

The Screen Printer's One Stop Shop

Written by [Deborah Sexton](#)

Shannon Lucier has built her highly successful freelance art business on offering a full-service from design concept to high-end separations for printers and apparel companies.

Walk into any retail store that offers designs from Warner Bros., NASCAR, WWF, or a host of other licenses, and chances are you've seen the work of Shannon Lucier. Although this San Diego-based freelance artist has only been on her own for the past five years, she's already established a top-notch reputation by providing high-end artwork and the separations to go with it for screen printers and apparel manufacturers.

After studying advertising art in college, Lucier landed a job 11 years ago designing a line of children's clothes for Disney and their upcoming movies. It was there that she learned the apparel and screen printing industry inside and out. Throughout most of the 1990's, Lucier worked for several California companies designing decorated garments for such famous brands as Levi's, Guess, and Universal Studios. She began as a production artist, worked her way to artist, and color separations became her specialty. "I had such a passion for my work, I was dreaming in color separations!" Lucier says, and in 1999; Monster Graphics was born.



Shannon Lucier



You might recognize freelance artist Shannon Lucier's work in some of the packaging and advertising done for Scott Fresener, U.S. Screen Printing Institute. This design was done for Fresener's Fast Films.

Lucier keeps herself busy with designing, color separating, and film output. Her artwork includes car racing/auto designs, surfer/skater styles, reggae, wildlife, and experience with consumer groups from juniors to kids. She caters to screen printers ranging in size from garage-based, four-color manual to high-volume 16-color automatic shops.

Monster Graphics has grown rapidly as Lucier has developed a solid reputation for her work. She attributes much of her success to starting early in the industry when high-end designs and separations were just being developed for apparel printing.

Because of her years of print shop experience, Lucier can predict the outcome of a final print and compensate for individual shop variables. "If you haven't experienced printing first hand, you wouldn't know how one small change, like an ink color, can cost a lot of time and money just to clean the screen and make adjustments," she says. "There are tricks to the trade that I know that allow me to make a print work right the first time."

Lucier's versatility as an artist also is one of her biggest selling points. "Besides tackling everything from Hot Wheels racing to Hanna Barbara, trends and fashions are always changing," she says. "That's the exciting part of my job."

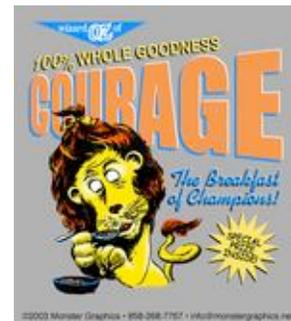
She also tracks apparel trends to guide clients to the hottest looks. "An important part of my business is knowing what's hot and what's not-everything from body style and colors, to graphic placement, and use of specialty inks."

Some of the latest trends are vintage styles, tattoo-like prints, and what Lucier describes as "simplicity with an edge." Specialty inks-shimmer for women, get for men-are popular, as is sparse use of high-density and



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This mermaid design, which is intended to resemble a tattoo, was created for a California T-shirt line. It was developed with WX Color Mixer and features a clear gel. Shannon Lucier keeps up with all the latest specialty inks to help point clients who are wanting a new look in the right direction.



Based on the original Wizard of Oz book, this design was created for a line of children's apparel. Artist Shannon Lucier's first job out of college was designing children's clothing for Disney.

metallic inks. New, longer-lasting glow-in-the-dark inks are also inspiring creative designs for children. This is an example of one of Lucier's many trade secrets she saves for her clients.

Lucier scouts such trends by traveling to top fashion trade shows, California's hot spots, and of course, shopping! "That's my favorite research," she says. "It's one thing to know what the manufacturers think is new and cutting edge, it's another to see what the public wants to wear and how they wear it."

Lucier is a contributing member of the Specialty Graphic Imaging Association (SGIA), reviews leading industry publications, and regularly attends trade shows like the Imprinted Sportswear Shows (ISS) to build her customer base and stay up-to-date on the latest technology. By staying versed in cutting-edge printing techniques and specialty inks, she can provide direction to a customer who wants to achieve a particular look.

Her down-to-business philosophy is quite the opposite of the stereotypical artist. She runs Monster Graphics like a true business right down to the service agreement, and offering online payment options. Although her designs are usually created digitally in Photoshop or Illustrator, she also is talented at hand drawing when the need arises. Most of her artwork is delivered electronically, and an FTP side allows her to upload large files so clients can access them immediately with a password. This efficient system helps her more easily handle frequent requests for rush work. "I've had a new client contact me in the morning, make payment online, and download the finished product by the end of the day," she says.

Lucier spends one-on-one time with her clients helping plan their designs with



In addition to her varied experience designing art for T-shirts and high-end separations, artist Shannon Lucier also has worked with apparel companies to develop unique clothing lines. This example was created as part of a Bob Marley ladies' line of clothing.



Because Lucier invests significant time tracking trends at the mall and retail fashion trade shows, she can offer her clients valuable input on the hottest new looks and techniques. One example is this tiki god design she created for a California surf line.

comps, samples, and color recommendations. If there's any question while a design is on the press, she's on the phone with the printer making suggestions and ensuring a perfect print. "In this industry, art can't just look good, it's got to look good printed," she says.

Lucier considers her reputation as a businessperson one of her greatest accomplishments. Word of mouth alone keeps a steady influx of customers, who are steadfastly loyal. "Once a client always a client. They come back for two simple reasons, quality and service," she says.

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Lucier describes one of the latest trends as "simplicity with an edge." A perfect example is this design created for Stanford University.



Lucier has developed a solid reputation in the auto racing market. This design, Car 49, was done for race car driver Mike Peters and his sponsors.