



MAKING ART A CAREER WITH ACA CERTIFICATION

GET CERTIFIED AND GET NOTICED — REAL-WORLD GRAPHIC DESIGN SKILLS LEAD TO SUCCESS

After participating in the inaugural ACA World Championship, Acquille was able to use his skills and ACA certification to launch a freelance digital art company, and his design career.

From Jamaica to Florida

Acquille Dunkley migrated from Jamaica to West Palm Beach, Florida in 2010. Moving to the US gave him his first exposure to the Adobe Certified Associate program, and, as they say, the rest is history. After participating in the inaugural ACA World Championship, Acquille was able to use his skills and ACA certification to launch a freelance digital art company, and his design career. Check out the full interview below.

Future SCAD Grad

Certiport: Acquille, thanks so much for taking the time to chat with us. We're so excited to hear about how things are going for you. Tell us where you're studying now.

Acquille: I'm a student at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Atlanta Campus, and I'm currently studying photography.

Certiport: That's great. Are you just going to school, or are you also working right now?

Acquille: I work as well. Right now I work as an assistant manager at a local art gallery called Spruill Gallery and I also own ADunkley Designs, a freelance digital art company.

Starting ADunkley Designs

Certiport: So you started your own digital art company! Tell us more about what you do for your clients.

Acquille: I started ADunkley Designs at age 17 back in 2012. I invested in a Canon Rebel T3i, an entry level DSLR camera, at the time. I was transitioning from just doing graphic design, to photographing my friends from high school. I moved from West Palm Beach, Florida in January 2014, to Atlanta, Georgia for art school. When I got there, I focused more on photography and building a network in Atlanta. I knew nobody to network with, so I had to start over from the few connections I had in Florida. I understood the importance of networking and what it is to have great contacts, at an early age. It took me that year to build up enough clients that would provide freelance work for me to pay the bills. By the end of 2015, ADunkley Designs had freelance work every month from New York, Florida and Atlanta! I



Adobe Certified Associate
World Championship

worked on all this while managing a part time job at a local art gallery and going to art school. I became the Photo editor for my school's media outlet and did that for a year during the same time as well. The work I was doing at that time, heavily



depended on the skills I knew in Photoshop, Lightroom and Illustrator. Thank God for Bridge and Lightroom for file processing! I did hundreds of apparel mockup images for the website of a clothing line in Atlanta for a year, and I created phone case designs for an accessory company in New York during that same year. Today, I mainly do portraiture photography, 3D Digital art and a little bit of graphic designing.

Achieving More with ACA

Certiport: And you're doing all of that while working and getting your college degree. I can't believe it! Do you feel like getting your ACA certification early helped push you toward all these amazing achievements?

Acquille: Getting my certification has helped more than I ever imagined. This ignited a burning desire to further my practice in art. Becoming certified in high school has provided the edge in Photoshop that I needed to stand out from other artists in the photo and digital art field. I've been able to gain so much experience after becoming certified. My certification gave me a chance to design my high school mascot logo before I graduated. I've gained even more experience in college because I was able to land freelance jobs that required advanced skills in Photoshop.

Try, Try Again

Certiport: Has design always been something that's come easy for you?

Acquille: Not at all. In fact, the first time I took the ACA Photoshop exam, I didn't pass. But this didn't discourage me. I realized how important this would be to my future career, and I knew I had to try even harder to gain this achievement.

Building a Better Resume

Certiport: So was it worth the extra effort to earn your certification?

Acquille: I would say yes. Getting certified only helped to enhance my career path, and is paying off in two major ways for me: Knowing the most efficient way to use the tools I learn in school, and standing out with my resume. Your resume is a living showcase of the skills and qualifications you have achieved, and my Photoshop certification was a great way to showcase my skills that I'd worked hard to learn. Plus, after a while, it becomes second nature. You become one with the language of your tools.

Certiport: That's what we hope for all students who earn our certifications: That they become so proficient that it's second nature. It does take practice though, for sure.

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-Acquille Dunkley-

Competing in the ACA World Championship

Certiport: Our last question is actually about the ACA World Championship. When you competed, it was the first year of the competition. What's your favorite memory you took away from the event?

Acquille: My favorite memory from the competition was showing my dad that my art could take my family places. When I was younger, my dad would take me to the graphic design firm he used to work in Jamaica. I remember being around age 14 or 15, and I told my dad I wanted to become a graphic designer. At first he said I should reconsider because it would be a hard life choosing the path of art. Growing up and continuing my true passion took me to Washington D.C. for the competition, and since then, my art has allowed my family and me to see other amazing places as well.



Get Involved

Do your students have the passion and capabilities to change the world? Give them an outlet to share their amazing talents! Learn more about the ACA World Championship at www.acachampionship.com.