

**FEB
2019**

**ON
PRACTICES**

**ROUND
ONE**



TEN INTERVIEWS

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CO-OWNERS
WCROW

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GRAPHIC DESIGNER

JEFF SHIN^{p20}
PRODUCT DESIGNER
WEALTHSIMPLE

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PHOTOGRAPHER

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CO-OWNERS
PLUS

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JIIN

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NICE & JUICY

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CREATIVE DIRECTOR
KID. STUDIO

*On Practices is an online editorial platform
for dialogue on building and maintaining
creative practices. Each round is comprised
of ten text-based interviews with notable
practitioners in various spaces.*



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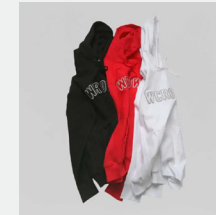
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WCROW is a contemporary ready-to-wear label based in Toronto. Combining high-end Japanese production methods with American street-style influences, their first collection 'OPEN HOUSE' debuted in the fall of 2018. Tomo serves as the creative director, spearheading the design and overseeing production of the garments. Vince is the brand director as well as co-founder and producer at Kid. Studio, a video production and design studio.



OP It seems both inexplicable and foretelling that the two of you would eventually come together on this project. Can you guys speak on where you were before WCROW as well as how it came about in the first place?

T I was designing at CYC Design Corp. (RC & wings+horns) for a few years and OVO as their Product Production Manager prior to starting WCROW. With that being said, Vince and I had discussed starting a venture together from 213 Sterling days back in 2013 so the mindset has been in the works for a minute. I've always wanted my own clothing company so it was just a natural progression of learning design, textiles and production at respected firms to gain the proper experience from a creators perspective as well as the business knowledge to strive in the apparel industry.

V For the last 4 years, I've been running Kid. with my brothers Glenn, Julian and Christo. It started off as a design studio but as we experimented with video early on, we found creative opportunity in the medium because it allowed us to express our concepts beyond a still frame and now accounts for 90% of our business.

Prior to this, Tomo and I met while working at Getoutside selling footwear. It wasn't apparent what we'd eventually work on together but knew that the time would come, naturally. 2017 Winter, we link up at a bar, tells me that he wants to start a clothing brand and without hesitation, we went for it — a similar flow to how Glenn and I started Kid. now that I recall it.

OP Appropriation has become an increasingly prevalent theme in fashion. What are your thoughts on this phenomenon?

T Appropriation is commonly discussed in a negative light as there have been many cases of abuse of this practice due to ignorance and laziness. I think appropriation is good when the proper research and knowledge is gained on the specific topic in order for the appropriator to be able to re-create or re-purpose with respect and sensibilities through their perspective. You see this the most in the culinary industry of chefs pulling influence from other cultures to put their own spin and cater to the palette of their culture to create something familiar but brand new in experience.

I believe that with access to information online, it is easier now and going forward for people to appropriate in any industry, especially apparel. I really do think it's a positive in a

sense because it means more merging and education of different cultures which ultimately is the first step to finding common ground with people of different up bringings. It comes down to paying homage with respect to the originator while engraving your own background and values into the designs.

OP How has WCROW incorporated this kind of philosophy into the clothing?

T When designing for WCROW, one of the main things I always incorporate is how do we make something familiar yet unique and different. I look at UK 50s tailoring for how clothing was made to fit on a man, 50's blue collar class for the rebellion attitude that brought casual clothing into the world and 80's in Japan when so much growth was happening as a country that the abundance of style and music pushed the pockets of style we see today in major cities like Tokyo.

Speaking outside of aesthetic, I really respect the traditional garment techniques of the Japanese/East Asian culture and the durable construction methods of American workwear so these are areas that I have studied and look to continue educating myself in order to create the best product for WCROW. A few examples from our current collection would be the Familiars Office Jacket, Pinstripe Herringbone Office Jacket & Trouser set and the WCROW® 3M Felt Hoodies.



Familiars Office Jacket
Traditional Japanese embroidery technique woven on a workwear silhouette



Pinstripe Herringbone Office Set
Japanese herringbone pinstripe workwear textile paired with the Office Jacket and relaxed taper trouser to give a nod to all three inspirations (50's UK pinstripe suiting, Japanese appropriation of herringbone weave and 50's American workwear)



WCROW® 3M Felt Hoodie
Vintage typeface and felt material WCROW appliqued over top of a 3M backing. The felt typeface pays homage to vintage clothing and the 3M backing is a nod to our current generation. The combination of the two resembles the old and new and is something that creates nostalgia from a unique perspective.

OP Since taking on new responsibilities at WCROW as brand director, while still producing and managing video work for Kid. Studio, how do you find your personal practice changing as you dip your feet into another industry? How conscious are you of these shifts and to what extent are they predetermined?

V Starting anything new has its challenges to find traction especially when you're balancing multiple roles. About 4 months into WCROW and running operations/production at Kid, I started crashing physically and mentally. It was clear that if I wanted the brands to be successful, I had to make adjustments because there was a void when it came to self-care and that didn't translate well to either workflow or my teams. I made a 180 by creating a routine for myself — training a few times a week, cutting out garbage from what I ate and taking

time to hang out with nature. The two industries are quite different but creating this loose routine now provides me with the energy and focus to continue developing the brands.

OP How does somebody realize they are crashing? And how does one start to work on a 180?

V It's subjective but for myself, I was lacking focus, my patience was thinning and my ideas became very narrow. It also translated to my life outside of the projects, sometimes affecting those closest to me and that was enough of an indicator that change was necessary. Starting a 180 begins with being aware and transparent with yourself about what you need to improve on - often the most difficult part.

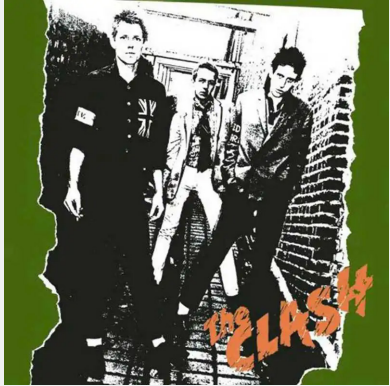
I look at UK 50s tailoring for how clothing was made to fit on a man, 50's blue collar class for the rebellion attitude that brought casual clothing into the world and 80's in Japan when so much growth was happening as a country that the abundance of style and music pushed the pockets of style we see today in major cities like Tokyo.

OP Top 3 albums of all time?

T



Interpol
Turn On The Bright Lights
2002



The Clash
The Clash
1977



Daft Punk
Discovery
2001

V Can't give you the top 3 of all time but these are the latest I've listened to:



Buena Vista Social Club at Carnegie Hall
2008



A\$AP ROCKY
Live. Love. ASAP.
2013



Against All Logic
2012 - 2017
2018



King Krule
The Ooz
2017

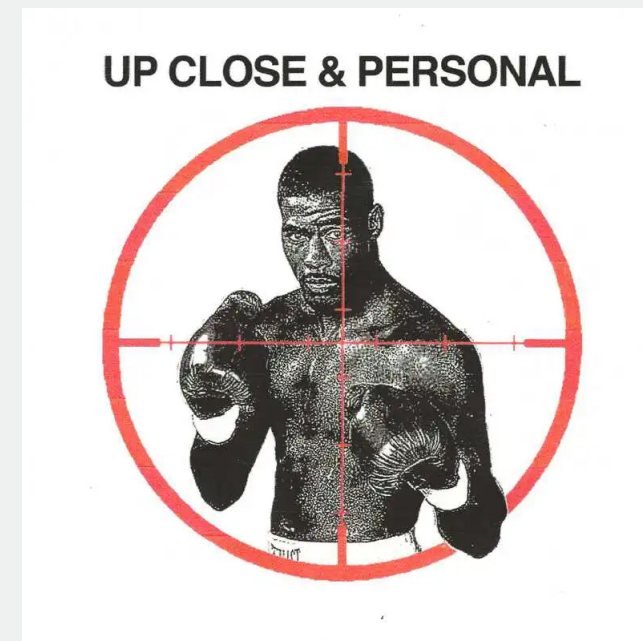
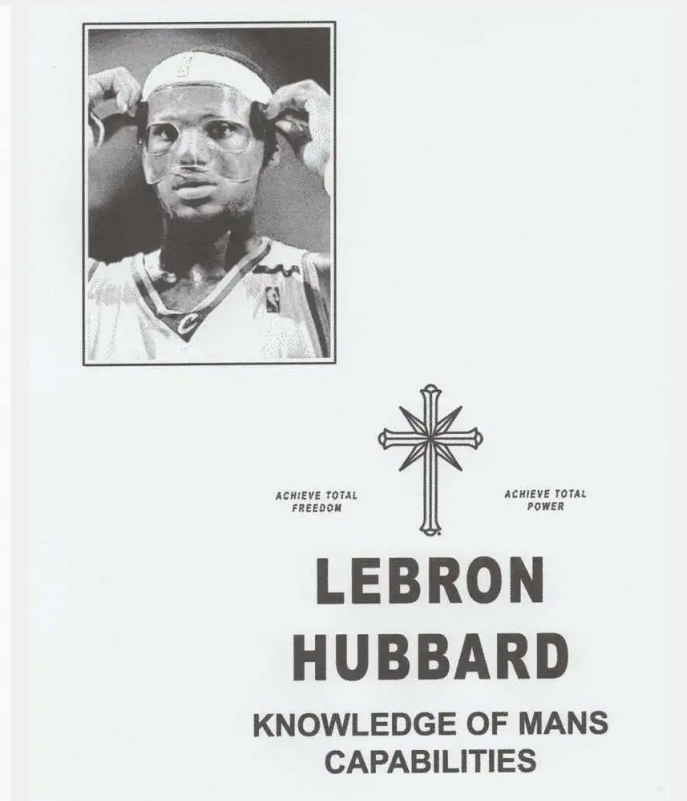
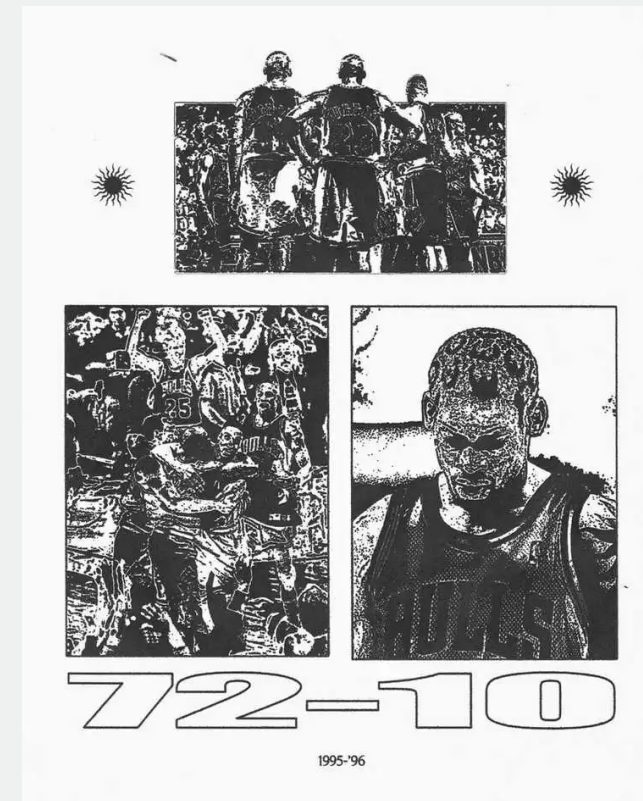
RONAN MCGEE

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Ronan McGee is a graphic designer and illustrator based in Toronto. He also runs 224, an online shop which serves as a platform for some of his work. His work leverages 1900s ephemera to produce gritty yet familiar imagery.



OP What's your current workflow like?

R Current work flow involves a lot of digging for references, photocopying, printing and scanning. The textures of old printed materials have always intrigued me, trying to replicate those is how I got into it.

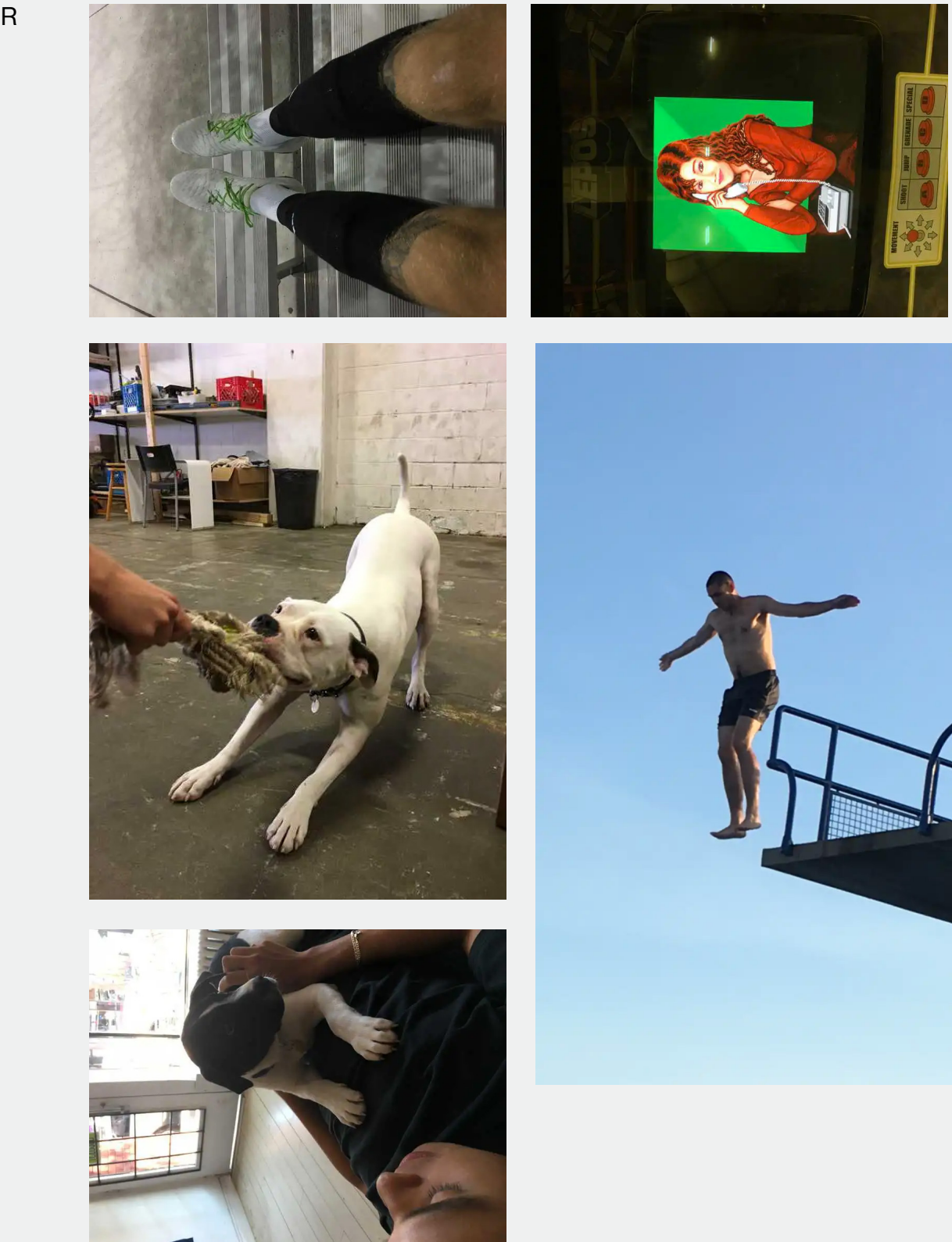
OP In *The Debate: A Legendary Contest of Two Giants of Graphic Design*, Wim Crouwel and Jan van Toorn have a conversation about their two opposing design philosophies. The following is an excerpt from the book:

If we reduce the two men's arguments to their most elementary form, then Crouwel believes that it is the graphic designer's sacred duty to present what the client, as message-maker, wants to say, and to do this as clearly and objectively as possible. The designer has no reason or justification to become personally involved in the message, imposing his vision between sender and receiver; to do so will inevitably cloud and confuse that message and make it harder for the viewer to understand. For Van Toorn, this technician-like posture of detachment is an illusion. He argues that there can be no such thing as an objective message and no neutrality on the part of the designer, because any act of design, in which the designer takes the role of intermediary, will introduce an element of subjectivity. Since this is the case, the designer should explicitly acknowledge and make use of the opportunity to construct and critique design's social meaning. For the designer to take this course, rather than hiding behind a mask of neutrality, both engages and liberates the viewer. Once the designer acknowledges that subjective intervention is inevitable, it is natural to want to work for clients whose content accords with the designer's personal concerns and convictions. Crouwel rejects this narrowing down of possible design clients, while Van Toorn sees Crouwel's uniformity of graphic outcome as a restriction of conceptual and aesthetic possibilities.

What are your thoughts on the two ideologies and how do you determine which side to veer towards?

R I think one can be on either side of this debate given the situation. There is a sweet spot between the two ideas. The designer should have creative control, but it is the client's duty to hire someone who will fit the project. Design suffers when that bond is off-kilter, in either direction.

OP Can you upload the last 5 photos from your camera roll?



OP Was there a conscious effort to develop or articulate a style in your work? What references, image production methods, time periods or motifs do you feel drawn towards?

R I'm drawn to different types of ephemera from throughout the 1900's. (Classifieds, instruction manuals, produce boxes etc..) There is an ongoing conscious effort to replicate the textures I see in them; the stippling, half tones and little imperfections from the printer. I like the simplicity and permanence of old printed matter, and I try to achieve that in my work.

OP What are some primary ways you consume your content / references?

R Usually through eBay, there is endless pages of retro print for sale on eBay, and I can search for exactly what I'm looking for.

OP Can you speak about 224? What is it, how did it start, and why?

R 224 is a platform that serves as my design portfolio as well as a shop where I occasionally rescue unused graphics. Often my favourite designs don't find a home, if I still feel strongly about them after a while I'll print them on a shirt or something and publish it there.

OP Do you see 224 being limited to apparel?

R I've never thought about it as limited to apparel, I guess its just happened that way so far. I'm not sure what'll be next. I've always wanted to make a book or something, but no plans right now.

OP How do you integrate inspiration from your personal life to your work and do you ever try to separate the two?

R There isn't really any separation there. It's all intertwined. I can't think of a better source of inspiration.

OP How do you manage your schedule? What's your typical day like these days?

R I have two day jobs, so I try to design in between, wherever it fits into the schedule.

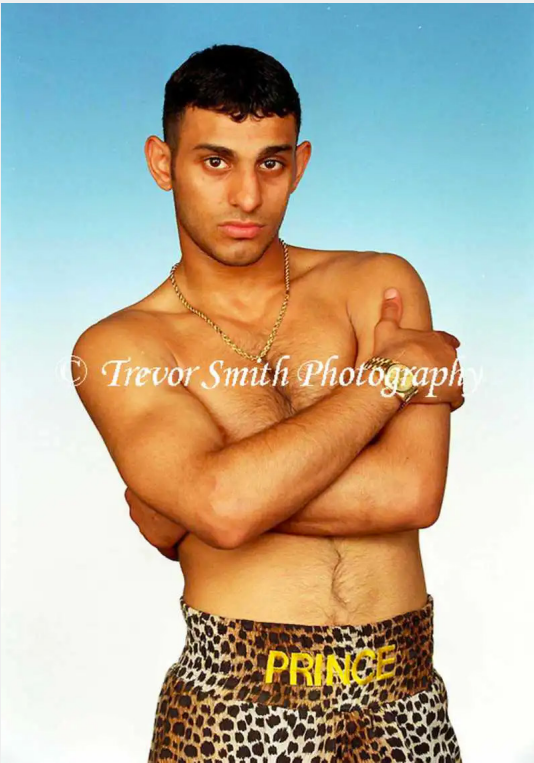
OP What would your dream project be?

R Something ridiculous, like a logo for Scientology or the UN. It would be quick, my favourite designs kind of pop in my head and I have to execute them right away. Stuff gets cloudy when I re-visit it too many times.

The designer should have creative control, but it is the client's duty to hire someone who will fit the project. Design suffers when that bond is off-kilter, in either direction.

OP Can you share one example of your work and what the source imagery looks like vs the final result?

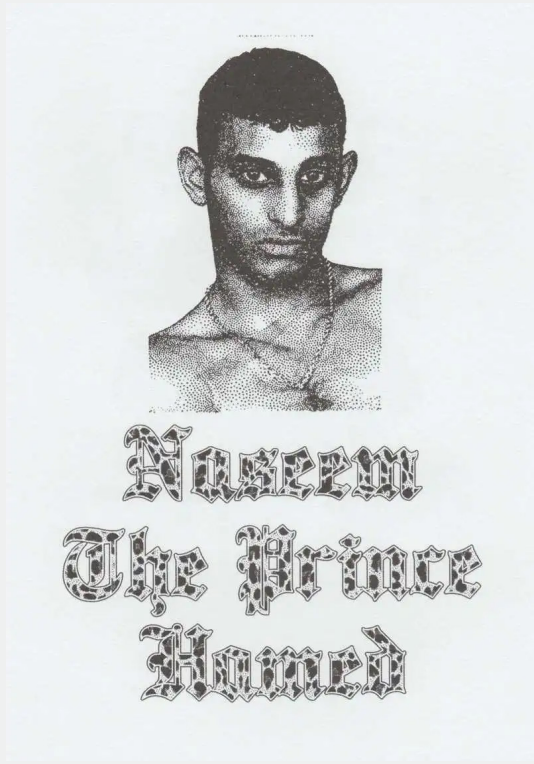
R



This is the original photo



Here I stippled over the picture a few times to separate the dark parts of the face into layers.



This is the final black and white composition of the face and text.



And the final print.

OP How do you catalog your references?

R In very messy folders on my laptop.

OP How much of your process is analog vs digital?

R In terms of time, 90% of the process is digital but the short analog parts are the most important.



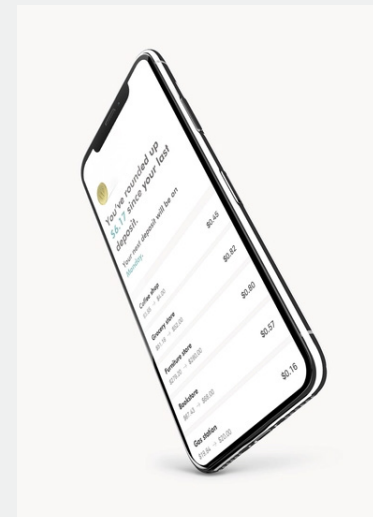
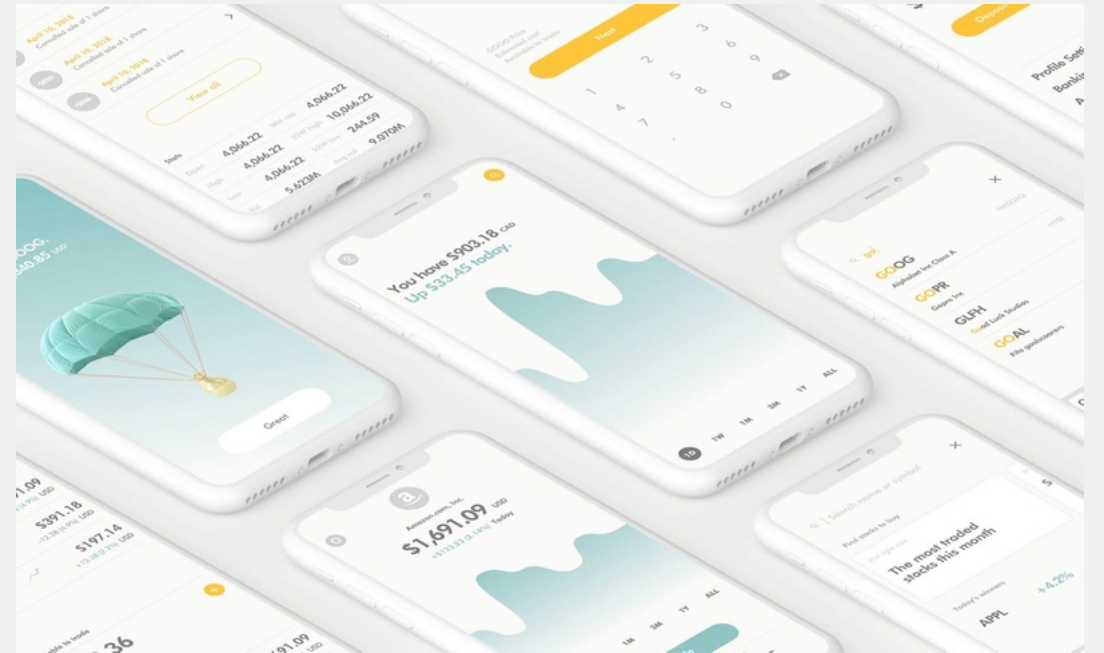
JEFF SHIN PRODUCT DESIGNER WEALTHSIMPLE

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Jeff Shin is a product designer based in Toronto. Currently, he's a senior product designer at Wealthsimple, making investing simple and accessible. Previously, he led product and design at Free, the creator studio behind The Creator Class, and before that, he was a product design lead at 500px, a global photography platform. He has taught design at schools like RED Academy and Brainstation, and often speaks about design at various conferences, events, and workshops.



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OP As somebody who's practice largely exists within corporate environments, how do you reconcile a personal style or motifs throughout your work?

J At the highest level, it's important to join a company whose design philosophy is in harmony with yours. That way, you can do creative work and most of the time have it be good for the brand and the product.

Pragmatically, it's about striking a balance on a daily basis between working within the guardrails of your design system versus pushing new ideas forward to the team, and having the self-awareness to detach your ego from your work.

OP Where do you see yourself in 3/4 years? Do you have any short term or long term goals?

J For now, I want to keep pushing forward great design in financial services at Wealthsimple. It's a terribly underserved industry when it comes to design despite its importance in everyone's lives, and I think we're doing a pretty good job in raising the bar.

In the long term, I'd like to build my own company. Having worked in startups for a while now has shown me how much impact you can have when you tackle important societal problems with design and technology. And there's definitely no shortage of important problems to solve.

OP You're a great example of drop-out success story. Can you describe your life during the time of the decision and how that's led to where you are currently?

J I always liked making stuff. Music, photos, movies, posters, websites, etc. Creating something out of nothing and being able to put them out into the world via the internet was really empowering, especially as a kid who grew up in a small city. When it came time for university, I only had one goal: get better at making stuff, so that I can make even cooler stuff. My real passion was design, but I never thought anyone could have a successful career in it, so I enrolled in computer science since I also had an interest in technology.

Within the first few weeks of university, I knew I was in the wrong place. I attended a few lectures, read through the syllabi, and I realized it wouldn't make me better at making stuff by the end of the year. I don't mean to discredit the value of a great computer science education, but it was all too theoretical for me. So I began skipping all my classes, and spent all

of my time on becoming a better maker.

At some point, I learned about user experience design as a career. It was like a eureka moment for me - user experience designers are in a sense a hybrid of art and science, and they were working on really interesting problems. From that point, I wanted nothing else than to become a user experience designer. I spent nights and weekends reading articles, listening to talks, researching best practices, and I started doing freelance design work for friends, student clubs, and startups that were a part of the university incubator.

At the end of my first year, I had a half decent design portfolio, and a 1.6 GPA. I wanted to join a company as a designer, but quickly realized that most companies don't offer design internships, especially product design internships. Not having any formal design education didn't help either. Knowing I had to creatively get my foot in the door as a designer, I applied for a marketing internship at a small startup with high growth. During my interview, I explained that while I can definitely help in marketing, what I was really good at was design. They ended up bringing me on, and within my first week, I sought out all the design work available, and was able convince the founder to change my role to a design intern.

A lot of people seem to think that my decision to drop out was this intense singular moment that took a lot of pondering and risktaking, but it really wasn't. As soon as I had a design internship under my name, it was pretty straightforward. I worked hard, kept learning on nights and weekends, reached out to designers I admired for advice, and at the end of my internship, the company offered me a full time role as a product designer. Accepting it and dropping out of school was a no brainer - why pay to study something you're not interested in, when you can get paid to do what you love?

Since then, my career just took off. I've been fortunate to have a career that's high in demand, so I've been able to work on really interesting products with incredibly smart people over the last 5 years. But deep down, I'm still the same kid that dropped out of school to pursue design - I just love making stuff and putting them out into the world.

OP Straying from convention and forging your own career path can be daunting and rewarding at the same time. If you could pass down some lessons to a younger version of yourself, what would you say?

J Don't rush into adulthood.

I think as kids, we all glorify adulthood in some way, whether that's wanting to have a great career, or wanting financial independence. This was especially true for me, as I was 19

when I started working with people much older than me. I felt like I needed act like a grown up in order to be taken seriously, so I kind of forced myself to grow up. I started seeing my university friends less, and instead devoted all my time to work.

Then it started to take a toll on me a few years later. I burned out pretty hard, was unsure about who I was, and felt out of place everywhere I went. Things are better now, but I've come to realize that you have literally decades to be an adult, but only your early to mid 20s to be young, make mistakes, and have the time and space to figure yourself out.

The proliferation of technology has forced a lot of brands to become universal (sometimes for no good reason), so that's why we're seeing a lot of safety and sameness in their designs. But I think we may be approaching the far swing of the pendulum.

OP How separate do you like to keep your interests from your work?

J If you're referring to my interests being design, they're not really separate, as my work took over design almost entirely in my life. When you start doing what you love for a living, your passion becomes intertwined with your livelihood. Broadly, this is a great thing, but it can take away the passion from what you love doing. Sadly, designing isn't much of a hobby for me anymore. I just don't have the energy for it on evenings and weekends since I expend most of my design energy at work. But on the bright side, it's led to a better work life balance, and it's helped me develop other interests outside of design.

OP A big reason why these dialogues can provide helpful context for others is the recent dissolution of career paths in the creative and cultural sectors. For example, something like marketing, which once had a leviathan-like structure of etiquette and pecking orders is now transforming into a wild-wild-west, free for all who can cross the lowering barriers to

entry. How do you think this recent paradigm shift will affect the design industry?

J Speaking strictly on product design, I think it will make the industry more diverse, and the work we produce more accessible, ultimately improving the lives of people who use digital products. This has already been happening, but we still have a ways to go.

From the very beginning, there have been biases in UI design. Since the first personal computers and the first graphical user interfaces originated from Silicon Valley, the earliest UI designers skewed towards a more affluent, well educated American west coast demographic. This may have been acceptable when computers were only used for highly specific tasks, but as computers become a part of our everyday lives, it means that user interfaces have inherent bias.

One of the core principles of design is empathy, but empathy can only go so far. Sometimes, you just can't empathize with everyone to a degree where you understand their background, their identity, their biases, and their view of the world. This isn't necessarily the fault of the designer - it's just that our empathy has intrinsic limits. This is why diversity of all kinds (age, gender, ethnicity, income, viewpoint, health, etc) matters in the design industry. We need diverse design teams with people from various backgrounds to create designs that are free of major blind spots, and serve everyone, not just a specific demographic.

The product design industry still has more work to do to make itself more accessible and inclusive, but we're getting there. I used to teach a user experience design program at a bootcamp in Toronto, and I remember being happily surprised that the students in my cohort all had diverse backgrounds, work experiences, education levels, and personal interests. And they were all itching to bring their unique viewpoint to designing products for everyone to use.

OP Inclusivity in design has been a hot topic for a minute. What are your thoughts about exclusivity in design? What is the role of accessibility within aesthetics?

J Whether exclusivity is appropriate in design is really dependent on how wide you cast your net in terms of audience. Generally, the broader the net, the more inclusive it should be. For certain "vital" services in finance, health, and even social networks, inclusivity should be non-negotiable, even if it comes at the cost of aesthetics. But for designs intended for smaller segments, exclusivity is appropriate, and can even be a good thing - as long as the risks are understood.

OP With globalization, the ‘casted net’ is being increasingly widened. It seems like graphic imagery everywhere is gradually amalgamating into a singular style. Given this momentum, how do you see the role of human influence towards graphic design in the future?

J I think almost all things move in a pendulum movement. The proliferation of technology has forced a lot of brands to become universal (sometimes for no good reason), so that’s why we’re seeing a lot of safety and sameness in their designs. But I think we may be approaching the far swing of the pendulum. We’ll inevitably swing back, as companies realize that there’s value in capturing a smaller, but more specific audience can be just as valuable if not more in many cases. Good examples of this are SSENSE and Robinhood Crypto.

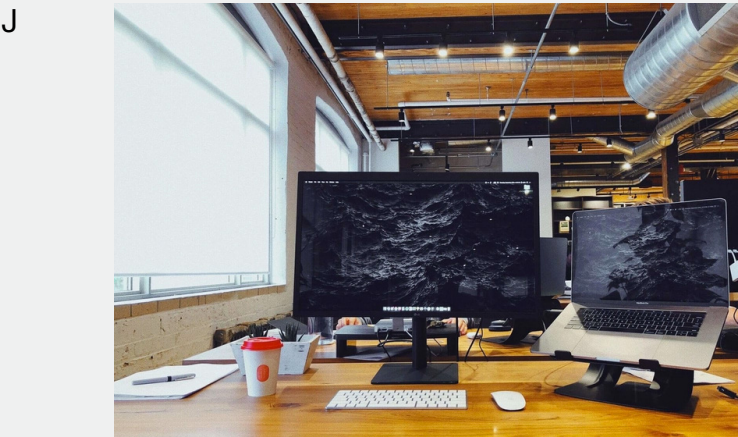
OP What’s your daily schedule like these days?

J It really changes day to day as designers at Wealthsimple own multiple projects across multiple teams at any given time. But we do have some daily rituals - we do a standup every morning to get a sense of what we’re all working on, and an informal critique near the end of each day to review each others’ work.

OP How do you spend your downtime? How much downtime do you have?

J I spend my downtime like most people - see friends, enjoy food, and recharge. I’m quite happy with the amount of downtime I have these days. I wasn’t good at this at the start of my career, but I feel like I have a work life balance that optimizes for long-term productivity.

OP Can you share a photo of your work station?



OP Do you listen to music while your work? If so what have you been listening to recently?

J Nothing gets me more productive than a long electronic set. Too Future has great mixes from a wide range of producers that I’m usually listening to on any given day.

KRISTIE MULLER PHOTOGRAPHER

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@kristie.muller



Kristie Muller is a videographer, photographer, and artist from Toronto. Her practice largely exists within the cultural sectors and includes clients such as Heron Preston and Toro Y Moi.

OP Can you talk about how you started as a photographer?

K I started out using disposable cameras when I was really young, nine or ten. My family never had cameras around and there weren't many family photos, but I was always drawn to it. I was a dancer at that time so I took pictures of my friends rehearsing and the costumes.

OP Do you have a camera of choice? If so, why?

K I have a few that I like, mostly digital now. I've been using phone cameras a lot, especially for video. I like how discreet it is. I can sneak a lot of pictures/videos easily, especially on set. During shoots the energy shifts completely if I bring out a big camera. My favourite camera is on one of my old iPhones. It's really tired out, and makes everything look flat and muted. I don't want any of the images I'm producing to make you think about cameras.

I've turned down a fair amount of work over the years. It can generate a bit of guilt, but the guilt pales in comparison to the regret of doing something you knew wasn't right for you from the beginning.

OP Your imagery has a candid yet distinct familiarity to it, are there any conscious themes or motifs you like to explore in your work?

K There are a few things that I keep revisiting: memory, surveillance, theft, temperament, character, Pareidolia, micro expressions. I use classic looking lines, but a lot of my work has a sense of humour to it.

OP Is there a certain type of work you would like to start attracting? What is your dream job?

K Lately I've been focused on taking my video formula and using it for music and fashion projects. I study culture and I like to tweak it. I hid out for a while alone in my work, but now I'm inspired to work with people. I have a lot of dream jobs. Ultimately I want to be doing things that feel fulfilling and allow me to continue my work and fuel bigger personal projects that I have up my sleeve.

OP What are your short and long term goals?

K I'm trying to build and keep a momentum in whatever I'm doing. I've spent a lot of time feeling like I've been on hold somewhat. Less waiting around, overthinking and planning; more doing. I'm working on a short film, planning to have it finished this year.

OP How separate do you like to keep your personal interests from your work?

K My personal interests spill into my work constantly. I'm interested in that crossover. My background is in dance, so I approach directing and editing like a choreographer. In my editing I work with nuances in the motion and steer things in and out of the sound like movements in dance. Fashion has always been a thing for me too. I do all the styling in my fashion projects and personal work. Music, writing and comedy also play key roles.

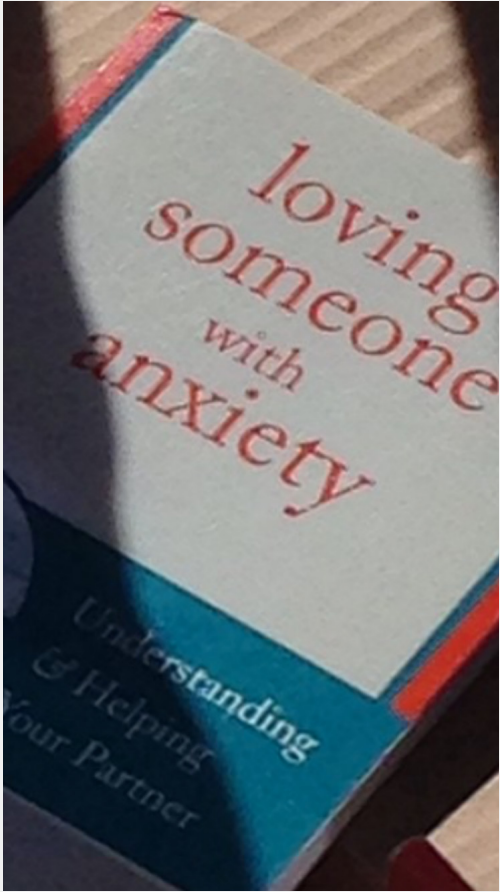
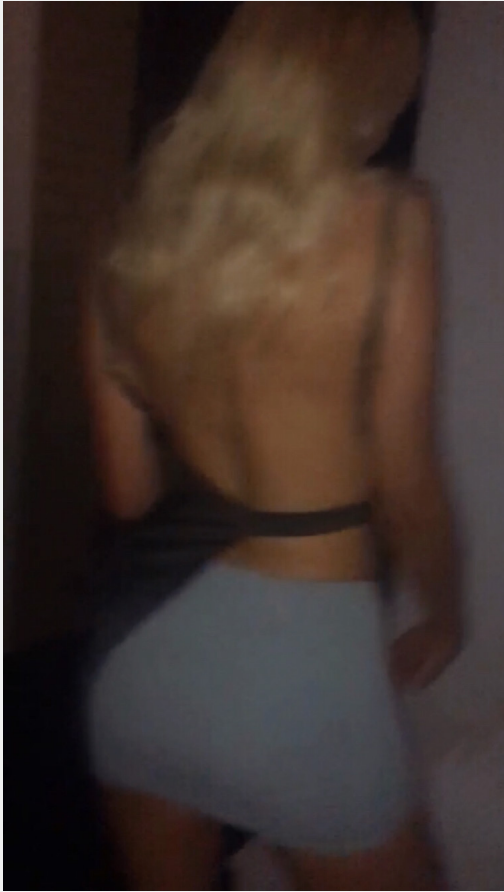
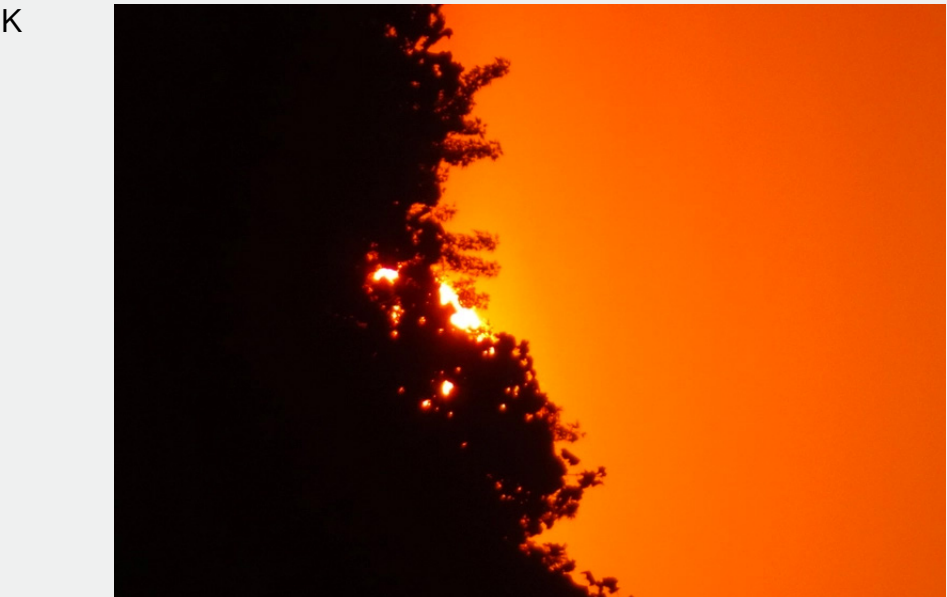
OP What are your thoughts on declining work?

K I've turned down a fair amount of work over the years. It can generate a bit of guilt, but the guilt pales in comparison to the regret of doing something you knew wasn't right for you from the beginning. I've always been selective about what I associate my work with. I'm really lucky, often the people I work with understand my vibe and entrust me with a lot of freedom.

How do you consume content and references for your work?

K Usually it's just through my surroundings. I'm always taking in the details. Things I see, people, words, shapes, nature, garbage. I like reality tv, lately I've been drawing a lot from that.

OP Can you share the last 5 photos in your camera roll?



OP As somebody who likes to blur the line between personal and professional, how conscious are you of developing a practice? Do things happen more organically or are you trying to steer it in a certain way?

K Always steering, always developing. A few years ago I wanted to disassociate myself personally from my work, now I'm being more immersive. My character is what's driving what I do, and it's all somewhat performative.

OP What do you mean by performative?

K Performative can sound insincere, but it's not. Some of it is my demeanour and some of it is the process itself. I'm not a stiff and uptight photographer type. When I'm filming, I'm moving around a lot. When I take pictures I'll go wherever to get my angle. I'll climb really high, or I'll literally stripper crawl on the floor. In directing, I like to act out scenarios with whoever I'm filming, and then we can draw things out of each other. It's the same in my photography, I'll often demonstrate movements or actions for a model/actor to portray.

OP What is it like to be on set with you?

K I like to set up camp and establish a vibe. I prefer to have as much privacy as possible, with a small group of people (2 - 5 tops). Everyone that's there needs to be active in what's happening. Extra eyes and cameras are stifling. I try to keep it light and open ended. I'll have a loose plan that I'm ready to abandon at anytime. As a director I'm pretty clear with what is working and what isn't. I have a very intuitive 'yes' or 'no' system that's instilled in me. I like to gather and gather, and then I'll take that and break it down and twist it into something different.

OP How much of your work is staged vs candid?

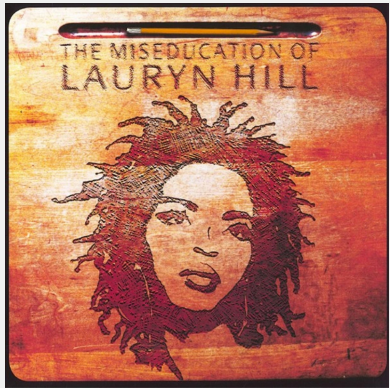
K It's both. I tend to think that pictures have little to do with reality. I'll photograph things that I see as they are in the street, but they'll end up looking surreal. I hone in on details and leave out the extra noise. During planned shoots I'll depict fictitious situations, but usually the footage and images that I end up using are candid from in between moments. I'm sneaky.

OP Top 5 albums of all time?

K That's tricky, here's a few I like:



Janet Jackson
The Velvet Rope
1997



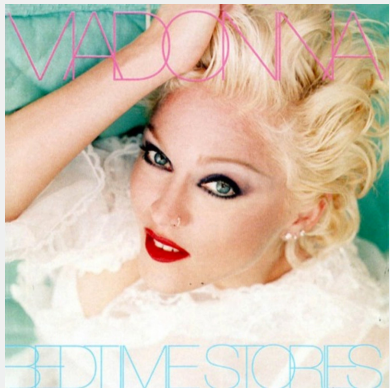
Lauryn Hill
The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill
1998



Young Thug
1017 Thug
2015



Gunna
Drip Season 3
2018



Madonna
Bedtime Stories
1994

ANDY & IBRAHIM CO-OWNERS PLUS

Instagram
@plus

Website
<https://plusshop.ca>



Plus is a luxury consignment store in Vancouver with a focus on streetwear apparel and collector's pieces.

OP What were you guys doing before Plus?

A Losing money at the casino.

I I'd just finished a web development internship at Shopify and was focusing on eCommerce and finishing up my computer science degree.

OP It's funny to watch when people ask what you do. You give a different response each time. How do you manage your time between all your commitments and businesses?

I Definitely a question I haven't quite perfected my answer for. I feel like I can easily lose someone in that answer by oversharing so I try to gauge the situation and give them an answer based on the person and setting. Still working on my time management though since I no longer have school as an obligation. For the most part, I really like to write everything down whether in my notes app, trello board or calendar I feel like if it's documented I will get to it. Keeping track of everything also helps me gauge progress and incentivize the completion of my tasks.

OP How did you get into consigning and reselling apparel? Did you always know this was what you wanted to do, or was there a shift in your life when you decided to turn it into a career?

A Selling sneakers to turn a profit wasn't even a thing until the late 2000s. Sure there were a few scattered rare pairs that could fetch you a little bit of coin but nobody back then would ever consider it being a profitable business. Before social media the only way to gauge what was cool was going to school and seeing what the cool kids were wearing. Like a lot of people, I was into retro Jordan's in highschool. I use to flip snapbacks and started a little screen print tee shirt brand in my parents basement, by 2013 there was enough of a market to sustain a business.

OP What was the process like for starting Plus? Biggest obstacles?

I It all happened relatively quickly. Andy and I were in discussions of potentially opening a shop back in August when we happened to stumble on the Gastown store listing; it

seemed fortuitous timing given the store's history, size and location were just right. Given the ideal match of the shop listing Andy and I decided to invest in building out our concept store. Everything moved rather quickly. Andy moved out to Vancouver a week later and by September the lease had been signed and plans to reconfigure the space had been drawn up. By far the hardest aspect of setting up the store was allocating and cultivating the right staff. We were fortunate enough to have such loyal and hard working friends come out and support us in our early stages, which helped pave the road to building and sustaining a pretty solid team of employees which I firmly believe uphold all the brand's beliefs and ideals. Stock and supply is another issue which we initially found difficult, however after building close relationships and connections with both local and international collectors we were able to abridge this challenge and stock our shelves with the very latest drops and more exclusive collector items.

OP At what point could you tell Plus was going to be successful?

A When Ibrahim wanted to buy my shares.

Most of my closest friends that are also in my professional network have come from connections made online.

OP What's your favourite piece in your closet?

A



My favourite piece right now is my Junya Watanabe x TNF Backpack Jacket.

I



My favourite pieces is my CDG x Lewis Leather Biker Jacket.

- OP

Advancements in technology have led to more accessibility into virtually every industry. How do you think your professional practice has been shaped by being brought up in these times?
- I

Accessibility to resources, people and feedback I think really has changed the capacity and speed I can learn new things at. For example, a few years back when I was working on starting Overalls I was super adamant on embroidering every single tag for every customer with their name on it. Within a matter of a few days I was able to find a used machine in Toronto for a fraction of the price of a new one, purchase a license key for the embroidery software on a forum and get 1:1 training on how to use the software through Skype. Moreover however, the accessibility to personal and professional connections is definitely the most important aspect of the current domain that has shaped my professional practices. Most of my closest friends that are also in my professional network have come from connections made online.
- OP

Having an unconventional career path, what were some key moments that validated your decisions as you became further invested?
- A

My parents actually supporting me and assisting me financially towards goals of mine. When I dropped out of school they were really upset..
- OP

What advice would you give to a 10 y/o version of yourself? What advice would you give to an 18 y/o version of yourself?
- A

To 10 year old me: "please make sure mom and dad don't enroll in the extended French program"

To 18 year old me: "get the biggest loan you possibly can and buy a bunch of bitcoin"
- I

To 10 year old me: "Keep playing Runescape and buy as many party hats as you can."

To 18 year old me: "Be more consistent on non-academic based projects and spend the bare minimum amount of time on school."

MISTER VICTORY GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Instagram
@mistervictory

Mister Victory is a graphic designer based in Toronto. He currently has an independent practice with a specialty in creating music covers and logos.



OP When did you know that you would pursue your passions full-time?

MV Art has been my passion since as long as I can remember, however it wasn't until my later teen years that I considered it to be a career possibility. I've always enjoyed drawing and painting, however never held myself to the the standard of what I believed at the time to be a "real artist". In school we'd learn about the typical roster of icons, such as Picasso, Van Gogh, Da Vinci, etc. Although inspiring, the constant exposure to artists such as these narrowed my perception of who could succeed in this craft. As a kid I felt as though artists were either selling pieces for millions, or broke working on their art as a hobby. It wasn't until my older brother Deaddilly introduced me to photoshop and graphic design, that I started to view art from a different perspective. Realizing that art isn't just what's displayed in galleries, it's in nearly everything we interact with on a daily basis from large billboards to the design of matchbox. From that point on I knew I could make art much more than just a passion.

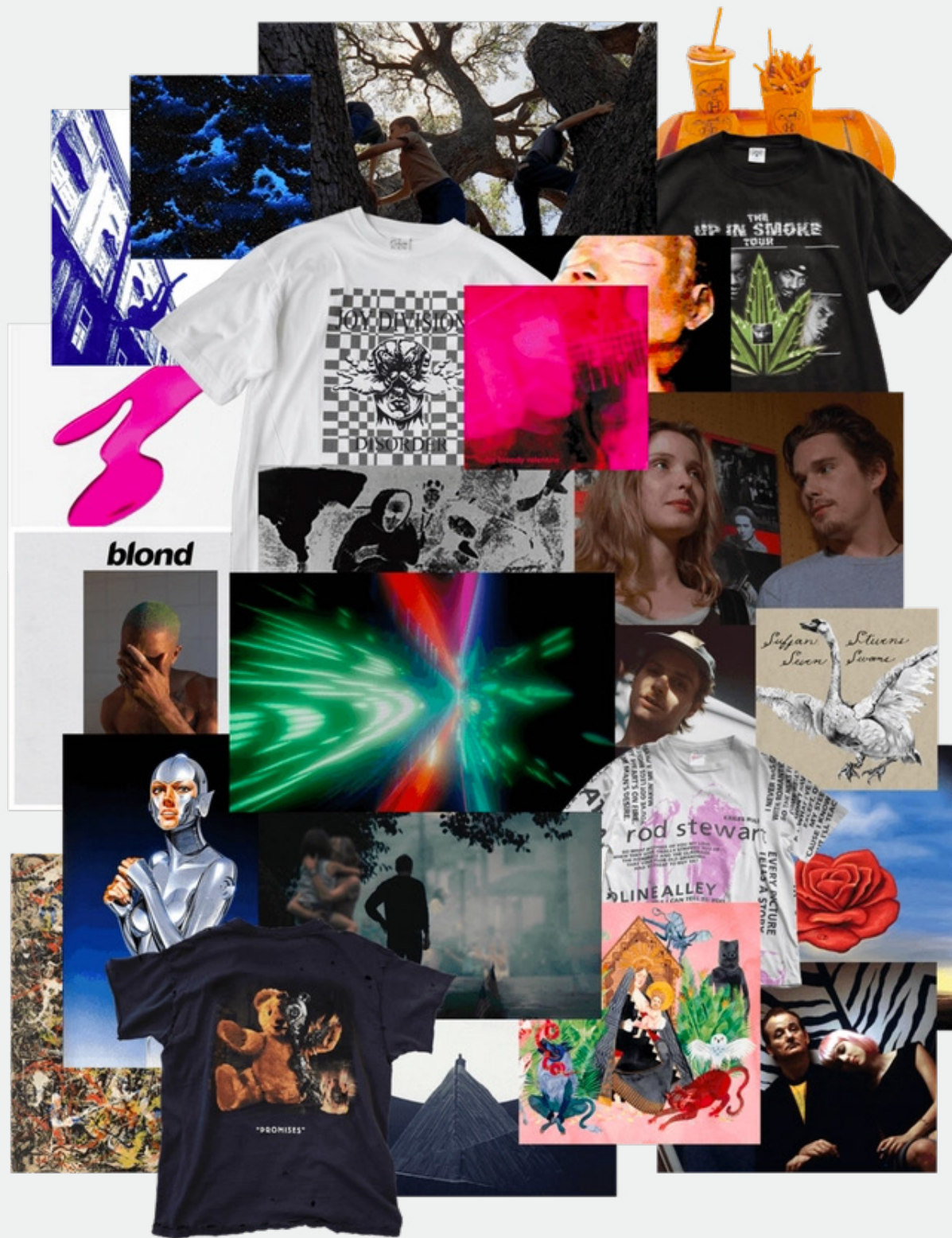
OP Can you describe your process for creating album art?



Select covers 2015 - 2018

Album art is one of my favourite projects to take on, however also one of the most delicate. There's a level of trust behind being tasked with visualizing another artists collection of work. Which is why I prefer to start my creative process with a conversation. Asking the artist a variety of questions that bring clarity to the deeper meanings behind the music. After that I listen to the music, and just let my mind take me where it will. I have terrible process work for album art, and to be honest sort of just have a deep routed trust in my creativity to make something special each time. It's this organic approach to the process which makes it a pleasure to work on, and leads to some of my favourite artworks.

Now when I'm without work I view it as time to develop myself as an artist and work on projects without financial gain in mind; and without fail, by taking the time to create new personal art, commissioned work follows.



OP What are some of your sources of inspiration?

MV	Top 5 Films
1	1. The Godfather Part II (1974)
2	2. The Godfather (1972)
3	3. The Godfather Part III (1978)
4	4. The Godfather: A Novel for Television (1979)
5	5. The Godfather: The Coda (1984)

1. Before Sunrise - Richard Linklater
2. Lost In Translation - Sofia Coppola
3. The Tree of Life - Terrence Malick
4. Blue Valentine - Derek Cianfrance
5. 2001: A Space Odyssey - Stanley Kubrick

Top 5 Music Artists

1. Elliott Smith
2. Father John Misty
3. Radiohead
4. Sufjan Stevens
5. Frank Ocean

Top 5 Designers/Artists

1. Peter Saville
2. Hajime Sorayama
3. David Rudnick
4. Tom Sachs
5. Hassan Rahim

OP How do you think your work would change if could never touch the adobe suite again?

MV I occasionally wonder what would happen if we were stripped of the basic things we use on a daily basis for creating and marketing. Things such as adobe suite, social media, and technology as a whole. To consider what life would be like without these tools and platforms really reminds me how much I take for granted, being apart of a generation that truly has the world at our fingertips both creatively and socially. While there's no doubt it would make achieving exposure and certain aesthetics difficult, I also believe it would do plenty of good. Forcing creatives like myself to work with what's directly accessible to experiment, develop techniques, and form a unique aesthetic. Ultimately it comes down to creativity, focusing on the ideas and bringing them to life by your own means. Whether that be a mac-book loaded with adobe suite, or a pencil and paper.

OP To receive a steady stream of inbound work is a luxury as a freelancer. Although their livelihoods depend on it, most graphic designers don't enjoy selling themselves. How do you think this conundrum should be handled for emerging talents? How did you handle it?

MV When those inevitable dry spells come around with little to no paid jobs, I don't stress it. I became a graphic designer out of wanting to create art for myself, and along the way from piece to piece I've received interest to do commissioned work. In the past when I've stressed over not getting jobs, it's led to nothing but self doubt and unpleasant work experiences. Whereas now when I'm without work I view it as time to develop myself as an artist, and work on projects without financial gain in mind; and without fail by taking the time to create new personal art, commissioned work follows.

MARCO LEE MUSICIAN JIIN

Instagram
@jiin.wav

Marco is a producer, art director, and musician based in Seoul. He releases music through the moniker JIIN.



OP How did you get into commercial music production?

M I don't remember exactly, I think the work first came through referrals from friends - either way I really liked not feeling so much pressure writing and submitting music.

OP How would you describe your own music?

M My music is fat flanger on the master bus and an overall engineering nightmare.

OP What do you mean engineering nightmare?

M I don't really have the oversight to think about the final mix when I'm writing or programming. It's a bad habit that makes life so much harder when I'm finally ready to mix the track. Everything usually sounds pretty muddy when I first start and it's always challenge to clean it up.

Im not conscious of developing a creative practice, anybody organized enough has the potential of doing that, unfortunately thats not me.

OP Having lived in both cities, what's it like operating a creative practice in Seoul vs Toronto?

M Seoul gives you way more room to take creative liberties - the budgets are higher and the clients either trust you more or just don't really care what you do once they hire you (still not really sure which one it is). That's probably the best part.

Another good part is being situated in between China and Japan - flight's are super cheap and quick so you can go back and forth, allowing you to work more in person and talk face to face with people you would otherwise only see behind a screen. I think that's important.

OP Apart from audio engineering and production, you've also done work in art direction and graphic design. How did you get into that and does your one medium inform the other in any way?

M Friends of friends - it seems like everything starts off as odd jobs for me. Yeah, design definitely influences music and vice versa - you can't spend all your time working on music only, you'll get stuck in a bubble. It's important to have some view into other people's bubbles to steal stuff you can bring into your own life.

OP What's your process like for commercial work? How much of your work does that take up?

M It depends on what kind of client it is and what they're asking from me. If it's a score I try to start with an image of the brand - what their influences are, what kind of audience they might have, what will adding music change about the meaning of their clothes? etc. I try to imagine the colour and texture of the music written in the context of the client. Right now I don't do a lot of commercial work, but in between personal projects it usually takes up 60-70% of my time.

OP How do you organize your schedule on a daily basis?

M My daily schedule is super temperamental to be honest - the closest things to routine are probably when I go eat (and even that is all over the place). I would probably be super productive if I had a routine haha.

OP How conscious are you of developing a specific sound? Are there recurring themes and motifs in your work?

M I'm going for a pretty specific texture, not so much a style or a specific genre. I like so many different styles of music - from house to R&B, to garage, rock, trance etc. I think establishing an identity through texture can be a trademark that justifies bouncing between different genres to a fanbase yeah?

I like to reference Chinese culture in one way or another - whether that be through the artwork, the lyrics or the texture of the music.



56

- OP How conscious are you of developing a creative practice? Do things happen more organically or are you trying to steer it in a certain way?
- M Im not conscious of developing a creative practice, anybody organized enough has the potential of doing that, unfortunately thats not me. Definitely organically... haha
- OP How did get involved with the club scene in Seoul, and eventually your involvement in Cakeshop / Contra? What did it take to brand and develop it?
- M I came to the right place at the right time. I moved here in 2015/2016 and the Cakeshop team was planning on opening a new venue. They asked me to help design the space and after that we started working more closely. I don't want to speak on that as I'd like to keep a line of privacy between the public and our business. I think branding can help a brand, but at the end of the day it comes down to taste and curation in music that keeps the name alive.
- OP What music have you been listening to recently?
- M I've been listening to Thom Yorke's new soundtrack for the Suspiria remake, and the score for the opera Damon Albarn did a some years ago.

ROSS LAI CREATIVE DIRECTOR NICE & JUICY

Website
<https://niceandjuicy.club>

Instagram
[@youngdumplings](#)

Twitter
[@youngdumplings](#)



Ross is the creative director of Nice & Juicy, a full-service production agency in Toronto. With a primary focus in film, Ross spends his time between directorial responsibilities and the creative direction of various subsidiary companies and ventures.

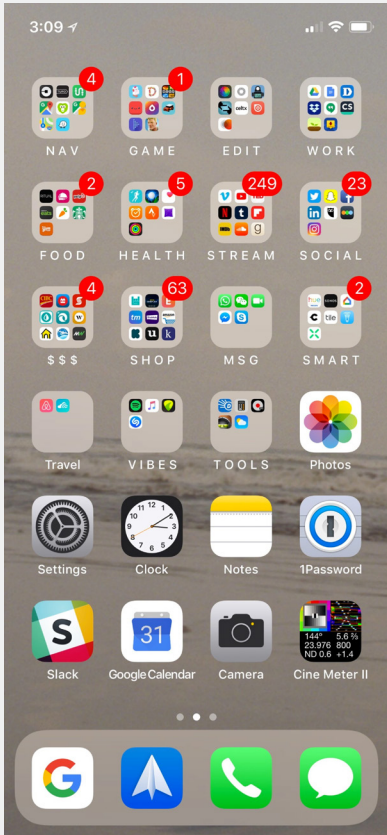
- OP What is your definition of a creative practice?
- R Everything can be a creative practice. Walking down the street can be creative practice. Conversing can be creative practice. Making a meal can be a creative practice. Philosophizing about existence can be creative practice. Giving your mom a back massage can be creative practice. As long as you are expressing an internal, intuitive, human truth in what you're doing I think that can be considered a creative practice.
- OP Is there anything that you would consider not a creative practice? Are there any lines that can be drawn to distinguish whether or not something is an active extension of one's practice?
- R Hard to draw a line considering I'm starting to see that with my practice everything is starting to become a lifestyle, where life and work are symbiotic. Like some sort of never ending couples dance, where the weight leans from one end to another but never really disconnects. For example, a conversation with a stranger can have profound influence on the output on something as tangible as a script or a decision made on set. The way I arrange the things in my room may inform how I stage actors or camera in a shot. Taking notice of natural light during a casual dinner may influence what time of day we should stage a scene. You can't only measure a painter's practice when paint is brushing against canvas, considering their walk down the street may be the spark of their next decision. What I can say though is I think if the mode of how a creative product was conceived can be replicated by an algorithm then it can be considered not creative.
- OP What was it like at the beginning of Nice & Juicy?
- R Considering I started the company broke on personal credit cards with my business partner Christian, kind of felt like jumping in a deep end of a pool without any knowledge on how to swim, only to realize it's an ocean...with sharks (turns out to be little fishies). You learn the swim over time, then perhaps learn how to build a boat then hopefully start seeing a trajectory of momentum that makes you think.. maybe it's not crazy to assume that we can fly. To summarize though, extremely tough, tremendously educational & incomparably fulfilling.

I just remember the feeling of walking into a lively El Salvadorian bar, cigarette and beer in hand, with my DP Diego gripping his 35mm Arriflex and a bare bones local film crew to support.

- OP As the creative lead in a collective practice, how has your work environment been shaped by your own personal ideologies?
- R I've always had a resentment against any sort of institutionalism or dogmatism and found myself healthier when independent and free without the bounds of regulation. I think I've been blessed to share similar ideologies with my comrades at Nice & Juicy & feel we're all doing our best to preserve our own independence as we strengthen our interdependence. We all dropped out of school. We connect on values. We want to live a balanced & virtuous life. We play on the same soccer team. We decline jobs that don't align with our voice. We'll pour money and time into things that we feel connected to. We fancy risks. We favour growth over comfort. In many ways, we're different, but in others very similar. The collective environment & culture has to be shaped by all of our personal ideologies or else it's not worth pursuing.
- OP How did you get into filmmaking?
- R I became that kid at the skatepark with the camera, sadly before I learned how to kick & push. Lots of bruises and a healthy dose of coming-of-age delinquency later, started taking the art more seriously. In short, hustled a load of random video related opportunities to keep alive and kept a disciplined study & practice at any available opportunity. Fast forward a few years, a few impulsive life decisions later, now finding myself in a position where I'm confident to say that filmmaking is going to be a lifelong pursuit. The level of emotion that can be evoked in a motion picture and unmeasurable amount of information that gets communicated to an audience is absolutely magical.

OP Can you upload a screenshot of your desktop and phone background?

2



OP Can you provide some context to your background images?

R

My desktop background at one point was double layered in screenshots and documents in it's smallest icon form. Technological vomit. At the time I was working with Justin Manahan (or Mister Victory) on a project & he showed me his ropes of organization. Coming from a design background, he was definitely more particular on order. Since then I just simplified to a minimal set up & never looked back. Same goes with the organization with the phone applications, kind of replicated the set up from the boy Elie. Both set ups made me appreciate keeping it clean.

The frame of the man is a still from our documentary "Mothers of". I just remember the feeling of walking into a lively El Salvadorian bar, cigarette and beer in hand, with my DP Diego gripping his 35mm Arriflex and a bare bones local film crew to support. Without much time to process, we dove in, essentially barging into their games without much more than swift head nods and hand shakes to approve our unexpected appearance. Our eyes were set on this dingy dark room in the back, slot machines illuminated by a few worn down florescent tubes - a weighing decaying ambience as a single fan oscillated, breezing a row of men, chain smoking with eyes locked on the prize. So we decide to roll on one gentleman, just inches away from him, really without his consent at this point, edging closer and closer until.. unexpectedly, he turns 180, breaks the 4th wall for a quick moment, completely unfazed and semi-distressed, before returning to his game. Something about his vulnerable, childlike gaze stuck with me like glue. It was one of those moments you know you'd never forget & ended up being an essential shot used in the film.

OP There is a graphic object with which you seem to have a special connection with. Can you speak about your infatuation with circles and the implications that they have in your life?

R

Circles are awesome. This kind of fascination picked up during a branding project that got me existentially wired. Contemplating things like patterns, time, culture, humanity, universality. The most ancient Chinese symbol is essentially a sliced circle, twirling around each other with remnants of the inverse in each side. That in itself implies so much. Duality. Chaos and form. Balance. It's a concept that I'm quite obsessed with. There's so much simplicity and information in such a simple object. It's a polygon with infinite sides. It's kind of infinite and nothing at the same time. Like a paradox. The Vintruvian Man. Ouroboros. Sacred geometry. Fibonacci. PI. Intersect it and you'll see a plant. I lived in a Mongolian yurt for short exchange in China & it felt really cleansing to have the sun peak & disperse the room evenly in the shape of a circle. Also the utilization of space was surprisingly optimized. There's just a lot of phenomenas & meanings I've drawn from circles. I think most

complex problems should be able to be illustrated in a few simple shapes & I always seem to weirdly come back to the circle for answers.

OP How do you manage your schedule? What’s your typical day like these days?

R Google calendar & a notebook, for shared & personal management. Every day is different but usually involves reading, conversations, writing, emails, meetings, food and a little too much caffeine. Pretty chill, as opposed to days on set which feel more like a military operation in comparison.

OP What were the most valuable lessons you’ve learned from your profession?

R Too many. I learned to trust my intuition, the gut. I feel most things are is felt first and post-rationalized after. I think it makes sense to trust the former, considering it has already been subconsciously processed. I’ve learned to be more open. The importance of learning. The importance of unlearning. Ex-forming. Staying foolish. Staying curious. Learned to celebrate differences. Including my own. Learned to value vulnerability and honesty. Learned to not only trust but enjoy the process.

OP Where do you see Nice & Juicy in the near future?

R Doing exactly what we’re doing right now. Shedding blood, sweat, and occasionally tears for the love of humanizing, cinematic experiences. But perhaps on a bigger scale. Much much bigger... To be continued...

OP If you had to decide right this moment, what would your last meal be?

R Hmm.. likely a splurge of Japanese food. Miso soup, sashimi salad, a plate of torched sushi, karaage, motoyaki, takoyaki and whiskey on the rocks to wash down the sorrow.

HARRISON ROBINSON MUSICIAN HARRISON

Instagram
@harrison.music

Twitter
@prodbyharrison

Harrison is a producer and musician from Toronto. His music is diverse and versatile with remnants of funk, house, and pop.



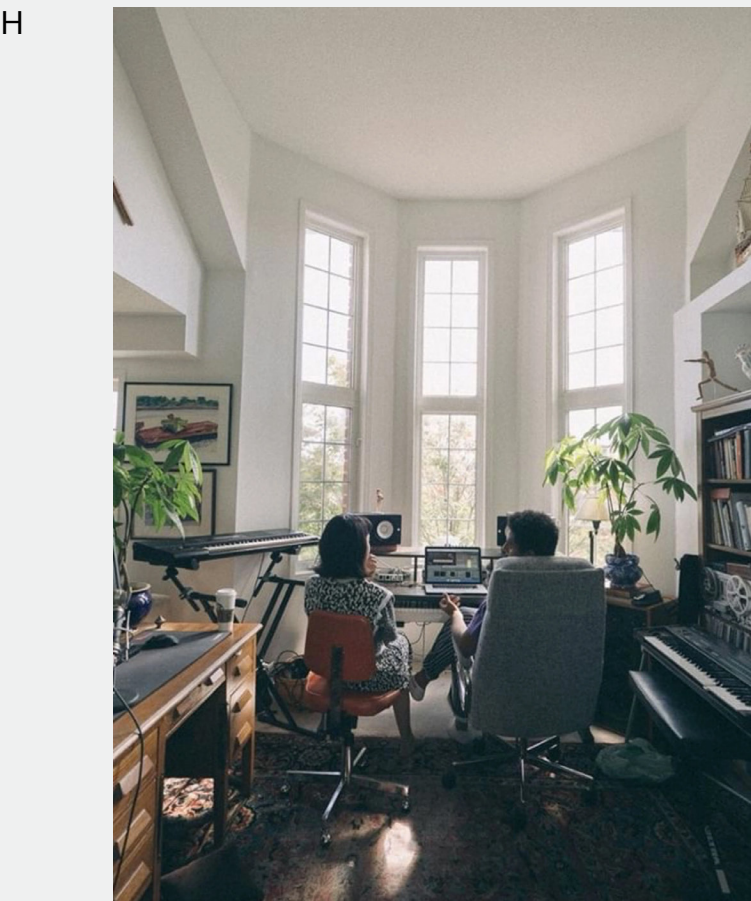
OP Where did your interest in music come from and how has it developed into a practice?

H Although I grew up loving music, I didn't fully appreciate it until grade 7 when I discovered the instrumentals of Nujabes and Damu the Fudgemunk. The process of creating made its way into my life when I was in grade 10 high school. Just beats for fun and slowly trying out experimentation with new genres I was finding

OP How long does it take you to make a song?

H I usually take less than a day to produce a song. If I don't finish it quick, I will be unsure if it's good or not. When you hear a loop over and over again your ears start to get tired of it. I think the shortest time was 30 minute and longest was 4 days.

OP Can you upload a photo of your work station?



OP Music has profound ties to geography. As the local Toronto music scene increases its global visibility, how do you think the sounds that come from this shift will be affected?

H I hope the music coming from Toronto continues to be genuine as more spotlight is put on it. If it starts to differ to formulaic, people will just look for the next up n coming city.

OP How do your musical collaborations usually come about?

H When it comes to collaboration, I really do prefer knowing the person. Even if I haven't met someone I like to talk to them over text or twitter or what not to get to know them a bit before making music. Also, I prefer a lot of the time for them to be from my city.

OP If you had to decide right now, what would your last meal be?

H A pulled pork sandwich with fries and coleslaw

OP What do your parents think of your career choice?

H My parents have always been supportive. They were iffy when I dropped out of collage but even then were still supportive.

OP Where do you find your musical inspirations?

H I try to listen to as much new music as I can but I'm mostly inspired by 70's funk and late 80's electro funk.

OP What are your thoughts on where contemporary music is heading?

H I think it's heading in a beautiful direction. Especially since we have so much access to so much music now!

OP How would you describe the landscape right now for emerging producers and musicians?

H Because of the sheer amount of music and accessibility to make music, it's getting harder to stand out for emerging artists. People are now starting to brand themselves first using social media such as twitter and Instagram then making their way into the music field. I personally think this is the smarter move. Some of our Biggest advantages are our access to free resources such as tutorials and lectures online

OP What are your short term and long term aspirations?

H In the short term, I want to work with as many artists in Toronto as possible. If I can help develop some people I believe, I'll feel happy. For the long term, I'd like to start a sync and licensing company and maybe one day score an anime or sumn

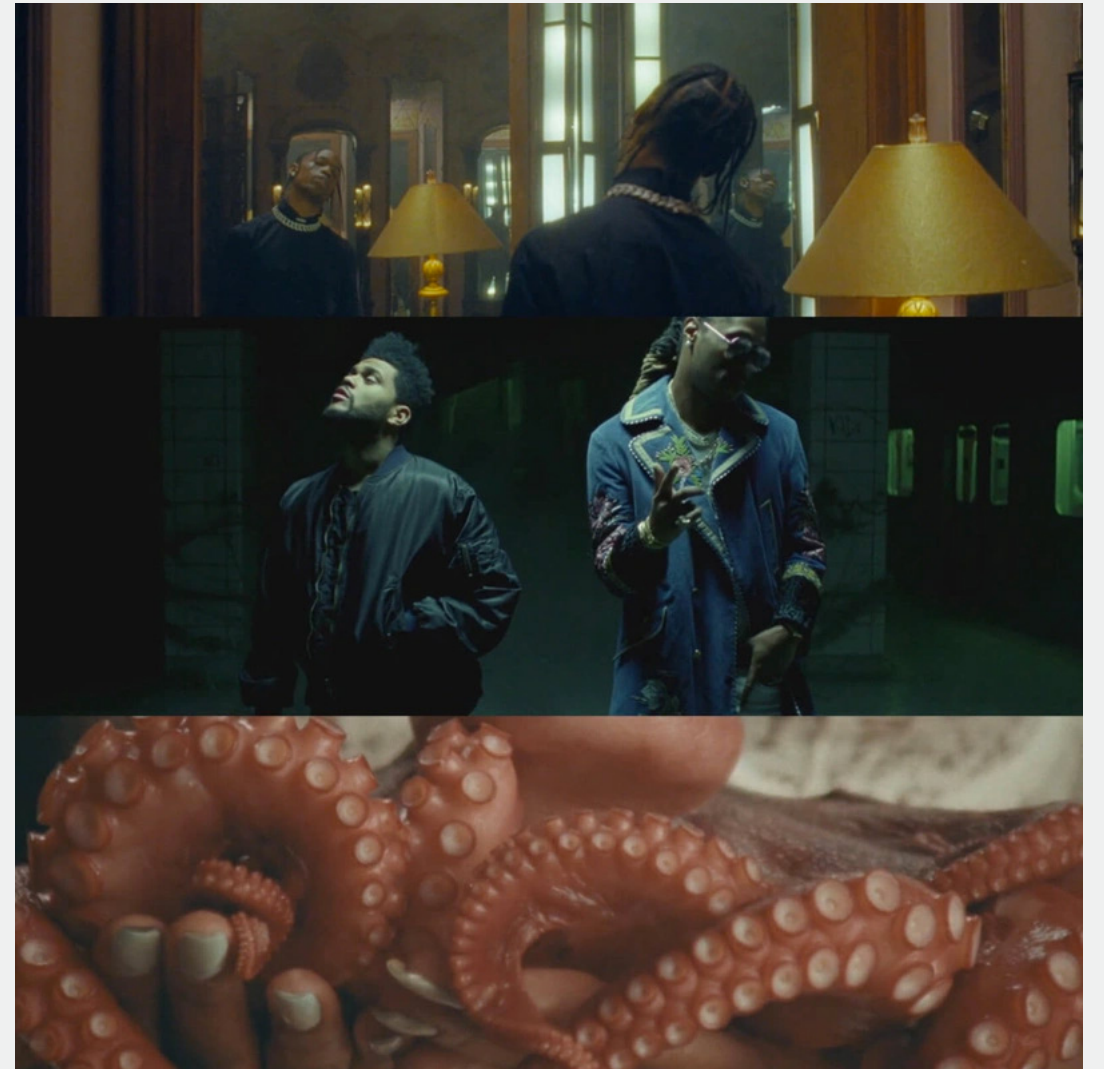
GLENN MICHAEL CREATIVE DIRECTOR KID. STUDIO

Website
<https://kidstudio.co>

Instagram
[@kidstudio_](#)

Twitter
[@kidstudio_](#)

Glenn is the co-founder and creative director of Kid. Studio, a film production and design studio based in Toronto. Over the years, Kid. has created music videos for The Weeknd, Drake, French Montanna, Big Sean, and Majid Jordan to name a few.



- OP

At what point did you realize you could turn your specific talents into a career path?
- G

I'm not sure I've even realized this yet. I've never consciously set out to make what I do a career. Though, I did realize that Kid., along with other dope creatives coming up at the time, could help change the way the world saw creative coming out of Toronto. People in our city became drawn to our work and let us know that we were a true representation of the creative community coming out of it's underbelly. That motivated us to work harder and help bring more attention to the creative energy flowing through the city.
- OP

What were some of the greatest barriers you've had to face both as a designer and as a director? How transferable are the skills and how has one medium influenced the other?
- G

I never graduated from my graphic design program in school, so trying to pursue a career in that field, at a higher level, was difficult. I worked some really shitty graphic designer jobs and interned at multiple places at the same time for literally 0 money, for years.

Starting off as a graphic designer, I've alway been drawn to certain compositions and lay-outs. I've definitely used my eye and taste as a graphic designer to develop the way I see shots framed and composed. At this point, there's a strong synergy between both mediums that has developed naturally, and pursuing both vehicles allows them to nurture and strengthen each other.
- OP

You've had a less conventional path that others in your position. Can you speak on your relationship to the industry and how that's affected your craft?
- G

I think coming in as an outsider has been a blessing in our work. Me, nor anyone on the team, has any formal education in any avenue of the film industry. I think that brings a certain atmosphere to our work that can't be taught. We've just had to learn our way around this industry as we go, but we also recognize that there is still a lot that needs to be learned. I think having that awareness, that we don't know it all, allows for our growth to be documented on film with every project that we put out.
- OP

What are your thoughts on film vs digital?

People in our city became drawn to our work and let us know that we were a true representation of the creative community coming out of it's underbelly.

- G

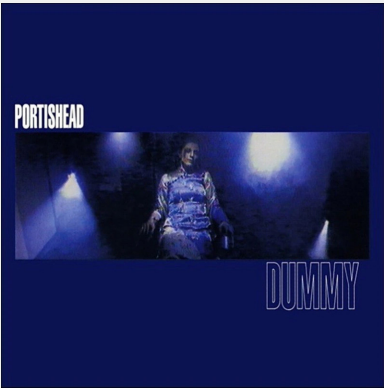
I'm a fan of film just because there's a certain soul about it that I personally haven't been able to replicate with digital. It's a texture preference. But I also believe that if you give a good creative either, and they'll be able to form something beautiful. I don't hold one at a higher regard than the other in terms of medium because some of the best work I've seen has been shot in digital.
- OP

Kid. is a perfect example of the type of ingenuity that can come out of the recent paradigm shift of lowering barriers to entry. However, I suspect this is largely due to the amount of respect and care that you guys pay to the craft and the industry. How do you think the creative landscape will change as skills and tastes become increasingly accessible?
- G

I think it's amazing that the playing ground is becoming increasingly levelled, whether a person decides to seek more conventional ways of education or going at it on their own, there's no right way to pursue creative endeavours.
- OP

What were the last 3 albums you listened to?

G



Portishead
Dummy
1994



Tierra Whack
Whack World
2018



Frank Ocean
Blonde
2016



Round 2

ETA SUMMER 2019