

# Installment Sixteen

March 1, 2010

Aja Griffin



Interesting new semester, interesting life. Filled with gratitude.

I've been thinking about this blog and why I'm writing it and why I find it interesting. I actually do like writing about what I'm doing, what I'm seeing and how I feel about those events. I like the sense of perspective I can sometimes achieve just by writing it down. I get to stand back and see if what I've written bears any resemblance to what I think I've seen and done. How well am I translating what I'm experiencing into the written word?

used photos and rudimentary sketches to convene ideas and I knew that wasn't enough. I often had a hard time convincing myself that what I was dreaming was going to look good. How could I convince a potential client that my idea was good? I'm learning how by asking why. Fascinating.

So, here at Blogville I ask: Why am I writing? Why are people reading this? Why do I continue to write when I have lots of homework to do, designs to produce? Why do my friends write me back with wonderful stories about their experiences here and there? And all of those whys churn in and out and back again to "why are we here?" "Why am I here?" You know, the really big question.

I suspect all this questioning has a direct relationship to the losses I've experienced over the past several years. My friend Aja died and I felt lost. My friend Butch died and I was heartbroken. My friend Doug died and I watched his family mourn, and I cried. Then my Dad died and I wondered why. Why was not my initial reaction but the thinking process has a strange twisting and spiraling movement when it's so intimately tied to emotion. Some times it takes a while to sort things out, and sometimes it just doesn't get sorted out for a really long time.

Butch Hennigan



It's a lot like grad school. I thought I knew some stuff about design before I got here, and that attitude has probably created some grief, however much unintended. Now I realize how little I really know and how much fun it is to learn. And in the learning I am asking questions, constantly, and the main question here at Pratt Studios seems to be "Why?" Why is the door there and not here? Why is the ceiling height ten feet and not ten feet six? Why are you orienting the windows toward that view, or that exposure? Why is the hallway only five feet wide?

This also relates directly to design, and the process of design here at Pratt. How do I translate what's in my head into something that can be read and interpreted by the buying public? I have

Hal Weakley



I had my taxes done recently. It was a traumatic experience. My tax guy in Taos didn't do my tax returns for 2008 and I wondered why, aloud, repeatedly, to him, his secretary, and his answering machine. I finally called a dear friend there who physically retrieved my paperwork from his office and mailed it to me here. And the upshot is I paid a lot of money (student loan grocery and rent money) to have the returns for 2008 and 2009 done here. I needed the figures to fill out the student loan forms for the government. And I owe taxes for 2008, plus undetermined penalties and interest.

So I paid them some (more student loan grocery and rent money) and asked for a payment plan for the rest.

Just to be clear, I'm not asking for a pity party here. I'm just stating facts to bring you to a perspective that I just realized. And it's a sobering realization. I was physically more upset by the amount of money I paid and the money I owe than I have been over the losses I've witnessed over the past few years. There's a problem there. I believe it's a problem of perspective. It's a problem of paying more attention to some things and not enough attention to others. I'm consciously not placing a judgment here because I've learned that my feelings don't necessarily accurately reflect the facts or the reality of any particular situation. What I am saying is that I was focused on one thing that really upset me (money) and not so focused on some other things that might be more important.

And all this leads me back to why.

And now I'm relaxing and watching another episode(s) of "Mad Men" on a pirated dvd that my roommate has. She has every episode. And I'm Maddicted. And the cool thing there is that our next project in Design Studio is to create offices for an ad agency in the Lever House (an architectural icon here in NY) whose clients are all "green" (meaning they are supposedly less harmful to the planet, environmentally sensitive, blah blah blah). We'll start the project in early March and work on it till the end of the semester in May. Long project. And I will be analyzing the hell out of "Mad Men", and perhaps even appropriating images and ideas.



February 20, 2010

LONG DAY at the computer. I've created two, yes, two photo collages in Photoshop of Grand Central Terminal. My teammate and I are pitching (for class) to design a flower market in one of the large rooms there, not unlike Covent Garden in London called Grand Central Garden. Nice, huh. Fun stuff. The first collage is of existing conditions and the reasoning why a flower market is a great idea. The second is a computer rendering of what that market might look like. Very fun, very time-consuming, and hopefully, a very good grade. I'll let you know. The photo is too big to see in this tiny space. Sorry.

Now, out for sushi (cheap!) with Madeline. Yippee. And since I've been in my jammies all day it'll be a treat just to walk outside!

March 1, 2010

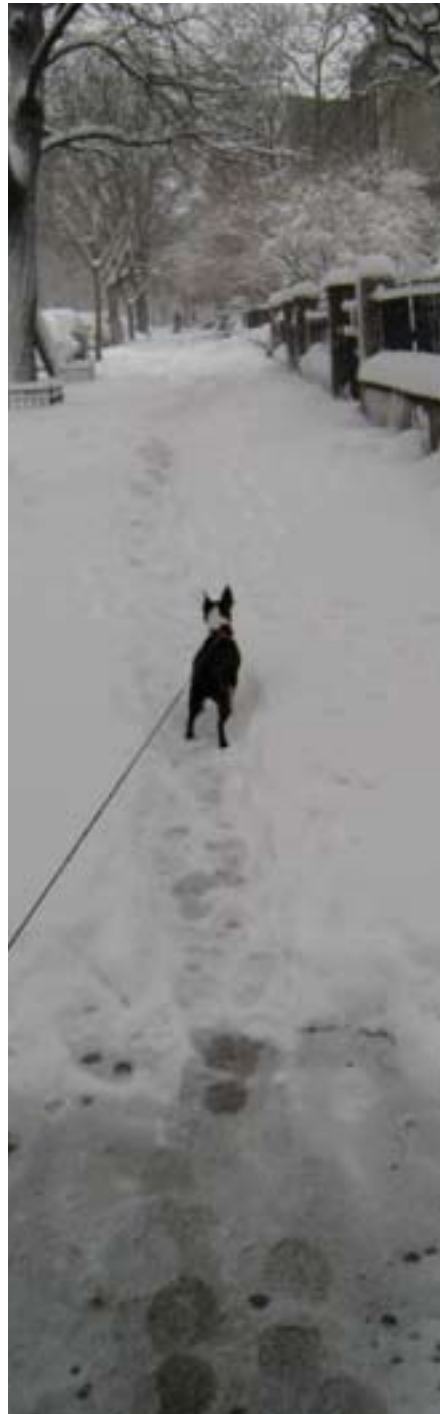
New month, new Monday, new assignment! Finally I can write this blog and get a grade on it. I have a class entitled Presentation Techniques, wherein we are learning about Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. So far, we've learned how to import photo files from the web or scans and then determined how large or small the files might need to be to create an appropriately sized print file, thus establishing the quality of the final print. It's a tricky business but somebody's got to learn this. I have such a greater appreciation for Beckwith, Steve, and Suzanne, and all the work they have done on Photoshop.

Today we learned about laying out text with photo pages in InDesign, creating aesthetically pleasing visuals for print, gauging the visual quality of a particular font to the nature of whatever project might be at hand. It's interesting stuff that will come in handy in lots of areas.

So, our assignment is to write three pages of text, add photos from a variety of sources and then make layouts, with pull quotes or sidebars, headlines, and whatever other snappy tricks one can pull out of one's handbag of tricks. It's always good to have a handbag of tricks. My grandmother taught me that.

Since I've written almost three pages here I can move right along to the layout, adding some photos I've taken recently of the major dump of snow we had on Friday last, and perhaps putting some quotes in from the books I've been reading lately. It might even make sense, but I'm not holding my breath. You shouldn't either, okay.

Orah Funk (Grandma)



Did I tell you that my Mom broke her hip on Saturday? She's in hospital right now in Chicago waiting for surgery. It's tricky because she's diabetic and that's putting a kink into the scheduling. They can't do the surgery unless the blood sugar is regulated and Mom can't eat for a while before the surgery. That makes determining how much insulin to administer tricky. I'm grateful she has good doctors, and my sister is a nurse so she knows the right questions to ask.

March 7, 2010

Mom's much better today. We talked this morning. She had a partial hip replacement last Tuesday and was transferred Friday to the hospital where my sister works, in Oak Park, Illinois. The doctos have stabilized the diabetes and gotten Mom into a much better place with her diet.

Better get this done and posted. Midterm in History of Interior Design tomorrow. Back to the books. Ciao for now.

Gloria Lee Weakley (Mom)

