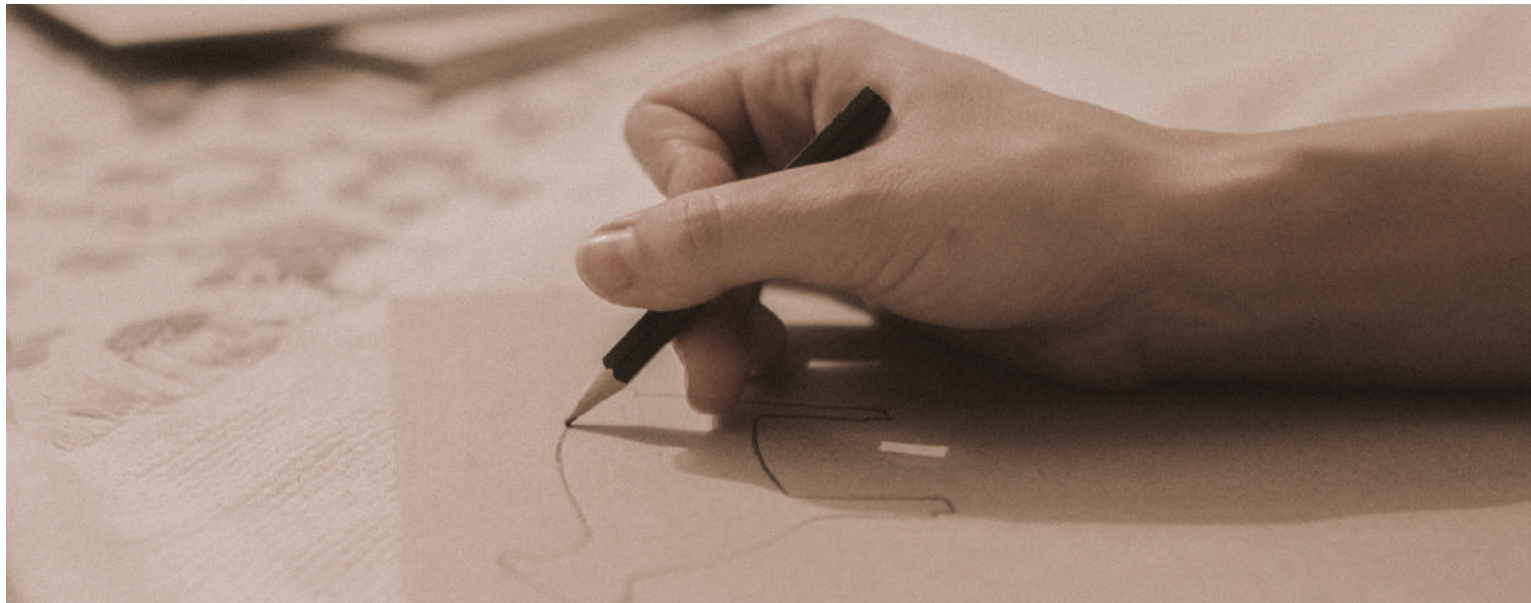# J. RYAN GARNER

portfolio   23

Design tends to be a black box skill. Insiders and outsiders alike think it is merely a matter of taste or genius. I do not. Therefore, in this portfolio you will find more than just pictures. You will find short reflections on these images. Specifically, you will learn more about my mindset and design process.

Being rooted in Appalachia, I think that design is a way of living. In my own heritage, design is woven into quilts, baked into pies, mixed into jams, and underscores countless songs and dances.

Because it is so ubiquitous, I firmly believe that the beauty and utility of design should be accessible. Well-made things and adorned graphics should not belong exclusively to the wealthy. They are common and should be shared.

In addition, design does not only tickle the eye. Design is about use, possibility, and actionable desire. A well-designed graphic or digital product should empower others to do things they had not yet considered. Design is a means of extending and enjoying life.

I have a simple design strategy stretched out over three basic tactics.

My strategy is that designs should be drawable. The people who encounter my designs should be able to reproduce them. Their life and free use should not be anchored to the designer. As a result, my personal style can be read as minimalist but I would describe it as *simplified*. My work aims for simplicity for the sake of accessibility and empowerment.

Tactically, I want my work to not only delight the eye but to teach and move. The content of any of my designs may not be explicitly informative but the net result of the image, structure, and feel should always enable further actions. Design should teach, move, and delight.

"When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece."

–John Ruskin

Identity Systems

Every identity system that I develop—whether corporate or personal—pivots around a mood and message. I start by applying raw shapes (*lit.* squares, triangles, etc.) to a collaborator's goals. These shapes quickly grow into logos, taglines, and graphic "voicing." If a collaborator already has marks and visual elements then I graphically align those components with their mood and vision. Each system is guided by the collaborator's specific tastes, desires, whilst being inflected by my own simplified and reduced approach.

David A. Garner, 2020

Sometimes, an identity system is built completely around the base typography's shapes. In Doug's case (*bottom right image*), the use of Gill Sans perfectly harmonized with his jovial and playful nature. When Gill is taken to an ultra weight, it begins having a clownish character. During the discovery and sketching phase, this yielded interesting shapes that mimicked Doug's beard.

INVESTORS OF CHANGE

Sometimes, designers have very little control over the proper name of a brand. In these cases, an appeal to basic shapes can be serendipitous. The "i" and "c" of *Investors for Change*, when laid on top of one another, visually evoke a key. This image is then "turned."

CHANGE LIFE MEDIA

In some cases, the name of a collaborator is vague and requires some level of abstraction. Once again, the basic letterforms could be used to evoke a sense of movement and forward change. The L is repeated and layered to give the sense of a object rotating forward.

ODYSSEY OF THE INTERIOR

Interiors are hard to depict. They are often hollow. In this case, the O of *Odyssey* provided the basic empty structure and the "i" was added to mimic the look of a black hole. The collaborator wanted a sense of journey but one that was guided by mystery and often darkness.

NEST AND NEEDLE

In this project, the collaborator was interested in selling their bespoke woven goods. Rather than use the letters to hint at a basic shape, when collected, they could be arranged in a messy way. Piggybacking on a bird weaving a home, the mark itself looked like a nest of letters and strings.

Personal and Professional Branding

From left:
Acomodo Design, 2020
Trenton St. Baptist Church, 2021

Startups and Rebrands

Left:
Slot, LLC, 2020
Right (clockwise)*:*
General Machine, 2022;
Construct Pacific, 2022;
Forward Vibe 2020

# Design is the intermediary between information and understanding

Information design is more than just typesetting or dressing up word documents. It is also not reducible to data visualization. As an information designer I utilize graphics, writing, data, research, UI architecture and more to put ideas into a palatable, digestible, and delightful form.

"When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece."

–John Ruskin
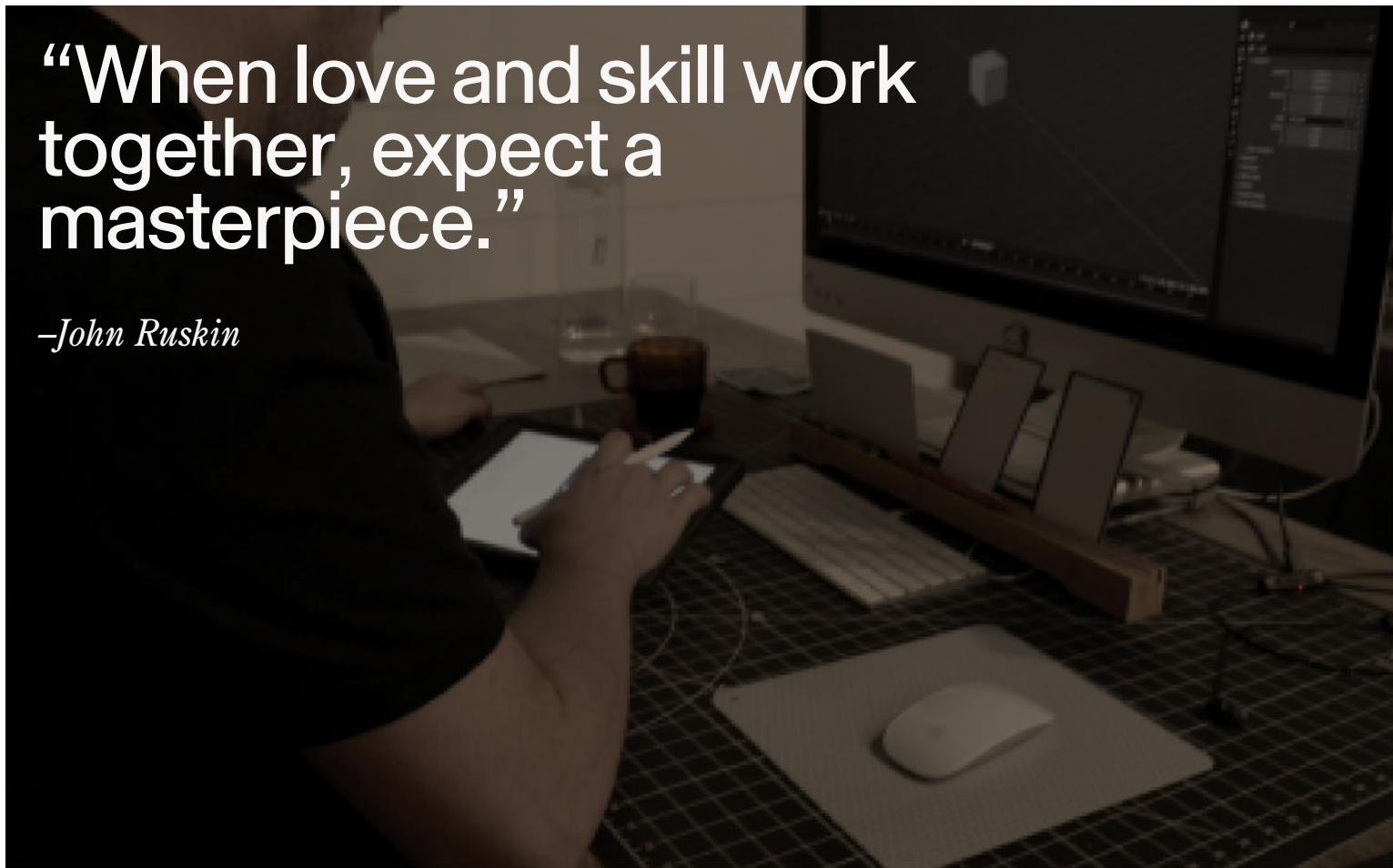
Information Design

A collaborator may need to showcase a series of informational elements or even display an array of sellable products. In these instances, the designer must carefully prepare for final reception and use. In the case of digital delivery, a layout must be readable a varied distances and speeds. In the case of print delivery, the composition must anticipate printer limitations, time constraints, and delivery mechanisms. Each is critical to the success of the information.
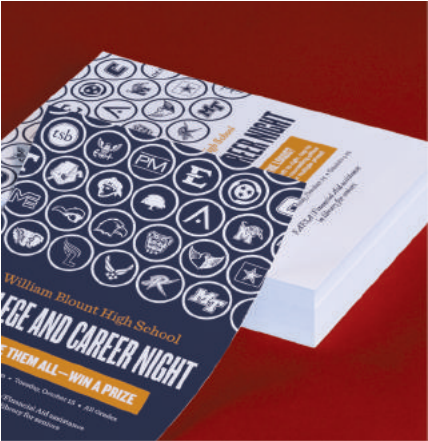
Fourth Purpose Foundation, 2022.

Often, informational designs are singular or small projects. A collaborator may need a podcast graphic, a poster, or even a series of white papers.
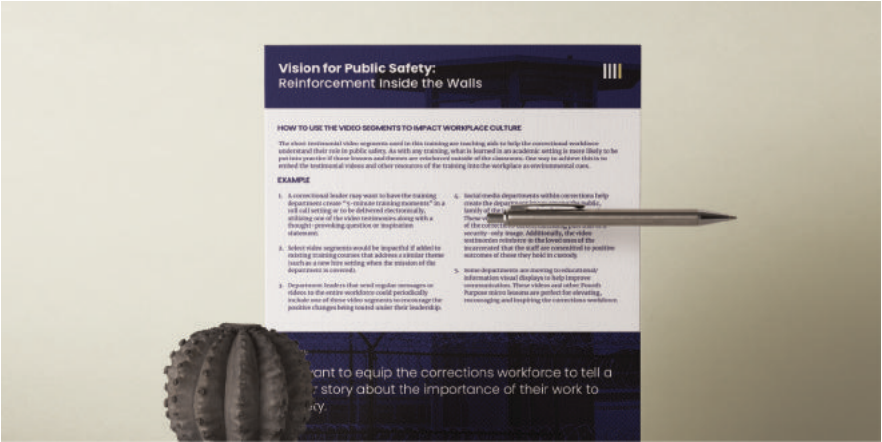
FET Construction, 2021

Wow My Garage, 2022

Mixed Media Information Design

Little River Montessori, 2019

Clemson University, 2021

Mircea Eliade and The Myth of the Eternal Return

Rule of St. Comghall, 2018

Book Oblivion, 2020

Promotional Designs

Collaborators can have specific needs like wearables or swag in order to boost their new brand. After building their basic elements, I incorporate them into requested promotional materials.

Knoxville Forest School, 2019

Above:
*Pellissippi Debate league,
2019*

Left*:
Envy Brand Studio, 2022*

Website and App Design

Information design conveniently translates into website design and application proto- typing. The principles of usability and understanding underlie both disciplines. The most significant difference between the print material ands these examples is the interaction. In website and app develop- ment, the design must anticipate user needs after the original visual appeal.

Right:
Slot, LLC, 2020
Below (clockwise)*:*
Clemson University, 2022;
Wolters Grace, 2022;
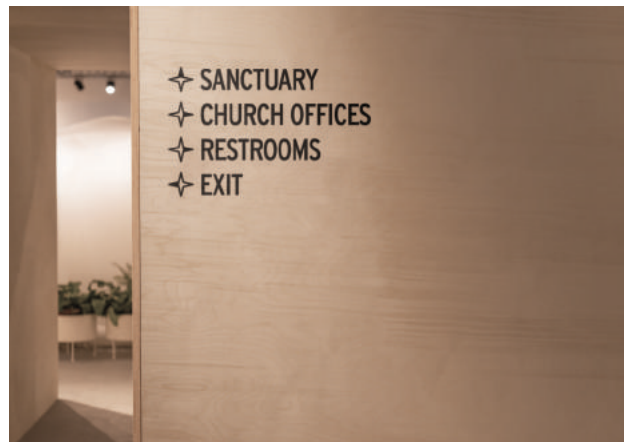*Your Home solar, 2020;*
Young Birth, 2019
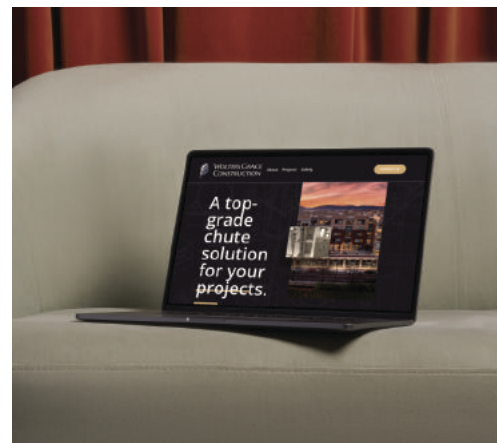
When the collaborator is an institution, they may require signage to augment their brand or to direct direct their customers when at a physical location. It is critical that this signage reflect the brand voice and system.
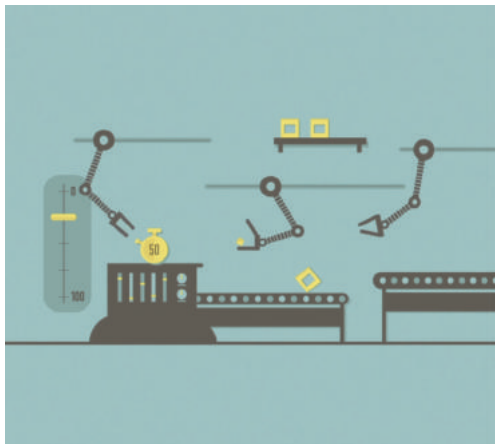

Above: *Wow My Garage, 2021*
Right: *St. Brendan's Anglican Church*

Outdoor and Wayfinding Design

Motion Design and Video Graphics

Increasingly, motion graphics and videos are instrumental to a design system's success. Motion design significantly advances the value of a design by introducing the unique element of time.

School of Motion, 2019.

Clemson University, 2020.

School of Motion, 2019.

Experimental Design

Beyond the needs of collaborators, I want to constantly prepare for forthcoming needs. Dimensional graphics will become increasingly significant as augmented and virtual reality gain traction. In addition, illustration and custom type add depth and character to any design system.

Teach Grotesk Custom Type, 2022

Custom Lego Design, 2022

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Made in Appalachia