

Initials: Ren Lanzi (RL)

Major: graphic design

Program: MFA

Graduation year: 2024

Answered remotely

What do you fill your workspace with (objects, tools, references)?

I love working with multiple tools and media. I try not to limit myself to a 2D plane or space, such as a poster or booklet. I collect anything I see that would fit into my aesthetic or any upcoming projects (trash, cool paper, unique fabrics, etc.). I also have a few published graphic design books that I look to for references, as well as small business/artist works that I've found in art/book fairs or vintage fairs.

Where do you get inspiration from? (online and from life)

Most of my inspiration comes from digital forms and projects. I find a lot of cool inspiration from Pinterest and my Instagram explore feed. The algorithm of online applications like the ones just mentioned is pretty advanced so it's easier to find works that align with my methodology, aesthetic, style, scheme, and more. Physical published design books are good for basics or fundamentals but when it comes to creative inspiration, online resources are the way to go.

What is your go-to creative tool?

I love using Procreate for illustrative purposes. It has everything I need to make icons, illustrations, simple animations, and more. Other than that, I love InDesign (might I say better than Illustrator). I'm not sure if it is because I'm more used to the functions of InDesign but I find it easier and more intuitive to use.

What motivates you to complete your studio projects?

After 2 years of studying graphic design with BU, I have realized that designing something you are not interested in will be a huge hindrance to your output or final product. If you worry too much about minute things like if this idea would be best for

your portfolio, or if it aligns with your professor's preferences, you are just setting yourself up for an unmotivated process. For now, I stay motivated by choosing good content that I enjoy collecting or researching; the form comes later. Without good content, I won't feel motivated to give my best when it comes to form-making.

What kind of art do you do recreationally?

I enjoy drawing in my free time. I've never been professionally taught but sketching and doodling are my hobbies outside of design. I tend to sketch short comics when I have time or work on simple animation projects.

What advice would you give to freshman you/freshman in general?

I think I would tell my freshman self to slow down and enjoy every day a little more, like the smaller things in everyday life. Take walks, admire the surroundings and the people, visit shops you've always passed but never walked into. I spend a lot of my undergrad speeding things up so I can graduate and move states.

What advice would you give to first years of the MFA master's program?

I think it is okay to fail on your projects. Not every iteration of a project will be perfect and not every final project will be the best either. If in any of the process you are not confident in the content or outcome, scrap it and start over. It is an option and it is okay, don't be scared to start new half way into a project even if you won't finish on time. If you explain your struggles and process well, the professors will understand completely. I think additionally save assignment sheets of every project even if you think you won't need them anymore. You can always revisit the project in your free time or over break to redo it with another concept or idea. You can also trade assignments with classmates who are in different design classes and do those assignments together.

What are some links/resources you frequently reference?

Designspiration is a good website to look for inspiration. It's like Pinterest except solely for art-related topics. Additionally, it always links to where it was originally from (portfolio, website, book, etc.). Sometimes of Pinterest, it doesn't show where it

originally came from so it's hard to track down who the designer or artist is. With Designspiration, that doesn't happen! Also, the SVA library is suchhhh a great resource, like seriously. I thought it was going to be any same old library of old design books that are outdated but it isn't! It has students' thesis works, other projects, books you won't be able to find anywhere, and people who work there that are great references and resources for design stuff.

What kind of feedback most benefits your design revisions?

I love detailed feedback and heavy criticism. Don't get me wrong, compliments are great but I am here to learn! I'd rather get a whole bunch of feedback that doesn't really apply rather than no feedback at all. I get to absorb knowledge even if it doesn't apply to this project but might to another one. Even if it is something small like the spacing of these two objects is off by 1px, I welcome it.

What would you like to design for in the future?

I really hope I don't end up in a commercial design job, stuck in a cubical, editing emails and websites for all of my life. I would love to design with a studio or even my own. I would love to design an experience or installations that leave an impact (whether just provoking an emotion or solving a design problem).

Does BU provide the necessary resources or expertise that you are looking for?

I think not BU but the people inside BU are more helpful in my opinion. I love talking to classmates and professors about projects that might not even pertain to them. I love reaching out to alumnus as they went through the same thing I'm experiencing now. So I'm not quite sure if BU provides everything necessary for me, but I make do with what we have available.

How does it feel to not have a "foundations" (drawing, painting, sculpture as required classes) year?

The learning curve for design was pretty steep coming into the MFA program, even in the certificate program, especially since I didn't have any design experience beforehand.

Learning Adobe CC and other programs and terms was hard. Plus, it's very limiting not having any other arts foundation courses that are required as someone who likes multimedia works. However, I do understand that the MFA program is only 2 years and that is a very short time to produce good design for your portfolio.