

McNeil Johnston, MVCD

Artist, Designer & Design Educator

Curriculum Vitae

Boone, North Carolina | (336) 639-2166 | firstnameemcneil@gmail.com | [Portfolio](#)

INTERESTS & AREAS OF SPECIALTY

Pedagogy and curriculum development in design education; practicing creativity & emotional intelligence through the design process; illustration, cross-media design & production, design for local businesses & community engagement.

EDUCATION

Master of Visual Communication Design

August 2023 - May 2025

Arizona State University, The Design School - Phoenix, AZ

Capstone Thesis: *"Feel This, Make That: Activities for Creativity and Emotional Intelligence"*

- Exploring how visual & tangible learning allows for deeper communication and connection
- **Advisors:** Dr. Marysol Ortega Pallenez (Design), Dr. William Heywood (Clinical Psychology)

Activities

- Graduate Teaching Assistant: GRA101, GRA111, GRA225, GRA401, GRA440
- Biomimicry Travel Studio: Immersive studio course focused on designing solutions for devastated coral reefs on Oahu. Studio integrated biology, biomimetic design, and traditional ecological knowledge to brainstorm regenerative, land-to-sea restoration strategies.

Bachelor of Science in Graphic Communications Management

August 2019 - May 2023

Appalachian State University - Boone, NC

Honors: Cum Laude

Activities

- Appalachian Student Ambassador
- Epsilon Pi Tau
- The Appalachian Student News Organization, *Graphics and Layout Editor*
- Second Story Media (Client Collaboration)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Faculty Adjunct

August 2025 - Present

Arizona State University, The Design School

Developed and implemented course syllabi, assignments, and assessments to ensure student success in online design curriculums.

Classes Taught:

- **GRA 101 "Designing Life:"** This course serves as a first-year seminar for design students at ASU's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts online. Developed a student-centered, interactive, project-based curriculum using reflective and creative exercises to help students strengthen critical thinking habits and navigate the transition into online design education.

Graduate Teaching Assistant

August 2023 - May 2025

Arizona State University, The Design School

Supported undergraduate students through facilitation of hands-on and instructional activities and thoughtful guidance, making academic content engaging and accessible. Designed course materials, lecture visuals, and interactive supplements to classes, enhancing engagement for 400+ students across 7 courses over two years. Collaborated with professors, department heads, and university administration to structure lessons, scheduling, and ensure clear classroom expectations.

Classes Assisted:

- **GRA 101: "Designing Life."** This course served as a first-year seminar for design students. Taught strategies to successfully navigate educational experiences in design. Focused on critical and reflective thinking through creative mediums.
- **GRA 225: "Communication Design Theory."** Theory related to the design of communication artifacts and interaction within various media environments.
- **GRA 111: "History of Graphic Design."** Surveys development of visual communication from its origins to the 20th century. Investigates significant technological, industrial, and social influences.
- **GRA 401: "Creative Environment."** Explored and investigated theories of the psychology of people and personality as it pertains to creativity and the creative environment. Taught collaborative tactics and granted students the opportunity to collaborate with various disciplines.
- **GRA 440: "Finding Purpose."** Career orientation in the creative professions, including value clarification, decision making, lifestyle planning, goal setting, and expression of individual talents.

Technical Assistant

January 2023 - May 2023

Appalachian State University, Graphic Communications Management

- Aided in instruction and lab operation for Introduction to Graphic Communications (GCM 1012)
- Tutored students in design software use in Adobe InDesign and Acrobat for both design and preparation for production for print
- Assisted in instructing students through finishing and assembly processes for print projects.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**Freelance Designer**

August 2019 - Present

- Freelance design and illustration for clients needing personalized branding and engaging marketing
- Creation of digital artwork, illustrations, social media posts, and printed merchandise
- Coordination and communication with printers to produce designed items.

Marketing Coordinator

August 2025 - May 2025

PlayCore, Inc. - Chattanooga, TN

- Coordinate and design print and digital materials across 7 recreation brands in a cross-media workflow - including website development, newsletter creation and catalog design - to increase B2B engagement and drive sales.
- Support day-to-day content creation and production, execution of events, and marketing operations for the PlayCore Site Amenity brands.

Junior Designer, Assistant Project Manager
Perspicuous Design - Mesa, AZ

May 2024 - September 2024

- Designed and delivered diverse digital and print assets and event materials including social media graphics, brand collateral, merch, banners, packaging and event visuals, ensuring brand consistency and high-quality execution
- Managed multiple projects for 5 brands, structuring files for efficient production, tracking progress, communicating with clients and production teams, and providing senior designers and management with real-time updates to meet tight deadlines.
- Collaborated in brainstorming sessions and design critiques, applying stakeholder and audience feedback to refine assets and enhance brand storytelling.

Creative Communications Intern
Alumni Association - Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

May 2023 - August 2023

- Designed visually engaging materials that supported Alumni events and programs, effectively communicating information to community members for the Office of Alumni Affairs
- Coordinated projects with printers to ensure high-quality and timely deliverables.

Office Assistant
Student Affairs - Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

January 2022 - August 2023

- Assisted Student Affairs staff with office function and research for university development
- Engaged with the campus community to answer questions, guide experiences, and provide a warm environment during their visit to the office

Editorial Designer, Writer, Photographer
Mountain Times Publications - Avery County, Watauga County, NC

May 2022 - August 2022

- Designed editorial layouts for multiple Adams Publishing Group newspapers using Adobe InDesign and Photoshop, aligning with brand standards and publication schedules.
- Shot and edited original photography for news features, profiles, and photo essays, managing the full photography production workflow from capture to publication-ready output
- Managed story flow and assets in TownCMS, coordinating with editors to meet weekly deadlines across 3 publications with a combined circulation of approximately 30,000 readers.
- Produced over 40 published articles and photo essays for The Avery Journal, covering local events, features, and community profiles.

PUBLICATIONS

March 2026 - En | Space Magazine. "Be Of Love: Printmaking for Social Justice." Book Arts Research Zine, ASU School of Art, 2024/25. Arizona State University, The Design School.

SKILLS, SOFTWARES, KNOWLEDGE

Visual Design & Design Pedagogy: Adobe Creative Cloud (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Lightroom, XD), Canva, Figma, Letterpress printing, Linoleum cut printmaking, Color theory, Design thinking, Foundations of design, Biomimicry, Design rhetoric, Branding, Sketching

Photography & Digital Imaging: Digital photography, photojournalism, photo editing, image preparation for digital and print publication

Production & Cross Media: Fiery (Print software), Foundational knowledge of Flexography, offset lithography, inks and substrates. Confidence in prepress, digital printing, and cross-media design.

Administrative: Google Suite, Microsoft Office

Teaching: Canvas, PeopleSoft, YellowDig, Miro