

HOW TO: DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN AESTHETIC

WITH TRINA BENTLEY / MAKE & MATTER

1

OBSERVE. EVERYTHING. EVERYDAY.

Be observant. Be open minded. Take note of things that inspire you & get your attention. Also take note of design in everyday life. Study specific elements of design, different tricks, subtle details, and think of how they could be repurposed & reinvented in your work. It doesn't have to be 'design greatness' to inspire you. Build visual files from these findings.

2

RESOURCE BUILD

HERE'S WHAT I COLLECT:

- textures
- old advertisements
- banners & enclosure shapes
- borders & ornaments
- patterns
- old type & handwriting
- random engravings
- cigar labels
- seals
- lines (for placing around type)
- old illustrations
- actions
- brushes

HERE'S WHERE I FIND THEM:

- google images (large image filter)
- thegraphicsfairy.com
- vintageephemera.blogspot.com
- creativemarket.com
- vintageadbrowser.com
- vintageprintable.com
- viintage.com
- botanicalillustrations.org
- olddesignshop.com
- flickr.com/commons

BUILDING THESE RESOURCES MAKE YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS MORE PRODUCTIVE.

3

MAKE YOUR METHOD

Schedule creativity.

I do my most creative work b/n:

_____ AM TO _____ AM
PM PM

I do my most creative work with:

- a pencil
- a mouse
- coffee
- beer
- music
- free of interruptions
- people
- _____

I do my most creative work when:

- I'm at the beginning of a project
- I have a deadline to meet
- 2 days before my presentation
- I'm suppose to be working on something else
- _____

AWESOME! ALIGN YOUR SCHEDULE FOR WHEN/HOW YOU WORK AT YOUR BEST. MAKE THIS A ROUTINE. A RITUAL. PRINT YOUR METHOD. HANG IT IN YOUR SPACE. TURN OFF YOUR PHONE, CLOSE DOWN YOUR MAIL + COMMIT TO CREATIVITY.

Find your weaknesses in the Creative process & overcome them.

Here are some tips to do just that.

Focus on Efficiency.

Do it Better. Do it Faster.

- Create results-oriented Goals. (Ex. "I have 4 hrs to get 2 options done.")
- Create a sense of urgency.

GET UNSTUCK

"I CAN'T GET STARTED."

- Sketch & define the different ideas you are going to tackle on screen. Have a clear game plan before starting.
- Make sure you have your resources at your fingertips.
- Focus on keeping moving & avoid distractions.
- Remember, it normally doesn't start good. Put your head down and WORK through it.

"I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH."

- Stop looking at everyone else's work.
- Mindset is everything. Get to a positive head space.
- Focus on discovery & the process of creating rather than the end result. Try to remove your brain and just trust what that inner voice tells you to do.

"I GET STUCK IN ONE OPTION."

- Try mentally only going 85% of the way there and then moving onto the next option. Focus less on details, more on big picture.
- Focus on results and use the clock to motivate you. (Ex. I have 3 hours to work, I will knock out 2 options. Period.)
- Do quick 15 min. studies moving from one idea to the next until you land on something good.

"EVERYTHING LOOKS THE SAME."

- Be more observant. Find more inspiration & techniques to explore. (step 1 & 2 above)
- Be open minded. Don't rule out anything. Try adding gradients if you're work is flat and textural. Give that 'ugly' font a shot. Add a crazy color. Move outside your comfort zone. Have an 'anything-is-fair-game' kinda attitude.

4

MAKE MAGIC.

Remove your brain. Follow your gut. Trust your eye. This seems to be my method for creating those design "AHAs." Figuring out how to get to the magic moments is a part of the fun - and frustration - of design. Here are some things that have helped me get "there."

Operate like an optimist.

Find a way to get excited about each and every project. Mindset is key in the design process.

Work in a way that allows freedom.

You must be able to explore and compare without the fear you will mess something up.

Mess something up.

Focus on the process of creating & forget about the end result. Go crazy and see what happy accidents arise.

- Turn it on its side
- Make it huge
- Make it small
- Destroy it
- Flip it
- Change the proportion
- Go uber minimal
- Print it, trace it, scan it
- Make it dark
- Make it light
- Take it into photoshop & play with hue/saturation
- Make it black & white
- Add a really bright color
- Do the opposite
- Scribble
- Pick a random font
- Layer in texture
- Explore transparency options and layering items (ie. multiply, dissolve, etc.)
- Make it look handdrawn
- Play with warp tool
- Explore photoshop filters Layer them together
- Stretch type (GASP)
- Doodle
- Make it look old
- Make it look fresh
- Add some handwriting
- Remove what is not needed

5

BUILD YOUR BASE

Learn what you do best.

This can take years to discover. Once you do, perfect it, make it your focus & learn how to sell it.

Be hungry for the work you want.

Once you find your niche, be hungry for that type of work. Seek it out. Let folks know that you want their business (but don't be desperate or sell yourself short!)

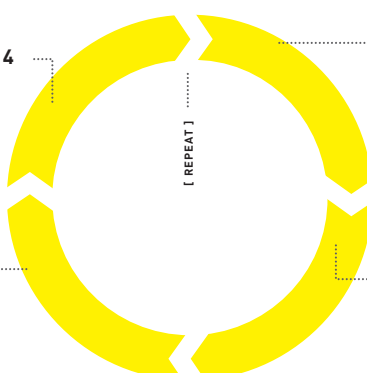
Shift from saying "YES" to "NO".

As you build up your base with the work you want, start saying "no" to those who no longer fit into your grand vision. The key from getting from "Yes" to "No" is demand.

HERE'S HOW TO CREATE DEMAND:

4 CREATE DEMAND AND CHARGE MORE WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!

3 ATTRACT MORE CLIENTS WHO LIKE WHAT YOU DO!



1 FOCUS ON WORK REPEAT STEPS 1-4 OVER AND OVER... + OVER THIS IS 95% OF IT! YOUR FOCUS SHOULD BE HERE.

2 INCREASE VISIBILITY VIA PUTTING WORK ONLINE, PINTEREST, SUBMITTING TO BLOGS, ETC.