10 Best Creatives from California

At Shillington, we love to explore and celebrate great design from around the world. We've covered the work of many creatives, from design studios to illustrators in many different countries and cities so far. Now, we're heading to the West Coast US, specifically, sunny California. The Golden State is known for Death Valley (the hottest National Park in the US), the gorgeous wine regions of Napa and Sonoma and also being the avocado capital of the world (in case you're wondering). It's also the birthplace of the internet, Apple and a vibrant art and design scene.

There are a lot of amazing design studios, designers and illustrators hailing from California. So let's dive right in and see who they are. We picked our top 10 to give you a taste of what California has to offer.

1. Laci Jordan

Laci Jordan is truly a renaissance woman—an artist, illustrator and creative director currently living in Los Angeles. She describes herself as a “consistent maker of moves” and creates content that aims to bring visibility to black creatives, especially women. She’s worked with some big names from Walt Disney to ABC. Her specialties are diverse and also include photography, web design, marketing and curation.

Her work is evocative and uses bold color choices to bring light to pop culture icons and marginalized voices. You can follow Laci on her blog and also check out her shop if you want to purchase a print.

2. Evangelina Rios

Evangelina Rios is a San Francisco-based designer. She says, as “designers, we can get stuck chasing the fleeting ideal of perfection. I often remind myself of what I’ve learned. The most authentic brands are human—too much polish strips that humanity away” and that stories need to be real and truthful in the way that consumers can connect with them. She’s created striking designs for brands ranging from restaurant branding to body care packaging and editorial.

She created the branding, typography and packaging for Fluid magazine which is aimed at “pushing the boundaries on gender expression” along with challenging gender roles and behaviors through interviews, essays and connecting the community

through conversation. We really loved the bold choice of type and for the custom logo inspired by the ’70s aesthetic and the brand assets designed for the magazine, using colors from the non-binary flag. The result was a publication that is edgy, sophisticated and contemporary.

3. Lina Cordero

Onlychild is a Los Angeles-based design studio started by the designer and photographer Lina Cordero. Her studio specializes in branding and visual solutions for brands after gaining experience working for media, fashion, technology and entertainment companies. Her work has a unique flair to it that is colorful, playful and uniquely crafted type choices.

For the Sydney-based Bar Positano, she drew inspiration from Italian mobile cafes, the Amalfi Coast and Italian vintage typography. The end result was a brand identity that is unique and vibrant—you can just imagine yourself sipping on a limoncello at Marina Grande.

4. Maya Ealey

San Francisco-based brand designer and illustrator Maya Ealey works for Asana and creates thoughtful design choices that she believes can transform the way brands communicate with the world, creating work that is beautiful, functional and meets client goals.

And for a trip down memory lane, head on to Maya’s shop Just

Rewindit. As she puts it, “Just Rewind It fully embraces the past, humor and self-awareness. Travel back in time to recall your most precious moments in the form of pins, prints, stickers and more.”

5. Herman Scheer

Herman Scheer is a Los Angeles design studio that helps brands connect with their consumers in a personal way through services like brand strategy, naming, identity and messaging. They’ve worked with some cool clients and created a shop for some of their favorite products they’ve worked on which you can find here.

For the gum and mint brand Neuro, they developed packaging

that is minimal and type-focused in a product line featuring 4 colors that exude different moods from calm to energetic. By seeing the minimal packaging alone, you immediately think this is a high-quality product and want to stash it in your back pocket.

6. Blossom Liu

Blossom Liu is a Los Angeles-based designer and visual communicator who understands the way design can permeate our culture and society. Through her work, she strives to create positive change, create connections and make contributions to society as a whole.

For the Second Chances project, she rebranded a nonprofit

after-school organization. The inspiration behind the design was the “vibrant visual language from the colorful scenes of South Los Angeles” and creating a visual identity that relates to the youth, sense of strength and community. She won 3 awards for this project, including RGD SoGood Awards (2020), Adobe Achievement Top Talent (2019) and ArtCenter Gallery (2018).

7. Aley Hanson

Aley Hanson is a freelance illustrator from San Francisco and creates artwork that focuses on diversity and embodying women’s strength. Her artwork ranges illustrations for editorial, product and brands with the goal of helping them

elevate their brand voice. Be sure to check out Aley’s shop too where you can find whimsical art prints and accessories that will be sure to add some character to your style.

For Women’s Day & Menstrual Hygiene Day, she created graphics for Kube Agency that was “inspired by all the badass womxn of the world fighting for justice, freedom and equality.”

8. Kati Forner

Kati Forner’s Los Angeles studio is a full-service agency that helps to transform brands by helping them grow through storytelling and considered design. The aesthetic, whether it’s for packaging, interactive or print is always minimal, elegant and uses a subdued a limited color palette for beauty,

fashion and lifestyle brands. Kati’s work is regularly recognized by design publications for its elegant, minimalist aesthetic and timeless style.

For Milk Moon, her studio developed the branding and packaging for this wellness-oriented motherhood brand that channels a “sense of calm, clarity and resilience.” The typography choice, logo and colors of the packaging channels motherhood, an organic ethos and a medicinal feel to the design that stresses quality and care.

9. Meredith Schomburg

The Los Angeles-based illustrator Meredith Schomburg creates a wide range of work from tech to editorial illustration, with

images that exude optimism and boldness. She’s created illustrators for brands like Airbnb, IDEO, Figma, GoDaddy and Found By. As other creatives can relate, for Meredith, the illustrations evolve over time and capture what she is going through in her life. There’s a key element that ties all the work together through bright colors and organic shapes.

We quite liked the portrait pictured above which showcases her signature style that is bold, feminine and distinctive with the use of orange and purple.

10. TRÜF Creative

The TRÜF Creative studio was founded by Adam Goldberg and Monika Kehrer, hailing from Santa Monica. They develop branding for products that show “authenticity, simplicity and boldness” for both new and old brands ranging from cultural institutions to technology companies.

They partnered with Art of Play to create one of the most unique playing cards decks you’ll ever find. To describe it in their words, the deck is “minimal, modern, graphic, quirky, stylized, grotesque, delightful and just plain weird” which is why we like it so much. The artwork of each card is distinctly unique and the box is letterpress-printed.

Want to see more amazing creatives from around the world? We recently visited Chicago, Pennsylvania, Canada and Belgium.

Feeling inspired? Why not become a graphic designer yourself—study design in London, Manchester, New York, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne or Online with Shillington.

https://www.shillingtoneducation.com/blog/10-best-creatives-from-california/