



College of Design

Graphic Design

Undergraduate Information

The Study of Graphic Design

Graphic design is a professional field of study based on the foundations of visual communication. The study of graphic design encompasses cultural, aesthetic, ergonomic, technical, ethical and economic fields. Designers create communications that serve many needs—everything from brand identity to multimedia interfaces. They solve communication problems of all types and sizes. The solutions require creativity, lateral thinking, research, and excellent verbal and written communication skills.

Graphic design has its roots in a variety of sources, including the study and history of the fine arts as well as the knowledge of technology and its history. The history of graphic design is linked to commerce and the ability of merchants, institutions and governments to communicate with their fellow citizens. It is also related to philosophical, literary and artistic movements.

Find us online at
[www.design.iastate.edu/
GD/index.php](http://www.design.iastate.edu/GD/index.php)



A. Platt, e-commerce Web site, ArtGR 478

How can graphic design improve the functionality and appearance of Internet communications?

Graphic Design at Iowa State University

In the 1960s, Iowa State University offered its first program in graphic design, called advertising design, through the College of Home Economics. By the time the College of Design was formed in 1978, the number of students enrolled in advertising design had grown to more than 300. In 1981 the name of the program changed to graphic design to reflect a more focused professional program.

Graphic design is a part of the department of art and design, which, together with the departments of architecture, landscape architecture, and community and regional planning, forms a unique and innovative interdisciplinary environment.

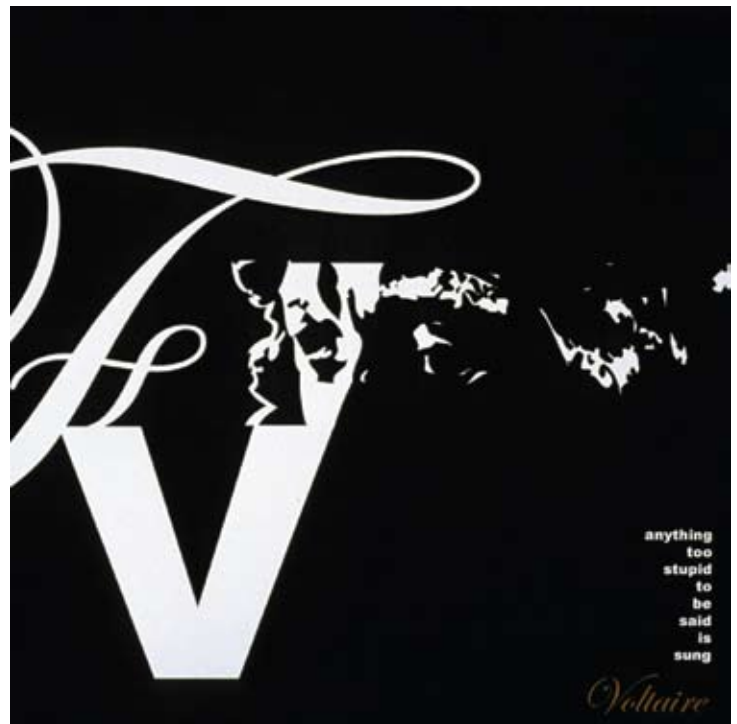
The Degree

The bachelor of fine arts (BFA) in graphic design is a four-year degree focused on preparing students for a career in the visual communication profession. This preparation includes an internship, international experiences, field trips, active involvement in professional organizations, and a well-balanced curriculum.

The graphic design program also offers a master of fine arts (MFA) in graphic design. The graduate degree is designed primarily for those interested in an advanced position in the design industry or in higher education.



Typography study, ArtGR 370



Typography study, ArtGR 270



N. Noonan, publication design, ArtGR 491



Erin Fitzgerald, exhibit design, ArtGR 474

How can we communicate complex information to large audiences?

How can we visually communicate information through diagrams, illustrations and photographs?

How can graphic design influence the economic and business environments of the future?

The Curriculum

The undergraduate program in graphic design is a four-year course of study. During the first year, students complete the College of Design's Core Design Program, which includes courses in design, drawing, and cultural studies as well as general education requirements such as math, science, English composition, an introduction to the university library, and electives. At the end of the first year, students are evaluated by the faculty on the basis of a portfolio review, essay, and academic achievement. Successful candidates then enter the curriculum in graphic design.

The graphic design curriculum consists of a three-year studio sequence that is supplemented with technology options, additional studio options, and professional practice courses and experiences. Students are encouraged to explore creative problem-solving techniques through their studio classes. They work together in teams and individually to solve the communication problems posed by their course assignments. Iowa State is one of only a few design schools that offer a two-semester sequence of graphic design history courses.

Many students elect to enroll in a minor to broaden their educational experience at Iowa State. Minors chosen by graphic design majors have included computer science, English, advertising, business, and modern languages.

Abigail Luhrs, patterns generated by repeating and rotating a six sided cube 16 times. Each face of the cube has a different but harmonious design. ArtGR 270



Demand for Graduates

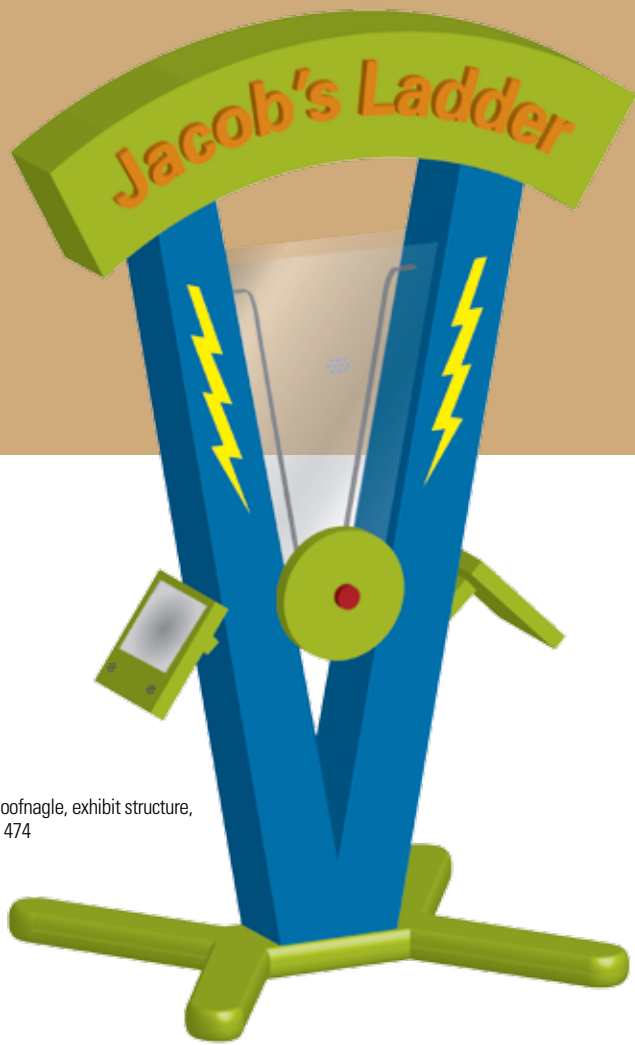
Iowa State's undergraduate program in graphic design is one of the strongest in the United States. Iowa State alumni are employed in some of the best design studios, corporations and advertising agencies throughout the country. They are consistently represented in the most prestigious design exhibitions in the world, including the American Center for Design 100 show, the AIGA Communication Graphics exhibit, and Industrial Design's annual exhibit, and their work may be found in many major national and international design publications.

Demand for graphic design graduates is high in several areas, including Web design and time-based media, publication design, and multidisciplinary design with a focus on collaboration. Iowa State alumni frequently work in Iowa and the surrounding states, as well as many major cities in the United States and around the world.



Haelnn Lee, food label project





Carl Hoofnagle, exhibit structure, ArtGR 474



Haelnn Lee, food label project

If these questions interest you, consider a major in graphic design.

Opportunities and Resources

Many graphic design students participate in the university honors program, which offers seminars, special programs and projects for undergraduates who have demonstrated the ability and motivation to assume more than the usual responsibility for their education. Iowa State also has an active student chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), the professional organization for graphic design. Off-campus opportunities include international study programs such as the semester abroad in the College of Design's Rome facility.

Graphic design studios are equipped with wireless network technology that enables students to connect to the university and college networks from their studio desks. Students are strongly encouraged to own laptops and bring them to class for maximum productive use of their time. The College of Design provides assistance and advice on which computer and software are needed for each design discipline; if you are considering a major in graphic design, please consult with the college's laptop program coordinator prior to purchasing a machine. Peripherals and output devices are contained in the college's computer labs.

The Faculty

The graphic design program has seven full-time faculty, and practicing professionals are invited as guest lecturers and reviewers to add richness and diversity to the curriculum. Faculty members have varied backgrounds, and all have professional experience in design practice before coming to education. Many have unique specializations that range from green design practices to human-computer interface design.

Craig Oldakowski, package design, ArtGR 471



Kim Ahrens, animation project, ArtGR 473

OBSCURE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1, SEPTEMBER 04

observer

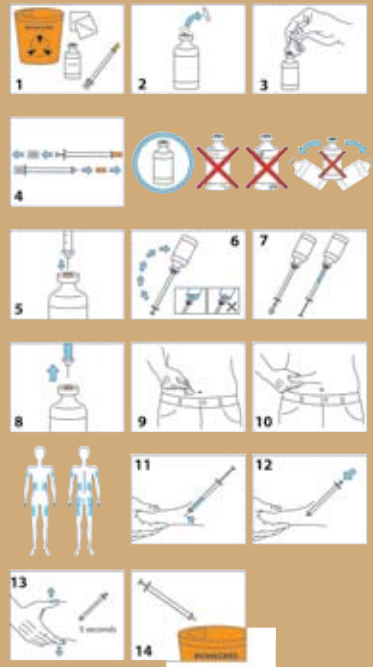
new zealand's
maori



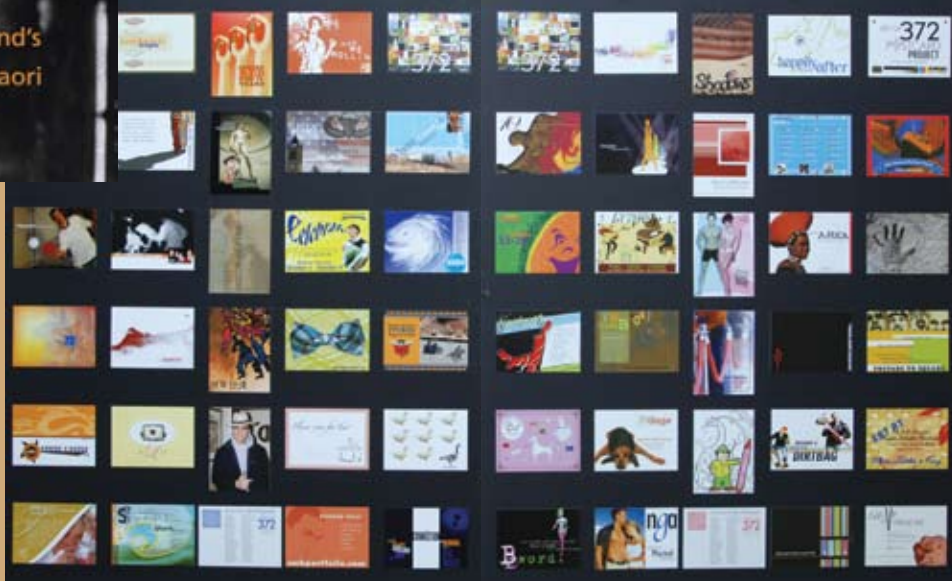
Lisa Ly, publication design, ArtGR 491

How to Give an Insulin Injection

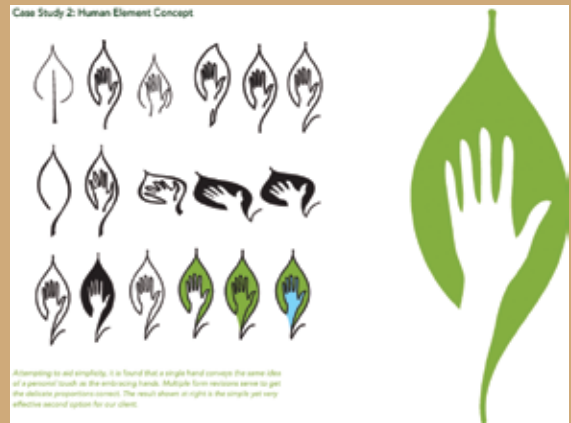
Marnie Meylor,
information design,
ArtGR 370



Printed postcard designs, ArtGR 372



Austin Van Laar, process book,
identity design, ArtGR 470



Financial Assistance

The university offers financial assistance in the form of grants, scholarships, loans and part-time employment. Scholarship recipients are selected on the basis of academic merit or other demonstrated talent as well as financial need. For new students, two scholarships are available. One is awarded through the College of Design to students entering a design-related major, while the department of art and design offers a scholarship for new students who have chosen a major in the department (like graphic design). A merit scholarship is available for graphic design students at the sophomore and junior levels. The department also presents a number of awards and scholarships to currently enrolled students on the basis of academic achievement.

High School Preparation

Beyond the minimum requirements for admission to Iowa State University, students who plan to pursue a major in graphic design may find a background in art, photography, journalism or computer science helpful in preparing for college coursework.

Contact Us

For more information on how you can become involved in the study of graphic design at Iowa State University, contact the department or the Office of Admissions:

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Rome studio



Rome studio



Field trip



Journals from graphic design students in Rome



Photographs by Roger Baer, Robert Elbert, Michael Faas

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