

JEN'S 10

THE SEARCH

- 1 Get organized (on screen).** It's one thing to know that there's lots of 'stuff out there,' another to discover that cool stuff, and another altogether to read it, record it, file it away for later reference or action. Make good use of free, easy-to-use programs out there like Evernote, Pinterest, Pocket, Delicious to organize articles, visual inspiration, capture job leads, note interesting galleries, etc.
- 2 Get organized (IRL).** Develop a system: start a simple excel spreadsheet to keep track of prospects for approaching individuals and organizations and a more detailed one for active applications that you intend to complete. Commit to your own 'magic number' – an increment of time you will spend per week, per day, etc., working toward your short and long-term professional goals (i.e., short term – finish resume; longer-term – land that internship; longer-longer term, 'what you want to do when you grow up.')
- 3 Become a Superfan.** Walk that (very) fine line between being tenacious and exhibiting stalker-like behavior. Immerse yourself in the industry, field and/or community you want to be a part of someday. Thinking about event design? Know who David Stark is. Interested in being part of the A-list gallery scene? Know White Cube. Leading a burgeoning women's wear business? Know about the CFDA/VOGUE Fashion Fund. For example, part of your initial pitch to many art directors should read like gracious, thoughtful, yet professional fan mail.
- 4 Narrow down, geographically.** It's great that you have the flexibility to move to the far corners of the globe for that residency or that internship. But, for an easier, more practical way to begin, commit to a manageable number, like three, maybe four cities to begin the search.
- 5 Narrow down, by field.** As you'll soon discover, there are deep and wide variations in the field of design; in the field of fashion; and the field of art. Pay attention to what you respond to as you encounter or engage with work (media, visiting artists, openings). Ask yourselves these questions: do you like the work? Do you believe in the mission of the organization? You can and should explore many, but it's helpful to organize your prospect list by industry category so you can more readily and easily identify associations and other resources to further your search and outreach.
- 6 Narrow down, by function.** It's not just about who you do it for and where that might be, but it's the what that you want to spend time thinking about. What are you into? Good at? Research? Kerning type? Stretching canvases? Engaging with clients? Setting your expectations to where you are in this process (and what experience/proficiency in technical skills you may have) makes for a more efficient and targeted prospect list.
- 7 Narrow down, by size.** There are a whole host of reasons why the size and structure of organizations should be considered, and there are pros and cons for each during this stage in your career. Smaller organizations will typically allow you more access to the central work of the organization; larger organizations will have more structured programs, i.e. intern project.
- 8 Develop a keen sense of self-awareness.** This is an ongoing process as your academic and professional career progresses. At what point of your day do you typically achieve the 'magic moment' in studio? When do you need a break? And, when does fooling around with an excel spreadsheet sound like a fun idea? Understand your rhythm and adjust your work flow accordingly.
- 9 Become a whiz at asking for info interviews/portfolio reviews.** The most effective technique to both 1) find out more about a field and 2) network, 1:1. We will talk more about this in an upcoming session, but this skill, in addition to your portfolio, is arguably the most effective tool you can master in this pursuit.
- 10 Pace yourself. This is a life-long process. It is a lifestyle.** Though you may not have realized it at the time you made the declaration you were heading to art school, the decision to pursue your BFA may, and likely will, live beyond 'what you do for a living.'