

It was a fortunate day when my high school mentor, Nancy Zimbalist, looked up from my latest homework assignment and asked me if I had ever considered going into graphic design. My answer was no, for like many, I had heard the phrase “graphic design” but had no idea what the practice entailed. Nancy was right to suggest this for she knew that I had a budding knowledge and practice in design work long before I ever had any formal training. At the time, my medium was mixed media collage in which I employed the foundation elements of design. In the creation of these collages, I had two main principles; firstly, that they be concept-driven. Secondly, text should always be an element. At the time, this was important to me because I felt it added something to the work that no other element could. It not only made people have to stop, pay attention and engage with your work but it also added a certain layer, texture and color that I have found no image-making ever could. In this way, I’ve always been attracted to words, language, text and eventually, type.

Though I now have years of formal design training under my belt, these principles still ring true in my work. I am a conceptual and thus research-based designer. I don’t make any decision in regard to a piece without it relating back to the initial concept. Design shouldn’t be making something look pretty or cool. Instead, design should engage, inform and even challenge the viewer on all levels, from content to type choice. I believe the best way to accomplish this is to invest meaning in all those levels.

Because of this philosophy (and perhaps because I am a certified type-junkie), I try to use typography as a driving visual element and push the way that type is understood as an element in and of itself. Type isn’t just the conveyance for the content of a text or an afterthought to be stuck in the corner of an image. It is still my belief that type has the same abilities to convey meaning and create connections as images. While of course there have been and are great designers who have pushed and redefined how we handle and think about type, innovation never ceases and I would like to consider myself a part of that.

While I have gained the digital skills necessary to be a designer of today during my schooling, I have not lost the zeal, skills or motivation to work with my hands. I specifically choose my alma mater, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, for that reason. As they widely endorse in the Visual Communications department, the computer is a tool and I view it as such. The school’s interdisciplinary curriculum allowed me to study design as well as other fields, such as letterpress printing, relief printing, book making and fiber & material studies. These have become additional tools (or at least other bases of knowledge) to my design work. In this way, I consider myself a versatile designer with a skill set of both new and old technologies.



nicole guzzo

**119 Neponset Avenue
Hyde Park, MA 02136**

PH: (617) 792-5689

EM: nguzzodesign@gmail.com