Artistpreneur Spotlight – Siu Tang, Founder | Creative Director Of The Orangeblowfish

admin . Posted on September 3, 2020

Siu Tang is founder and creative director of The Orangeblowfish, an award-winning, independent creative agency spanning across Asia Pacific: Shanghai, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Sydney. After spending more than 10 years in the corporate world, in 2012, Siu started his career in creative art and branding. Siu has had the pleasure to work on creative projects for Fortune 500 companies and startups that includes rebranding and corporate identity initiatives, brand activation campaigns for print, digital, social, wall art installation for public and corporate spaces and more. Siu is well-known street for his street art in Asia and has held two art shows in Shanghai. Siu is a regular speaker at events and contributor to magazines on a variety of topics ranging from changing careers, to what it takes to be a creative, and the future landscapes of China.

1.) What elements and/or characteristics made you say to yourself that you wanted to do entrepreneurship for a living?

I wanted to do something that would inspire my children. When I thought about answering the question, "Daddy, what do you do for a living?," I looked at my life from an entirely different perspective. Growing up, I had the thought that I wanted to make a ton of money, but when you get older you realize that's not the most important thing in life.

2.) Who are your influences/heroes/role models?

Paula Scher is an American graphic designer who is quite inspiring. Her story and creative journey are really interesting – she turned gig posters into a job and pioneered her way through to environmental design projects. As an artist, I'm also inspired by those around me – from the person walking on the street next to me to other artists, like my friend Fran in Hong Kong.

3.) If you could compare yourself to someone who is already established in your line of work, who would that be and why? If you don't like to compare yourself, then what separates you from other everyone else who does what you do?

I don't limit my inspiration to only creatives. I compare myself to successful people from other types of industries and see what I can learn from them. For example, Thomas Heatherwick, who started with an art degree, built one of the most successful architecture practices in the world. He has a background in sculpture and environmental graphics and I'm in awe of his ideas, and how he applied them to a completely different industry. I strive to be multi-disciplined. Limiting myself to one specific area limits creativity. It's important to be flexible in order to problem solve.

4.) Everyone in life goes through adversity of some sort. Is there anything in your life that has any influence on the work that you do? What is the most difficult thing you've had to endure on your path to becoming an entrepreneur?

I'm what you would call a late bloomer. I started my own business and entered the creative field at a much later age. I also don't have the traditional creative / designer background, and as such I had to work harder to improve my own skill and win clients. Needless to say, there were plenty of late nights. I love what I do, so I'm enjoying the learning curve and challenges!

5.) How do you prepare yourself to create? What is your process?

Here's more about our creative process: https://www.theorangeblowfish.com/creativebrandingdesign/ (https://www.theorangeblowfish.com/creativebrandingdesign/)

6.) How do you think the internet and social media affected the creative industry and how artists are able to market themselves? Social media is obviously an extremely important element in today's world, especially when it comes to business, branding, marketing, etc. With that being said, do you think an artist will be able to survive in today's economy if they're not social media savvy?

I first started sharing my art, seeing what others are up to, keeping my practice accountable. Lots of artists tend to keep projects private. It's important to be social media savvy but you can't social media be the only guiding factor: chasing followers, fame and glory. . I feel that as an artist, or in any profession, you need to be true to yourself and your work has to be meaningful to you. The purpose of social media is to amplify your work, see what's trending, as well as engage with a community that perhaps you wouldn't have had access to offline. Be careful with taking comments too personally, as there's a lot of people who you don't know who give very harsh criticism. It's a fine balance.

7.) Typically, entrepreneurs who try to create products and/or services for mass consumption for the general public and make more money are seen as "sell-outs." Do you see it that way and if so, what do you plan to do to make sure that what you offer stays true to your brand and make a good living at the same time without having to "sell out"?

Being successful does not mean you're a sellout, it means you are aware of what is en fashion or en vogue. Sometimes your artwork or designs resonate with your audience. It's not to say, "I'm very popular … OMG, I'm a sellout." No. There is a sense of pride in all of us that we want to make things people will like, people will buy. We are social creatures!

As long as you're true to yourself, constantly improving yourself to be better at your craft, and continue to move forward, checking in to ask yourself, "What's next?"... and you'll be alright.

8.) Professionally, where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

I love living in the moment. When I was in corporate, I used to dream about where I would be in 5 years in the future, and having started The Orangeblowfish 8 years ago, I would never have imagined to be where I am today.

So, my aim now in life, is to not know what fun and interesting projects I'll be doing, because when we are so focused on the end goal, we are not present. When I am creating something, I think the moment is precious. So, I tend to enjoy it.