



The Underemployed Creative

Multi-hyphenate Jason Kinney on bears, booths and design nerds

The first thing you notice when you see Jason Kinney is his beard.

It's as if he were a classical Greek statue, or perhaps a subject from a neoclassical painting. The beard is striking and stoic, yet full of flair.

Kinney, who hails from Charlotte, North Carolina, calls himself an "underemployed creative."

"Two weeks ago I was assisting a wardrobe stylist on a Walmart commercial to this last week doing a photo booth for a corporate client to designing a business card, scarves, and then photography," Kinney says.

He started early as an artist, studying photography in high school, and came out of the closet when he was 19 while working at the Gap.

"I never saw myself buying silk flowers," Kinney jokes.

He's referring to his preparation for his photo booths, but the statement applies well to Kinney, 38. A Portland transplant of three years, he's made a name for himself

as the creator of silk scarves, the crafter behind labor-intensive photo booths and the mastermind of a YouTube video that went viral.

Upon moving here he did a photo booth for a friend, a process that led to his signature creations. To make his very specific spaces, Kinney admits it takes "a week's worth of work and numerous trips to Michaels and Home Depot." His clients have included Stumptown Coffee Roasters, Hanna Andersson and Laughing Planet.

Two years ago, when Lady Gaga was at the apex of her fame with songs like "Poker Face" and "Bad Romance," Kinney had an idea for a parody. The result: "Neutra Face: An Ode On A Typeface (A Bearded Poker Face Parody)," a YouTube video that has amassed more than 430,000 views.

"I credit the bears and the design nerds for the popularity of 'Neutra Face,'" Kinney says. "When I look at the stats, we were big in America, Canada and Germany—if that doesn't say bears and design nerds, I don't what does."

To see Kinney's work, visit his website, jasonkinney.net, or his Flickr page, flickr.com/photos/jasonkinney.

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