

## Illustration Graduate *HighLight*



**Anna Abbate**

*Illustration Graduate of Spring 2025.*

### From New Orleans Roots to Creative Excellence



Anna Abbate's journey is a testament Born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana—a city where food, art, music, and family intertwine seamlessly—Anna developed a profound appreciation for creativity and connection from an early age.

Her parents modeled hard work and resilience: her father spent twelve years on Gulf oil platforms, even returning to work the day after surviving a helicopter accident so her mother could continue homeschooling Anna and her sister. Her mother made countless personal sacrifices to prioritize their education and dreams. Homeschooled, Anna thrived with the freedom to finish academics quickly and dive deeply into artistic pursuits—sewing, cardboard sculptures, drawing, painting, jewelry making, and more. Her parents' signature “punishment” of taking away her hot glue gun (rather than TV or phone) only underscored her passion. These experiences built not only a strong work ethic but also the confidence to pursue a creative career.

Anna's artistic foundation expanded at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), where she was accepted into the AP Visual Arts program. There she explored ceramics, photography, drawing, painting, printmaking, and bronze casting, learning adaptability across media.

Seeking a college that would prepare her professionally, she chose **Nossi College of Art & Design** in Tennessee. Her time at Nossi was truly extraordinary. A super talented artist with a wonderful personality, Anna approached every project with enthusiasm, a consistent smile, and a genuine desire to help her peers.

She absorbed lessons in class while eagerly learning more on her own, always delivering finished work with pride and professionalism. Faculty and classmates remember her positive spirit and dedication fondly.

A junior-year trip to Hawaii ignited her love for tropical and beach-themed art, influences that still shine through much of

her portfolio—including her own wedding invitation. Anna and her husband share a passion for beach travel, with a shared dream of one day living near the coast.

While seeking an internship Anna turned a personal connection into a remarkable opportunity. Through a colleague of a family member, she reached out about internships,



completed spec work during the interview process, and secured an internship that quickly evolved into a full-time role.



Some of Anna's favorite works from high school. The top three were created using a paper cut technique. She tried to create intricate designs that resembled lace. Each piece was cut out using an xacto knife.



A still life painting in acrylic on cardboard, from high school.



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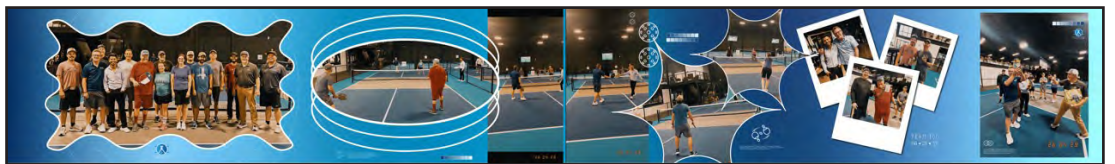
Navigating the World of Illustration

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**Anna Abbate**  
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More art work from Anna's college and professional work.



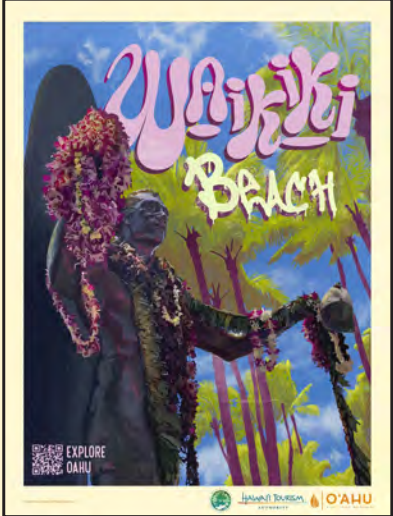
Today, she serves as a graphic designer for SMC Global and its subsidiaries. Her multifaceted work spans graphic design, illustration, photography, videography, video editing, copywriting, animation, branding, and social media management. She oversees LinkedIn pages, leads branding and rebranding initiatives, and creates marketing materials—including brochures for trade shows—that strengthen the company's global presence. Anna has played a key role in modernizing visual identities within the chemical industry, bringing fresh, professional design to organizations that historically lagged in this area.

She views design as problem-solving and clear communication that supports people and missions.

From a homeschooled artist in New Orleans to shaping the brand of a global company, Anna's path reflects gratitude for her parents' sacrifices, the guidance of dedicated teachers like Mark Fleming at Nossi, and the doors opened along the way. Her story continues to inspire, reminding us that creativity, resilience, and a positive spirit can lead to meaningful, impactful work.

*Congratulations, Anna—we're proud to call you a Nossi alumna!*

*Her multifaceted work spans graphic design, illustration, photography, videography, video editing, copywriting, animation, branding, and social media management.*



**Product Spotlight**  
*Thursday*

**Sodium Hypophosphite**

Sodium Hypophosphite is a highly effective reducing agent primarily used in electroless nickel plating, where it enables the deposition of uniform metal coatings without the need for an external electrical current.

At SMC Global, we prioritize purity, consistency, and supply reliability, ensuring your process performs at scale without disruption.

Request technical specifications or connect with our team to evaluate fit for your application.

**NATIONAL LOGISTICS DAY**

**JUNE 28TH**

**SMC GLOBAL**  
a Different Kind of Chemistry

Celebrating the hard work and dedication of our logistics professionals.

**Happy Holidays**

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS

MEET US AT

*The Gulf State Pavillion*

GULF SHORES AL.  
11-08-25



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COLLEGE of ART & DESIGN  
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## ADOBE SHORTCUTS



### Dimensions.

All the Adobe Creative Suite software available to you is simply a set of tools. What will truly make you stand out from other artists is your creativity, unique vision, and personal voice.

It is imperative for illustrators to embrace a wide range of software tools. The creative market is fast-paced and constantly evolving, demanding adaptability and strong technical skills. While mastering these tools is essential, it is your personal artistic approach and unique vision that will truly elevate you above the competition. Adobe Dimensions is one of those powerful tools that can help you render your art and creations with exceptional quality and realism.

Adobe Dimensions is a powerful 3D design and compositing tool developed by Adobe that allows graphic designers and illustrators to easily create photorealistic 3D images and scenes. Its main purpose is to bridge 2D design with 3D visualization, enabling users to import illustrations, logos, packaging designs, or branding elements and place them into realistic 3D environments with accurate lighting, materials, and camera angles.

**AMAZINGLY  
SIMPLE  
3D**



## MESSAGE From Mark

**Mark Fleming**  
Illustration Program Director  
and Instructor Since 2004.  
[m Fleming@nossi.edu](mailto:m Fleming@nossi.edu)

**The Future of Illustration.  
It takes more than talent to succeed.**



As Program Director of Illustration, I want to share an important truth with you: in today's rapidly evolving creative market, raw talent alone is no longer enough to build a thriving career.

The illustration industry rewards those who combine exceptional artistic ability with strategic professionalism and proactive engagement. While your technical skills and creative vision will open doors, it is your ability to navigate the professional landscape that will determine how far those doors swing open. The most successful illustrators today treat their careers as businesses—curating their presence, building relationships, and positioning themselves as reliable, collaborative partners for clients and collaborators alike.

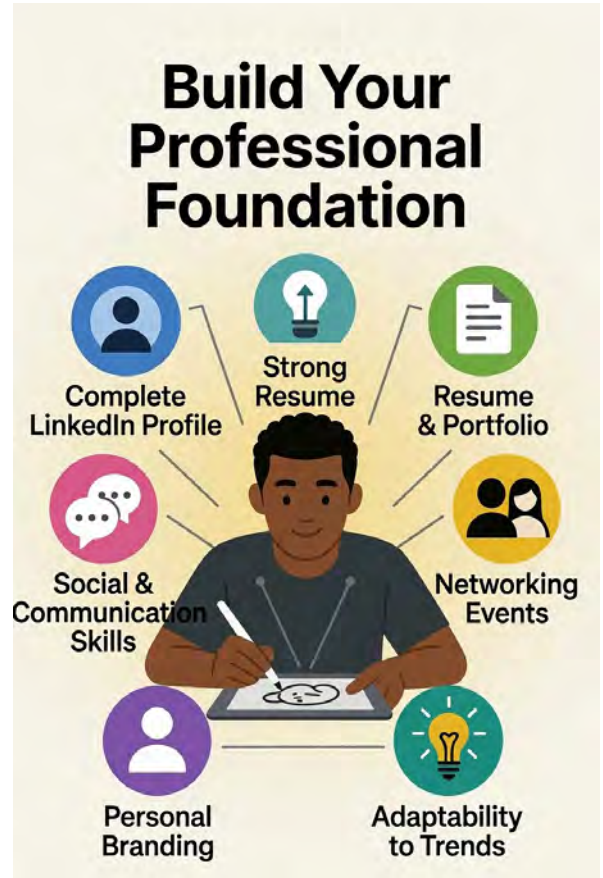
To truly excel, I strongly encourage you to fully engage with your social and professional environment. Complete your LinkedIn profile thoughtfully, treating it as a living portfolio that highlights not only your work but also your process, achievements, and personality.

Craft a polished resume that clearly articulates your skills, experiences, and unique value. Invest time in developing strong social and communication skills—practice articulating your ideas, giving and receiving feedback gracefully, and networking with intention.

Attend industry events, join online communities, participate in critiques, and reach out to working professionals.

Remember that opportunities often flow through relationships, and a warm, professional demeanor can turn a casual conversation into a long-term client or mentor connection.

Additionally, focus on building a cohesive personal brand, maintaining an up-to-date portfolio website, and staying adaptable to emerging tools, platforms, and market trends.



Continuous learning and self-promotion are now essential parts of the illustrator's toolkit. **You are not just artists—you are creative entrepreneurs.** Embrace these practices with the same passion you bring to your artwork, and you will be well-equipped to not only survive but truly thrive in this dynamic field.

## Kirk is here to help you with best practices for your road to success.

Contact Kirk and learn how to best position your LinkedIn, Resume and so much more.

**Kirk Denney**  
Vice President of Talent Development and Strategic Engagement  
You can contact him at [k.denney@nossi.edu](mailto:k.denney@nossi.edu).

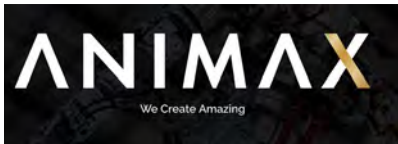
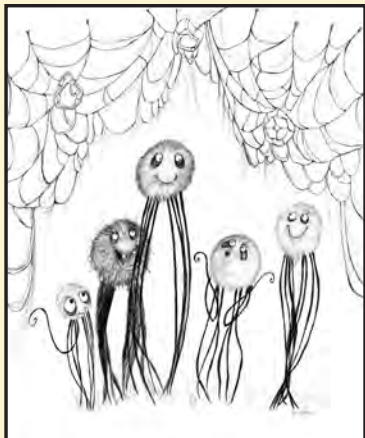


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**Mark Sloniker**, *Art Director at Animax*  
• [Animaxdesigns.com](http://Animaxdesigns.com)

Visit Mark's website at [MarkSlonikerImaginarium.com](http://MarkSlonikerImaginarium.com) to see more of his great artwork.

Mark Sloniker is a Nashville-based, multi-disciplined artist whose creative spirit has left its mark across the entertainment industry. A warm, approachable personality with immense talent, Mark is not only a gifted artist but also someone deeply eager to help others—whether mentoring aspiring creatives or sharing his knowledge with students and colleagues.

Primarily self-taught (autodidactic), Mark has always supplemented his natural abilities by seeking out mentors and continuously expanding his skills. His journey began in traditional hand-drawn animation and has since blossomed into a remarkable career spanning illustration, graphic design, photography, sculpture, hat-making, writing, and the soft fabrication of puppets, animatronics, and costumes.

Today, Mark serves as *Art Director at Animax*, a world-class studio that creates unforgettable characters for theme parks and live entertainment around the globe. His versatile work has appeared on album covers, magazines, theater and touring show stages, children's books, music videos, TV commercials, and home goods. At the heart of his art lies a beautiful juxtaposition: the complex, intricate forms found in nature



blended with the simplified, imaginative shapes of beloved characters.

In addition to his impressive professional achievements, Mark has been an active member of the *Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI)* for 11 years. He also serves on the *Illustration Advisory Board at Nossi College of Art and Design*, where his guidance and generous support help shape the next generation of illustrators. Whether he's designing larger-than-life characters for global audiences or taking time to encourage fellow artists, Mark Sloniker exemplifies both creative excellence and heartfelt generosity. We're grateful to have such a talented and caring artist in our community!



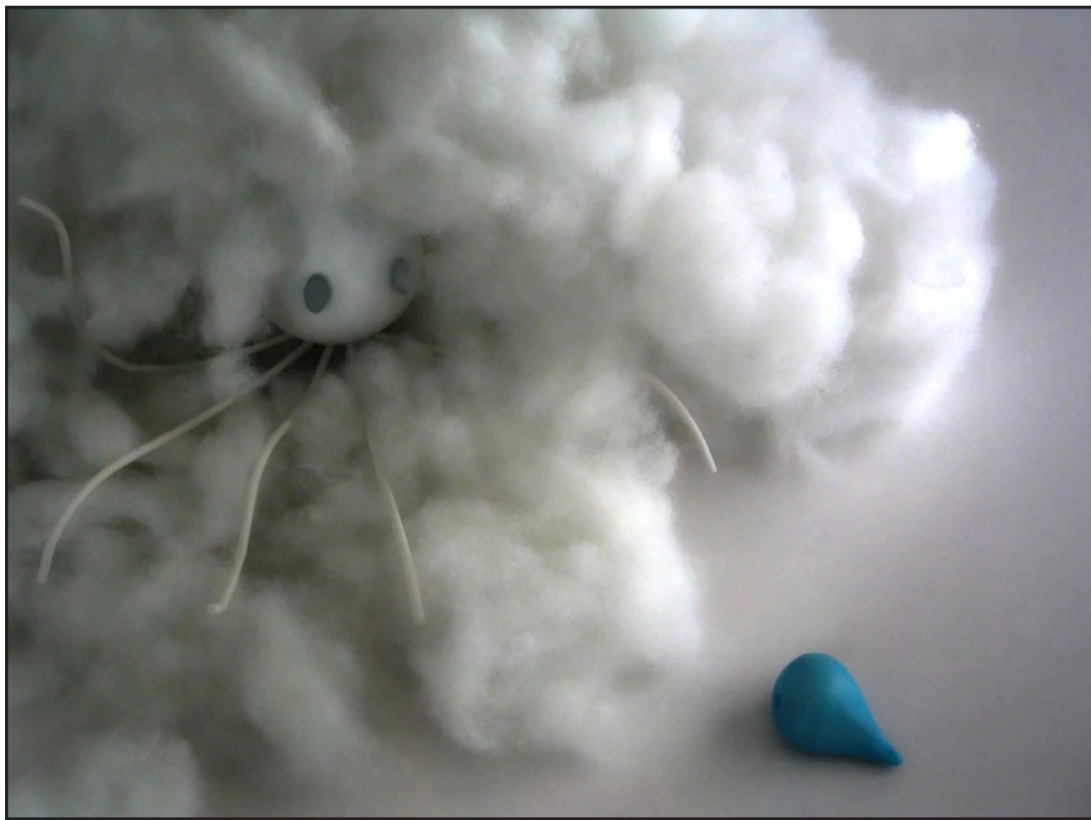
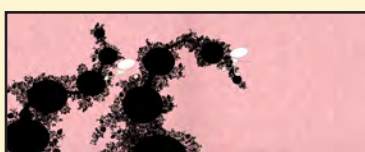
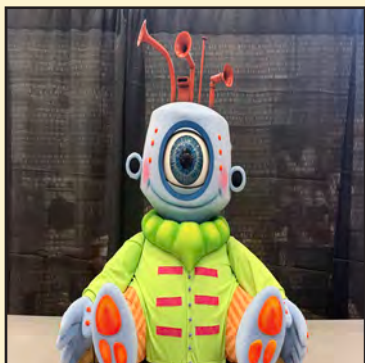
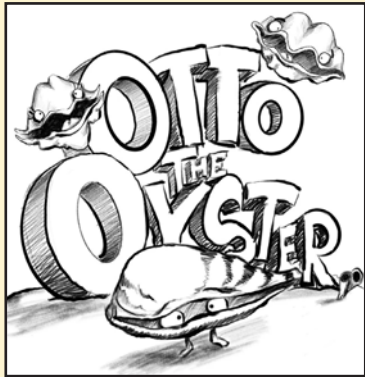
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## More Artwork from Mark Sloniker.



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"...If you choose not to decide You still have made a choice..."

— Neil Peart

## INSTRUCTOR *IN-FOCUS*



### Meet Our Faculty: Laird Ogden, Storyteller and Artist

**Laird Ogden**  
Illustration Instructor since 2025  
logden@nossi.edu

One year ago, Nossi College of Art welcomed Laird Ogden to our faculty, and in that short time he has already made a lasting impression. Talented, approachable, and deeply passionate about his craft, Laird is the kind of educator who inspires students not only through his impressive professional résumé but through his genuine enthusiasm for visual storytelling in all its forms.

35-episode educational web series *Nature Minute* and has edited multiple award-winning documentary shorts. The challenge of distilling hours of raw footage into concise, meaningful narratives remains one of his most rewarding creative outlets.

Laird's artwork has been exhibited across the United States, Canada, and Europe,



Laird's love of art began in childhood, nourished by a steady stream of comics, Disney films, and Saturday morning cartoons. That early spark led him to study at Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts. After graduating, he headed to New York City, where he landed an enviable position as studio assistant to Eisner Award-winning illustrator and comic artist Peter Kuper. There, he contributed to the creation of the acclaimed graphic novel *The System* (Vertigo/DC Comics) and assisted on several other titles. He also gained hands-on experience compiling artwork into book form and mastering the emerging digital tools of the publishing industry.

including shows at the Frist Center in Nashville, the Museum of Caricature in Warsaw, Poland, and Parsons School of Art in New York. Most recently, he has worked with noted art director Barry Jackson, creating storyboards and concept art for several films currently in development.

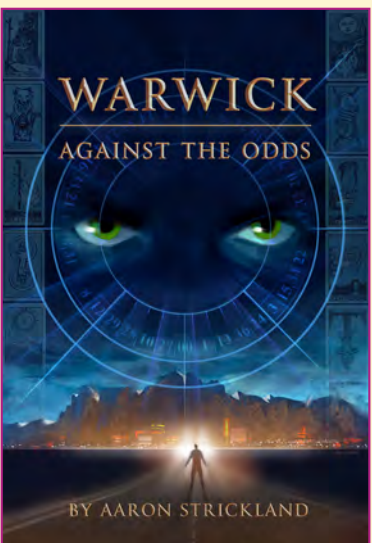
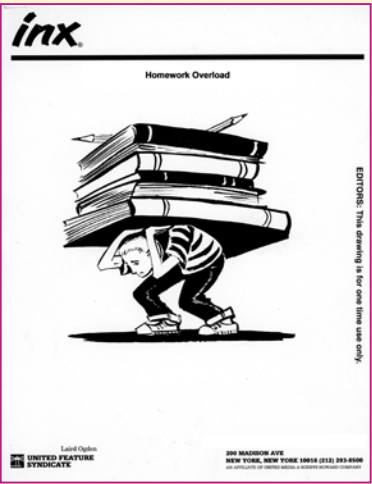
Now in his second year at Nossi, Laird brings this rich, multifaceted experience into the classroom every day. Students and colleagues alike praise his generosity with feedback, his technical expertise, and his ability to connect classroom lessons to real-world creative practice. Whether guiding students through illustration techniques, design principles, or the storytelling power of motion media, he encourages them to embrace both the technical and the personal in their work.

While building his own freelance career as an illustrator and designer—including work with the nationally syndicated Inx editorial illustration service—Laird broadened his skill set at a Manhattan design agency. His projects ranged from publications for the New York Stock Exchange and magazine ads to corporate identity and web design. It was during this period that his longstanding passion for filmmaking truly flourished.

When reflecting on his winding career path, Laird notes the twists, turns, and occasional blind alleys that ultimately led him here. "It's a road that has led me to Nossi," he says, "where I feel truly privileged to work with its incredible students, faculty, and staff." We are equally fortunate to have him.

Collaborating with the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Laird helped produce compelling branding videos that captured student and research success stories. He also served as editor and photographer for the

Welcome to the Nossi family, Laird—here's to many more years of inspiring the next generation of visual storytellers.



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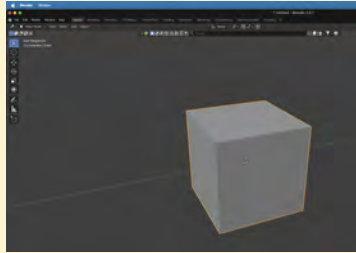
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## SHORTCUTS

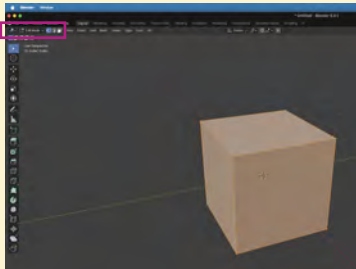


### Adding Loop Cuts

1. Select your object.

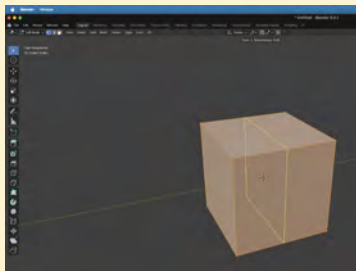


2. Hit the TAB key to enter EDIT MODE.

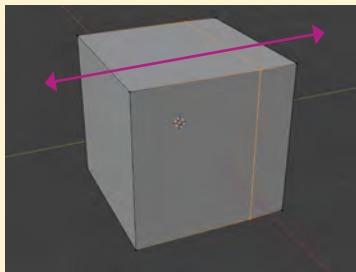


3. Command + R (Mac)

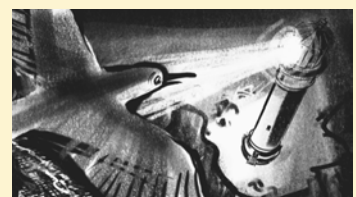
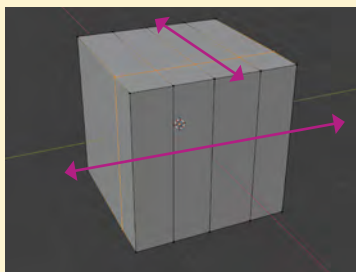
- Hover over an edge to preview the cut.
- Scroll the mouse wheel up or down to add multiple cuts.



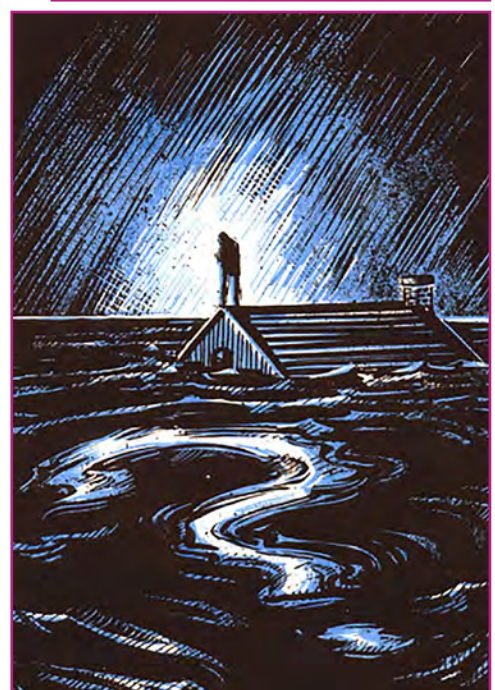
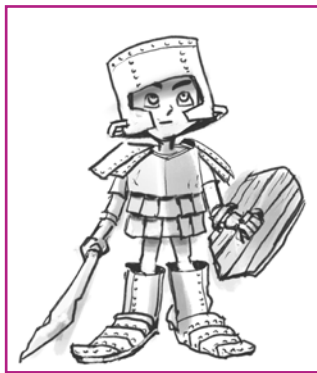
- Left-click once to confirm, then slide the cut and left-click again to lock it in place.



4. Repeat and add as many as you want.



## MORE WORK EXAMPLES *Laird Ogden*



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## ADOBE INDESIGN SHORTCUTS

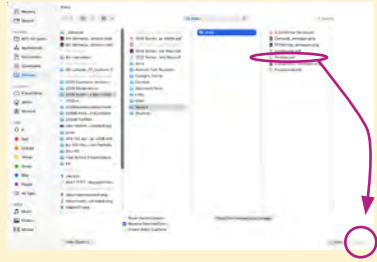


### Placing an image into InDesign

Bring the image you desire in faster by knowing your shortcuts in every program. In the menu it is File/Place but a simple keystroke will do the trick faster.

#### 1. Use the shortcut Com + D = Place

A folder box will appear. Navigate to the file you want to place, select it and click OPEN.



#### 2. You will then have a loaded cursor. You have 3 choices of placing the image.

Click once to place the FULL image.

OR

Click and drag to bring the image in and size it.

OR

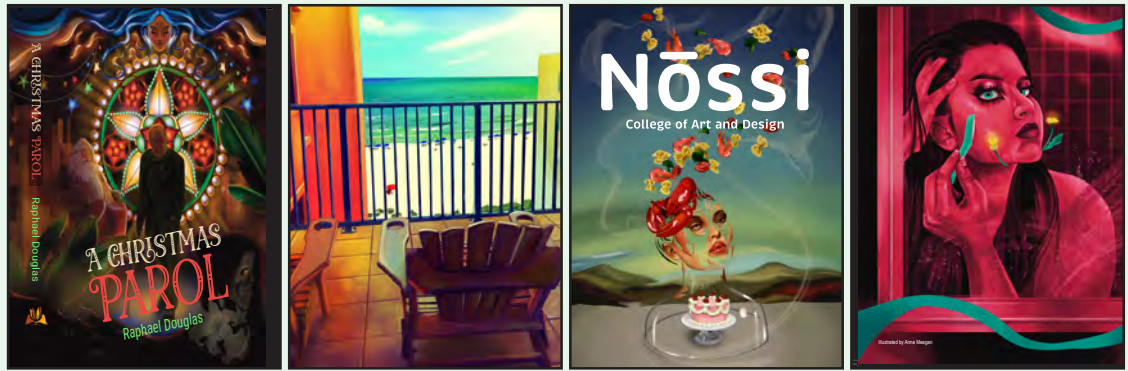
Click and HOLD SHIFT to place the image in proportion.

## Illustration Students Graduating *HighLight*

This section will showcase the works of graduating students during the Summer semester of 2026 featuring *Anne Meegan, Addah O'Brien, Sara Winnett, Gabriell*

*Mattes and Melynda Borchert.* Each student has their own style, vision and drive. The portfolios are looking great. Here are some samples of their work.

Anne Meegan



Addah O'Brien



Sara Winnett



Gabriell Mattes



Melynda Borchert



*"Painting is easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do."*

~Edgar Degas



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## INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE:

"Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad... While they are deciding, make even more art."

Andy Warhol



## ILLUSTRATION INSTRUCTORS



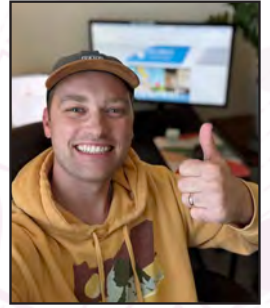
**Caleigh Bird**  
Illustration Instructor  
cbird@nossi.edu



**Mark Fleming**  
Illustration Program Director  
mfleming@nossi.edu



**Maureen O'Brien**  
Illustration Instructor  
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**Grant Tudor**  
Illustration Instructor  
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**Jose Semidei**  
Illustration Instructor  
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**Mikal Barker**  
Illustration Instructor  
mbarker@nossi.edu

### EIGHT ILLUSTRATION INSTRUCTORS SHAPING THE CREATIVE EDUCATION INDUSTRY IN THE COMPETITIVE WORLD OF VISUAL ARTS AND GRAPHICS.

Eight highly talented and experienced illustration instructors stand out not only for their exceptional skills across painting, design, graphics, marketing, motion graphics, and the full spectrum of the industry, but also for their profound dedication to teaching and nurturing their students.

With decades of combined professional experience from animation studios, ad agencies, wide variety of businesses, and fine-art galleries, these instructors are deeply invested in their students' growth. They are known for going above and beyond—offering personalized mentorship, detailed feedback, and genuine care that helps aspiring artists build both technical mastery and professional confidence.



**Tracy Ratliff**  
Illustration Instructor  
tratliff@nossi.edu



**Laird Ogden**  
Illustration Instructor  
logden@nossi.edu

## TIPS: How to deal with foreshortening



**Caleigh Bird**  
University of South Carolina,  
BFA, MFA,  
Adjunct Illustration  
Instructor since 2021.  
cbird@nossi.edu



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## Glance *Student Art Work This Semester*



**Charlie Spraggins,** *Alternative Mediums*



**Devon Ha'o**



**Devon Ha'o**



**Madison Allen**



**Miles Dunn**



**Nick Black,** *Alternative Mediums*



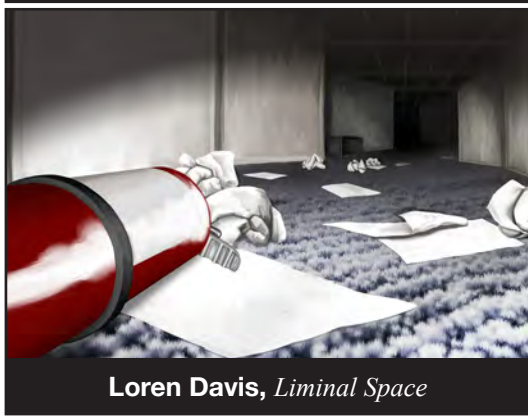
**Sloane Koenig,** *Alternative Mediums*



**Miles Dunn,** *Alternative Mediums*



**Ethan Sanchez,** *Cathedral Interior*



**Loren Davis,** *Liminal Space*



**Kate Stone,** *Nana's Kitchen*



**Nick Black,** *Figure Studies*



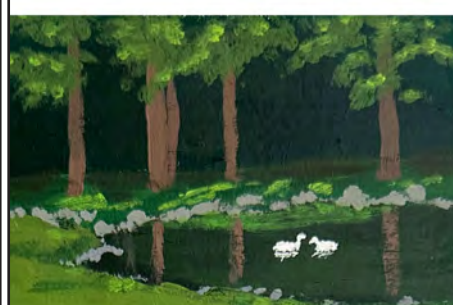
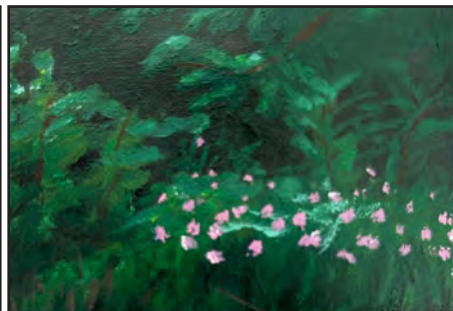
**Daniel Sloan,** *Figure Study*



**Zae Williams,** *Oil Painting*



**Sloane Koenig,** *Plein Air Study*



**Dillan Rose,** *Plein Air Study*

