

GRAPHIC DESIGN | ADVERTISING | PHOTOGRAPHY | ART/ILLUSTRATION | PRODUCTS | ARCHITECTURE | EDUCATION



Álvaro Pérez: Memorable in all His Simplicity

I APPROACHED HIM LOOKING FOR A WELL REPUTED DESIGNER FOR OUR BRANDING. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS NOT HIS DOUBTLESS DESIGNER GENIUS BUT HIS CLAIRVOYANT UNDERSTANDING OF OUR NEEDS AND HIS HUMAN VALUES.

José Ramón García, CEO at *Vetclan and MASCOMPANY*

FOR 20 YEARS, HE HAS ALWAYS IMPRESSED ME WITH HIS CREATIVE EYE, UNIQUE APPROACH TO DESIGN, AND HIS REFRESHING UNCONVENTIONALITY. I WILL CONTINUE TO TRUST HIM FOR 20 MORE!

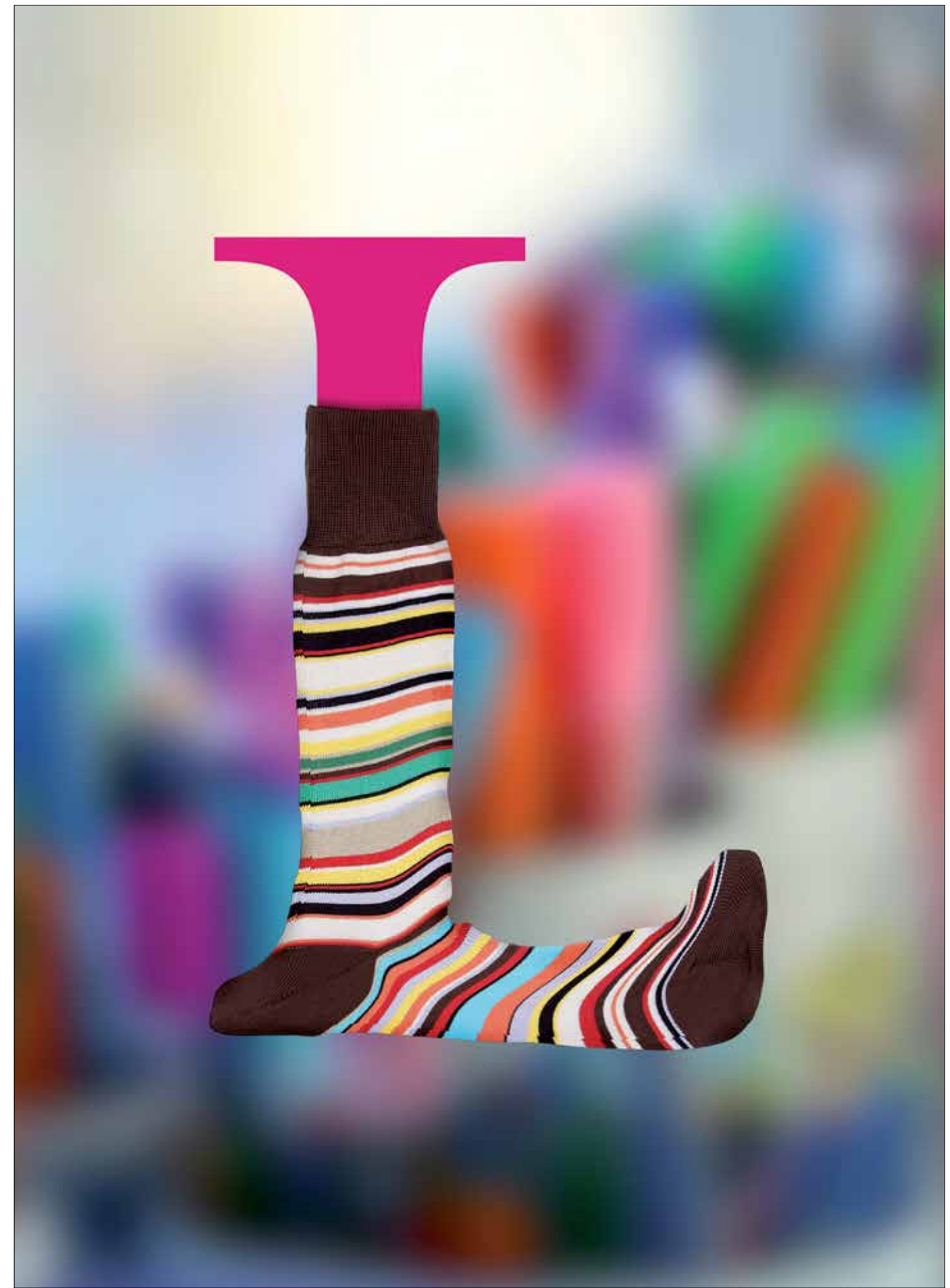
Jorge Juan Pascau, CEO at *Mr.Think*

HE PUTS HIS HEART AND FIVE SENSES INTO EVERY PROJECT. HE IS PASSIONATE, A MAVERICK, AND OPEN-MINDED. WORKING WITH HIM MEANS A NEW CHALLENGE AND EXCITEMENT EVERYDAY. IT'S AS EASY TO WORK WITH HIM AS IT'S TO LIVE WITH HIM!

Curra Medina, Partner at *El Paso, Galería de Comunicación*

I'VE KNOWN HIM FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS. HE HAS THE ABILITY TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS AND CONVERTS THEM INTO A REVELATORY ADVENTURE OF EFFECTIVE ANSWERS. THE REASON IS HIS ART AND PASSION FOR PEOPLE.

Charles Owona, Lead partner at *Valor Intangible*



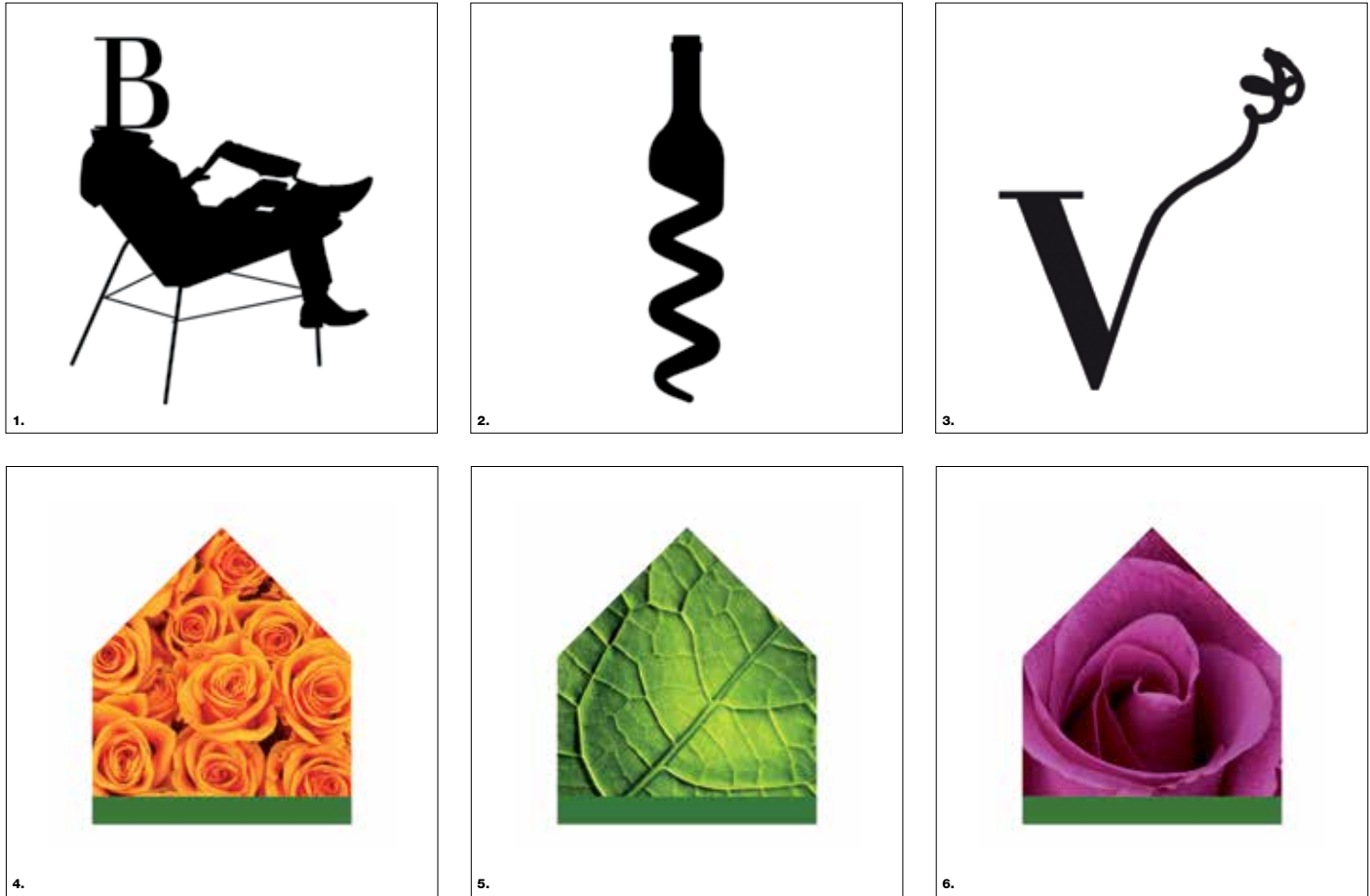
Ludotalleres. 2014



Introduction by José Manuel Noriega *Corporate Communication Manager at Bosch Spain*

There will be more than one “golden age” of graphic design in Spain, but it was in the 1990s that this discipline was dignified. Álvaro Pérez belongs to that generation and I was lucky to have him as a student in my classes on Corporate Identity. Today it is I who learn from him. Of the graphics that give personality to the projects of El Paso, Galería de Comunicación. If something makes these graphics different, unique and effective, it is that they not only “show” but also “tell”, they tell us through their forms their intention; a difficult merit in these times of abundant innocuous graphic contamination.

DESIGNING REQUIRES PASSION AND LOVE.
WHEN YOU WAKE UP IN THE MORNING KNOWING
THAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO WHAT YOU LOVE...
YOU ARE NOT REALLY WORKING. THERE IS NO
GREATER SATISFACTION. **Álvaro Pérez**, *Graphis Designer & Founder of El Paso, Galería de Comunicación*



1. Logo for Buchmann Ediciones. 2006. 2. Logo for Sancti Spiritus Wines. 2009. 3. Logo for Valpravega vineyard. 2018. 4, 5 & 6. Mutant Logo for Lazar Greenhouses. 2010.



Packaging for wine Sancti Spiritus El Real. 2009



1. Logo for Observatory of Reading and the Book of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain. 2018. 2. Logo for espÁfrica, trade company between Spain and África. 2009. 3. Logo for Europac's Customer Day. 2017. 4. Logo for Mascompany, vet clinics. 2008. 5. Logo for Berta Medina, english teacher. 2009. 6. Logo for TORCH, a "little but annoying" fashion brand. 2006. 7. Logo for MUNCYT, Spain National Museum of Science and Technology. 2009. 8. Logo for Toucan on Board, digital entertainment system for aircrafts. 2009. 9. Logo for Allá Voy, a local logistic company. 2014. 10. Logo for Curra Medina's personal brand, creative consultant. 2012. 11. Logo for Elefantex, casual textile accessories. 2016. 12. Logo for Granja Aventura, nature entertainment park (Marketing Agency: Mr. Think). 2015.



What inspired or motivated you into your career?

I really believe in the power of images. A powerful image makes people think... it inspires them. This idea came to me when I was a kid. I still remember how I liked looking for records, how I flipped through the sleeves until one caught my attention. I remember the cover of "Lovehunter," the disc from Whitesnake in 1980, and what I thought in that moment was, "This is what I want to do."

What is your work philosophy?

To offer inspiration and create emotionally engaging projects, based on strong concepts with easy and smart forms. Our design should stay cool and interesting to our clients for years. That is our way of working, and always with a smile.

Have you always believed in a minimalist approach? Where did this first stem from?

Yes, always. A strong concept, a great idea, must shine. So, make sure it is not hidden behind noisy graphics that mean nothing. Making a complicated design is easy, and it can be done by anyone. Keeping it simple is our aim, our job and what we must do. It is what I believe, what I learned and what I teach my students: "Keep It Simple, Stupid." The "KISS rule," the one and only for a great design.

Who is or was your greatest mentor?

I had great teachers when I was a student, and they helped me with my first professional steps. I try to be the same to my students now. But, if I must talk about somebody who was important to me in my career, I must talk about Frank Memelsdorff: the way he worked with concepts was so intelligent, and his way of growing ideas from "great" to "absolutely amazing." I worked with him a long time ago, and later we became friends. He wrote the introduction to my first book. Unfortunately, he left us in 2017. I want to share with you one of his many pieces of advice: "Where many similar offers are presented on the stage, design is the tie-breaker."

What is the most difficult challenge you've had to overcome?

Not growing, keeping us independent and competing with all the biggest players. Our main tool is grey, soft, weighs about 1.2 kg and is inside our heads. Do I need anything else? Just give me a pencil. We like to work with clients who really appreciate the ideas.

Who were some of your greatest past influences?

It is a difficult question because I have a lot from different sectors, but I will say two great designers, one from your country and one from Spain: Paul Rand and Fermín Garbayo. I do not need to talk about Paul Rand and his work, everybody knows him. Fermín Garbayo has been one of the main Spanish graphic artists. Some time ago, we redesigned one of his logos: ONCE, the Spanish National Organization for the Visually Disabled. And we kept his "blind man" symbol because it became a world reference. It has been used by a lot of disabled organizations in different countries.

Who among your contemporaries today do you most admire?

I really admire the creative vision of Sagmeister, the clean and sharp design of Chip Kidd, and Starck's work with shapes, volumes, and environment.

How do you feel you stand apart from your contemporaries?

I do not feel that I do. I just keep an open mind and continue to be in love with my job. I'm always committed to producing good design for my clients... and for us. Good design is important for us both. It is not only an economic issue.

Would you say that there are any characteristics exclusive to the graphic design scene in Spain?

Spain has always been a creative environment. We have great artists, beautiful landscapes, wonderful people... and passion! This passion is everywhere. Here we are hard workers. Joining all those things, we get great results!

What would be your dream assignment?

Always the next one! We have worked for lots of different clients in all kinds of sectors, and that has pushed us to learn from everyone and think every time of a new strategy. Every new strategy is a new dream, and we love dreaming!

In looking at your portfolio, I've noticed that you have done some consistent work with veterinary hospitals. Are animals something that you are passionate about?

Yes, we love animals. They give you everything and never leave you. We had the opportunity to create a strategy for a new kind of vet hospitals: from the name to the lamps (we made them out of dog feeders!) and with our client we created a modern, consistent, different and cool brand. A place to share time with your pet and with vet care, a shop, pet grooming and a bar which we called "The Club." After Mascompany, we worked with other vet hospitals and we enjoyed them a lot.

What is your greatest professional achievement?

Working everyday with the same passion we had when we opened in 1999, keeping us independent, free and happy, showing that a little design studio with just two people can work with big clients too.

Your PUROMETAL925.com Project really stands out from the rest in your Graphis portfolio. Can you tell me a little about this project? (you vision, how you took a slightly less simplistic approach, etc).

As I said, we have worked for lots of different sectors. For years we worked with jewelry brands. And we had to learn about their whole process. This gave us insight on jewelry craft work. Ever since I was a kid I have collected silver skull rings, but I never found the one I really wanted. So I started thinking about making it and this became our own jewellery brand: PUROMETAL925. Skull rings, rock'n'roll, tattoos, hot rods... some of our passions! Finally I got to wear the skull ring I had dreamed of. We called it "La Perfecto Skull," and we didn't stop. We have designed others, and we will design more silver jewellery. The logo design, the posters, the packaging and, of course, the jewelry has a rock'n'roll soul and needs a little badass look.

What part of your work do you find most demanding?

We are really committed to strong concepts. We need to learn a lot from our clients to understand what would be better for them to reach their goal. We spend a lot of time on research, analysis and process. Only when we have the knowledge can we start creating a strong concept and good designs. Europac



(Top) Mutant Logo for VITAVAL, vet clinic. 2010. / (Bottom) Letterhead for VITAVAL. 2010.

has been one of our clients for many years. They produce kraft paper rolls that weigh tons. Something very different to A4 leaves of paper. We learned about their process so that we could understand what makes their service different.. They can serve their clients with whatever amount of paper is needed, and with any characteristics wanted. This was something impossible for their competitors. We created a concept to present their products and their difference: "A la cart." In a restaurant, you can order what you like, what you really want, and it will be served. We designed a complete menu which included all Europac's papers, from starters, sushi or salad to cakes and coffee and photographed them. It became Europac's catalogue for years in all the countries where they work.

What is the greatest satisfaction you get from your work?

Designing is something you have to do for passion, it is a kind of love. When you wake up in the morning knowing that you are going to do what you love... you are not really working. There is no greater satisfaction.

Where do you seek inspiration?

Everywhere! Inspiration is around us, just keep an open-mind. Art, books, conversations, furniture, travels, friends, music...

What professional goals do you still have for yourself?

Now, I have my latest book about core graphic design in the oven and I'm writing another two about personal brand and creativity. I'm managing and teaching a brand design and idea generation course that will start in a few weeks, and I'm preparing some new talks for different business schools.

What advice would you have for students starting out today?

Be honest and humble, know your skills and work with passion. Do not try to be good at everything. Do not push yourself to do what you hate, nor show work in your portfolio that you don't like to do. Do not trust everything to luck and talent, because they will rarely accompany you when you need them.

What do you value most?

Working with Curra Medina, my partner and wife. Knowing that every morning we will have new challenges and we will find creative solutions together.

Do you have any passion projects outside of your work?

Yes, I am in the process of writing a book about knives. It is another one of my passions. If I hadn't been a designer, I would probably have been a knife smith... or a rock star... or a hot rod mechanic... or...

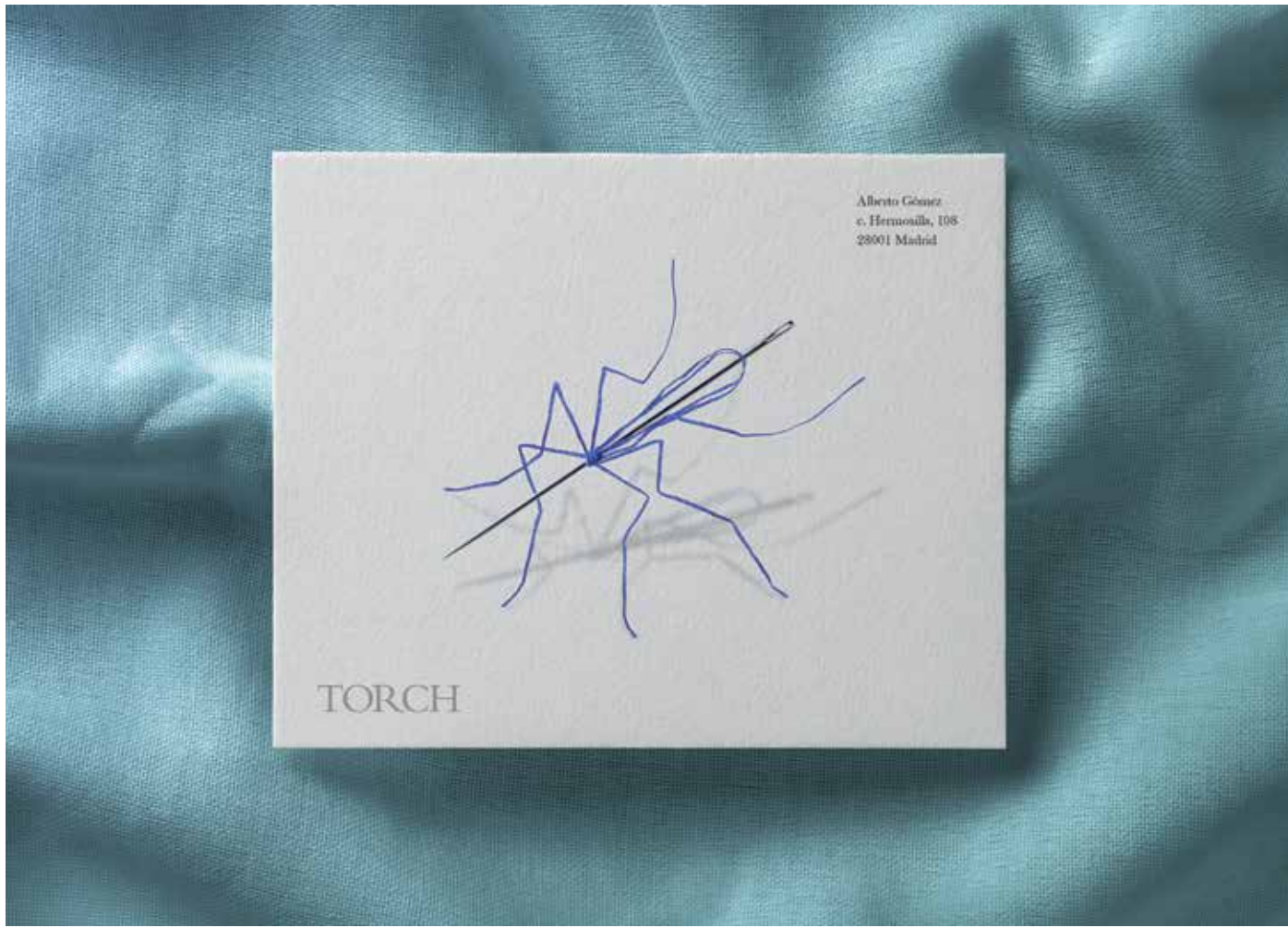
How do you define success?

Love what you do. And you will never feel like you are working again...

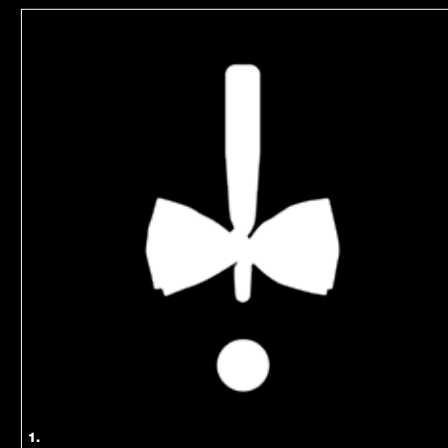
Who would you like to see featured in the next Graphis Journal?

I would like to see Belin. He is one of the best urban artists at the moment... and he is Spanish too. His art is amazing and I think he has really cool ideas.

Álvaro Pérez elpasocomunicacion.com
See his Graphis Master Portfolio on graphis.com.



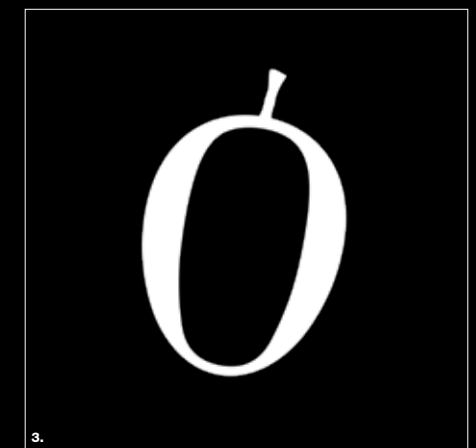
(Top) Card for TORCH, a "little but annoying" fashion brand. 2006. / (Bottom) Label for Elefantex, casual textile accessories. 2016.



1.



2.



3.

(Top) One of Mascocompany's vet clinics in Madrid. 2008. / (Bottom) 1. Logo for The Party Set, event organizing company in London. 2016. 2. Logo for On Time Catering. 2012. 3. Logo for La Oliva Negra, spanish tapas bar. 2011.