



[Music]

Tom Kelley:

First real speaker, not including your spiritual leader Ric Grefé and your moderator Tom Kelly. The first real speaker today is Yolanda Santosa, isn't that a lovely name, Yolanda Santosa, you know the tip of the tongue, no never mind. Kinda fun to say and I bet some of the linguists in the audience could tell us why or maybe Michael Conforti from yesterday would say why -- you know, I've just -- I've saw it. Well, I'll start by just, at the beginning at the prep that it's just kinda reading everybody's name and somehow Yolanda's name stuck out. Though, she actually doesn't like it as much as I do. So, I'm gonna call her "Yo" from now on. [Laughter] So in my first 2 minutes of talking with Yo, I discovered that she loves concrete, which I do not know about you but in my experience, other than talking to civil engineers, not that many people say it. Loves concrete, and as you may know her firm is called Ferroconcrete. She also said that she loves the color grey, which is one of my favorite colors too, though one of my best friends as Tom, grey, you know he says it's not a color. And I insisted that it is a color, right, there's some pantone numbers associated with it, and I did some research and it is technically a color, I'll be it what they called an achromatic one, as in the from the Greek meaning without color. [Laughter] But -- anyhow, okay so wait, I think I'm off of a tangent again, back to Yolanda. So Yolanda's AIGA article says she has a boundless love of branding, but apparently not all forms of branding, however. Because as a newly minted Art Center grad, she started her career at a corporate branding firm, which shall not be named, and I don't think she'll name it today. And she said it wasn't exactly her true calling, in her own words she says, "I quit on my 10th day there, a decision that was 9 days overdue". [Laughter] So armed with her learning from that first experiment, she launched a successful career in motion graphics doing main title sequences for popular TV shows like Ugly Betty, and Desperate Housewives, earning 3 -- count them three Emmy nominations along the way. More recently, Yo formed her own branding studio Ferroconcrete, right, favorite material, favorite color, Ferroconcrete. She's traveled all the way from LA today to be with us. She might win the traveled furthest to speak at AIGA Gain, and she's gonna talk today about her successful work for Pinkberry, a red hot brand of Swirly Goodness. So please give a warm welcome to Yo Santosa.

[Applause]

[Music]

Yolanda Santosa:

Hi, good morning. So I admit it, I'm actually here to talk about K-Y Jelly [laughter] I'm just kidding. I'm here to talk about a little bit about the journey of the Pinkberry brand. And my first experience with Pinkberry came about two and a half years ago, when at that point they had one store, now they have over 70 stores, they had one store and it was in West Hollywood. So, and I was there to meet the co-founder who is an architect. And the first thing I noticed was wow, okay there's a huge brand signal, just out of the architecture alone from the outside. And then noticed the designer outdoor furniture, the strategically placed designer dog bowl, and once I got on the interior it feels very contemporary, very open, and I noticed the pebble floors, Phillippe Starck Ghost chairs, the Le Klint lamps, I'm like, "Oh, okay!" Young is crazy, the architecture -- interior design is everywhere in here. And he said,

"Yo, do you know why I used this light up there? It's called the litten lights, it's very expensive. And I said, "No, why Young?" and he said, "Because it makes people look beautiful". He said, "Have you ever been to a nightclub where you're dancing, you're feeling good and suddenly you have to go to the bathroom and you look at yourself in the mirror and like 'oh my God!' [Laughter] 'I'm going home alone again tonight.'" [Laughter] Anyway, he said, "I used this light even though it's expensive because I want people to come in feeling like they're beautiful in my store. And not only that, I've put lights underneath the topping counters so that when you walk towards it you feel like you're walking towards a cosmetic counter, and you feel beautiful and fresh and healthy," and I thought, "That's brilliant!" And so, my challenge was how do we take this brand from the store and the logo and the architecture that it, that it is a gorgeous product that it is, how do we build the whole personality outside of it. So the first step was to create a visual brand for it, a graphic visual brand. And it seemed a pretty obvious solution that I should be inspired by the beautiful store design. So it took the circles that comes in from the patterns in the store, the color palette was directly derived out of it, and the transparency came from the ghost chairs which also communicates transparency and lightness which is what the Pinkberry product is. And then the next thing I talked to him, he said, "You know Yo, we only have two flavors which is original and green tea, and you can't even buy anything else here not even water". I'm like "Wow! That is an interesting concept." And the next thing that we have to tackle was how do we portray this product? And it was so obvious that the idea of the product was so focused with just plain and green tea that the solution had to be a little bit of a minimalist approach to it. And we also thought we could have taken a picture of the actual product in a paper cup, with the toppings chopped up, like how it was served in a store. But we felt no, this is a completely different concept, at this point it wasn't a norm to see an ice cream store with designer furniture chairs and you walk in and you feel like you are in a very high-end store. And the same thing with the product, we had to portray it as if it's an abstraction of itself, there has to be romance in it, it has to have personality as if it's artwork. And somehow because, I don't know if you guys are familiar with the taste of Pinkberry, it's tangy. So before this, all yogurt we've tasted is always sweet, they're trying to be ice cream. While Pinkberry is sour in your mouth, and it just is -- this is taste of the yogurt, it's not hiding anything. And from that, because it's such a new product, somehow I just thought about 2001 Space Odyssey, white and white and bright. And from that that's where the inspiration come from that the product was to be shot on white, on white, on white, punctuated by vibrant colors of the toppings. That's what we get. And the next step was to create the website, same rules, everything should be secondary, the only thing that you should be looking at is the actual product. And this is a shot of the West Hollywood store with all the fans outside. I like to zoom in on this guy, that's good. [Laughter] So how do we take these fans -- these friends of people and put it in one place where they can communicate to each other and feel like they belong to a certain passionate group about it. So, we've created something called the Pinkberry Groupie. We could have called it the Pinkberry Fan Club, but the idea of the word groupie is like, you know, the definition of it is young person especially a teenage girl, who is an ardent admirer of rock musicians and may follow them on tour. Pinkberry is a rock star, and that's what we tried to do with the name Pinkberry Groupie. That also translates how do we talk about Pinkberry as a language, as copyrighting language, and we came up with the tag line Swirly Goodness. Which the first word is visual based, it's based on the shape of the logo and it's based off the shape of the product. While the second word is an emotional-based, it's the state of being good, moral excellence, and excellence in quality of the product. And that language translates and it had a life of its own and translates into all the different applications like Hours of Operation, we call it Swirling Daily instead of Hours of Operation. And we even called the team members who serve this, we call them Swirlers, we even have a Swirly College. And this is a sign that's outside of one of the Pinkberry stores it says residential permit parking zone, do not do this, do not do this, please do not litter. But instead of having

that tone, we introduce it with a happy neighborhood makes a happy Pinkberry. And suddenly the whole tone of this message which is saying don't do this, don't do this, it feels very soft and inviting, and actually says "Let's do these good things for the good of togetherness". We could have been a party pooper and called it "Rules and regulation on Pinkberry premises", that wouldn't have been so fun. We also create custom icons that's purely for Pinkberry, add a little leaf here and there. Pinkberry men and women restroom, it's very special when you go in there. And we also -- this is a campaign that we did for Pinkberry going green, "Good things comes in swirls", they do, don't they? Pinkberry has a personality. Pinkberry can fall in love, so this is the plain and the green tea falling in love with each other, you make my heart swirl. And a Pinkberry likes to dress up for Christmas, she really likes to dress up, look at her with the ear mops made up of coconut trees, coconut shavings, aww. [Laughter] Anyway, so we do stuff like collaterals as well, like brochures, menus, product ID tags, gift cards, packaging, t-shirts, eco-friendly bags. So it translates to all the graphic design that we've created in the beginning and the branding, it all translates into all these different elements. Cars, exterior of the stores while it's under construction, and also interior of the store, in fact Pinkberry likes to dress up its interior. And we almost treat this entire orange wall as if it's a museum wall piece that we can change every season. So here's Halloween, we like to call it "Hitchcock meets Sleepy Hollow", and then the typography "Happy Halloween" is hung upside down in the trees like bats. And completely changed for fall, leaves. And for Christmas actually we had, this thing that's based on the song "let it snow, let it snow", you know that song? Yes. But it goes "let it swirl, let it swirl, let it swirl". And at the same time we played remixes of this -- the let it snow music throughout the whole store. So that when somebody walks in, you see this thing on the wall, you hear this song, you connect it altogether. So, Pinkberry, the whole Pinkberry is all about experiences about tasting, it's about hearing, it's all your senses. Pinkberry Summer, where the logo kind of blooms because it's in love, Marie Antoinette wallpaper type thing, that actually didn't get made because it was too expensive, very expensive. And then some of the walls actually communicate a little bit of history of Pinkberry. So this is what we call more of the flagship store where you walk in and you can see the whole beginning of 2005 when it first started and how it ended up to being where it is today. So after that, we started thinking, what is the relationship between the product and the topping? And we kind built this whole thing, the idea around Your Canvas and Your Palette, that your yogurt is Your Canvas and your toping is Your Palette. And that the combination of the two is only limited by your imagination, that each of us is an artist and we put as much topping, whatever we want on it. And taking that idea further is we translate it into the website and create this wallpaper where you can customize, you can pick plain, you can pick green tea, or whatever topping you like and create your own idea of what swirly goodness is to you. So there it is. And we also have this thing on the website to again bring the community into the brand, it's like people can submit what is their favorite masterpiece topping. And here is a beautiful letter from one of our favorite answers said, "Bliss is always fun in my local Pinkberry in the form of a frozen treat topped with fresh fruit. What's my heaven on earth combination? Snow White Mountain Swirl of that famous yogurt, topped with the following ornaments of nature, blackberries, raspberries, and blue berries", and signed off groupie for life, Dumont. Groupie for life, that's not bad, to actually get somebody that passionate about the brand. And here's the formula that we've been playing with for a while, it's Your canvas plus Your palette equals teddy bear; your canvas plus your palette equals Christmas tree. So, it can be anything, and this whole idea cements the connection between Pinkberry, art, and design. And we created events, concept for events to actually bring this concept even further is we invited groupies only to come and create their own Pinkberry masterpieces. So all ages. [Laughter] Very fun, there's a bunny, and then we got a penguin with a hat, and you get presents, you got presents. This is the only day when you're rewarded for playing with your food. Anybody young and old, for this one day you feel like a little kid and there's a sense that takes you back to that day

when it is all innocent. So let's take a moment to just think about this and ask the questions, "So did design help create the business of Pinkberry?" Well I would say yes. In fact it is part of our positioning statement that we say, "Witty, fresh, culturally relevant with a soft spot for design, Pinkberry is your cool best friend". And with that somebody wants to say to you, happy Halloween. [Laughter] Thank you!

[Applause]

Tom Kelley:

Okay, that was fun, Yo.

Yolanda Santosa:

Thank you.

Tom Kelley:

Thanks, so as usual I have questions.

Yolanda Santosa:

Oh-oh.

[Laughter]

Tom Kelley:

No, they are not hard ones. In fact here I'll answer the first one.

Yolanda Santosa:

Yehey! [Laughter] While I'm taking over.

Tom Kelley:

My first question is about, oh when you do something really fresh and unique like Pinkberry, sometimes, I don't know if anybody else has had this experience. Sometimes you look around and notice that other people have copied, right? Or not copied exactly but built on your ideas. 10 or 15 years ago, IDEO, based on some anthropological research came up with this idea that kids, your toothbrushes needed to be tremendously differently than they were at the time. Up until then everybody thought that parents, you know, have big hands and kids have little hands and so kids' toothbrushes should be smaller, skinnier version of their parents' toothbrush. But anthropology showed that yeah, that's perfectly logical until you go out and actually watch a kid brush their teeth. And when you watch a kid at a certain age brush their teeth they don't hold it in their fingertips like you do, you know because they don't have that fine motor control, they fist it, they hold to like this. And so our anthropologist on the first day of observation said "Hey, wait a minute, kids don't need little skinny toothbrush, they need a big fat toothbrush". In fact let's make it a big fat squishy toothbrush and our client Oral-B had a really good time with that idea, having then I think the best selling kids' toothbrush in the world for a year or two after that. But, you know, the patents and all kind of protections but you may have noticed, if you've been to any drugstore in the world in the last ten years, pretty much everybody's got one, right? And I don't know the legality of how that works but eventually all innovations get caught up with and that's why you gotta think about a red clean effect that you've got to always stay ahead, you've got to keep another innovation coming in the pipeline. So see I did answer the first question. [Laughter] But my question of you is, so I'm somewhat familiar with your brand, we don't really have them in Northern California where I live yet, but I've read about it a lot. And I've also think

I've heard about fast followers, you want to talk about other brands catching up or trying to catch or emulating.

Yolanda Santosa:

Oh yeah, how many of you guys have heard of other yogurt brands. There's KiwiBerry, Yogaberry, there's Yogo Tango even. So, I mean when Pinkberry first started, obviously there is only Pinkberry. And once we started realizing that a lot of these other brands are popping up, my heart just raced. Because you know, you either, if you don't evolve and you don't prove yourself that you are the leader of the brand, people are gonna catch up to you and take over. And at that point Pinkberry didn't have any financial backing; they were like privately-funded. So some of these companies who actually started are backed by big corporations, so we were a nervous wreck, we're like how do we connect to the consumers, how do we? And I think that's why we are so passionate with what we do and because we where there from the beginning, it was one store, we'd never expected it to take off to this level. And the fact is I think I was so lucky because the founders have never started their own business like this before. And they've never said like don't do this, don't do this, like this is not how it's supposed to, you know, this is too much for our brand. They -- pretty much, Young and Shelly who is the founders, they pretty much say "Go for it, go for it." Sometimes they'd never even see comp and they said you just go for it, like it's a dream. [Laughter] Yeah. And I mean, if guys -- are you guys familiar with the Pinkberry song? Oh I don't wanna sing it.

[Laughter]

Tom Kelley:

You know what? I think you should.

Yolanda Santosa:

No, no, no. That's not gonna happen, oh my God!

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Tom Kelley:

I will say, while you're warming up your voice, I'll say that [laughter] when you visit the Pinkberry website there's this funny thing that happens, there's somehow and I don't know technically how this happens, it pops up a little player. As soon as you go to the website it pops up the Pinkberry player. When you close the site, the player is still there and you notice -- suddenly notice that like for the last 3 hours you've been listening to the Pinkberry song, right? But it's very subliminal but I think Yo is preparing, you know, the audience around the world for when Pinkberry actually arrives on their shores. So yeah, how about that song?

[Laughter]

Yolanda Santosa:

No, I'm just gonna say this that they sometimes play it in the middle of the day in the stores, and some girls they would just like P-I-N, they start like jamming right there and like clapping and wow, that's awesome. Anyway, where was I?

Tom Kelley:

Well, you are about to sing the song but we'll skip that. [Laughter] So you have these Groupie-only events, how do you know who the Groupies are? Have they, do you have some sort of loyalty-club or something?

Yolanda Santosa:

Oh, yeah! We have a club that people can sign up, and I don't remember how many thousands now, 10s and 20s thousands. Before we first started, I was literally the one behind the e-mail, if people e-mailed to the Fellow Groupie which is my nickname, I would literally reply to them and say thanks for being a Groupie. And like -- after that it starts like hundreds, 200, like I can't do this anymore, somebody take over. And when somebody took that over, it was like if I felt like I was giving a baby away, you know. But it's so wonderful being a part of seeing one company go from 1 to 70. I learned such an invaluable lesson.

Tom Kelley:

So I think if your target market is like 15 to 25 year olds, I was pleased to see that I'm actually not complete outside the people who --

Yolanda Santosa:

Yes, yes.

Tom Kelley:

might go to a Pinkberry, so if I became a Groupie, what, is it? Is there some benefit -- do I -- besides for all the e-mail that I'm sure that Pinkberry sends me.

Yolanda Santosa:

Well, you get to invited to specific events, and actually you get to try new products as well, and you get to go to sometimes we call it blogger night where certain bloggers would come and try new things and blog about stuff. And somebody asked me this, "So you guys spent a lot of money paying those actresses and actors to eat your stuff, right?" Like no, not at all, in fact we never, we never did. It was just I think because we were in Hollywood, I don't know what the logistics of that is.

Tom Kelley:

There you go. So before the -- you are having Ferroconcrete and doing things like Pinkberry, you did this motion graphics work. Which seems really interesting looking at it from afar, the title sequences in TV and movies, you got those Emmy nominations. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Yolanda Santosa:

Working in motion graphic is completely different than branding. Because I feel suddenly you switch to a very corporate group of people that do think of things as business first on top of everything else, although there are leeways around that too. But with motion graphic, it's all about creativity, and you meet directors who you just sit down and just talk about brainstorm ideas and he has a vision of what he wants, which is really good to be a part of it. And I always feel like main titles is like, what do you call that, like an appetizer to the actual movie or the actual main course. First of all, it's great, you get to shoot, you get to meet directors, you get to meet actors, but what am I wandering off -- but anyway it's the sequence and story-telling that I find really beautiful. And when I first switched from motion graphic which is 6 years of my first working life into branding, I thought I had to start from zero, because I know nothing about branding except for what I was taught about in school. But I realized everything that I

learned from motion which is story-telling, building personalities, and story telling over a period of two minutes as in motion graphic. But in branding you are telling a story over a period of years, and it has the same cast, you have to build a personality around the product or around the brand, and so it is pretty much the same thing. What I learned was I didn't have to start from zero, in fact I had all this knowledge I had about it to translate. And I think come to branding, at a little different perspective because it wasn't a traditional branding, I mean I have no experience in anything except for this personal journey.

Tom Kelley:

Can you tell us, so, you know, everybody's got their own personal journey, and yours is really interesting, you know, to end up where you currently are. So you're born in Indonesia, you grew up in Singapore, can you tell us like when you first knew that you might approach design, or how that started in your life, or how you got to here?

Yolanda Santosa:

Oh I knew a long time ago because in high school I failed everything else except for art.

[Laughter]

Tom Kelley:

That's a clue.

Yolanda Santosa:

That was pretty bad. My parents wasn't happy [laughter], but now they are!

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Tom Kelley:

That's good.

Yolanda Santosa:

Thanks.

[Applause]

So, a message to all of you, high school dropouts and failures, go for it!

[Laughter]

Tom Kelley:

So besides the go for it advice, you know, there's a lot of young designers in the room, we've got some students here as well. Any advice to them as of how to find the way, because you didn't find your way right away, you have that first little 10 days at the corporate branding story?

Yolanda Santosa:

Yeah, yeah.

Tom Kelley:

Any suggestion on how they could learn from your experiences for example.

Yolanda Santosa:

Well you have a certain idea I think after you graduate at about what you want to do, and I wanna go do film for sure, I wanna do brochures and I wanna do magazines for sure. But, well, you'll never know until you get into the actual work environment what you're really passionate about till you're actually sitting there. 'Cause I love -- I've always loved branding, when I graduated and then I started with that company, I'm like "Yey, branding!" And then what they made me do was logos for like 8 hours a day -- logos, logos, logos. And I don't mind it so much but I was asking them like, "Can I go in that department where you kind of come up with the ideas for the brand and then not just do visual stuff like this". And then they're like, "No, you need a business degree for that, you need to be in the marketing department", I'm like, "Oh no". I went into the wrong profession. And so, to take myself off that boredom, I went the complete opposite direction I thought what's the opposite of boring is entertainment, so that's how I went into motion graphic. And I took one After Effects class, somehow I made it through to the motion graphic industry. And then -- but it kept coming back. In the back of my head I still knew that branding was my first love. And so when this opportunity came by, I took one week off from work [laughter] did my whole-patient-presentation, got the job for Pinkberry, and I quit my job the next Monday. And people say, "You're crazy, you can't start a company based on one client, you know?" But I thought, I mean if I don't take this risk, when it's gonna happen? I'm gonna be, you know, I've always wanted to start my own company. It's perfect opportunity. I believe in the product, I love the founders, and so there you go, I jumped, all good!

Tom Kelley:

Well, good for you!

[Applause]

So I just have one more question, this is actually from the very beginning, the first minute of your presentation which is where do you get those lights that make everyone look beautiful?

[Laughter]

Yolanda Santosa:

Oh, I'll give you the URL.

Tom Kelley:

Okay there we go.

[Laughter]

Yo was sensing that I might need this light more than some people in the room so, great, thank you very much Yo!

Yolanda Santosa:

Thank you!

[Applause] [Music]
