

T NEXT T TRILING

an essay about my future

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an essay about my dreams

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BEING EXTREMELY ORDINARY

My future as a graphic designer. I guess I want to be an ordinary designer. Many people in this field say, that they are or want to be extraordinary. Though I believe that being extraordinary is not one of the requirements for the job. Also, if everybody is extraordinary then it is not meaningful to define your own position with this property. Still, I feel that many designers and especially design students strive for this. Creating something different than others, thinking differently than everyone else. These are tempting, but false embodiments. As a designer your job is not like that. You must communicate what needs to be communicated. You have to be good in getting to know what this is. And then you must find the best way to do it. The outcome can be especially good, or if you want: extraordinarily good. But the process is ordinary. The best designers are ordinary. What distinguishes them is their skill in being ordinary.

JAKOB IN THE MIDDLE

Of course, there is always the question on which level of hierarchy you stand. On the top you have more influence on the ideas. While on the bottom the work is more practically oriented. I want to be somewhere in the middle. I want my head to be in harmony with my hands. For sure at the beginning of my career. I don't only want to do jobs where I have to execute ideas from other people. I don't gain anything from that except money. Money is not bad at all, but not everything. And I don't want to direct jobs completely on my own, thinking of everything and executing everything myself. I know myself very good. I would work too hard, and get paid way too less. Don't get me wrong. I like working hard. But even better if I don't have to fight for my money every time and can share my expertise with others.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

I don't want to start my own studio for the same reason. Entrepreneurism is not my desire. I desire the least possible amount of paperwork and organization, so that I can focus on what I can do best. And if I have to sacrifice the dream of independence, so be it. I worked self-employed for some years next to my school and study. I liked it very much, because I could work whenever and wherever I wanted. Having an own business is good for the self-esteem and I loved making my own website and business-cards and yes, it was a great time. Having clients, people who hire *you* as a designer, feels very very good. Especially if you can make them happy.

I would happily found a new graphic design studio if I can surely be successful enough to employ a bookkeeper. I don't want to deal with bookkeeping myself. It would provide me an enormous gastric ulcer in no-time. No bookkeeping. No self-employment. Not Now.

GROUPING

Even more it makes me happy to work in a nice environment with other people. I experience this with working for PIPS:Lab, a media-artist group in Amsterdam (they have a bookkeeper). I love it there for the exchange with the others, and for the financial stability that is provided through the power of grouping together. It makes bigger projects possible, and allows the members to specialize, to dive into their skills and dreams. This is an arrangement where I could see myself in the future. A group. Not only several designers sharing studiospace, but a group. With a bookkeeper. And a good coffee machine.

THE JOBS

I don't care too much about the sort of jobs that I would get. If I look at the work of my design-heroes, then I can see that especially dull assignments can be fascinating if turned into something special. Also, I don't mind doing websites, flyers, posters and so on for average companies. I can identify with Jakob, the professional. The one who works for money, and has a family, free time and a free head when he arrives at home after work. Yes, I think I could be happy like this. And good.

ON CHANGING THE WORLD

I don't strive to change the world of graphic design. Though, I also don't feel a need to preserve it. I rather want to explore what it actually is. Maybe I come to different conclusions than others. But that is not my goal. When Newton thought of his theories about the world, I am sure he did not intend to come up with new ideas for the sake of originality. He wanted to know what the world *is* like, how it behaves and what that means. Most of the people I adore share this goal. Be it an artist or a scientist or someone else. The world is crazy enough, we don't need new stuff. We need better stuff. Someone could invent a bicycle where you crank with your nose instead of with your feet. It would be a different bicycle. It would be new. Extraordinary. Maybe in a sense even very cool. But I believe that neither the invention nor the inventor will become very successful. More successful will be the one who understands what a bicycle is, finds new ways of optimizing it to bring reality closer to the ideal. The result may also be a new kind of bicycle, but it doesn't have to be. I believe that we live the status quo of graphic design is a transition and adaption to the new media that we explore nowadays. And I strongly believe, that there are many many people building "bicycles where you have to crank with your nose" and maybe I do it as well sometimes. And maybe only through these experiments we can define anything and get to know what we are dealing with. But it is not the goal, at least not mine. I like experimenting and playing around and I want to be able to do this in my job as well. But I don't want to change the world, I want to understand it.

SHARING

I like the idea of sharing my knowledge and skill. Anyway, during the study I often was a person other students turned to when they had technical issues, and I enjoyed working as an assisting teacher for a while. Becoming a teacher myself one day? Yes, I would like that.

MASTERING MYSELF

I thought about getting a master's degree after engaging myself in the pleasure of working full-time for a while. After one year or two, I might feel the need to deeply develop some skills without having the pressure of selling it. Then, I want to start a master. But for now I just want to start working. This is the next thing that ever has to happen.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "jakob". The letters are lowercase and written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The "j" has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right and then loops back down. The "k" is tall and narrow, and the "o" is a simple oval. The "b" is also simple and rounded.