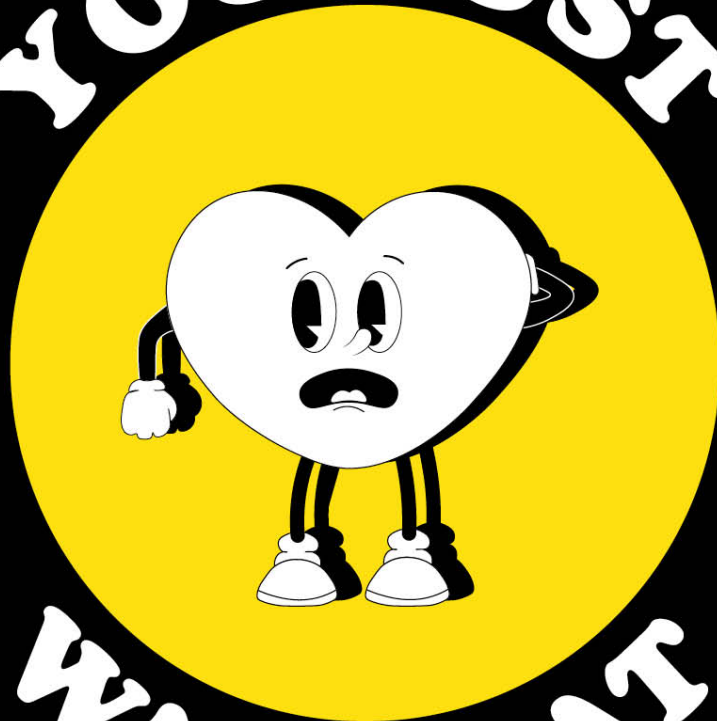


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Jillian Owens

Spring 2026

Capstone - Graphic Design

Department of Art and Art History

Artist Statement:

My work is rooted in illustration, graphic design, and storytelling. I create images and systems that feel immersive, intentional, and emotionally charged. Across my projects, I am interested in how visual language can build an entire world, not just a single image. Whether I am designing a game, constructing a narrative illustration, or developing a branded composition, I want the viewer to feel pulled into a space that is cohesive, stylized, and alive. I am drawn to work that feels both structured and expressive, where every line, shape, and color choice contributes to a larger atmosphere.

A major influence on my practice is Japanese art, especially ukiyo-e woodblock prints. I am deeply inspired by the clarity of their line work, the confidence of their compositions, and the way flat areas of color can still create depth, rhythm, and emotion. Ukiyo-e prints often achieve a remarkable balance between simplicity and richness. Their visual language is direct, but never empty. I return again and again to the way these prints use contour, repetition, negative space, and color blocking to guide the eye and shape the mood of an image. That influence appears throughout my own work, even when the final result is contemporary, illustrative, or design-driven rather than traditionally referential.

What resonates with me most about ukiyo-e is its ability to transform ordinary subjects into something visually memorable and poetic. The treatment of landscapes, figures, interiors, weather, and movement feels stylized, but never disconnected from emotion. I am interested in carrying that same quality into my own work. I want my images to feel deliberate and graphic, but also human. I want them to hold both design logic and feeling at once. In my process, line is never just an outline. It is structure, motion, and voice. Color is never just decoration. It becomes a way to flatten, organize, contrast, and unify a composition.

My attraction to line work comes from this desire for clarity. I love the way a strong line can define space without overcomplicating it. It can suggest form, guide movement, and create personality with a kind of economy that feels powerful. In my own projects, I often use line to simplify visual information while still preserving mood and detail. I think of line as a way to create order inside an image, especially when I am working with complex concepts or layered systems. It helps me build work that is readable, but still expressive.

Color blocking is just as important in my practice. I am drawn to the visual impact of bold, contained areas of color and the way they can establish harmony across a piece. Flat color has a directness that I find compelling. It forces each decision to matter. Without relying on heavy rendering or realism, color must do more conceptual work. It can separate forms, shape hierarchy, create tension, or reinforce a narrative tone. I enjoy this challenge because it aligns

with how I think as both an illustrator and a designer. I am always looking for the strongest way to communicate an idea visually, and color blocking allows me to do that with precision.

At the same time, my work is not only about aesthetic influence. It is also about personal connection and the kinds of visual worlds I want to create. I am drawn to projects that feel immersive because I have always been fascinated by environments, systems, and atmospheres that suggest something larger than what is immediately visible. I like when a piece hints at a whole story beyond the frame. That might happen through objects, typography, spatial design, or the mood of a setting. I enjoy creating work that gives the viewer just enough information to enter the world and imagine more for themselves.

This interest in world building is central to my design practice. I often think beyond a single image and instead consider how a concept can extend across multiple surfaces or formats. A project might begin with one illustration, but I quickly start asking how that language could live on packaging, printed matter, spatial elements, or interface-like systems. This way of thinking reflects my love of graphic design as a discipline. I do not see illustration and design as separate from one another. For me, they are most exciting when they work together. Illustration can bring specificity, personality, and atmosphere, while graphic design can provide structure, hierarchy, and cohesion. When combined well, they create an experience that feels complete.

My process usually begins with research, reference gathering, and visual analysis. I spend a lot of time looking at composition, shape language, historical design references, and material culture connected to a project's theme. When I work, I think carefully about how each formal choice contributes to the final experience. I ask what kind of line quality best suits the mood, what palette creates the right balance of energy and restraint, and how the composition can feel stable while still dynamic. This process is both analytical and intuitive. I make many decisions through structure and refinement, but I also leave room for instinct, especially when shaping tone and atmosphere.

As a designer, I care deeply about craft. I want my work to feel resolved. I want it to show restraint where needed and intensity where it matters. I am not interested in adding detail just for complexity. I want each visual element to earn its place. That belief comes partly from the influences I return to most. Japanese woodblock prints, graphic posters, editorial illustration, and design systems all share a respect for intentionality. They show that strong work does not depend on excess. It depends on precision, rhythm, and confidence.

On a personal level, I think my practice reflects the way I see design itself. I see it as a way of translating fascination into form. When I am inspired by a visual language, a place, a texture, or a story, I want to understand what makes it resonate and then reinterpret that through my own perspective. I am not trying to replicate historical forms exactly. I am trying to learn from their logic, their beauty, and their discipline. Japanese art has given me a framework for thinking about simplification, composition, and the emotional force of design. It has shaped the way I build images and the way I value visual clarity.

Ultimately, my work is about creating pieces that feel immersive, deliberate, and distinct. I want them to communicate clearly, but I also want them to hold atmosphere and personality. Through line, color blocking, typography, and world building, I create designs that invite viewers to look

closely and stay with the image a little longer. My goal is to make work that feels thoughtfully constructed and visually alive, where influence, craft, and imagination come together in a way that feels personal to me.

Title**Original Format**

Figure 1: ASTROSTRIKE

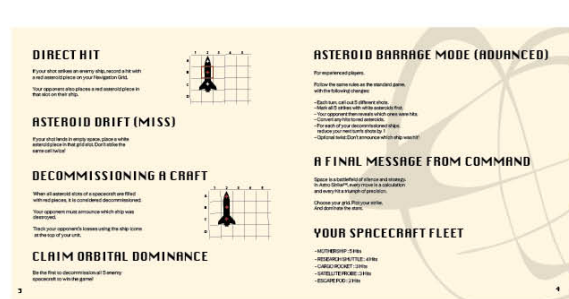
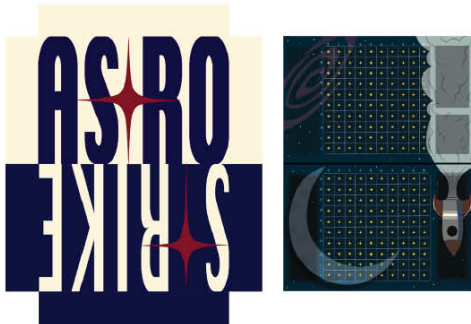
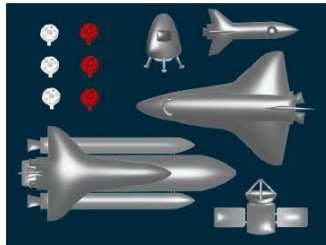
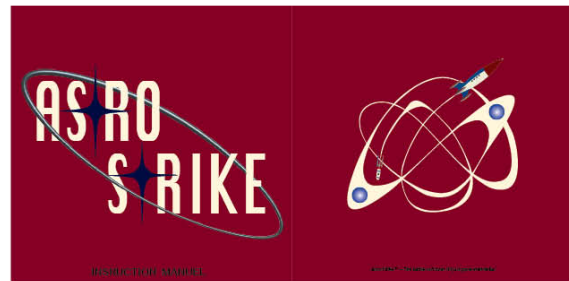
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Figure 2: Social Error #14

Illustrator, 18 in x 24 in

Figure 3: BARKNOLL

Illustrator, 18 in x 24 in

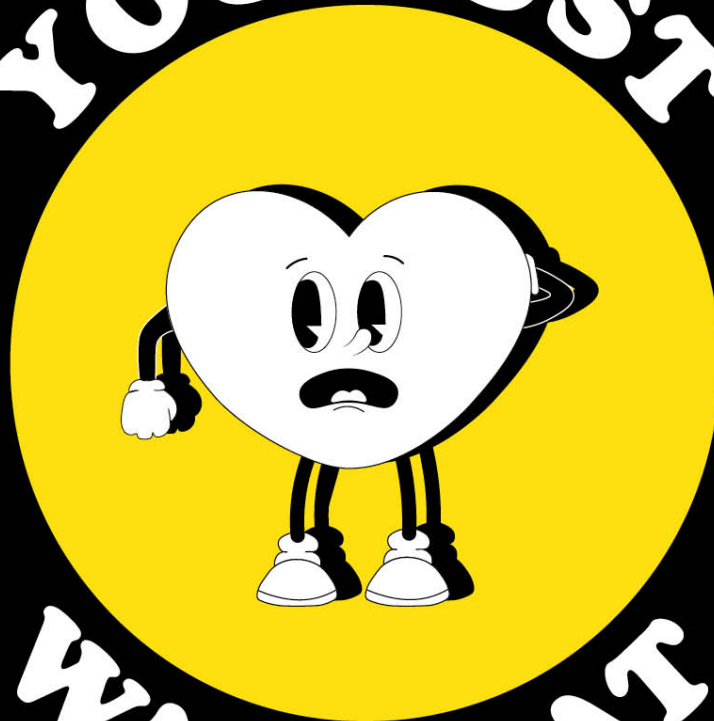


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BFA Graphic Design 2026

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Figure 2: Social Error #14

