

SE03EP01

Vanessa Guirey

H: Welcome to Noles Abroad, a podcast by Florida State University International Programs! I'm Hannah

Z: And I'm Zoe! And we are your hosts. On this podcast we'll talk about study abroad from the perspective of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni who make it an experience worth sharing. We'll also bring you travel tips and fun facts from around the globe.

H: Welcome back for season three! We're very excited about this season. To kick us off for episode one, we talked to Vanessa Guirey, IP's Graphic Designer. Vanessa talks about her study abroad experience in Greece, her journey in design, and how she has helped influence IP's brand. Let's go to our conversation with Vanessa now.

H: Hello Noles Abroad listeners, welcome back for season three! To kick us off this season we have a really exciting episode. Today, it is the full IP marketing team and we're going to talk all things marketing but today we're interviewing our graphic designer and she's going to tell us all about the branding and the look of IP that we all know and love. So to kick us off, Vanessa could you introduce yourself to our listeners?

Vanessa (V): For sure! First off, I'm so, so excited to be here with all, with you both, but my name is Vanessa Guirey, I work as the graphic designer for IP and I studied abroad in Greece. It wasn't a program with FSU International Programs, when I was in community college I studied abroad through a program there and it was a art focused program because I was studying studio art at the time, but ceramics in Greece.

Z: We want to ask you about the design and art of IP but first, could you talk a little bit about your design history and how you came to be a graphic designer and artist? And just have you always considered yourself to be a creative and can you just talk about that creative journey?

V: Yeah that's a super good question. I feel like I have always considered myself creative whether I believed that my entire life or not is a totally different story but when I look back on the things I enjoyed as a child and just throughout my life it's always been creating with my hands and creative problem solving. But to describe kind of my journey into graphic design and an artist, it started honestly from like I said childhood when I was young but really manifested itself when I went to community college and decided to take art classes. Even then I wasn't like "I'm an artist" I was like I just love doing this type of stuff but from there was introduced as so many different mediums of art from sculpture, drawing, photography, ceramics, painting. So many different things that just kind of put me into the mindset of what a creative does and what it is like to be an artist from even art history and craft like classes where I even made jewelry at some point. So I was introduced to so many different types of art and from there I was, I decided to move on to of course a university after getting my AA and I went into the retail merchandising program. And which might not initially seem like something that is graphic design focus or like artist focus but I thought maybe it was a good path to take in terms of like it being you know a more solid path because I didn't really know what type of options there were for artists but also it being creative at the same time because clothing, fashion, design, that's all in there. But to fast forward the story I also got my Master's in this Retail Merchandising which is actually called Global Merchandising and from there I was able to work in different programs at the time like Illustrator where we entered contests

to design clothing which was cool. And actually wow I totally forgot this part but in my undergrad, so there are many publications associated under the Retail Merchandising program that are focused on fashion and just fashion magazine and Diverse World Fashion, Clutch Magazine, Swatch Magazine, which I was a part of and where I was a publication designer. So that was kind of my first intro into publication design, just kind of an extracurricular that I decided to take on the side from a club that I was associated with on campus. So yeah that's kind of how I got into graphic design. I've always been a creative and yeah.

H: Can you talk a little bit more about your study abroad experience and how that impacted your path to becoming the graphic designer for International Programs and just how that experience helped you grow creatively?

V: So I feel like being in another country is something that sparks your interest and opens up your senses in general. And I think that being in another country, seeing how other people live, speaking another language, and just seeing historic monuments is super inspiring and definitely helped me grow as a creative. And I would say that it's mainly the teachers that I had at the time that challenged me to think in different ways. I love how you can be in the middle of a project but they present different questions to you or ideas that challenge you to think outside of the box that you originally were thinking in. And could you repeat what the first part of the question was?

H: With your study abroad experience, those teachers that challenged you, seeing the world, how did that impact your path to becoming the graphic designer for International Programs?

V: Okay this is a good question. Kind of earlier about what I was saying I didn't realize or know any of the paths that maybe creatives could have. I definitely saw that there is opportunity to live a life as a creative and as an artist and I think that being in another country where you saw other people do that, there were people or artists who were taking residencies at the school that I was going to, and that art has a huge influence on history made me realize that you can have a large impact doing work as a creative or as a designer, as an artist because it I feel like is what makes the world go round.

H: That's such a cool perspective on study abroad and how just seeing the world can kind of make you realize like these things that you love, other people love and can actually make a life doing them. So that's really cool that you got that out of your study abroad experience.

Z: Alright so our next question we want to shift a little bit to graphic design and just branding in general. So we want to ask why is branding important, both to you as an individual and to an organization like International Programs?

V: Love this question because I do see branding is being super important personally and I feel like my perception of what branding is me personally and what it is and organization is kind of muddled and mixed because I've worked in marketing so long that I view things from that branding sort of lens anytime I'm like deciding to choose to support a certain brand or yeah choose to support a certain brand. But why branding is important in general is just because you perceive companies by how they look visually first and that comes down to color, comes down to their choice of typeface for their logo, what type of imagery that they use, those are all elements that attract you. And elements of your personality, if you find that in a company's visual branding you will want to support that and you will want to dig more into it and see what it's all about. But this brought me back to kind of my art classes and how even the smallest

of things can influence how you perceive a brand and that's why people have sort of brand books and things that kind of outlay exactly why they do certain things a certain way. And like I was saying this problem back to my art classes where we had a project where we had to draw a line and then define a line as a line being angry, a line being happy, a line being sad. And it's funny how even the slightest curvature in a straight line can make it be perceived as a certain way and that's exactly what branding is. It's sort of kind of creating a face for how people, how you want to be perceived.

H: So, we obviously work very closely together and I know that something we talk about a lot is IP's voice and imagery and our perception, how people are perceiving us, so can you tell us how you would describe the International Programs brand and then your influence on that brand?

V: Right, so the International Programs brand I think is pretty unique to our FSU population just because we use such a variety of colors and a different typeface to kind of define who we are. And in terms of what the brand, the visual branding is for IP it's talking about or yeah it's conveying adventure, it's conveying experience of a lifetime, it's conveying fun, but also being academically focused because the design is structurally sound. And I think that is really important to how IP works because we talk about how it's study abroad so it's totally fun, but also there's a structure to what you do when you go abroad and that is being an academic student. So, we use a bunch of fun colors and that's because the world is colorful, your experiences are colorful and fun when you go abroad, and we use a typeface called Intro and that was chosen for IP because it's impactful. It's what's called a super family of fonts and there's a huge variety but we started using we started using it as a display typeface, display font, and meaning that we used the more larger, bolder forms of the family because we want study abroad to be to be known as being impactful. So the boldness of the colors, the boldness of our typeface, that all comes through in all our design. Something that you'll notice too is that there is a lot of dynamic elements so even if for example, we don't ever for example like tilt our text to be like wonky and funny it's always, like I was saying, academically sound so straight readable, legible. But what we do is use imagery to kind of convey like taking off into the world so a lot of like shooting off elements and planes again it's just our branding is to convey fun and academics all at once.

H: I'm sure so many people have seen our branding on our social media accounts, in our catalogs, on our website those types of things have felt that have like felt that fun and enthusiasm in seeing the world but I'm sure I'm listening to this they'll be like "oh my gosh" like I didn't think about it that way but I felt that. Which is why branding is so cool. You don't necessarily think about these things unless you're in this work but I'm sure hearing about it, people are going to be paying attention to the brands that they're attracted to and trying to figure out why it is that they think they're cool. So that's a really cool explanation about IP's brand.

V: And I think I forgot to answer that second part of the question about how I feel like my influence or how my personality has been brought through IP and it's interesting because I have been with International Programs from the beginning of it's sort of rebrand and I do definitely see elements of myself in it just because I mean maybe even listening through here you can tell I'm a bubbly person, I've been smiling throughout this whole thing, and I know that that is the vibrancy that we want to portray through study abroad so I do impart some of that element of my personality when it comes to creating and branding visuals for International Programs.

H: Absolutely, for those that know you, know that looking at IP's branding is looking at Vanessa. It is, it's so cool to see how I mean I haven't been here as long as you have I wasn't here for the whole rebranding

but getting to know you has been getting to know IPs brand. And it's really cool to see that influence and vice versa that you were still your own person but you can have such an impact on such a large organization is really cool to see.

Z: So next we want to talk about kind of a fun question but what is your creative process like, can you walk us through that?

V: Yah so my creative process, I'd say it's really similar to most designers, creates the first part is kind of figuring... Well let me first say that involves a lot of research. Design is very, it is very you know visual, an artistry, but there is a sort of method to designing. And I think a lot of, maybe a lot of people who are not in the design world maybe don't know that and it does involve a lot of background research. So let me kind of outlay what maybe I would do for like a project for IP. Something that comes to mind from one of my most recent projects with International Programs is our Mapping Your Identities booklet which involved a lot of just researching background or other documents, not other documents but like...

H: Like resources and things.

V: Yes, other resources that we wanted to mimic and kind of had that same branding and that vibe that we wanted to go for the booklet. So that comes down to defining what kind of words we want people to think about when they see the visuals, what kind of colors do we want them to see, what kind of elements, again like visual imagery do we want that there to be, like more planes or smiley faces, do you want there to be like hats, this is just random like things that might come out of a design sort of brief. So after the sort of research, it's compiling a sort of mood board, color story, and from there you hopefully you have like all of the copy and all that stuff that you need to create start creating, and from there it's just kind of yeah it's kind of defining the brand of what the project is and then taking that and again to its smallest elements, whether use straight lines or curvy lines to convey a certain word or feeling that is how the process goes.

H: Awesome and I'm sure that it can change from project to project like how smooth that process goes or if you go back to one step and forward again, and playing with things. But the final project product is always so impressive and I never truly understand how you get from A to B but it's always incredible to see the things that you produce that make me feel like this is an IP production this like feels like study abroad. So it's really cool to be able to see the end product, even though I'm not necessarily involved in getting to the end product. Kind of going a little step further in your creative process and in your work where do you find inspiration in your work at IP?

V: So first off when it comes to visuals I'd say that I look to other study abroad organizations, I look to what's kind of general. What is you know "in" in the design world. But in terms of kind of where I find inspiration to create, or how I find inspiration to create it's again looking at what other people are doing but also I'm totally influenced by or inspired by just what we do as team and that is kind of you know motivating and letting other people know that they have the opportunity to study abroad and that it is accessible to anyone as long as you put your mind to it. And that is what we also try to bring through in our graphics, in our visuals is that it is accessible to anybody.

Z: I love that so much. So our last question that we want to ask is something that we ask all of our interviewees, so that is just what advice do you have for students considering study abroad?

V: This is a really big question just because I feel like I could say so much about like what I would want to tell people. But I think the biggest thing is, if you want to study abroad, if you've been thinking about study abroad and maybe you're not sure whether it be you have hang ups with your own self going abroad or if you just have hang ups with not being sure if you're financially capable I'd say talk to people. Talk to people who have studied abroad, come and speak to our office about you know the options that you have, and talk to you our Ambassadors, our student workers who love to talk about their study abroad experience and just I feel like putting it out there, putting it out there that you want to study abroad will bring forth opportunity for you to find the resources for you to be able to study abroad, and also find the inspiration for you to study abroad. And yes, talking to people, putting it out there, saying it out in the world that you want to study abroad will most definitely bring you to the things that will help you do that.

Z: That's such good advice. I think we talk about community so often and it's great that you're offering students the advice to draw on their community from the very beginning. To talk about it with other people and to talk to those that have done it before and just put it out there that they want to do it so that's really great advice. And thank you so much for talking with us today.

V: Yes of course, it was such a blast!

H: Thanks Vanessa, thanks for sharing your design inspiration, your design process and just everything about IP's brand. Hopefully people understand a little bit more about what we're trying to accomplish and feel the things that we're trying to make them feel when they see anything coming from international programs so, thank you Vanessa.

H: Before we disembark, we want to talk about our Summer 2021 programs!

International Programs is glad to be sending students abroad again! Our spring semester students have arrived abroad and IP is busy planning for summer! We would love to welcome you to one of our European study centers this summer. Applications are open now on our website!

Z: You can learn more about our program offerings during our Summer 2021 Study Abroad Fair taking place on Flipgrid from January 19th to January 24th! Check it out at flipgrid.com/fsuip to learn more about our summer programs, financial aid, academics, and more! Also be sure to check out our Instagram that Friday to enter our giveaway for a chance to win a \$500 airfare scholarship to use toward one of our programs!

Also, if you're on campus and want to stop by to talk to us in person, we're hosting Recess on Landis with Campus Rec on January 19th, from 11am to 1pm, where we'll have yard games to play and IP Student Ambassadors to talk to about our programs and their experiences abroad. See you there!

H: Thanks to Vanessa for talking with us today, and thanks to all of you for tuning in to the first episode of Season 3!

Z: This podcast is a production of FSU International Programs. The music for this podcast was composed by John Bartmann. Our logo was designed by Vanessa Guirey, who also does our sound engineering. Editing, transcription, and research is done by us, Zoë Crook and Hannah Meister.