14 Best Creatives from Pennsylvania

At Shillington, we love to explore and celebrate great design from around the world. We've covered the work of many creatives, from freelance designers to animation studios, in many different countries so far and now we're heading to the USA for a celebration of creatives from the many cities of Pennsylvania. With the questionable amounts of sun in Philadelphia getting a lot of attention, it could be easy to overlook the creative magic happening elsewhere in the state.

Don't feel guilty if you have gotten stuck in this trap yourself. We did the digging for you and have uncovered some of the many talented creatives—producing work across branding, illustration, digital design, animation and more—who call Pennsylvania home.

1. Noa Denmon

Noa Denmon is a Pittsburgh-based illustrator, who creates detailed editorial illustrations for a clients such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and Macmillan Publishers. Her subject matter has a strong lean to portraiture and character, with her digital illustrations evoking the texture and energy of traditional media. Denmon’s recent book cover design for author and actress Echo Brown‘s young adult novel Black Girl Unlimited: The Remarkable Story of a Teenage Wizard is an eye-catching, masterful work of illustration.

2. Risolve Studio

Risolve Studio is a Risograph printing studio founded in 2017, which is located in downtown Lancaster, PA. The family-run studio was founded upon a passion for sharing great innovative design and printmaking. Owners Sebastian and Lyndsey Burke are the husband and wife team behind this amazing printing studio who are in the business of making bright and bold things. The studio celebrates and expands the accessibility of Riso Printing, pushing the boundaries and technical possibilities of the medium. We love the beautiful Risolve Studio Sample Pack created by Lyndsey, which showcases the versatility and scope capable of Risograph on a delicious variety of paper stock from US based paper company, French Paper Co.

3. Corey Brickley

Based out of Philadelphia, freelance illustrator and designer Corey Brickley specialises in moody, comic-style illustrations rich in depth and story. Brickley boasts a client base across editorial and publishing which includes The New Yorker, The Huffington Post and Pacific Standard. The spooky mood of his work takes one step closer to the truly terrifying in his 2019 project The Folio Book of Horror Stories. A collection of stories tracing the history of horror, Brickley provides horror inspired illustrations, with this simple but chilling example gracing the book’s cover.

4. Mary Kate McDevitt

Illustrator and lettering artist Mary Kate McDevitt has been creating hand lettering and illustrations since 2010 from her studio in Philadelphia. With a sizeable client list boasting the likes of Nike, Penguin Books, Nintendo and Chronicle Books, she is sought after for her cheerfully colourful lettering with a positive tone of voice. While so many of us have been running around getting lost in between the desire to be hyper productive during lockdowns and the guilt of not getting enough done, McDevitt created this affirming lettering piece to remind us all to take a minute without punishing ourselves for resting in amongst the mayhem.

5. Efir Media

Efir Media are a web design and branding agency working out of Philadelphia, USA and Europe. Creating a variety of web and digital solutions for their clients needs, their portfolio of work is slick and contemporary. Their work on the UI/ UX design and web development for animation design studio Lemon Digital resulted in a slick, monochromatic minimalist website which featured integrated animated elements into the user experience. As a result, which could be a very stripped back digital experience becomes dynamic and intriguing, inviting the visitor into a world of movement and story telling.

6. Sarah Huny Young

Sarah Huny Young is a Pittsburgh-based creative director, interdisciplinary artist and photographer, who also works as an event producer and DJ. Young is an indomitable and influential creative force with a multifaceted practice. Her most recent project, American Woman is, in her own words, “a multimedia portrait and interview series about Black American women”, which was launched in July 2016. This powerful project takes an intersectional and stereotype pushing take on the overwhelmingly white and colonial story of the term “American Woman.” Explore the awesome project Instagram, then head to the Vimeo channel to watch the video interviews.

7. Rob Shields

Based in Philadelphia, Rob Shields is an illustrator, comic artist and game developer whose style lands like an explosion of neon, cyber-punk madness. His work catches he eye and then draws the viewer into its immense detail. Taking this visual complexity to the next level, his kickstarter comic project Neon Wasteland, is the perfect example of converging technologies deepening a traditional medium. The comic series is full of detailed illustrations from across the psychedelic, post apocalyptic world of Neon Wasteland. However, as we see in his kickstarter video here, Shields has expanded the concept of the comic to include VR, with an interactive story that is almost a choose your own adventure cartoon with

interactive play aspects and behind the story extras. This is a really trippy project and well worth exploring.

8. Dana Kalnick

Dana Kalnick is a freelance designer, illustrator and comic artist based in Philadelphia. Her illustrative style is warm and whimsical, dominated by soft tonal colours and minimal outlines. The subject matter of Kalnick’s work lends itself to fanciful and dream like scenes, melding perspective and detail to tell a deeper story. Her beautiful illustration Sea of Feels, is a perfect example of this.

9. Ahn Na Yi

Ahn Na Yi is a Harleysville-based designer and illustrator, who specialises on UX/UI and animation. The bold geometric style of her work lends itself beautify to playful, modular app designs. We really enjoyed her personal project Animal App, a simple but crisply designed educational app for children and adults to learn about animals. We love that she also includes animals like dragons and in the “type” section describing each animal, has written mystical.

10. Cheyenne Jacobs

Cheyenne Jacobs is a designer based out of Philadelphia. She is one half of the design studio Say Less Design, which she co-founded with designer and friend Randi Bellamy. The studio produces branding, offering services across digital, packaging, print and art direction. Jacob’s work on the Rail Park Concert Benefit campaign branding visuals and posters for the 2018 event run in The Rail Park, a revitalisation project in Philadelphia transforming a section of unused rail lines into a a dynamic, usable public space for the community.

11. Trevor Fraley

Philadelphia-based freelance illustrator and character designer Trevor Fraley creates artworks for film, comics and editorial. His bold, story powered style of illustration has been featured on Kotaku, Blavity and Medium. We loved his his comic book approach to Inktober in 2019, where he told the story of Friday, a little girl who can see and talk to ghosts. Of his more recent work, we couldn’t go past his illustration celebrating the 2020 Oscars wins of directors Matthew A. Cherry, Taika Waititi and Bong Joon Ho.

12. Farid Ghanbari

Farid Ghanbari is an art director with a background as a 3D CG generalist and lighting artist with more than a decade of experience. Based in Philadelphia, Ghanbari creates exquisitely detailed, immersive 3D rendered artworks which possess a deep cinematic ambiance. In some, there is a feeling of anticipation and ambience in the scenes he renders, as though you will be transported into another universe. In others, his work takes you deep into the minute details of the universe, like this surreal medical illustration of a cancer cell dividing. It’s both grotesque and intriguing. It certainly grabs the attention.

13. Sophia Marie Pappas

From her Pittsburgh-based studio, illustrator Sophia Marie Pappas creates work for magazines, children’s publishing and greeting cards. Her style is flexible and contemporary, bringing to life vibrant senes with splashes of colour and minimal line work. Her dynamic illustrations lend themselves well to motion. We particularly love the minimal colour palate and playful story of this small animated GIF, titled Live From the Kitchen: A GIF on how not to cut an orange.

14. Dan Lee

The power of Philadelphia-based lettering artist Dan Lee’s work is in his eye for catching the mood and story of a moment. He masterfully remixes and revives famous book quotes, tweets and private thoughts into artworks for the eyes, mind and soul. Working on an iPad Pro into Procreate, his instagram feed offers up a veritable cornucopia of positive affirmation and energy boosting artworks. Lettering lends itself well to glorifying famous well crafted lines. However, the private thoughts and moments of an artists life, when shared, often hit home the deepest. We really enjoyed the sentiment of this particular this piece, which Lee describes as a Saturday night self-portrait.

Want to see the full list of creatives around the world? The latest countries we covered in the series are Canada, Russia

and Belgium.

Feeling inspired? Check out our #ILoveTheseGuys series to discover more creative studios from around the world! Or become a graphic designer yourself—study design in London, Manchester, New York, Sydney, Brisbane or Melbourne with Shillington.

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