

MJ Balvanera is a Brand Designer, Riso Publisher, and Educator based in Los Angeles, CA with a deep-rooted passion for the intersection of design, branding, and publishing. With a master's degree in graphic design and nearly a decade of experience across branding, web, self-publishing, and marketing, she specializes in creating designs that extend beyond aesthetics to actively shape brands and identity.

Experience

Instructor May 2025 – Aug 2025

Snap, Inc. hosts a philanthropic branch, Snap Design Academy, through which I served as Instructor to 15 young community college design students from underrepresented communities.

As an Instructor at Snap, Inc., I mentored a cohort of 15 college-level scholars in their design education throughout the course of 9 weeks. The main focus of the curriculum included:

- Educational overview of iconography, typography, image-making, visual language systems (branding), UX/UI, and presentation design.
- Emphasizing the importance of conceptual thinking and the ability to navigate ambiguity as an essential skill.
- Interpersonal mentorship and guidance throughout the course, ensuring scholars felt seen and heard while also encouraging them to produce the best work possible.

Brand Designer Aug 2024 – Present

UST, a provider of digital technology and transformation, information technology and services. UST is based in Orange County, California and has offices in more than 25 countries. It is based in the following regions: the Americas, EMEA, APAC, and India.

As a Brand Designer at UST, I play a crucial role in building and maintaining our brand identity across various digital platforms. My responsibilities include:

- Developing dynamic social media templates that have measurably increased engagement rates, some reaching up to 11,000 engagements, ensuring brand identity is visually aligned with our mission.
- Creating brand assets for digital marketing campaigns, contributing to a significant rise in click-through rates and driving a significant boost in lead generation.
- Designing over 20 comprehensive internal digital style guides that communicate complex technology concepts through complex, concept driven visual that have streamlined the design process, promoting adherence to brand standards across all departments.

Brand Designer Jan 2024 – Aug 2024

DoorDash is an American company operating online food ordering and food delivery.

As a Brand Designer at DoorDash, I played a pivotal role in crafting compelling digital marketing materials that articulated design concepts and decisions. My key responsibilities included:

- Designing impactful marketing collateral for DashPass, effectively collaborating with marketing stakeholders and contributing to a notable increase in engagement rates by 45%.
- Leading creative initiatives for the "Summer of DashPass" campaign, which successfully captured customer attention and drove a 30% rise in subscriptions during the campaign period.
- Leading design on co-branded campaigns, such as Aldi x DoorDash, where I helped develop visual assets that strengthened partnerships and expanded our reach in the market.

Senior Graphic Designer Mar 2022 – Dec 2022

Jinx is an American company making healthier dog food a reality. With an internal creative team of 3 people, we created assets in both print and digital spaces.

As a Senior Graphic Designer at Jinx, I was dedicated to crafting visually engaging assets that strengthen our brand presence and connect with our audience. My primary responsibilities included:

- Creating dynamic social media assets that have significantly boosted our online engagement, contributing to an increase in followers and interactions across platforms.
- Designing brand digital marketing materials that effectively communicate our messaging and drive customer acquisition, resulting in a 35% rise in conversion rates.
- Developing innovative packaging designs that not only enhance product appeal but also reflect our brand values, helping to elevate customer experience and brand loyalty.
- Producing a variety of printed collateral, from promotional materials to event graphics, ensuring consistency in brand identity across all touchpoints.

Brand Designer Feb 2021 – Mar 2022

Fatty15 is the world's first, and only science-backed, patented, award-winning C15:0 fatty acid supplement that supports your long-term health & wellness.

As a Brand Designer at Fatty15, I was instrumental in launching the brand by implementing comprehensive brand guidelines across various touchpoints. My responsibilities included:

- Creating dynamic visual assets for diverse touchpoints, including internal employer communications, furthering the brand identity through the guidelines, specific event communications, social media and paid ads, etc.
- Developing innovative packaging designs including printed newspapers and merch that not only enhance product appeal but also reflect our brand values, helping to elevate customer experience and brand loyalty.

Design Lead Sep 2019 – Mar 2020

Our Place is an American cookware brand specialises in multi-functional utensils in a tablespace-worthy aesthetic, designed to make cooking easier and streamline your kitchen cupboards.

As Design Lead at Our Place and the first creative hire since it's founding, the role encompassed building out the style brand guidelines, packaging design, and art direction for campaigns. Some of the key skills at use for this role were:

- Developed 60+ page brand identity guidelines for the brand which are still in use today. Brand guidelines include guides for brand partnerships, packaging, art direction as well as everyday brand direction.
- Art direction for 5 brand campaigns ranging in scope and budget. Each shoot was developed with a specific mood board and brand goals in mind.
- Packaging design developed in partnership with Lumi to create a cohesive brand experience for customers receive product. Innovation was at the forefront taking into account materials, dielines, and logistics.

Founder & Creative Director Jan 2022 – Present

Impresos México is an innovative risograph publishing house and printing press that I co-founded in 2021 in Mexico City. We have created a space where visual arts and editorial design intertwine to explore and experiment with the various identities connected to Mexican culture.

As a Founder & Creative Director at Impresos México, I have developed a brand that is cohesive not only visually but conceptually and with an editorial through line. My responsibilities include:

- Developing publishing projects from start to finish, which includes concepting to printing. So far we have published 9 books in total.
- Creating all graphic materials for the brand including digital assets, print ephemera, web updates, etc.
- Giving talks and lectures regarding the press at different institutions.

Founder & Creative Director Jun 2019 – Jun 2021

Co—Conspirator Press is a publishing platform for artists, writers, designers, printers, social justice workers, and editors from historically underrepresented communities co-founded in 2019. Since it's founding in 2019, and up to Summer 2021, CO—CO Press has published 9 titles.

As a Founder & Creative Director at Co—Conspirator Press, I developed a brand that is cohesive not only visually but conceptually and with an editorial through line. My responsibilities include:

- Developed publishing projects from start to finish, which includes concepting to printing.
- Created all graphic materials for the brand including digital assets, print ephemera, web updates, etc.

Education

MFA Graphic Design at Otis College (Academic Excellence Award) in Los Angeles, CA Jun 2015 – Aug 2017

BFA Visual Communication at CENTRO in CDMX, Mexico Jan 2010 – Jun 2015

Lectures, Exhibitions & Teachings

Snap Inc. May 2025 – Aug 2025

Snap Design Academy, Instructor, Los Angeles, CA

Ford Foundation Mar – May 2025

Reverberations: Lineages in Design History, Group Exhibition, New York, NY

Palm Springs Art Museum Aug – Nov 2023

Eso es la Vida/Life is Like: Graphic Design from Mexico, Group Exhibition, Palm Springs, CA

LACMA July 2022

LA Print: Edition 11 – Activist Graphics, Lecturer, Los Angeles, CA

CCA California College of Art June 2020

Publishing for Social Change, Instructor, Oakland, CA

Abierto Mexicano de Diseño Nov 2020

Publishing as a Political, Democratic and Generous Practice, Lecturer, CDMX, Mexico

Wendy's Subway Jul 2020

Communal Care for Liberation, Lecturer, Vancouver, Canada

Skillset

Animation
Adobe Creative Suit
Art Direction
Branding & Identity
Digital Marketing
Editorial Design
Figma
Illustration
Typography
Web Design

Clients

Day Job, Subtropic Studio, Mural, DoorDash, ALTR, Jinx, Our Place, fatty15, Byte, Jinx, ICA LA, SALIMA Magazine, Feminist Center for Creative Work, Omnivore, Content Object, Kilter, Truecar, TedXPasadena Women