

TOP 10
THINGS I'VE LEARNED
WHILE BEING A
“GRAPHIC DESIGNER”

Melissa Steep, 2014

Note: All images have been borrowed from the internet.



10 PECKED TO DEATH BY DUCKS

Your work will be criticized: constructively or otherwise. Growing a thick skin is needed on this career path.

Coworkers, bosses and clients will let you know what they would like changed.

Remember the most important opinion is of your target audience, however your boss and clients sign your paycheques.

It's important to be able to defend your work, but also know when to alter it to make it better.



9 SHARK SUGAR

Sharks can smell fear, so can clients.

Never present work you're not confident in. If your intent is questioned, it will be hard to defend your position.

A photograph of a forest of giant sequoia trees. The trees are massive, with thick, reddish-brown trunks and dense green foliage. A person wearing a red jacket and blue pants is walking on a path in the foreground, providing a sense of scale. A piece of brown paper with handwritten text is overlaid on the image.

8 I'M KIND OF A BIG DEAL

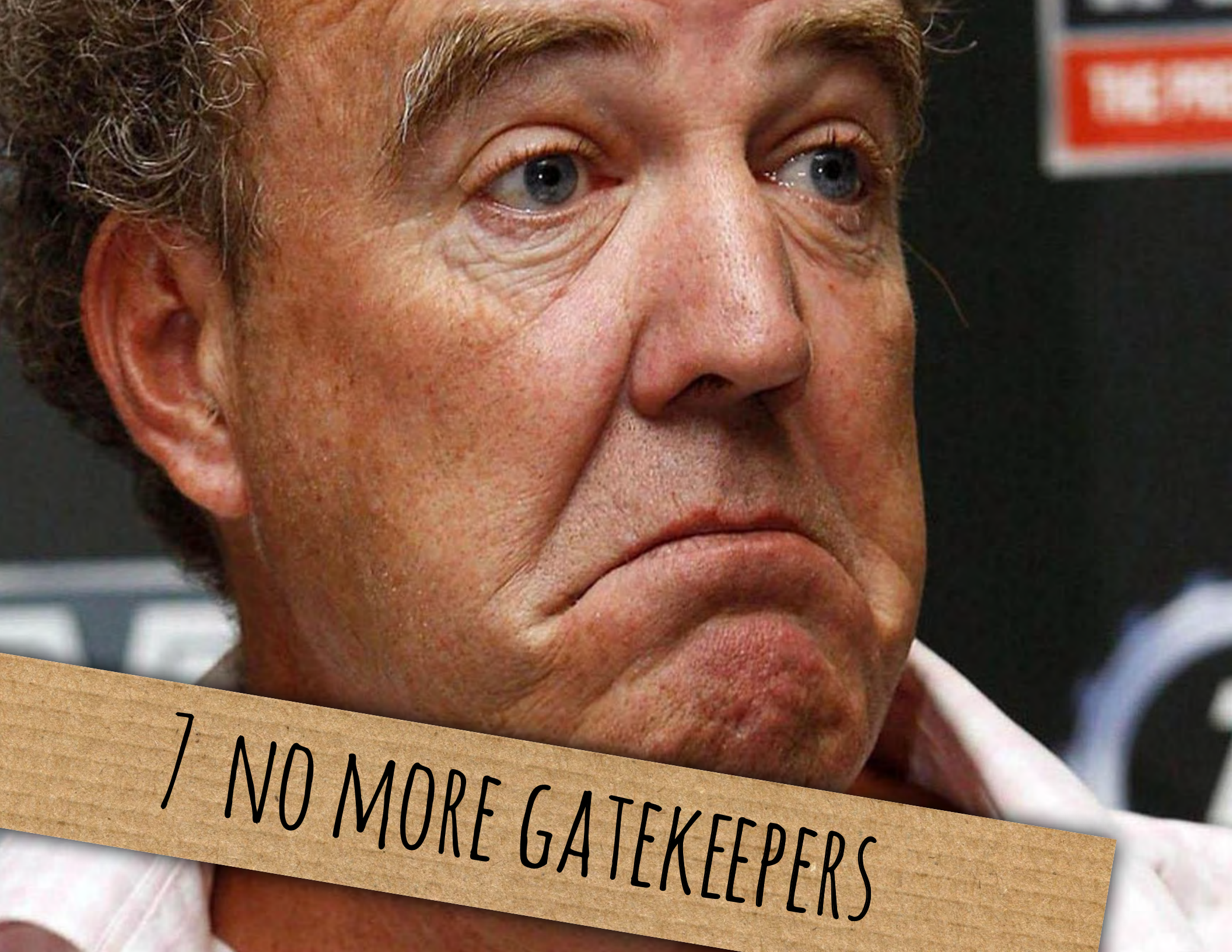
Artists are naturally self-conscious.

Putting your work out there for the world to see and judge can be nerve-wracking.

Another way to think about it: you're very brave.

Brave because you have the courage to show your vulnerability time and time again.

Always remember that when you are feeling low about your work.



7 NO MORE GATEKEEPERS

Now more than ever before gatekeepers are disappearing - meaning if you have an idea for something, you can make it happen.

Sites such as Kickstarter, Etsy and even Twitter connect you to your target audience and put you in a position to speak to the head-honcho online!



6 MORE SKILLS = MORE CHOICE

Graphic design is a great skill to have. You know about typography, colour theory, layout, grids, etc.

For a well-balanced resume, add another skill such as: programming, web design, social media, copywriting, public relations, marketing or advertising.

The more skills you have, the more choice you'll have on where you can get employment.

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a straw hat, black-rimmed glasses, and a bright green patterned scarf, is looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a blue denim jacket. In the background, a black motorcycle is parked on a city street. The street has buildings with various facades, including a corrugated metal shutter and a brick wall. A green construction net is visible on the right side of the street. A brown banner with white text is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

5 NICHE-BRAND-TREND

**Know your Niche: Who are you speaking to?
What do they want? Can you help them achieve
their goals?**

**Know your Brand: How do you appeal to your
niche market? Does the presentation of who
you are resonate with your target market?**

**Know it's a Trend: Know when it's time to move
on. Opening a cupcake store right now is prob-
ably not wise if the new rage is in food trucks.**

Every trend has a season.

4 WHY?

A large group of Disney characters, including Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Goofy, Donald Duck, and many others, are arranged in a large U-shape on a dark, paved surface. The characters are dressed in various costumes, some of which are elaborate and colorful. In the top right corner, there is a piece of light brown cardboard with the text "4 WHY?" written on it in a black, handwritten-style font. The characters are arranged in a way that they appear to be looking towards the center of the U-shape. The overall scene is a playful and creative representation of a group of Disney characters.

If you are not sure why you've been asked to do something, don't be afraid to ask why.

Maybe there is a strategy behind it, more information that you need to know - it could provide you with valuable insight.

The more you know about the "why" the better your work will be.

HELLO
my name is

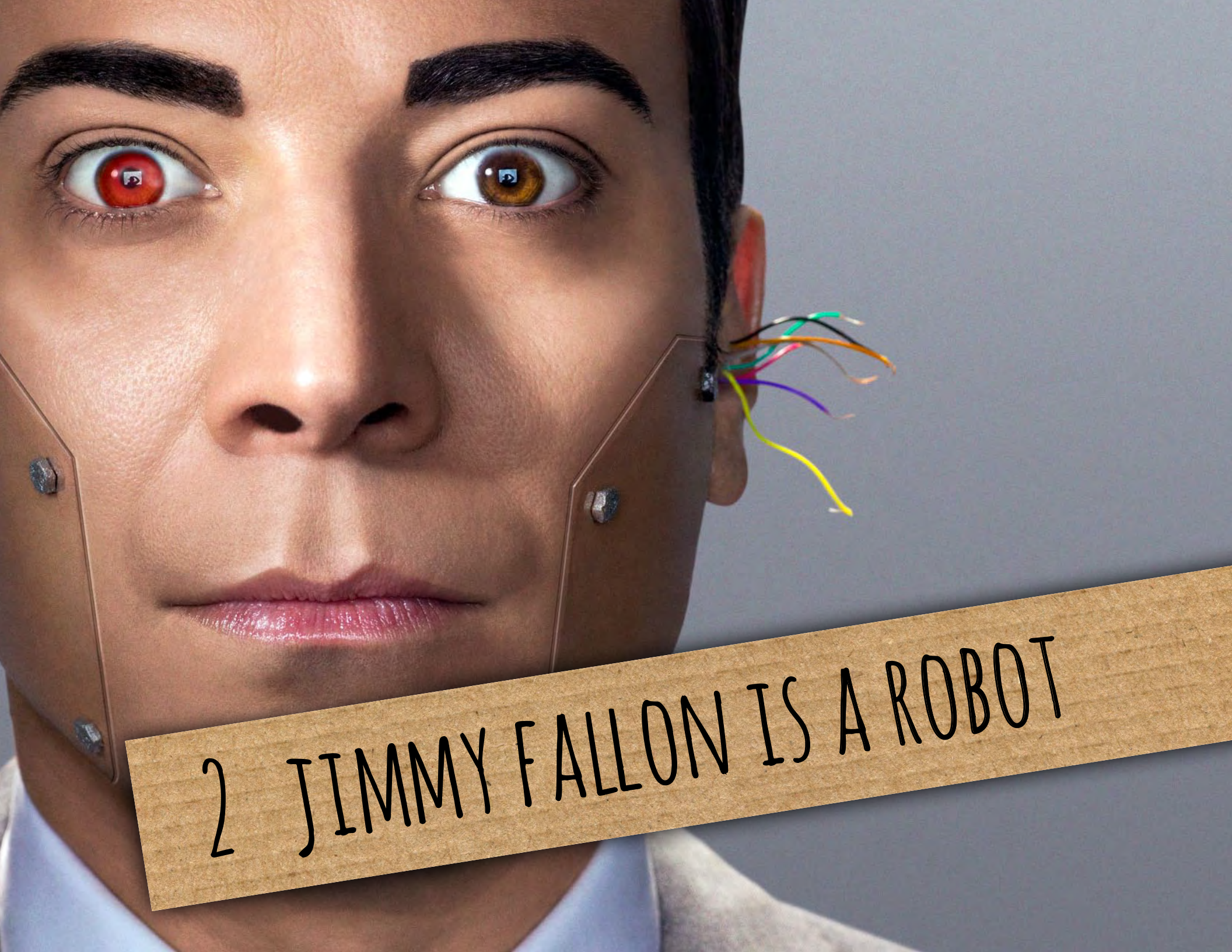
CONTENT

3 THE GUTS

Something that I am learning right now is the power of owning your own content.

If you really love kayaking and you can tap into that niche market kayakers and sell your design or a brand that surrounds it - you're laughing!

Sure, you can design lots of communications material for lots of other audiences, but it's great when you have something to call your own.



2 JIMMY FALLON IS A ROBOT

Not all clients, coworkers or bosses will understand the need for graphic design.

Some people believe art should be free, open to contest or can be automated online.

Don't waste your time trying to convince these people. Your work and your time are worth the money. Never undervalue, never sell-out.

I CREATE. DON'T REACT



It is easy in this online world to see design and immediately get envious or even competitive about “one-upping” the other guy. These are dangerous waters to create from.

The best place to create is from being inspired. What inspires you? Go out, be in nature, get a coffee with friends, watch your favourite movie, etc.

Make your creative process a positive experience!