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Experience & Approaches

By Edward Locke

My professional recognitions:

Recognition of my artistic and design capabilities include:

- (1) Honorable Mention from 1993 GoldStar International Design Competition for designing a multi-functional food processor system,
- (2) Pasadena City College Commercial and Fine Arts Scholarship, 2017,
- (3) Guisados Featured Artist Exhibition 2017,
- (4) Society of Professional Journalists National Winner of Mark of Excellence Award for Photo Illustration, 2017, and Journalism Association of Community Colleges 2017 SoCal Publication Award Photo-Illustration First Place, and
- (5) Journalism Association of Community Colleges 2017 SoCal Publication Award Editorial Cartoon First Place.

My experiences:

I worked as full-time graphic artist and designer for corporations and institutions, and for local clients in the Greater Los Angeles area, on graphic design, art production and technical illustration projects. When I taught engineering graphics at Santa Ana College as a part-time instructor, and at the University of Georgia College of Education as a graduate teaching and research assistant, I taught some relevant principles and skills for graphic communication to students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In addition, I painted two advertisement murals for Foochow Restaurant in Chinatown, Los Angeles.

My approaches:

My artistic creation projects usually starts with the definition of a theme or topic, which are connected to culture, beauty of nature, or current events. For example, the *Manchu Mermaid* digital photography project and *the Birth of the Manchu Nation* storyboard project are both connected to the history, belief, aspiration and lifestyle of the Manchu people, *the Sunlight Island* 3ds MAX animation video project is connected to the natural beauty of Gulangyu Islet, the place where I was born. I am well educated beyond art, design and technology; I read a lot in philosophy, religion, political-economics, sociology, and anthropology; and I stay current with what is happening in the United States and around the world. These enlarge my scope of understanding of humans and the nature and give me plenty of ideas to choose from for my artistic expression.

Even for artistic expression, I use the techniques of market investigation, which constitutes an important part of my graphic design process. This is done with museum visitation, library reading, and Internet research, to get useful insights and inspiration. I periodically go to local libraries with substantial collections of books on arts and graphic design, such as [Brand Library and Art Center in Glendale](#), [Los Angeles Central Library](#), the library of the [Art Center College of Design in Pasadena](#), and the art library of the [University of California Los Angeles](#), browsing through books and magazines to get some ideas from other artists' works for my reference.

I usually carry a pocket-size camera with me to take pictures of flowers, trees, buildings, sky and others; I also periodically visit tourist attractions such as [Los Angeles Zoo](#), [the Aquarium of the Pacific](#), [Huntington Library and Botanical Garden](#), [Santa Monica Beach](#), [Disneyland](#), [Universal Studios](#) in Hollywood, [Knott's Berry Farm](#), [the Medieval Times](#), [the Exposition Park](#) with [California Science Center](#), [California African American Museum](#), [Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County](#), [the Museum of the American West \(Autry Center\)](#) and many others, to take pictures of animals, fish, ocean, artifacts, and others; and these digital photos could be used as raw materials for my graphic design and digital photography projects. I prefer to use my own pictures instead of depending on commercially available stock photos.

As a continuing learning process, local museums, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, Orange County, the Gatty Villa in Malibu, and others, also constitute great sources of inspiration with their architectural, interior and environmental design, their permanent as well as temporary exhibitions.

The next step is “brainstorming” or generation of as much ideas as possible for the artistic creation projects at hand, with some definite goals established as to what visual impact I want to have on the average viewers of my artworks, but absolutely without any particular restriction with regard to sizes, shapes, features, etc., and certainly without any criticism, self-criticism, or judgement; the key of conducting a successful “brainstorming” session is to “go crazy,” or simply let your ideas go “wild” and come out of your mind in a free flow; I draw quick sketches (I do NOT elaborate or try to make them look “professional;” and I take quick notes; number, not quality, is what is needed in the “brainstorming” session. I make quick thumbnail sketches with ball-point pens, color pencils and sometimes markers, to establish possible layout, color schemes and composition of the pieces I am working on, such as oil painting, watercolor painting, color pencil drawings, digital photos, Flash videos, etc.. Ideas so generated will be analyzed, compared, and combined to reach a more balanced strategy for the solution of the artistic creation problem at hand. Sometimes, several sessions of brainstorming might be needed; and the process might take from 3 hours to 2 days, continuously and/or intermittently, because creativity depends on inspiration, and the outbursts of inspiration are by no means similar to mass production on the assembly line. Taking breaks to refresh the brain and coming back to previously generated sets of ideas will be necessary in order to come up with the best initial creative strategy possible. At the end of the step of brainstorming, a “final” set of artistic expression sketches will be prepared for the “official” task of artistic creation. Occasionally, for more “innovative” projects requiring more creative thinking, the “brainstorming” session could start before the market investigation process. In this case, market investigation supplies some useful tips on the use of particular skills at a technical level.

The next step is the actual execution of the art works, using appropriate set or sets of tools, traditional or digital, “conventional” or “non-conventional,” or a combination of all of them.