

Justin Chuan

Head of Design at Orb. I build brands, products, and the teams behind them.

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THE ROLE I'D CREATE AT TYPESAFE

Founding Head of Design and Brand. A System One model needs a company that looks and reads the way the model behaves: reliable, fast, and exact. I'd own that end to end, from the brand and website to the shape of the docs and SDK references, the launches, and the demos that make a typed judgment feel obvious to a developer inside ten seconds. I've built the brand function from zero four times and led rebrands that shipped. I write, I direct, and I still make things with my own hands.

EXPERIENCE

2024 – present

Head of Design

Orb, San Francisco

Brand Design Lead from 2024, Head of Design from November 2025. Led the January 2026 rebrand: wordmark, typographic system, RGB palette, photography program, and website. Announced over Business Wire and carried by VentureBeat. Design across brand, marketing, and product.

2021 – 2023

Director of Brand Design

Netlify, remote

Built the Brand Design team from zero and led a major transition in Netlify's identity. Developed the brand attributes and compass with the co-founders and customers, then shepherded the new identity through rollout across the company and its partners.

2018 – 2020

Head of Brand and Communications Design

BuildingConnected, then Autodesk, San Francisco

Joined as the second brand designer and built a team of seven. Led a comprehensive rebrand grounded in sixty hours of interviews; ran workshops on branding and Design Thinking across the organization.

2012 – 2018

Senior Manager of Visual Design

Sharethrough, San Francisco

Grew from first visual designer to team lead and developed the brand from the ground up. Identity and event work praised by Khoi Vinh; the "Ads Can Fit In" outdoor campaign was covered in multiple publications.

1998 – 2016

Earlier

Capslock (co-founder), Bleu Marketing Solutions, CNET

Site design for 99% Invisible, where the "99pi" abbreviation is mine, and IHG; design and copywriting for HP and Cisco; a creative services internship at CNET in 1998, where it started.

HOW I WORK

Design is too important to be left to designers.

I'm a generalist who focuses on brand design and design management, and I've kept my hands in graphic design, filmmaking, web design, photography, identity, illustration, and product design. My teams raise the design literacy of the organizations around them. I believe design is the intentional solution to a problem within constraints, and that anyone should be able to practice it. The job of a design leader is to put it in more hands, not fewer.

HOW I LEAD

Ten years of managing designers, starting as a reluctant introvert. Three lessons: listening is the most impactful thing a manager does; people need paths shaped by their own needs, communication style, and aspirations, which means knowing when to coach, mentor, or direct; and org charts are upside down. The first modern one, drawn for the New York and Erie Railroad in 1855, put leadership at the roots. Managers exist to nourish the branches.

SELECTED WORK

- Orb rebrand, 2026: wordmark, typography, RGB palette, photography program, values posters, website.
- Netlify rebrand, 2021–2023: logo, identity system, guidelines, website.
- BuildingConnected rebrand, 2019: research, identity, and rollout.
- Native Ad Summit, 2014–2017: identity and experience for a 700-person event and a national roadshow.
- Sharethrough identity, style guide, Calibrate, and the "Ads Can Fit In" billboards, 2012–2018.

Galleries at justinchuan.com.

BUILT ON JEV

Curator Co.

A taste engine for films, series, books, albums, and games. Every title is read on fourteen dimensions of character and tone, and every page shows a calibrated probability you'll rate it four stars or more. Code owns the workflow and the math; Jev supplies typed answers. Every call is metered, every work scored once. Invite-only beta at curatorco.app.

ALSO

- Pixcii (pixcii.art): turns a photo or video into a glyph mosaic, with print, vector, video, and embeddable export. Made with the Orb design team.
- Twenty-eight years in design, ten leading teams.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

“Justin's ability to imagine and execute a creative vision is reason enough to hire him, but beyond that he's also a kind, empathetic leader. He's got the resolve to carry big ideas through to completion.”

Jason Lengstorf, founder of CodeTV. Managed Justin at Netlify.

“He is a thoughtful designer, a critical thinker, an empathetic leader, and a kind teammate. As an engineer, I truly value Justin's willingness to challenge me and be challenged.”

Ryan Mulligan, Senior Design Engineer at Function Health

“He understands how to incorporate design into all other facets of an organization and a brand. He's thoughtful, curious, and never hesitates to ask hard questions.”

Rob Fan, co-founder of Sharethrough

RANGE

- Brand systems, identity, typography, art direction, photography and film direction.
- Web: hand-written HTML and CSS, Next.js, Postgres, Netlify, Chrome extensions.
- AI: TypeSafe Jev in production, with calibration, metering, and evaluation scripts.
- Writing: campaign copy, brand voice, launch posts, docs.