11 Signs You Should Pursue a Career in Design

At Shillington, we believe some people are destined for a graphic design career. Designers are creative people who have a knack for aesthetics, notice the finer details and love to learn new things. They just move through the world differently!

At all six of our campuses around the world, our students—most without any previous graphic design training—recognise their eye for design and decide to turn their passion into a creative career. Should you pursue a graphic design career? We're here to help you find out.

Here's our round-up of 11 signs you should go after a career in design—echoed by stories from Shillington teachers.

1. You buy things just for the packaging.

Does the bottle of wine with the most unique label always find its way into your shopping basket? Have you found yourself admiring the take-out bag your food came in while eating lunch? If so, you have a serious appreciation for packaging design and know what it takes to stand out on the shelf.

Shillington Sydney's Johnny Boardman gets it. "I love designing packaging because there's a design competition going on in every category at any one time. Your design will be sitting right there rubbing shoulders next to all the other products and it's your job to be original, be creative, be disruptive in any way you can to grab the attention of the public. At the end of the day, the most appealing design wins! Just as long as the product doesn't suck or taste like poop."

2. You recognise fonts have different personalities.

You know font choice matters. With so many different typefaces available, it’s essential to find the right typeface pairings to complement the design. Designers can quickly tell what works and what doesn’t, so if Comic Sans and Papyrus make you cringe—you’re well on your way to establishing your career in design!

Shillington Manchester’s John Palowski loves typography too. “Drawing wasn’t my go-to skill growing up – so I turned my attention to sketching out the letterforms for logos such as Reebok & Kawasaki which (in the 1980s) had that instant cool

factor. I guess that was my training ground for all the type I find myself designing today.”

So You Need a Typeface? graphic by Julian Hansen.

3. You know the difference between maroon and marsala.

Who knew there were so many colours in the rainbow? You! Do you know what the latest colour trends are? Are your bookshelves coordinated by colour? Colour choice is a big part of design, and it takes a keen eye to perfect. Simply seeing the spectrum is a powerful place to start.

Shillington Manchester's Laura Weldon understands. "I nearly had a breakdown while choosing a paint colour for my living room. My husband couldn't believe there were so many options for 'off-white'."

4. You spend hours on Pinterest and Instagram.

We all know how addictive social media can be. Designers love creating mood boards because visual research can inspire and spark creativity in unpredictable ways. You should definitely consider a career in design if you find yourself lusting over stationery on Pinterest or in a deep spiral of #typography tags on Instagram.

Shillington New York's Shanti Sparrow knows the joy of Pinterest. Check out her epic collection of design boards.

5. You download apps just to check out the design.

As our everyday life catapults into the innovative future, designers play a big role in creating well-designed digital products. If your phone is full of apps you hardly use but can't bear to delete—you have a head start in understanding the world of UX aka User Experience design.

Shillington New York's Anthony Wood watches for impressive app design. "It's amazing how often you interact with apps. One of

my favourite examples is the Virgin Australia flight check-in, which makes a usually painful process into something smooth and simple!”

6. You care about aesthetics in everyday life.

Are the cushions on your sofa organised by size or colour? Are your picture frames perfectly aligned? If so, you understand the importance of visual clarity. Balance, Repetition, Contrast, Alignment, Hierarchy. The five design principles that create the foundation of design education are already forming in your brain.

Shillington Melbourne's Lucy Wells knows your obsession. "Im totally OCD in this in so many more ways than one. The most evident is when I finished moving into my apartment and I realised all the furniture I had picked out was a tone of grey. Subconsciously (without realising it) I'm always matching everything and anything to a neutral/natural colour palette. I even dress that way. You'd never catch me with something bold or bright."

7. You understand the power of branding.

Branding is more than just a logo—it's the spirit and idea behind a product or service that consumers connect with.

Successful brands create an instant reaction. If you recognise and understand brand loyalty, your inner designer is well at work.

Shillington Melbourne's Wayne Smith is really into branding. "Branding is so important as it filters subconsciously through everything we interact with. From global power-house companies to local start-ups, museums and charities, politicians and celebrities. Through fashion, culture and social media people are managing their own brands every day!"

8. You have a knack for craft and handmade.

Do you like to get your hands dirty? Do you enjoy the process of crafting as much as the end product? If you're a creative at heart if you spend your weekend undertaking home DIY projects, or even unwinding with an adult colouring book, a graphic design career could be the right path for you.

Shillington London's Alyson Pearson loves to get crafty too. "Rather than buying birthday cards, I make them."

9. You know design is more than meets the eye.

You see what others don't, and love wowing friends with the hidden meaning in popular logos. Your favourite party trick?

Uncovering the the secret arrow in the FedEx logo, pointing out the bear in Toblerone, or identifying the a –> z in Amazon.

Shillington Sydney's Sara Mazzoni knows what you're talking about. "My jaw dropped when I realised that the Roxy logo was an extension of the Rip Curl logo!"

10. You collect designs that inspire.

If you save your favourite cards and invitations, have a bowl filled with cool old matchbooks, or can't bear to throw out an empty but beautiful perfume bottle … signs are you're a

creative! Both the casual graphic artist and those with a graphic design career love to collect examples that inspire because when something works, it works.

Shillington London's Ali Neilly is a fan of collecting too. "I'm a serial collector. I once acquired an elderly woman's stamp collection from a charity shop and since then have continued to add to it as they're the perfect addition to a moodboard with their unique patterns and colours."

11. You love to learn.

Have you ever watched a YouTube tutorial to help you perfect a new skill? Our field is ever-evolving, and as designers there's always more to learn! Graphic design is a hands on

career for creative minds. At Shillington, we know that our creative journey is a life-long one, which is why we're always finding ways to stay ahead of the curve.

Shillington Melbourne's Spencer Harrison has always been a self-educator. "I love reading and often have 2-3 books on the go, reading about art, science, design, history, productivity and lot's of other subjects. Books give me the opportunity to learn from the greatest minds that have come before me and fills my brain with new ideas that fuel my creativity and help keep me inspired in my day to day work."

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If you're nodding along to this list, maybe you should become a designer! Kickstart your graphic design career in just 3 months full-time or 9 months part-time at Shillington in New York, London, Manchester, Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane –> www.shillingtoneducation.com

Top image by Shillington New York teacher Emily Comfort.

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