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WORDS
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LIVE A DOUBLE (CREATIVE LIFE

Whether it's writers who illustrate, letterers who sculpt, some creatives master the art of multitasking. Meet 4 versatile talents who balance 2 jobs every day without exceeding 24 hours at their disposal—and find out how you can, too.

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mployers, clients, you name it—everyone wants a jack-of-all-trades creative (read: someone insanely talented with octopus arms who can do 25 jobs in one afternoon and barely break a sweat). We all know those expectations are absurd and can only lead to the master-of-none malady. On the other hand, nobody wants to be pigeonholed into any one creative role. Plus, having an inquisitive mind and exploring other passions can only feed our creativity and improve our talents. So how exactly do we branch out and avoid becoming the buffet bar sampler with a mash of half-strengths on our plate?

For answers, we tapped the multitasking synapses of top hybrid creatives—crossbreeds who seriously kick-ass in more than one field. Through their inspiring stories, we culled insights into how you can chase a motley of passions and develop more than a pudding cup of expertise.



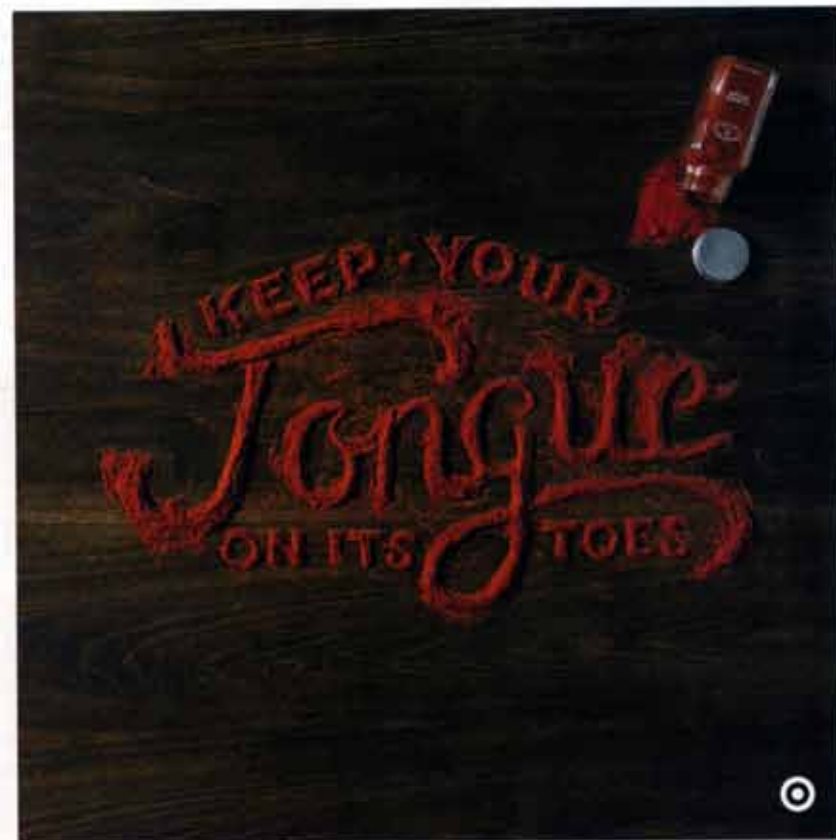
THE LETTERING ARTIST/ THE LETTERING ARTIST/ SCULPTOR

Columbus, OH-based Danielle Evans (www.marmaladebleue.com, www.foodtypography.com) figured out how to meld her diverse interests into one deliciously satisfying niche. With a background in illustration and knack for the tactile, she handsculpts type out of thick piles of ground beef, flour, coffee, mashed potatoes, cheese and other random ingredients.

And we're not just talking dinnertime, play-with-your-food creations. These are technically dead-on, 3D typographic showstoppers for clients like Target, Macaroni Grill and Belcampo Meat Co., among others. Plus, Evans does her own photography and retouching, too. Why the edible medium, you ask? "The food just happened to be around, and at the most basic level, I wanted to know what would happen," Evans says. "It all started from there."

TOP TAKEAWAYS

BE A CURIOSITY FREAK. In fact, that driving curiosity is one of Evans' keys to hybrid creative success. In college, she ventured outside her illustration major to try a sculpting class. She loved it and opted to craft an entire children's story out of clay for her senior thesis—just to see if she could. After graduating, Evans followed her passion for typography, studying it for years on her own. "I had gained this knowledge base that I didn't even realize I had until I started playing with food," she says. Her advice: "Try new things, explore new ideas and stay curious. It's the only way you'll grow and improve."



Playing With Food
When Danielle Evans creates her food typography designs, she often puts as much thought into the backgrounds and surrounding elements as she does in choosing the materials.



LOOK UP THE LADDER. Evans' path hasn't been without challenges. "I struggled so much at first because I had all these interests and couldn't figure out how to combine them into something useful or practical," she says. Feeling lost, she sought out a creative mentor who helped her nail a clear direction and encouraged her to pursue it full blast. "Find people in the creative community who are doing what you want to do, and pick their brains," Evans suggests.

DON'T FEAR THE INTERNET. Evans' big break came when she answered a universal Twitter call for lettering artists sent out by Allan Peters, associate creative director at Target. Although she had only created three or four typographic food sculptures at the time, she took a chance and sent her work Peters' way. "He got back to me in five minutes and wanted to know when I could fly out." That was a pivotal lesson for Evans. "When you're trying something new and sharing it on the Internet, it's scary and intimidating to think people are going to think it's stupid."

But she learned that you don't need a perfectly polished website, or a "perfect" anything—just a few quality pieces that best represent you. "Put your work out there, get it seen and have confidence in your creative voice," she says.

LIVE FOR THE DETAILS. Ultimately, it's Evans' targeted focus on the small stuff that's propelled her talents beyond the norm. Whether researching script styles, learning how to capture that ideal photographic light or thoughtfully considering the elements surrounding her pieces (like chocolate type set on butcher paper, shown at left), that extra effort has taken her skills and creations to the next level. "Pay attention to all the little details," she says. "It makes a huge difference."

QUICKSTART HYBRID CREATIVE SUCCESS

There's no simple path to becoming a multitasking whiz. But these hybrid creatives were happy to offer some nuggets of wisdom on pursuing the double (creative) life.

MIX AND MINGLE. "Step outside your current environment and surround yourself with creatives in other industries. It's through all their insights that you'll start to think differently."

— Brian Scheyer, graphic designer/fashion designer

STUDY UP. "The worst piece of advice I was given, and the only advice I followed for many years, was that the only way to learn how to write—is to write. But if you're doing any kind of creative job, you need to read up as much as possible. You can learn an awful lot about technique."

— Andy Riley, cartoonist/scripewriter

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS. "It seems most people are either super-conceptual thinkers but aren't strong executors or are highly technical with flat ideas. Figure out what strengths you're bringing to your endeavor, and work toward improving the weaknesses."

— Danielle Evans, lettering artist/sculptor

FIND A ROCKIN' MENTOR. "I had a great writing teacher in college and a great creative director at my first job. What was so awesome about them? They challenged me and encouraged me."

— Kathryn McFarlane, advertising copywriter/illustrator



THE GRAPHIC DESIGNER/ THE GRAPHIC DESIGNER/ FASHION DESIGNER

By day, Brian Scheyer (www.brianscheyer.com) is creative director at the San Francisco-based ad agency Mortar, where he develops print and interactive campaigns, directs commercials and leads a creative staff. By night, he's fashion designer of the award-winning label gr.dano, a womenswear line with a distinct architectural style. Launched in 2006 with his wife Jill Giordano, the duo designs everything together, from sketching ideas and selecting fabrics to draping silhouettes.

But while Scheyer has a 20-year graphic design career working with brands like Dockers, Google, Yahoo! and Kohler, his fashion training has been mostly DIY. "Essentially, I learned the process of fashion design through osmosis," Scheyer says. While he was dating Giordano, she enrolled in the fashion design program at the Academy of Art University San Francisco. "I was part of her education the whole way through. We would work on projects together; I would ask questions and learn the process," Scheyer says. "But when I started to apply my graphic design eye to fashion design—that's when it clicked."

TOP TAKEAWAYS

FIND THE CREATIVE THREADS AND MAKE MAGIC. It's Scheyer's ability to see the parallels in his endeavors that's played a crucial role in his seamless second career jump. "All the things that make a great graphic designer—like visually understanding the problem, solving it in the most simplistic way and having a cohesive voice throughout all the campaign touchpoints—are the same when you're developing a fashion collection." He advises, "Take the knowledge and creative voice you've already honed in your first career, and refocus it into your next venture. That's what'll make you stand out."

Scheyer is all about process, rather than outcome. Many times, he'll find himself working through a graphic design challenge and realize later that the same thinking can be applied to his fashion line. "You don't immediately come up with the answer," he says. "It's that journey that gets you there. So you have to allow yourself to dig in, find those nuances and slowly develop it into something tangible. That's where the magic is."

FUSE CREATIVITY INTO YOUR EVERYDAY. Scheyer treats every endeavor—not just his careers—as a creative exercise. "When I haven't been food shopping in two weeks because I've been busy and only have a couple things in my fridge, I could easily order-in; or I could try to make something interesting," he says. By constantly sharpening your chops, you're readying yourself to take on that next venture.

PURSUE WITH A PASSION. How does Scheyer actually balance two 40-hour-a-week jobs? With a crazy amount of hard work, energy and passion he finds every opportunity—when he's not at his full-time creative director day job, of course—to work on the gr.dano label. That means evenings, weekends and even vacations. "Fashion design is a tough business," Scheyer says. "It takes a lot of work and dedication, but at the same time it doesn't feel like work because I'm with my wife, the person I enjoy the most."

He also finds keeping lists and prioritizing insanely crucial, as well as taking power naps and snagging a little time for himself. "Working on something you're passionate about takes energy. It helps to go for a walk, zone out with your favorite song on loop and give your brain a rest," Scheyer says. "Absorb all you can, practice your craft as much as possible. ... And find that perfect blend of coffee and alcohol during the day."

Fashion Forward

Brian Scheyer's 9-to-5 includes redesigns of sites like Mintbox.com. By night, weekend and vacation, he designs clothes with his wife, Jill.





**THE CARTOONIST/
THE CARTOONIST/
SCREENWRITER
SCREENWRITER**

Just about anyone can start a web comic—draw it, post it online and, bam! You're a cartoonist. Making a living at this fading art is a whole nother thing. Yet, U.K.-based Andy Riley (www.misterandyriley.com) has achieved the near impossible. Along with creating *Observer Magazine's* weekly "Roasted" strip for nearly eight years, he's the hilarious and twisted mind behind the best-selling *Bunny Suicides* series about self-destructive fluffy rabbits, as well as books *D.I.Y. Dentistry*, *Great Lies to Tell Small Kids*, *Selfish Pigs* and more.

As if that's not cool enough, his other career is penning animated flicks like *Gnomeo and Juliet* and writing for a host of sitcoms such as HBO's "Veep." But ask this British wit how he leads double lives, and he'll be the first to tell you: "I have two careers, but I don't see them as separate. It's all comedy writing: one with pictures and one without. It's just about following your interests and what turns you on."

**TOP TAKEAWAYS
TOP TAKEAWAYS**

START SMALL AND PRACTICE YOUR BUM OFF. When Riley was 4 years old, he started making cartoons. At age 13, he officially decided he wanted to be a cartoonist and spent the following years working toward his goal. "I didn't have a mentor or teacher, but I'd draw all the time, as much I could," Riley says. "I'd actively study the cartoonists I liked and copy their style just to see if I could do it. I'd create cartoon strips and try to sell them around the school. I did posters for local events, birthday invitations, really anything just so I could draw and get better."

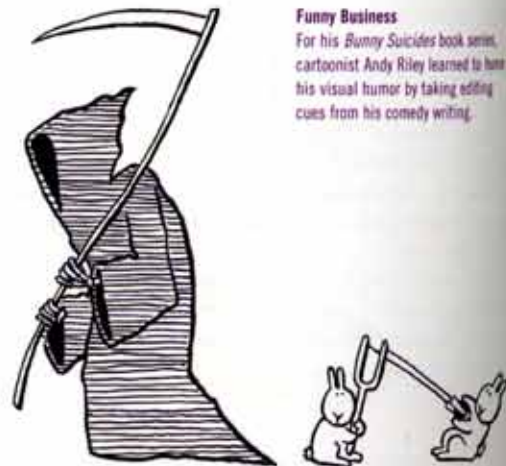
LEARN FROM YOU. One of the keys to Riley's success is nailing humor in its raw simplicity. It was actually his comedy writing that helped him become a better cartoonist. "The *Bunny Suicides* books are against my previous drawing style, which was getting more illustrative with loads of crosshatching," he says. "The comedy writing made me aware of how much you have to boil down to communicate the funny idea. I learned you have to strip away everything that's not doing its job."

DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING COMMERCIAL. While the dream, of course, is to make a living doing what we love, Riley says to nix the focus on making your work mainstream. In fact, when he graduated from college, he struggled as a cartoonist.

"I was neither a newspaper cartoonist nor a comic artist at that time. So falling between those two mediums, I was sort of uncommercial," he says. Rather than changing his style to fit the market or creating work he wasn't excited about, Riley put his professional cartooning on hold for a little while and focused on honing his distinct creative voice. The market, of course, eventually caught up to him.

BE PATHOLOGICALLY PRODUCTIVE. So how does this madcap creative balance two careers? Riley spends four to five days a week writing and squeezes the cartooning in whenever he can, be it evenings, weekends or throughout his day. "You have to be pathologically productive with this ridiculous itch to make things, even when you don't want to. And pretty much give up a social life," he says. "But when it's all stuff you want, you're highly motivated to do it."

GIVE YOURSELF THE FREEDOM TO HAVE BAD IDEAS. Sure, that critical voice in your head will occasionally pop up and knock down ideas. More than just ignoring the inner naysayer, Riley suggests, "Give yourself the freedom to have crap ideas. That's what it's all about. Then you switch hats and find the good ones. But you have to give yourself that freedom first."



Funny Business
For his *Bunny Suicides* book series, cartoonist Andy Riley learned to hone his visual humor by taking editing cues from his comedy writing.



**THE ADVERTISING COPYWRITER/
THE ADVERTISING COPYWRITER/
ILLUSTRATOR
ILLUSTRATOR**

Kathryn McFarlane (www.kathrynmcfarlane.com) doesn't just have one of those covetable advertising jobs where she gets to wordsmith clever campaigns and commercials for brands such as Lexus, Häagen-Dazs and Jack in the Box. She's also an in-demand artist creating playful and colorful illustrations for clients including Beer Belly (a craft beer bar in Korea Town), The Ritz Carlton, Poketo and more. Not to mention she has a thriving Society6.com shop and periodically shows her work at galleries throughout the West Coast.

"The copywriting fills a 40-hour workweek and then some, but the workload isn't always consistent, so I take on illustration jobs during the lighter times," McFarlane says. Yet, this writer/artist never intended on balancing two careers: "The illustration and painting started as a creative release from the bureaucracy of agency life, but it grew into something else."

**TOP TAKEAWAYS
TOP TAKEAWAYS**

TAP YOUR NETWORK. In fact, it was McFarlane's connections in the ad world that helped her kickstart the professional illustration path. "My first commission was illustrating a birthday invitation for one of my creative directors," she says. "It made me realize there was an opportunity in the drawing." From there, friends and colleagues at other agencies began hiring McFarlane for illustration work. "Creative people usually know other creative people. Use your network," she advises.



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Stress-Free Side Gig
Illustration and painting became Kathryn McFarlane's escape from her 9-to-5, but it later took on a life of its own.



TO MARKET, TO MARKET. Although McFarlane's creative endeavors occasionally come together when a word inspires an illustration or vice versa, she's found that maintaining separate websites targeted to her potential clients is the best way to market herself. "I keep one site for illustration, the other for copywriting, and I link the two," she says. "If people are curious, they can explore. But I've found it's best not to overwhelm people with all your work."

BE BRAVE. Like it or not, being a creative pro means getting your work shot down. What's helped McFarlane succeed is staying secure in her skills and ability, even when she's told her work isn't right? "Believing you can solve something is half the battle," she says.

BE THE GENERATOR BUNNY. There's no better recipe for success than just sitting down and doing it. "Thinking too much about writing a line or making a drawing can be your worst enemy. The more you generate, the more you learn about the process," McFarlane says.

San Francisco-based Stephanie Orma is a hybrid creative: She can write, illustrate, design ... and hula hoop using one foot while drinking a glass of vino. She writes for *HOW*, *Print*, *Dwell*, *Entrepreneur*, *CNN*, *Communication Arts*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, *San Francisco Magazine* and more. @stephanieorma; www.ormadesign.com

DANIELLE EVANS COLUMBUS, OH www.marmaladebleue.com
KATHRYN MCFARLANE LOS ANGELES www.kathrynmcfarlane.com
ANDY RILEY LONDON www.misterandyriley.com
BRIAN SCHEYER SAN FRANCISCO www.brianscheyer.com