

EP 3: JARGON FOR EVERY OCCASION

Podcast transcription 9/2018

Hey there people welcome to episode 3 of the Frequency Café podcast, I am your host Sebastian and today we have graphic designer Annukka Repo.

Hello Annukka, how are you doing?

Hello hello Sebastian, nice to be here, I'm good thanks, and and to be friendly you can call me Nukka if its easier.

Nukka? OK yeah I guess it's for the sake of the conversation Nukka is gonna be the better option yeah. Because it will be kind of awkward to just go Annukka all the time, haha.

Yeah that is actually one reason why I have the nickname / artist name, because I figured that it sound that my name has an errr... like an "the" or "an" in the beginning, so it doesn't sound like a name (to other language speaking people).

Okay, so it's not only your... it's not only the name you want people to call you so, your professional name.

Yes, yes I use it all over the internet. You can find me by NukkaRepo

Oh okay, yeah okay. So Nukka you have had quite a lot of experience as a graphic designer and err, how long were you a freelancer again?

I have been freelancer for nearly three years now. Since I graduated in 2015.

So still kinda new to the scene in a way?

Yeah, you could say that, yes .

Hehehe. Yeah. What I understood also is that, you didn't choose this path from just out of nowhere, right?

Like did you have some kind of a devotion since you were a child that pushed you to become a graphic designer?

Well, I started with PlayDoh and all this kind of artsy stuff like most kids do. And I used to love to draw all the time. Like when I asked my friends over we didn't do anything else but draw. Because I had the upper hand but... hahaha!

Hahaha, the dominance!

Haha! But umm, I actually went through school like any normal kid would do. I had no idea that I had to start working at one time, like hahaha! It's just studying, having fun and all this kind of stuff. Then when I had to start looking for schools I figured that yeah, design would be nice. Because I had been drawing like furniture and something like product design kind of solutions and interior design kind of solutions, mainly for myself. To uh, improve my own room which I had in my home. But during my school years I actually figured that I cannot do anything out of wood or plastic or anything. My vision in my head just doesn't translate to my hands, in physical form that is, so I started, instead of tools, I started using the magic wand in Photoshop and this kind of stuff, different tools, and that's how I found it actually, what I want to do.

Okay, nice! But of course the graphic designers world doesn't feel or seem to be really that simple right? Like you do have for sure some kind of competition in that field, don't you?

Yes definitely, there are many amazing graphic designers and many people love to do this, 'cause the programs are available and you can start with free versions or different programs all together. You don't have to use Adobe. But it is a tough world, if I may say so. Everyone can draw in a way, if you allow me to say that. But not everyone can make a profession out of it, or get butter on their bread.

Everyone can draw, but not everyone can make a profession out of it.

-Nukka

Yeah yeah, true it's not also, of course anyone can buy a license for Photoshop and anyone can check out some kind of tutorial on how to do cool 80's style graphics for instance!

Mm'hmm, definitely!

But that will not mean that you are going to be a professional on that. It means that you just got to do your little project, it doesn't really mean that you now know exactly how different variables work together visually.

Mm'hmm yeah! For example the compositions, contrast, groups and all these kind of things and taught in school, and those you might not get through Youtube videos. You just have to start learning and it takes a lot of time.

Yeah. You have also been working with a lot of bigger projects like

Tampereen työllisyyspalvelut and Näyttämöt and Kasvunpajat.

Yes, actually when I moved to Tampere in 2015 Autumn, I just posted this one post on this Facebook group for Tampere internationals or something like that, and I just said "Hey I just moved here, I'm a graphic designer, what can I do?" Because I knew absolutely no one in here. So uh, basically this one guy just said "YOU, you come with me!" ...

(both laugh)

... and I was really swept in with all the students and awesome entrepreneurial people and some way I found myself in the situation where I was helping unemployed people to like, rebrand themselves visually.

For example there's this TalentSpace which is at the Finlayson area here in Tampere, they have TreStart going on there which operates and there's this Uratehdas also and all these kind of groups that help unemployed people who are trying to get a job and are working on their CV's, so these visual things I could as a graphic designer help them (with).

So that's how I also got my foot between the door, and then people started knowing me and that's call networking! So then after a while they contacted me that "Hey you're the graphic designer, could you do this and this stuff for us" and I was like yeah sure of course!

Ah so the ball just started rolling just by itself?

Yeah! In a way! And I have noticed that it is 20% hard work and 80% showing up. Hahaha.

Is what it is. You have to be there. That is true!

You can't sit in your home office all day.

That is true ladies and gentlemen actually like face-to-face it's the best way how you get your clients. It's the best way how you also get new friends, get new ways to up yourself of your experience. So it is true what you are saying. Maybe the biggest corner stone in media.

Yes it is, it is. And of course if you are a little bit introverted personality of course it works, you just have to push yourself or find different ways to get more clients in this industry.

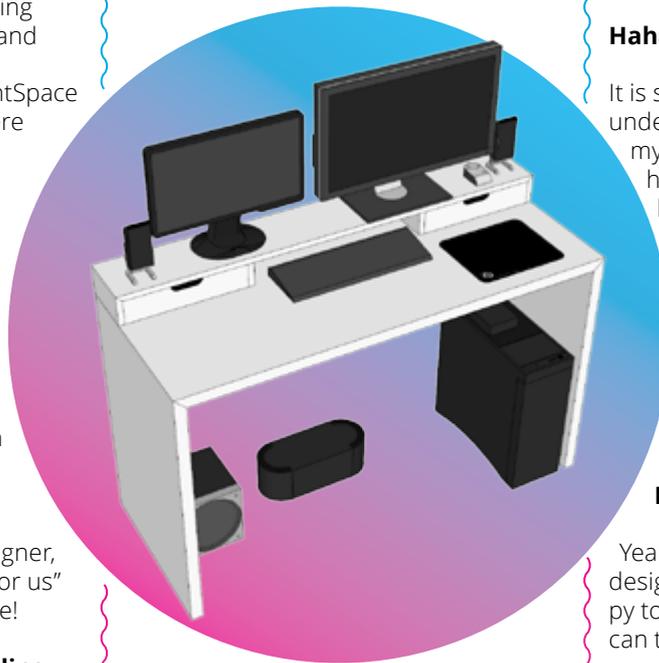
Yeah. As you, actually as you said you moved to Tampere right?

Mm'hmm!

From what city did you move again?

I'm originally from Järvenpää and I moved from Järvenpää after my matriculation examination, that's a horrible word but Finnish lukio, Finnish high school. After that I moved to Kouvolaa which is the "Chernobyl of Finland" as we like to call it, because of all the concrete.

Because it's so similar actually. There's a picture where you can put both, one next to each other and they are exactly the same. Hahaha!



Yeah, but honestly it is a beautiful city.

Oh yeah, it is.

Especially during the summer like all Finnish cities — always visit during summer.

Yeah. That's true.

That's what they always say. And um, I studied there in the Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences which is now XAMK with an X, I don't know why they have this 'youthful' X there, but they rebranded after I left so it's cool.

I studied Design there, so Bachelor of Culture and Arts, degree program in Design. That's a fancy title that I have and so the four years that I spent there weren't specifically graphic design but like everything that can be designed.

So product design, a little bit of services, lots of mood boards about how to meet the client or all these err... When you create something for a client you have make these user boards kind of stuff, and of course we have these workshops where I could do plastics,

jewellery, wood work also CNC machine which is also wood work, metal workshop, all this kind of hands on.

Aah so yeah, it isn't just what people might think when you say you are a designer, that you basically just draw the things, you've actually build the things you're drawing?

Well I have designed one or two products and I am actually sitting at a desk that I have just designed myself.

Oh okay!

Just last Autumn! I call it the White Monster 'cause it is so huge!

Hahahaha!

It is so huge, honestly, that I can sit under it, like beneath the table and with my back straight and I will not hit my head. How many of you have a table like that?

Yeah I don't think any of you have that hahaha!

But yeah, I just had to have a table and now I finally have it. But I didn't build it myself, I used a local carpenter so it's safe.

Hahaha, in a way. That's great!

Yeah in a way, actually when we were designing it together he was really happy to actually to finally have a client who can talk like, designer to designer.

Actually talk the language needed, you two can talk with. Actually having the right kind of speech, yeah that's true. It is something...

We understood each other on another level.

Yeah, it is something that actually at times getting in crossfire between two artists is that, you think you are talking the same language but you're not. Haha, you're just saying words the other doesn't understand and then it just goes on and on, until one day or another someone's going to say "Hey I'm going to be honest with you, I did not understand what you said to me yesterday, haha!"

Mm'hmm! At least they are honest about it!

Yeah that's true.

I have some people who just stare at me blankly and they don't understand anything.

Hahaha!

And those kind of interactions with people, I have realized how important it is for professionals to be able to word their, uh, this kind of professional jargon talk to the commoner, if you say, if you allow me to say commoner. But um, for example when I say to my clients or if people come to ask me about some project or anything, it comes down to a talk about resolution of an image for example, or what's the difference between an image on screen or in print or why something like that happens to the image, why does it look so bad, why this pixelation kind of thing goes, or happens. I use this kind, uh I'm don't know if it's a wordplay but ummm...

Imagine you have a blueberry or any kind of berry and that berry is one pixel. So if you have thousands of pixels times thousands of pixels big image and then you have all those pixels as blueberries, and you want that picture, you want to make that image bigger.

Yeah.

What happens to the blueberries? They get all smushed and horrible.

Hehehe yeah, that is true.

Yeah so that way actually, with this kind of a umm word image [allegory] people actually get it and they stop doing it, they stop stretching the images.

Hahahaha, yeah that's true and there is that.. you just have to come up with your own way to explaining someone, why something will work, something will not because as you said, for the commoner it's not going to be that simple, the job you are doing. It's not going to be just "oh okay well she just going to take a 24 pixel wide pencil and draw me some kind of vector.

Mhmm! Like we have, I have this uhmm... Especially on designer these uhh exclusive forums, there are a lot of designers who complain that clients give logos for print from their website.

Okay.

Or they give files as Word files, these kind of things that just are not that good for printing or any kind of uhh bigger use. The image does not have enough data. And then I'm always reading those comments like "why don't you teach your client?"

Hehehe!

One of our like main things as professionals is to teach the client.

Yeah.

That's what I think. Because otherwise the client does not know what they are actually buying. They don't understand the product that you are actually giving them. And then if they don't understand it, you just give them something and they are like "I don't know what to do with this", and then they continue forward, and they keep asking new professionals or ordering new graphic design or any kind of design job without understanding the actual thing they are paying for.

Yeah, so it is, so also a part of your job is to kind of explain just, the why you're doing it.

Mhmm. Yeah, it's like the same thing, like if you go to a pharmacy and the person there, who is a professional, couldn't tell you how to use the drug that you are purchasing.

.. reduce the complaining and be more open to actually teaching the client.
-Nukka

Yeah, exactly. Or I mean that no one in the pharmacy is going to tell you that "Hey here's your pill, take it" they are going to say "Here's the pill, this is why you have to take it, and this is what it is going to do to you. Take it this many times."

Mhmm yeah!

Kind of the same as a graphic designer should do.

Yes. I really think that we should try to reduce the complaining and be more open to actually teaching the client. And for all the people who are now listening and they think that "oh the client is then going to steal our job" I don't think so.

Noooo....

Because you have been at least studying for four years. They are not going to gain the same professionalism or the experience over night.

Yeah, exactly. And it's not going to as you said, it's not.. I mean as we said earlier it's not the same as picking a tutorial from YouTube and just you know, activating Photoshop. It is different kinds of ways how to use your wrist, how to activate different effects, to put different filters, it is not that simple than just drawing a stick figure.

Yeah, there's actually this one piece of comic that I have seen a few years back: there's this one guy who holds up a piece of art and then this client is sitting at his desk. And the client asks like "why am I paying you this many thousands of dollars for something you did in ten minutes?" and the designer answers "because it took me ten years to learn to do it in ten minutes"

Hahaha!

So that's professionalism.

Yeah, now that's true professionalism, that's very true. Yeah and so, yeah so, would you say that it's actually easier for you to then to base your way of working on a client's demands or is it easier for you to go with your own way of thinking and drawing?

Well, because most of my design clients so far have been from offices, that don't use that much graphic design themselves, that they just do all their posters that they need to print, they do them in PowerPoint or, that's their lovechild the PowerPoint, they use it everywhere.

Hahaha, yeah.

So then I can understand their situation where they are coming from and then I kind of tile or tone down my professional jargon talk. So then they understand what I'm talking and I understand what they are talking and then we can find the common tune as we say in Finnish, yhteinen sävel.

Ehehe, yeah, middle ground.

Middle ground, yeah.

Alright Nukka, thank you very much for joining the show

Oh thank you for having me! It was very nice!

Sebastian Pidone
Frequency Café

Anukka "Nukka" Repo
Graphic Designer

