

Chris Calori

Environmental Graphic Designer



Chris Calori, along with her partner David Vanden-Eynden, is a principal designer at CVE-Design | Entro, a New York City-based design firm that specializes in environmental graphic design (EGD), the planning and design of signage and wayfinding programs, branded environments, and user navigation systems. Calori received a master's degree in design planning and a bachelor's degree in industrial design/visual communications from Ohio State University. She and Vanden-Eynden helped establish EGD around the world and are recognized as being among the twenty-five most influential designers in the field. Calori answered the questions below.

What appeals to you about design as a profession?

I love design because it always presents new opportunities and new challenges, even as you acquire knowledge based on your past experience. No two design problems are the same, and neither are the solutions. You change, the world changes, and all that you experience is synthesized in each and every design solution.

Stay interested. Besides hard work and persistence, the other key to being a great designer is experiences and empathy; they help you understand how to communicate with many different people. So diversify your experiences. Challenge yourself to learn new things and meet new people. Stay open-minded and flexible.



Fig. 4-X. CVEDesign, *Stocking Hall signage and placemaking*, Cornell University, 2011–2014.



Fig. 4-X. CVEDesign, Roosevelt Island signage and placemaking, New York City, 2016–2018.

What do environmental graphic designers do?

EG designers are often part of the consultant team assembled by architects for a building design or renovation project, but EG design has finally come into its own, as well. Cities and universities engage EG designers to create signage and other EG design programs. Real estate managers hire EG designers to revitalize the image of a building or facility. Corporations and institutions, including transportation agencies, ask EG designers to unify environmental communication systems on regional, national, and global scales.

What steps can a student take to become an environmental graphic designer?

EGD is a cross-disciplinary specialty field that combines aspects of graphic design,

architecture, and industrial and interior design. Due to the lack of comprehensive EGD educational programs, and because of the cross-disciplinary nature of the field, the only way EGD practitioners can fill gaps in their knowledge base is by learning in the workplace. For example, a graphic designer must learn about three-dimensional forms and materials, working in scale, interpreting architectural drawings, and basic drafting.

Any tips for young designers?

Design is an inherently collaborative process, so you should come to any design relationship with a cooperative rather than an adversarial spirit. Of course, you must bring your knowledge, expertise, and conviction to the relationship, but you also must be able to give and take.