

WHY THE WORLD LOOKS THE WAY IT DOES

10,000 years of visual communication
brought to life through research, storytelling
and hands-on exploration—from ancient
writing and illuminated manuscripts to photography,
animation, digital media and immersive worlds.

65+ Lectures • 50+ Topics

Hands-On + Research • In-Person + Online + Immersive

Built and taught at Parsons, St. John's, NYIT, Pratt, and CUNY

Conceived and Developed
by John Battista De Santis

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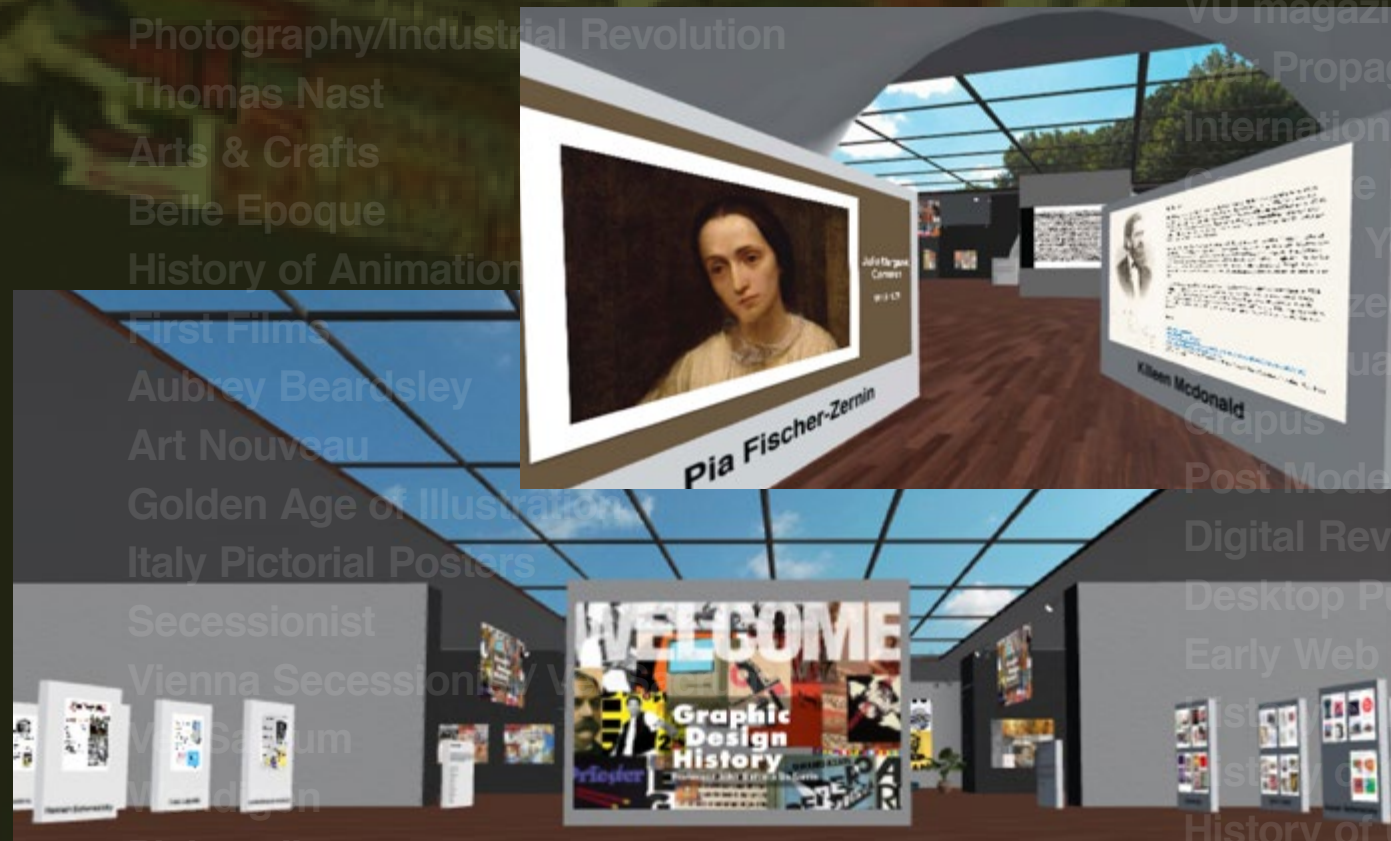
What If You Could Walk Into History? From Online Course to Immersive World

Students didn't just learn about the Bauhaus. They walked through it — and Dada, Constructivism, and every era in between.

Working with The New School's XReality Center, I built a proof-of-concept: Graphic Design History extended into a live, immersive 3D environment. Students entered a shared virtual space, navigated historical periods, encountered lectures and resources, and saw their own work presented in virtual galleries.

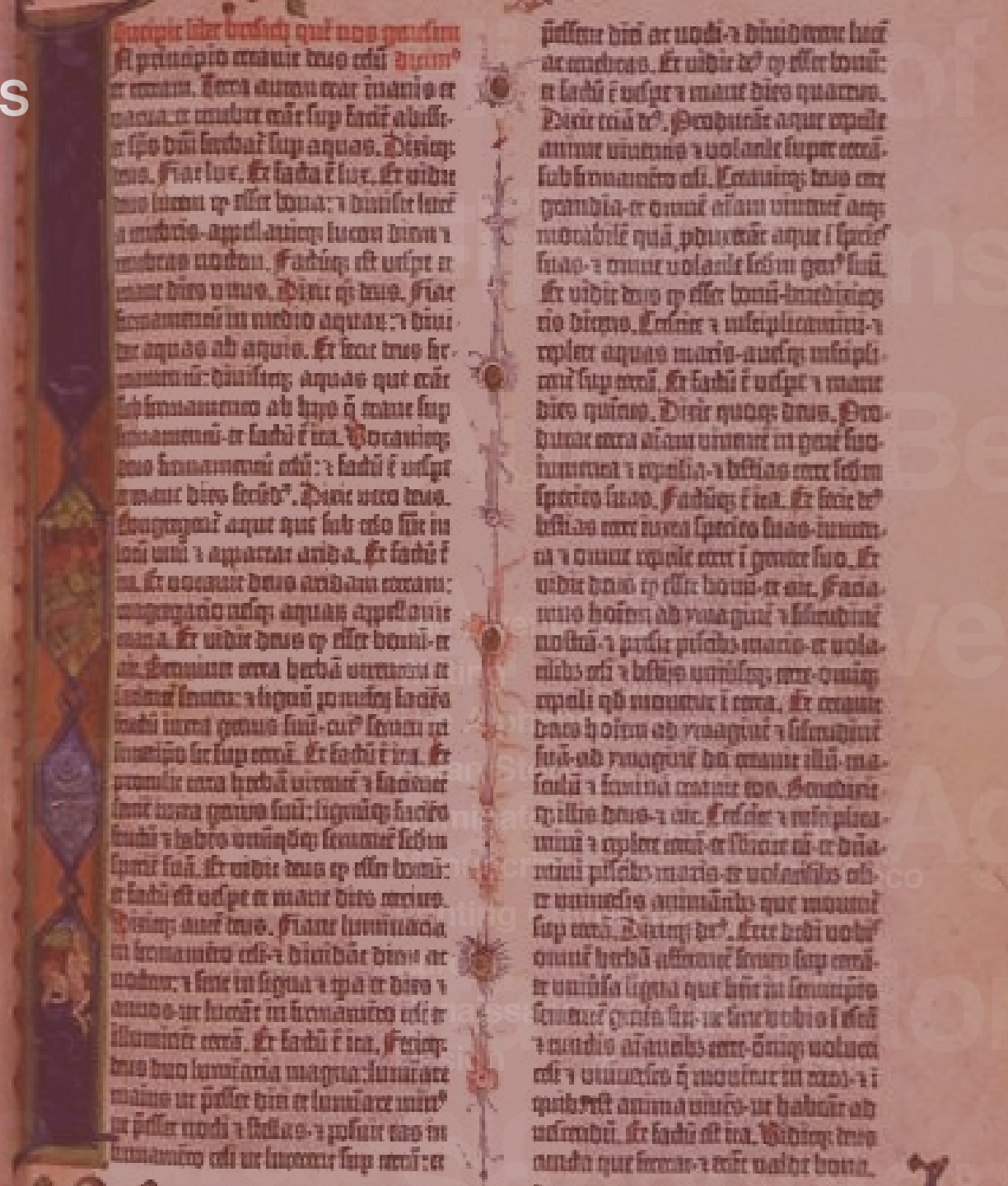
I developed the concepts — historical environments, artwork, virtual narratives, student-project spaces, and 3D exhibitions — transforming course content from the screen into a place students could enter and experience.

The course became the environment — extending design history from screen to a space students experienced.



The Visual World Didn't Start Yesterday.

The goal: understand what came before to better understand—and create within—the visual world we live in now.



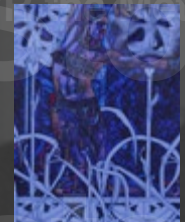
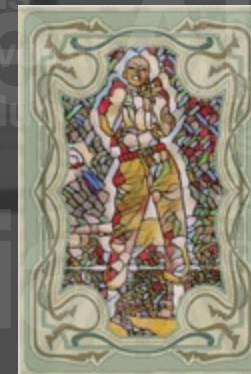
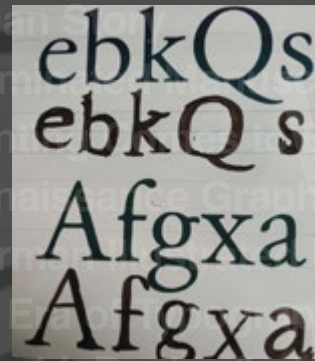
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History You Make, Not Just Memorize.

What does cuneiform mean after you've actually tried writing it? What changes when you construct an illuminated manuscript page, draw historical letterforms, build a camera obscura, or make animation one frame at a time?

My hands-on approach turns historical developments into experiences: write your name in cuneiform or hieroglyphics · create a Book of Kells-inspired carpet page · render Renaissance letterforms · build a camera obscura · make a flip book · explore Art Nouveau composition · work with Plakatstil reduction · experiment with Dada's Exquisite Corpse.

Students encounter historical ideas through the processes, technologies, and visual decisions that produced them.



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Once You See It, You Can't Unsee It.

The Past Is Hiding In Plain Sight.

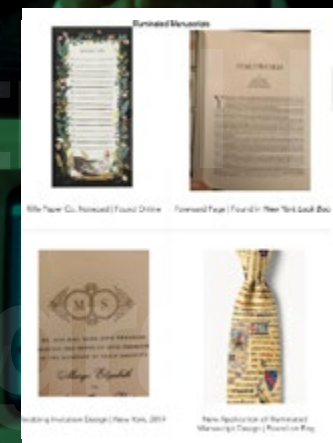
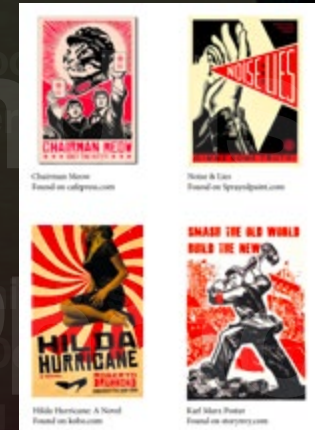
History becomes much more relevant when you start recognizing it everywhere. Ongoing components train students to do exactly that:

Period of Design Review — students find contemporary work that carries the visual language of historical movements

Morning at the Museum — puts students directly in front of historical objects and collections

A historical style stops being just a lecture. It becomes something you can see on the street, in a museum, on a package, in an identity, in advertising — or on a screen.

Weekly Periods of Design Review Document and Discussions



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Two Tracks. Same History. Different Depth.

I developed two distinct tracks from my visual historical foundation.

Hands-On + Experiential

Visual lectures combined with historical processes, experimentation, observation, museum investigation and making.

Research + Analysis + Making

Greater emphasis on research, writing, cultural and technological context, and comparative analysis—while continuing to use visual investigation and making.

The balance can shift for different audiences, disciplines, academic levels and formats without sacrificing depth.

That adaptability allows the material to work as a complete course, focused program, lecture series, presentation or workshop.



Research And Analysis
Historical Influence In Design
Bauhaus



Historical Influence in Design

Constructivism (1915-1930)

Research & Analysis
Historical Influence of Jan Tschichold



Historical Application
Plakatstil

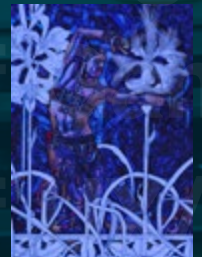
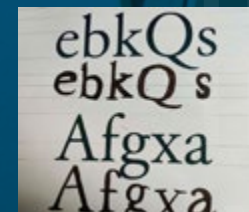
Final Project Historical Application Art
Deco & Research and Analysis Historical
Influence In Design Constructivism
(Compiled)

Historical Application
Plakatstil

Visual Activity

International Typographic Style

Design Tech Innovation Project
Research Analysis
Lithography: The Technology That
Fueled Mass Visual Culture -



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From Cuneiform to UX/UI History.

The story continues into the visual world being created now.

I connect changes in visual communication to the cultural and technological forces that produced them—showing how each new medium changes what we make, how we communicate and how we experienced information in the past though today.

History becomes a way of understanding the present, not escaping from it.

Invention of Writing

The Alphabet

Asian Story

Illuminated Manuscripts

Printing in Europe

Renaissance Graphic Design

German Books

Typographic Landmarks

Industrial Revolution:

Graphic Design

Photography

Thomas Nast

Arts & Crafts

Belle Epoque

History of Animation

First Films

Aubrey Beardsley

Art Nouveau

Golden Age of Illustration

Italy Pictorial Posters

Vienna Secessionist

Ver Sacrum

Wendigen

Plakatstil

Futurism

The Bolted Book

Dada

Constructivism

De Stijl

Bauhaus

Jan Tschichold

Modernism/Art Deco

VU Magazine

War Propaganda

International Typographic Style

Massimo Vignelli

Corporate Image

New York School

Polish/Czech Posters

Conceptual Design

Grapus

Postmodern Graphic Design

Digital Revolution:

Design/Technology

Desktop Publishing

Early Web Design

History of Digital Art

History of Gaming

History of UX/UI design

AR/VR Metaverse Design

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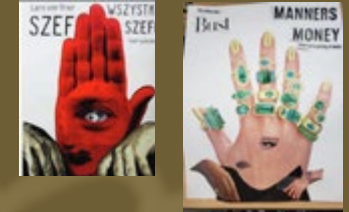
Built, Tested and Continually Adapted at Five Universities.

I have developed, taught and expanded this body of work across:
Parsons / The New School • Pratt Institute • St. John's University
New York Institute of Technology • CUNY

It's been adapted for undergraduate and graduate study, as well as in-person, synchronous online, and asynchronous learning. At Parsons, my asynchronous Graphic Design History course was used as a model in New School online faculty training.

The content isn't simply transferred from one setting to another. The depth, the assignments, the balance of making and analysis, and the mode of engagement are rebuilt around the audience and environment every time.

Polish/Czech Poster Collage



Mucha Mashup



Sunprints



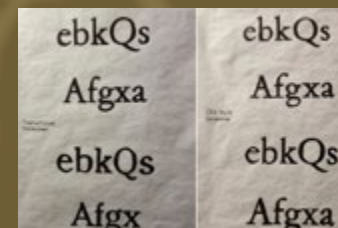
Post Modernist Mashup



Dada — Exquisite Corpse



Typographic Studies



Try Old Macs & PCs



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What began as a design-history course has grown into an adaptable body of original visual content, research, stories, and hands-on experiences that can change in scale, depth, and format for different audiences.

65+ Original Lectures • 50+ Topics • 10,000 Years of Visual Communication

Courses • Lectures • Talks • Presentation Series
• Workshops • Online Learning

From cuneiform to UX/UI, the central idea remains the same:

Understand what came before.
See what surrounds you differently.
Create what comes next more intelligently.

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