

The Photoplus Conference and Expo is an annual event that has been around since 1983. This year marks the 29th anniversary of PhotoPlus Expo. The event took place at the New York Javits Center. The larger indoor space is the perfect location to house the 240 exhibitors, with their giant booths, as well as the 22,000 attendees that participated in the event.

Upon arriving at the Javits Center, I was impressed with how grandiose the event seemed. I confess that I hadn't heard of the expo until Professor Shah proposed it to us. I immediately recognized the big name companies like Canon, Epson, Sony, Kodak, etc. I severely underestimated the event.

I previously attended another event at the Javits Center (New York Comic Con) and immediately remembered getting hands-on time with a product I've admired for years. So, as soon as I proceeded through the security gate and reached the show floor, I began to seek out this company: Wacom. I figured that the products that the company is known to produce would be just as relevant to illustration as it is to photography, so I was sure to find them somewhere on the show floor.

Wacom is one of the most popular manufacturers of pen tablets and interactive pen displays. Graphic designers, illustrators, and any artist in the modern world will recognize the brand and know at least one of Wacom's products. I've been stalking their latest pen display the "Cintiq 12WX". It retails for \$999.00, so as a college student working part-time this device is a far off

dream. As previously mentioned, I had the opportunity to use the Cintiq at a previous and was anxious to get my hands on it again.

When I finally found Wacom's booth, admittedly, I was disappointed by the size of their booth. It was occupied by two gentlemen with only three tablets (only one of which was from the Cintiq family). As much as I wanted to dive right in and get comfortable with the Cintiq, I couldn't. Not only were the tablets set at a height and angle that gave off a vibe of "look, but don't touch", but the Wacom representatives seemed tense as if they were guarding the devices from us. In short, I didn't feel comfortable approaching the booth. I begrudgingly took a brochure that explained what I already knew about the Cintiq.

For what it's worth the brochure was nicely designed. It's printed on a smooth, good quality, black, glossy paper. It's about 8 inches tall and about 11 inches wide with three vertical folds. Information-wise, the Cintiq is prominently displayed on the front cover and throughout the brochure, followed by white text describing product information. The text font is clear and legible.

Moving on from Wacom, I wandered the show floor for other recognizable companies that cater to my interests, mainly illustration. I'm not a photographer and, unfortunately, this was a photography event, so my chances of finding illustration related products was very low. I had just about given up when I happened to spot a screen showing imaged of illustrations. It was one of many displays at the Academy of Art University's large booth.

I stood at each screen, watching works done by students of that university. They showed works from photographers, illustrators, filmmakers, and animators. I was very impressed by the pieces and seriously considered attending classes at their campus (located in San Francisco, California). I signed up to receive an information packet about their degree programs. However, as impressed as I was by the works of art, I had to consider why they were the only school at the event and how they could afford such a large booth presence. Upon researching the Academy of Art University, I learned that they have a very high tuition and that's why they could afford their booth size and equipment. Frankly, I can't afford the tuition and find that their presence at the event marks them as a business first and institution of learning second.

All in all, I was impressed by the scale of the Photoplus Conference and Expo. I was also very impressed by the big name exhibitors on display at the show floor. These two elements are a reminder that the world does not revolve around my specific interests. I'm pleased that photo enthusiasts have an event of this magnitude for their industry and that I was able to be a part of it.