

creativity | community | entrepreneurship

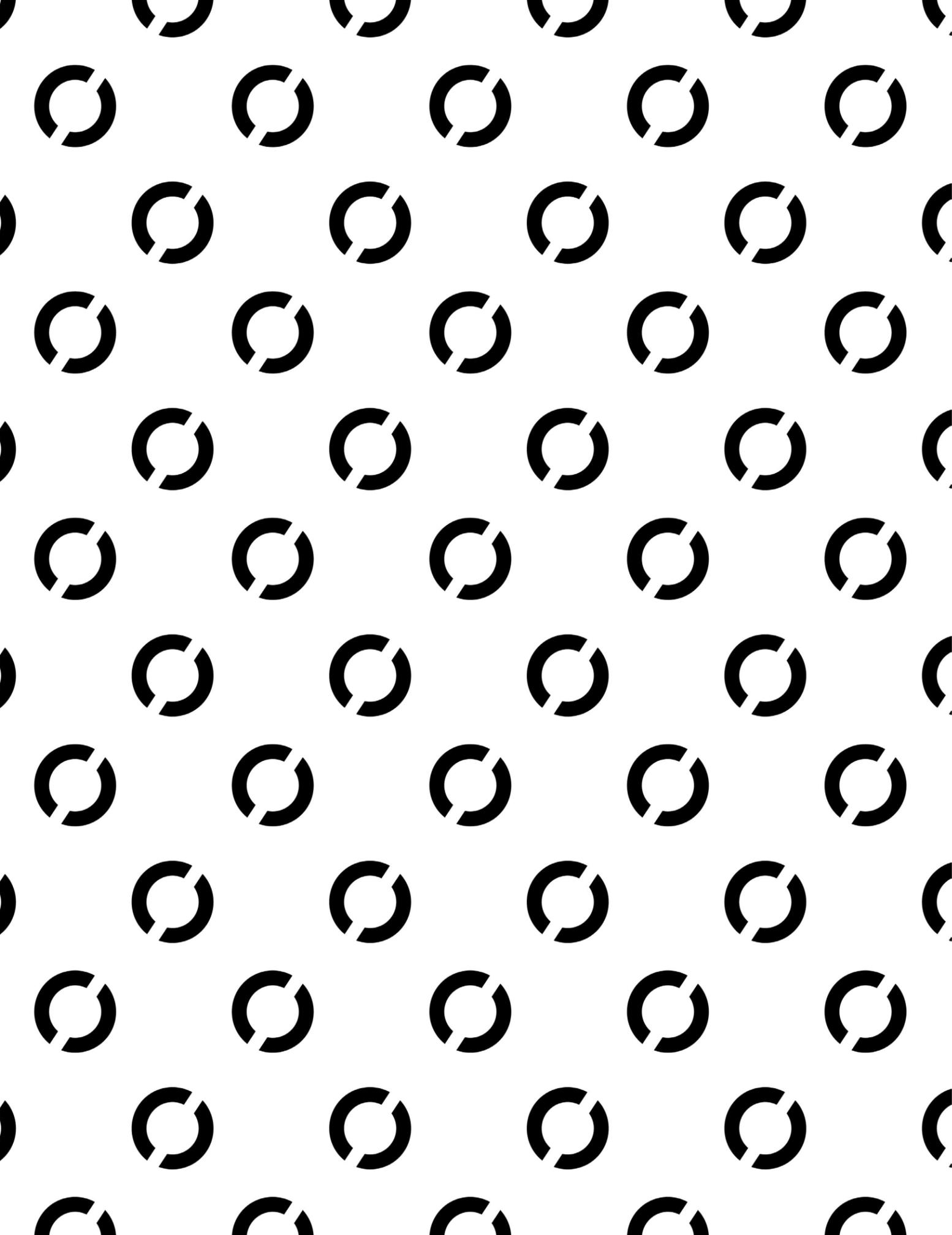
BELONG

magazine



12

ISSUE TWELVE
BELONG.MAG.COM



／ Our Mission

Belong Magazine is designed to celebrate the art and community of blogging, social media and entrepreneurship.

In all that we do, our mission is to inspire women to use their passions for a purpose in creating and sharing authentic words, images, ideas and experiences virtually and off-line and to be life-giving and encouraging to others.

It is our desire for women to know that they are enough, their voice matters, and that they have a place.

They belong. YOU BELONG.



TYPE DESIGN BY JEN WAGNER



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PHOTO BY JEN WOJCIK

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less is more

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

Exacto knives and glue. The old school “cut and paste” method. That’s where my graphic design journey began. Though we don’t have to contend with sharp blades anymore (says the girl who had to have several stitches after slicing off a piece of her index finger), basic design principles remain constant.

Among my favorite principles is white space--“areas of a design void of text or graphics”--hence, the centerfold of “less is more” for this design issue. Whether it’s graphic design, home design or simply designing your own life, white space couldn’t be more essential. But like so many essential things, it’s also quickly forgotten, right?

My cluttered desk and bursting closet, tchotchkes on every surface available, a calendar with hardly a minute unscheduled--clearly I don’t embrace this concept in practice even if my head thinks it’s true.

White space is defined by Wiki as “areas of a design void of text or graphics. White space is also analogous to “negative space” where “positive space” is defined as images, blocks of text, and other graphical elements.” Isn’t it interesting that this essential principle is also called “negative”? No wonder we have trouble fully embracing it.

But here is the deal, it isn’t negative as a value: just like balance and alignment are essential to design and life, so is white space. This idea of space to breathe—visually as well as spiritually— gives us permission to “be still” (which I had tattooed on my wrist since I needed a very visible reminder). By taking this time, we are able live more fully.

So, in keeping with the white space principle, I’ll leave you with this challenge to embrace for your design and your life: less is more.



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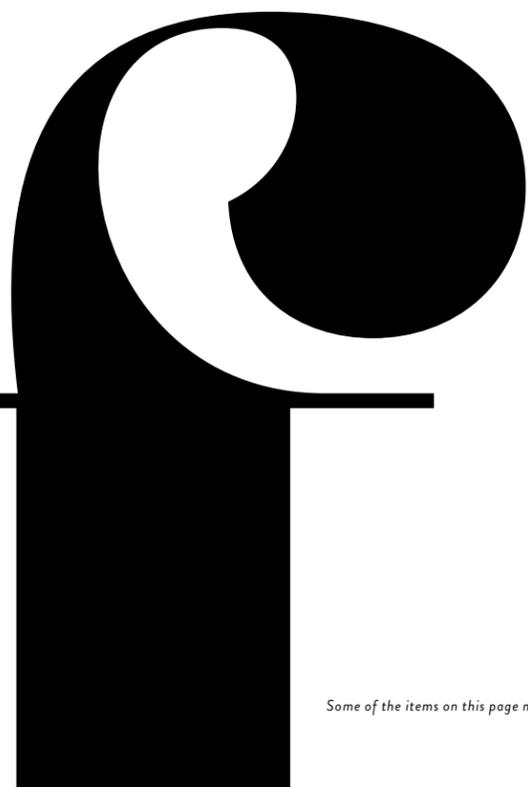
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\$7
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Design Secrets from the Pros

**“Don’t overthink your fonts.
Let them tell your brand story as much
as colour, layout and graphics do!”**

@GRAFIKBOUTIQUE

“Less is more.”

@SMALL_MOMENTS

**“Clean lines feel fresh and
modern now...and 10 years
from now. Trust me.”**

COCO, DELUXEMODERN DESIGN

**“Don’t fear
white space.”**

ALLYSON CARTER

**“Design can be beautiful,
but if it doesn’t attract
or relate to your ideal
audience, it won’t mean
anything.”**

NIKKITA COHOON, @NIKKITA.CO

**“Simplify again.
When too much is going on,
your message gets cloudy.”**

LILAH HIGGINS

**“Simplicity can get the point
across in a way that doesn’t
overwhelm the consumer while
still making a bold statement.”**

LEIGHANN RENEE

**“If you’re not a designer,
don’t fake it until you make
it. Good design sells. If you
can’t afford to hire out,
there’s a template for that.”**

VANESSA RYAN

**“Know your
keyboard shortcuts.”**

@LOUDLEAPORAH

**“Breaks the rules!
Those are the designs
most remembered.”**

@DEFININGEBONY

**“Pretty is great,
but purposeful
design is best.”**

MICHELLE LARA, @LUXELARA

**“Be intentional.
Make every element
‘earn’ its right to
be in your brand.”**

@ATELIER21CO



10

Do's & Don'ts for Your Website

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SINCERELY BEE PHOTOGRAPHY



by **Amanda Olson**

WWW.ANCHORADESIGN.COM / @ANCHORADESIGN

Whether you already have a website or you are looking to build a new one, here is a list of ten website do's and don'ts that is based on common mistakes this designer has seen during nearly a decade in the world of web design.

DO MAKE SURE WHAT YOU DO AND WHO YOU SERVE IS VERY CLEAR ON YOUR HOME PAGE.

When someone lands on your website, you have about 7 seconds to capture their attention and intrigue them to stay. You don't want that person to spend that 7 seconds trying to figure out what you do and if it's for them. If that happens, they'll most likely just give up and leave. A good rule of thumb to keep in mind is, "Don't make your website visitors think, don't make them work."

The first step to achieving this is to make it very clear on your home page what you do and who you serve. It can literally be as simple as a nice photo with the text, "[Offering] for [audience]."

Then, get a second opinion from a friend, neighbor, or random passerby. Say, "Hey [enter person's name here], can you go to my website and tell me what you think I do and who I'm offering it to? Thank you so much (because manners)!"

DO INVEST IN CONTENT DEVELOPMENT.

What is content? Content is anything that lives on your website and can be consumed. It's the text (a.k.a 'copy'), images, videos, sound clips, infographics, downloads, blog articles and the list goes on.

Now, I'm not saying you have to pay someone else to do this - although you totally can, and it will save you so much time and energy. Whether you pay a copywriter to help you out, or take the time to do it yourself, I highly encourage you to spend time developing content that is going to make website visitors excited about finding your website, spending time there and coming back later for more. Also, content is great for SEO, especially when it's infused with relevant keywords.

DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE A CALL TO ACTION (CTA) ON EVERY PAGE.

This one is so, so important. As the architect of your site, you get to influence how users navigate it. Think about the page flow you would ideally like a website visitor to take. Say someone goes to your about page, where do you want them to go next? Would you like them to check out your services? Contact you? Check out some blog articles? Perfect. Now that you've decided that, include a link on the page for your users to do that thing. It's as simple as that!

A good rule of thumb to follow is, "No dead ends." If someone encounters a dead end on your site, they're going to be more likely to just leave after they've found the information they came for. Always encourage exploration by suggesting their next destination.

DO PLAN AHEAD FOR SEO.

I think it's a common misconception that SEO can be tacked on at the end of the website process. Actually, it needs to be considered from the very beginning. You should be determining target keywords from the start and then creating your content to support those keywords.

Those words and phrases need to be integrated into your website copy, page titles, headlines, image 'alt tags' and page descriptions. In my opinion, it's much easier to incorporate this from the beginning instead of going in at the end and trying to figure out where your keywords will fit.

DO INVEST IN GOOD PHOTOGRAPHY.

I know this may be a luxury for some, but professional photography can seriously uplevel your website. You could do a small shoot for as little as a few hundred dollars and have branded imagery for your website AND social media AND any other marketing materials you create. Custom photography is huge in creating a branded experience. It helps your site feel truly unique because your photos are one-of-a-kind.

“The more interactions someone has with your brand, the more they begin to develop a relationship with it.”

They were created just for you, and visitors aren't going to see them anywhere else.

Can't afford custom photography at the moment? That's okay! Do what you can with what you have where you're at. The next best thing is to find good stock imagery that fits your brand aesthetic.

DO INCLUDE SOCIAL PROOF!

I love this tip because it's incredibly easy, free and anyone can do it.

What is social proof and why is it so important? Social proof includes product reviews, testimonials, badges, memberships, certifications, awards, mention of past or current clients, and features in publications. Social proof has a huge influence on buying behavior, because it's similar to a personal recommendation from a friend. People want to hear from someone that's not you that your product or service is worth it.

At minimum, get 1-3 testimonials from past clients or customers. Then add those to your website. Have you received awards, been featured somewhere, or have a membership to a credible, relevant organization? Add those logos to your website too.

DO MAKE SURE YOUR WEBSITE IMAGES ARE OPTIMIZED FOR WEB.

Large file sizes slow down your site and this is important for a couple reasons. Not only does this make users unhappy and they may just leave if your site doesn't load fast enough, but search engines like fast sites and will rank them higher.

General rules of thumb that I aim for are images that are no larger than 2000 pixels wide, and I try to keep file sizes under 400 KB. A good tool to compress images with little degradation of file quality is tinypng.com.

If you have a lot of large image files on your site, you might look into adding a CDN package to your web hosting plan. CDN stands for content delivery network. Basically, it's a network of servers that allows users to load your site from the server that's closest to them. In short, it speeds up your site significantly.

DO USE PROPER CONTRAST FOR TEXT.

A common issue across websites and web graphics is not using proper contrast for readability. Light colored text (especially yellow) or white text on light

backgrounds are a couple examples. Always air on the side of more contrast than less. Remember, if people can't read what you're trying to say, you haven't communicated anything to them.

If you're wondering whether your color choices pass the test, ask multiple people to take a look. There are also online tools available, like webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker, to help you check the contrast of your color choices.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT DRIVING TRAFFIC TO YOUR SITE AFTER LAUNCH.

Getting your website launched is only half the challenge. The other half is getting people to it! A brand new website will do you no good if people aren't seeing it, so it's important to strategize about how you plan to drive traffic.

First, a couple important questions. Who is your audience and where is their attention?

Whatever you answer to that question, start there. Consider these traffic-driving strategies: engage in Facebook groups, guest blog, start a podcast, pin all your blog articles and freebies to Pinterest, comment on others people's blog posts, host a webinar, add a link to your website in your email signature and the list goes on.

DON'T SET IT AND FORGET IT.

You just launched your site. Time to celebrate, right? Yes! Absolutely. But the work/fun doesn't stop there. Your website should always be up-to-date, a reflection of the current state of your business. You also want to keep your content fresh so users will continually come back and visit. The more interactions someone has with your brand, the more they begin to develop a relationship with it, and then make a purchase.

Follow these steps to make a plan for maintaining your website. Make a list of all the things you'll need to update from time to time. These could be holiday announcements, products, blog articles, your portfolio, theme updates, etc. For each, write down how often you'll need to make these changes and who will be making the changes. Then, get out your planner or calendar, and schedule reminders to make those updates.

So, how'd your website fare?

Did you pass with flying colors? Awesome. Not so much? Start with the items on this list to make effective improvements to your online space. 🍷



Amanda Olson is the designer, front-end developer, and dreamer behind Anchor <A> Digital Design Co.

How to Design a Dreamy 9 Grid



by **Kathryn Coffman**

WWW.FASHIONABLYFRANKMARKETING.COM / @FASHIONABLYFRANKMARKETING

Memorable. Captivating. Coordinated. Inspiring. Storytelling at its finest. We all know it when we see it: the perfect Instagram 9 grid that makes us weak in the knees! But, how does one go about crafting a feed that leaves impact in an audience's heart? I'm dishing a bit of the secret sauce from the world of digital marketing gurus that will have you whipping up your dream grid in no time!

1 INVEST IN IMAGERY.

I cannot stress this enough. Quality imagery is the bread and butter of your 9 grid. I know the price tag may seem like a lot at first glance, but hiring a professional branding photographer is KEY to your success on social media, especially on Instagram. Your audience wants to connect with you (or your team, if your business is larger). They want the dirt – the behind-the-scenes look of your day-to-day operations. While you can give a lot of this in your Instagram Stories, it's nice to weave in personable photos throughout your curated 9 grid, too.

Make sure you choose a photographer who truly gets you, understands your business mission and values and is totally down for the challenge of capturing it on camera. I've worked with some not-so-great creatives who didn't have my best interest at heart – and it showed in their work. Once I found the photographers who wholeheartedly believed in me and my business mission, I swear I never

looked better than in their breathtaking captures. I was the girl who used to HATE the way she looked when she open-mouth smiled, and now those are the images I choose the most of for my feed. Being in the company of a creative who can make you feel calm and relaxed during a shoot is so, so important.

Now, let's be real: unless you're a corporation or a business with the big bucks, it's hard to hire a photographer to follow you around everywhere. That's when stock photography comes into play. I am a big believer in the power of stock photography and use it to fill up about 70% of my feed each month (shout-out to TwigyPosts, Rosemary Watson & The Bloguettes!). Utilize stock photography to your advantage if it fits with your business type – I promise, it's a life saver.

2 PLAN IT OUT!

There's a few things you'll want to consider when planning out your 9 grid.

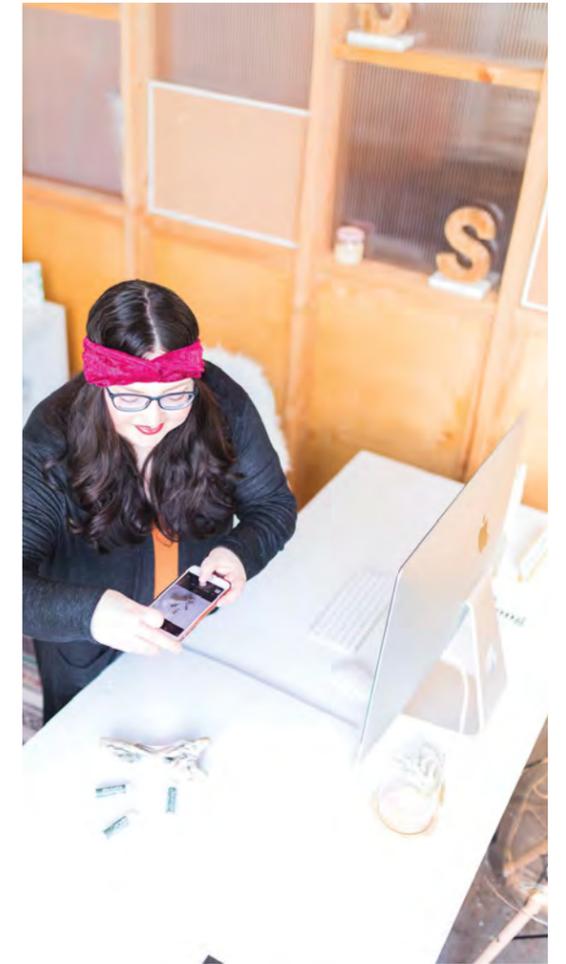
First things first: make sure you are considering white space and balance of subjects throughout your 9 grid. I like to pull up a simple Canva 9 grid template (www.canva.com) and map out the visual look and feel of each 9-day set. If you use a super busy photo on Monday, make sure that Sunday and Tuesday's posts are clean, clear and utilize a good amount of white space, and so forth.

Some people (I'm one of these people) like to rotate inspirational quotes or some other version of a text graphic every X number of posts – I personally place a quote graphic every 6th image (so, I post a quote graphic, then I post 5 images, then another quote graphic, if you feel me). This allows the layout of the grid to match up all quote graphics on a single vertical line – ah, just so pleasing to the eyes! It is seriously SO simple and will have your audience uber impressed that you took the time to intentionally craft such a beautiful feed.

When you plan your feed, go out 9, 18 or 30 days – whichever feels best to you and works with the flow of your business pace – everyone is different. My biz stays pretty much the same each month, so I opt for however long the month is. I work with a professional copywriter to give my posts that extra PIZAZZ that I love, and we collaborate monthly to map out themes, record any important must-post holiday dates and which quotes we'll use in that month. Staying tuned in to recent news and popular trends can help you decide which content to create.

3 BE TRUE TO YOUR BRAND.

Nobody wants to see blush pinks and rose golds in a feed fit for an autumn brand. They expect succulents and indoor plants, wood surfaces, deep tones and a whole lotta Magnolia home décor. If they resonate strongly with your brand, they most likely share your values, as well as your aesthetic taste. Being true to who YOU are and what your brand stands for is vital in crafting a dreamy 9 grid.



By studying the master of color psychology, Fiona Humberstone (The Brand Stylist), ensures that the imagery on your grid is fit for your brand. When you schedule your next photoshoot, map out your looks to compliment (or match) your brand's color story. Then, when you purchase stock photos, be sure you pick the subscription that fits your aesthetic. Less is more (and this is coming from the girl who HOARDS stock photos! It's a problem—my friends would tell you that I need Stock Savers Anonymous).

4 DON'T FORGET THE HEART.

While anyone can take the time to perfect their white space and balance text graphics with photos, not everyone is leading from an intentional, heart-centered space when they design their Insta grid – and this is the number one mistake that leads to brands failing at social media. Above all, make sure that the photographs and words you are sharing are in line with your brand's spirit and soul, and you'll have us all hooked. 📌

Kathryn Coffman is a digital marketing consultant from the Pacific Northwest who helps heart-centered female creatives transcend overwhelm, find balance and leave impact through their social media platforms, websites, blogs, email communications and overall branding.

HOW A COLLABORATIVE

Design Process

CAN MAKE YOU A BETTER CREATIVE



by **Taylor Cusick Hollman**

WWW.SOURCEDCO.COM / [@SOURCED_CO](https://www.instagram.com/SOURCED_CO)

As creatives, collaboration can be a scary word. While we're artistic and open, we also tend to enjoy retaining creative control. (Us? Control freaks? No way. Ok, maybe a little.) But, when we open ourselves to collaborating with others—especially those who see things through a different lens or bring a skillset that's vastly different from our own to the table—we become more well-rounded creatives and designers, and this allows us the opportunity to grow. Let's break down the ins-and-outs of successfully collaborating with other creatives (while still remaining somewhat sane). Read on for top tips for finding personal growth through creative collaboration.



1 KNOW YOUR OWN STYLE

Self-awareness is a key foundational element for successful collaboration. Before you embark on collaborating with other creatives, it's so important that you know your personal style—both as it relates to your aesthetic preferences and your communication style. One of the keys to growing as a creative is to work with others who see things from a different point of view than you. You don't grow by sticking only to what you know. If your design eye favors a neutral, minimalistic aesthetic, try collaborating with a creative who's known for her colorful, eclectic style. The same goes for communication. If you don't understand your own communication style, it can be difficult (to say the least) to successfully participate in a collaborative process. Understanding your own strengths and weaknesses will allow you to build a team that supplements your aesthetic preferences and complements your communication style.

2 SEEK DIVERSITY, BUT FIND A COMMON THREAD

Working outside of your comfort zone and being willing to be vulnerable will allow you to grow in ways you never imagined. Ask yourself what you're most intimidated by when it comes to process and be open to creative processes that differ from your own. If you've been reaching the finish line the same way for five (...or 10...or 20) years, maybe there's another, more exciting, more inspiring, more successful route that you've been missing all along. We develop workflows and operate on cruise-control because it's efficient, sure—but, while keeping our head down and trudging along in the same fashion we have for years may be efficient, there's value in straying from that path every now and then to take in new scenery. That scenery, after all, might just inspire and energize our work in brand new ways.

The key, though, to seeing success when you're working with new creatives and unfamiliar processes is to find a common thread—something that can both anchor and unite you and your collaborators as a team. Find out what each of you have in common in regards to how you communicate ideas to clients. Do you use creative briefs, mood boards or sketches? What aspects of workflow or process can you all agree on? While working with others whose style, ideas and processes vary from your own is key for growth, there still needs to be some common ground there for the sake of practicality. Working through a design project with a collaborative process requires that you learn how to speak each other's language first and foremost.



“There’s no better way to grow as a creative than working with others whose strengths, stylistic preferences and creative processes vary from your own.”



BUILD A PROCESS THAT ENCOURAGES GROWTH

When it comes to collaboration, the easiest thing to do (and the thing we creative-control-loving people typically want to do) is to assign everyone a role that’s within their expertise and comfort zone and let each individual handle their own aspect of the project. The problem with that approach, though, is that it’s not actually collaborative at all. If your goal is to expand your horizons as a creative, you have to develop a process that requires teamwork and encourages growth. Below are our top tips for doing so (spoiler alert: you’ll have to loosen that white-knuckle grip you’ve come to love...but it will be so worth it; we promise!):

Create a consistent process. Even if you are all coming to and working on a project from different places, creating a consistent process and developing a set of expectations will ensure that things go smoothly. Determine how and when you’ll work—and look for opportunities to work on the project together in the same space, rather than individually from separate settings.

Watch how each person works through it. Pay attention to your creative partners. How do they work through problems? Where are they finding inspiration? Watching and absorbing what others are doing is where so much of the learning happens.

Anticipate opportunities for growth. Look for areas where you can help out your fellow collaborators, and don’t be afraid to jump in when something is out of your comfort zone. Growing as a creative requires challenging yourself and being fearless.

Overall, there’s no better way to grow as a creative than working with others whose strengths, stylistic preferences, and creative processes vary from your own. Growth, after all, doesn’t come from a place of comfort. Discomfort, challenge and vulnerability are all catalysts for creative growth. The challenge is for you to embrace the fear and discomfort that so often come along with collaboration in the name of expanding your own creative horizons. [🔗](#)

Taylor Cusick Hollman is a Co-Founder of Sourced Co. and a marketing consultant for wedding industry professionals.



Designing Your Business On Purpose



by **Alisha Robertson**

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I have always been a firm believer that everyone on this earth has a unique purpose - a special gift that we have been given to add a bigger meaning to everything that we do while we are here. Some people find this purpose through acts of kindness, through hobbies or maybe even through their corporate career. But I also believe that there are those of us who fulfil our purpose through entrepreneurship.

Building a business around what we love or a simple passion is easy. You launch a website, gather a few products or services and release it out into the world. But building a business around our purpose can be tricky because that intention has to spill over into every single aspect of your business from your website, to the message you share to the people you want to attract.

I learned this the hard way in my early days of entrepreneurship.

See, the internet can be both a gift and a curse. On one hand, it's a place filled with endless amounts of information where you can literally learn anything your heart desires. But on the other hand, it's also a space where we often only see the highlight reels of

our favorite influencers which can then spark a ton of comparison.

While I was building my coaching business, I always knew from the start that my main purpose would be to help eliminate some of the stress that came along with figuring out how to grow your business. I had a rough start being fully dependant on what I could learn from Google and I wanted to eliminate some of that stress for the women who followed me. But as the years went on, and the internet began to evolve, I began to notice a shift in how I felt like I should be doing business.

While I was learning all of these great marketing strategies that helped me to increase my income and audience size, I was also consuming a lot more information than normal. I signed up for every webinar, online class and live stream imaginable from all of my favorite business owners whom I felt were more successful than I was. But instead of using that information as motivation, I allowed it to make me feel as if I wasn't doing enough.

The more I consumed, the more I got away from my original purpose. I began to mold and shape my brand in order to fit in with the crowd and quickly found myself just going through the motions with every task I completed. Not to mention I was miserable with every move I made despite the increase in money I was making.

Feelings of overwhelm, anxiety and despair took over me every morning because I had gotten so far away from my original purpose - so far, in fact, that I had no clue how or if I could ever get back to it. I had to make the decision to either continue to be miserable and accept what I had done to myself, quit altogether or do everything possible to get realigned with what I felt like I had been called to do.

Maybe you've been there - constantly doing what the world around you is preaching but always feeling like something is missing. Or maybe you're there now but not quite ready to just throw in the towel.

How I was able to go back to the drawing board and successfully design my business on purpose? And how can you do the same no matter what stage of business you may be in?

GET A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR "WHY"

What is the bigger reason behind why you do what you do? Is it to bring awareness to a specific situation that the world is being affected by? Is it to bring a little joy into someone's life? Once you are clear with the bigger intention behind your business, everything that you create should support that bigger purpose.

My "why" was to take the overwhelm and confusion out of building a business, so every blog post I created and every service that I offered helped to accomplish that bigger goal. I then put this mission all over my website, social media and everything I created for my business.

UNDERSTAND WHO YOU WILL SERVE

One of the best pieces of advice that I could have ever received is that your purpose is not about you but about the people you will serve. Whatever it is that you were placed on this earth to do, it is to help someone through their journey. Every piece of content you create should be able to support them through some of their biggest pain points. Whether that be starting a business, getting their website designed or even planning their next vacation.

Start off by getting clear on their basic demographics, what they are interested in and then get clear on their biggest pain points or struggles that are related to your industry.

Alisha is the founder of LivingOverExisting.com, self-published author and business coach dedicated to helping women ditch fear, gain clarity and begin making money doing what they love.

SET SOLID BOUNDARIES

Building your business on purpose often means saying "no" to opportunities or clients that do not align with your purpose. This is exactly how I began to spiral away from my own path. I started saying "yes" to learning more and trying new things that I knew I shouldn't have been doing. Because it was what everyone else was doing and because I knew that it would make me money, I committed to it.

Now, there is nothing wrong with trying something new or even saying "yes" to opportunities that may be outside of your comfort zone. I encourage that. But you should always consider if it is truly aligned with your purpose and how it will ultimately allow you to serve your audience.

CONSTANTLY SHARE YOUR MESSAGE

To truly build your business means being willing to share it with the world around you. You were given your purpose for a reason and it should be heard. Not only for self-promotion to help grow your business but to also connect you and your brand with others that have like minded beliefs or a similar mission. This is how strong communities are built both on and offline.

People want to connect with another person, not just a brand. Storytelling through your content and the conversations you have with your audience is how you make that happen.

My two big takeaways for you are this:

Whatever it is that you are building or designing, there is a bigger purpose behind all of it. I encourage you to do some soul searching to uncover what that bigger purpose is.

Know that it is never too late to design your business on purpose. If I can come back from being stuck in comparison and self-doubt, then you most definitely can start where you are. 🌟

HOW TO

Refresh Your Website

IN A WEEKEND



by **Andra Barkey and Kelly Zugay**

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For small business owners and entrepreneurs, our websites are like our online homes—a welcoming place for prospective clients, and a place we want to feel proud to call our own. Still, it's common to feel as though certain details are out of place—or missing altogether. Maybe you want to better connect with your audience, or maybe you want your personality to shine through in a fresh, new way. With just one weekend and the following five steps, your website can be a place you're excited to call your online home.

1 / Understand your website's goal.

Your website is more than a place to showcase your work; it's a place to share who you are, to connect with your audience, and to encourage your audience to contact you, work with you or purchase from you. Put simply, the goal of your website is to provide a foundation of clear, purposeful content to encourage your audience to invest in you. When you understand your website's goal, bringing all of your website's pieces together will be much easier to do.

2 / Create an outline.

When it comes to the pages of your website, less is more. That way, a visitor doesn't have to reach very far or click around too much to find the exact content they are looking for. We recommend Home, About, Services, Portfolio, Blog, and Contact—but of course, every business will have unique needs. You may need to find creative ways to condense your content, but your visitors will be so glad you did.

3 / Gather your content.

Gather your branding, photography, videography and copywriting for your website. Page by page, determine how to showcase your personality, approach and work in a professional and polished way. Once again, challenge yourself to find creative ways to condense your content. Your website should provide just enough content to be helpful and engaging while also motivating and inspiring visitors to contact you.

4 / Polish your content.

It's natural to want to share all you can on your website—but when it comes to your website, less content can be better than the wrong content. If you're in need of professional, on-brand photography, consider investing in styled stock photography. If you're in need of copywriting help, search the Internet for helpful guides to effective copywriting (or check out the Creative Directory in this issue). There are so many resources to explore if you still feel as though your website isn't quite capturing your personality, quality or brand.

5 / Ask a trusted customer or client for feedback.

While you can ask family and friends for feedback, asking a trusted customer or client for feedback is preferred. Your customers and clients know about your services or your products better than anyone else since they've experienced them first-hand. Send your newly-polished website to a customer or client and ask them:

Does my website showcase my business accurately?

Does my website showcase my personality, style or unique approach?

What should I include to help my prospective clients have a better understanding of my services or my products?

What stood out to you during your client experience?

Their feedback will be so valuable as you put the finishing touches on your website and prepare to present it to the world once again.

Just like the decorations on the walls of your home, your website is an ever-changing piece of your journey. As your business grows, changes and evolves, your website is also likely to do so. Use these five tips to assess and reassess your website in the years to come. In the meanwhile, you can confidently tell your prospective clients, "Welcome home!" 🏠

Andra Barkey and Kelly Zugay are designers, educators, encouragers, and co-founders of With Grace and Gold™, a Minneapolis-based creative studio.

Designing Your Ideal Life

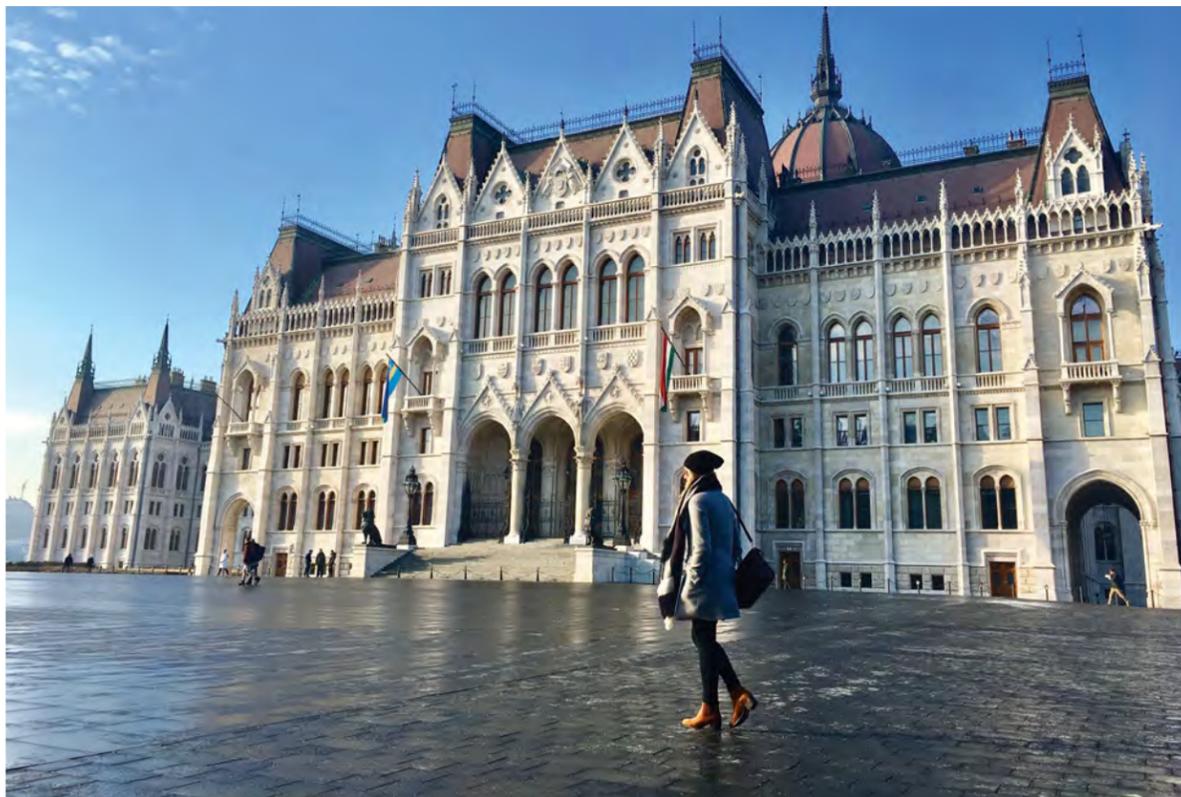
by Meesen Brown

WWW.GOBEHERE.COM / @GOBEHERE & @MEESEN B



PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS MAHER





We know the obvious ways design is part of our lives - through architecture, advertisements, home decor, fashion, art, food, and the list goes on. But have you ever thought about the actual 'design' of your life? Of what your *ideal* life looks like? Versus what your *current* life design is?

When you stop to ponder this, you realize that your life is something that you too can design, and something you have control over the design of.

Let's discuss for a minute the notion of *flexibility*. Not just flexibility in the sense of stretches and yoga, but flexibility in our day-to-day lives, routines and work. Having the flexibility to design your day is something everyone strives for in today's society.

Flexible work has become a hot topic lately as more people are trying to find work-life balance. Employees are requesting flexible work options to have more time for themselves, the things they enjoy and people they love. Whether you're a mother that wants to pick up your child, someone that is sick of sitting in rush hour traffic for two hours, or someone who desires to experience new places and people, flexible work is what you want.

Women especially value flexibility. In a world and workforce that was created by men and for men, women are striving to find a way to live how they want. Whether it's because they are fed up with toxic office environments, don't resonate with the 9-5 work structure, or have a penchant for travel and autonomy, more and more women aspire to create alternative frameworks in which they can thrive on their own terms.

This notion of seeking more and trying to live outside the box is something many women have dreamt of but few have pursued. Fear of the unknown, change, risk, danger, failing or even fear of succeeding and loving it too much, all hold us back. If you can shake these fears and take that leap, the possibilities are endless.

You CAN design your lifestyle.

It's as simple as that. You can live in Boise, Idaho one month then decide you're going to move to Bali the next. You can spend your whole life saying "what if's" and making excuses, or you can go ahead and actually do it.

And once you do it opens a *world* of possibilities. The value, knowledge and life-long memories you gain from pushing yourself out your comfort zone to live abroad are endless. You no longer have to settle for staying in the same town or city you grew up in or falling into the same daily routine that no longer excites or serves you. You can break free and learn - from adventure, from experience, from new cultures, people, places, cuisines and get to know this beautiful world we're so lucky to call our home.

You can choose to design a life you *truly* love, one that meets all your needs and wants. That's the goal of what we've created at Behere. To help women design lives they really love, through living in cities around the world, a month at a time. The notion of moving to a new city is exciting, but also frightening and overwhelming.

We've been there; we get it. That's why we've taken care of all the getting set up and settled down parts, so you can continue your life - in a new city. We also know the decision to start your flexible lifestyle is one of the best decisions you'll make.

In a recent study about the benefits of living abroad, it showed that living abroad actually helps you find yourself (something most of us are trying to do). It helps you do this because when you're away from your home environment and exposed to different people, cultures and values, you realize which values you have that are your own and which are simply a product of your upbringing. This can be best summed up in a quote by the German Philosopher, Hermann von Keyserling: "*The shortest path to oneself leads around the world*".

But what does this global-flexible lifestyle look like? It could be spending a month in Spain, a month in Bali, 3 months in the Croatia, a month in Thailand or a build-your-own "Eat Pray Love" experience. That's the beauty of your flexible lifestyle: *you* design it how you like.

"What about work, my job, my company?" Technology has you covered on that one. Thanks to the rapidly growing innovations of today, we can now speak with people all over the world face-to-face (or rather through a screen with our faces on it), we can communicate instantly with teams via platforms like Slack, Google Docs and more. We are always and instantly connected, wherever the wifi might be.

What's more are the benefits this lifestyle can have on your work that you won't truly realize until you've done it. You'll feel more inspired by your new environments, more creative and more productive. You're no longer distracted by office conversations, unnecessary meetings, loud coworkers (or barista's if you're a coffee shop working kinda gal). You'll feel refreshed and invigorated by the new sensations and sights around you. Excited by the possibilities, by the world, by your oh-so-delicious pizza at lunch, or your vino tinto by the beach at sunset. You feel *free*. Free to do what you want. To design your day - today, tomorrow, next week month, etc.. You can work on your passion projects or you can pour your reinvigorated heart into your work.

Don't get me wrong though, this is not a vacation. It is a lifestyle. An actual, sustainable, possible lifestyle. One that you will have to work at achieving and maintaining. The reality is, you will still have the problems you had at home. There will still be bad days, laundry and work to be done. But that's the point. Not to run away from your life, but to *design* your life. The way you want it.

So try this: write out your ideal day - what it looks like, what you do, what it's filled with. Where in the world are you? Where do you want to be? Write down what you want your day and lifestyle to look like. There you will have it. Your *flexible lifestyle design*. Now go make it happen. 🌀

Meesen Brown is the CEO & cofounder of Behere, a flexible living platform that helps women live and thrive in cities around the world, without long-term contracts or obligations. She's lived in over 8 countries and knows new places and experiences fuel inspiration and creativity.



Designing Photos

TO WORK WITH YOUR BRAND



by **Heidi Hapanowicz**

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You already know that you need good photos for your brand. That's a given. But your images will need to blend seamlessly with your brand. If not, your audience will feel confused rather than connected when they visit your website or social media pages. So how can you create photos that are designed to work with your brand?

As a personal branding photographer and visual marketing expert, I get asked this questions A LOT. It's one of my favorite topics. Here's my advice.

GET INSPIRED.

Begin your personal branding photography adventure with inspiration. Create a mood board on Pinterest, and start pinning images that look and feel like your brand. If there are certain headshots you love—and would love to do yourself—pin them. If you love the props used in a photo, pin it. If a particular pose, facial expression or outfit has your brand written all over it, pin it! A mood board is a visual guide for you and your photographer.

NEXT, A UNIQUE LOCATION MIGHT HELP YOU TELL YOUR BRAND STORY.

A San Francisco-based entrepreneur whose business is location-dependent might want the Golden Gate Bridge in the background. Or a New York-based fitness entrepreneur might want an action shot in Central Park. Or maybe you LOVE to work out of a cozy little coffee shop down the street where everyone knows your name. A couple photos of you working at your favorite table will give you an authentic story to tell.

SIMPLIFY.

Most brands have way too many brand elements. Five different fonts on a webpage might feel fun when you're dreaming it up, but it makes your visitors feel confused about what's really going on. The same can go for colors, shapes, lines, backgrounds, boxes, buttons and—styles of photography.

One of the BEST things you can do for your brand is to simplify.

Heidi Hapanowicz is an International Personal Branding Photographer & visual marketing expert. She works with camera-shy online business owners helping them plan their dream photoshoots.



This can be as easy as creating more white space. You don't need seven photos of you on your home page. Your site will feel cluttered and your visitors will be confused if you have too many elements competing for attention. Identify the most important copy, image(s), and call to action on each page, and leave it at that. Do the same in your photos. Less is more.

BE CONSISTENT.

In addition to simplifying your brand elements and photos, be consistent with the elements you keep. For example, know your brand colors and integrate them in your photos when possible using props, painting backdrops and wardrobe. You can even incorporate your colors post-production by adding colored text to the images.

Consistency isn't only about the look you create, but also about how you make people feel. Your words and images should complement each other. If your images are soft and ethereal, yet you're dropping F-bombs every other paragraph, your audience will feel the disconnect. Your photos need to match your brand voice.

The best way to get consistent across your brand is to determine your brand's emotion. Show emotion in your photos, design, and copy. Are you fun to work with? Do you look and sound confident? Likeable? Full of life? Does your mood match your brand? Time spent refining your brand's emotion is well worth it.

CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.

One of the easiest ways to connect with people online is through images. If your ideal clients can see your face and feel like they are in a conversation with you when they visit your website or social media content, you're doing it right.

Who are you speaking to and trying to convert into clients? During your photoshoot, imagine that you are in that very conversation. How do you want your ideal clients to feel? What do you want them to know about you? And about themselves? Bring this intention into your photos, and your audience will feel it when they see your photos in action.

Give your audience a behind-the-scenes glimpse of your work. Document your process. Gary Vaynerchuck does this beautifully. He's always filming when he does something he thinks his audience can learn from (which happens ALL the time in his world). These photos or videos don't have to be perfect. They work well because they're NOT perfect. They work because they're real. Try to incorporate candid shots on a regular basis.

Remember that your audience will connect to you through your images. Think about that connection with every image you create. 📸

My 6 top photo tips, tools and resources

There are so many tools and resources to help you create images that you adore. Here are some of my best tips:

Hire pros for hair and makeup. I can't emphasize this enough. Good hair and makeup are worth the extra cash every time. You'll probably feel like the makeup is too heavy, but on camera, it fades big-time. Trust me, those lashes and eyeliner will accentuate your best features. Get it, girl!

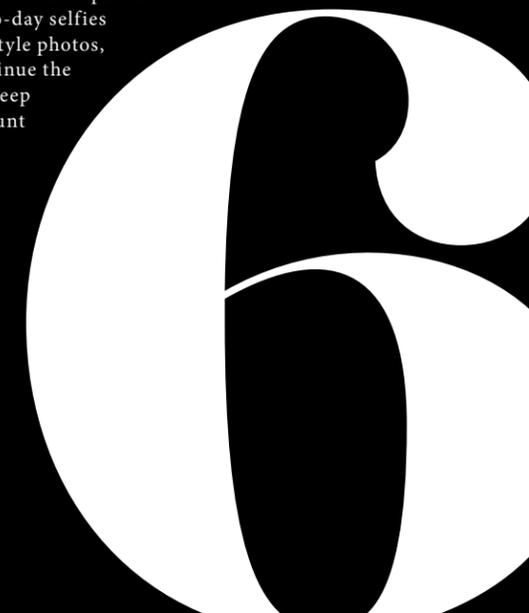
Shoot with design in mind. Make sure your photographer is familiar with taking photos for the web. Take lots of horizontal photos, which are ideal for websites. And take images with lots of negative space so you can add text later.

Use props to tell a story. What do you do at work? Take some photos that show you in action. What would your audience imagine you doing behind the scenes? Give them a glimpse in your photos.

Don't forget about social media pics. You'll need some images to use for your social media posts in addition to your website, so be sure to get those, too. Behind-the-scenes shots work great on social media, so save some for your feed.

Create a backdrop. A bold, colorful backdrop will incorporate your brand colors and create images that you can add text to. Spray paint a large cardboard backdrop with your color brand color (it doesn't have to be perfect—that's what Photoshop is for), and you can create unique branded images.

Take an iPhone photography course. A professional branding photography shoot will take your brand to the next level, for sure. But when you can add to those photos with your own day-to-day selfies and on-the-spot lifestyle photos, you'll be able to continue the story with pics that keep your Instagram account fresh and gorgeous.





with **Nicole Gresh**

WWW.NOOSAYOGHURT.COM / @NOOSAYOGHURT

Designing a Business

FROM THE GROUND UP

Belong recently had the chance to talk to Koel Thomaе, the co-founder of noosa yoghurt, about being a female entrepreneur designing a business from the ground up.

A passion for good food has always driven Koel's life. After college, the Aussie expat found herself living in Boulder, CO – a natural foods mecca in the U.S. Curious by nature, she had dabbled in different industries from IT to non-profits, always hungry to find her way into the food space. She began her natural foods career in 2004 as supply chain coordinator and later manager on the operations team at IZZE Beverage Company, a position she held through PepsiCo's 2006 acquisition of the company. During the early start-up phase of what would become noosa yoghurt, Koel also served as an operations management consultant for several young

natural food companies, including Mix1 Beverages and Snikiddy, LLC. Once Koel decided to start her own yoghurt company, she cold-called Robert Graves, a fourth-generation dairy farmer with a Colorado farm, to help bring noosa yoghurt to life.

noosa started out from humble beginnings, with Koel and Rob making yoghurt in small batches and selling just four flavors at local farmer's markets and Colorado Whole Foods stores. Today, noosa is sold in 25,000+ stores nationwide and Koel continues to be instrumental in the brand's growth. She is involved in the day-to-day operations, shapes company culture and has expanded her team of 35 to 240, to date, all while traveling the world to draw inspiration for noosa's new flavors which now total 30 (and growing) delicious options.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAM PLANE

Q: Why your own business and why yogurt?

In 2004, I went to visit my mum back in Australia and made a delicious discovery: Down the street from where my mum lived on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, I discovered a locally-made yogurt (spelled yoghurt in Australia, hence noosa's use of that spelling) that changed the trajectory of my life.

The clear packaging and nostalgic passion fruit flavor grabbed hold of me, so I purchased the yoghurt and brought it home to my mum's beach apartment.

Then I ate it. That was the revolutionary moment for me.

That moment really stopped me in my tracks. I later returned to Boulder, and my job at IZZE but I couldn't shake that taste experience. I talked about it so much that my mum and boss urged me to contact the Australian company again, and I did. Now I get to eat the most delicious yoghurt in the world more than once a year!

Q: What were the first things you did to start Noosa?

First I secured a license to the Aussie yoghurt recipe. With that in hand I got to work figuring out the nuts and bolts of building a yoghurt making facility.

That's when I hit my first major roadblock. Having just visited the Colorado State Health inspector, I was sent packing with a voluminous document called the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance. I was told, "Don't come back until you understand all of this."

I realized that I needed a dairy partner who could fill in the gaps of my very limited dairy industry knowledge. That's when I cold called Robert Graves to understand if he would be interested in partnering with me to create yoghurt. I was really lucky that he was sold on my vision!

We then put our heads down and worked tirelessly together to bring noosa yoghurt to life. Rob was focused on the manufacturing side of the equation while I worked on bringing the brand to life. Then in January

“To be an entrepreneur, you have to be willing to take risks outside of the norm.”

2010, we launched in our first stores. That first year was like doing an MBA in light speed. Even with great mentors in the mix we had to learn so many new things. It was an exciting, crazy time.

Q: How did you know when you were onto something? What was the moment you realized this was actually going to be something bigger than just you?

There wasn't anything like noosa in the category when the yoghurt was first introduced — the shelves were still filled with low-fat, diet-focused yogurt choices and noosa came out like nothing else out there. Following our launch in 2010, our next big tipping point was when Target approached us in 2012 to test in their Super Target stores. Within four months they expanded us nationally into their PFresh stores. That's when I realized we were probably onto something that was going to really stick with consumers.

Q: What were the hardest aspects of starting your own business and how did you overcome them?

Thankfully, my mistake came early on in the noosa process so I was able to learn from it and move on. But essentially, when we launched noosa and started to expand beyond Colorado into the east coast, we didn't completely bake our growth strategy. Our retail partner at the time wasn't invested in our success and saw yogurt as a commodity product. Because of this (and a combination of other factors, including supply chain issues), we failed.

This experience led us to create a regional strategy, where we could partner with the right retailers and put the appropriate support behind our expansion. When you are spending your own money, you become smart about not repeating your mistakes. The experience taught me about the art of saying no, and now I'm a lot better at it!

Q: Collaboration seems to be a big part of Noosa. How do you establish these relationships?

Supporting local brands and partnerships is important for us as a brand. We leverage relationships locally and will consider working with the brand when it makes sense for a new innovation and one that is a perfect match for noosa. Our first partner was with Bhakti Chai and we developed a limited edition Bhakti Chai noosa flavor which everyone raved about — it was a pretty popular flavor for us. Since then, last year we launched our first-ever mix-in line — noosa mates. mates consist of our creamy, velvety yoghurt made with whole milk, paired with premium crunchy toppings like Guittard dark chocolate, roasted nuts, and Purely Elizabeth granola. We chose these partners because they are made with premium ingredients and really blend well with our yoghurt. All of our partners have been female owned, and I'm inspired by women like Elizabeth Stein, Amy Guittard and Brook Eddy every day. Not only

do we share best practices about running a business, but we also share resources, industry tips and product collaborations.

Q: Let's be honest: there's a bit of competition out there. What do you do to stay relevant in the market?

Choosing to make noosa with whole milk at a time when low-fat, Greek yogurt was flying off shelves was a major risk, and now whole-milk dairy is a well-established movement in food that is trickling down to the masses. When we launched, we defied convention in so many ways, including foregoing traditional yoghurt packaging and launched in clear 8 oz. tubs — allowing consumers to see the bright colors of the fresh fruit purees inside.

But also, at noosa, we literally use our guts to come up with new flavor combinations. I'm always on the hunt for the next big thing and during my food trek through high-dairy consumption cities (Copenhagen, Paris, San Francisco, New York) I saw savory and spicy yoghurt combinations all over. This inspired me to experiment with noosa's tart and sweet foundation with notes of heat, which led to the development of blackberry serrano noosa and our sweet heat line that we launched two years ago; that's not something every brand is doing! Additionally, these treks serve as inspiration for our current noosa mates mix-ins and future flavors.

Ultimately, we're constantly future-proofing the brand by staying in front of these culinary trends and innovating for quality over quantity.

Q: Where do you find support for your dream and how do you keep your creativity alive?

My mum and my first grade teacher Mrs. Johnson were my biggest career influencers! My mum has always encouraged me to follow my passion, even if it didn't seem conventional. And Mrs. Johnson instilled such an amazing love of learning from a young age. We used to wave at tourists riding the Kuranda Train each morning with a sign that said 'Have a Happy Day!' To be an entrepreneur you have to be willing to take risks outside of the norm and you have to want to learn, sometimes at light speed, about all the complexities of creating and running a business; these ladies, the love of learning and growth of my business help keep that creativity alive!

Q: In addition to being business owner, you have a family. What does a typical day look like for you?

Being an entrepreneur is bloody hard work! Finding a way to balance a family and building a business was definitely a challenge. But it's also opened me up to a world of amazing friends and experiences.

The first thing I do in the morning when I wake up is to try and carve out time to read to my daughter Matilda, enjoy a cup of tea and a tub of passion fruit noosa. No day is ever the same which keeps it interesting. In the early days of Matilda's life our team was so lean, making



me really embrace the mantra of quality versus quantity. I'm fortunate to now have an amazing team that is helping us drive the business and I've been able to focus my energy on my passion of spreading brand love and helping innovate future products.

The last thing I do before I go to bed is.... check that my daughter is sleeping soundly. I haven't been able to shake that habit from when she was a baby.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of being a female entrepreneur?

I'm inspired by my female partners and mentors every day! Not only do we share best practices about running a business, but we also share resources, industry tips, and sometimes are even lucky enough to collaborate on products together (noosa mates!). Having them to bounce ideas off of without judgement and with open minds is definitely my favorite part of being a female entrepreneur.

Q: If you could give other female entrepreneurs one piece of advice, what would it be?

Seek strong women out. If they're not in your workplace specifically, join a networking group or go to an industry event. Or find them online (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook groups, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) You have to be willing to put yourself out there and put in the time to maintain these relationships — digitally and IRL. I believe that having a strong group of mentors and peers who are in business is invaluable to your success and sanity! 🌸

DIY: Design It Yourself



by **Kara Whitten**

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Simple Cactus Painted Planters

Are you looking for yet another way to add a little plant life to your home? Or maybe you are just thinking, “dang, I really need more cacti in my life”. These DIY simple cactus painted planters work perfectly as planters (obvs), but can also hold pens, pencils, and office supplies. Or make them using a giant ceramic kitchen organizer instead for a little pop of cacti in your kitchen. However you make them, they will be done and ready in about 20-30 minutes and ready to display!

MATERIALS

Concrete or ceramic pots (these are from Target in the garden section)
Acrylic craft paint in shades of green
Gold leaf pen
Paint brush

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This first step is pretty difficult, so get ready. Begin by painting your pots with your green cactus colored paint and let dry. Oh so challenging, right?! Hehehe.
2. Use the gold paint pen to draw the spines of the cactus. You can choose between lines, little arrows, or simple sprinkle like spines.
3. Let the gold paint dry, then fill your cactus painted cups with anything your heart desires. Cacti in cacti? Sure! Pens and pencils? Perfect!



Crepe Paper Flower Magnets

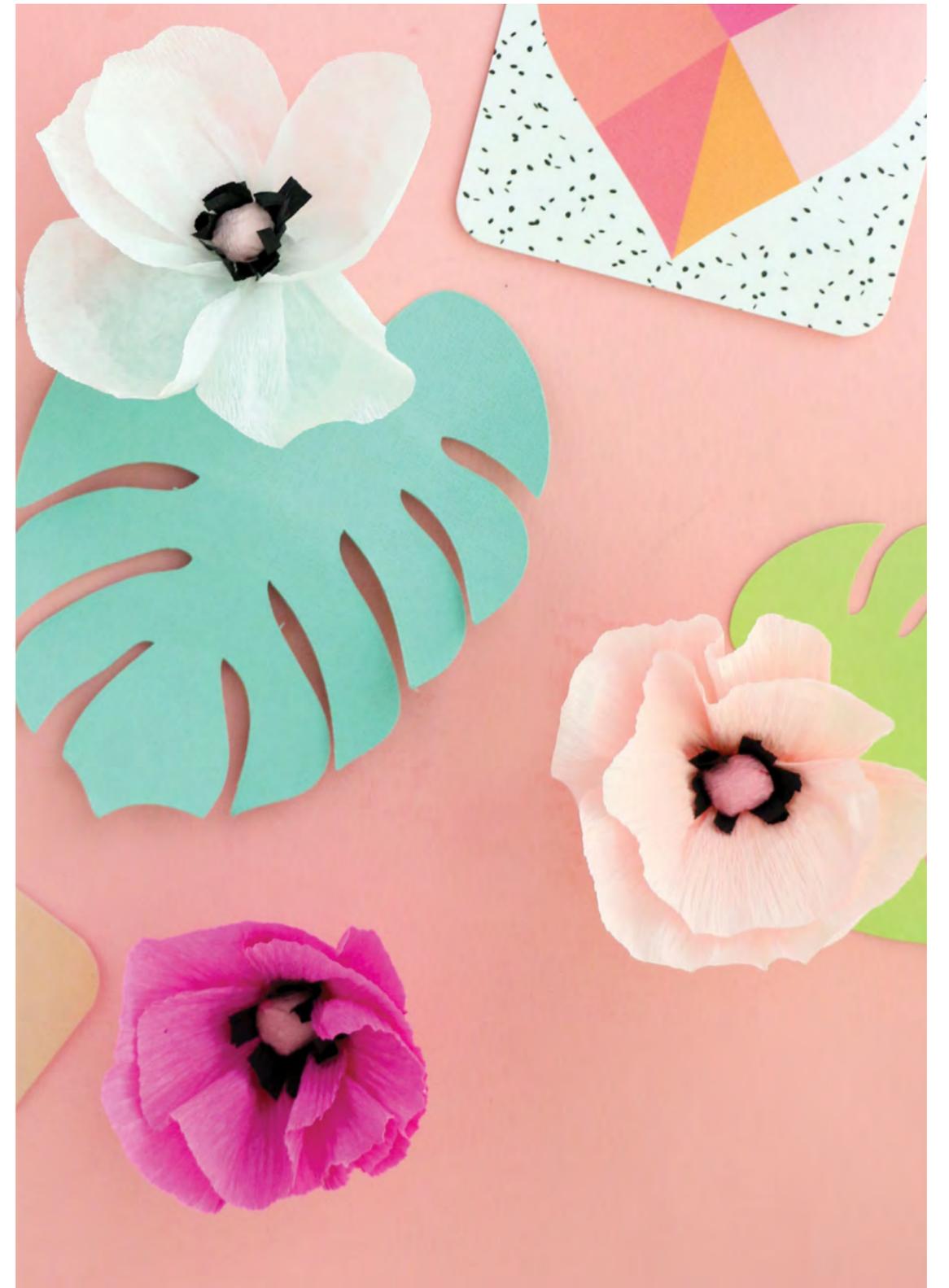
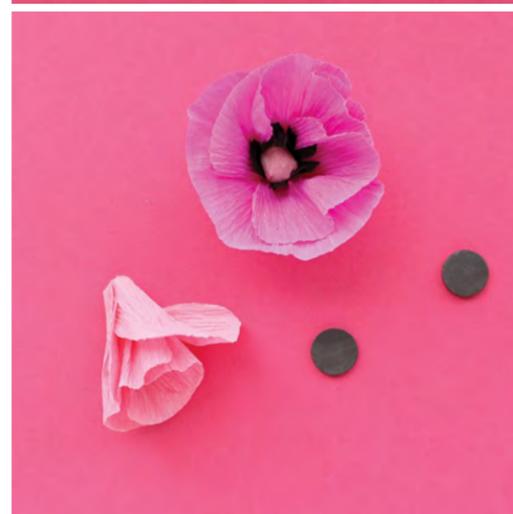
While I am not a fan of having magnets on my fridge, my office is a whole other story. These DIY crepe paper flower magnets look super cute holding up inspiration images and mini prints in my studio. Heck, they even look pretty all on their own! And if your home or office is in need of a little color too, well, then these magnets are the perfect craft for you.

MATERIALS

- Crepe paper rolls (I use the large sheets from Paper Mart)
- Hot Glue
- Magnets
- Scissors

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Begin by cutting a 3" square from light pink crepe paper, a 1" by 6" long piece of black crepe paper, and 4-5 petal shapes from the crepe paper color of your choice.
 2. Add a piece of scrap crepe paper into the center of the pink square and twist together to form a ball that will be the center of the flower.
 3. Fringe cut the black strip leaving about 1/4" uncut along one side.
 4. Wrap the black fringe crepe paper around the center stamen and hot glue in place.
 5. Pull on the petals to spread the crepe paper out and make the ruffled look of real flower petals.
 6. Glue the petals around the stamen overlapping the petals as you go until you have a full flower shape.
 7. Pinch the base of the flower together and cut off the end as close to the base of the flower as possible.
 8. Add a large dab of hot glue and add your magnet.
 9. Let the glue dry they gently fluff up the flower and spread apart the petals to make the flower look more realistic.
 10. Repeat with several colors of crepe paper to make an entire bouquet of DIY crepe paper flower magnets!
- Once you get the hang of this simple shape, try different center stamens and petal shapes to create different flower looks. Then go around and stick them on any magnetic surface you can find! Because they are just that pretty!



Donut Card Case

What's better than paying for things with a card pulled from a donut? Or handing someone a business card from a donut case? Nothing I tell you!

MATERIALS

- Piece of tan tooling leather (I found mine at the craft store)
- Multi surface craft paint
- Fabric Glue (I used Alene's fast grab)
- Paint brush
- Scissors
- Small bowl and pencil to create your circle

INSTRUCTIONS

- Using your small bowl to trace two circles onto the leather. You want to make sure whatever size bowl you get is large enough to fully fit a business or credit card inside it.
- Cut the circles out.
- Paint on the icing and sprinkles using your craft paint.
- Place a card on the back of one piece of leather and add glue around the card. The space where there is no glue will become the pocket for your cards, so you want to make sure it is at least 1/2" larger than the card so that you can fit a few cards in your case.
- Then just place the other circle on top and press to glue the two pieces of leather together.
- Let the glue dry for a few hours and your card case is ready to fill with cards.
- Because of the stiff tooling leather used, there is no need for a closure. You can simply squeeze the sides of the donut together to open the case and pull out your cards. When the case is laying flat, the cards stay securely inside.



Designing Women



“Every great design begins with an even better story.”

LORINDA MAMO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CALLIE LYNCH

Product Design

Keema

WWW.PENCILMEINSTATIONERY.COM / @PENCILMEIN

Q: What do you do?

I am a graphic designer who loves making bold, simple, geometric patterns that can be applied to just about any surface.

Q: What exactly is “pattern design” and how do you do it?

Pattern design can be described as a simple object created and then repeated in a consistent way. Repetition is the main key to a pattern.

Q: How did you get into pattern design? What drew you to it?

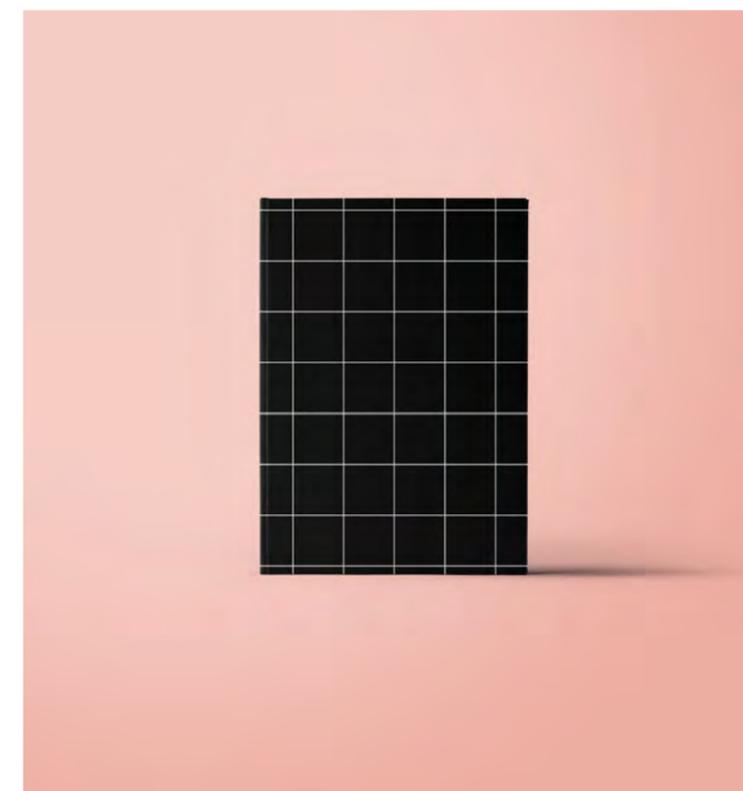
It was a happy accident. I’ve always had a love for it (I was obsessed with wrapping paper and all things stationery as a kid)! I took an online course after graduating from college and became obsessed. Pattern design adds fun and life to anything, whether it be simple or intricate.

Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

One of my most sold products is the marble and pale pink notebook. I created it for myself originally (with a matching phone case), then posted it on instagram (@pencilmein). Soon after, I received tons of messages asking for that design with personalized names and messages. I loooooove when I’m asked to personalize my products.

Q: What are your favorite resources for pattern design?

Everything. Fashion, interior design, technology, magazines, blogs, nature, the list goes on.



Interior Design

Annie Downing



WWW.ANNIEDOWNING.COM / @ANNIEDOWNINGINTERIORS

Q: What do you do?

My team and I specialize in residential family homes. We help clients from the initial conceptual phase through the construction process to installation.

Q: What exactly does an “interior designer” do?

An interior designer helps clients create a cohesive, functional and beautiful space while helping with space planning, over all design, all details and budgets. We help clients with every single detail from hardware to window treatments and furniture. An interior designer manages all the details of the project from ordering to inspection and delivery. It involves a lot of project management. Interior designers work closely with architects and builders to help clients realize their vision.

Q: How did you get into interior design? What drew you to it?

Growing up, I rearranged my room on a weekly basis. I loved how changing my room would change my perspective. I realized that I wanted to help people do the same thing but I didn't realize it until after college (and having worked in politics and television for 10 years). I took interior design and art classes after work and on the weekends. It just snowballed from there.

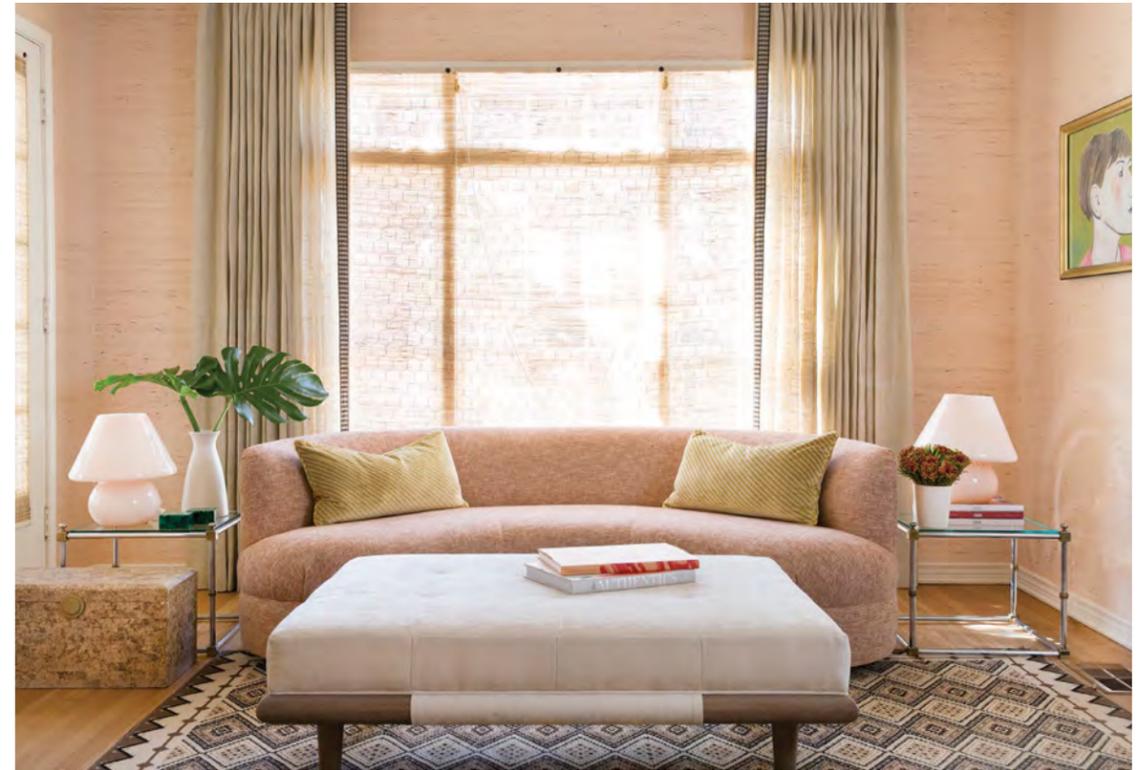
Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

I love different projects for different reasons, but the best ones are the ones where a client completely trusts you and respects your creativity - and has a realistic budget, of course. I also love the projects where my team and I are involved from the beginning - whether it is during the architectural phase or demo. I loved helping this family design their large great room where they gather for the holidays.

Q: What are your favorite resources for pattern design?

Quickbooks for one. Honestly, there's nothing like seeing things in person and feeling them. I get so tired of clicking and scrolling online, but if I have to specify, Chairish is great as is Circa Who and Scout Design Studio. I love our local showrooms in Austin, such as Supply and James. Round Top Antiques Fair and Marburger Farms in the Spring and Fall in Texas are great fun. 214 Modern during High Point is great. I just recently visited LA for LCDQ Legends and fell in love with Harbinger, LA.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BUFF STRICKLAND



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Visual Design

Claudine Zafra



WWW.CLAUDINENZAFRA.COM / @CLAUDINEZAFRA

Q: What do you do?

I am currently a Visual Designer for ShopStyle Inc. which is a fashion search engine that allows users to shop many brands in one place. Fashion has always been a passion of mine and having a background in the retail industry has been one of my biggest strengths as a visual designer for ShopStyle. My day-to-day work involves designing homepage heroes, blog headers, email marketing designs, social media visuals, establishing style-guides and also designing for ShopStyle-hosted events. I work closely with the creative director to ensure that my designs follow the brand standards. It's never a dull moment as a visual designer!

As a designer, it is my responsibility to create visually consistent branding across our works - this is especially true when you work for a single-brand company. My visual design role at ShopStyle has been very unique in that it is a company that promotes many retail partners; my added responsibility is balancing not only the look and feel of our brand partners, but to design these assets cohesively in a way that represents the ShopStyle brand identity. This has been challenging at times, but I actually find this very fun because I haven't encountered this balancing act before in my career.

Q: What exactly does a "visual designer" do?

Visual design is sort of a catch-all design field. It is often intertwined with graphic design and is used loosely at times. From my experience, visual design tends to be more on branding and web design, and sometimes print. For example, I have larger 360 projects where I have to not only create a fresh visual look, but to also translate that look and feel into different sized assets (from homepage, to blog, to social media). Designing these 360 assets consistently becomes a subconscious way to communicate the message to the users.

I say that it is a catch-all design career because you need to be well-rounded in many skills like typography, visual hierarchy, color theory, wireframing, and at times, even some front-end coding (basic HTML and CSS). Adobe products and Sketch are industry standard tools. Visual designers must have a wide set of design skills and often need to be able to communicate with many business partners. Oftentimes, this means presenting reasonings behind a design to the marketing team or explaining to a front-end engineer how a homepage behavior needs to transition from desktop to mobile experience.

Because you have to be well-rounded as a visual designer, the projects and deliverables don't always stay consistent and are ever evolving - which is super fulfilling over time.



Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

This is a hard question to answer as I really do love all of my projects! I recently designed a few assets for a ShopStyle speaker series for South by Southwest (ShopStyle owns the rights to this project since I designed these as an employee of the company). I really enjoyed working on this project because event design is one of the few projects I get where I can work in print. I get so used to web deliverables that creating print-ready designs is refreshing.

This particular event design was inspired by the café that our speaker series was being held at which was a very artsy venue. I pulled colors from photos of the venue and combined these with ShopStyle brand colors, and the end-product meshed together really well. Assets for this event included a bar sign, menu, name cards and mobile save-the-dates and invites.

Q: What are your favorite resources for visual design?

Since I have been working in fashion and retail, social media (mainly Instagram) has honestly been the strongest resource of inspirations for me. I follow many competitor brands, and it is always so inspiring every time I open up my feed. Oftentimes, brands create 360 designs that umbrellas social media. So when something visual catches my eye in my feed, this actually leads me to a landing page that tells the bigger visual story.

I take full advantage of the saving/bookmarking function on Instagram and I sort out my inspos in a few different collections (i.e. homepage inspo or email animations inspo). Whenever I start a new project and find myself a little stuck, my saved items have been my saving grace!

I also like to do bi-weekly trips to stores like Barnes & Noble to check out what publications are doing these days, and this is actually how I first found *Belong!* I browse through magazines and book covers for hours. I always look forward to these inspo-trips of mine.

Product Design

Jamie Lim



WWW.KAYUDESIGN.COM / @KAYUDESIGN

Q: What do you do?

I am the founder and owner of KAYU, a line of handcrafted handbags inspired by my childhood in South East Asia.

Q: What exactly does a “product designer” do?

I see myself as more of a collaborator. I work with artisans in South East Asia to modernize and refine their craft so that it appeals to the modern day consumer. The artisans are the real product designers; they are the ones who have been making their crafts for generations and generations.

**Q: How did you get into handbag design?
What drew you to it?**

I grew up in South East Asia surrounded by artisanal crafts. Over the years, I noticed that these crafts were disappearing and being replaced by mass produced, synthetic alternatives. I created KAYU because I wanted to preserve my cultural heritage and also provide jobs to the artisans. I explored several product categories, but handbags were what resonated most with our customers.

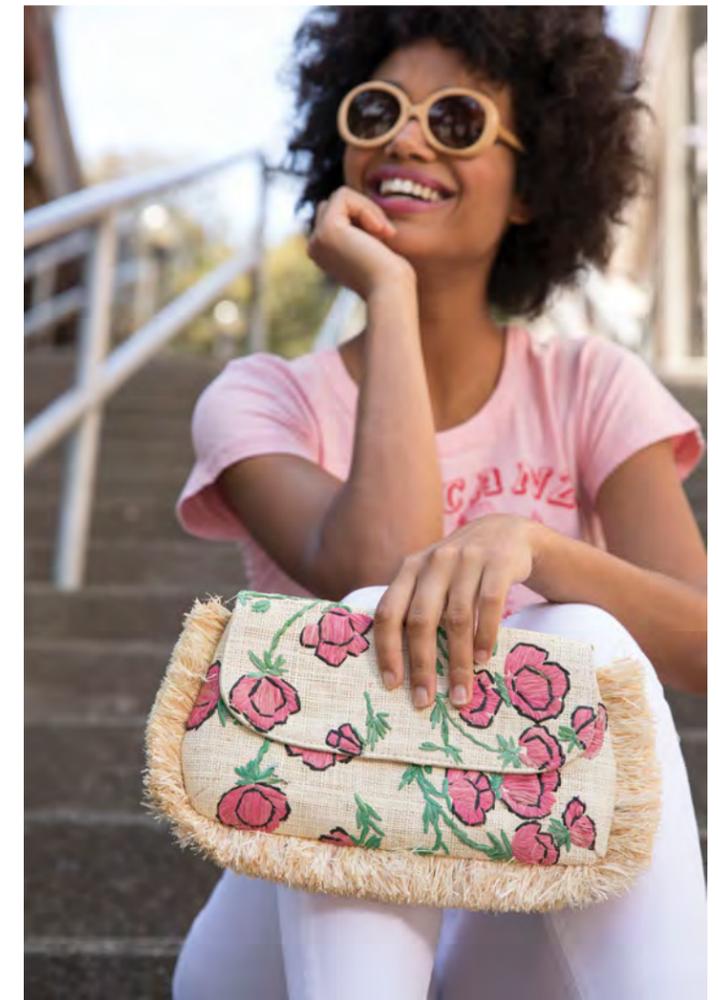
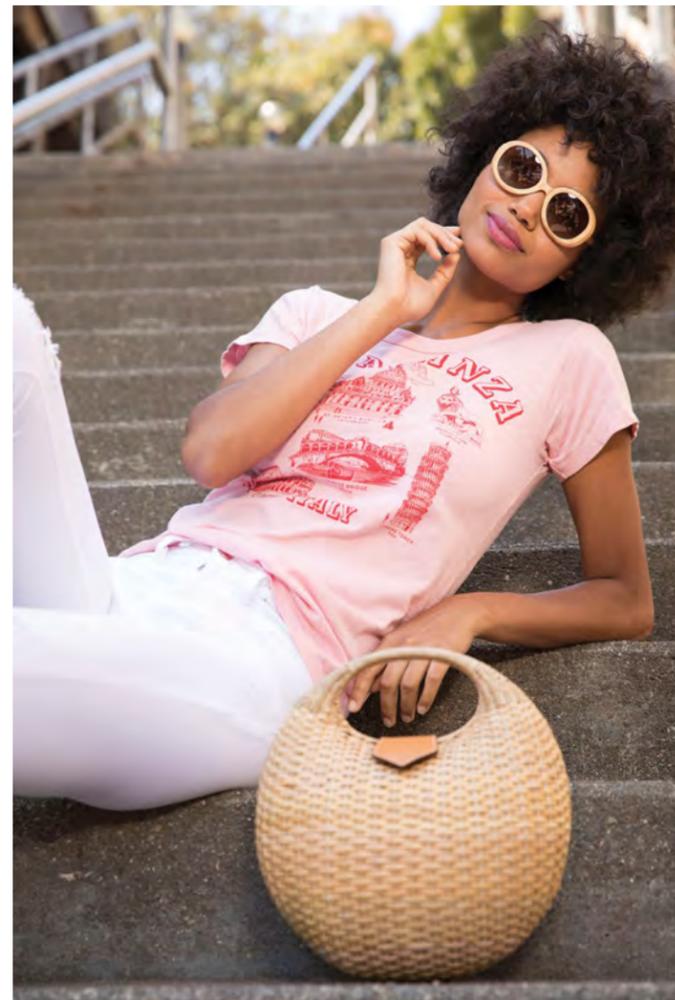
Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

I recently traveled to Asia to visit the tribes in rural Malaysia. After an hour flight from Kuala Lumpur, I traveled 5 hours on a dirt road and 1 hour on a tiny boat to reach our destination. The people there are extremely poor with no access to electricity, running water or any means of livelihood. We spent our time exploring the jungle to look for materials like rattan and bamboo and held a weaving workshop. My hope is to somehow help the tribes market and sell their crafts and provide them with a sustainable source of income.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAYDIE MCCUMBER

Q: What are your favorite resources for product design?

I love going to local markets. It’s a great place to spot both traditional and more modern products. Some of my favorite markets are Chatuchak in Bangkok, Central Market in Phom Penh and the L’isle-sur-la-Sorgue Sunday market in Provence.



Type Design

Jen Wagner



WWW.JENWAGNER.CO / @JENWAGER.CO

Q: What do you do?

I'm a type designer!

Q: What exactly does a "type designer" do?

Basically, a type designer creates alphabet sets and develops them into fonts. These can then be purchased and installed on a computer. Fonts I design usually fall into three categories: serif, sans serif, and script – and the process for each looks a little different. Most of my serif and sans serif fonts start either on paper or in Adobe Illustrator, whereas script fonts start on paper or in Procreate on my iPad. I draw out each letter, vectorize them and import them to a font-building program called Glyphs where I can clean them up and make adjustments. Then they're exported and sold digitally to the world!

**Q: How did you get into type design?
What drew you to it?**

I actually stumbled into type design. In 2016, I was in a lull as a freelance designer and creative director; my husband encouraged me to do something for myself as I was feeling stressed and overwhelmed. When I thought about something I wanted to learn for fun, I remembered that a friend of mine (Dylan Roop, a talented designer himself) had just told me about a plugin for Adobe Illustrator called FontSelf. It's an add-on that makes creating fonts extremely easy. I thought at the very least, it could be a really cool creative exercise and maybe even make a little extra money every month. Immediately

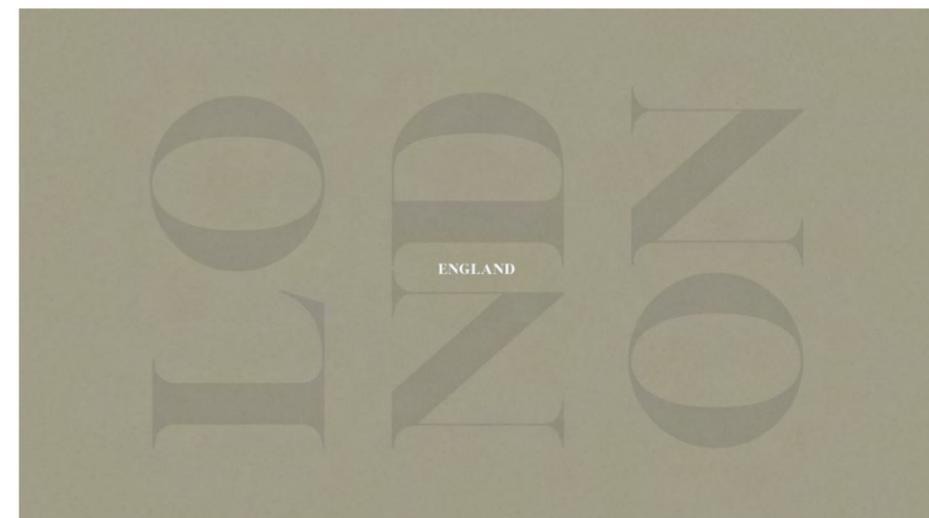
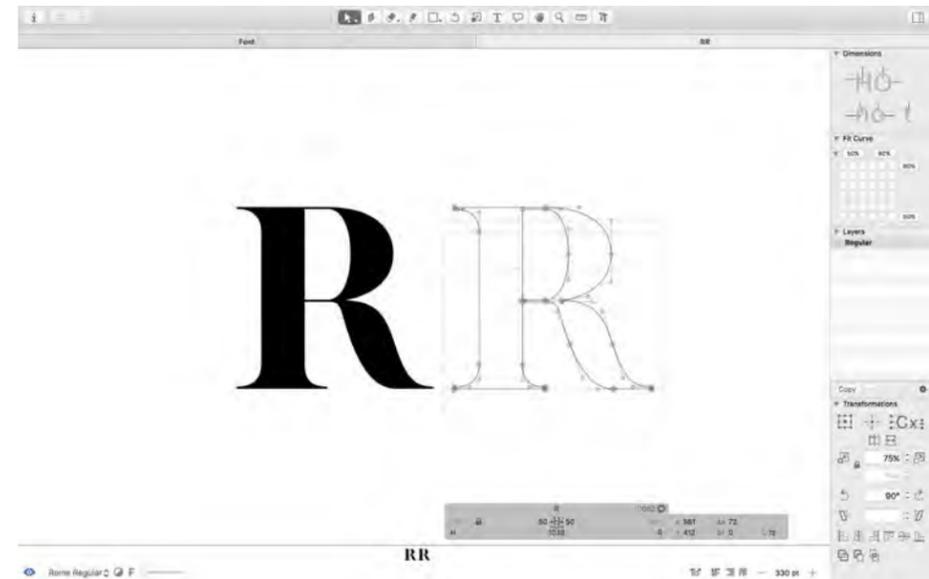
after starting, I totally fell in love with the process. The months leading up to that time were some of the more difficult in my life, and I found focusing on one letter at a time to be extremely therapeutic. To go from creative directing large projects with tons of moving parts to focusing on one tiny part of one letter – it felt like a creative relief. I finally had fun creating again, and so I stuck with it!

Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

My favorite is a serif typeface called "London". This is the first thick serif I've done in a while and it's been fun to watch my process get easier and more refined. I'm noticing that my lines are getting cleaner and my letters are getting more balanced as a set, which are both things I didn't think about when I first started a couple years ago. It's always exciting to watch yourself get better as an artist, and that's what excites me most about this typeface. I'm also really happy about how it's looking for different projects – it seems like it'll become a staple in my font library for client work that comes in.

Q: What are your favorite resources for type design?

I'm always using a combination of Adobe Illustrator, Procreate, and Glyphs to create my fonts. When I first started, I used Illustrator and a plugin called "FontSelf", which makes it easy to generate typefaces. That's actually what I used to create all of my fonts for the first six months I did type design, so it's a really great place to start!



Fabric Design

Bonnie Christine

WWW.BONNIECHRISTINE.COM / @GOINGHOMETOROOST

Q: What do you do?

I am an artist and fabric designer living nestled in the hills of the great Smoky Mountains. My heart is filled with flowers, and making artwork for companies and products around the world is my happy place. I'm passionate about sharing what I know, teaching surface design and inspiring others to make a living doing what they love.

Q: What exactly does a "fabric designer" do?

Oh, so many things! I design artwork for Art Gallery Fabrics, who then produces quilting cotton, rayon, canvas, knit and voile with the designs. I get to sew with the fabrics, present them at Quilt Market twice a year and the best part - see what others create with my designs!

Q: How did you get into fabric design? What drew you to it?

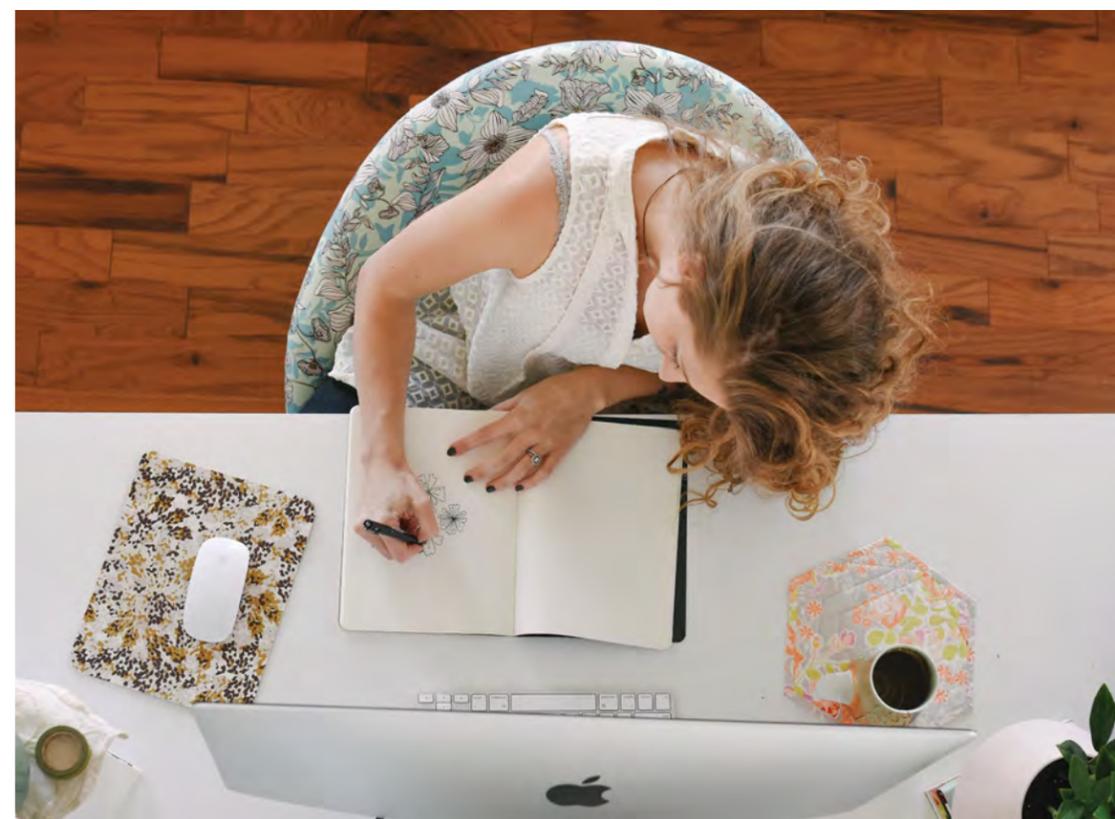
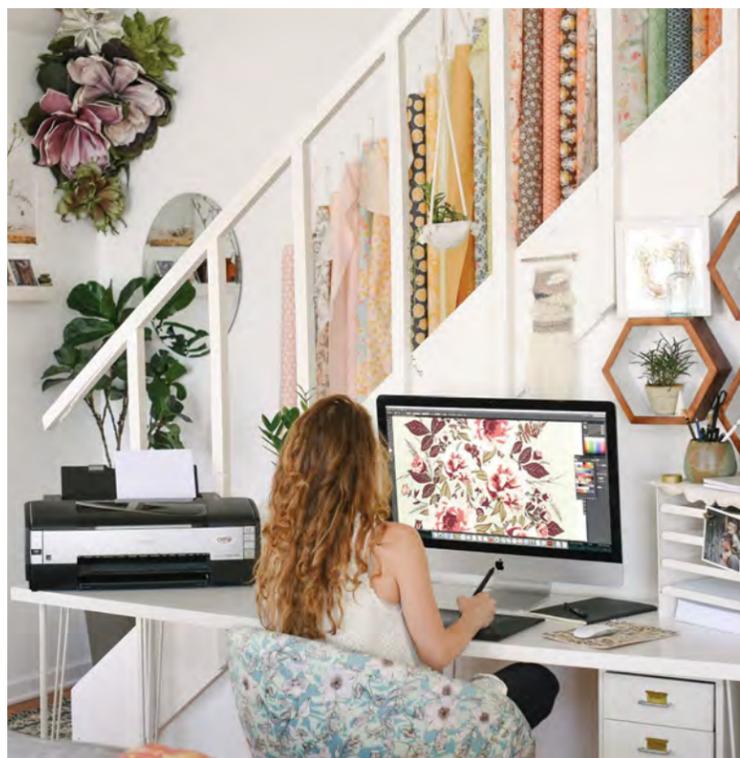
My journey begins with my momma. Because of her, my childhood was saturated with creativity. I grew up spending time in her quilt shop, watching her sew and making things alongside her. We spent time learning crafts together, decorating the house and cooking meals. Whenever I wanted to learn a new craft, I knew I could turn to her. From pottery and painting to photography and baking. She has mastered it all! Creativity seems to seep from her pores and it's through her wisdom, willingness to teach and kind guidance that made me know that my world had to revolve around being creative too.

Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

By far my favorite projects are always the clothes and toys I make for my children, Bear (4) and Ollie (2). They're a huge inspiration to me, and I love seeing the world through their eyes!

Q: What are your favorite resources for fabric design?

Because of my journey, I've become passionate about sharing what I've learned. I teach several courses on Surface Pattern Design and created a membership called the Roost Tribe based on what I myself would have loved to have been a part of when I was starting my journey. This is where I share all of my 'secrets', teach Fabric Design and encourage a community of like-minded creatives. I hope you'll come join me, I look forward to connecting with you there!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CALLIE LYNCH

Product Design

Amy Stringer-Mowat



WWW.AMERICANHEIRLOOM.COM / @AHEIRLOOM



Q: What do you do?

I am the CCO of the housewares brand American Heirloom. Trained as a digital designer, I work with a small team to create our tabletop designs. We work with manufacturing partners all based in the US and assemble our work in Brooklyn, NY. Most days, you will find me behind a computer, working with our laser cutters or talking to the team about how to push our designs further. I am also a mom to Henry (age 6) and Sadie (age 1). Being a mom and a business owner has been an intense learning curve, but I have always been up for a challenge!

Q: What exactly does a “product designer” do?

In my mind, a product designer is someone who sees a need for a product. Maybe that item solves a problem, saves some time, or creates a moment of joy. As a product designer, I feel like I am translating something cultural and significant into a product or item to be used, treasured or create a temporary feeling. Once I have an event or a feeling in mind, I work to create this product on the computer, and then have it made to be enjoyed by our community. Currently, our office is inspired by food, family and the ritual of celebration.

Q: How did you get into home décor and entertaining design? What drew you to it?

I have always had an appreciation for beautiful food, housewares and inspired engineering since I studied Architecture at Columbia University. My background was in the food industry, and then as I completed my degree, fabrication became my focus. After planning a wedding during the recession in 2009, my husband and I found that we needed to make many of our personalized tabletop pieces for the day; these pieces became the prototypes for my business. Significant life events always inspire our company’s designs. Today, as I spearhead the operations for the business, I am constantly incorporating the tradition of family and our values into every facet of my work.

Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

I really love the cake stands that we do, as they pushed us further in our design process when we started to work on them. We were originally known for our state shaped cutting boards, which were pretty 2D and flat. The cake stand took us to wood turning and using new materials and CAKE! They are such a good scale and fully embraced by a super supportive baking community online that they really got us moving into a new style.

“I am translating something cultural and significant into a product or item to be used, treasured or create a temporary feeling.”

Q: What are your favorite resources for product design?

I always look to materials first when it comes to product design. We have certain limitations to think about when we use the tools in our shop and beyond. I always feel so inspired by stationery and graphic design. It always a great challenge to look at a flat design and translate it into 3D. Once we get an idea on what to make, we then go into our material options and how we can make them all fit together. I also, of course, look for inspiration online on places like Design Milk and Cup of Jo.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALYSSA KIRSTEN

Graphic Design

Rachel Green



WWW.INTENTIONALLY-DESIGNED.COM / @INTENTIONALLYDESIGNED

Q: What do you do?

My mission is to give my clients the tools and encouragement they need to pursue their dreams well, be more intentional with their lives and business and create a business they love that serves a life they love even more. Through intentional business development, valuable education and resources and a place of community, I'm wholeheartedly devoted to giving clients that dream and helping them pursue their passions. I work with other business owners to develop their businesses visually and strategically. I take a different approach to branding by going deeper than what you see. It's about more than designing a pretty brand, it's about intentionally creating a plan for the business and then using the visuals to make that come to life. Beyond the design of brands and websites, I also provide support for a building, growing and thriving business.

Q: What exactly does a "graphic designer" do?

A graphic designer can do many things, but essentially we create digital designs. A graphic designer can design anything from invitations and stationery to brands and websites (like I do). Graphic design can also include designing physical products, books, signs, email marketing graphics, social media graphics or menus. Usually, a graphic designer will specialize in one area or industry and stick to designing similar things, but the possibilities are endless when it comes to graphic design.

Q: How did you get into graphic design? What drew you to it?

While I did take some design classes in college, I am mostly self-taught in the world of graphic design and web development. After college, I worked for a local web development agency where I learned a lot of my skills in design and development. I then started my own business designing stationery. Over the years I've shifted back towards business and brand design and have had many opportunities to refine my skills further. I've always been drawn to design and will swoon over anything with good design. I have a natural passion for colors, textures, fonts and arrangements that spills over into a love for interior design as well. There is just something I love about creating beauty and art from pixels on a screen.

Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

It is honestly so hard to choose one. I've been so blessed to have worked with some incredible clients who I now consider friends. Each one of my projects has been unique and exciting on which to work. Working with The Bloom Workshop on their site was a highlight because it was a turning point for me as a designer. I was challenged by this project and pushed myself in both design and development and I think it was just what I needed to get a fresh perspective.

Q: What are your favorite resources for graphic design?

Some of my favorite resources are Adobe CC (use it daily and can't design without it!), Creative Market and Squarespace. Two of my favorite design courses are the Share-worthy Design Course and The InDesign Field Guide.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATIE STARKS

Textile Design

Teresa
Grow

WWW.MADISONANDGROW.COM / @MADISONANDGROW

Q: What exactly do you do?

I am owner and designer of Madison and Grow, an interiors and textile studio. I design wallpaper and fabric for the home as well as work with clients selecting all finish materials and space planning. I very much enjoy working one on one with home owners, helping them to create a home that is reflective of their taste and their lives. I am a guide and am my best self when helping people achieve their own sense of space. I consider it a calling.

Q: What is textile design?

For me textile design is creating pattern and color with hand screened wallpapers and linen. I bring my experience as a designer to all of my pattern designs. When I am designing a pattern I build it with scale and color and line simultaneously, color is never an afterthought. Color is an integral element to all design and every element in design has a color; wood, brick and masonry all have a color and need to be considered with the whole design palette. With all of my textiles I keep in mind they will be part of a larger design.

Q: How did you get into textile design?

Color and space and how it affects the way we feel has been an obsession since I was a child. I worked at The Storefront for Art and Architecture while studying art at SVA in Manhattan. I became interested in working

with environments and discovered Donald Kaufman, the premier color consultant in the United States and I was off to the races!

Q: What has been your favorite project and why?

The flamingo estate, a project by STUDIO KO, in eagle rock neighborhood of Los Angeles. I worked with Bronstruction assisting with and creating custom paint colors, the architects are based in Paris and I was the onsite designer in charge of creating boards and converting paint and color selections from STUDIO KO into house paints. It is such an incredible and unique space and it was such a thrill to be able to contribute. Check out: @flamingo_estate on instagram.

Q: What are your favorite design resources?

We are so lucky in Los Angeles, with access to everything art and design. To name a few neighborhood places I return to time and again: Lawson Fenning, Nicky Kehoe, Jills Paint, Diamond Foam and Fabric, Mission Tile, and of course my showroom Walnut Wallpaper. I lean heavy on Instagram and Pinterest for sourcing and sorting ideas. I am an avid reader and currently hold 17 library cards, I'll never tire of flipping through art and design books. My membership to the Huntington Library and Gardens is money well spent and I would recommend to anyone looking for inspiration.





Rise

by **Arielle Estoria**

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WWW.ARIELLEESTORIA.COM / [@ARIELLEESTORIA](https://www.instagram.com/arielleestoria)



Imagine an event, an event where you were told to come as your best-dressed self, an event where you were told to “go-big”, you know heels, eyeliner and all.

So you added the contour, painted the eye shadow on, added a touch of lip, brought out your favorite and fanciest outfit and strutted in, confident and all dolled up.

Now imagine walking into the venue and immediately being handed a pair of comfy yoga pants, loose t-shirt and a makeup remover wipe.

Imagine being told that before you could attend, that you had to take it all off, start fresh, breathe and just enter exactly as you are, not who you were trying to be.

Rise Conference, is not your average women’s conference.

It’s a conference where sure, you can come cute, prepare for your instagram photos but the moment you walk through those doors, the moment the event starts, you get to come exactly as you are. All makeup and fancy instagrammable clothes aside, you get to just simply show up. Rise Conference is a space where women have the opportunity to learn about who they are and not just what they do in this world. Where the kids can be left at home, they don’t have to share their food for a few days and they have the opportunity to show up for themselves and take away all that they need from hugs, to coffee, to tears or new friends. A space where I have watched women LITERALLY shake everything their mama gave them and walk away experiencing more freedom and acceptance for the very skin that they are in. My favorite part is the tears-- where they have the opportunity to unravel in front of close friends and strangers and release years of hurt, fear and words unsaid.

No, this is not your average women’s conference and it’s led by a not so average woman. I won’t get into the details of all of her amazingness but you know that one person who loves you real good but sometimes it stings a little with how much truth

and tools for growth they give you *because* they love you? Yeah, that’s Rachel Hollis, she is a powerhouse of a woman who speaks from wisdom, truth and experience and someone who does so authentically and with grit. In a heartbeat, she will be the first to share the embarrassing story, admit the places and moments where she’s not perfect nor does she have it all together, she leads by example. What makes Rachel such an incredible voice and influence is that she believes strongly that whatever she’s capable of achieving and accomplishing with some hard work and sweat other women can do. She roots for people so hard pretty much every time you interact with her you would swear that you’ve known her for years. She creates a space for women that says, “you are welcome here” instead of the message “you can’t sit with us” that has been commonly used within women of influence. But most importantly she creates a space that says “*look, I don’t have it all together either. We’re in the mess together sister.*”

So commonly within spaces of women we assume we have to “have it all together”, kids are perfect, marriage is just dandy, house is clean, you workout and your skin is flawless. We put these heavy expectations on ourselves and they transcend into our relationship with others. What if all the walls were down? What if we each took the time to lift the pressure of being perfect off of one another’s shoulders? How much more freely would we live? These are the questions and the challenge that Rise Conference elicits, how can women walk away feeling lighter and yet so much more full.

Alongside Rachel Hollis was a list of other amazing speakers with messages of encouragement, empowerment and tool equipping. Speakers such as her Husband Dave Hollis, Writer and Speaker Brittany Barron, Best-Selling author Anna Todd, Founder and CEO of May Designs, Mica May, Therapist Elyse Snipes oh and me, poet and speaker Arielle Estoria. Each speaker brought their own expertise and experience with just the right amount of motivation and inspiration. Between panels and

PHOTOGRAPHY BY VANESSA TODD

keynotes, attendees walk away with tangible tools, words of encouragement and motivation to spearhead and live out their fullest and best life.

Rise is for the dreamers who never stopped dreaming, they just had to put a hold on it. Rise is for the women trying to figure out what their voices sound like and what their deepest desires are all over again. "You have put too much work in your dream to let it die inside of you." This was a quote from Rachel Hollis during one of her TWO keynote talks during the conference and it resonated with everyone so deeply especially me. The reason this conference is so freaking spectacular is that there's a certain electric magic that surges through the room and it's because there's this realization that there are some powerful, capable, world changing women sitting in those seats and some of them up until that moment -- didn't even know it.



The conference always ends with everyone's favorite part -- the dance party that is always epic, always themed and always so much fun. It's the part where we celebrate, the team included all the hard work that goes into putting on the conference and all the beauty that comes out of it also. This past year was 90s themed and the ladies brought out their funky patterns, snap bracelets, high waisted *everything* and matching glitter hats. There's sweat, dancing and a lot of smiles and it is the most perfect way to end a conference.

I had the honor of sharing a custom spoken word poem with the women of Rise Conference and I would like to share a snippet of it here for you to truly get a glimpse into the world of Rise.

*See it's not about where we are going---
And it's not entirely about where we've been either*

*It's about every small step before our first leap
It's about how we ignored fear and decided to take the first leap*

It's about how we are still afraid and yet we do it anyway

About every fail and flop

Every rerouted turn

*See, Where you are going, will not be the most magical
The most magical is in the mountains you climbed to get there*

It's about how resilient and brave you were to keep climbing

*Remember how you got here
the little beginnings, the soft whisper of starting
The tug on your heart that convinced you that you were made for more
Because you were
You were made for made*

*The uncertainty you felt and yet the passion to keep going
Every tedious step, a beautiful addition to the story
---to your story*

I'm not saying don't ever look back---because you should

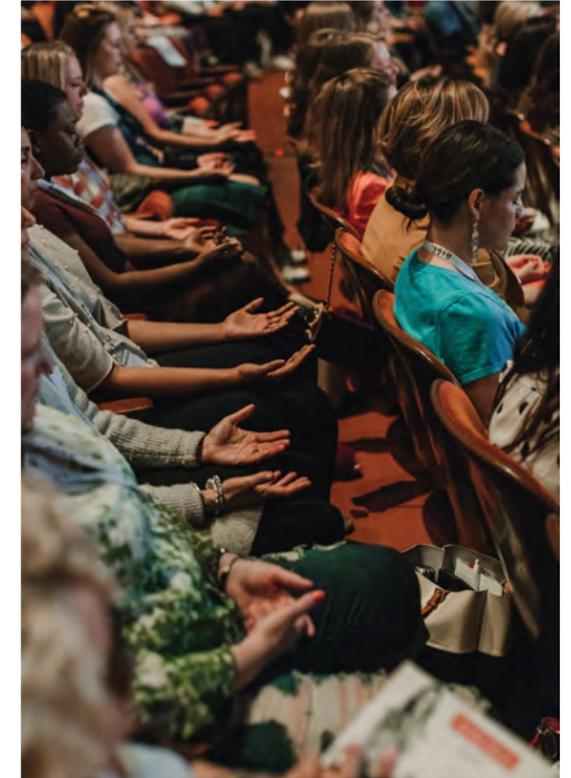
But Only to realize how far you've come and how much more you have yet to go

Do not be afraid of the distance between where you are and where you are going

For it is in that space--that you learn what it means to rise

So imagine walking into a room, and given the opportunity to just show up exactly as you are, to finally exhale, to be inspired and to leave every fear and doubt and insecurity at the door before you walk in. Imagine a space where you are seen and walk away being loved in ways you didn't even realize by complete strangers, imagine walking away with a new idea of community, of self and confidence and standing a little taller, walking a little more confidently and knowing that when you fall because at some point you will--you will have all that you need to get back up. 🔄

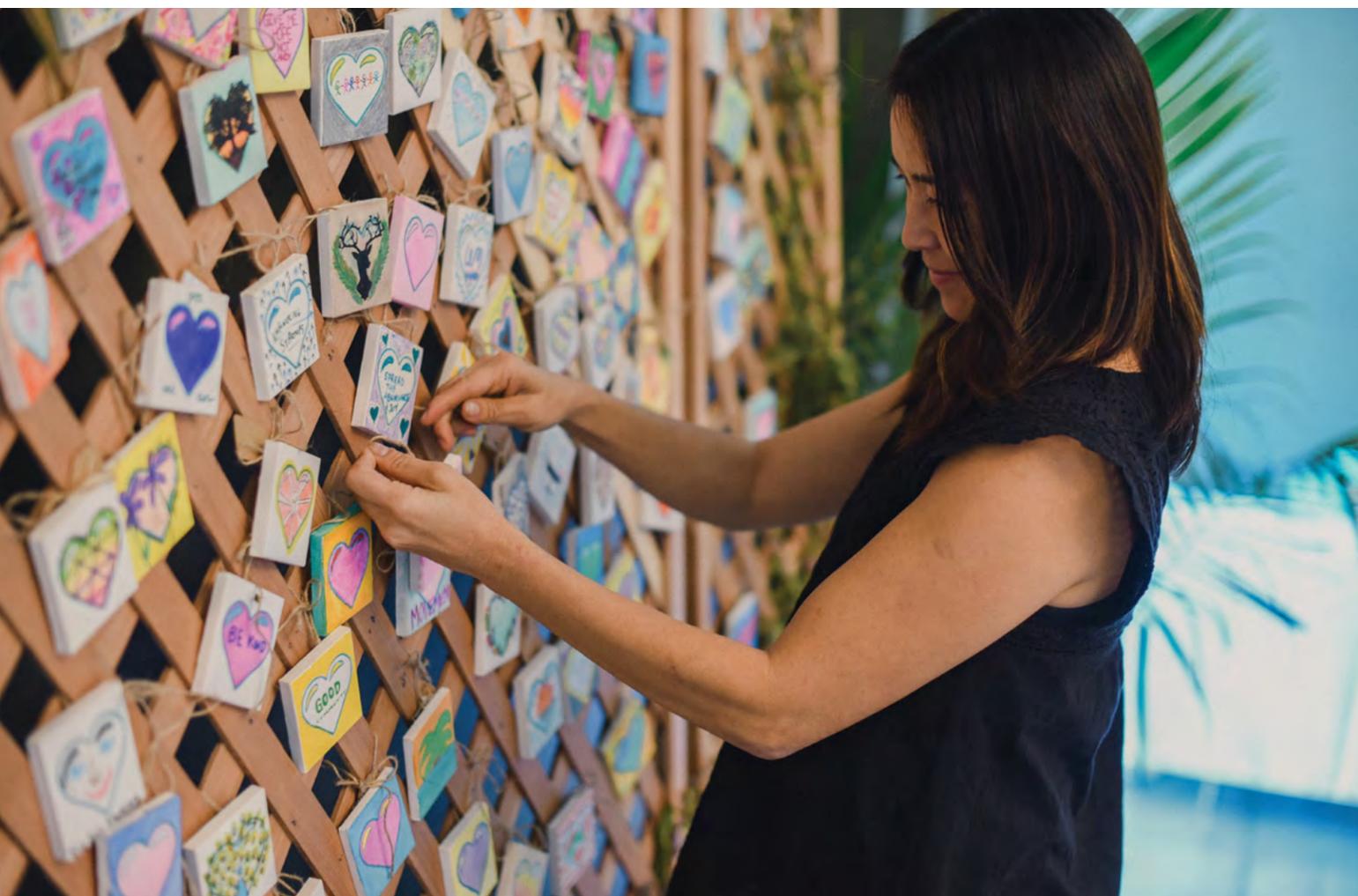




The Heart Series

by **Caroline Rubach**

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The Heart Series Conference, which feels more like an intimate retreat, is a two-day opportunity for social entrepreneurs, conscious brand leaders and nonprofits to connect and learn from one another regarding better business practices.

Megan Sette and Gail Cayetano hosted The Inaugural Heart Series Conference in February of 2015 with the hope of creating a space for people to come together and learn “do good” business practices from one another. Gail called Meg a few years back, and asked for some recommendations regarding social impact conferences that she could attend to expand her socially conscious family jewelry line. After some thought and research, Meg and Gail both realized that nothing of the sort existed at that time. How did they respond? Naturally, for these two passionate go-getters, they decided they would pool together their resources, contacts, and creativity and they would make it happen.

The heart of this conference is a sense of belonging to a greater community, the power of connecting and exchanging ideas around making a greater impact. But what actually happens during these two days? For the past four years, The Heart Series has hosted a long list of inspiring speakers from leading companies and organizations, all in the scope of conscious business, to discuss their current practices and navigate through dynamic issues that they face today - notable brands and businesses have participated like Honest Co., TOMS, Etsy, Virgin Galactic, Lululemon, Youtube, Pinterest, Ben & Jerry's, Bumble, Beautycounter; Everlane, Pencils of Promise, DoSomething - just to name a few.

Interspersed among thought-provoking talks and captivating panels are activities that leave attendees feeling encouraged, challenged, engaged and connected. The activities have ranged from collective music creation to participating in a “Give & Get” discussion to adding personal graffiti to a cumulative art wall, as was all done at this year's conference.

One of the most unique activities present at the 2018 Heart Series was an activity hosted by SoulPancake's CEO, Shabnam Mogharabi, in which she encouraged

attendees to write a moment of personal vulnerability on a piece of paper. Attendees then folded their paper into a paper airplane and flew it across the room for another attendee to pick up and read aloud, and then to discuss with that person. This activity epitomizes the entire goal and successful impact of The Heart Series conference: the connection, the community and the action it cultivates, which turns into positive and tangible impact.

In an effort to practice the impact that they preach, The Heart Series partnered with over fifty companies “doing good” this past year in order to truly live out the socially conscious mission of this conference in all aspects. For example, Cheeky Home, a tableware company that is committed to helping end hunger in the United States, provided all plateware, cups, and utensils throughout the two days of the event. And food partners such as Deep River Snacks, and This Bar Saves Lives among others, not only donated their products for attendees to enjoy during the event, but they also gave back in other ways.

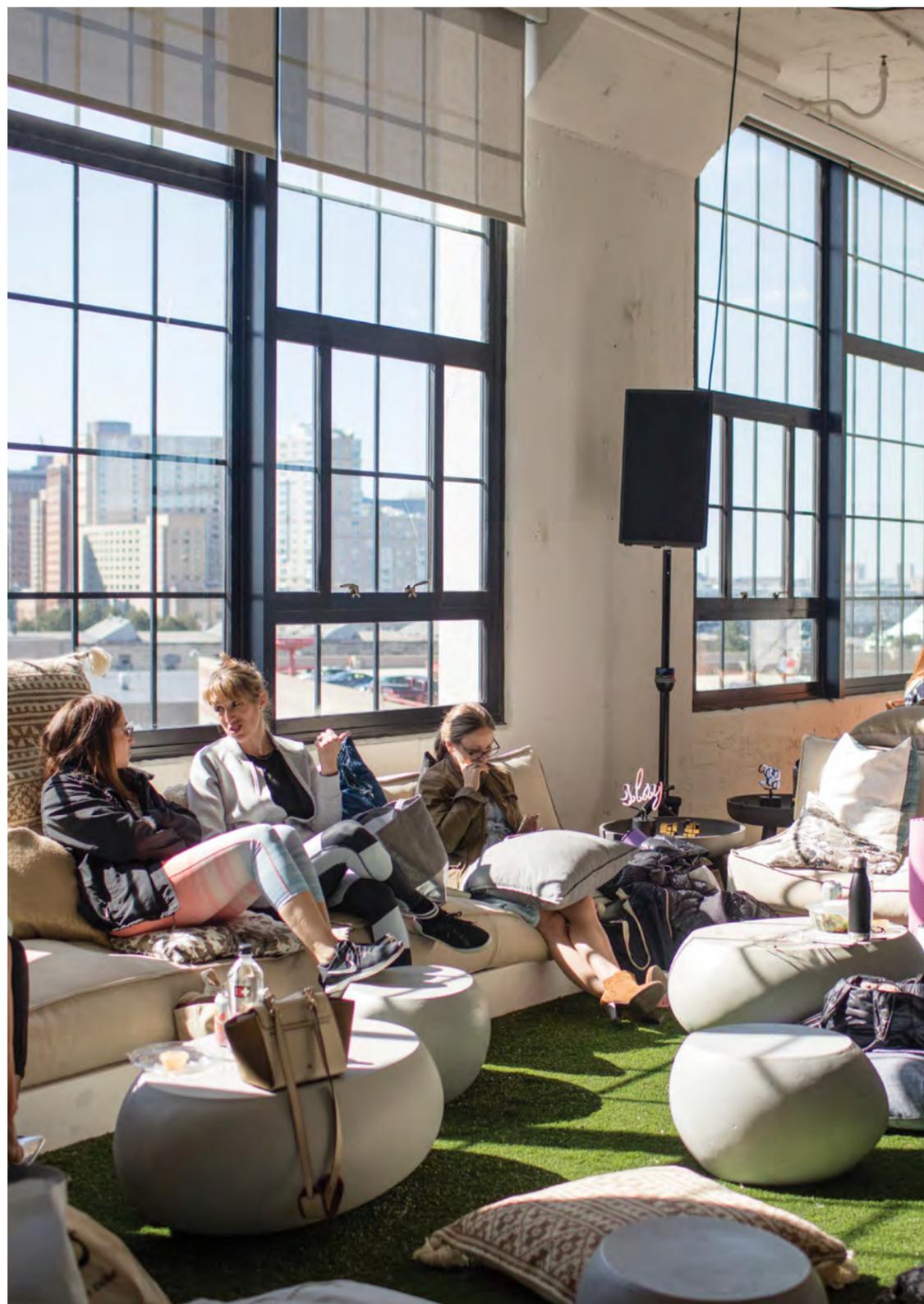
Overall, this conference is vastly motivating and rejuvenating and creates a space in which people can intimately connect with others who are led first and foremost by their mission and who punctuate their work with effective, meaningful action.

At the end of these two exhilarating and full days, all in attendance can see that The Heart Series is a natural outpouring of Meg and Gail's passion for connecting people and for empowering businesses to #HaveaHeartDoWell.

You can learn more about the event by visiting their website www.theheartseries.com. Or following [@theheartseries](https://www.instagram.com/theheartseries) on Instagram and Twitter. If you are interested in getting more involved, volunteering, or partnering email us at: hello@theheartseries.com.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALICE TU





W.E.L.L. Summit

WWW.WELLSUMMIT.ORG / @WELLSUMMIT

The W.E.L.L. Summit: Wellness. Empowerment. Learning. Luxury. They've created a life-changing experience for those seeking self-improvement and welcome all who are as passionate as they are about living well. From beauty bloggers and wellness professionals to those looking to learn more about the ever-expanding realms of inner beauty/peace of mind, clean eating, of-the-moment fitness trends, making informed consumer decisions and exploring the now covetable field of green beauty, this is the place of inspiration.

The first of its kind, they've taken the standard summit format and hit "refresh." The W.E.L.L. Summit welcomes leaders in the wellness industry to speak in large panel discussion groups. They share their deep knowledge of their respective markets, inspiring you to make simple life changes and imparting tips for living to your best standard of health.

Small break-out sessions also provide intimate access to these professionals. All the questions you've always wanted to ask. All the tips you'll need for buying beauty products, overhauling your pantry, selecting a workout program that fits into your daily life. The latest trends, complete with insider tips.

The W.E.L.L. Summit's first annual natural conference was held in the Boston Design Center with nearly 500 attendees. "W.E.L.L. Summit is about creating

a life-changing experience for those seeking self-improvement and all who are passionate about living well," said Gianne Doherty, W.E.L.L. Summit founder and CEO.

Pooling experts across the spectrum of wellness for panels and sessions like "Everyday Products and Their Ingredients" to "Drop the labels, healthy food for your mental health" and "Sacred Beauty," attendees helped themselves to a day of learning and empowerment. Leading wellness gurus such as clean beauty expert Tara Foley, Founder of Follain, organic baby food leader Agatha Achindu, founder of Yummy Spoonful, and body positivity influencer Chinae Alexander took the stage to share their knowledge and inspire attendees to further their wellness journey.

Attendees has the opportunity to browse the marketplace with clean products like Piper Wai, Branch Basics, Athleta, Credo Beauty, Follain and many more while sipping on Purity Organic and HyVida and munching on lunch provided by SweetGreen.

From Boston to NYC in 2018 and beyond, W.E.L.L. Summit is bringing together a 360-degree perspective on wellness and natural lifestyle. [👉](#)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARILIA LIMA





Confidence Con

WWW.CONFIDENCECON.COM / @CONFIDENCECON



In 2014, Creative Powerhouse, Hannah Royce, founded Confidence Con in order to bring women in her community together in a way none of them had ever experienced. Her goal was to evoke change in the way women and girls view themselves. With her knack for content curation, styling, event planning, digital everything, she naturally brings people together. Her passion lies in empowering women to confidently and authentically live their lives. She understands that it's sometimes difficult to live in our truth - but also knows it's necessary for a life filled with happiness.

As women, we have one mission: to work together to stand as one. Confidence Con focuses on diversity, intersectionality and community through hearing the voices of all women. They lead with compassion and empathy for those who have ever been marginalized or underrepresented. Through the many voices heard at Confidence Con, women learn how to truly love others in their community - starting with loving themselves. This unity and oneness has the power to change the confidence of future generations of women from the inside out.

At Confidence Con, they are fearlessly serious about empowering women to:

Take up space
Live bold lives
Speak their truth

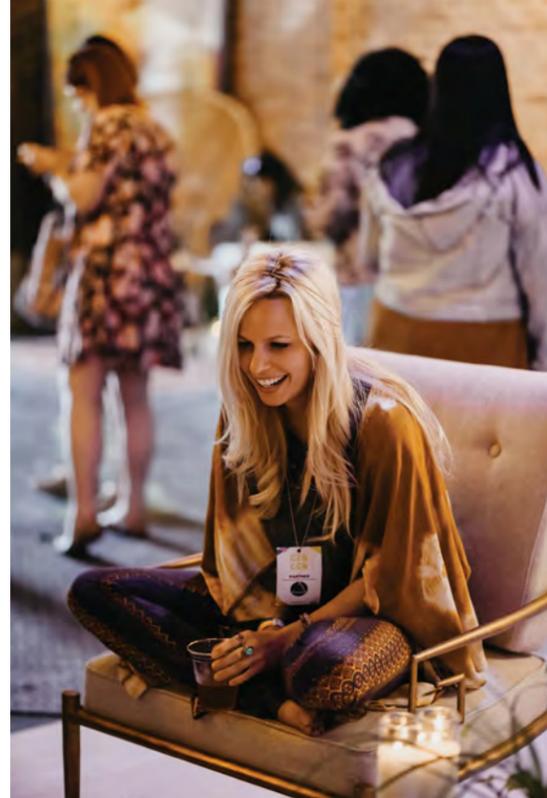
This female-founded initiative is dedicated to spotlighting, celebrating and enlightening the amazing women in our communities. They are fearlessly serious about empowering women to self-actualize through loving who they are, taking up space and speaking their truth. They thrive in being surrounded by the thought provokers, movers and shakers, artists, entrepreneurs and empowered.

The impact seen in past attendees has been remarkable. They are spreading this unique set of tools to female communities across the globe.

Each transformative event includes:

- a self-service keynote discussion
- necessary dance-parties
- a diverse group of inspiration, insight and raw conversations with local panelists
- the chance to form relationships with other like-minded, uplifting, creative and purposeful women
- interactive programming throughout the event
- actionable tools to step into your own power and greatness
- unlimited high-fives (and hugs, if that's your thing)
- Love bags filled to the brim
- And most importantly, a sense of belonging, connection and understanding. 🌱

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RACHEL WATERS





**“We’re fearlessly
serious about
empowering women
to take up space,
live bold lives, and
speak their truth.”**



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about the artist



Danielle Mah

Danielle is a graphic designer who helps creative women entrepreneurs, communities and brands tell their stories online through visuals and finding their unique brand voice. She helps those who want to be heard raise their voices and increase their impact. She specializes in branding and has a huge heart for helping creatives design a life they love through entrepreneurship. When she's not designing logos, she's finding ways to design her home and lifestyle with her Siamese cat by her side. She loves hot weather, dessert and goes by the saying: "Any season is ice cream season!" Her idea of a relaxing weekend consists of coffee shops, craft shows, food trucks, hiking and the occasional Netflix and Cheetos with her husband.

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