

Hien Phan: Flying in on the Western Wind

MTSU is proud to be the home of Graphic Design senior Hien Phan, who traveled all the way from Vietnam to pursue her studies here. She has excelled in graphic and interactive design work, earning an impressive list of awards and achievements that only continues to expand.

Art & Design (AAD): Hello Hien! What can you tell me about yourself and your artwork?

Hien: I flew halfway across the globe to study Graphic Design at MTSU with the goal of earning freedom of mind and culture and to constantly discover my role in life. My roots are in Vietnam, and I grow up with the Western wind. I'm still a growing plant in a creative field and would be so happy to rise towards the sky with talented, positive people. My design philosophy varies on different moments in my life, but for now, it is: Always try to explore new things but in consciousness.

AAD: So, what drew you to graphic design?

Hien: I knew Adobe programs such as Photoshop or Illustrator before knowing the existence of graphic design. I love graphic design for the freedom in visualizing an object with the ultimate support from technology and an unlimited amount of inspiration from the internet. Of course, I have learned that graphic design is not art-- there are rules in branding and marketing to follow, and the visuals need to be productively displayed. That was a tough lesson that I keep reminding myself of when working in different roles as a graphic designer for various on-campus jobs.

AAD: How has the pandemic affected your experience as a graphic designer and art student?

Hien: When COVID hit, I was lost in such an empty schedule and boredom. But then, several free creative events took place to support the community of artists and newbie designers. I joined several of them, where I learned new skills in Adobe XD, tried new ways of creating typography, and started creating user interfaces (UI).

Airbnb Mate was the first UI that I've ever designed, which was honored in the "Hype" Graphic Design exhibition in the 210 Art Gallery on campus. That was probably the time I told myself, "What I have done was worth it. Just keep moving forward." The show marked how strong we have been as graphic design students at MTSU and reminded us that we need to keep things moving forward with our creative minds and positive souls.

AAD: Congratulations on your accomplishment and continued success, despite the obstacles! Have you had any other experiences at MTSU that you'd like to share?

Hien: It is my pleasure to be in the Package Design class, where we practice with pals and observe

our progress throughout the semester. The variety of projects keep us energized every time we sketch ideas on paper or screens. We're glad that each project was highlighted in a show of our own, which was the "Boxed: Package Design" exhibition in the 210 Gallery during Fall 2020.

AAD: How was that for you?

Hien: That was the first time in a while that I saw people interacting and building something together, physically - it was weird but also charming. I assisted in creating visuals for the shows, including flyers and social media posts. I think we have overcome ourselves to put this exhibition together.

AAD: How wonderful! You're a senior, so graduation is upcoming. What do you plan to do next?

Hien: After graduation, I hope to spend time working in the creative industry, but in general, I'm open to any kind of opportunities ranging from work to another degree. My mind changes several times a day, so who knows the plan for a year from now, right?

AAD: Right! Sometimes it's good to go with the flow. We wish you the best of luck. Thank you, Hien!

Hien: Thank you!

To see Hien Phan's work and more, her portfolio is available for viewing on her website [here](#) or at <https://hienphan.work>.