

# A BETTER BREAK

KIM  
EPSTEIN

*Personal Brand*

MS IDS 413

Visual Communication

Fall 2023





# NARRATIVE

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## *Background*

My career in communication began at the Roski School of Fine Art at the University of Southern California. My concentration in drawing, painting, and new genres gave me a broad, theory-based view of visual communication, cultural practice, design history, and social movement.

Mentored by painter Bob Alderette, theorist Kenny Berger, and cultural practitioners Robby Herbst and Christina Ulke, I learned to be my own object. I demand a lot of myself, I am critical of systems, and I promised to never paint a landscape until I'm over 75.

I've come to a point, now, where I refuse to discuss art. Not with you, not with anyone. But I still subscribe to Hi-Fructose.

## *What have I done?*

After college, I moved back to my home town, took an agency job (mostly writing), and learned the computer skills I didn't have at Moore College of Art and Design. I moved on to jobs in branding, brand writing, content marketing, graphic and interactive design, digital marketing, experience design, internal communications, and culture building.

Along the way I learned about non-profit communications, the human resources training and development industry, animal advocacy, postal tracking and address management, bookkeeping for small businesses, and independent schools.

Most recently, I've begun teaching 3d modeling and digital media production in a middle school summer enrichment program.

# NARRATIVE

## What do I do?

I currently work at the Lawrenceville School. I design, build, and maintain the School's websites, advise faculty and staff on presentations and information design, and teach two courses in the Lawrenceville Summer Scholars program.

I ingest, synergize, and distill the values, spirit, and capabilities of the School and process them into digestible, attractive, and relatable deliverables for their audience. I make sure they're approaching their audience with empathy, authenticity, transparency, and curiosity.

I teach my students to approach new technologies with confidence, patience, and fun. I teach them to be thoughtful about their creation and to be critical of the media they consume.

## What is my brand?

a Better Break is my self as a design and communications contractor and volunteer. I don't use it often, but when I do, it's important to me to convey that I am a mar-comm generalist that offers a broad range of services.

In each of my jobs, I've been a cleaner - someone brought in to burn down a brand, build a new foundation, and find efficiencies in production. While I take my work very seriously, comedy and magical thinking is a big part of what I do.

At this moment, I am not seeking work, but there may come a time when I am. I want my brand to speak plainly and use some of my own design theories to appeal to people who want to see some personality and might connect with my aesthetic.

I am from scary girl to sad girl,  
from war paint to house paint

From 12-hour days to 12-hour naps  
from 11:11 to wait, am or pm?

I am from childhood insomnia - Kids in the Hall and Designing Women in the middle of the night,  
from nightmares and visions and "normal little girls are happy."

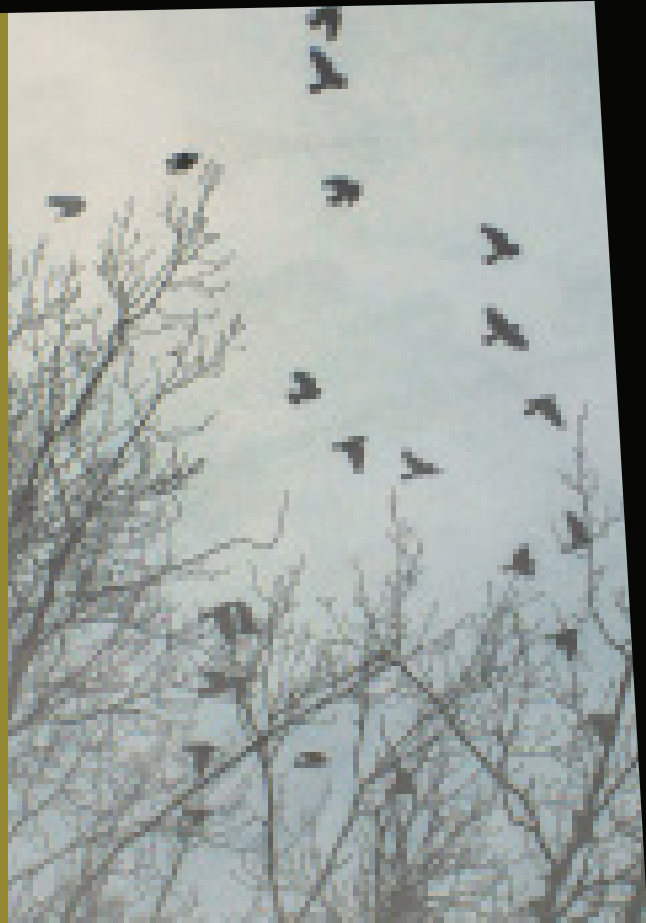
From violence and creeps and sick and sad,  
to *no* and *now* and *will*.

Bad news to clown shoes,  
three miles of rough road walking down the street.

I am from smudged makeup and tears of laughter, zippo lighters and pocket knives.  
From plastic bracelets and impractical shoes, trinkets and tape.

From love: unromantic, unflattering, reluctant, resentful.  
Openness and frankness and salt in the wound.

From foster husbands and borrowed fathers, psychic mothers-in-law:  
*Oh honey, you hang on.*





A BETTER BREAK  
IS WHAT PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR  
IN THE WAITING PLACE

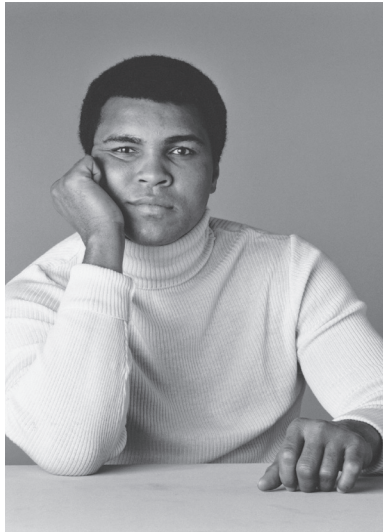
I value intelligence and a desire to solve problems; being a challenger and questioning everything; entertainment as a means of caring for others; uncompromising authenticity and honesty; showmanship; humor; grace; and forthrightness. I believe in silliness as a great connector of people and I believe in elegance as a measure of purpose.



INSPIRATION

# INSPIRATION

## CHARACTERIZATION



### *Muhammad Ali*

Muhammad approached celebrity with humor, showmanship, and style grounded in extraordinary ability, used for positive change and speaking out for good.



### *Barbie*

Barbie can do anything. She has no corporate facade, no reticent femininity, no age, no gods, no masters. She's taking it easy and getting it done.

# INSPIRATION

## VISUAL STYLE



### *Courtney Love*

Pink and lace and lady things, but with a snarl and unabashed fortitude. Layering nostalgic ephemera with mass-produced, bright, common things. It's the layering - the imposition or projection - that elevates the ordinary and gives nostalgic ideas a transformed home in the future.



### *Barbie*

Barbie has no self consciousness. Because there is no expectation of derailment or devastation, there's no fear. Bright colors are celebratory, not unrestrained. Bold, graphic patterns are attractive, not to compensate for function, but to augment it.

# INSPIRATION

## VISUAL STYLE



*Mikhail Vrubel*

More layers! Layers of flesh beyond human anatomy, layers of vegetation, abstract growth, perspective, and light. Vrubel paints, not as documentation or advertisement, but to illuminate the lens of individual perception and reminding us that the material as we are aware of it is also a product of the mind.



*Lyubov Popova*

Fashion is repositioned with community purpose. Ease of movement (practical systems) is prioritized over augmentation of the body. Color and shape are exuberant and celebratory of geometry (human discovery of natural processes).

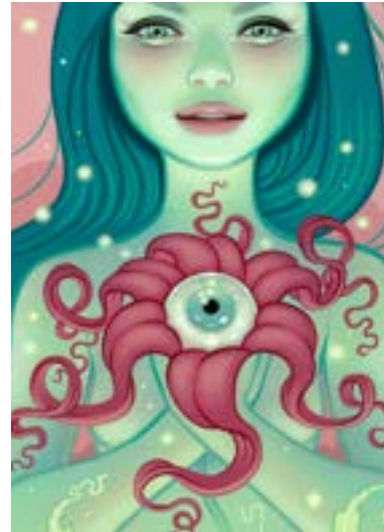
# INSPIRATION

## VISUAL STYLE



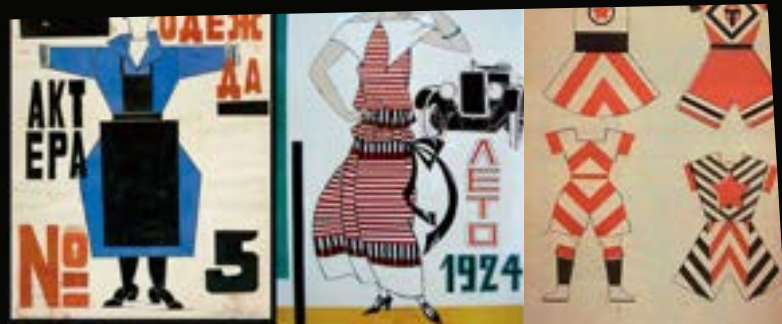
### *Mab Graves*

Mab's world building and drawing techniques influence my style. Her characters follow anatomical logic within their world, they are more dependent on shape and expression than relationships or actions. They wear their qualities. Her use of transparent papers, washy backgrounds, and hard pencil lines is similar to how I direct attention in my work.



### *Tara McPherson*

Tara's use of color is similar to mine - a skewed secondary palette that occupies a feminine and fantastical space while celebrating organic forms and using full black to add definition. Her work is also character driven and communicates transformation and wonder.





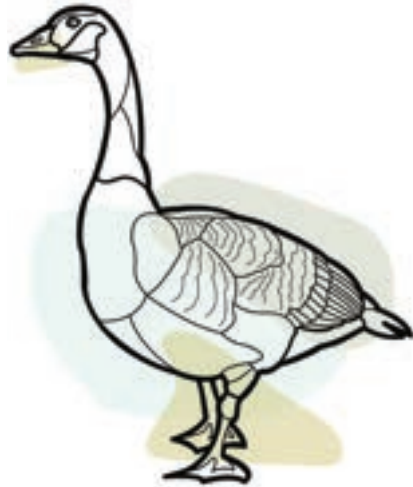
The background features a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in shades of purple, blue, and teal. The pattern is layered, with some areas appearing more prominent than others. Overlaid on this pattern are several horizontal bars of varying colors and opacities, including solid purple, semi-transparent purple, and semi-transparent blue, creating a sense of depth and movement.

# Visuals

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A  
BETTER  
BREAK

A BETTER BREAK



MAIN TITLE

*SubTitle*

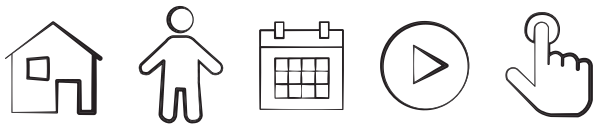
The font heirarchy I've chosen is meant to show a push, pull, and stretch across headers, and a clean, legible body text.

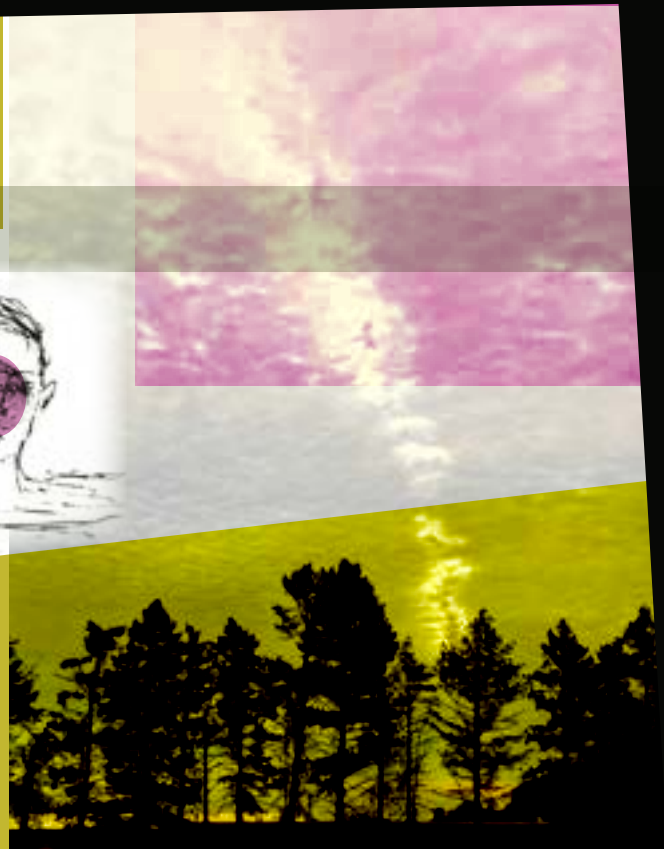
Heading One

My color palette is CMYK sours. It's energetic and polychromatic. The main brand color is an acidic ochre, and can be the color of the logo. It has a dark and light variation.

HEADING TWO

Layered and overlain photos and sharp black "eyeliner" are common, along with color blocking and geometric patterns.









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