

## SAM POTTS

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## PROFILE

I'm a generalist designer and design thinker, with experience that ranges from books and brands to apps and websites. I work toward the most unified combination of voice and aesthetic, always pursuing the best union of form and content. My background extends from my first job editing college textbooks to a wide-ranging career as a graphic designer with detours into innovation strategy and ux design. The thread that runs through everything is a search for meaningful expression, whether the task at hand is a brand, a digital experience, or a hardware store for superheroes that's also a writing center for students.

## EXPERIENCE

Graphic Designer

Clients include: Apple Inc., Sesame Workshop, School of Visual Arts, Harvard University Press

July 2018 – present

Summary: For Apple's Search Ads group, I created a suite of screens for a fake app demonstrating the Apple App Store's advertising platform, and also redesigning pages on searchads.apple.com. For Sesame Workshop (the parent organization of Sesame Street), I designed the 2020 annual report for their Middle East children's education initiative, *Ahlan Simsim*. This report was instrumental in securing operational funding from the MacArthur Foundation. I was a member of the small team creating an entirely new site at sva.edu for School of Visual Arts. Recently I've designed several book jackets for Harvard, a website for AI ethicist Reid Blackman, and a bilingual Sanskrit/English edition of the ancient poem *Yoga Tarvali*, privately published.

Associate Director, Content Strategy

Rhode Island School of Design

April 2017 – July 2018

Role: I was hired to manage content on the famed art school's primary website, risd.edu. The role spanned three broad areas of responsibility inside RISD's Media Group: planning site content initiatives; managing content updates from across campus; and serving as the site's liaison with partners in admissions, academics, giving, and alumni. In this role, I worked directly with the incoming Director of Giving to build a new section on risd.edu that for the first time enabled donations and fundraising directly through the web. I led a team in building a new microsite to promote the school's newest master's program in Liberal Arts. I created documentation of our group's publishing cycle in order to surface areas of inefficiency and streamline team collaboration.

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Senior User Experience Designer

Clients: strategy and marketing agencies Phenomenon, OIC Agency, Something Massive

August 2013 – March 2017

Services: As a team member at Something Massive working for TOMS Shoes, I designed a program to bring to life the client's concept of an internal crowdfunding philanthropy competition. This entailed creating the competition's complete online home and solving logistical problems around timing and scheduling of the competition. While at Phenomenon, I created nearly a hundred wireframes in two weeks for a proof-of-concept wireless carrier website, contributing to the agency's push to launch a competitor to Google Fi.

User Experience Designer

*The New York Times* Games Group

February 2013 – July 2013

Role: In 2014, the *Times* launched its first four digital products as a major new revenue initiative. I was the UX designer for the first native iOS crossword app, tasked with creating a full complement of experience assets: user flows, wireframes, prototypes, puzzle grids, the Mini puzzle, icons, even a custom keyboard. I devised user flows to make game play efficient and simple while also meeting the *Times*'s revenue mandate to sell puzzle packs. This product was a major success for the *Times*, growing from more than 200,000 subscribers at launch to 2 million monthly users in the first two years. Revenue in the first year was reported at nearly \$3 million.

Senior Communications Designer

IDEO New York

June 2010 – January 2013

Role: Working in the highly collaborative, radically speculative environment of IDEO's design-strategy consultancy, I was one of three on the team to help the CFPB (an agency in the US Department of the Treasury) build an online tool for comparing the cost of college tuition, one of the agency's initial core financial education resources for the public. Other projects involved hospitality, financial services, and consumer goods. I also co-created an in-house storytelling event and staged a night of personal stories for the office community.

Owner & Principal

Sam Potts Inc.

August 2002 – October 2009

For seven years, I operated a successful graphic design business, building from just three initial clients to a client list that included best-selling authors (John Hodgman, Jon Scieszka), premier restaurants (Nobu, Montrachet, Aix), musical geniuses (They Might Be Giants, Jonathan Coulton), small businesses (BodyTonic Pilates, Daniel Johnnes Wines), and non-profits (JEHT Foundation, 826NYC). I was responsible for the life of every project, from negotiating budgets to the execution of concepts to production of print materials and digital products. In every project, my goal was to deliver value for my client and provide design solutions that spoke with a strong point of view.

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#### SAM POTTS INC. STUDIO HIGHLIGHTS

- Branding Highlights: The full identity for IFC Center, the independent film channel's flagship movie theater in Manhattan. My design system is still in use after 15-plus years, including the jokes I wrote for the back of the tickets. Full identities and print collateral for NYC restaurants: Aix, Brasserie 360, fr.og. Full identity and collateral for BodyTonic Pilates Gymnasium, new then and now a Park Slope institution.
- Digital Highlights: Ten websites under one URL: the original myriadrestaurantgroup.com site (for the parent company of Nobu and Tribeca Grill). Full site for beloved children's book author Jon Scieszka, children's book laureate of the United States. Publication site for the *Terrible Two* YA book series by Mac Barnett and Jory John.
- Publishing Highlights: The Metropolitan Museum's official monograph of *The Gates* by Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Three books of fake trivia and erroneous history, replete with tables and diagrams, by John Hodgman.  
*Bed, Bed, Bed*, the only children's book by They Might Be Giants.

#### FAVORITE PROJECT

- The Brooklyn Superhero Supply Co. was the project of a lifetime. As the storefront for the nonprofit tutoring center 826NYC, the superhero store sold equipment and accessories for the modern crimefighter. As the sole designer, and a volunteer, I wrote and designed the famous storefront signage, art directed multiple brands of superhero supplies and their packaging systems, and designed in-store signs and displays. For the tutoring centering, I designed books, fundraising materials, templates for workshops, softball uniforms, anything that was needed. It's not easy to get a nonprofit noticed, but the store's hilarious premise and unassuming yet engaging design has been an important part of the center's lasting presence in the neighborhood.

#### TEACHING

Products of Design masters program, School of Visual Arts  
2022 –2024

Art Center College of Design  
2014 – 2017

School of Visual Arts  
1997 – 1999

#### EDUCATION

Columbia University  
Bachelor's in Comparative Literature 1992 in New York City

Portfolio Center  
Two years of post-graduate work in Graphic Design from 1998 – 2000 in Atlanta