

Capilano U IDEA
San Francisco
Trip 2016



Capilano U IDEA San Francisco Trip 2016

Report by Vida Jurcic



The San Francisco Cultural & Professional Trip was led and chaperoned by myself and my partner, Dean Ponto. There were 13 Capilano University IDEA students on the trip, most of whom aspiring to become designers. The choice of San Francisco over New York was a good one in terms of studios to visit, as they are plentiful and prosperous in the Bay Area.

Most of the students arrived January 1, therefore having a couple of days to orient themselves and explore the city a bit. On Sunday, January 1, a group of us went to the de Young Museum followed by the Legion of Honor Museum, both of which have a good collection of art including some Salvador Dali paintings that are lesser known, but remarkable. There is a small collection of John Singer Sargent, a Mary Cassatt and some remarkable works by John Singleton Copley in the de Young and at least one token piece by some of the great impressionists such as Monet etc. in the Legion of Honor.



On Monday, January 3, a group of us went to Alcatraz, which was creepy, inspiring and a visually rich experience. On Tuesday, January 4, we met at the Museum of Craft & Design, which was extremely inspiring and very moving. There were two shows in progress, both based on sculptures and installation art. One of the shows was all work by war veterans: Art And Other Tactics: Contemporary Craft By Artist Veterans. Most of their pieces were a statement about how war has touched and affected the artist. The other show was a collection of works by women in a war torn Middle East: Without Camouflage. Dafna Kaffeman. Silvia Levenson. Both shows were very much appreciated by the students, and since they were in such tactile mediums, inspired them to think differently about communication possibilities.

That same Tuesday afternoon, we visited the supremely talented Jessica Hische, whose studio is in the colourful Mission District, which is filled with Latin inspired mural art. Jessica's studio is nestled in a residential street, in a very humble part of the neighbourhood. It's a very cozy, bright space filled with Jessica's inspiring lettering and artifacts, and her warm personality. She was an absolute delight, and spent almost two hours with us, showing the students some of the secrets of her technique, sharing her sketchbooks and giving some very valuable advice and encouragement.

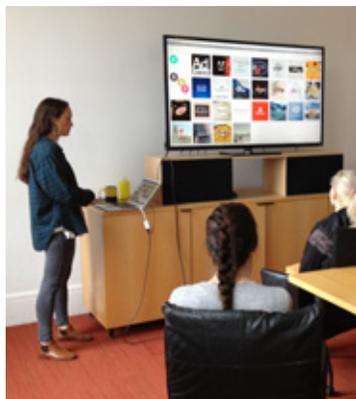


On Wednesday, January 6, we visited Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, a West Coast agency known for their innovative advertising and quirky campaigns. They have over 300 people working in their multi-level, turn-of-the-century red brick office building which is just around the corner from Chinatown. Gabrielle Gonzales organized a wonderful visit and tour for us. She gave us an overview of the agency, showing some work, then introduced us to three sets of speakers, the first of whom were a couple of young interns that had only been there a month. They were a writer (male)/art director (female) creative team that were put together by the Creative Director to work on projects. The art director is originally from Savannah, Georgia. As internship applicants, they had to pass a test: creating a video using an inanimate object and re-purposing it as something else. The writer created a video using a child's roller skates as an ab roller. The art director created an animated video about a carrot as a bad roommate. The second speaker was a senior designer who talked to the students about having a distinctive portfolio and a style to stand out from the competition. He also talked about how he collaborates with the art directors. The third speaking team were a creative duo from Melbourne, Australia known as R + L (Rohan and Laura). They have been in San Francisco for 6 months working at Goodby. They showed us some of their brilliant work done in Australia, where budgets are smaller. One of these campaigns was for Victoria Road Safety, an installation of white spray painted articles on white pillars, that were the ungiven Christmas gifts of those that were killed on the road prior to Christmas. Each item was accompanied by a profile of the departed love one. It was very moving, and made me cry. They also created a social media campaign for MS awareness based on what the symptoms look like. Photographers and artists shot visual representations of what they feel like, and the public was invited to create more and post them. We were at Goodby for over two hours.



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Following the speaker presentations, Gabrielle took us on a tour of the agency. They have a photo studio and editing suite in their basement, and a beer vending machine in their lunch room. Some of our students will be applying for internships!

In the afternoon, we met at Meta Design, an internationally acclaimed design firm founded by Erik Spiekermann. It's in the heart of the Financial District on Battery Street. There we were greeted by Hozy Rossi, Copy Writer, Lindsay Gravette, Creative Director and Geoff Phillips, Design Director. They showed us a few case studies, including work that they have done for Adobe Creative Suite, the San Francisco Ballet, the New York Philharmonic (they re-designed Paula Scher's logo) and some work they are currently doing for Dog DNA testing. Other notable clients include Volkswagen, Audi and 23 and Me DNA testing. Hozy was a gracious host, and took us on a tour of the open format studio of 22 people, including a look at their "War Room", where the current project boards are presented to their clients.



On Thursday January 7, the highlight of the day was a visit with Ammunition. They are located in a funky space converted warehouse space, Roundhouse One, across from Fisherman's Wharf and Pier 33 in a hotbed of design firms and head offices of major brands like Levis and THX. It's a very vibrant, youthful area. Ammunition was recently named one of the most innovative multi-disciplinary design firms in North America. They are an off-shoot company founded by people who left Meta Design to create their own company, one of whom was the creative director for Microsoft. They currently do a lot of package design and branding, and they had us all sign a non-disclosure agreement. The students learned a lot about presentation process and how to sell a concept to the client.



Friday, January 8 was our final day of visits, and we made our way to a lovely residential neighbourhood in Berkeley, and to St. Hieronymus Press, the studio of legendary poster designer, David Lance Goines. David has been in the red brick building housing his many letterpresses since he was 19 years old. Over the decades he has collected an amazing amount of artifacts and ephemera of his own creation. He was a bit of a radical in the 1960s, and was expelled from Berkeley for his views. He is very opinionated today, and had some very useful advice for the students. He showed them his techniques, his woodcuts and his sketchbook filled with tiny, exquisitely rendered miniatures of the posters he would create. He and his business partner, Richard, are masters of their craft and internationally respected and loved.

As an unplanned, added bonus for the students, Dean and I discovered another letterpress studio in the neighbourhood called Twig & Fig. They have an in-house design studio and a little shop in the front to sell their wares. Serge, the young pressman from Quebec, invited us to bring the students for a tour, so we did. Twig & Fig create some elaborate custom pieces (mostly invitations to events) on a wide assortment of substrates and materials. There is nothing that they will not try to find a way to print on, engrave or hand assemble. It was an eye-opener for the students to see how they can stretch their creativity.



Back in San Francisco on Friday evening, we all met at Z & Y restaurant in Chinatown for a Szechuan dinner to end our visit satiated body and soul. After dinner, the students went back to their hostel to pack for the journey home, hopefully not leaving their hearts in San Francisco!