Meet Inez Padiachy, Shillington Graduate and Designer at Roundtable Studio

After Shillington London graduate Inez Padiachy completed her degree in Sociology and Sign Language, everything aligned and all the signs pointed to graphic design. A double chance encounter led her to Shillington and the rest was history. Inez joined our full-time course and three months later joined the design industry—now working at Roundtable Studio.

We caught up with Inez two years into her design journey to

chat about the Shillington graphic design course, her favourite projects and side passions.

First of all, why Shillington? What made you choose our course?

I was looking for a practical course that wasn’t too long and would help me upgrade my self-taught skills. I was sitting on the tube in London one day reading an Australian magazine called Frankie and saw a Shillington advert; a couple of seconds later, I looked out the tube window and saw a massive ad for Shillington on the tube tunnel wall. It felt like a sign, so I looked online, it seemed perfect, exactly what I had been looking for, and the rest is history.

What were you up to before Shillington? Why did you make the transition to design?

I had just completed my degree in Sociology and BSL (British Sign Language). I have always been interested in belonging—mainly through the lens of racial injustice so it gave me a great opportunity to dive deep into that. Studying sociology is essentially like in-depth user research; it's looking at people's behaviour patterns, really interrogating why they do what they do. And BSL is a form of visual communication. So there were hints of design thinking in my degree; I just didn't know it! I was always trying to bring design into my projects, and I even made a zine on an ethnographic study on trees for one module. While I was at uni, I started a side-hustle making merch and picked up a few freelance design gigs that gave me a taste for it, and before long, I realised it was what I wanted to do.

What have you been to since? Talk us through your design journey so far.

I graduated from Shillington mid-pandemic; it was a strange entry into the world of work, going from seeing my classmates every day to having everything over Zoom. I landed an internship with KISS branding after meeting them at the Shillington grad showcase. It was a great introduction to the industry.

> *It was encouraging to see the process Shillington taught us was what they used in studios; I felt very prepared, which was awesome given it had only been three months!*

After that, I went freelance for a bit. I'm super into motion

design and got to do freelance gigs in that area. I did some work for a charity called Blueprint For All, who create opportunities for ethnic minorities in the workplace, which was an absolute honour as it’s a topic I’m very passionate about. Not long after, I started at the studio I’m currently in.

You’re now working at Roundtable Studio. Can you tell us about your role?

Sure! Roundtable consists of designers and developers. Having designers and devs in our team means we do a range of different projects, from design consulting for digital cities in Norway to managing the UX design systems for a banking app or even designing a website for a sustainable farming

movement.

Every project is different, which I love, and it’s meant I’ve grown in various areas of design. Although every project is different, at our core is doing work that has a positive impact on the world, so even on the days I’m on the 50th revision of a design, I’m still fuelled by the fact that what we’re doing has a bigger purpose which is important to me. We’re based in a printer called F E Burman in Bermondsey; working closely with devs, printers and designers feels like a rich in-person process, which I love.

Could you tell us about a favourite recent project?

Ooh, hard to choose! We recently rebranded a co-working space

just opposite Spitalfields market in Shoreditch. We were trusted to do the branding process from start to finish. Which meant even going in and painting the decals on the walls and doing some of the interior design. So it felt like a dream in terms of the creative freedom we had, and it’s in a huge old church, so there was a load of character to work with!

You also illustrate on the side. Can you tell us about your illustration work?

Illustration/animation is my real love. I could sit for hours with my headphones on and a good cup of coffee, drawing away on my iPad. I try to use it as an outlet to let my imagination run wild and push myself creatively. I’ve always been a bit of a daydreamer, and my illustrations are like a window into how

I see the world. For me, they feel like the most organic form of visual expression in my life at the minute.

What inspires your work, both design and illustration?

Purpose and people are very important to me; there’s always a lot of heart in my design. Sometimes inspiration feels like lighting a match, I overhear something on the tube or see the light hitting the pavement in a certain way, and it’s like sparking a flame; suddenly, I have a clear idea/direction.

A lot of inspiration comes from everyday life; there is so much extraordinary in the ordinary moments you have to be on the lookout. I also try not to take myself too seriously; I have a pretty silly sense of humour, which comes through in

some of my work. I’m a big ideas person, so I usually have 100 crazy ideas and two serious ones, so I love exploring and creating really out-there stuff, then slowly refining it to fit the brief.

What was your time like at Shillington? Any highlights?

Absolutely LOVED my time at Shillington. Don’t get me wrong, it is hard work and intense.

> *But it felt like I was finally doing what I had wanted to do for a long time, and I got to do it all day around great people.*

Shillington gave me structure and process, which I needed. I

also met some GREAT friends, who I still see today and who have been key in my design journey.

Did you have a favourite brief on the course? Tell us your process!

It’s so hard to choose! I loved the app design brief, it was my first time doing UI design, and it was really neat to dive into the user journey and study the personas. I designed an app called Moodshaper, which ended up being a finalist for an AGDA award. And we’re currently developing it in real life as part of a passion project series in my studio, so that feels cool! You never know where your briefs will end up.

What would you say to someone who is skeptical about the Shillington course?

> *One of the most amazing things about doing Shillington was seeing 30 people from a diverse range of backgrounds and levels of experience all undergo the same course and come out with incredible designs.*

The teachers are excellent and invested, and the process is foolproof, so wherever you're coming from, there's no doubt you'll grow in so many ways at Shillington. I also did the course half online and half in person because we went into lockdown so I can attest it's great online and in person!

Anything else you would like to share? Surprise us!

I've found keeping creative outside of work is key for me! Passion projects are the way forward; last month, I made a table and recently, I've been developing a mixed media ethnographic study in the local community where I live in Elephant and Castle. Even if it's just going to a gig or wandering around a museum, design can be such a powerful tool in more ways than we know, so keep exploring!

Huge thanks to Inez for sharing her story with us! Make sure to check out more of her work on her website and follow her on Instagram to keep up to date with her illustrations.

Want to follow in Inez's footsteps? Read all about

Shillington's innovative approach to design education.

https://blog.shillingtoneducation.com/inez-padiachy-graphic-design-graduate/