

THE ILLUSTRATORS' Way

Navigating the World of Illustration

MESSAGE From Mark



Mark Fleming
*Illustration Program Director
and instructor since 2004.*

What's next in our vibrant field of Illustration?

The future of illustration isn't just coming; it's here, and it's brimming with opportunities for bold, human-centered creators like you. Illustration is evolving faster than ever, blending cutting-edge tech with timeless storytelling.

Your unique voice is irreplaceable. AI may generate ideas, but it can't capture the soul, perspective, or handcrafted magic that defines great illustration.

In a world flooded with AI's polished outputs, clients are craving the raw, imperfect charm of hand-drawn work. *Your sketchbooks are your superpower here!*

Flat designs are out; depth is in. Expect 3D illustrations to dominate web, AR experiences, and branding, creating interactive worlds that pull viewers in. *Tools like Blender are game-changers.*



nōssi
COLLEGE of
ART & DESIGN
nashville | nossi.edu

Illustration Graduate *HighLight*



Cydnee Cothron Dickey
Illustration Graduate of Spring 2024.

A Visionary Artist and Leader in Creativity

A Tennessee-born illustrator, tattoo artist, graphic designer and fine art visionary, has carved a remarkable path in the world of art.

As a graduate of Nossi College of Art, Cydnee emerged not only as a highly talented and driven student but also as a standout leader among her peers, particularly in illustration. Her boundless creativity and dedication have made her a shining star, inspiring both her classmates and the broader artistic community. Today, as the proud founder of **11:37 Art Studio**, she continues to weave enchantment into every piece she creates, blending whimsy, nature, and storytelling with unparalleled skill.

Cydnee's artistic journey began in childhood, marked by an extraordinary drive that set her apart early on. By age twelve, she was already selling her vibrant oil paintings at local craft fairs, showcasing a precocious talent for capturing beauty on canvas. At fifteen, she began experimenting with tattooing on fruit, a playful yet determined step toward mastering a craft early in her career. By seventeen, while still in high school, Cydnee boldly stepped into professional tattooing, demonstrating a fearless commitment to her art. Her ability to tell stories through imagery—whether in ink, paint, or design—has become a hallmark of her work, resonating in everything from intricate tattoo designs to large-scale commercial commissions.

At Nossi College of Art, Cydnee's talent and leadership shone brightly. As a student, she excelled in illustration, earning admiration for her ability to bring fantastical scenes to life with traditional and digital mediums. Her work often features enchanting creatures, sun-dappled woodlands, and quiet, evocative moments that invite viewers into a world of wonder. Whether crafting a delicate illustration of a fox curled beneath a mushroom or designing a mural that transforms a space, Cydnee's art radiates a rare blend of technical mastery and emotional depth. Her role as a student intern further highlighted her leadership, as she mentored peers and contributed to the Nossi community with passion and insight.

Cydnee's versatility extends beyond illustration to fine art and graphic design, where her conceptual brilliance and problem-solving skills shine. Her portfolio includes breathtaking murals and historic fresco restorations, showcasing her ability to merge technical precision with creative vision. Each medium she explores—whether painting, inking, or designing—reflects her belief that art is about storytelling and connection, no matter the form. In founding **11:37 Art Studio**, Cydnee has created a cozy, inspiring haven where her dreams take flight. The studio is a testament to her entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to living a life immersed in art. Here, she crafts original tattoo designs that blend her signature whimsical style with deeply personal narratives, while also producing fine art and commercial designs that captivate clients

and collectors alike. Every piece she creates, from a delicate watercolor to a bold mural, carries the spark of her imagination and her commitment to making the world more beautiful.

Cydnee Cothron Dickey's journey—from a young artist selling paintings at craft fairs to a trailblazing illustrator, tattoo artist, and designer—embodies the power of talent, drive, and vision. Her time as a leader at Nossi College of Art laid the foundation for a career that continues to inspire, proving that true artistry knows no bounds. At **11:37 Art Studio**, Cydnee lives her dream, creating one magical piece at a time, and her work invites us all to see the world through her wondrous lens.

Cydnee would love to hear from you!



Contact Cydnee
for art, get a tattoo,
learn to tattoo, art lessons
and more.

(931) 452-9010
1137artstudio.com
1137_artstudio



THE ILLUSTRATORS' Way

Navigating the World of Illustration

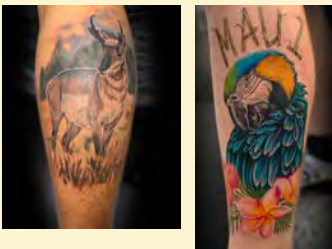


Illustration Graduate *HighLight*

Cydnee Cothron Dickey
Illustration Graduate of Spring 2024.

A variety of artwork by Cydnee.

Want to learn to tattoo?



nōssi
COLLEGE of
ART & DESIGN
nashville | nossi.edu

Contact Cydnee
for art, get a tattoo,
learn to tattoo, art lessons
and more.

(931) 452-9010
1137artstudio.com
1137_artstudio



THE ILLUSTRATORS' Way

Navigating the World of Illustration

Samples of Tracy's Work in design and illustration.



INSTRUCTOR *IN-FOCUS*



Tracy Ratliff
Illustration & Graphic Design instructor since 2018.

Tracy has become an invaluable asset to the Nossi teaching family, demonstrating remarkable dedication to her students and the institution. As an instructor of both Graphic Design and Illustration courses, she brings a wealth of expertise and passion to her classrooms. Tracy's strong teaching style and ability to connect with students ensure they learn effectively, mastering essential skills under her guidance.

Tracy Ratliff: A Creative Force in Art and Education

Tracy Ratliff's creative journey is a testament to passion, perseverance, and an unyielding commitment to art. Born in Appalachian Virginia, Tracy's love for drawing ignited in childhood. By age ten, she had already declared her future as an artist—a vision she pursued with unwavering determination.

In high school, Tracy honed her craft, selling pencil-drawn portraits and watercolor, acrylic, and oil paintings to earn extra income. This early entrepreneurial spirit paved the way for her studies at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, where she majored in Visual Communications. There, she discovered graphic design, captivated by its conceptual problem-solving nature, which she seamlessly added to her creative repertoire. Her exploration didn't stop there—Tracy also delved into photography, even running a portrait studio shortly after high school.

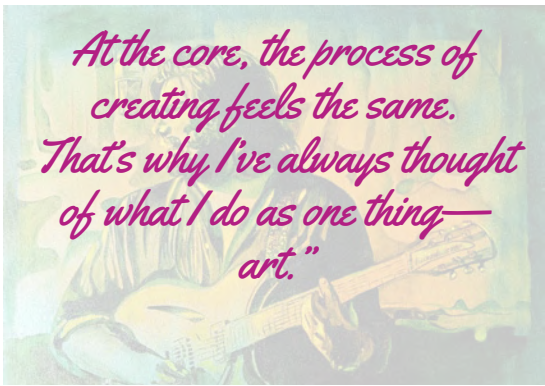
After graduating, Tracy set her sights on merging her passions for visual art and music. Undeterred by uncertainty, she cold-called record companies along the East Coast, pitching her skills as an illustrator and designer. Her persistence paid off when a small record label on Nashville's iconic Music Row gave her a chance, launching her professional career.

Tracy's drive to evolve led her to Nossi College of Art, where she earned her B.G.A. with honors in 2012. Today, she continues to push boundaries, pursuing a Master of Science in Digital Design at the prestigious University of Edinburgh in Scotland, with graduation anticipated in Spring 2026.

As an instructor of Graphic Design and Illustration at Nossi, Tracy is a cornerstone of the program. Her strong teaching style and ability to connect with students ensure they thrive, mastering essential skills under her guidance. Her dedication has earned her an A+ rating as a teacher, reflecting her profound impact on the classroom.

For Tracy, creativity transcends mediums. "Whether I'm illustrating, designing, or photographing, I don't experience them as separate worlds," she shares. "The vision comes from the same creative headspace—it's about the idea and finding the best way to bring it into the world. Illustration gives me the joy of drawing and image-making, while design challenges me intellectually with its problem-solving and communication goals. At the core, the process of creating feels the same. That's why I've always thought of what I do as one thing—art."

Tracy Ratliff's journey—from a determined young artist in Virginia to an inspiring educator and lifelong learner—embodies the spirit of creativity and resilience. Her students and colleagues at Nossi are fortunate to learn from such a dynamic force in the world of art.



THE ILLUSTRATORS' Way

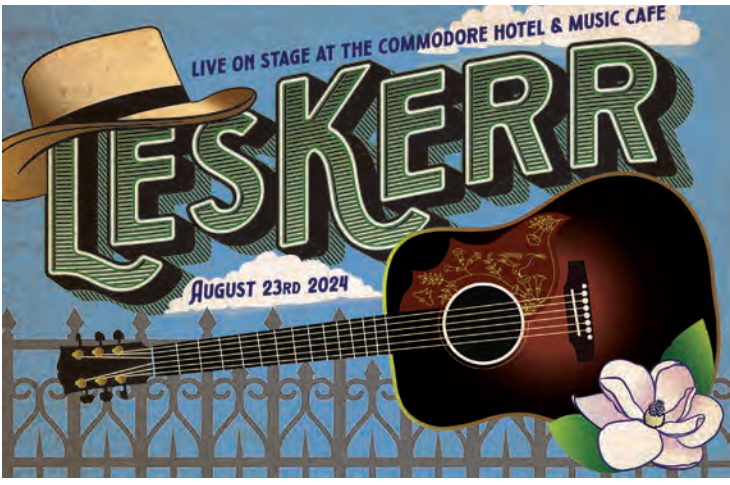
Navigating the World of Illustration

Samples of Tracy's Work in design and illustration.



INSTRUCTOR *IN-FOCUS*

Tracy Ratliff: More Art Work



ADOBE PHOTOSHOP SHORTCUTS



Work smarter not harder.

When someone sends you pictures of low light. Quick adjust with LEVELS.

1. Use the shortcut
Com + L = LEVELS



2. Adjust sliders on
dialogue box to reset
the white point, mid
tones and darks.



3. Results will be
a richer black and
tones.



Illustration Student Graduating *HighLight*

This section will showcase the work of a graduating student during the fall semester of 2025. This semester the work of Jeanette

Nettles is featured. Each student has their own style, vision and drive. Here are some samples of her work.

Jeanette Nettles



Field Trip *PICASSO WORKS*

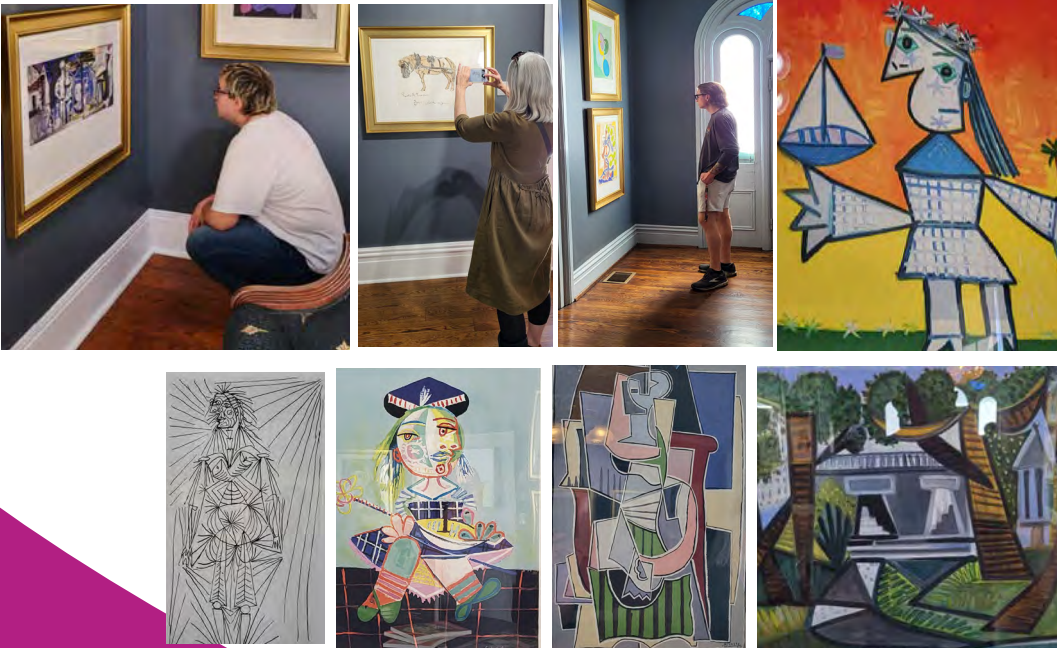


Students from Nossi College of Art

recently took a field trip to Monthaven Arts and Cultural Center to view an extraordinary exhibition of works by Pablo Picasso. Monthaven is located in Hendersonville, TN at 1017 Antebellum Cir, Hendersonville, TN 37075.

Through Nossi's partnership with Monthaven, students have the unique

opportunity to experience masterworks of world-renowned artists right here in the local community. During the visit, students were deeply engaged, studying Picasso's bold use of color, form, and abstraction that revolutionized modern art. As one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, Picasso's pioneering role in developing Cubism and his exploration of emotional depth through painting, sculpture, and printmaking offered students an inspiring glimpse into the power of creative innovation.



THE ILLUSTRATORS' Way

Navigating the World of Illustration

Glance Student Art Work This Semester



Addah O'Brien, *Adv. Anatomy*



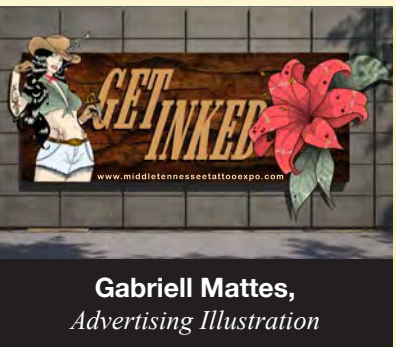
Hayden McQueen, *Color Theory*



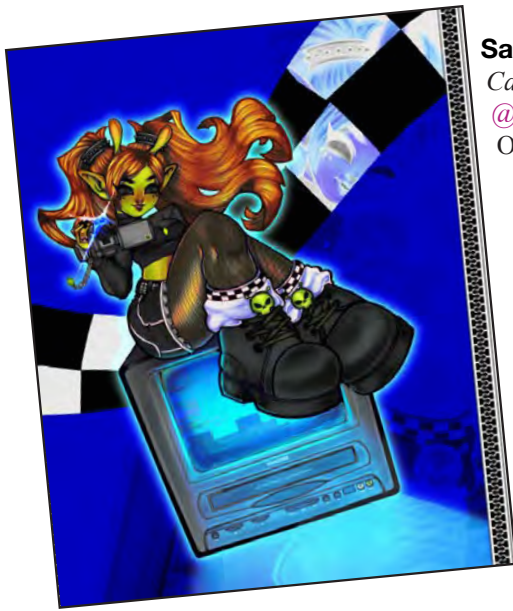
Melanie Martinez, *Anatomy*



Sara Headley, *Anatomy*



Gabriell Mattes, *Advertising Illustration*



Sam McKinney
Capstone class.
@SinnamonKupo
On Insta/X(twitter)



Sloane Koenig, *Basic Drawing*



Josh Brown, *Adobe Illustrator*



Miles Dunn, *Adobe Illustrator*



Miles Dunn, *Basic Drawing*



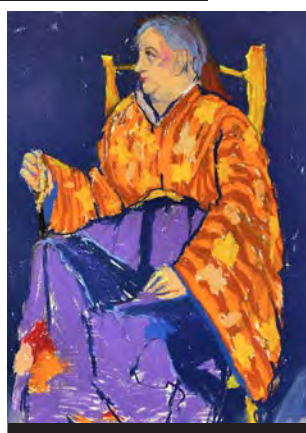
Crovis Diaz, *Color Theory*



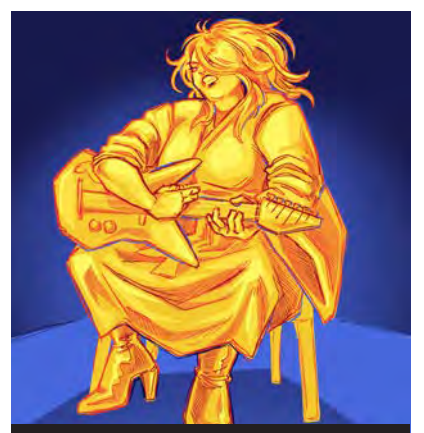
Dillan Rose, *Adobe Illustrator*



Chelsea Bristow, *Color Theory*



Ian Andreason, *Anatomy*



Connor Merlo, *Anatomy*



Savannah Shaffer, *Sequential*



Aaron Exler, *Color Theory*



Ryan Gardenhire, *Color Theory*



MIDDLE TENNESSEE TATTOO EXPO
NASHVILLE FAIRGROUNDS
NOVEMBER 7-9, 2025

Gabriell Mattes, *Advertising Illustration*

**ADOBE
ILLUSTRATOR
SHORTCUTS**



**Work smarter
not harder.**

Ever wanted to make a circle of shapes? You tried to do this manually and its never right.

**1. Make the shape
you want to repeat.**



**2. Select it and go to
the menu -
Object/Repeat/Radial**



**3. Slider on right will
add and remove more
or less shapes. You
can also resize at this
point.**



Spotlight on Mindy Gilbert:
The Heart Behind Nossi's Academic Operations



Mindy Gilbert
mgilbert@nossi.edu

At Nossi College of Art, few people wear as many hats—or wear them as gracefully—as Mindy, Director of Academic Operations. With a calm efficiency and a heart for helping others, Mindy is the behind-the-scenes force who keeps the college running smoothly. She builds out faculty and student schedules each semester, carefully customizing them to fit individual needs and ensure the best possible learning experience. Whether it's resolving schedule changes, troubleshooting Moodle, assisting with Verkada Security Pass and Verity Apps, or helping with Nossi.edu emails, Mindy is the go-to person for students and instructors alike. Her open-

door policy reflects her genuine care for every member of the Nossi community—she's always ready to listen, guide, or simply offer a kind word.

Mindy's dedication is rooted in a deep background of service and education. She holds a Bachelor's in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Educational Psychology and Counselor Education from Tennessee Technological University, and spent years working with at-risk youth in various nonprofits before joining Nossi in 2009. Beyond her administrative excellence, Mindy brings warmth and personality to campus life. She adores her “puppers,” Ziggy and Nico, who are beloved campus visitors, and when she's not organizing the college, you'll likely find her cheering for the Tennessee Titans, experimenting in the kitchen, or expressing her creativity through art. Mindy does so much for so many people at Nossi, and her care and commitment truly embody the spirit of the college.



From Kirk: *Illustration Careers are Thriving!*



Kirk D. Denney, MFA
Vice President of Talent Development and Strategic Engagement
k.denney@nossi.edu

Now is an exciting time to be an Illustrator -- creative careers are stronger than ever, especially across technology-driven industries that rely on visual storytellers. *The more skills you build, the more marketable you become!*

Today's employers are seeking illustrators who can blend traditional creativity with modern tools -- skills like social media,

content creation, motion graphics, and smart use of AI. Learning how to use AI as a tool while keeping your own creative vision in control is essential! Those who cultivate technology as an aid rather than the final creative force will be the ones shaping tomorrow's industry and leading the way for what's next.

Stay tuned as some exciting career opportunities in the technology sector are announced in the near future!

--KD

In All of the Software Classes:
SAVE EARLY,....SAVE OFTEN !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THE

ILLUSTRATORS

Way

Navigating the World of Illustration

ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR SHORTCUTS



Work smarter not harder.

Ever wanted to make a circle of shapes? You tried to do this manually and its never right.

1. Make a shape and repeat as needed.



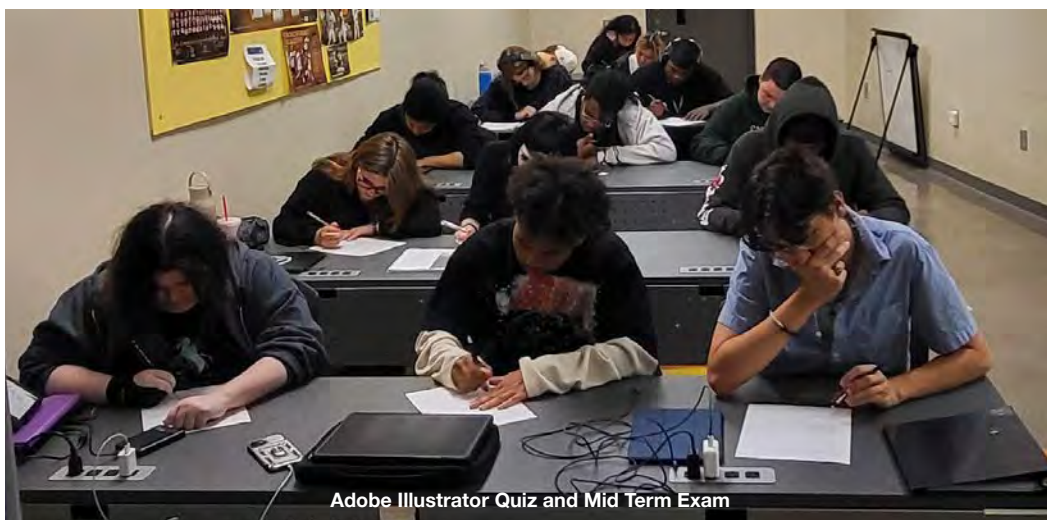
2. Create a letter to work with.



3. Move letter over shapes. Select them all. Then use shortcut **COMMAND + 7** (Clipping Mask)



The Trained Eye: *Candid Photos*



Adobe Illustrator Quiz and Mid Term Exam



Chef Russ and all working hard



Julietta and Zee creating their book.



Lilly Daffron
ldaffron@

Have ideas for the newsletter?

Submit them to Mark Fleming at mfleming@nossi.edu