

KAT BODRIE INTERVIEWS COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Adam Dixon

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[Email interview with Adam Dixon, Senior Designer, Airtype, Winston-Salem]

KB: Tell me about how you formed a connection with Hoots Beer Co.

AD: We've known the two Erics for about a decade or more at this point, from the service industry, music scene and just general community connections. When they were preparing to open, there was only one brewery in town, so we were excited for the opportunity to help Winston grow in that area.

KB: What have you designed for Hoots?

AD: Oh man the list goes on and on. We started with the logo and a handful of secondary assets. As Hoots has grown over the years, we've helped however we can. We've designed logos for some of their specialty beers like Gashopper and Zinzendorf. We've created beer can labels, keg collars, menus, patches, shirts, stickers, coasters, event tents, business cards. We are particularly proud of the van wrap we recently designed.

We also helped them build a beer catalog system. Hoots is always growing and changing, so putting a lot of money into a catalog that would ultimately change a few months later didn't make a lot of sense. So instead, we worked with a local letterpress vendor to print some really nice catalog covers, and used a binding system that would allow for temporary information to change as their beer selection changed.

KB: What were you aiming for in creating these images? What message(s) are you trying to send? / How are you trying to affect consumers?

AD: We were aiming to create a brand that felt very blue collar and approachable. The people at Hoots are very hardworking but not very flashy people. When you are around them you realize they aren't trying to impress you, they are just trying to make good beer and have a good time doing it. That's so much of what we were trying to do with their brand. We wanted to create a brand that feels like an extension of the people behind it all. The logo draws inspiration from municipal marks, owls, and encourages self reflection with the ouroboros. The limited color palette continues that same train of thought. Leaning heavily on black and white maintains their understated appearance.

KB: Tell me about your creative process. What inspired you? What media did you use, and what media do you prefer to work in?

AD: Our creative process was pretty straightforward. As always we started by listening to what they were trying to do, and gained an understanding for who they are as people. From there we sketched a ton of ideas before landing on the mark we thought would serve them the best. After that, we just hopped into illustrator and began refining the mark.

KB: Do you see any particular challenges in creating art/logos for breweries?

AD: The largest challenge I think we run into is creating something unique for each brewery. Being a craft brewery isn't really a unique thing anymore. Everywhere you look there are new craft breweries popping up. Our city has gained a handful of craft breweries in the past year alone.

So just leaning on the craft brewery angle isn't enough to set you apart. You have to bring something new and fresh to the table to make sure you don't just blend in with the rest. With Hoots, our angle was really playing up the blue collar aspect of their brand. Whenever we are working with Hoots on a new project, there's always a moment where what we are creating begins to feel over done and showy, and that's usually a sign that we've gone too far. Hoots is unique in that it's very DIY and almost sort of punk rock. We wanted to highlight those things, not hide them. We feel like people respond well to that authenticity and transparency.

KB: Why do you want to support Hoots?

AD: The people at Hoots are trying to do interesting things in our city. We love Winston-Salem, and we are always looking to help people who are making our city better. Hoots shares that love for Winston-Salem; they could have done this wherever they want, and we are happy that they chose to do it here.

KB: Why is working with Hoots one of your "favorite longstanding projects"?

AD: We just work really well together. There is a mutual respect for each other's ideas, and consequently we have a good time working together. They'll come to us with an idea, promotion, or problem, and they trust us to help. We also seem to have a similar work ethic. At Airtype we take our work seriously and almost nothing else. Hoots seems to take beer seriously and not much else.

KB: Do you have any projects you're working on for Hoots right now? Do you have any future collaborations planned?

AD: We are always in the picture with Hoots. We help maintain their brand. Sometimes we are designing for their next big idea. Other times we are helping them with some of the

smaller details of their business. We love it all the same. The big projects are fun, but making sure the tiny details are perfect is also rewarding.

KB: What other types of projects are you working on, in general?

AD: As long as you promise not to tell anyone... We are working on rebranding an up and coming neighborhood in the area. Our owner and a few friends just opened a new music venue in Winston called The Ramkat, for which we did the branding. We are very excited about a new local business opening soon in downtown that we branded. We recently signed on with the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce for an exciting new project. We are also about to rebrand a local non-profit. Our Portland office is also staying busy, working on rebranding a new outdoor boating product and a number of other projects. There's often way too much going on in our office, but we'd rather be busy than bored.

KB: Do you have a favorite Hoots beer?

AD: Their pale is always a safe bet. We typically don't like wheat beers, but there's something special about the Wheelbite. Their Day Porter is delicious as well.