

**RYAN MOLLOY** | STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I believe the traditional boundaries defining the roles of a graphic designer have blurred/vanished placing designers in non-traditional roles: the designer as author, editor, director, artist, and researcher. Designers have been forced to become extremely media savvy, embracing the ever-changing face of technology the fading borders of the discipline. It is because of this understanding of design that I approach education by providing students two sets of knowledges:

- » First, formal, form-making skills acquired through assignments which introduce methods, structures, and techniques for creating designed objects. These skills form the foundation of a designer's ability to effectively communicate their ideas. I believe that these skills are often gained through exercises that require a great deal of repetition and revision. I liken these skills to that of a craftsman whose abilities come from years of practice and apprenticeship.
- » Second, critical thinking skills acquired by asking students to question the social, political, technological, cultural, and theoretical context their work exists within. It is my belief that design seeks to not only understand the status quo, but it also seeks to change it. In this I view design as a lens to reinterpret the world around us. As an instructor one of my priorities is to produce students who are confident in their intellectual ability in addition to their ability to create beautifully designed objects.

My personal pedagogical goals are derived directly from my personal practice and my definition of what design is. All of my assignments are drawn from methods utilized in my design practice and from my creative research. This intimate knowledge of content and method strengthens my connection to what students learn.

In my practice I liken the discipline of graphic design to what architect Lebbeus Woods insists of architecture, in that design "was only and always concerned with experimental beginnings." As I derive my pedagogical goals from my practice I also treat my classroom as a laboratory, creating an atmosphere where students feel at ease to develop their own personal voice and ideas about what design is within the context of my assignments. This belief, that my classroom is a lab, drives majority of my course work, which largely involves assignments labeled as experimental or non-applied. I firmly believe that one of the advantages of being within an academic institution is its ability to alleviate the pressure of standards and precedent found in commercial practice. I believe that this pushes towards an open atmosphere where ideas can flourish, and allows for students to experiment freely. It is my belief that in the expanding field of graphic design, that I need to provide students the ability operate in a variety of contexts beyond traditional professional practice. This said at all times I demonstrate and explain to students how they can easily apply methods, techniques, and processes learned in my courses within a commercial practice.