

Feminist
Propaganda

[Issue 01, Dropbox Design]

Who Ladies
Create

FEMINIST PROPAGANDA

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[What is feminism?]
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Artist features

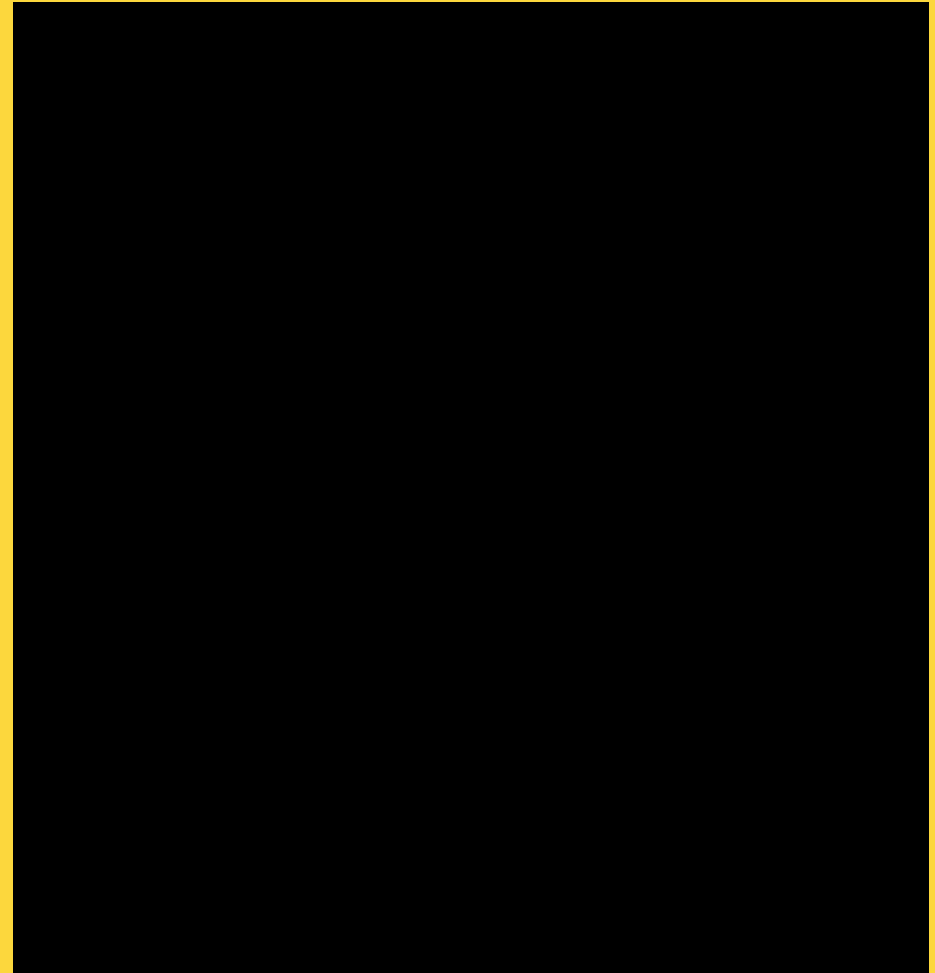
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Closing

[Make work human]



From one feminist



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rs



FEMINISM IS THE
RADICAL NOTION
THAT WOMEN ARE
HUMAN
BEINGS.



Welcome
to



Ladies Who
Create

Ladies Who Create is a forum that brings together womxn and non-binary people in design, plus their allies. We are writers, researchers, designers, program managers, illustrators, and more, encompassing the broad range of creatives in our community. Founded by Anisha Jain in 2017—when she was just one of three womxn on the Dropbox Design team—this community has grown to include hundreds of womxn around the world.

Our goal is straightforward. We provide supportive community programming to help womxn in design grow. We succeed when our members feel a sense of possibility and accelerated progress in what they're able to achieve. We seek to gain and generously share knowledge, create meaningful relationships, and help people achieve their career ambitions.

We believe that the best investment we can make is in the future of womxn. And we know it pays off! Last year, Dropbox Design tipped the scales, with a team that was 57% womxn and leadership that was 61% womxn. We hosted intimate events around the world to connect womxn in the community. We published killer pieces like *Ladies Get Loud*, *Permission to Speak*, *New Hymns*, and this lovely piece of propaganda. And we're just getting started. Our ambitions are bigger, and the stakes are higher than ever for womxn. The time to link arms and grow our community is now.

Note: In this publication, we use the word womxn as an alternative form of the English words women and woman. Womxn explicitly includes non-cisgender women and functions in a manner similar to the words womyn and wimmin—as a rejection of the sexist etymology of the words women and woman. As we evolve, so too does our language.



The
feminist

uprising

fem·i·nism

The advocacy of
women's rights
on the basis
of equality of
the sexes.

the right
to vote

the right
to work

laws for
health care

protection against
rape and
assault

ability to
receive
education

protective laws for
maternity
leave

ability to earn
equal pay

the right to
hold office

ability to
own property

equity in
gender
roles



01



02



03



04



05



06



07



08



09



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01

Ruth Bader
Ginsburg

02

bell
hooks

03

Michelle
Obama

04

Toni
Morrison

05

Gloria
Steinem

06

Oprah
Winfrey

07

Ida
B. Wells

08

Shirley
Chisholm

09

Malala
Yousafzai

10

Madeleine
Albright

11

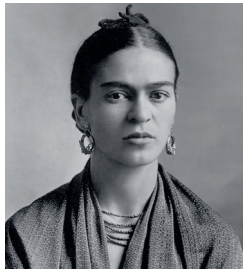
Grace
Hopper

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Cheris
Kramarae



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Christine
Blasey Ford

14

Frida
Kahlo

15

Joan
Jett

16

Tarana
Burke

17

Dolores
Huerta

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Indira
Gandhi

19

Rupi
Kaur

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Maya
Angelou

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Chimamanda
Ngozi
Adichie

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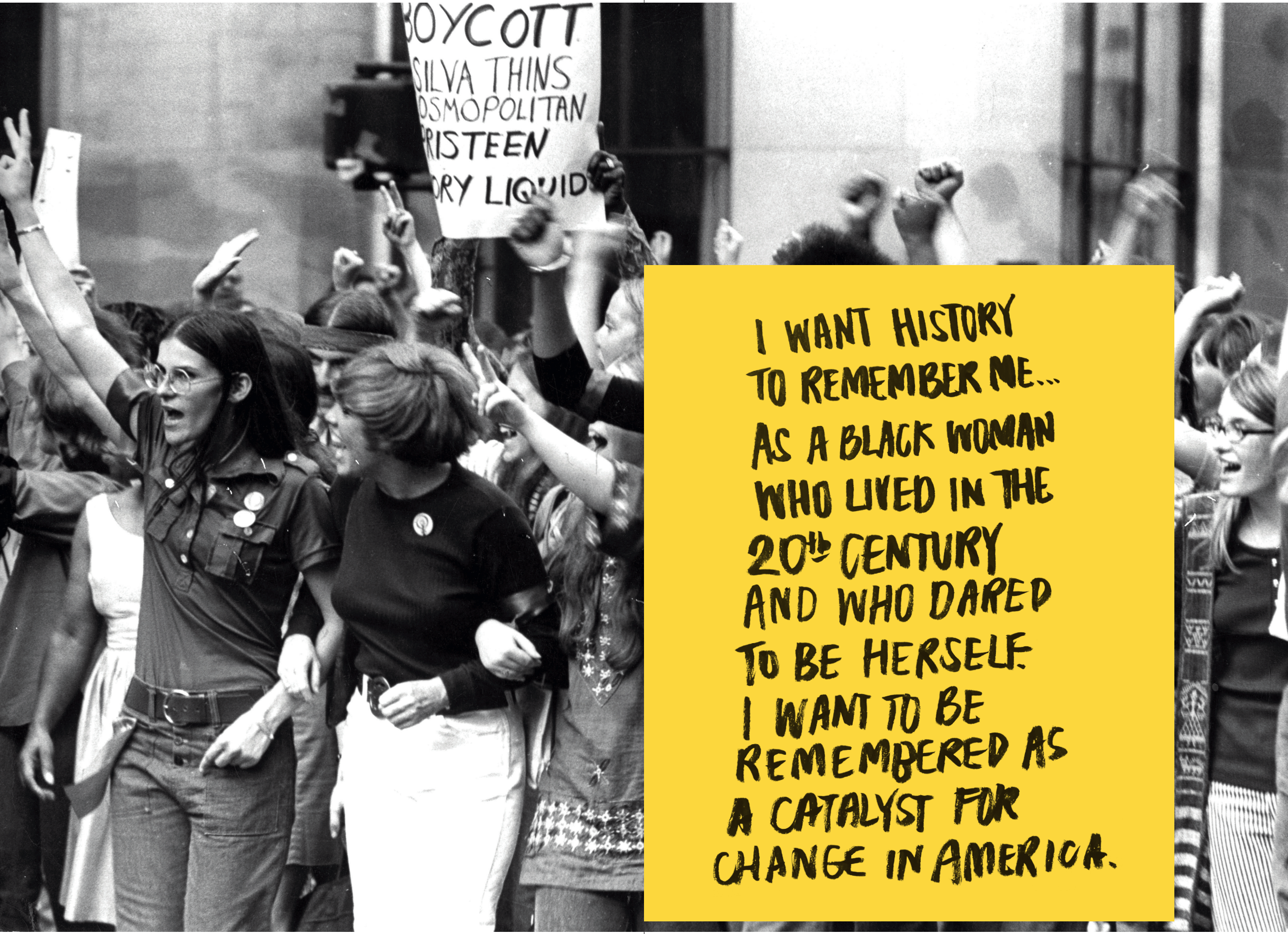
Hillary
Clinton

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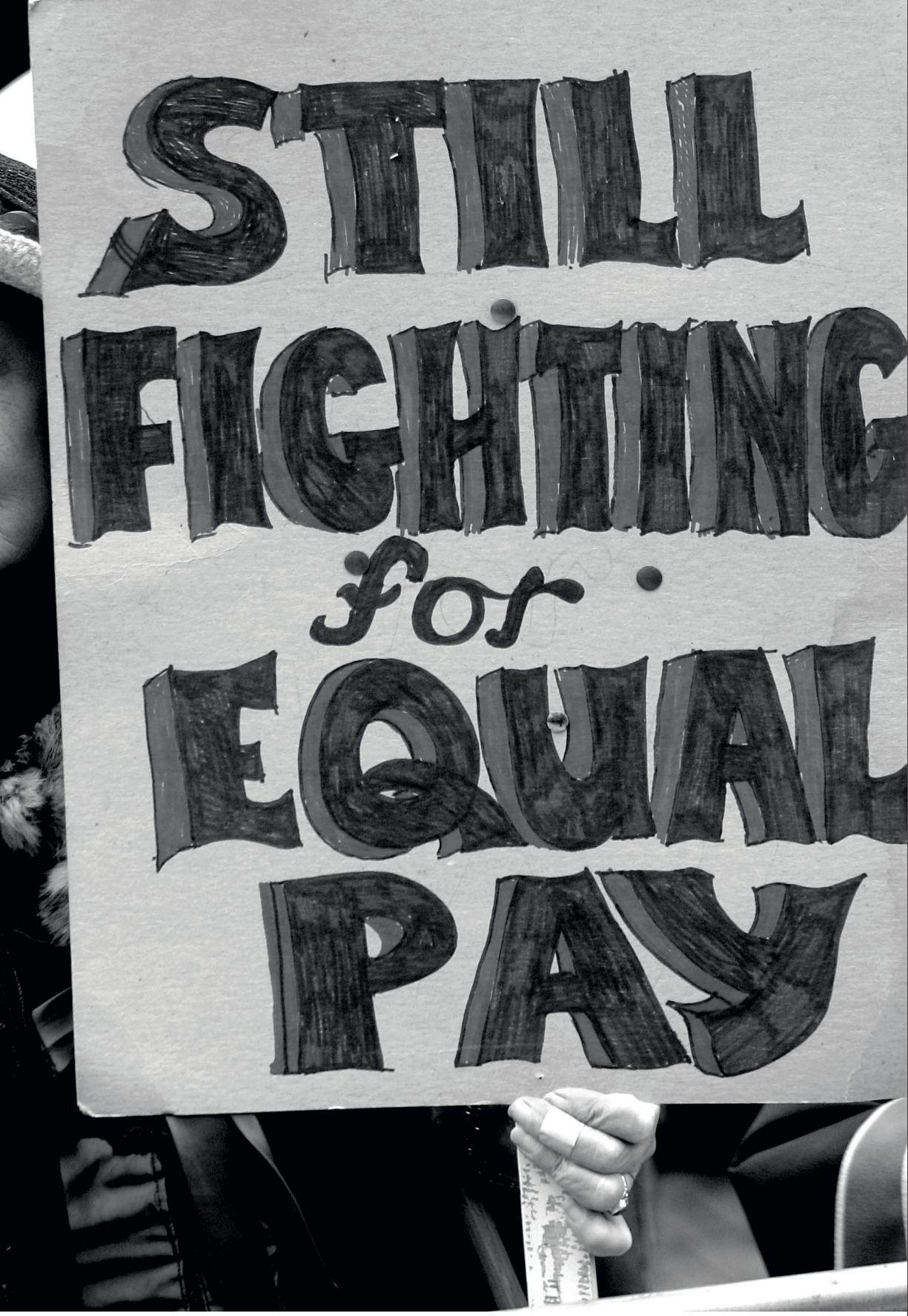
Alexandria
Ocasio-Cortez

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Laverne
Cox



I WANT HISTORY
TO REMEMBER ME...
AS A BLACK WOMAN
WHO LIVED IN THE
20th CENTURY
AND WHO DARED
TO BE HERSELF.
I WANT TO BE
REMEMBERED AS
A CATALYST FOR
CHANGE IN AMERICA.



What does
feminism

mean
to you?

LaDonna Witmer Willems

“Feminism means equality. It means having the right to take up space. It means owning my voice. It means walking tall. It means lifting up other womxn. It means telling my daughter she doesn’t have to smile just because a man told her to.”

Lori Novak

“Letting my talent and character earn your respect, not my gender.”

Sydney Goldstein

“That I’m an independent person who can hold my own and I don’t need to be catered to.”

Amanda Miller

“Celebrating the unique power of womxn.”

Elizabeth Gilmore

“Equal rights for men and womxn.”

Charlotte Ratel

“Rebecca West said, ‘I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.’ Feminism is vouching for equal opportunities. Being able to ask and answer the question: ‘Would this situation be any different if I were a man?’ is a good start towards change and equality. It’s not just about rights anymore; it’s about changing stereotypes and values.”

Frederique Matti

“Feminism to me means that I support anything womxn do, even if it doesn’t align with my own views or ideas, or when I simply don’t understand. This is tricky, but it’s so needed that we stop excluding people who need the support.”

“As the saying goes, womxn’s rights are human rights.”

Kavya Sivaraman

Constance Wellman

“Feminism means we all have a seat at the table. This is something I believe in my core, and I strive to work every day to make this more of a reality.”

Jen DiZio

“I appreciate what the scholar bell hooks says: ‘Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.’ By that standard, my ‘job’ as a feminist is to bring together and advocate for ideas, people, and policies that support this movement.”

Berenice Méndez

“It means questioning, opposing, and revising ideas and practices that dampen the voices, abilities, and contributions of womxn in society, and teaching this practice to the next generation of womxn and men.”

Michelle Morrison

“Equality.”



THERE IS A
SPECIAL PLACE IN
HELL FOR WOMEN
WHO DON'T
HELP OTHER
WOMEN.



How has
community

impacted
you?

Emma Highley

“Ladies Who Create has brought me so many kick-ass female friendships and helped me grow as a person. Words can’t describe the feeling when you have a team of badassess cheering you on—you really feel like you can do anything. Everyone deserves to feel that way.”

Frederique Matti

“It really helps to see how other womxn deal with the same stuff; we’re in this together. It’s also so cool to see people cheer each other on and grow together, instead of the big competition thing we are so used to doing as womxn.”

Olga de la Iglesia

“Sisterhood is always welcoming for all of us.”

Elizabeth Gilmore

“It’s allowed me to feel free and comfortable being just myself, with all the weird quirks and traits that my past career told me to soften.”

Berenice Méndez

“When you’re growing your career and developing new skills, it really matters who you’re looking up to for establishing new habits and perspectives into your practice. Having circles like Ladies Who Create helps to share best practices and advice among creatives who I can relate to, and who are invested in making the industry more inclusive.”

Constance Wellman

“Ladies Who Create has given me a community that I can rely on for support and encouragement as I navigate the day-to-day of work. It has allowed me to develop connections with womxn in design.”

Emily Simms

“Sometimes all you need is to know that there are people out there who give a damn, and communities like Ladies Who Create are doing just that.”

Lori Novak

“These groups are so important for keeping us connected and human.”

Jen Murse

“It’s been amazing to connect with womxn in the industry. Coming together to just mix and mingle and form a network has been so magical. I appreciate being a part of this amazing group of womxn.”

Bev Achterhof

“When I joined Dropbox, I was really inspired by Anisha’s vision for womxn growing and lifting each other up. As a lead for Ladies Who Create, I’ve been honored to work with such an incredible group of creative womxn to grow not only this community but our own careers as well.”

Jen DiZio

“Just knowing this community is here has a huge impact on my work and psyche. I feel that there’s a tribe of womxn behind me, pushing me forward.”

Artist



features

Elizabeth Gilmore

Creative Director · Photographer · San Francisco



ig: @elizabethgilmore

Elizabeth is a mother and creative director in San Francisco working at Dropbox. From the Midwest to the great West, she respects good people, good color combos, and bad action movies. Former plant mama, road-trip junkie, and photographer. Currently, new baby mama, NPR power listener, and patterned-dress collector.

01

How does your identity as a womxn inform your work?

Early in my career, I had to fight really hard for my opinions and recommendations to be heard. So as I've led design teams, I take a very inclusive and open approach. This applies not only to the work in reviews or design sessions—making sure everyone's voices are heard and shared—but also in how I manage my reports. I always ask for feedback and have spent a lot of time learning how to better communicate, listen, and allow my reports to be heard and seen.

02

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

Actually, other than Dropbox, I've always started work at companies that were definitely a "boys' club" and had to fight really hard to infiltrate and influence. I've failed at speaking my mind when it mattered, many times. I learned to find allies (womxn and men) who help empower and lift up my voice. And then, once I was able to navigate that, I worked to use my perspective as a womxn to better recruit, redefine my team's culture, and mentor my designers.

03

How do you navigate anxiety about work?

I used to get all of my emotional gratification from work, and that quickly turned unhealthy and unsustainable. So I've made real efforts to make sure that I understand that my job is my job and it's only one part of me, not everything. Since having a son, I've worked hard at compartmentalizing areas of my life so they're not bleeding into one another. It's a learned skill, and I've definitely failed at it multiple times, but in that failure you learn more about your own boundaries and priorities. I've realized you can have different priorities for different parts of your life too!

Another way to navigate anxiety about work is to really lean on and trust in your team and coworkers. This can be a scary approach, but for me, building empathy for each other has this calming effect, where isolation starts to disappear and camaraderie really triumphs! Lean on each other!!! And if work sucks, at least you kinda like the people you get to be around!

04

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

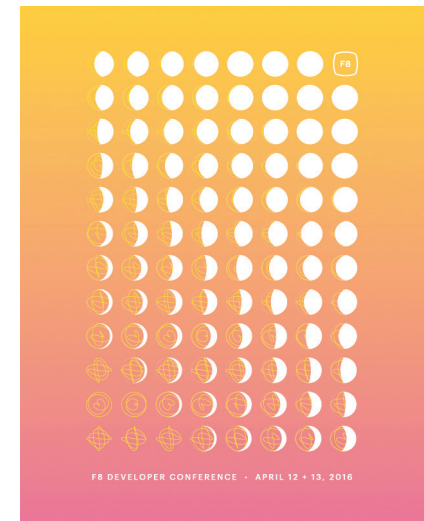
Know your worth and fight for it relentlessly. Never let someone tell you that titles don't matter, because it's usually a man who is saying that.

Stop apologizing. Lift each other up.

05

What's the best career advice you've received?

You're not saving lives!



Emily Simms

Artist · Designer · New York



ig: @emlysmms

Emily specializes in art direction, visual identity, still-life photography, and set design. In image creation, her work focuses heavily on conceptual thinking and humor manifested through rich textures and tones. In visual identity, her work focuses on a strong sense of color and form with a minimalist approach.



01

How does your identity as a womxn inform your work?

Less than the work itself, my identity informs how I approach my work. Having heard things like, “If you were a man, you’d be a creative director by now,” and being on dates where someone feels threatened and makes comments like, “With the work you’ve been doing, you must be saving for, what, your third house by now?” I’ve had to maneuver conversations and approach things with caution.

02

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

I’ve worked for many different womxn, with many different personality types. I think the key to success, individually and as a community, is vocalizing praise and admiration and truly supporting each other. We need to celebrate each other’s wins. When the goal is to get ahead and to be seen, you’re not making your best work. When you are creating for others through your own lens, the opportunity for conversation and growth is insane.

03

Who do you look up to for career inspiration?

David Byrne. I have a deep admiration for his constant curiosity, willingness to explore new territories, and the sense of humor paired with intelligence he brings to his work.

The color palette in the *True Stories* scene where John Ingle is singing “Puzzlin’ Evidence” inspired the first logo I designed for myself.

René Redzepi, the chef behind Noma, is someone I grew to admire greatly after reading his journal. Through his honesty, I was able to learn a lot about leadership.

04

How do you navigate anxiety about work?

Patience and empathy. This is something I am constantly working on. When things feel uncertain or overwhelming, I find myself catastrophizing to prepare for the worst. I worry that I am not doing enough, that I’m not good enough, that I’m not growing at the rate I thought I would, and it can become pretty consuming. The reality is, there

is so much that goes on behind closed doors and things that amount to a greater picture beyond work and beyond the day-to-day. Focusing on the things I can control and letting go of the things I can't has been my recent mantra. That, and giving myself the space to step away, breathe, and rationalize. We live in times of instant gratification, which I think might lend itself to feeling the need to create immediate solutions. But the reality is, very few of us are saving lives and we can benefit from taking a beat on the things that need it.

05

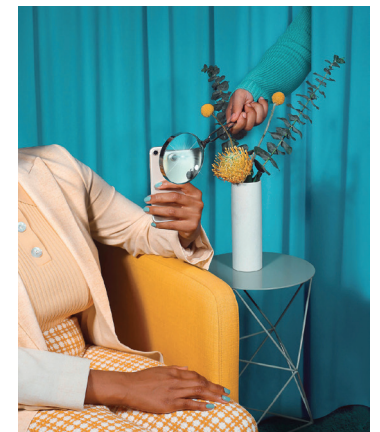
What do you want to be doing in five years?

Truthfully, I find it incredibly difficult to set long-term goals for myself. I definitely have pipe dreams beyond the world of design, but I also know that where I am now is not where I thought I would be five years ago—in the best way. I'm working on the mentality of being better tomorrow than I am today and celebrating the small wins. I'm sure those will amount to a big victory—whatever that may be.

06

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

*Take the time you need to
trust yourself.*



07

What is the best career advice you've received?

Get over yourself.

Lori Novak

Designer · Black Ops · San Francisco



ig: @lorienovak

Lori is a designer in San Francisco who is very interested in spaces, places, and mostly having fun. She is currently a designer on the black ops team at Dropbox.

01

How does your identity as a womxn inform your work?

Inherently. So much so that it's hard to put into words.

02

Who do you look up to for career inspiration?

Harry Styles, because he politely does whatever he wants. He's not a womxn, but he does bend gender norms pretty gracefully.

03

How do you train your creative muscle?

Constantly coming up with ideas. Ideas for anything. I keep them all in my phone.

04

How do you navigate anxiety about work?

Perspective always helps my anxiety seem small. Why am I freaking out when there are way more people going through much worse? Deep breaths. Be present. One thing at a time.

05

How do you overcome a creative rut?

I get really pissed at myself and call my mom. Stepping away completely and doing something else usually helps. Clean, read, or take a walk!

06

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

We are the hardest-working people I know.



07

What do you want to be doing five years from now?

*same as now,
but better with a dog.*



**MEN ARE AFRAID
THAT WOMEN WILL
LAUGH AT THEM.
WOMEN ARE AFRAID
THAT MEN WILL
KILL THEM.**

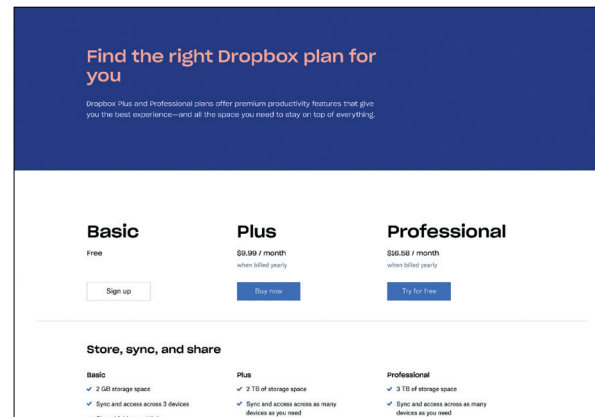
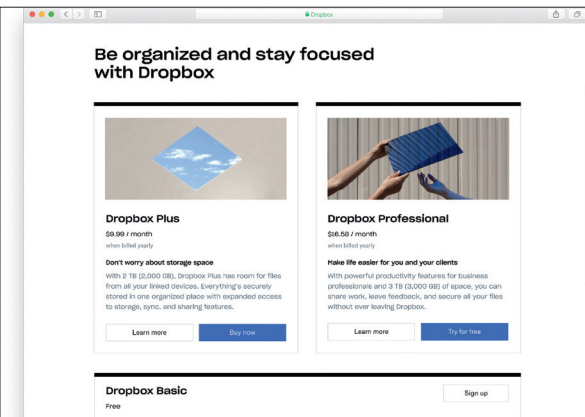
Emma Highley

Designer · Yogi · San Francisco



ig: @emmahighley

Emma is a product designer at
Dropbox by day, yoga instructor
by night, and a dog mom in all
the space between.



stress. I've learned there's a beauty in balance when it comes to the feminine intuition. While it can feel rewarding to take care of your team, there is power in taking care of yourself first. When you show up for yourself, you are better prepared to show up for others.

02

Who do you look up to for career inspiration?

I admire every person who speaks up in the face of fear and owns their power and their voice. There's something uniquely beautiful when someone is truly living their purpose and voicing their truth. It's inspirational, and empowers others to do the same.

03

How do you navigate anxiety about work?

If I ever feel anxiety start to creep in while at work, I take a moment to breathe, ground down, and take a moment to myself. I've found just taking a step outside can be extremely healing—the fresh air helps get oxygen pumping through your lungs, and changing your atmosphere physically allows your mind to reset. By taking a few moments to settle my thoughts, I'm able to be a better person, coworker, and friend.

04

What do you want to be doing in five years?

CEO.

05

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

*you are you,
and that is your power!*

01

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

Womxn are naturally more intuitive, and I've always found this both an advantage and a disadvantage in my career. A womxn can walk into a conference room and immediately know someone is upset before anyone opens their mouth. This innate ability to be attuned to the world around you is an unspoken strength that can help build strong, trusting relationships, allow you to hold space for others, and create clarity in chaos. But it can also be a double-edged sword, because it can be easy to take on the emotions of others and carry the weight of responsibility for your team's

Olga de la Iglesia

Artist New York Barcelona



ig: @olgadelaiglesia

Olga is an artist and photographer who lives and works in Barcelona and New York. Her work explores the boundary between fashion and documentary photography. She merges two languages to generate visual narratives that, through colors and shapes, maintain a close connection with social structures.

01

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

It's very natural for me to communicate with people on the set while shooting; as a womxn it is easy for me to create relationship ties with just a look or gesture. On the other hand, it was difficult for me at first to avoid some lewd glances and comments from assistants or photographers I worked with.

02

How does your identity as a womxn inform your work?

In my work, womxn have different shapes and colors that contribute to the global beauty of humanity. I accept those differences and work with models who aren't from agencies exclusively, so I can bring the viewer closer to the reality of the world—not just what the media wants to show.

03

Who is your favorite female artist or photographer?

Hilma af Klint.

04

How do you train your creative muscle?

Dance naked in front of the mirror. Walk in nature. Run by the beach. Do yoga and meditation. Read. Laugh with my friends.

05

How do you navigate anxiety about work?

Transmitting the values in which I believe, and giving light to and provoking emotions in others without receiving anything in return—only hope for the world. I try to believe in what I do with all my heart. I try to not look at what others are doing and compare myself to them, but admire them instead.



06

What do you want to be doing in five years?

Same but bigger, with bigger budgets. I would love to do furniture and sculpture. I also have the dream to help young creatives develop their creative capacities and believe in themselves.

07

What inspires you?

*my source of inspiration is
humanity in all of its facets*



Berenice Méndez

Designer · Hello Sign · San Francisco



ig: @berenesque

Berenice is a designer and illustrator. She was born and raised in the US–Mexico border city of Ciudad Juárez. She has always been interested in visual arts and crafts and earned her BFA in graphic design and painting from the University of Texas at El Paso. She worked in advertising before making her way to the Bay Area in 2015 to work in tech, which led her to HelloSign and Dropbox. She doodles almost every day and loves spending time with her rescue greyhound, Grover.



01

How do you overcome a creative rut?

Going on long walks with my dog. Cleaning my apartment. Solving a puzzle, playing a game. Slowing down and doing something creative in a different field.

02

How would you describe your creative practice?

I'm a communications designer, which means I have a broad spectrum of work and can immerse myself into, say, content design for web as much as crafting illustrations for an ad campaign. I concern myself with the way an audience receives, interacts with, and thinks about the message we put out, and get to craft its visual form.

03

How do you navigate anxiety about work?

I talk about it. In the past, I used to conceal it because I feared it would make me look incompetent or inexperienced. Now, I share it with my peers and ask for help when I need it.

04

How do you train your creative muscle?

I have a tote bag full of art supplies that I carry with me on the weekends to coffee shops. I spend a few hours developing a concept, illustration, or just plainly sketching what I have in front of me. In the fall, I really enjoy taking part in Inktober, which allows me to be very consistent in my drawing. Lastly, I really enjoy toys and interior designs, so I like visiting galleries, showrooms, and museum gift stores to look at beautiful objects and publications.

05

Who is your dream collaborator?

Definitely a writer. Mainly because I'd love to witness and experience some of their creative processes and because a good piece of writing can really get me inspired.

06

What do you want to be doing in five years?

I'm eyeing art direction as my next step, so hopefully that.

07

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

Share your work, your struggle, and your learnings. Our power lies in our ability to be masters of our craft while elevating other womxn as well.

Jen Murse

Design Director · Business owner · San Francisco



ig: @jenmurse

Jen is a multidisciplinary designer and former small-business owner based in San Francisco. She currently leads design for the Brand Communications team at Square. When she's not working, she enjoys a good cup of coffee, riding her bike around the city, and tinkering around on projects with her husband, Garth.

01

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

I've worn many hats during my career, and one of those hats was running my own small business where I designed and sold jewelry. Being a womxn selling jewelry was very fitting and perfect, and it was pretty much my identity for quite some time. I felt very proud to be a female small-business owner doing it day in and day out. I also think it allowed me to connect with my customers better. They felt like they could talk to me honestly.

02

Who do you look up to for career inspiration?

There are so many. Paula Scher is one of the legends in design, at the top. A true inspiration. Meg Lewis is amazing because she's paved her own way and helps others do the same. Jessica Walsh is young and yet so incredibly successful. And even my friend Alex, who isn't a womxn but is a design executive in tech and from an immensely humble background, just worked really hard to get to where he is.

03

What do you want to be doing in five years?

This is tough, since five years ago I had my own business, which was one of my life goals. In another five years I don't necessarily know where I'll be, but I definitely want to be surrounded by an amazing team doing amazing work. It could be big or small. I just want to believe in what I'm doing and know that the people I'm working with also believe in it too.

04

How do you navigate anxiety about work?

if you are good at what you do, and you truly believe in it, that will make a lot of anxiety go away



05

What's the best career advice you've received?

Always get louder.

06

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

There's no one direct path. Everyone's story is unique. Pave your own way.



OUR BODIES
OUR MINDS
OUR POWER

HER WINGS ARE
GUT AND THEN
SHE IS BLAMED
FOR NOT KNOWING
HOW TO FLY.

Jen DiZio

International Research · San Francisco



ig: @jendizio

Jen is a qualitative product researcher specializing in international growth. Prior to joining Dropbox, she led strategic research initiatives at Instagram.



01

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

As a researcher, I often find that I can connect with my subjects, especially my female participants, better because of my gender. For example, the research I led on womxn in emerging markets for Instagram likely would not have been possible if I hadn't been leading it. That is, we were talking to womxn and teenage girls about their experience with social media in some regions where just being on social media as a young womxn was a crime. So establishing the connection—from one womxn to another—was imperative.

02

Is there a cause or political platform that you're fired up about?

Ummm... all of them? If I had to choose, I would say that ensuring quality and well-rounded education for ALL citizens is my primary cause. This includes funding early childhood education, and secondary school for anyone who elects to go. But this education should be well-rounded and include the arts, music, philosophy—fields that will help our young people become critical and engaged members of the community.

03

What's the best career advice you've received?

From Anna Wintour: "Stop focusing on what everyone around you is doing. Set a goal and see it through."

04

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

Find your tribe. Support your tribe. Thank your tribe.

05

How does your identity as a womxn inform your work?

*As I get older, I feel more
empowered to set an example
and to look after the generation of
women who will come after me.*

Charlotte Rate1

artist · director · montreal



ig: @charlotterate1

Charlotte is an idea generator.
She's interested in making
sensitive and conceptual work
as a film director, art
director, designer, painter,
and set designer.

01

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

I've been asked to join teams on the basis of being a womxn. I've experienced sexism and have seen coworkers experience it too. I've been told that I couldn't do a job because I "wasn't strong enough." I've been asked in a job interview if I could take male criticism. The questions linked to gender often come up in my field of work.

Recently, I was part of a meeting of 13. I had just joined the team of 10 men and two other womxn. People were talking loudly over one another and interrupting each other, yet when the womxn creative director found some space in the conversation to speak, she whispered. Everyone listened because there was no other way of hearing her point. Until they cut her off again.

Would she have said more if the men had let her speak? Did they realize that she had been waiting for them to stop speaking so she could speak? Was I the only one to notice this?

One of the womxn who walked out of that meeting with me qualified it as a "BDE" meeting. Embarrassed that I hadn't made myself familiar with all the work terms yet, I timidly asked what it meant. "Big d!ck energy," she said. It seemed the three womxn in that room had lived this event the same way.

02

Who do you look up to for career inspiration?

I fell in love with the work of filmmaker and artist Agnès Varda. Her way of seeing life is so poetic, beautiful, and refreshing when you take into consideration the times she had to live in. She's a great inspiration for me. I also look up to Adi Goodrich, Debbie Millman, Jessica Walsh, and my mom.



03

Is there a cause or political platform that you're fired up about?

Female and diversity representation in the advertising industry is very important to me. Womxn represent 85% of product consumerism, yet their interests are being communicated by (let's be honest) mostly men! Including multiple genders and diversity in our images, videos, messages as proportionally as they truly exist in our society can only add credibility, and make our work human. So why not work together towards that?

04

How do you train your creative muscle?

My workshop is filled with leftover paint and materials from set-design gigs, and I love spending time making things and color palettes, murals, illustrations. My last food-pun painting series was born during a time of unemployment due to a last-minute cancelation, so I hired myself to challenge my creativity. I keep a notepad with project ideas. COVID-19 quarantine might be the perfect time to start going through that list.

05

What do you want to be doing in five years?

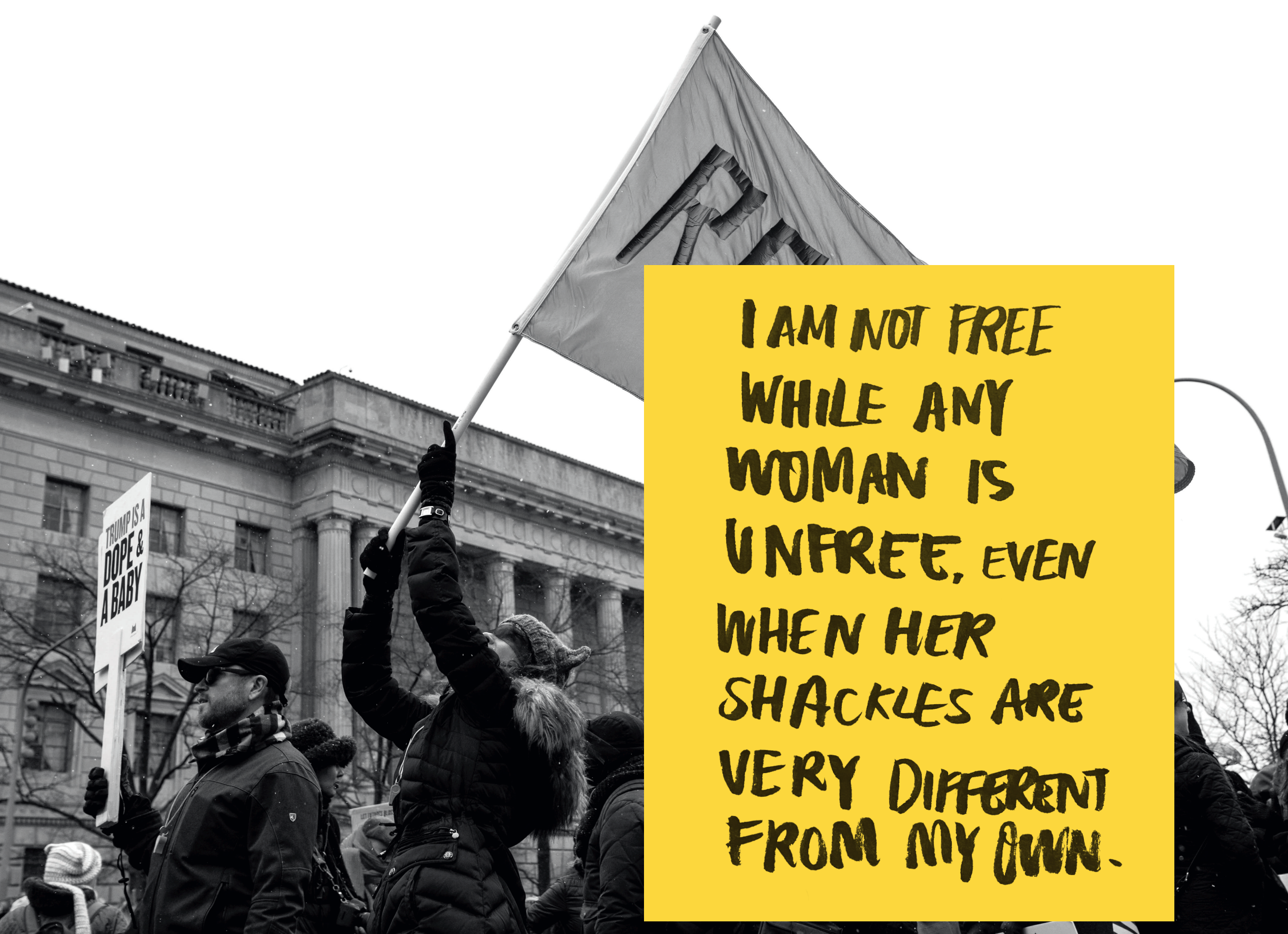
I love being part of the creative field and couldn't imagine my life (now or in five years) without it. In five years, I want to be taking on more responsibilities, projects, and resources to make a difference in exceeding the limits of our own imaginations.

06

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

Let's get in touch and come together! Let's start the conversation.





I AM NOT FREE
WHILE ANY
WOMAN IS
UNFREE, EVEN
WHEN HER
SHACKLES ARE
VERY DIFFERENT
FROM MY OWN.

LaDonna Witmer

Associate Editorial Director · San Francisco



ig: @wordsbyladonna

As one of the editorial gurus on the Brand Studio team, LaDonna helps create or facilitate the best and most powerful expression of the Dropbox brand voice in all its forms. On the journey to finding her own voice, she's been a newspaper journalist, advertising copywriter, poet, and public speaker. She's also a mom to 9-year-old Lucette.

01

How does your identity as a womxn inform your work?

In many ways it makes me more attuned to the outsider or minority perspective—who is in the room, who is speaking, who is the audience, who is missing? Once I became a mother, that absolutely changed the way I looked at many work assignments as well. Suddenly my future encompassed more years than just my own lifetime. I began to look at the world as a place that my daughter would inhabit after I was gone, and that changed the way I'd answer the question: "How does this work matter?"

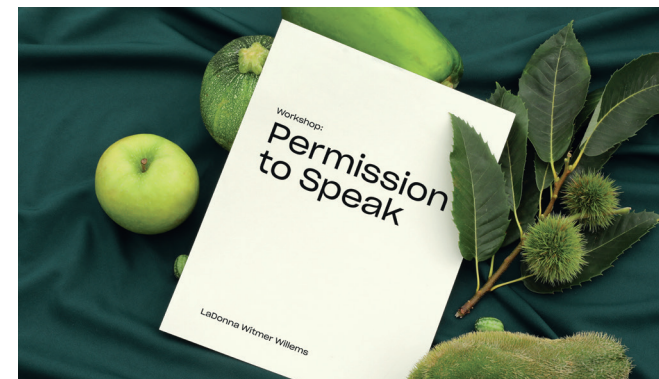
02

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

I first began my career as a newspaper reporter, and was often encouraged by older (male) editors to use my "feminine wiles" to cajole sources into giving me intel. I was also dubbed "the sensitive reporter," which meant that I was asked to call grieving families whose child or parent or spouse had just died in a newsworthy manner and ask them how they felt.

When I was a young copywriter, my (male) boss told me to "unbutton your shirt one more button if you want him to like what you wrote" when going in to present copy to the (male) CEO.

And then there are a lot of stories about being interrupted, spoken over, or silenced in some way. But we all have those stories, don't we?



03

Is there a cause or political platform that you're fired up about?

I'm pretty passionate about womxn getting a seat at the table. I was really excited about all the smart and capable womxn in the presidential race this year. But then, one by one, they dropped out. I'm not feeling very good about that. I'm also pretty fired up about environmental issues, about climate change, about finding ways to make the world a more sustainable, livable place.

04

How do you train your creative muscle?

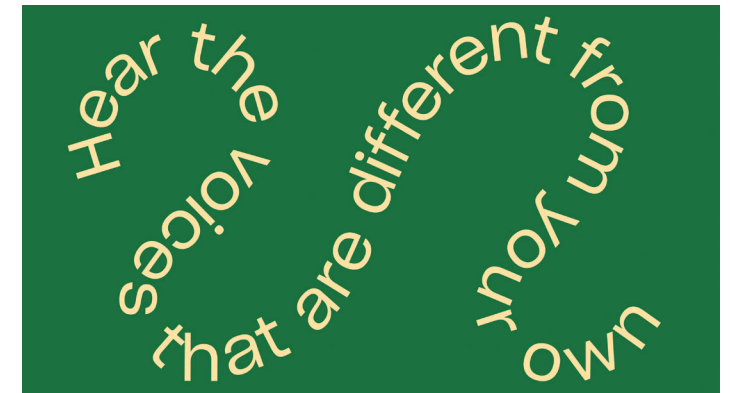
I just keep writing. In my off-hours, I'm writing a book. And though I dream of long, Wi-Fi-free days spent racking up an impressive word count from a picturesque cabin in the forest, the reality is that most of my writing gets done in 20-minute sprints. Early in the morning before my people get up. Late at night when they're in bed. In-between times in waiting rooms, at lunch hours, in transit. Wherever I can grab the time.

Reading is another great way—it's like writing research. Reading not only opens doors to other worlds, perspectives, and ideas, but I get inspired and challenged by other voices, by other writers' techniques, by the topics people choose to write about, and the way they tell their stories. If I'm always reading, and always writing, then I'll always be learning.

05

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

*Make space to create
the small things that
give you joy.*



Kavya Sivaraman

feminist · Designer · San Francisco



www.kavyasivaraman.com

Kavya is a visual designer, a feminist, and often described as “sarcastic and loud.” She strives to make everyday problems uplifting—and make the world seem a little less scary while showing that design can move things forward for the better.

01

How would you describe your creative practice?

Organized chaos. I am the kind of person who wants to test each and every single thing before I land on a direction, to make sure no stone has been left unturned.

02

How do you overcome a creative rut?

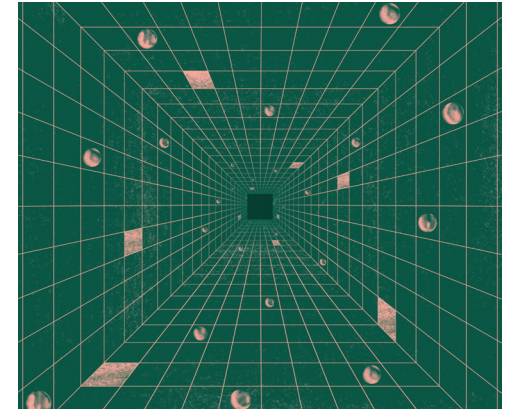
Step back, reassess, and come back with fresh eyes. I also love scribbling every single idea that pops into my head in my ratty little journal.

03

Can you share any stories from your creative career when being a womxn was a focus, for better or worse?

Growing up in India, a nation steeped in patriarchy, I constantly rebelled against the idea of womxn being suppressed. This continued all the way into graduate school, where I focused the three years of my portfolio on highlighting different womxn's rights movements, with emphasis on womxn artists, type designers, and filmmakers. This work culminated in my yearlong master's thesis focused on equal pay for womxn.

From there, I pivoted straight to working for a nonprofit focused on womxn's rights and helping womxn advance in the workplace. It was a dream gig for me—getting to do what I was truly passionate about and hearing womxn's stories from all over the globe. I have been lucky so far in my career to have some badass female bosses who have empowered me to want to do what they do someday. I cannot think of a time when being a womxn wasn't a focus in my career—and, to be honest, I wouldn't have it any other way.



04

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

Don't apologize for who you are and what your message is. You are a badass person and we celebrate you, just as you are.

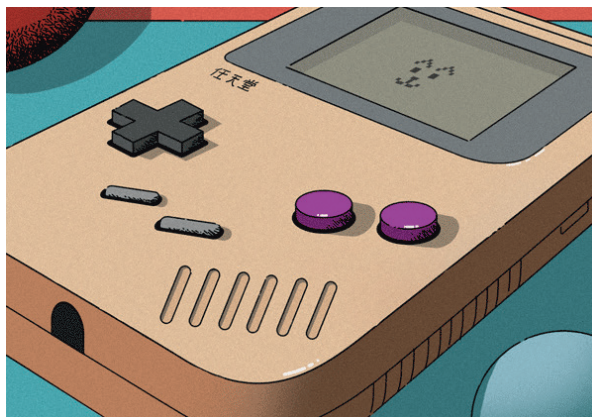
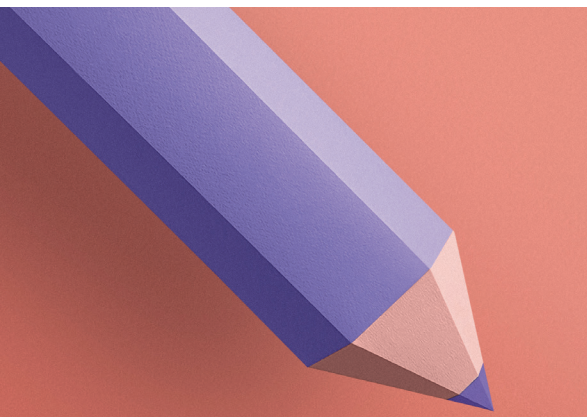
Emily Suvanvej

Artist Illustrator New York



ig: @emy_su

Emily is a multidisciplinary artist working in animation and editorial illustration. Taking inspiration from master designers like Eizen Suzuki, Milton Glaser, Moebius, and Yukio Kitta, she works in both tactile and digital mediums to create whimsical, striking, and elevated visuals. Current obsessions include: retro devices, sci-fi landscapes, '90s nostalgia, cats, and coffee.



much of a character designer, so it's easier for me to stick to abstract backgrounds, shapes, and scenes that don't necessarily have a gender.

03

How do you overcome a creative rut?

My creative ruts are usually caused by me overthinking and putting unnecessary pressure on myself, so I start by trying to let that pressure go. The perfectionism I tend toward is actually counterproductive to my creativity, so it's a constant battle. But once I learned to do this, my momentum shot up and I started creating better work than I ever did before!

04

What message do you have for womxn in the creative community?

This is a beautiful time to be a womxn in a creative field. We're still swimming against a strong current, but things are only getting better and better—and all the communities like Ladies Who Create are strengthening our cause! As long as we keep supporting each other and lifting other womxn up, soon we'll shatter those stubborn systems that are holding us back. And they won't even know what hit 'em.



01

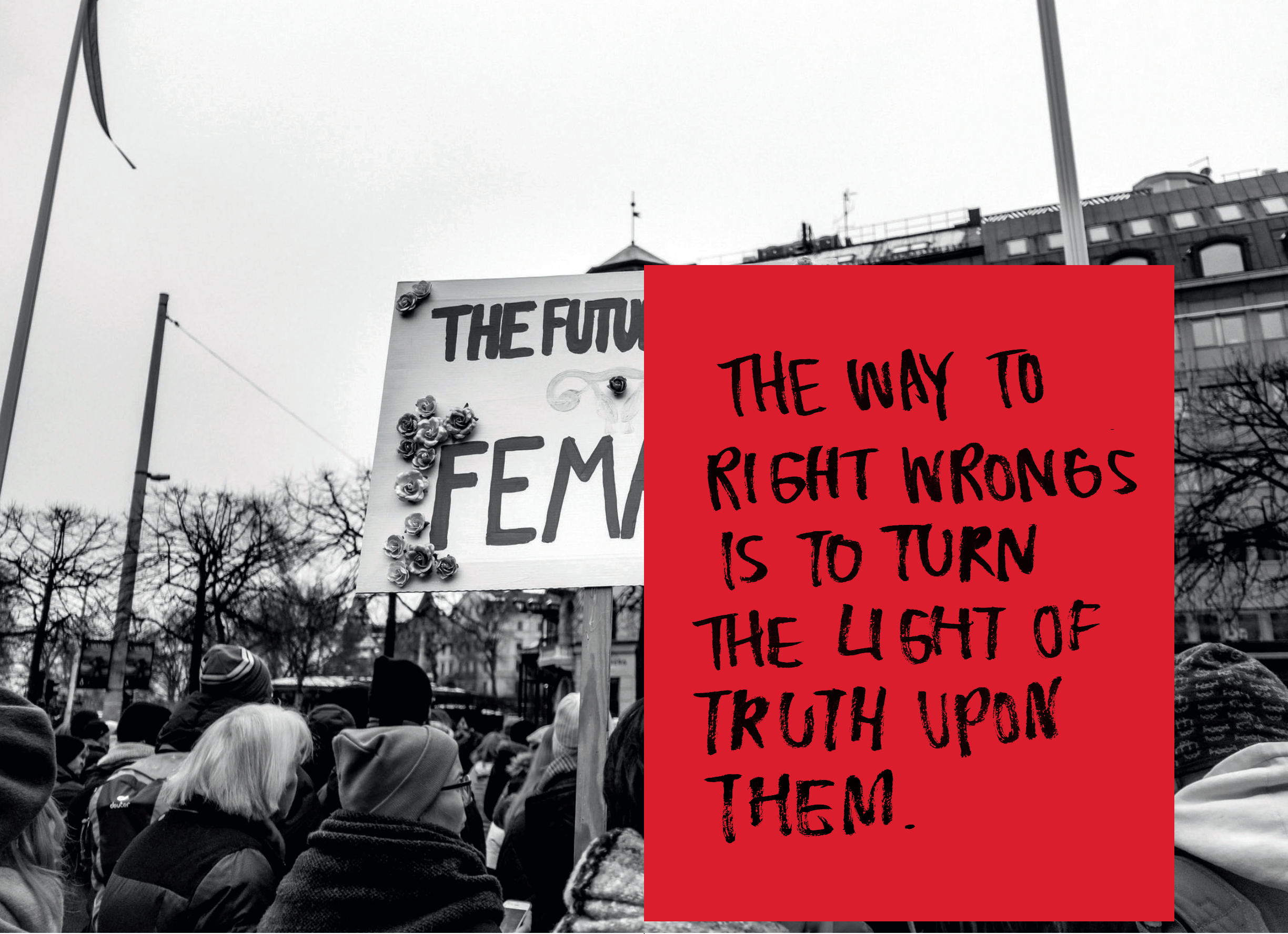
How do you train your creative muscle?

Creative fulfillment is super-important to me, so I try to create something just for myself (not for a client or work) every single day. Whether it's just a sketch or something bigger, keeping that momentum fuels my creativity and boosts the quality of my work! And it also just makes me happy.

02

How does your identity as a womxn inform your work?

I'm sure I have more feminine sensibilities when it comes to color and detail, but I do try not to inject too much of my gender identity into my work. I'm not



THE FUTURE
FEM

THE WAY TO
RIGHT WRONGS
IS TO TURN
THE LIGHT OF
TRUTH UPON
THEM.

Make



work
human

“Give it a personality. Have fun with humor. Serious topics don’t always need serious design.”

“If you can, become friends—not just colleagues. Really care for the people you spend your whole days sitting next to in the office. It will make your time in the office better, and I truly believe that will make communication, and thus the product you make together, better.”

“By including as many diverse perspectives and inputs as possible, to make the work created by all of us, not just a few.”

“Work with kindness and equality; none is better or less than you; we are all unique.”

“Work feels more human when I feel seen as a whole person—and also when I see others as whole people. So things like this zine, where we are sharing our stories and getting to know each other in a deeper, more meaningful way—that goes a long way toward making work more human.”

Emily Simms

“I think we could
all benefit from
f*cking up a
little bit more.”

Jen DiZio

“Get more
people in
the field
to talk to
our customers.
Let them
see, hear, and
feel what our
customers
are doing.”

Emma Highley

“EMPATHY. Humans feel
things in a unique
way. When we start to
understand each
other on a deeper level,
we can start to
empathize with how
someone feels,
thinks, and works. Once
we see things through
their lens, we can
start to build solutions
that feel the way
they feel and work the
way they work.”

Emily Suvanvej

“Relatable ideas!
Creating concepts,
with heart and
intention, that
strike some chord
in the viewer is so
important in design.
Anyone can make
a pretty picture,
but it must have
an idea behind it to
be successful.”



You can't be

To truly unleash the power of diversity in our communities, our relationships, and the products we use and create, we must make investments in women. Within Ladies Who Create, these investments have taken the form of supportive environments that amplify voices, workshops to help navigate difficult career obstacles, and even just the opportunity to meet and learn from other design communities.

But even with these programs and initiatives in place, Ladies Who Create would not be what it is without the amazing women that continue to contribute, to share, to question, to inspire, to show up in the ways that they are able to. My heart is so full to see the generosity and talent of this growing community, and we're so excited to highlight a few of the wonderful souls of LWC in this zine.

Here's to an amazing year ahead! Let's continue to challenge ourselves, to elevate the unique strengths in each of us, to speak up when something's missing, and to celebrate the wins - big and small - along the way.

*With love,
Sarah*

ou
ee

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A FEMINIST IS
ANYONE WHO
RECOGNIZES THE
EQUALITY AND
FULL
HUMANITY
OF WOMEN
AND MEN.

GLORIA STEINEM

