

# Annette Fuentes

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Building brands, experiences and partnerships that communicate value and support organizational growth.

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# Furnace Accelerator Program

Brand identity, program design & demo day launch



### Program overview

FURNACE is a technology transfer accelerator that helps researchers and innovators from Arizona’s leading universities transform intellectual property into market-ready startup ventures. Through funding, mentorship, and commercialization support, the program bridges the gap between laboratory discovery and economic impact — operating at the intersection of academia, entrepreneurship, and investment.

The inaugural demo day and pitch competition was the program’s public launch moment. This was a high-stakes event designed to attract founders, secure sponsors, generate media coverage, and signal to the broader innovation ecosystem that FURNACE was a serious player. The visual identity had to carry that weight from day one.

FURNACE was designed for a commercially minded room—investors and founders read design differently than academic stakeholders. This type of audience responds to confidence, clarity, and to a brand that looks like it knows where it’s going. The brief required an identity with genuine market-facing edge, not institutional polish.

### The challenge

FURNACE need a brand to reflect the intersection of academia, entrepreneurship, and investment. Institutional credibility wasn't enough. This was a program designed to attract founders, secure sponsors, and have participants stand up in front of investors. The visual identity had to carry commercial weight while remaining anchored to ASU's innovation ecosystem.

The brief wasn't to design a demo day event, it was to design a program identity that a demo day would launch. A brand that would be built to grow with each new cohort and remain recognizable across every format and platform it would appear on.

### My role

I owned the creative end-to-end: brand strategy, logo, visual identity system, and execution across every touchpoint for the inaugural pitch competition. The scope stretched from stage design and branded apparel to animated digital banners and paid media placements. A range that stress-tested the brand system across every scale, content and output.

Sponsor integration was built into the identity system from the start. I defined how partner brands could appear within the FURNACE visual framework. Providing sponsors structured visibility while ensuring co-branded surfaces reinforced rather than fragmented the program's market presence. The result was a sponsor experience that felt intentional on both sides of the relationship.



## Visual thinking

The FURNACE identity was designed to bridge ASU's academic credibility with the entrepreneurial ambition of the startups it supported, appealing to both researchers and venture-minded innovators.

The visual direction leaned into energy and precision — a mark and system with enough character to be memorable and enough restraint to be taken seriously. Typography and color were chosen to feel contemporary, timeless and confident rather than institutional. The name itself—FURNACE—already informed the visual language of transformation, heat, pressure, emergence.

## System & scale

The brand system was stress-tested across the widest format range from a stage backdrop and branded apparel to animated digital banners and paid media placements in print and digital magazines and newspapers. Each application required the identity to perform at a different scale, in a different context, for a different part of the audience. Building a system that held up across all of different platforms meant establishing clear rules for how the mark, typography, and color behaved under compression, expansion, and motion.

## Stakeholder & sponsor outcomes

To support sponsor visibility without compromising brand consistency, I built co-branding guidelines directly into the identity system. Defined placement zones and hierarchy rules ensured sponsors received prominent recognition while maintaining a cohesive FURNACE brand across all touchpoints.

**FURNACE**



**FURNACE**



**FURNACE**



**FURNACE**



## Deliverables

### Brand foundation

- Logo
- Visual identity system

### Environmental design

- Roll-up banners
- Name badges — four category types

### Event collateral & print

- Agenda booklet
- PPT template — event
- PPT template — speakers
- T-shirt design
- Sponsor integration
- Digital & paid media

### Social media digital assets

- Animated digital banners
- Magazine advertisement — print
- Magazine advertisement — digital
- Newspaper advertisement — print
- Newspaper advertisement — digital





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**FURNACE**

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[furnaceaccelerator.com](http://furnaceaccelerator.com)

Outcome

FURNACE launched with a brand that performed across every platform, from the pitch stage to print media to the shirts on attendees' backs.

Sponsors integrated cleanly within a system designed to accommodate them without compromise. Most importantly, the identity was built to outlast its launch moment—a program brand with the flexibility to scale across cohorts and the character to become an institution in Arizona's innovation ecosystem.



# **U.S.-ASEAN Science, Technology, and Innovation Cooperation (STIC) Program**

Brand identity, event design & international production



### Program overview

The U.S.–ASEAN Science, Technology, Innovation, and Commercialization (STIC) Program was a multi-year initiative funded by the U.S. State Department and implemented by ASU to strengthen STEM collaboration across Southeast Asia. Operating across all 10 ASEAN member states, the program was designed to connect researchers, innovators, and institutions across borders.

The kick-off conference in Indonesia was the program's first public moment. It was also a logistical and creative challenge that required to be a brand be built from scratch. A full conference design system had to be developed, and every file had to be production-ready for printing overseas with no existing visual precedent to reference.

The partners involved spanned ASU, the U.S. State Department, and institutions across multiple ASEAN countries—each with their own brand standards and visibility requirements.

## The challenge

The U.S.–ASEAN STIC Program was a newly launched, State Department–funded initiative with no visual identity and a kick-off conference in Indonesia. The brand had to be built, the conference had to be designed, and every file had to be production-ready for overseas printing.

## My role

I led the creative direction and design execution from brand strategy through final production. I developed the visual identity, including the logo, style guide, and core brand system. Which would serve as the foundation for the program throughout its multi-year lifecycle.

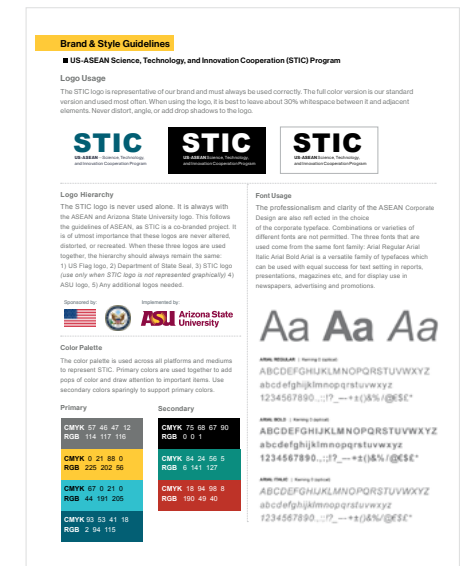
The identity needed to accommodate multiple institutional partners, including ASU, the U.S. State Department, and ASEAN member organizations—each with distinct branding requirements and stakeholder expectations.

I also managed the design and preparation of conference materials for international production, ensuring assets were accurately reproduced and delivered for overseas printing.

I created a scalable brand system that balanced the needs of multiple international stakeholders while enabling non-design teams to produce consistent communications independently. The result was a cohesive visual identity that supported both the launch event and the program's ongoing growth across digital and print channels.

# STIC

**US-ASEAN**—Science, Technology,  
and Innovation Cooperation Program





### Visual thinking

The STIC brand was designed to work across cultures, languages, and institutions in both the U.S. and Southeast Asia.

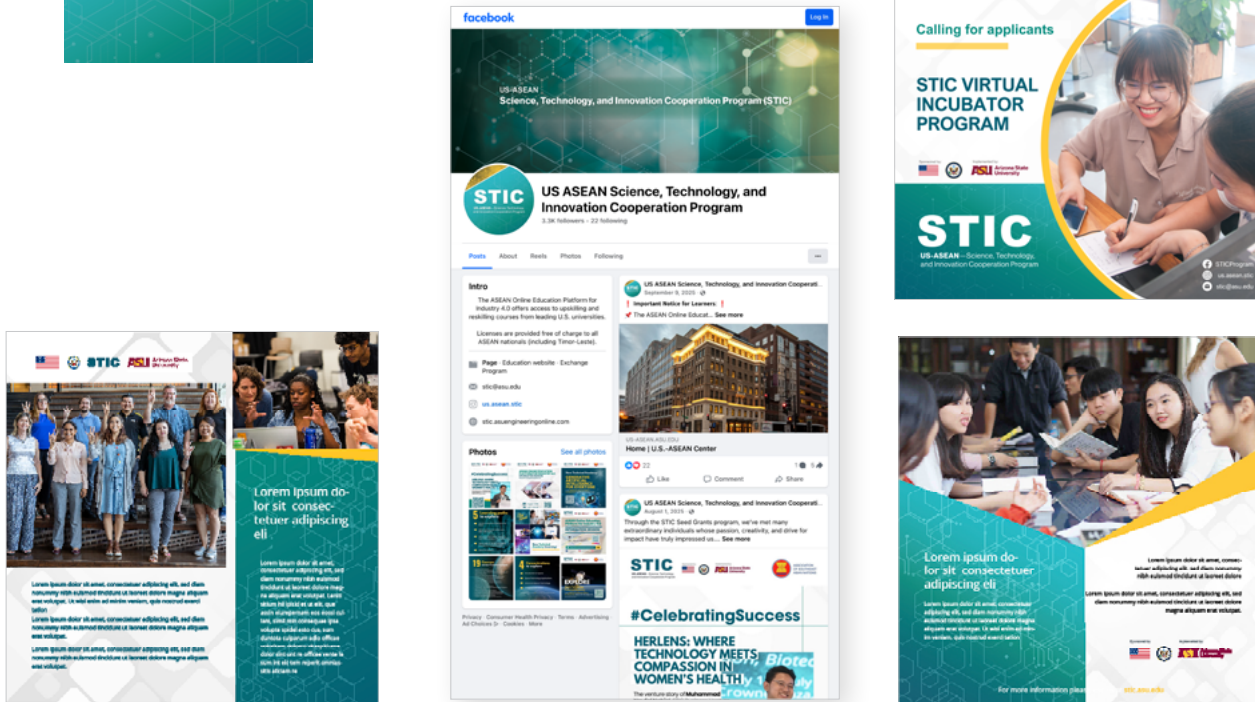
The identity emphasized clarity, credibility, and flexibility, with a scalable logo, typography, and color system that adapted seamlessly across print, digital, and event materials.

### System & scale

Rather than creating assets for individual events, I developed a scalable design system that supported a multi-year, multi-country program. Templates, guidelines, and reusable components enabled teams to create consistent, on-brand communications independently as the program expanded.

### Stakeholder Integration

I established clear co-branding guidelines and visual hierarchy standards that integrated government, academic, and institutional partners while maintaining the STIC brand as the primary identity. This approach ensured consistent recognition for partners without compromising brand cohesion.





### Brand foundation

- Logo
- Style guide
- Environmental design & wayfinding
- Digital stage backdrop
- Print backdrop
- Roll-up banners
- Wayfinding signage
- Name badges

### Ceremonial & recognition

- Giant checks — multiple award types
- Certificates — two designs

### Digital & ongoing brand extensions

- Social media branding
- Social media post templates
- Flyer templates
- Zoom backgrounds
- Speaker PPT templates



### Outcome

The STIC brand launched on schedule and maintained consistency across conference environments, partner communications, print collateral, and digital channels. What began as a conference identity evolved into a scalable brand system that supported the program throughout its three-year lifecycle.

By establishing clear governance, reusable templates, and a flexible visual framework, the brand enabled distributed teams across multiple countries and institutions to communicate consistently without ongoing design support.

The result was a cohesive program identity that remained recognizable across cultures, organizations, and years of implementation.



# Western Pathways Conference

Brand identity, experience design & sponsor governance



### Program overview

Global Pathways was an ASU initiative dedicated to expanding international access to higher education. The Western Pathways Conference was its first large-scale public-facing event of academic partners, institutional stakeholders and sponsors.

Global Pathways and Western Pathways had no prior visual identity to build from and no established creative process to follow.

The brief was deceptively simple—make it look like it belonged. That meant creating a brand system from scratch within the constraints of a large public research university, aligning multiple internal units around a single creative direction, and establishing the visual standards that sponsors and partners would be required to work within.

The conference needed to feel credible on first contact. Professional enough to earn institutional trust, distinctive enough to stand apart from the broader ASU communications landscape, and flexible enough to scale into a recurring program without a redesign.

### Business Challenge

A first-time institutional conference with no prior brand, no visual precedent, and no established creative authority. Multiple ASU units were involved, sponsors needed integration guidance, and the timeline left no room for iteration by committee.

### Role

I led creative end-to-end: brand strategy, visual identity, print and environmental design, sponsor governance, and templated systems for reuse. This wasn't a project where the strategy arrived handed down — I shaped it. Every decision was made in service of a system that could scale, adapt, and be handed off without losing coherence.

Separately, I created the logo for Global Pathways, the parent ASU initiative — giving the conference identity both an institutional anchor and room to develop its own distinct voice.

**GLOBAL  
PATH//AYS  
INSTITUTE**

at Arizona State University

**GLOBAL  
PATH//AYS  
INSTITUTE**  
at Arizona State University

**WESTERN  
PATH//AYS  
CONFERENCE**

**WESTERN  
PATH//AYS  
CONFERENCE**



### Visual Identity

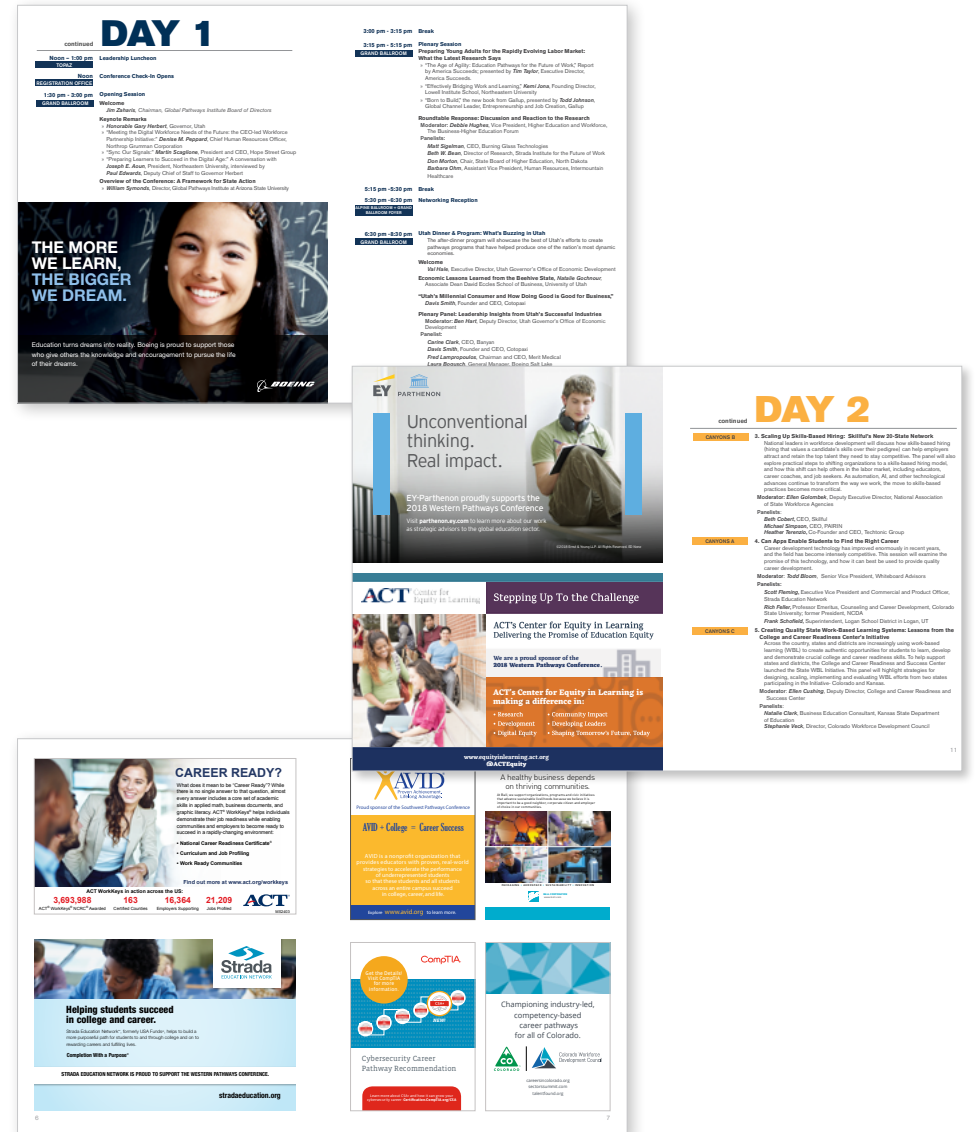
With no existing brand to build from, I created a visual identity that aligned with ASU's brand architecture while establishing a distinct presence for the conference. A custom typographic and color system provided consistency across all touchpoints while giving the event its own recognizable voice.

### Design System

I developed a modular design system that scaled across 13 event touchpoints, from stage graphics to printed materials. Templates, layout rules, and sponsor guidelines enabled consistent execution across teams while reducing the need for ongoing design support.

### Stakeholder & Sponsor Integration

I aligned stakeholders around audience and program goals, establishing co-branding standards that balanced sponsor visibility with brand integrity. The resulting framework streamlined asset creation and ensured all materials felt cohesive, regardless of who produced them.





### Deliverables

13 touchpoints across print, digital & environmental

### Pre-event & Sponsor Development

- Save the date—digital and printed postcard
- Sponsor pitch PPT template
- Sponsor style guide
- Tote bags & sponsor giveaways

### Environmental design & wayfinding

- Stage backdrop
- Roll-up banners
- Directional signage
- Schedule signage
- Table signs & table tents
- Name badges

### Content & print collateral

- 12-page agenda booklet
- Speaker presentation template
- Question cards



### Outcome

The conference launched successfully across every touchpoint. The sponsor style guide eliminated revision cycles and ensured partner assets arrived production-ready. The modular design system and templated collateral now serve as the creative foundation for every future iteration — the next organizer inherits a blueprint, not a blank page.



### Hobby

Over the years, I've developed a deep appreciation for vintage automobiles, and attending local car shows has become one of my favorite creative pursuits. The photographs in this collection were captured over time using various generations of my iPhone, documenting the craftsmanship, character, and timeless details that make these vehicles memorable.

As a designer, I'm naturally drawn to thoughtful form, proportion, and visual storytelling. Great design reveals itself across disciplines, and these cars continue to inspire my curiosity, reinforcing my belief that exceptional design is both enduring and impossible to ignore.

An abstract graphic composed of numerous thin, white, curved lines that intersect to form a complex, three-dimensional wireframe structure. The lines are arranged in a way that suggests a sphere or a similar curved surface, but they are distorted and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is that of a digital or architectural model rendered in a minimalist, wireframe style.

# Thank You!

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