



Photographers and Artisans

The Watson Writes Portfolio

(These are just a sampling of the dozens of articles written on this subject matter)

*“Apple’s newest smartphone models use machine learning to make every image look ‘professionally taken.’ **That doesn’t mean the photos are good.**” New Yorker Magazine*

Let’s face it. When people think photography in 2022, they see our “selfie” driven world. It is about our “phones”. What used to be a communication device now masquerades as a “photography lab in one’s palm.”

Smile, click, done.

A wild snap, and the subject hopes something “good” happened. We snap, and we snap until we get something “decent.” Do the results approach anything close to professional photography? No. A recent independent photograph study observed of the latest iPhone photography capability: ““Its complex, interwoven set of ‘smart’ software components don’t fit together quite right.”

Here is the secret you need to know. Photography is not about how a camera is snapped. The magical results are 1000% due to what is in front of the camera to be captured. The final photo must exude a brand, whether professional or personal. That brand must be defined, its story constructed and then it needs to be painted with the perfect lighting, color tones, positioning and images. The skill required to integrate all these elements into experiential magic is equal parts science and art. The talent to bring it all together is rare.

That talent’s name is Taylor Boone.

Within Taylor's methodology, you or your product are her pallet of colors. She will bring out your shades, your tones, your nuances, your identity, and your spirit in a way you did not imagine possible. Light, textures and the shape of her subject's face are her tools, and she manages each with intense precision.

Taylor's perspective was formed early. Due to an illness when she was a girl, she was completely deaf for several years during her formative young life. The removal of this sense forced her to develop her visual skills and fine tune her observations. Her intuition for the emotions around her has been honed to a deep level of detail. It guides her strategy in constructing the image for her client that reveals them in a way they might have never imagined possible.

"Oh my God, that is perfect. How did you know, how did you see and capture THAT?" is a common response to Taylor Boone concepts.

Taylor's objective is to make you or your product inspirational. As your target viewer sees you through Taylor Boone's lens, they will be moved and compelled to embrace your uniqueness and your mission.

Taylor's mediums range from still photography to videography. Whether a single image, or a full video production, Taylor will integrate the exactly right sensory expression that conveys your story and relevance in the most deeply felt way. Your prospects and clients will not just intellectually understand you, your product or service, they will emotionally connect.

Your project will be run with precision. Since it is being developed by our boutique-style agency, your media strategy will be defined, the details thought-out and well planned. Your digital marketing assets will be made available for evaluation, approval, and delivered in a state-of-the-art process.

Taylor believes in you. She is aware that within you, you carry an idea, a brilliance, and an importance. She knows that just as you have a unique fingerprint and a unique DNA map, you carry a soul, whether as a person, product or service, with a message. She will help you find it, define it and see it.

Then, she will make the rest of the world see it too.

Paul Richmond Soars with Phoenix and Butterfly Wings

Paul Richmond's paintings are mind-blowing. Filled with abstraction of color, motion, form and vibrancy, they focus on the unique identity of the subject and that subject's inner life with its own abstraction of pain, joy and spirit. They often blend beauty with whimsy, intrigue with eroticism.

Paul has gained international notoriety, publication in numerous art journals and anthologies as well as exhibition in galleries and museums through the United States. In his own words, "My style weaves back and forth between realism and abstraction, usually incorporating aspects of both to varying degrees. There are common threads of personal narrative, self-expression, and the questioning of societal constructs around gender and sexuality."

In full disclosure, I personally have been the subject of one of Paul's paintings, a piece in his Promiseland exhibit called [Echoes](#). Seeing yourself from Paul Richmond's perspective is not just seeing your face on a wall... he lets you see what your soul looks like.

I recently caught up with him for an interview.

When you meet him, his boyish exuberant personality does not scream “serious artist”. He is accessible and outgoing. He laughs a lot and while not taking himself too seriously, demands due respect for his work. He is completely accessible, but after a few minutes of watching him work, you know you are in the presence of someone extraordinary.

He is an artist on the verge of soaring to great heights. The wings with which he flies are not just his own, however. The fluttering you may imagine hearing around him are not from him alone.

They are from his phoenix and his butterfly. Two womanly forces – one that has inspired him, and one that has been a thorough and life-saving guiding force to his personal accomplishment.

The Phoenix: Linda Regula

Linda Regula was Paul Richmond’s life-long art instructor. Paul met her when he was 4 years old. She was the first person in his life who literally lived amongst their created art. Walking into her home and seeing that environment, impressed him greatly. She saw promise in him, and immediately told his parents that she would guide him in his talent.

Linda’s art was both her expression and her release of the pain of abuse she had suffered. She embraced the image of the phoenix, ““Being poor, shy, skinny, and motherless, I was bullied unmercifully as a child. When I was in the fourth grade, our teacher asked students to listen to a story about a phoenix, then to draw a picture of the mythical fire bird rising from ashes...Gathering up several crayons marked with names that I loved, I colored its feathers emerald green, ruby red, violet, and cobalt blue. At last, satisfied that my Phoenix appeared to live within the drawing, I created a radiant yellow sun whose golden rays seemed to tease the bird into flight. I then drew glowing embers scattered beneath its feet, and colored black and brown residue clinging to its long legs to indicate that the great bird was rising from sooty ashes.” Her phoenix was given a place of honor in her classroom, but was soon destroyed by her bully. ”Memory of that bully destroying my phoenix drawing still remains as if that magnificent fire bird, its feet coated with hot ashes, had actually walked across my brain.”

She communicated this to the young Mr. Richmond in age-appropriate ways, giving him the awareness that his own artistic expression was more than ideas and concepts, but a means to heal – should he need it. When he entered fourth grade, the need for that outlet emerged.

His earlier school career had been in a Montessori environment, and after third grade, he was sent to a Catholic school. His artistic and buoyant personality signaled his emerging sexual orientation and even before he could grasp his own self-awareness, he was badgered and abused himself.

He did not confide this to Linda, mostly due to shame and confusion he felt, but she became aware of his change in mood and demeanor. When he finally did open up, enough, she encouraged him to “paint about it.” His first painting expressing the situation was a work called “The Piece that did not fit.” It was a painting of a puzzle with all the pieces (his classmates) fitting, and one odd piece that did not... himself. As he dealt with suicidal thoughts in sixth grade, his ability to paint his feelings, and to express himself through Linda’s classes were the only things that kept him from exercising self-harm. “Taking pride in myself as an artist was my life raft,” he says. “Linda encouraged me to

take all of those feelings and express them in art, I hadn't really considered that before. I had seen her paintings and the way she used art to process her own life, but that was the first time I realized I could do that too — that art could be a way for me to deal with what was happening at school and in my life.”

The Butterfly: Dolly Parton

Dolly Parton loves butterflies. In many ways, they seem equally representative of her persona. From humble beginnings, they transform into colorful fabulousity. They are attention getting, fabulous and always soaring to new colorful heights. They are the definition of Dolly Parton.

As a young teenager, Paul Richmond held the ultimate butterfly, Dolly Parton, up as a role model. “As I got older, I became more aware of her personality and who she was, I just really related to her. There were a lot of similarities actually between her and Linda, because they both have the backstory of growing up in poverty in the mountains; Both had really adorable Southern accents. They are both creative inspiring people who really shine a big light in the world. So, Linda was first, but I think it was kind of natural for me to latch on to Dolly as a role model because she was so similar in many ways to the role model that I already had.”

Paul's youthful determination to meet The Butterfly paid off. He persuaded both his parents and Parton's handlers to allow him to bring her a piece of art when she opened Dollywood. He was 12 years old.

Years later, inspired by a Dolly reference on his website, The World of Wonder gallery in Los Angeles contacted him and asked him to submit a piece for their Dolly-Pop exhibition. He created a fanciful piece. In the canvas, Dolly appears in the Glinda Good Witch bubble above the yellow brick road in front of a 4-year old boy who stands transfixed... wearing a pair of grown woman's high healed shoes. A huge butterfly is featured prominently in the painting.

A print of the painting also ended up in Dolly's dressing room. “I was really trying to just capture my childhood fascination with Dolly and I thought the Wizard of Oz, would be a perfect metaphor for that. Meeting Dolly in Dollywood, as a kid was such a, such a meaningful important part of my childhood, and I wanted to represent the feeling she really opened up a whole world to me that I knew I wanted to be part of, and that I wanted to someday venture out into from the little conservative town that I lived in. Experience more of this big colorful amazing world for which Dolly was the entry point,” Paul told me.

The Phoenix Rises and the Butterfly Sings

Linda Regula died in July of 2020. Her passing intensified Paul's commitment and involvement in an organization they had co-founded called the You Will Rise Project.

Its logo is the phoenix.

You Will Rise provides “a multimedia showcase for people of all ages who have been bullied to share their stories through the arts. Submissions can include visual art (paintings, drawings, sculptures, videos, etc.) as well as poetry, song lyrics, short stories, or other creative expressions that best

capture their personal experiences. The You Will Rise Project asks only that contributors be truthful and real. No corrections or alterations will be made to the works that are posted on the site.”

Shortly after Linda’s passing, Paul heard from Parton’s art director. They wanted to commission a Paul Richmond painting for Dolly Parton’s living room... a painting of butterflies.

Paul had a great conversation and shared about his back story, about Linda, and his love of Dolly. He told them about You Will Rise, and an online fund raiser they were doing for a scholarship in Linda’s name. “Well, I think that Dolly would really like to be part of that,” the director stated.

On Saturday, October 17, You Will Rise and ArtCOZ (the Artist Colony of Zanesville) presented a virtual event honoring Regula’s legacy and established the Linda Regula Legacy Scholarship Fund for young people who utilize artistic expression to communicate their personal experiences with adversity.

The event included the donation of a rhinestone-studded autographed guitar from Parton’s personal collection.

And Dolly Parton sang a livestream tribute to Linda. The butterfly serenaded the phoenix.

“It was really beautiful to see the intersection of these two incredible women. Two women who were so important to me, come together in this way, at this event. It was really powerful. It meant so much,” Paul says.

As for the future, Paul continues both his art and his activism. He has a renewed passion to the You Will Rise Project. He is a driver behind the Re-Drawing Masculinity project for which he is both an instructor and model, along with transgender artist Briden Schueren. The workshop is designed to introduce the fundamentals of figure drawing and anatomy. The project website states: “Masculinity means more than bodies with a penis. This workshop is all-inclusive and anyone being inappropriate or disrespectful will be disconnected and banned.”

Paul seeks to also emulate his role model, Parton, the Butterfly. He says of her recent contribution to the fight against COVID 19: “Dolly has never been somebody who was interested in trying to make political statements she’s always been much more about spreading love and acceptance of everybody. I felt like this was such a meaningful way for her to contribute something so important right now. Then to also make a video of herself getting the vaccine to help hopefully inspire those who might have fears about it. Maybe she can reach people that others can’t. That’s kind of how she’s always operated she, she really, she doesn’t want to be divisive she truly wants to help, and she uses her platform to do that and I really respect that.”

As Paul and I finished our talk, he commented with a twinkle of an eye, “There are things coming up that I can’t yet tell you about for this interview. But stay tuned.”

I got butterflies....

How If You Design for the Marginalized, the Mainstream Users Win

American corporations embrace a self-evident truth. An inclusion of all talent across all genders, all races, and all physical abilities, is the key to the broadest success and financial health. This has

raised the consciousness and challenges of human resource professionals to meet the needs of all in the corporation, not simply the majority.

One human resource leader at a global organization expressed frustration on how to meet the needs she was uncovering. As she focused on each individually marginalized group, she found that each had unique challenges with specific requests for solution. When she looked at the list of designs each requested, she found many suggestions were diametrically opposed. If she solved situations for one group, she left another group in need.

Nothing exemplified this more than the demands for appropriate restroom access and design. The debate about transgender people's access to restrooms has polarized communities across the nation, with the current bathroom design pitting communities against each other. Is there an answer?

There is. It is called Universal Design. Universal Design meets the need to incorporate requirements that seem to be in direct conflict.

What is universal design?

Universal design is "The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design" (Ron Mace, 1985). While universal design began in the disability rights movement, its principles have spread beyond the built environment to inform website design, education, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work.

How can universal design help us meet the needs of all groups?

Universal design focuses on the most marginalized users to design an environment that benefits all users. Quite often, design choices intended to help one group benefit everyone else. This phenomenon is called the curb-cut effect. Curb-cuts, those sidewalk ramps designed for wheelchair users, also benefit people using walkers, strollers, bikes, carts, or wheeled luggage.

The curb-cut effect also shows up in DEI work. For example, in an organization where black women experienced significant barriers to inclusion, data showed that their managers were less supportive of them than other groups. The organization subsequently invested in inclusion training and management to change managers behaviors. As a result, this not only improved the experience of black women employees, but also improved the culture and opportunities for all other demographic groups across the organization. Inclusive management directly impacts employee engagement, with real implications for the entire organization's performance and profitability.

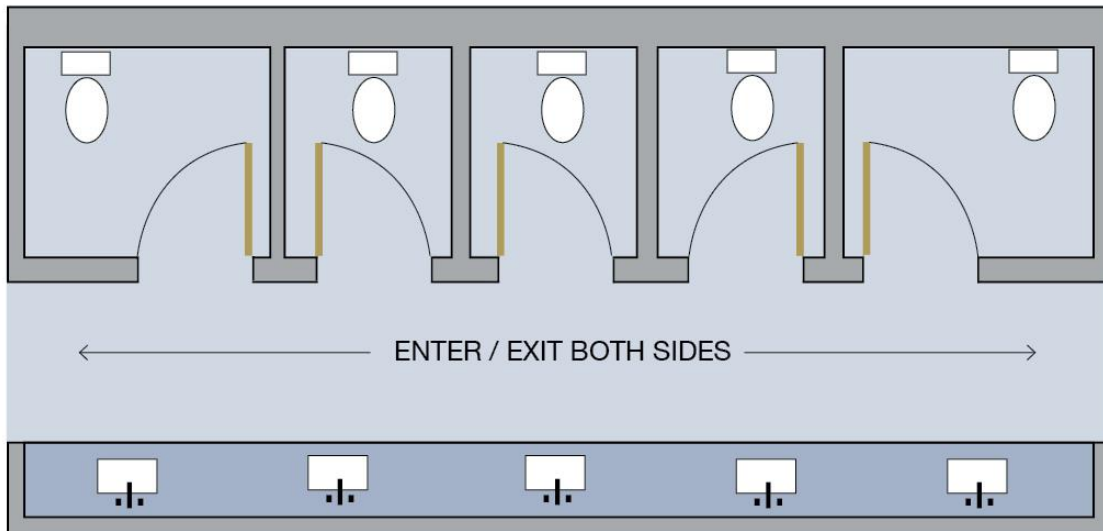
In the bathroom situation, universal design asks how bathrooms can be welcoming spaces for all people. Transgender people want to use the bathroom without being challenged, and women fear getting cornered in a space with no exit by a stranger. Universal design can address both needs.

All-gender restrooms with stalls whose doors extend to the ground and that do not have gaps provide privacy to transgender people and women alike. By creating rows of stalls in airy hallways with exits on either side, universal design addresses women's fears about being

cornered in the bathroom. True to the curb-cut effect, parents with children of the opposite gender and individuals whose caregivers do not share their gender also benefit from this design.

ALL GENDER RESTROOMS

INDIVIDUAL STALLS/ROOMS: FULL HEIGHT PARTITIONS WITH FULL HEIGHT DOORS ALLOW FOR PRIVACY



A single mother has a son who is uncomfortable using public restrooms or changing rooms alone, and at six years old, some feel he should not be allowed in women's spaces with her assistance. She often finds herself in a position where she has to choose between making other people uncomfortable or having him opt out of using public restrooms altogether. The gender-neutral universal design eliminates this dilemma without making her son feel his presence is an issue.

What is the workflow for universal design?

Universal design is a process rather than a static approach, and it asks us to design according to this cycle:

- What are the current best practices for our application?
- Who is the most impacted by or marginalized by the current system?
- How can we best support users who need additional accommodations?
- How will we evaluate our design?

Intentionally including users who might otherwise be considered "exceptions" in the design process is essential. That's because when we only consider the dominant group due to their gender, race, abilities, management status, or one of many other social identities, we will miss the barriers to inclusion that marginalized people experience. Designers research best practices by involving users through surveys, focus groups, listening sessions, community outreach, or

advocacy groups. Casting a wide net in the research phase helps people like the head of HR include multiple stakeholders from the outset.



The next step is identifying the most marginalized users. Identified them while researching best practices. Do additional research by disaggregating employee engagement scores, salaries, promotion rates, disciplinary actions, and turnover data. Compare the demographics of entry-level employees and executives. Look for groups who are in conflict with each other because the current system has created a zero-sum game, like the bathroom dilemma.

Once we identify and understand barriers to inclusion and who the most marginalized user(s) are, we can begin the design process.

What are the principles of universal design?

The following chart lists the seven principles of universal design and lists examples of them in the built environment and workplace culture.

Principle	Built environment	Workplace culture
Equitable use	Curb cuts accommodate walkers, wheelchairs, strollers, bikes, carts, and rolling luggage.	The organization openly acknowledges disparities and takes action to correct them.

Flexibility in use	Adjustable height desks, tables, and chairs accommodate people of all sizes.	The organization understands and embraces culturally diverse communication, learning, and leadership styles.
Simple and intuitive	Control buttons on equipment are labeled with text and symbols that are simple and intuitive to understand.	Career paths and promotion criteria are stated plainly and clearly.
Perceptible information	Signage with large print and high contrast.	Actionable feedback is given in a timely manner. Cultural norms and expectations are communicated clearly.
Tolerance for error	Guardrails or curbs to protect people from falling off pathways.	Mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities.
Low physical effort	Lever handles rather than knobs for doors, automatic doors.	Employers support work-life balance in word and deed.
Size and space for approach and use	Wide aisles in offices, theaters, and other public spaces.	Meeting organizers select rooms that are large enough to accommodate all attendees.

Even with a robust planning and design process, successfully designing for the needs of all users will have challenges. To achieve optimal results, the designer must keep a creative mindset and be constantly vigilant for improvements. Within organizations, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) play an important advisory role to senior leadership and can help fuel continuous improvement. Create opt-out versus opt-in processes to gather feedback and accommodation requests. This encourages feedback from the otherwise quieter part of the population. This data should inform future design iterations.

As important as leveraging universal design principles in the built environment, systems, and processes is, it cannot create full inclusion alone.

The corporate environment and culture must embrace not only the design but the spirit behind it. If the culture is toxic, marginalized individuals will feel oppressed and not take advantage of inclusive accommodations.

A company provided gender transition-related health care as part of its package to employees. Because it did not provide any transgender visibility in the company, nor did it take any action against employees making transphobic jokes and commentary, their transgender employees did not feel safe taking advantage of the benefits they were willing to provide.

Instead, a key employee exited the organization and began his gender transition process while employed at his next organization.

Parting Thoughts

An empowered, supported and motivated workforce is a company's greatest asset, and most important factor for success. By intentionally building accessible and welcoming built environments and workplaces cultures for the most marginalized users, we paradoxically improve the experience of all users. Integrating universal design principles as a tactic in their inclusive cultural endeavors is the true secret to accomplish their ultimate best.



Kai Stowers, Coach and Consultant in DEI and Organization Development

Kai Stowers is a consultant, certified integral coach from New Ventures West, and has a master's degree in Organizational Psychology and Change Leadership from Columbia University. He partners with organizations to help leaders gain greater self-awareness, lead culture change, and build inclusive teams within their organizations.

Kaistowers.com



Amy Bradac, Founder + CEO, Bradac and Co

Amy founded Bradac Co in 2013 as a full-service real estate construction management firm. As the CEO, she is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company as well as building new business relationships. Amy's 20 years of experience as an architect and contractor give her the unique experience of having viewed the industry from every angle, making her adept at facilitating communication and moving projects forward on time and budget. bradac.co