities may be just as effective in promoting global awareness as the traditional semester abroad experiences. These courses are generally more affordable and appeal to students who might not be able or willing to commit to a semester or a year abroad. Short-term study abroad courses allow students in highly structured professional programs like Graphic Design and Illustration to have an immersive study abroad experience without falling behind or adding extra time to complete required coursework back at their home schools.

For the past nine years, Communication Design faculty members at Massachusetts College of Art and Design* have been engaged in developing and organising short-term travel abroad courses to Western Europe, China, and New Zealand for graphic design and illustration students. One of the benefits of faculty-led programs is that faculty members can develop and define the thematic thread of the travel course plus its deliverables, while ensuring that the travel course curriculum and its objectives are closely aligned and integrated within the students' primary coursework.

The cornerstone of each of these particular short-term travel courses is to investigate – through the focused lens of communication design – the differences and similarities of visual language strategies that give shape, form and content to all contemporary visual culture. Within each semester's short-term travel course, the student group visits and engages in lively discussion with design and illustration professionals on site in their places of business and creative activity. Each trip includes a two to three-day immersion project at 'sister' art colleges in the countries we visit. This is a unique opportunity for all the students involved to get acquainted while engaging in a culturally based group design project.

* Massachusetts College of Art and Design is a public, independent college of art and design. The college's professional baccalaureate and graduate programs prepare students to participate in the creative economy as fine artists, designers, and art educators, and to engage in the well being of their society. As a national leader in visual art and design education, the college influences contemporary culture through the accomplishments of its alumni and the creative activities of its faculty and staff.



Why London and Dublin?

'In both cities you can feel the history and energy swelling around you and it was incredible to be able to experience that.' – Casey McGee, student participant in CTP.

The UK is recognised internationally for cutting edge and innovative communication design – illustration, design, advertising, motion graphics and animation. The hub of this activity is London, one of the greatest cities in the world for art, design, music, theatre, sports, shopping, and a host of other activities. London is home to writers, politicians, artists, musicians, designers and illustrators. In its metropolitan area are over eight million people representing communities from every corner of the earth. It is truly an international city.

Ireland, with its own proud history and tradition, centres itself in the vibrant capital of Dublin. Dublin is also home to writers, politicians, artists, musicians, designers and illustrators. Sampling both London's urbaneness, and Dublin's distinctive small city coziness, provides our graphic design and illustration students with a glimpse into what feeds the creative identity of Great Britain and Ireland. Both capitals, London and Dublin, represent the creative and economic heart of their cultures. Each city has made enormous contributions to the growth of the creative global economy. As such, they remain magnets for cutting edge communication design.

Outside of the US, it is more common for communication design professionals to have multiple expressions of their creativity than their American counterparts. Illustrators are also fine artists,

designers and animators. Graphic designers animate, design furniture, clothing lines, products and installations and all are engaged in a range of public service and fine art expressions. To our 'eyes' this approach fosters a broadened mix to all creative fields and a tradition of appreciation for the artist, designer and crafts person as a valued, vital participant in culture and society. The MassArt students who have participated in past 'Crossing the Pond' travel course trips have returned with expanded and inspired perspectives of both global and personal applications for their creativity.

'Traveling to London and Dublin not only opened my eyes to the global market of creativeness, but altered the way I was thinking about art making, the way I interact with people unknown to me, and the way I am able to share myself with the world.' – Emily Lawes, student participant.



Top: Students in the archive at St. Brides Printing Library photographing Eric Gill's drawing of Gill Sans

Centre: At St. Brides Printing Library, photographing historic typefaces

Below left: Tony Brook at Spin/Unit Editions in South London

Bottom left: Harry Pearce at Pentagram London

Opposite page

Top: Student group project book: Life is ...

Centre, left to right: Lauren Contic working with her group of students in the studio at NCAD

MassArt student Rebecca Ranney working on the project brief in her sketchbook at NCAD

Inside pages from student group project book: Life is ...

NCAD and MassArt students presenting their joint project



Boots on the ground

In keeping with the interdisciplinary focus of our March 2014 short-term study abroad course 'Crossing the Pond: Exploring Communication Design in London and Dublin', our activities included studio visits and discussions with Johnny Kelly/Nexus Productions; Harry Pearce/Pentagram; Brian Grimwood/CIA; Tony Brook/Spin; Fig Taylor/AOI; Steve Simpson and Alan Clarke. The group visited the Tate Modern; the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Design Museum; the Whitechapel Gallery; Chris Beetles Gallery; Illustration Cupboard; St. Brides Library; Kemistry Gallery; National Gallery of Ireland; Irish Museum of Contemporary Art; *Book of Kells* at Trinity College, Newgrange, and many other amazing places.

'Having the opportunity of visiting working artists in graphic design and illustration was inspirational, and it gave me a sense of community of artists. It was so generous of them to take their time to show us the kind of work they do, and even give their insight on how the approach their projects.' – Julia Parany, student participant.

'Harry Pearce of Pentagram put it nicely when talking about maintaining the balance between his work as a designer and personal life: If you treat this like a business, it will treat you like a business. If you treat it like a creative way of life it will treat you like a way of life.' – Eleanor Norton, student participant.

Each short-term study abroad trip also includes meet-ups with students and their tutors at English and Irish colleges and universities. On this trip we visited with: London College of Communication (Sian Cook); Royal College of Art (Teal Triggs); Anglia Ruskin University (Will Hill) and National College of Art and Design (Connor Clark and Matthew Thompson).

'Art and design schools in the UK have a more inclusive and loosely defined approach to communications design education. At both the Royal College of Art in London (RCA), and the National College of Art in Dublin (NCAD), the distinction between graphic designer and illustrator is much less concrete, and is usually self-defined. Students are encouraged to partake in both, and change their focus if needed, as opposed to a set curriculum for each separate

major in most American art and design colleges and universities. This approach fosters a healthy foundation for the integration of design and illustration in the professional world, and is visible immediately when speaking with working professionals in both countries. Both illustrators and graphic designers are aware of their peers in both disciplines, in contrast to just their own, as it is in the US' – Shannon Knight, student participant in CTP.

Invited by program head, Connor Clark at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin (NCAD), our students were included in a collaborative group project over a four-day period. Fifty-two MassArt students and NCAD students were collectively placed in mixed groups and challenged with a creative assignment brief to research and document an assigned Dublin neighbourhood, and create a visual narrative project based on the group's dynamic. Photographer Matthew Thompson set the brief, organised and led the project.

'It was compelling to see how much their curriculum differed from ours. Where ours is very structured and guided by our project briefs,

theirs was much looser, especially in Dublin. Being able to collaborate with them on a project, when we both have very different learning styles and approaches to design, was a great experience.' – Casey McGee, student participant in CTP 2014.

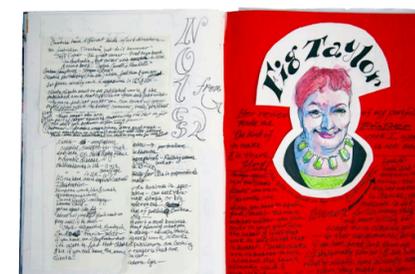
'Americans are so used to a fast paced world that is always go-go-go and when we arrived at NCAD the students were very much in a "state of mind" that it will happen when it happens. It seems that creative people in Europe wait to be inspired, where in America, we go out looking for it.' – Cara Ciardelli, student participant.

Back home

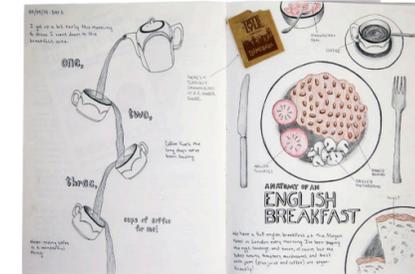
As with all credit bearing courses in US colleges and universities, there are 'deliverables' expected, and these deliverables take form of both written and visual projects that help to assess what students had absorbed and learned from this unique experience. In this particular short-term travel course we set three projects: a written response to what the student learned on the trip – the quotes in this article are taken from these written responses; a sketchbook to record first-hand impressions and experiences – the

sketchbook project started before the trip by asking students to analyse neighbourhoods in Boston to journaling experiences in both London and Dublin; and a visual 'project' to enable the students to summarise their experience within the concrete form of a book, blog, website, film, series of posters and/or series of illustrations.

'Keeping a visual journal was a great experience and I know it will be a very important keepsake for me when I want to look back on the trip.' – Rebecca Ranney, student participant.



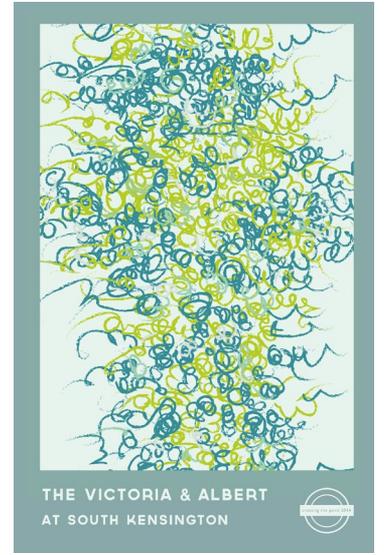
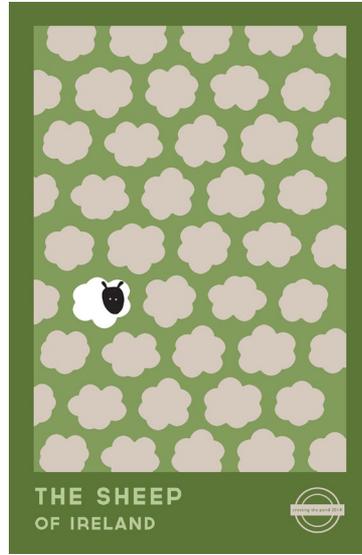
Inside pages from Abby McCoy's sketchbook



Inside pages from Rebecca Ranney's sketchbook



**ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN
DUBLIN, IRELAND**



Jillian Lynch: 'In this poster series, I recalled locations and environments that stood out to me the most in England and Ireland. I also was also inspired by vintage travel posters from the London Underground and hoped to bring in similar design qualities. I focused on simplifying colors and shapes as well as finding patterns in the environment in order to make playful and interesting images.'

Julia Parany: 'In my travels to London and Dublin I encountered many words and phrases that they use differently than we do. It was fun to talk and laugh about these words, and come up with as many as we could. I decided to document this experience, as it was exciting and interesting to compare phrases from place to place.'



What did they learn?

'I think that it was incredibly beneficial to have studied these cultural design differences at this point in my life so that as I move forward I have a better understanding of not only the design field on an international level, but as a method of understanding what it takes to be a productive member of such an influential community. It was also inspiring to see what an important role community played in the communication design field, between both illustrators and graphic designers. Professionals in both London and Dublin form an ebb and flow of continuously conversing and working together to shape the creative world to fit the needs of the contemporary world.' – Eleanor Norton, student participant.

'The integration of graphic design and illustration in England and Ireland was probably the most striking distinction. In the US, graphic design and illustration, despite their overall designation as communications design, are separate disciplines.' – Shannon Knight, student participant.

'I felt incredibly fortunate to meet so many professionals working within communication design, but for me the most valuable information gained from

this trip was from the interaction with the students that we met from both Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge and NCAD Dublin. Surprisingly, and despite the differences in our culture, they were really our counterparts.' – Kaitlyn Beach, student participant.

'The trip ignited a new flame of motivation and a fresh spark of confidence that I hope will linger with me as I face the endeavors of an artist and an illustrator.' – Paige Mulhern, student participant.

'Traveling to these new and fascinating places was liberating, informative and a breath of fresh air. It was definitely an influential two weeks for myself since it filled me with inspiration for my work back home.' – Jillian Lynch, student participant.



Shannon Knight: 'I was raised by two excellent cooks and have always loved food, so for me a big part of this trip was the luxury of dining out and eating lots of delicious things! With the popularity of Instagram, it seems like every singular item a person eats needs to be documented and shared, and I liked the idea of taking that documentation and celebration of food and changing the medium. So, in the style of Instagram snapshots (square format, overhead shots), I documented some of my favourite meals abroad by painting them.'

'The carrot cake and cappuccino were at the Victoria and Albert Museum cafe, and I incorporated a tapestry seen in the museum as the tablecloth in my painting.'

'The red quinoa/edamame salad was from M&S – healthy, tasty convenience store food that you could only dream about in the US.'

Top: Jillian Lynch's poster series of England and Ireland

Centre: Julia Parany's final project work

Bottom : Shannon Knight's food illustrations