

Designer  
Writer  
Teacher

Chuck Byrne

*A Very Brief Festschrift*



“Chuck frequently says,  
‘Don’t rush it.  
Good design takes considerable thought and time.’”

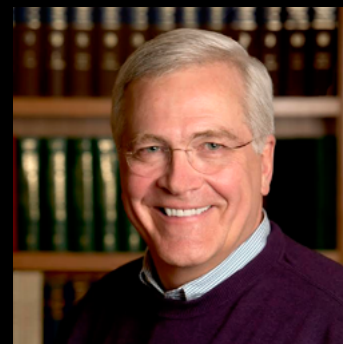
–Elizabeth Douthitt Byrne  
Former Head  
Environmental Design Library  
University of California



“Every interaction with Chuck involves new insights to design, to simplicity of effort and approach, and to the application of precision craft and art.”

–Mike Keller

Head of the Libraries, Stanford University  
Publisher, Stanford University Press



“Through Chuck, I have learned that ‘opening one’s rolodex’ is an invaluable support for public institutions.

He deftly and selflessly masterminds connections with the goal of sharing the best design with the most people...

Thanks to his altruism, museum collections contain prime examples of California’s golden era in design, where they can inspire generations to come.”

–Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher  
Curator of Architecture and Design  
SFMOMA



“When I listen to Chuck  
I always see more than I did before.

He has young eyes  
and a master’s insight.”

—Jim Faris

Creative Director, Skype

Original Creative Director, Android



“One of my favourite Chuck quotes is...

‘I don’t think sense is all that common.’”

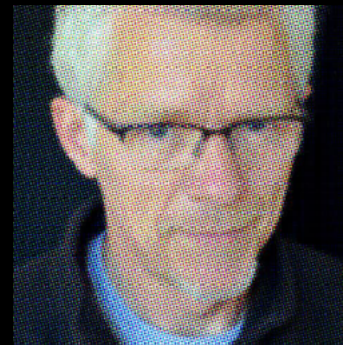
–Dennis Letbetter  
Photographer



“I learn stuff from Chuck all the time.  
The latest kernel of wisdom came recently,  
when I asked which designers impress him.

He qualified his answer by saying,  
‘You have to understand what designers are after  
to understand if they have succeeded.’”

–Rudy VanderLans  
Co-Founder  
*Emigre*



“What did I learn from Chuck?

There’s nothing new...

we’re just seeing things in a new context.”

– Clement Mok  
Impresario  
Sugarfish Sushi





“What I learned from Chuck is to relax.

I remember him telling me  
that he’s never so relaxed as when he gets on a plane  
because at that point he knows everything is out of his hands.

I think of that whenever I fly now and it helps enormously.  
I even manage to carry it over into other areas of my life.”

–Carol Stevens Kner  
Former Managing Editor  
*Print Magazine*



“Chuck taught me to appreciate the history of design—  
to investigate where design came from,  
to understand where design is now,  
and to influence where design can go.”

—Marco Huerta  
(Former Student)  
Director of Product Design  
Visa



“On the first day of Advanced Typography  
Chuck told us that ‘Ideas are not precious,  
and you shouldn’t be scared of throwing them away.’

He made us use Sharpies, so we wouldn’t get lost in detail,  
and cheap copy paper, so we wouldn’t feel attached to the output.”

–Thomas Gaskin  
(Former Student)  
Innovation Manager  
Doblin Group, New York



“The coin of the realm  
is the ‘design idea.’”

–Randall Sexton  
Professor, Graphic Design,  
San José State University



“What did Chuck teach me?

‘It’s all about the white space.’”

–Pino Trogu

Associate Professor, Information Design,  
San Francisco State University



“What did Chuck teach me?

‘Giving more than you can.’”

– Connie Hwang  
Chair, Department of Design  
San José State University



“I shared an office with Chuck for 17 years.  
I enjoyed his insightful views of design practice,  
real action for others in our field,  
and gentle cynicism.”

–Joe Miller  
Assistant Professor  
San José State University



“In 1980, we moved into an office together. My half was black and white plus a few red accents. Chuck’s half was an explosion in yellow: cabinets, coat hangers, paper clips, pencil sharpeners, tape dispensers, and waste baskets.

All this was rather peculiar for our clients. Eventually, though, it led to our collaboration on some very colorful projects.

–Robert Probst  
Dean,  
College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning  
University of Cincinnati





“Chuck is a true gentleman (a rarity these days).

Reflective, yet tenacious,  
he has sterling integrity as a teacher and a writer.  
He is thorough and diligent,  
consistently setting a fine example of care and quality.

But he has an unfair advantage:  
his wife, Elizabeth, head of the design library at Berkeley.”

–Leslie Becker  
Professor  
(and Former Design Division Dean)  
California College of the Arts



“Chuck and I were comrades in design.  
He brought a lot to the table—a lot of enlightened ideas.

He’s always been a very ardent teacher.  
He organized an exhibit of my work at San José State,  
which was a turning point for me.

Give him a good rousing applause, will you?”

—Jack Stauffacher  
Doyen of San Francisco Fine Printers



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and students

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