

SHAPE SH//FT

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# GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

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**D**o you remember being a kid and how the weight of your preferred medium of grammar school art (mine was a set of magic markers that I was always missing at least one of) felt so great in your hands? The satisfying energy that's expelled and immediate gratification of putting a mark on a surface have made those old approaches part of my arsenal for good, especially as I became more versed in my profession. I spent my school years making posters, laying out yearbooks with rubber cement, never knowing that what I was doing was design; I thought I was just having fun. I didn't even know what graphic design was until I went to college and learned that everything I'd been doing had a very necessary place in the world and I could make a living out of it? What?! Sign me up.



So off to art school I went. We were on the cusp of a huge boom in tech and discussing the changing needs within the industry, namely for those who could make something function and make it look good. We were encouraged to take classes on coding, web support, and making it all work for digital. This is where my stubbornness set in, hard. I felt such a love for analog methods and I didn't feel that I had the aptitude or interest in making something that could only live on screen. Even if I had to leave it there, I would still incorporate hand-rendered elements, or else it didn't feel complete. I believe it's a very primal thing, to create with your hands and to feel the movement of your marks, and I didn't want to lose that for a changing market. Luckily, mostly due to my stubbornness, I've been able to marry analog with digital in many projects and, so far, the relationship between the two is pretty dreamy.

Incorporating analog methods into my digital processes has helped me feel connected to my work. Making something with your hands allows for freedom, movement, more depth, and more ideas. It tells your brain "Hey, we're on!" and is so beneficial for creative wellness, even if you're staining your entire wardrobe (ahem, me.) I love when clients seek me out simply because they know I love to dig in and get messy with projects, whether it's gold leafing, ink lettering, texture embroidery, screen printing, wood burning, et cetera. It makes me feel so much more at ease with creating an imperfect outcome, especially since graphic design is so metrics-based and we often measure by the tiniest increments in honor of perfection. I love the contrast between the two.

Now go get your hands dirty. You'll love it, even though your clothes may not.



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