Career Research Paper

Name Omitted

I am interested in a career in graphic design because I feel that it would be a great and productive way for me to be able to express my creativity.

I spent thirteen years of my early life in Cambodia, a country that over the years has been able to recover from a terrible genocide. However, though they are continuing to progress, most of the designs that they continue to use are either lifeless or gaudy with no real rhyme or reason for the clashing of elements used. In my eyes, they are still in a color-starved, design-muddled state.   Maybe the effects of growing up in a country that was filled with drabness and disorder is what sparked my love for design or maybe it was the fact that my dad was a graphic designer for many years. I don't know. But I do know that I have always been a visually oriented person. I love beauty, order and color. I know that graphic design can affect you emotionally; it not only catches your attention, it speaks to everyone that sees it. It tells a story.

I want to be able to speak through the projects that I do. I see graphic design everywhere. It is present in everything we do, see, and in whatever we buy. It's full of creativity and inspires and speaks to the world that is all around us. I want to be a graphic designer because I want to inspire the world around me with my designs in the same way that other designers have inspired me with their work.

Graphic designers are constantly being inspired by the things around them, and in the book Inspirability, 40 Top Designers Speak Out About What Inspires Them, there is an interview with Graphic Designer Ann Field. She stated that some things that inspire her are: "French patisserie, Couture fashion, nature and those who play with it, fine art, music, and interior design -- particularly the 1930s and 1950s looks."[1] Another interview in the book was with Graphic Designer Steve Hartman. When he was asked what inspired him, he stated that he tended to try and find inspiration in odd places, but that he finds a lot of his inspiration in basic history. He said he enjoys reading about people such as Thomas Jefferson or Ben Franklin-- people who took risks and created something amazing. That's definitely one thing that I love about graphic design; inspiration can come from pretty much anywhere.

In a recent interview with Graphic Designer Louie Abrego, he shared his reason for becoming a graphic designer, which I found were similar to the reason I would like to enter the field of graphic design. He

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[1] Pashkow, Matt. "Inspirability, 40 Top Designers Speak Out About What Inspires." *How Design*. F.W Publications. Print. 2005. pg. 22

stated: "When I was young, I got captivated by the multi-form of art and tried to reach as many areas as I could by taking music classes, learning design, editing videos and drawing."[2]

Mr. Abrego had no formal education in graphic design. His career as a designer began at the age of fifteen by watching step-by-step YouTube tutorials as well as by trying to replicate other designers' styles. Though this is one way to start the journey to become a graphic designer, I believe being a student in the Visual Communications Program will better prepare me to enter a field that I love. The work that I do during the time that I am a student will prepare me, and since the program is a technique based program, it will provide me with the challenges that I will face working in a graphics design career. Even more importantly though, it will allow me to learn to help others communicate their stories.

In my interview with Mr. Abrego, I went on to ask him what he most enjoys about being a graphic designer. He responded, "Creating art concepts and portraying emotions/ideas into something that people will look at."[3]   He also went on to add that some of the stresses of being a graphic designer for him is the stress of not finishing a project on time, missing files, or accidentally deleting a file.

Curious to know what the primary goal of a graphic designer should be, I asked Mr Abrego. He stated that he thought that the main goal of a graphic designer was to "create something clear, easy to watch, but at the same time relevant and complete."[4]

When I asked Mr. Abrego what graphic art skills he considers important in order to being successful in the design field, he said, "In graphic design everything we see sends a message, a mood and a story. Graphic design is translating a concept to a visual result. So, it's not just about knowing how to do things, but how to get the people to see the same thing you are trying to express."[5] He went on to say that another skill or qualification that would help someone get started was, "Learning to get inspired, by many different things--music, colors, textures, moments, light, and mainly works from other people."[6]

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[2] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016
[3] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016
[4] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016
[5] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016
[6] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016

Mr. Abrego also stated that he felt that important qualities in a graphic designer are …

"creativity, patience and social connections. If the client is friends with you," he added, "it's easier to work for

them."[7]

Curious to know what a designer's normal day looked like, I asked Mr Abrego what he usually does all

day everyday. "It depends," he said, "but I usually start my day with coffee and reviewing what I did the day

before, then I continue a project, or I start a new one, and then it's creating a visual concept, finding some

inspiration, creating the elements, and merging everything."[8]

Graphic designers get clients through a variety of ways. If you're freelance, it usually tends to be by

approaching brands or companies that you'd like to work for and asking them if they would like you to work for

them after presenting your portfolio. Letting my curiosity get the better of me, I asked Mr Abrego how he usually

got his clients.. He said that he tends to get his clients from Facebook, his design page or even his personal

inbox.

There are different ways that a graphic designer will to choose to work, one way is to just work by

freelancing or working independently, one of the other ways would be to work in-house, via agency or on a

team. When I asked Mr. Abrego whether he worked independently or on a team, he responded that he did both,

but that usually working with a team gives a better and faster result.

There are multiple types of graphic design jobs out there in the world--jobs such as package design,

advertising/marketing, print design, logo design, web design, etc. Even illustration is tied in with graphic design.

In the book Becoming a Graphic and Digital Designer, A Guide to Careers in Design, the author has an interview

with Steve Brodner, an illustrator and caricaturist. In the interview Brodner is asked what he looks for in a

illustrator, art or craft. Brodner's response shows just how creative illustrators are and how they can be

associated with the graphic design field. He states, "Thinking, drawing, imagining, selling. Illustration will honor

those people who can combine talents, skills. They will always land on their feet, coming up with a great new

thing."[9] All of these different design careers tend to have one thing in common; they all put your imagination to

[7] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016

[8] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016

[9] Heller, Steven. Becoming a Graphic and Digital Designer, A Guide to Careers in Design. *John Wiley & Sons Inc.* John Wiley & Sons Inc. Print. 2015.

work as they strive to consider: What is my client wanting? What are his goals? How am I going to communicate that?

As a graphic design student, I believe that communication is a huge part of graphic design. Every time a designer creates a piece of work, they are trying to communicate something. Whether it is with words, with visual aids or pictures—their goal is to communicate a specific message.

When I asked Mr. Abrego how important communication in graphic design is, he confirmed what I believe with his response: "Communication is humanity's best gift, you can communicate something without words…just with colors, pictures, sounds and textures. So the challenge is to communicate the message you're trying to send, using anything and everything."[10]

Most graphic designers tend to sketch things out to be able to come up with ideas when working on a project. When I asked Mr. Abrego how many designs he usually sketches before choosing an idea, or if he even sketches out his ideas before he starts a project, this was his response: "I try to do 5 to 10 sketches, then show the best ones to the client so he can pick one."[11]

Graphic design as a whole is constantly changing and evolving as the years go by. When I asked Mr. Abrego what he thought the current trends in the industry were, he responded that he thought that the current trend was minimalistic, clean designs - designs that send only one message. He went on to say that he thought that the less colors and text there were, the better it would look.

When it comes to how much an entry level graphic design position is, it seems to vary from country to country and also varies on whether or not you are a freelance graphic designer or not. According to Indeed.com, the average salary for designers in the United States for 2016 seems to be around $53,000.[12] When I asked Mr Abrego, a graphic designer who is based in Monterrey, Mexico what he thought the average salary for an entry level graphic design job was, he said that it depended on the type of project you were working on if you are a freelance designer, but if you have a regular salary it's probably around $900 a month. That would be

[10] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016
[11] Abrego, Louie. Email Interview. 16, November, 2016
[12] Indeed. "Graphic Designer Salary." *Indeed*. Indeed. 21, November, 2016.
http://www.indeed.com/salary/Graphic-Designer.html

about $10,800 annually. In the UK, according to Adrem.com, the average junior graphic designer's salary is about£22,000 annually, the equivalent to a little over $23,000.[13]

One of the places that I would love to be able to work for would be Adidas. From my research it seems like they are great company to work for. They strive to shape the future of sports by creating products that people will enjoy and love. On the Adidas website, this is what they say about shaping the future of sports, "It requires an innovative application of creativity that goes beyond any one job, department or brand. Wherever you sit at the Adidas Group, creativity means taking risks, solving problems and being adaptive."[14] Adidas also has this quote by Ben Herath on their website: "As a designer you need to be willing to always learn, always ask questions, challenge what you know and unleash your natural curiosity. A curiosity to ask why does that shoe look like that?"[15]

To me, that is what I am looking for. I love being challenged, pushing the limits of my creativity, and I love being able to learn new things. Adidas would challenge me to push myself further and help to explore more of my creativity. Another plus would be the fact that I would be able to, as their website puts it, "redefine the way clothing and footwear transform the future pitch, court or course".[16] If I could design for a company such as Adidas I feel that I would be able to be a part of a design team that would be coming up with new and creative ways to create innovative products that consumers would enjoy.

As a graphic designer I would love to be able to create pieces of work that stop people in their tracks such as the surreal work of Erik Johansson. His work makes you stop and just stand in awe of what he has created. I would even love to design print styles such as the iconic book jackets of Chip Kidd. I would love to be able to see my designs and creations out there in the world for people to enjoy, as well as being able to portray a message and story to those who have eyes to see it.

[13] Adriem Group. "UK Graphic Design Salary Guide." *Adriem Group*. Adriem Group. Web 1, May, 2016.
https://adremgroup.com/guidance/graphic-design-salary-guide/
[14] Adidas Group. "Who We Are". *Adidas Group.* Adidas Group. Web. 2016. http://careers.adidas-group.com/
[15] Adidas Group. "Meet the Designers". *Adidas Group.* Adidas Group. Web. 2016.
https://careers.adidas-group.com/teams/makers/design#meet-the-designers
[16] Adidas Group. "Meet the Designers". *Adidas Group.* Adidas Group. Web. 2016.
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