



Deborah Kekone

Graphic Designer

Contact

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Portfolio:
<https://bit.ly/deborahkekone>

Education

Woodbury University
Burbank, CA
Graphic Design Studies

Brooks College
Long Beach, CA
AS, Visual Communications
Dean's List, Honor Roll

Mt. San Antonio College
Walnut, CA
Misc. undergraduate studies
photography, graphic design and
general education studies

Expertise

Graphic Design for Print and Digital
Creative / Art Direction
Brand Identity and Development
Brand Management
Web / UI Design
Color Theory
Typography
Visual Hierarchy
Copywriting
Generative AI Curation
Data-driven Processes
Technical Collaboration

I am an award-winning graphic designer with over two decades of hands-on experience in art and creative direction, print and packaging design, web design and development, and corporate identity and brand development and management. Highly skilled in creating and telling stories through the use of visual narratives, I have a comprehensive skill set and thrive both in the autonomy of individual projects and the dynamism of collaborative creative environments, both in-person and remotely. I have a fundamental understanding of how to meet audience needs and my broad experience includes working with clients in a wide array of sectors including education (preschool through higher education), government agencies, non-profit and professional associations, healthcare, beauty and wellness, fashion, dining and travel, entertainment, music, film, home goods, automotive, real estate (both commercial and residential), manufacturing, and others.

Professional Experience

Senior Graphic Designer / VMA Communications / Claremont, CA
February 2020–present

Collaborate with the creative team, clients, writers, videographers, photographers, and programmers to design and develop award-winning digital and print collateral, outreach materials, and branding for government agencies, public education, infrastructure/transportation, and non-profit clients. Additional responsibilities include art directing photoshoots, fulfilling RFP requests, providing creative direction on projects, copywriting and copy editing, research and implementation of new technology, training staff, and establishing formalized processes for the creative department.

Recognitions:

- *2022 Publications and Digital Media Award*, National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)–Hacienda La Puente Unified School District *Facts at a Glance Brochure* design
- *2023 Golden Achievement Award*, National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)–Lynwood Unified School District, collateral design for *Lynwood on the Rise: Rebuilding a Fallen Community*
- *2024 Award of Excellence*, California School Public Relations Association (CalSPRA)–Newport Mesa Unified School District, *District Brag Sheet* design

Graphic Designer (Part-Time) / Rodin Marketing / Sherman Oaks, CA
October 2008–April 2020

Design print and digital marketing collateral, tradeshow and point-of-purchase displays, and logos and branding for nonprofit, healthcare and senior care, private education, wealth management, commercial real estate, logistics, and other small to medium-size business clients.

Graphic Designer (Freelance) / Sterling Strategic Management / Laguna Beach, CA
May 2012–October 2018

Design print and digital marketing collateral, stakeholder communications, and conference/convention materials for professional associations.

Graphic Designer (Part-Time) / Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, CSULB / Long Beach, CA
April 2009–December 2017

Work with the Garden's Development and Special Events staff members to create branded materials for print and web, communicating Garden news and events and promoting special event opportunities.

Senior Graphic Designer / Rabuck Stranger / Culver City, CA
January 2008–December 2008

Collaborate with the creative team to develop brand and marketing strategy for luxury goods, education, and technology companies. Responsibilities included designing for print and web advertising, corporate collateral, direct mail, brand identity, websites, and new media.

Technical Skills

Apple/Mac OS

Adobe Creative Cloud:
InDesign / Photoshop / Bridge /
Illustrator / Lightroom / Premiere /
After Effects / Acrobat

Adobe Express

Adobe Firefly

Generative AI

Canva

Wordpress

HTML / CSS

Photo Retouching

Apple Numbers / Keynote / Pages
Microsoft Office / Google G-Suite

Email Marketing:
Constant Contact / MailChimp

Project Management:
Asana / Figma

Client and Time Management:
BigTime / Zoho

File Management and Sharing:
Dropbox / Google Drive /
Microsoft OneDrive / HighTail

Social Media

Database Management

Budgets

Soft Skills

- Quickly learn and adopt new technology, skills, and processes
- Early identification of design and communications trends
- Strong understanding of how to have a strategically targeted approach while empathetically meeting the needs of broad audiences
- Thrive in collaborative environments
- Effective communication
- Abstract and macro-level strategic approach
- Attention to detail
- Quick decision-making
- Resilient and able to quickly pivot, as needed
- Flexible and smoothly transition across different team roles
- Strong understanding of business operations including profit-margin and ROI

Freelance Art Director, Graphic Designer / Self-Employed / Claremont, CA
Ongoing (September 2006–present)

Working directly with clients, as well as in-house and agency creative teams, to design print and digital collateral, advertising, stakeholder communications, packaging, marketing materials, websites, and logos for clients across a broad array of sectors including education, nonprofit, entertainment, luxury goods, healthcare and senior care, real estate, financial services, and more. Additional responsibilities include developing relationships and collaborating with in-house staff to identify short- and long-term communications needs, fulfilling the role of art director to establish effective creative strategy, brand development, and copywriting.

Freelance positions and clientele have included Jungle 8 Creative, Wagstaff Worldwide, Rogers & Cowan, Group Concepts, California Botanic Garden, Beecan Health, Hadassah, Lubin Olson & Niewiadomski, UCLA, San Gabriel Consortium on Homelessness, Safe Parking LA, and the Claremont Colleges

Professional Associations

Graphic Artists Guild

Member

Volunteer Experience

Rachel Forester for Claremont City Council (2024)

Art Director

Jed Leano for State Assembly (2023–2024)

Art Director

Jed Leano for Claremont City Council (2022)

Art Director

Claremont Educational Foundation (CEF) (2019–2022)

Co-President of the Board: Three-year, volunteer term (approximately 10-15 hours per week), fulfilling the role of Executive Director. Duties include leading the implementation of a multi-year strategic plan, collaborating with board members, executing fundraising and giving programs, hiring and managing paid staff, leading recruitment and onboarding of new board members, cultivating relationships with donors and business partners, and implementing new policies, programs, and initiatives including development of the organization's first DEI (diversity, equitability, and inclusion) policy and full-day summer camp program.

Other Leadership and Committee Positions: Executive Committee Member (2018–2023); Communications Committee Chair and Member (2018–2024); Diversity, Equitability and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Member and Facilitator (2021–2024); Development Committee Co-Chair (2020–2021); Hiring Committee Member (2019–2023); SLICE of Summer Program Committee Member (2019–2023)

Ophelia's Jump Productions (2021)

Member, Board of Directors

Bob Fass for Claremont School Board (2019–2020)

Art Director / Communications Committee Co-Chair

Yes! for Claremont–Measure CR (Sales Tax Measure) (2018)

Communications Director / Committee Member