

Designing

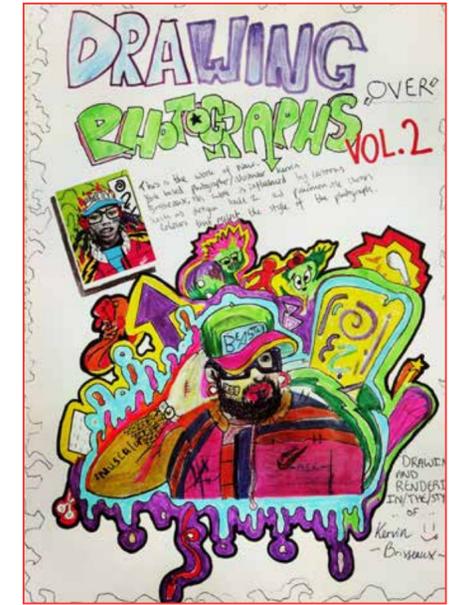
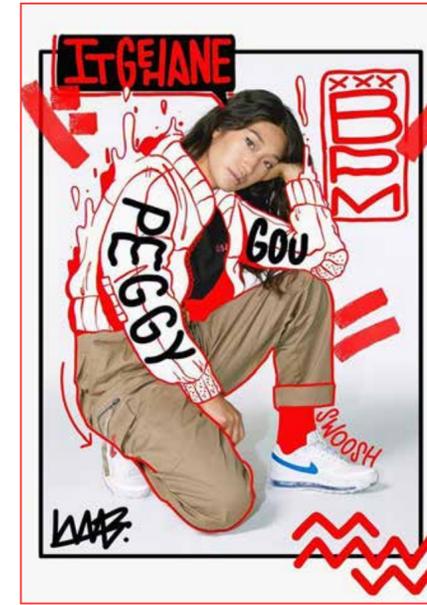
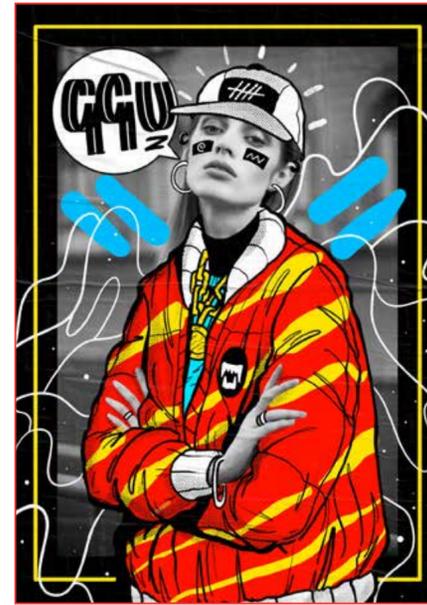
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- Yinka Ilori
- 8BitCADE
- Ideas factory
- Inspirography
- Terence Conran
- Made Here Now
- Time and Motion
- Creative [Un]blocks
- Design through making
- Bees, Trees, & Factories
- Beasley designs of the year

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Inspirography

Perpetua O'Sullivan, Crown Hills Community College

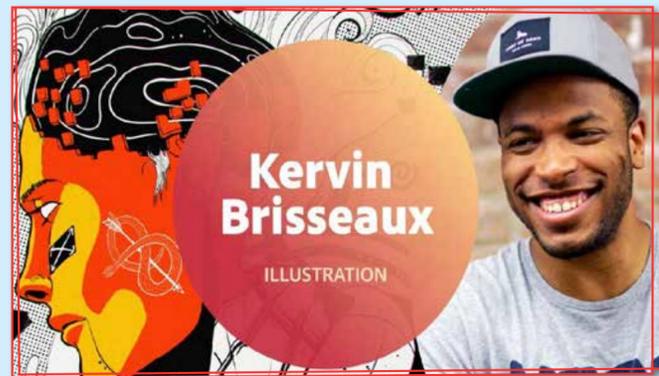


Pupils watching a recording



Four months into the COVID-19 pandemic I was given the opportunity to deliver the only Photography course at Crown Hills Community College in Leicester. I was thrilled and rose to this challenge, but that was soon followed by thoughts of concern due to social distancing guidelines and online learning. How was I going to engage and inspire students through a screen using digital technology when they are accustomed to swiping a video if it does not hold their attention in the first five minutes?

Awarding body iconic favourites like Philippe Starck, James Dyson, Picasso, Dali have all been taught by schools across the country and can easily be accessible in a book or the web, but I wanted to be different, to inspire students in a new and exciting way and bring something fresh into the classroom.



Finding the right inspiration

It was important for me to be able to base my inspirational source on the key elements of the specification: how ideas, themes, subjects and feelings can inspire creative responses. With this in mind, I needed to search for a designer/artist that had a distinctive view of the world and incorporated different styles, aesthetics and genres into their work. Taking into account current affairs at the time I thought a good starting point was to educate students to know that art, design and technology is accessible to all. There is a world of BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) artists and designers out there to relate to who have similar backgrounds to the students at Crown Hills.

After spending endless hours searching for an image of an artist/designer to fit my very specific criteria and someone who had the knowledge and understanding about the importance of visual communication, I finally came across Kervin Brisseaux, who is an illustrator and photographer from New York. He was diverse, quirky and fun; I knew instantly that he would be exciting and

engaging and assist in my quest to be able to motivate students for distanced learning and visual communication.

Brisseaux's influences and work were exactly what I needed to build into my scheme of work to capture my audience and explain things like presentation techniques, scale, sequence and composition and his style is cross-referenced to various specification points in the Photography and Graphics curriculum. With only been able to find his portfolios and his current job role online, I decided to write to him, I did not think I had much to lose considering the many artists I had contacted during my years of teaching Design and Technology. I expressed my excitement of using him as a role model to inspire my pupils, and yet to my surprise, he replied!

Linking up

To work with a New York based artist was very special indeed and I replied to ask if he would be interested in recording a video interview so I could play this back to my students. He agreed, so to spark students' interest, we started with some icebreaker questions like

what is your favourite food and do you have any pets before we got into the more specific ones about his background, how he got into his field of work, what inspired him and his career journey so far. It was important for students to understand what subjects Kervin had taken at school and at what point in his life did he realise that photography and becoming an artist was the path he wanted to go down.

The students were really taken aback by the interview, firstly because their teacher is on screen talking to someone 'famous' and secondly: here is a current American artist who does not fit the profile of the ones being taught in schools across the country. The impact of organising the video with Kervin has been invaluable and a real eye opener as he discussed his journey from his background in architecture and my students are now visually aware of colour, space, form and structure. He ended with a very personal and powerful message, which was to not be afraid of criticism because it is essential for growth and not about instant gratification, and those all-important four words of wisdom: be passionate, practice, be patient and be proud.

Kervin is design director at design agency Vault 49 in New York. His commercial work includes designs for Adobe, New Balance and EA Sports. You can see examples of his artwork at [instagram.com/brisseaux](https://www.instagram.com/brisseaux)

