

# BLiNK

## Creative Agency

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In an industrial part of town bordering San Jose International Airport, a revolutionary has taken up residence in one of the warehouses. The diesel-powered saws and construction-yellow Bobcats owned by the concrete contractor next door eye their new neighbor safely from behind a chainlink, barbed wire fence. Who is this newcomer? BLiNK Creative Agency.

Tired of watching Silicon Valley's creative exodus—artists feeling compelled to drive (or even move) to Oakland and San Francisco in search of places to express their imagination—Bill Lonero and Paul Ferradas decided it was time for a local alternative. “We’re finally here, so they can come on over,” Ferradas grins.

The creation of BLiNK was far from instantaneous. Owner Lonero had been itching to convert the space into a photography studio ever since his band began using another part of the building for their rehearsal/recording studio. Though his main passion is music, he's a strong believer that all creatives play on the same team. It ultimately took seven years for Lonero's coveted space to finally become available, but after securing the spot, he recruited his longtime friend, fashion and advertising photographer Paul Ferradas, to oversee the operation.

By bringing Ferradas on as general manager and creative director, Lonero was confident BLiNK could cater to the needs of photographers—providing the space and technical equipment currently in demand. With 15 years of experience and a strong track record, Ferradas also ensured connections with the industry's local agencies.

The next step was to find and recruit resident artists with skills in makeup, hair, set styling, and beyond. As this process is still ongoing, Lonero and Ferradas continue to add to this list with the intention of catering to as many niches as possible. “I want to have an umbrella of artists that we can call upon when the need arises,” Ferradas explains. With makeup, for instance, that means enlisting artists gifted in theatrical makeup, special effects, and natural styles.

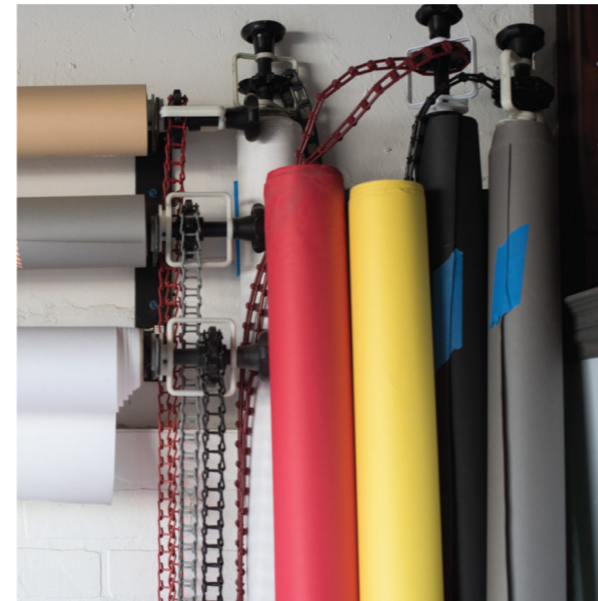


Bill Lonero (Front) and Paul Ferradas (Back)



“You never know what’s going to come through the door. And that’s part of the magic.”

– Paul Ferradas



Besides the task of building a strong team, there was also the space itself to consider. To make it their own, Lonero and Ferradas needed to take the layout of the previous owner (a microphone company) and pull a grime-to-glamour transformation. When they first came into possession of the studio, “there was a bunch of machines and grease and dirt,” Lonero reminisced. In all, they spent half a year rolling up their sleeves and recruiting friends to help renovate the space. BLiNK opened January 1st of this year—a fitting time for a new beginning.

BLiNK’s main attraction is its cycloramic wall. Also called an infinity wall, this cove consists of a smooth white surface with no visible corners. There is also a swanky loft where clients can either lounge on black leather couches or oversee the shoot as they lean on the sleek cable rail and dark wooden posts bordering the ledge. “Our whole thing is to provide a warm, welcoming environment,” Lonero says. “Art shouldn’t be cold. We try to make it personal.”

Hoping to attract creatives of all kinds, Lonero and Ferradas aren’t limiting themselves to being “just a photography studio.” Though they expect plenty of fashion and still-life product shoots, all those with a creative bent (devotees from a variety of different mediums as well as hobbyists and professionals alike) are welcome to bring their ideas. “We want to cater to everybody’s needs—not only photo, but video, media, web design,” Ferradas confirms. “Anybody who wants to create, basically.” He later adds, “You never know what’s going to come through the door. And that’s part of the magic.”

In addition to being a studio rental, BLiNK also offers workshops. “Yeah, you have YouTube,” Ferradas says, “but there’s nothing like meeting somebody face to face and being in that environment and asking questions.” Janice Daoud—a celebrity makeup artist who has worked with Rihanna and Usher—recently visited to teach established makeup artists about makeup kit organization. In May, renowned rock music photographer Neil Zlozower will share about his experience capturing legends like Van Halen, Led Zeppelin, David Bowie, and Guns N’ Roses (a perfect choice to fit both Ferradas’ passion for photography and Lonero’s passion for rock).

Besides workshops, BLiNK also encourages creatives to meet each other and network through industry mixers hosted on the last Monday of every month. The hope is to be an incubator for new collaborations. “I know there are creatives down here in the South Bay,” Ferradas says. “They just need to come out from under their rocks.”

