

BROOKE COLLINS

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Hello there,

I'd like to share a story with you, one that traces the journey that led me to my career as a designer. This narrative might offer you a glimpse into the passion and dedication I bring to this industry, and the skills I've honed along the way, which I hope to contribute to your company.

One of my earliest memories sparked my journey. It was a chilly December evening, just after dusk, in my grandparents' hand-built log cabin. The scent of the Christmas tree mingled with the aroma of cedar wood burning in the fireplace. At six years old, I sat at our third-generation kitchen table, exploring a brand new tin of artist pencils I had discovered under the tree a few days prior. Unlike crayons, these pencils were void of color and lacked the waxy, breakable texture I was used to.

Noticing my hesitation, my grandfather, a quiet man with a stern yet kind demeanor, sat beside me. He had taught himself to be a draftsman while recovering from an injury in a Vietnam War Hospital, half a world away. As he guided my hands with his calloused ones, we began to draw an apple, discarded on the table a little earlier. I vividly remember the smell of his wool plaid shirt, a mix of forest and motor oil, and most importantly, the moment my fascination with art clicked into place. My grandfather showed me how to see the world's smallest details—the highlight on the apple, the shadow beneath it, the reflected light—and how to capture them with practice. That moment set the course for the rest of my life.

This newfound passion grew through countless sketchbooks, documenting the world around me at every opportunity, whether in the waiting rooms of Boston Children's Hospital with my special needs sister or in the tranquility of a log cabin in the Adirondack Mountains of northern New York.

My educational journey began early. At just 15, I pursued a degree in Studio Art at SUNY Potsdam, focusing initially on illustration and ceramics before discovering the compelling allure of Graphic Design. The idea of creating visual identities that could influence, persuade, educate, and communicate to the masses captivated me. I graduated at 19 with a degree in Graphic Design, minoring in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing, and Studio Art with a concentration in illustration.

I continued my education at the Rochester Institute of Technology, earning my Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication in 2021. These academic achievements equipped me with a deep understanding of design principles and marketing strategies, fostering a mindset that constantly seeks innovation and excellence.

As an Associate Art Director at Partners And Napier, I've worked on national projects for brands like High West Whiskey, Fresca, Kim Crawford Wines, and Bausch and Lomb Medical. I have tackled everything from billboards to packaging, and while I was always happy to design within strict established brand guidelines, I was especially proud to be one of the brand stewards, helping guide the illustrative personality of High West Whiskey, and ideating for their creative team.

Twenty years have passed since my grandfather first placed a pencil in my hand. While the tools have evolved, my passion continues to grow. My skills have been fine-tuned as I continually seek new challenges and opportunities.

I would be honored to discuss how I can bring my journey and experiences to your team, whether as a freelancer or in another capacity. In closing, I'd like to share a personal connection that keeps me grounded and motivated. The painting below is the first my grandfather ever created in a small village far away. It represents his determination to inspire a recovering young man with dreams, one of which was to own and fly his very own plane one day. Almost 40 years later, an exact replica of this plane became the one he used to teach me how to fly. I hang this painting in my studio as a reminder of where my design journey began and to reinforce the belief that our passions are the pursuits worth chasing in life. I consider myself incredibly blessed to have a career that fills me with excitement and purpose every day.

Thank you for considering my story. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how I can contribute to your team.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brandon K. Collins". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Painted by **William Gary Atkinson** in a Vietnam War Recovery Hospital