

PRATT INK • A Studio Model for Sustained Client Partnerships

My Framework for Institutionalizing Client-Based Creative Practice

Developing, Building, and Sustaining Client Partnerships Through a Junior Design Team

Conceived & Developed by John Battista De Santis

A repeatable studio model built from the work I already do:
identifying prospective clients, developing partnerships, pitch-
ing opportunities, and sustaining long-term relationships.

Pratt **Ink** organizes that process into a structured model, with
a junior design team supporting client work while building
lasting relationships between Pratt and nonprofit, cultural,
educational, and industry partners.

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PRATT INK • The Question Behind It

Pratt Ink didn't begin as an effort to create another program. It grew from years of developing partnerships with Pratt Libraries, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, nonprofits, cultural institutions, industry partners, and campus departments.

Every collaboration had a different objective, but they revealed the same pattern: when design teams worked on authentic challenges for real organizations, the quality of the work improved, expectations rose, and the partnership created value for everyone involved.

Over time, my focus shifted from landing the next successful partnership to understanding why some collaborations consistently produced exceptional results while others did not. The answer was rarely talent or resources. It was structure.

Pratt Ink is the studio model I developed to provide that structure.

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Pratt **Ink** is the proposed client-based studio model I developed for Pratt Institute, connecting a rotating junior design team with nonprofits, cultural institutions, startups, campus departments, and community organizations. The pilot is currently embedded within courses I developed and teach.

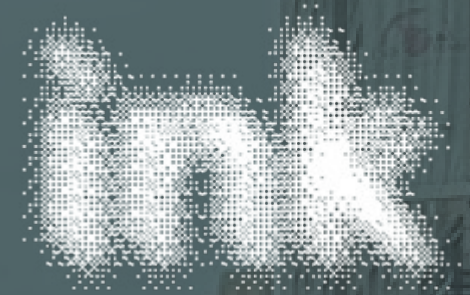
Rather than treating client work as an occasional experience, the model integrates it into the curriculum through an ongoing pipeline of partnerships that creates measurable value for students, partner organizations, and the institution...

For the model to succeed beyond any one project or individual, it was designed as a sustainable framework rather than a one-time initiative. That includes:

- Governance and staffing
- Partnership development
- Implementation and growth
- Benchmarking and long-term sustainability

The challenge was never the idea. The challenge was designing a structure capable of sustaining it.

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PRATT INK • Proof of Concept in Practice

I've pitched Pratt **Ink** in two forms, with two different outcomes:
A standalone Creative Hub — a fully resourced, dedicated client-based studio for the department. Although the proposal was not approved, it established the broader institutional vision.

An elective course — “**Pratt Ink**,” client-based course built around live/prospective client engagements, was approved to run.

The proof of concept already exists. The model has been developed through projects completed in my Graphic Design and Communication Design courses, including:

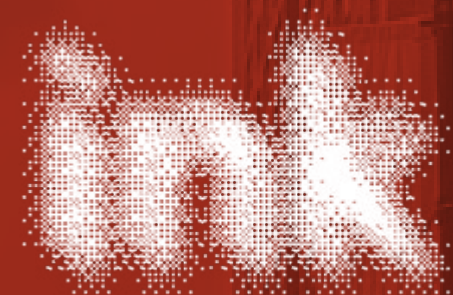
Pratt Exhibitions — motion graphics, and promotional materials developed to professional curatorial standard.

Pratt Libraries — wayfinding, signage, digital communications, branding, and accessibility-focused designs.

Blick Art Materials — an ongoing commercial partnership featuring rotating student exhibitions in a national retail environment.

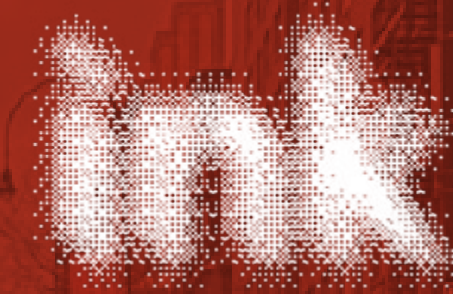
Together, these collaborations demonstrate the principle behind **Pratt ink**: authentic client partnerships consistently produce stronger work than hypothetical design briefs.

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PRATT INK • The Strategic Business Case

Beyond demonstrating the concept, I developed a comprehensive proposal for expanding Pratt ink into a fully resourced creative studio supported by a long-term implementation strategy.

The proposal included:

Competitive analysis benchmarking Pratt ink against comparable models — (Savannah College of Art & Design), CCA's Hubbub Studio, Miami Ad School — identifying successes, limitations, and where **Pratt ink** creates a competitive edge.

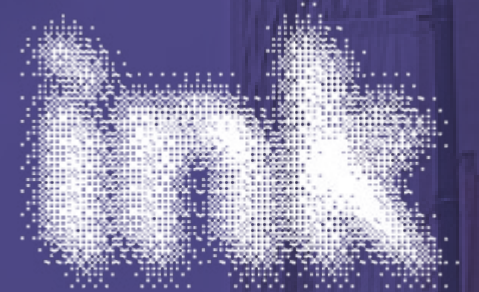
ROI and enrollment modeling projecting a swing from documented national enrollment decline to measurable Year 1 and Year 2 growth, tied to benchmarks in comparable studio models.

Three-tier budget scenarios, full launch, staffed pilot, and course-embedded pilot supported by detailed budget projections.

Funding source mapping across federal workforce and education grants (Perkins V, WIOA, NSF ATE, Department of Education Title V), arts and cultural grants (NEA, NYSCA), private foundations (Mellon, Kresge), corporate partners (Adobe, Autodesk, Wacom).

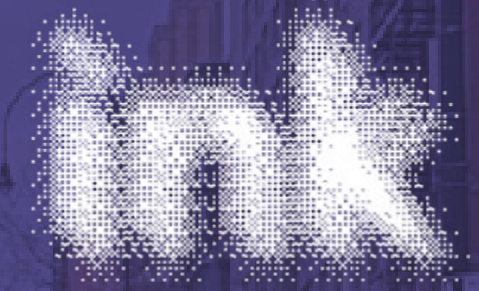
I authored this proposal for institutional leadership; it has not yet moved to full funding or launch.

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PRATT INK • Why It Matters

Organizations rarely struggle because they lack ideas. More often, they struggle because they lack structures capable of sustaining those ideas beyond individual projects or individual champions. Designing those structures—through partnerships, workflow, and organizational planning—has become one of the defining themes of my work.

Pratt **Ink** represents more than a proposal. It is a practical model for building long-term partnerships that connect education with professional practice while creating lasting value for students, partner organizations, and the institution.

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