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My Graphic Design Professional Reflection

GRA 491

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My journey as an artist began with some crayons and some paper, given to me by my mother once she realized my fascination with drawing. At that young age, I remember how I used to pay attention to everything around me – whether it was the design motif on the curtains or all the different flowers my mom grew in the yard. I enjoyed picking a subject for the day so I could reproduce it on my drawing pad. I had no training nor a teacher, but I knew that I had this ability to create whatever captured my interest or imagination. Besides art, I also had a love for aviation and for a moment, I began veering towards a career in that field, but the dream of designing had a greater influence on my decisions. Looking at everyday items, I immersed myself in ways of creating my own version with a unique look that reflected my style. I also contemplated how the use of designs could be used to provide answers whenever it was needed. “Within problems or frustrations of everyday tasks, there is a potential for a design solution that can make the experience easier on the end user.” (Stevens, 2020, p.16). I was eager to participate in a field where my best ability would allow me to make a valuable contribution. Fast forward to today, and here I am, pursuing this course that will equip me with the means of using design to satisfy needs or solve problems that require the skill of a creative.

 The classes that I’ve taken throughout this program have enabled me to refine my approach to art and design. (*I’ve received suggestions or advice that enabled me to rethink my strategy and I was sometimes in awe, viewing the final result and comparing it to the first sketch that was conceived*). The opportunity to analyze and partake in critique, is one that has served well to drive me to improve or hone my skills as a creator. I’ve come to appreciate how important it is for my work to be experienced from someone other than myself where they have the power to express their views and provide valuable advice. This is why I’ve had to prepare myself to adapt and be flexible, no matter how confident I am about a particular concept. Experience has taught me that there’s the possibility to take a good idea and make it even greater so as to achieve a high level of success. The audience of course, plays a great part in determining whether a design is effective and well received. Useful feedback can stimulate thinking that leads to changes in one’s approach or style and I think this benefits everyone as it promotes originality and gives the designer better exposure in a world of tough competition.

 In a world of competition, one has to be resilient, unique and persevere in order to make any progress. This is where I took on the class which would see me develop my brand which bore my personal logo. It also saw the creation of my personal website that would give me the opportunity to gradually showcase my work to the public. I have to say honestly that the construction of a website seemed extremely daunting at first. I loved the idea of designing it but when it came to learning code, initially, I struggled to take command of it. Even now, I admit this is one area that is a bit of a hurdle. Though the technical aspect has been a challenge I am willing to take the time to practice and improve my skill in this area, keeping in mind that the world depends heavily on digital creativity. It would benefit me immensely if I can successfully overcome my weakness as I would be aptly prepared should an opportunity present itself .

 The content that I’ve assimilated from this educational journey will remain with me as I take a step towards applying the techniques learnt, in my progress as an artist, illustrator and designer. *Learn to be flexible,* I told myself as the world so rich in culture and diversity, is always evolving. People’s tastes and expectations can vary from one end of the globe to the next and I’m grateful to know that this is a factor to consider when approaching a design project. Even what was taught on the basics of drawing is essential to me as a professional in the field. For example, Dabner et al (2014) state, “Sketching and drawing engage you in a constant process of observation, and help you understand the world around you. Whereas computer technology is another tool for the development of ideas, you should treat drawing as the basis of expression that underpins your design decisions” (p. 16). Even though I was born with this ability, I learned to be humble and open-minded. I smile every time I look at my work or someone else’s because whether it’s a building or a piece of furniture, it began with a rough sketch, that was eventually refined and brought to life. I consider myself to be in a constant state of improvement as I take on assignments or projects now and in the future. I want to allow myself time to review what I’ve learned and explore what can be achieved to leave a positive impact with clients. These clients, I believe will consist mainly of those who need projects related to branding, community events, traditional painting and greeting cards. (*although it would be a dream come true to delve into product design – including transportation design*). In any case, I need to manage my expectations and exercise my best effort at achieving a professional result every time it is required.

My print portfolio shows some of the best digital work that I’m capable of since I’ve undertaken this graphic design program. Although some pieces are of my own inspiration, they are not what I would consider to be personal. According to Taylor (2012), “Lengthy, deeply personal projects that bear little resemblance to anything a designer would be asked to produce in the real world can result in a repetitive or highly uncommercial portfolio” (p. 13). It was always my intention to pursue works that weren’t just for self-satisfaction but rather would be utilized by society. For example, I have an interest in livery design and this is displayed in one of my pieces, where I imagine a project which uses the USPS as an example. This is an idea that not only can be improved, but it is practical, and it also showcases my skill and ideas. Another example is the product illustration in which I portray what’s possible when an accurate visual interpretation of a concept is needed.

The other works found in my portfolio such as the Pasta Amore products and the Upper Crust logo is one of my strengths as I am very confident in composing designs that meet such requirements. This can be seen in the high quality of these pieces, and how they fulfil the needs of a client in this regard. In the case of the Upper Crust logo for example, I remember creating several sketches at the ideation stage. Then I thought, *why not use bread as the answer?*  And so I did! That is why the logo has this unique, yet professional look to it. I admit that I’m proud of what it became as the final product. The piece called *Preserve Life* came at time when I was involved with some mural projects. Funny enough, within that composition itself is what appears to be the destruction of a wall mural – one which represents the poor and downtrodden. This composition would serve as a blueprint for a future project. I am pleased that I was able to make amends to all of my illustrations for a more polished presentation. All this is thanks to the classes taken during this program which helped guide me on the right path.

On the flip side of this, I ran into some unexpected issues with my design portfolio page on my website. Once I had all the necessary changes, I encountered a problem where two of my compositions were not visible to the viewer. They were visible when I ran Adobe Dreamweaver, but for some odd reason, they didn’t show up on the website, setting me back as I spend hours upon hours trying to solve this issue. This ties in with what I mentioned previously about the technical aspect of website design – I was simply baffled. Eventually I was able to address the problem through trial and error and just in time as I try my best to meet deadlines. At no point was I ready to give up and I know that the same attitude can be applied to my professional life. In the event that I’m faced with an obstacle, I need to rely on my knowledge and confidence in producing a satisfactory result on time.

I have spent most of my time doing designs on my own and in the future, it may very well continue to be this way. It’s not to say that I’ll work on my own without ever considering to work as part of a team. I do realize the importance of group work where working as a unit can prove rather fruitful as ideas are subject to evaluation and critique before arriving at the final stage. Whether I choose to continue my journey as a lone wolf or as a team member, I will carry with me the knowledge, skills and attitude that I’ve acquired during this course to boldly face my next project with enthusiasm and determination to ensure the target audience is left with a satisfactory experience.

References

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